

Teacher Readiness in the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum at State High School 14 Padang

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received Desember 11, 2025

Revised December 12, 2025

Accepted December 14, 2025

Available online Januari 29, 2026

Keywords:

Teacher Readiness, Independent Curriculum, Educational Administration, P5



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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the readiness of teachers in implementing the Independent Curriculum at SMA Negeri 14 Padang. This research was driven by the ongoing national transition toward the Independent Curriculum, which requires teachers to adapt to new approaches such as differentiated instruction, flexible learning pathways, and project-based learning. Many schools still experience difficulties in translating these concepts into practice, making it important to analyze the real readiness of teachers at the school level. The research focused on lesson planning, learning implementation, and assessment processes as core indicators of teacher readiness. A descriptive qualitative method was used, with interviews, observations, and documentation as data collection techniques. The novelty of this study lies in its specific exploration of teacher readiness within a single school context during an early stage of curriculum adoption, providing detailed insights into practical challenges that are often overlooked in broader policy-level analyses. The findings revealed that teachers at SMA Negeri 14 Padang have a good understanding of the Independent Curriculum's core concepts such as differentiated instruction, student-centered learning, and project-based assessment. However, challenges remain in preparing teaching modules and integrating P5 (Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Projects) into daily learning. The support of the principal, continuous training, and collaboration among teachers are critical in ensuring the successful implementation of the curriculum. The implications of this study suggest that sustained professional development and structured mentoring systems are essential to strengthen teacher capacity and ensure long-term curriculum effectiveness at the school level.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Curriculum reform in Indonesia has continued to evolve in response to the nation's commitment to improving the quality of teaching and learning. The introduction of the Merdeka Curriculum in 2022 represents a major shift toward flexible, student-centered, and competency-based education. The reform emphasizes differentiated instruction, formative assessment, and project-based learning as essential strategies to support meaningful learning experiences (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, 2022). In this context, teacher readiness becomes a critical determinant of curriculum implementation success, as teachers play a central role in transforming curriculum principles into classroom practices.

Despite this policy shift, research indicates that the implementation of new curricula in Indonesia frequently encounters challenges due to varying levels of teacher preparedness. Limited understanding of

curriculum components, insufficient pedagogical adaptability, and difficulties in shifting from teacher-centered to student-centered approaches often lead to classroom practices that remain monotonous, directive, and less responsive to learners' needs. These conditions may hinder the effective application of differentiated learning, the use of authentic assessment, and the integration of Pancasila Student Profile (P5) projects, all of which are core elements of the Merdeka Curriculum (Rahmawati & Nanda, 2024).

Such challenges are also evident in SMA Negeri 14 Padang, a public senior high school in West Sumatra that began implementing the Merdeka Curriculum during the 2023/2024 academic year. Although the school is recognized for its engagement in innovative learning practices and community-based projects, differences in teacher competence, uneven readiness, and limited instructional resources continue to influence the consistency and quality of curriculum application. As a result, classroom practices do not always reflect the flexibility, personalization, and student autonomy emphasized by the curriculum.

As noted by Mulyasa (2023), the success of curriculum reform largely depends on the extent to which teachers are ready to plan, deliver, and assess learning in ways that align with curricular demands. Building upon this theoretical perspective, this study seeks to analyze the readiness of teachers in implementing the Independent Curriculum at SMA Negeri 14 Padang, as well as identifying supporting and inhibiting factors. Understanding these aspects is expected to provide insights that can strengthen curriculum implementation and contribute to improving the overall quality of learning within the school context.

Article Type

This article is an **original research article** presenting field findings on teacher readiness in implementing the Independent Curriculum at SMA Negeri 14 Padang. The study employs a qualitative descriptive approach with data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation.

Figure 1 is inserted in the text box and illustrates the level of teacher readiness in implementing the Independent Curriculum at SMA Negeri 14 Padang. As shown in the figure, teacher readiness is measured across three main aspects: **planning**, **implementation**, and **evaluation**. The figure provides a clear comparison of the readiness percentage in each aspect, emphasizing that teachers demonstrate higher readiness in planning activities compared to implementation and evaluation. The image is drawn with a line width of 1 pt and maintains good contrast quality to ensure clear visualization and interpretation.

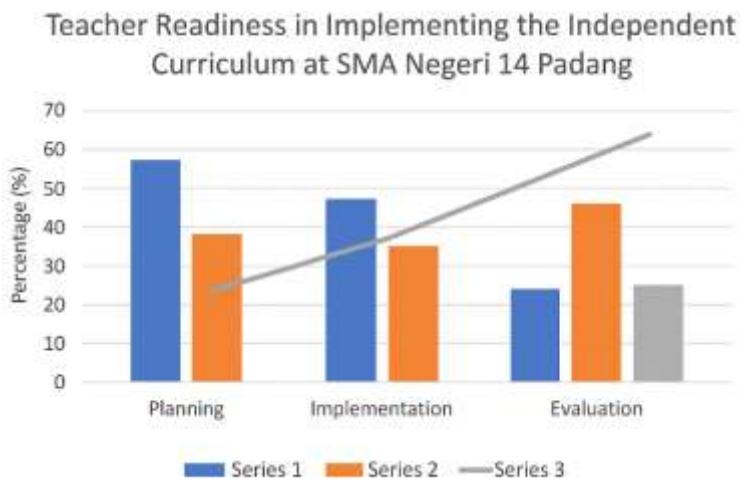


Figure 1. Teacher Readiness in Implementing the Independent Curriculum at SMA Negeri 14 Padang

The bar and line chart illustrates the readiness of teachers across three key aspects of curriculum implementation: **Planning (Perencanaan)**, **Implementation (Pelaksanaan)**, and **Evaluation (Evaluasi)**. The blue bars represent the percentage of teachers prepared in the first data series, the orange bars indicate the second data series, and the gray line shows a trend across the combined readiness measures. The chart highlights that teacher readiness is highest in the planning stage, followed by implementation, and slightly lower in evaluation, indicating areas where further professional development may be needed to ensure effective curriculum delivery.

2. METHOD, DATA, ANALYSIS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive method, which was selected because it allows researchers to explore real conditions in the field and describe teacher readiness in implementing the Independent Curriculum in a natural school setting. This method is appropriate for capturing participants' perceptions, classroom practices, and contextual factors that cannot be measured quantitatively. The research design followed an interpretive qualitative approach, emphasizing rich descriptions and in-depth understanding of the implementation process.

The research was conducted at SMA Negeri 14 Padang, located on Jl. Beringin Raya, Koto Tangah District, Padang City, West Sumatra. The participants consisted of the school principal and seven teachers representing key subject areas, including Bahasa Indonesia, English, Mathematics, Biology, Sociology, and Art. Teachers were selected purposively based on their direct involvement in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum.

Data were collected through three techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. Classroom observations were carried out to examine teaching practices and the implementation of P5 project activities. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers and the school principal to obtain deeper insights into their perceptions, challenges, and levels of readiness concerning the curriculum. Documentation, including lesson plans, teacher work programs, and administrative records, was analyzed to complement and validate the observed and reported data.

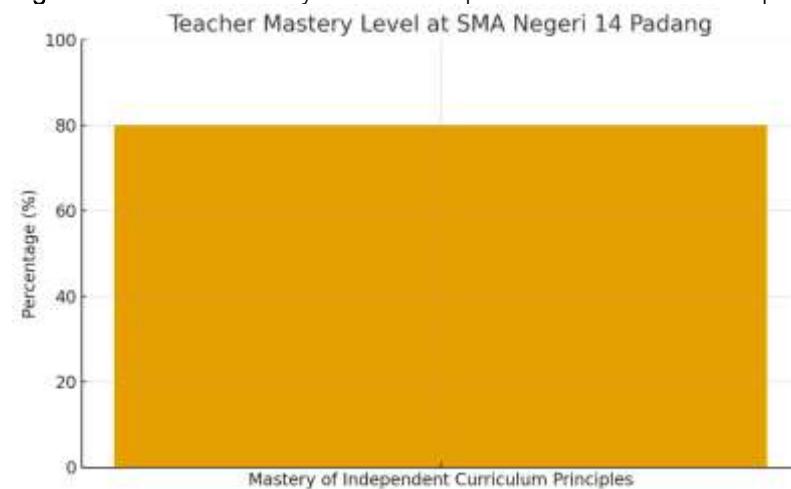
Data analysis followed the framework proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involved selecting and organizing relevant information; data display was conducted through matrices and thematic grouping; and conclusions were drawn by identifying patterns related to teacher readiness across planning, implementation, and evaluation aspects.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The findings of this study indicate that teachers at SMA Negeri 14 Padang have demonstrated a relatively strong level of readiness in implementing the Independent Curriculum. Based on the data collected, approximately 80% of teachers have mastered the core principles of the curriculum, including differentiated learning, competency achievement, and the use of formative assessment.

Figure 1. Teacher Mastery Level of Independent Curriculum Principles



This degree of mastery suggests that teachers possess an adequate conceptual understanding to support the shift toward more flexible and student-centered learning. The distribution of this readiness level is visually presented in Figure 1, which illustrates the percentage of teachers who meet the expected competency criteria in curriculum comprehension.

In practice, teachers have begun to develop their own modul ajar (teaching modules), although a portion of them continue to adapt existing materials from the Merdeka Mengajar platform. Compared with the initial stage of implementation, administrative tasks such as lesson documentation, teaching reflections,

and evaluation reporting have shown improvement. This progress reflects a gradual increase in teacher autonomy and confidence in designing learning experiences aligned with the Independent Curriculum.

The school has also shown active engagement in implementing the P5 (Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila) program. Project themes such as “Environmental Sustainability” and “Local Cultural Revitalization” have allowed students to collaborate across disciplines, producing various authentic outputs including environmental campaigns and exhibitions of local products. These activities illustrate that teachers are not only prepared conceptually but are also capable of facilitating project-based learning as required by the curriculum.

Despite these positive developments, several challenges remain evident. Teachers still face limitations in accessing or creating digital learning media, and the preparation of individualized learning materials demands considerable time and effort. These constraints occasionally hinder the full optimization of differentiated instruction in the classroom. Nevertheless, support from school leadership—particularly through the principal’s role in motivating teachers and organizing professional development—has been instrumental in sustaining the implementation process. The presence of a Guru Penggerak team further strengthens peer collaboration and mentoring among teachers.

Overall, the findings of this study align with Rahmawati and Nanda (2024), who emphasize that teacher collaboration and leadership support are crucial determinants of successful curriculum reform. While SMA Negeri 14 Padang has achieved notable progress, continued professional learning and broader resource support remain essential to enhance teacher readiness in the long term.

Discussion

The overall readiness of teachers at SMA Negeri 14 Padang reflects a relatively mature understanding of the Independent Curriculum. The high mastery level (80%) indicates that teachers have succeeded in internalizing the curriculum’s principles, supporting the shift toward student-centered instruction. This readiness is consistent with [Rahmawati and Nanda \(2024\)](#), who highlight the crucial roles of school leadership and teacher collaboration in facilitating curriculum reform. The active involvement of the principal in mentoring and training strengthens this transition.

However, the challenges identified particularly limited digital resources and the time required to prepare individualized learning materials indicate that the implementation is not yet optimal. These issues suggest that although conceptual readiness is strong, technical and resource readiness still requires improvement. This finding answers the research problem by showing that teacher readiness exists, but is uneven across domains. Teachers are strongest in planning but still need support in implementation and assessment aspects.

The progress of the P5 project implementation further confirms that teachers are capable of managing project-based learning, although the workload involved indicates the need for sustained professional learning communities. These results align with [Mulyasa \(2023\)](#), who argues that continuous capacity building is essential for ensuring the long-term success of curriculum innovation. Therefore, ongoing support from local education authorities and structured peer collaboration are necessary to strengthen the implementation process.

4. CONCLUSION

Teachers at SMA Negeri 14 Padang show a high level of readiness in implementing the Independent Curriculum, demonstrated by their understanding of core principles and ability to plan differentiated lessons. However, the preparation of teaching modules and the effective integration of P5 activities remain areas that require improvement. Based on these findings, it is recommended that school leaders and local education authorities provide sustained training programs, strengthened administrative support systems, and targeted digital literacy development. These efforts are intended to help teachers enhance instructional quality, optimize P5 implementation, and ensure the long-term effectiveness of the Independent Curriculum.

5. ACKNOWLEDGE

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to SMA Negeri 14 Padang for granting permission, providing data, and supporting the research process related to the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. Appreciation is also extended to the teachers and school administrators who willingly participated and shared valuable insights regarding their readiness to implement the curriculum. The author gratefully acknowledges Universitas Negeri Padang for the academic guidance, facilities, and institutional

support that significantly contributed to the completion of this study. Finally, the author extends thanks to all parties whose contributions, both directly and indirectly, supported the successful completion of this research.

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