

Implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum and its Implications for Improving Teacher Professionalism in Indonesia

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Abstract

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum requires teachers to be more innovative, creative, and adaptable to the diverse needs of students. Teachers no longer act only as conveyors of material, but as facilitators who support competency-based and character-based learning. Teacher professionalism is a key element in the success of this curriculum, with a focus on improving pedagogical, technological, and soft skills such as critical thinking and collaboration skills. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method with a literature review approach. Data were obtained from various sources, including books, journals, and related documents that are relevant to the research topic. The results of the study show that although there are challenges in its implementation, such as limited technological infrastructure and teacher readiness, the government has provided support through training programs and improving teacher welfare. Overall, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum has a positive impact on improving teacher professionalism in Indonesia and makes an important contribution to improving the quality of national education.

1. Introduction

The Independent Curriculum is a new educational curriculum introduced in Indonesia with the aim of providing greater freedom to teachers and schools in designing learning according to the needs and characteristics of students. This curriculum is designed to provide more flexibility in the teaching and learning process, with a focus on developing student competencies and character. Unlike the previous curriculum which tended to be uniform, the Independent Curriculum emphasizes a more contextual, innovative, and project-based approach, so that students can learn more deeply and according to their interests. The Independent Curriculum aims to provide more flexibility and independence to schools, teachers, and students in the teaching and learning process, so that education can be more in line with the needs and potential of each student. (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2021).

The curriculum changes in Indonesia are motivated by the need to respond to global and local dynamics in the world of education, including technological developments, social change, and labor market demands. The previous curriculum considered still too rigid and not fully relevant to the development of the times, where students need 21st century skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration. In addition, the results of the education evaluation show that students still tend to be passive and focus more on mastering the material than developing competencies.

The need for change is also driven by challenges in an overly centralized education system, which makes it difficult for many schools and teachers to adapt learning to local contexts. The Independent Curriculum is here to provide greater autonomy to schools and teachers so that they can design learning that is more relevant and in accordance with the needs of students, both in terms of academics and character development. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum is part of the Indonesian government's policy to improve the quality of education. The government wants to create a more flexible education system, focused on the potential and needs of students, and relevant to global developments.

One of the main characteristics of the Independent Curriculum is the flexibility given to teachers and students. The independent curriculum gives teachers the freedom to design learning programs that are in accordance with the characteristics and learning needs of students.

Curriculum changes not only require adjustments in terms of learning materials, but also in terms of teacher professionalism. In the Independent Curriculum, teachers not only act as

material deliverers, but also as learning facilitators. Teachers are required to be more innovative in developing student-centered learning strategies. This requires teachers to be more creative in designing interesting learning experiences that are in accordance with the interests and abilities of individual students.

Along with the current curriculum modification, teacher performance must also be improved. The initial step in implementing the education process is to produce versatile, intelligent, and highly competitive human beings with the aim of improving teacher performance (Kamaludin, 2023a; Lelah et al., 2020; Mukminin, 2022). Teachers no longer only act as conveyors of material, but also as facilitators who help students develop competencies according to their potential. In the context of the Independent Curriculum, teacher professionalism is very important because the success of implementing this curriculum depends heavily on the teacher's ability to adapt, develop innovative learning methods, and provide a more meaningful learning experience for students.

Teacher professionalism includes the ability to continue learning, innovating, and having a high work ethic in supporting student learning.

The Independent Curriculum presents new challenges for teachers, such as the freedom to design more flexible learning, but also demands greater responsibility in terms of evaluating and assessing the learning process. Without strong professionalism, the implementation of this curriculum can be hampered by teachers' lack of understanding of new, more complex and dynamic approaches.

Therefore, teacher professionalism is key to ensuring that the Merdeka Curriculum can be implemented effectively and have a positive impact on the quality of education in Indonesia. Continuous training, support, and development are needed to ensure that teachers can adopt and implement this curriculum well. informasi sangat penting dalam banyak aspek kehidupan, termasuk pendidikan, selama revolusi industri 4.0 dan *society* 5.0.

2. Method

In this research, the method that will be used is descriptive qualitative. According to Rahayu, et al. in Sugiyono (2022: 6315) qualitative methods are classified as artistic methods because the research process is less visual and as interpretive methods because the information produced in the study is usually related to the interpretation of information collected on the spot. Qualitative research is a process of collecting information that is collected naturally for interpretation and analysis of phenomena, where the researcher is the main tool. According to Indriyani (2023: 19) a qualitative approach is research that in the process produces descriptive information, meaning that the information obtained is presented with words to describe the objects being observed or studied. According to Gita in Moleong (2023: 170) the descriptive method is analyzing information that collected in the form of words, pictures and not numbers. Information is obtained from interview results, photos, field notes, personal documents, videos, notes and documents other official. So, the qualitative descriptive research method is a qualitative research method. the process of which produces information in the form of words, images, and not numbers to describe the object being observed or researched.

This research uses a literature review design literature review is a technique for collecting information or sources related to research topics obtained from various reading sources, such as magazines, books, the internet, and other libraries. The results of the literature review are used as a basis and input to explain and detail the aspects being studied. In this study, the author used reading sources from the internet, books, Open Knowledge Maps and Google Scholar which contained journals that were relevant to the content of this study. ini menggunakan metode *literature review* atau penelitian pustaka. Ulasan yang tersedia dalam penelitian ini tentunya menggunakan literatur yang relevan, seperti buku, laporan pemerintah, jurnal ilmiah, dan publikasi internasional (Kirby, 2023). *Literture review* tersebut dipilih berdasarkan relevansinya terhadap topik, seperti teknologi informasi dalam pendidikan, manajemen pendidikan, manajemen efektif, literasi digital, dan

generasi emas 2045. Kajian ini juga mengidentifikasi metode terbaik untuk memasukkan teknologi ke dalam sistem pendidikan di negara-negara yang telah menggunakannya dengan baik.

3. Result and Discussion

The Merdeka Belajar Curriculum is an initiative of the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) which was introduced at the end of 2019. This curriculum aims to provide more flexibility in learning, adapt to the needs of students, and encourage improvements in the quality of education in Indonesia. The Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum that provides flexibility for educators to be able to teach quality learning according to the learning needs and interests of students. The implementation of the curriculum is carried out with the hope of making a change in the world of education and focusing on character development and potential development based on competency. According to Alfath (2022: 45) the Merdeka Belajar curriculum is a breakthrough in the application of freedom of thought.

The implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum enables students to play a more active role in the learning process. They are free to choose subjects, topics, and extracurricular activities that suit their abilities, interests, and talents. So students can undergo a more meaningful and self-appropriate learning process. In addition, this curriculum also provides opportunities for students to develop their intellectual potential as a whole.

The implementation of the independent learning curriculum was also triggered by the decline in the quality of educational services and graduates of Indonesian education, as well as the decline in the competitiveness of Indonesian education graduates in the 4.0 and 5.0 markets (Sudarma, 2021). The concept of the Independent Learning curriculum is very different from the curriculum that has existed and been used by formal education in Indonesia. This latest education concept is more taking into account the individual cognitive abilities and uniqueness of students. Independent Learning means that teachers and students have the freedom to innovate, the freedom to learn independently and creatively.

The Ministry of Education and Culture defines Merdeka Belajar as a learning process that gives freedom and authority to educational institutions to reduce the burden of complicated administration (Widiono, 2021). Merdeka Belajar allows flexibility in achieving goals, while still following applicable rules and procedures.

One of the steps taken by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology in educational reform is to provide freedom to teachers to teach according to the level of student understanding through the Merdeka Belajar program. In its implementation, teachers act as facilitators who create a pleasant learning atmosphere for students. This is done with a personal approach and the use of learning methods and media that make the learning process more enjoyable and free from pressure. The main key to Merdeka Belajar lies in the design of learning strategies that start from the freedom of teachers in teaching to the freedom of students in learning.

The principles of Independent Learning include three aspects, namely: 1) focusing on students; 2) literacy-oriented processes; and 3) learning objectives, methods, and scope. In addition, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology also gives teachers the freedom to choose how to deliver the curriculum or teaching methods. The teacher's freedom consists of several things, including the following: (a) freedom to innovate to achieve learning goals by using active, effective, and efficient learning models; (b) learning and independence. This means being able to develop creativity in preparing learning designs, being skilled in every situation, having an independent attitude and not being based on applicable regulations and being able to translate the curriculum before being taught to students; (c) creative, namely being able to create something unique, being able to create new ideas, being flexible, sociable, fun, and liking to experiment (Widyastuti, 2022).

3.1 Independent Learning Curriculum Implementation Strategy

To make the independent learning curriculum a success, steps need to be taken, namely

the teaching and learning process policy, the independent quality teacher policy, the policy of increasing funding for the independent boarding teacher education program for elementary and secondary schools, and the independent learning curriculum policy. The emphasis for the independent learning curriculum is more oriented towards the process and results. Therefore, the elementary and secondary education curriculum must be freed both in terms of content and learning resources, but still refers to the national goals of education (Nadiroh, 2020).

The design of the strategy for implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum is based on the lessons of curriculum implementation that have been carried out in Indonesia and in other countries. Curriculum design planning cannot be separated from its implementation strategy. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology has made efforts to develop the strategy for implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum by considering the complexity of the systemic context. In addition, the strategy for implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum is also based on the principles of curriculum design, including being simple, easy to understand and easy to implement, focusing on competencies and character in all students, flexible, collaborative, harmonious and also paying attention to the results of studies and feedback.

As is known, the main characteristics of the Independent Learning Curriculum that can support the current learning recovery are: (1) Project-based learning for the development of soft skills and character which includes faith, piety, and noble morals, mutual cooperation, global diversity, independence, critical thinking, and creativity; (2) Focusing on essential materials and expected to provide sufficient time for in-depth learning on basic competencies such as literacy and numeracy; (3) All teachers have the flexibility to carry out learning that is in accordance with the abilities of students (teaching at the right level) and also make adjustments to the local context and content.

The key to the success of the Independent Curriculum lies in the willingness of school principals and teachers to adapt and understand the Independent Curriculum. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology has also prepared a strategic scheme for implementing the Independent Curriculum, namely: (1) the route for adopting the independent curriculum is carried out in stages. Assistance in analyzing school readiness is carried out periodically every 3 months by providing feedback. This is done by both the central government and local governments to map the need for adjustments to support the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum; (2) provision of assessment options and ICT-based teaching tools. For example: Textbooks, teaching modules, projects, media in digital form; (3) emphasizing independent training for the independent curriculum using information and communication technology. Training based on this technology can allow teachers to access it online. Of course, this can make it easier for an educational institution to adopt an independent curriculum. The Ministry of Education and Culture has also prepared various educational videos, podcasts, or e-books that have been distributed in various media; (4) provision of competent human resources in educational institutions. These human resources come from driving schools/PK Vocational Schools that have implemented the Independent Curriculum. This strategy can be implemented directly or online through webinars, face-to-face seminars, workshops, or other meetings; (5) utilization of learning communities formed on the initiative of alumni teachers and trainers at the moving teachers. With this strategy, it is hoped that it can become a forum for exchanging good practices in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. A learning community aims to create exchange, sharing experiences and openness in terms of implementing learning in schools. The fourth and fifth strategies are strategies that focus more on meetings, both meetings that present resource persons and learning communities room. Creating an open space between teachers, students and when carrying out learning activities, including the implementation of the Independent Curriculum together, this can be achieved through community involvement. (Mutiani, Abbas, Syaharuddin, & Susanto, 2020, pp. 113-122).

In implementing this prototype curriculum, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Higher Education provides support to schools in the form of distributing teaching modules, teacher books,

and formats of formative summative assessment, and also examples of curriculum development in educational units with the aim of helping teachers and students in implementing learning. Ideally, this teaching module is prepared by each subject teacher. However, as an initial stage, if the teacher does not yet have the ability to prepare their own teaching module, the teacher can use the teaching module that has been prepared by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology to be developed independently.

3.2 Teacher Professionalism Competence

Competence etymologically means "skill or ability". Meanwhile, according to the Republic of Indonesia Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, it is explained that: "Competence is a set of knowledge, skills, and behaviors that must be possessed, internalized, and mastered by a teacher or lecturers in carrying out their professional duties".

In accordance with what was conveyed by Aktar (2021) in the *Edumaspu* education journal, competence is the ability that a person has which includes knowledge, skills and attitudes that can be applied in real work and are also beneficial for oneself and one's environment.

Meanwhile, the definition of professionalism according to several experts, including Komarudin in Uzer Usman (2002:14) states that professionalism comes from Latin, namely "profesia", which means work, expertise, position, professorship. Meanwhile, according to Kunandar (2011:45) profession is also interpreted as a field of work that someone wants or is engaged in which implies special knowledge and skills obtained from intensive academic education.

Article 1 of the Teachers and Lecturers Law (2006:4) also explains that professionalism is a job or activity carried out by a person and becomes a source of income that requires expertise, skills or abilities that can meet certain quality standards or norms and also requires education. Professionals also refer to two things, namely first about people who hold a profession and secondly a person's performance in doing work that is in accordance with their profession.

From the above definitions, it can be concluded that professional teacher competence is the ability of a teacher to deeply master the subject matter he/she teaches, and have pedagogical skills in conveying the material to students in a way that can be understood and applied by them. This competence includes mastery of the theory, concept, and application of the subject matter for which he/she is responsible.

According to the Minister of National Education Regulation No. 16 of 2007, teacher professional competence is defined as a broad and in-depth mastery of subject matter which includes mastery of scientific substance related to the field of study, as well as mastery of scientific structure and methodology.

According to Husna Asmara (2015:24) teacher professional competence is the mastery of learning materials broadly and deeply which enables teachers to guide students to meet the competency standards set out in the National Education Standards. In addition, teachers must also be able to understand and also master the learning materials contained in the curriculum, in addition teachers are also able to understand the structure, concepts and scientific methods that are in accordance with the learning materials, a teacher is also able to understand the relationship between concepts between related subjects and is able to apply scientific concepts in everyday life. Meanwhile, according to Zainal Arifin in his journal (2013:134) the characteristics of professional teachers include the following: having empathy with students, respecting anyone, having positive views and behavior, having good approach skills and a sense of humor. Professional teachers are not only teachers who are able to provide professional materials, they must also have a good personality.

Teachers are continuously required to increase their knowledge, especially knowledge that they have mastered and that is related to the development of science and technology. Based on Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005 concerning National Education Standards, it can be explained that the competence possessed by a teacher is one of the requirements for improving the quality of education. These competencies include: pedagogical competency, personality competency, social competency and professional competency. Then in the context of competency,

a teacher is required to have four basic competencies, namely: pedagogical, personality, social and professional competencies.

Based on the description above, it can be understood that the professional competence of teachers is a competency that must be mastered by teachers in relation to the implementation of their main task of teaching. A person can be said to be professional when he has mastered the competency according to his profession. Likewise with teachers, a teacher can be said to be a professional person if the teacher is able to master the teaching competency.

3.3 Aspects of Teacher Professionalism Competence

Professional teacher competencies include several aspects as follows: (1) Mastery of Learning Materials, namely teachers must have in-depth knowledge of the subjects taught. This mastery is not only limited to the school level, but also includes broader knowledge in order to provide comprehensive explanations and be integrated with everyday life; (2) Mastery of Pedagogy, namely the ability to integrate academic knowledge with effective learning methods. Teachers must be able to link theory with practice, adjust teaching methods to student characteristics, and utilize technology in the learning process; (3) Understanding of the Curriculum, namely teachers must understand the applicable curriculum (educational objectives, learning outcomes, and content standards) so that teachers can prepare learning plans that are in accordance with national standards and can achieve the competencies expected of students; (4) Continuous Professional Development, namely teachers must always improve their knowledge and skills through continuous professional development. This can be done through training, seminars, and scientific discussions that support improving the quality of education; (5) Ability to Manage Learning, namely the ability of teachers to prepare teaching modules, choose the right teaching methods, and evaluate the success of the learning process through formative and summative assessments; (6) Ability to Use Technology in Learning, namely in this digital era, teachers are required to be able to use information and communication technology in the learning process, such as using digital-based learning media, educational applications, and online learning systems.

As for the indicators of Teacher Professional Competence, according to Cucu Suhana (page: 158) there are several indicators that can be used as a measure of the characteristics of teachers who are considered competent in terms of professionalism, namely: (1) can develop responsibility well; (2) can carry out their roles and functions appropriately; (3) can work with the aim of realizing educational goals in schools; (4) can carry out their roles and functions in learning.

Cucu Suhana (2010) also explained that the professional competencies that a teacher must master are as follows: (1) Mastering the material, structure, concepts and scientific thought patterns that support the subjects he teaches; (2) Can master the Standard Competencies and Basic Competencies in the subjects/development that he/she teaches; (3) Can develop the learning materials that he/she teaches creatively and innovatively; (4) Can develop his/her professionalism in a sustainable manner and carrying out reflective actions; and (5) Can utilize information and communication technology in communicating and developing oneself.

According to Hamalik (2006: 38), a teacher is considered professionally competent if: (1) The teacher is able to develop responsibilities as well as possible; (2) The teacher is able to carry out his/her roles successfully; (3) The teacher is able to work in an effort to achieve educational goals; and (4) The teacher is able to carry out his role in the teaching and learning process in the classroom.

Meanwhile, according to Mohammad Uzer Usman (2011:19), teacher competencies include: (1) Mastering teaching materials; (2) Being able to manage teaching and learning programs; (3) Implementing teaching programs; (4) Assessing the results of the teaching and learning process that has been implemented; and (5) Mastering the foundations of education.

3.4 Soft Skill Competencies Possessed by Teachers in the Independent Learning Curriculum

As previously explained, a professional teacher is a teacher who has the ability to plan a

teaching and learning program, implement and lead a teaching and learning process, assess the development of the teaching and learning process and can utilize the results of teaching and learning progress assessments and other information to improve the teaching and learning process. One of the professional abilities of teachers is soft skills. In the era of the Independent Learning Curriculum, in addition to mastering technical skills or professional competencies, soft skills are a very important competency for a teacher. Soft skills competencies are non-technical skills related to interpersonal and intrapersonal abilities, as well as self-management skills that enable teachers to adapt to change and support the creation of effective, innovative, and relevant learning processes to the current needs of students.

Soft skills relate to emotional intelligence, personality traits, social skills, communication, language, personal habits, friendliness, and optimism that characterize a person's ability to relate to others. Soft skills also relate to an individual's personal character that can improve individual interactions, job performance and career prospects.

The components of soft skill competencies that teachers can have in implementing the independent learning curriculum include: (1) Critical Thinking, which is a directed process that can be used for mental activities, for example solving a problem, making a decision, persuading, analyzing an assumption and conducting scientific research. Critical thinking is the ability to express opinions using an organized method. Critical thinking is the ability to systematically evaluate the weight of personal opinions and the opinions of others; (2) Time management, where a teacher is able to package learning as effectively and efficiently as possible. Time is an important factor in learning, unwise use of time will affect the achievement of instructional widening and can create a domino effect. To have the ability to manage time well, a teacher can create a strategy by making a more mature plan, in addition a teacher is also able to prepare alternative plans. This Time Management can make it easier for teachers to place something based on a priority scale. Thus, all activities can be carried out neatly because of mature planning; (3) Negotiation and Teamwork or what is commonly called collaboration. In the independent curriculum, teachers have the right to freely develop themselves, pursue careers and collaborate according to their needs and interests. The independent curriculum specifically also accommodates collaborative activities for teachers on the independent teaching platform; (4) Good communication, in the sense that during the learning process, teachers must accustom their students to communicate with each other about lessons and other things, both with teachers and with students. Using good and appropriate words in communicating will have a positive impact on children. Children will feel satisfied because the desired goals are achieved so that children's self-confidence will increase; (5) Self-development, this aims to improve their competence as professional educators, both in terms of knowledge and skills. This self-development is certainly related to the competence of the disciplines they have, and also the ability to utilize current technology to support learning activities; (6) Leadership skills, this is needed because it is to influence, guide and direct or manage students so that they are willing to do something in order to achieve learning goals. A teacher's leadership is not only limited to the role of the teacher in the context of the classroom when interacting with students but also includes the role of a teacher in interacting with the principal/head of school and also with colleagues. This still refers to the same final goal, namely to improve the process and results of student learning.

In other words, a professional teacher is someone who has special abilities and expertise in the field of teaching so that he is able to carry out his duties as a teacher with maximum ability. A professional teacher will be able to carry out his duties in accordance with the provisions set.

3.5 The Role of Teachers in Implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum

In the Independent Learning Curriculum, the role of teachers has undergone significant changes compared to the previous curriculum. The role of teachers is no longer just as a transmitter of material, but rather as a learning facilitator who encourages student independence and creativity. This change is in line with The philosophy of the Independent Curriculum emphasizes student-centered learning, flexibility in teaching, and the development of individual

potential. The implementation of curriculum development is first obtained by teachers.

It doesn't stop there, the curriculum must be delivered to students. Teachers as leaders in classroom learning are then required to be able to adapt and be ready for change in order to face challenges in the industrial era 4.0 (Khoirurrijal, et al. 2022). The role of teachers is basically in accordance with the curriculum guidelines, namely as teachers, mentors, and educators. As teachers, teachers carry out the educational process, creating effective and enjoyable learning for students. As a mentor, the role of the teacher is to help students get to know themselves and the problems they face and to help provide solutions to their problems. As educators, teachers facilitate the entire process of introduction and maturity in students through the learning that is taught (Daga, 2021).

In implementing this independent learning curriculum, teachers are given the freedom to selecting, designing, using, and developing a learning plan format. There are three main components in a learning plan, namely learning objectives, learning activities, and learning assessments. Teachers in this era of the independent learning curriculum must abandon the old conventional methods and be able to understand new things quickly (Isnaini, 2020). Using digital technology to support the teacher's learning process to be more efficient and effective, and changing monotonous and less innovative lessons into interesting and stimulating learning (Ambarita & Siahaya, 2023). This also changes the role of teachers as learning resources and providers of knowledge information, as well as becoming motivators, facilitators, mentors, and even inspiration to develop the creative imagination, character, and teamwork needed by students in the future. Educators must be able to master risk taking, effectiveness, autonomy, collaboration, and appreciation (Andriani, 2021; Bakhruddin, 2021)

In this Independent Curriculum, the role of teachers is explained that the curriculum is a vehicle and teachers as drivers to bring learning in the best way. Teacher spirituality is very important to design meaningful learning in schools. In addition, the evaluation system is based on student work portfolios, real-life experience-based learning, and field practice. The role of teachers is more as a motivator and guide so that they can develop their own interests and learning according to their abilities, learning styles, and individual psychological development.

In addition, the role of teachers in the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum is very focused on encouraging independence, creativity, and character development of students. Teachers not only deliver materials, but also become facilitators, leaders, innovators, and lifelong learners who collaborate with various parties in supporting educational success.

With the implementation of the independent learning curriculum, it is hoped that teachers will be adaptive to change. Thus, teachers can implement the Independent Curriculum optimally. In addition, teacher professionalism is also expected to increase. Teacher professionalism refers to teacher competence, attitude, and behavior which reflects the standards of the educational profession, which in the Independent Curriculum is becoming increasingly important.

And it is expected that in the implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum, more emphasis is placed on learning freedom for teachers and students, it is also expected that a teacher as an educator can create a comfortable, enjoyable learning atmosphere and be able to arouse learning motivation so that students do not feel burdened by a learning material. The learning model applied by the teacher is also expected to help students who develop critical, creative, innovative thinking skills and are able to solve problems in their lives.

The ways or strategies to improve teacher professionalism in implementing the independent learning curriculum, the first is the Independent Strategy, meaning that a teacher with full awareness, without coercion, strong motivation within himself (internally) is willing to improve the professional competence of teachers in the independent curriculum. The forms of activities that can be carried out include: seeking information through various media related to the independent curriculum, through discussion forums in KKG/MGMP, participating in training/IHT/workshops or the like organized by various educational institutions and continuing studies to a higher level.

The second strategy that can be done is the involvement of the principal. In this case, the

principal has duties and responsibilities in organizing education in schools. The principal can supervise/ coach, motivate, mentor and guide teachers or also provide opportunities for all teachers fairly and evenly to participate in further studies or training/IHT/workshops organized by educational institutions related to the preparation of the independent curriculum.

The third strategy is the Concern of School Supervisors. In accordance with their main duties and functions, school supervisors can provide supervision/guidance services to all school residents (principals and teachers) in preparing the independent learning curriculum. The form of supervision/ guidance can be directed at aspects that are administrative or academic/learning in nature. Furthermore, the fourth strategy is the Attention of the Education Office. Activities that can be provided by the education office are facilitating teachers by preparing programs and their implementation and by providing a special budget to hold coaching activities to prepare the independent curriculum for teachers at all school levels.

The fifth strategy is the Education and Training Institution Program or Education Quality Assurance Institution. This institution has a role as a teacher partner to improve professional competence in compiling a curriculum based on Independent Learning. Programs, implementations and budgets need to be prepared routinely and continuously so that improvements in professional competence are always up to date in accordance with the needs and developments of the times.

4. Conclusion

The implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum has brought significant changes to the world of Indonesian education, especially in terms of learning and teacher professionalism. This curriculum is designed to provide greater flexibility to schools and teachers in designing relevant learning processes and contextual to the needs of students. In the context of improving teacher professionalism, the Independent Curriculum encourages teachers to continue to develop their professional competencies in various aspects such as being more creative and innovative in learning, being able to adapt to the diverse needs of students, and utilizing new technologies and approaches in learning. The implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum towards improving teacher professionalism can be seen in several main aspects: (1) Improving Pedagogical and Technological Competencies; (2) Strengthening Non-Technical Skills (Soft Skills); (3) Continuous Learning, namely; (4) Collaboration with Parents and Communities to support student learning holistically.

In the implementation of the independent learning curriculum, it is explained that the role of a teacher is the most vital aspect in the teaching and learning process, namely having an important task to form students who are superior and intelligent intellectually and spiritually, teachers also have an important responsibility in guiding, teaching, and inspiring students so that they can learn effectively. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to improve teacher competence so that they are able to design effective and interesting learning.

Overall, the implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum is a positive step that has a major impact on improving teacher professionalism in Indonesia.

Teachers are expected to be agents of change who are able to facilitate relevant and meaningful learning for students, and continue to adapt to the dynamics of developments in the world of education in the 21st century.

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