

# The Effect of the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum and Teacher Work Discipline on the Quality of Learning in Elementary Schools in Central Lombok Regency

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**Abstract:** This study aims to determine the effect of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and teacher work discipline on the quality of learning in public elementary schools in Central Lombok Regency. The study uses a quantitative approach with an ex post facto method. The study population consists of all elementary school teachers who have implemented the Merdeka Curriculum, with a sample of 38 teachers selected using area quota sampling. Data collection techniques used a 1-5 Likert scale observation sheet. There were 58 items for the Merdeka Curriculum implementation variable, 50 items for teacher work discipline, and 50 items for learning quality. Data analysis was performed using multiple correlation and partial correlation. The results showed that both the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and teacher work discipline simultaneously and partially had a significant effect on learning quality. The multiple correlation results showed a value of  $R = 0.981$  and  $F = 447.443$ , which means that the influence of both variables on learning quality was very strong and significant. The correlation results show that the relationship between the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and the quality of learning is  $r = 0.955$ , and the relationship between teacher work discipline and the quality of learning is  $r = 0.963$ . Meanwhile, the partial correlation results show that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum with learning quality with the teacher's work discipline variable controlled is 0.685 and the significance value is 5.562, and the teacher's work discipline with learning quality with the Merdeka Curriculum implementation variable controlled is 0.751 and the significance value is 6.728. These results confirm that learning quality is greatly influenced by the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and teacher work discipline in elementary schools in Central Lombok Regency.

**Keyword:** *Independent Curriculum, Teacher Discipline, Learning Quality, Elementary School.*

## I. INTRODUCTION (HEADING 1)

Education plays an important role in shaping students' character and basic skills, which influence their future intellectual and social development. In Indonesia, the government continues to develop the education system to achieve national education goals. One strategic step is the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, which gives greater freedom and flexibility to schools, teachers, and students in achieving learning objectives. The Merdeka Curriculum (IKM) is part of efforts to restore learning through a more flexible curriculum framework, emphasizing essential material, character development, and student competencies. One of the main features of IKM is the application of Project Based Learning (PjBL) to foster soft skills and character in accordance with the Pancasila Student Profile [1]. This curriculum is expected to create adaptive, creative, and innovative learning in accordance with student characteristics and the times [2].

The success of the Merdeka Curriculum implementation is greatly influenced by teachers' work discipline, which includes consistency, preparedness, and exemplary teaching. This discipline plays a role in creating a conducive learning atmosphere while improving the quality of learning. States that discipline cannot be achieved without continuous practice [3]. Emphasizes that positive discipline training supports the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum [4], while [5] proves that there is a significant influence of teacher discipline and curriculum on learning outcomes. Similarly, [6] state that managing student discipline is an integral part of the curriculum, and teachers' positive perceptions of the curriculum encourage disciplined, interactive, and quality learning.

The quality of learning is a key indicator of educational success, reflected in the achievement of objectives, the effectiveness of methods, and the development of students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies [7]. In the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, the quality of learning improves when teachers consistently implement differentiated learning, projects that strengthen the Pancasila student profile, and relevant authentic assessments [8]. However, the success of implementation still depends heavily on teacher discipline, including punctuality, readiness of teaching tools, regularity of administration, and consistency of learning activities [9]. The effective implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum combined with teacher discipline has been proven to create an interactive and sustainable learning process [10].

The results of research by [11] reveal that teachers who have been trained and understand the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum are able to create a learning environment that is enjoyable, creative, and responsive to students' needs. Skilled teachers adapt learning strategies to students' abilities, interests, and learning styles so that learning is more meaningful. Such a learning environment encourages active student engagement, increases motivation, and develops 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication.

Confirms that the quality of learning is influenced by internal and external factors, including teacher discipline [12]. Disciplined teachers are able to manage time, prepare teaching materials consistently, and create continuity in the learning process. This allows students to understand the material gradually, form positive learning habits, and improve their understanding. Meanwhile, [13] emphasize that the quality of learning is closely related to a flexible curriculum and the work ethic of teachers. The synergy between an adaptive curriculum and teacher discipline improves teacher-student interaction, academic achievement, and overall learning effectiveness.

However, initial observations in elementary schools in Central Lombok Regency show that there are still many obstacles. Teachers do not yet fully understand differentiated learning, diagnostic assessments, or character-building project strategies. Limited learning resources, teaching aids, and technology also hamper implementation [14]. Teacher discipline is also still low, as seen in tardiness, gaps in the preparation of teaching materials, and a lack of enthusiasm for teaching [15,16]. In addition, the lack of infrastructure in rural areas, such as classrooms, books, and internet access, exacerbates the situation, resulting in the suboptimal implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum [17].

The novelty of this study is that it presents a simultaneous analysis model between the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and teacher work discipline as predictors of learning quality, unlike previous studies that generally examined variables separately in the context of the 2013 Curriculum. The focus on Central Lombok Regency is a distinguishing aspect, as this region faces limitations in terms of facilities, training, and access that differ from urban areas. This quantitative study uses standardized instruments to measure teachers' perceptions and practices, resulting in findings based on actual evidence in 2024. Its urgency lies in the need for a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of the Merdeka Curriculum in areas with challenges in infrastructure and teacher competence, so that the results of the study can form the basis for education policy, teacher training, and strategies for improving the quality of inclusive and equitable learning. This study aims to examine the influence of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum and teacher work discipline on the quality of learning in elementary schools in Central Lombok Regency.

## II. METHODS

This research is quantitative with an ex post facto approach. No specific treatment was administered, but rather the study only revealed symptoms that already existed at the time of the study. Therefore, the researcher had no direct control over the independent variables, and thus, the existing conditions could not be manipulated [18]. The research design used was a correlational design, a type of quantitative research that aims to identify the relationship between two or more variables [19]. This research was conducted from May to June 2025. The study locations were several elementary schools in Central Lombok Regency: SDN Loang Tuna, SDN Manggong, SDN 2 Perina, and SDN Batu Entek. These schools were selected based on their grade differences, thus representing diverse conditions.

The study population was all elementary schools in Jonggat District, Central Lombok Regency. The sampling technique used area quota sampling, with the study sample comprising all teachers at four designated elementary schools: SDN Loang Tuna (high grade), SDN Manggong and SDN 2 Perina (medium grade), and SDN Batu Entek (low grade). Data analysis was conducted using normality and linearity tests, followed by hypothesis testing using multiple correlation and partial correlation analyses. According to [20] the following is the formula for multiple correlation and partial correlation analysis.

a. Multiple correlation

$$R_{yX_1X_2} = \sqrt{\frac{r^2_{yx1} + r^2_{yx2} - 2r_{yx1}r_{yx2}r_{x1x2}}{1 - r^2_{x1x2}}}$$

b. Partial correlation

$$r_{x_1Y-X_2} = \frac{r_{x_1Y} - r_{x_2Y}r_{x_1x_2}}{\sqrt{1 - r_{x_2Y}^2} \sqrt{1 - r_{x_1x_2}^2}}$$

## III. RESULT

### A. Prerequisite Test Analysis

Prerequisite testing analysis consists of two things, namely normality and linearity testing. Based on the results of the normality test using the chi-square formula with the help of SPSS version 27, it was found that all research variables, namely the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum ( $X_1$ ) with a chi-square value of  $3.684 < 7.815$  and significance of  $0.298 > 0.05$ , teacher work discipline ( $X_2$ ) with a chi-square value of  $0.105 < 7.815$  and significance of  $0.991 > 0.05$ , and learning quality ( $Y$ ) with a chi-square value of  $0.526 < 7.815$  and significance of  $0.913 > 0.05$ , were all normally distributed. Thus, it can be concluded that the research data meets the assumption of normality and is suitable for use in further statistical testing.

Meanwhile, the results of the linearity test with the SPSS version 27 program showed that the relationship between the implementation of the Independent Curriculum ( $X_1$ ) and the quality of learning ( $Y$ ) showed a significance of  $0.001 < 0.05$  and a deviation from linearity of  $0.417 > 0.05$ , while the relationship between teacher work discipline ( $X_2$ ) and the quality of learning ( $Y$ ) showed a significance of  $0.001 < 0.05$  and a deviation from linearity of  $0.532 > 0.05$ . Thus, it can be concluded that the two independent variables, namely the implementation of the Independent Curriculum and teacher work discipline, have a linear relationship with the quality of learning, so that the data meets the requirements for correlation and regression analysis.

### B. Data Analysis

The correlation analysis in this study was carried out using two approaches, namely the multiple correlation approach and partial correlation. The Pearson correlation test was conducted to directly determine the relationship between two variables. The results are as follows:

**Table 1.** Multiple Correlation Test Results

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	0,981 <sup>a</sup>	0,962	0,960	1,993	0,962	441,195	2	35	< 0,001

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that the correlation between the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum and teacher work discipline on the quality of learning is significant. The results of the multiple correlation significance test of X1 and X2 against Y were obtained.

$$F_{count} = \frac{\frac{0.981^2}{2}}{(1-0.981^2)(38-2-1)} = \frac{\frac{0.962361}{2}}{(1-0.962361)(35)} = \frac{0.4811805}{0.0010754} = 447,443,$$

So it is concluded that there is a significant influence between the implementation of the independent curriculum and teacher work discipline on the quality of learning.

After the results of the multiple correlation are known, a partial correlation test is then carried out to determine the relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable by controlling the other independent variables. The following is a partial correlation test table.

**Table 2.** Partial correlation test results

Independent Variable	Control variables	r Partial	Sig. (p)	Interpretation
X <sub>1</sub> with Y		0,955	< 0,001	Very strong, significant
X <sub>2</sub> with Y		0,963	< 0,001	Very strong, significant
X <sub>1</sub> to Y	X <sub>2</sub> controlled	0,685	< 0,001	Implementation of the Curriculum still has a significant influence on Y
X <sub>2</sub> to Y	X <sub>1</sub> controlled	0,751	< 0,001	Work discipline still has a significant influence on Y

It can be concluded that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum is strongly correlated with the quality of learning. Teacher work discipline is also strongly correlated with the quality of learning. Both remain significantly influential on the quality of learning even when other variables are controlled. This means that both X1 and X2 each have independent contributions to improving the quality of learning. The partial correlation significance test of X1 against Y with X2 controlled was obtained.

$$t_{count} = \frac{0.685\sqrt{38-3}}{\sqrt{1-0.685^2}} = \frac{4.0525}{0.7285} = 5,562,$$

So it is concluded that there is a significant influence between the implementation of the independent curriculum on the quality of learning if teacher work discipline is controlled. Whereas, the significance test of the partial correlation of X2 to Y after X1 is controlled is determined to be obtained.

$$t_{count} = \frac{0.751\sqrt{38-3}}{\sqrt{1-0.751^2}} = \frac{4.4429}{0.6603} = 6,728$$

Therefore, it can be concluded that teacher work discipline significantly influences learning quality if the implementation of the Independent Curriculum is controlled.

The above results reinforce [21] theory of educational quality, which states that learning quality is determined by a combination of an effective curriculum system and professional implementation. Successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum provides space for teachers and students to adapt the learning process to their potential and needs. Disciplined teachers are a complementary factor because they ensure the process is carried out consistently and responsibly.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum (X1) and teacher work discipline (X2) have a positive and significant effect, both partially and simultaneously, on the quality of learning (Y) in elementary schools in Central Lombok Regency. The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum has been proven to improve learning quality through adaptive, contextual, and student-centered learning, which encourages active student participation, teacher flexibility, and the achievement of learning objectives according to needs [22,23]. Its successful implementation has not only improved students' cognitive learning outcomes but also created a collaborative learning environment that encourages pedagogical innovation and strengthens the Pancasila learner profile [24,25].

Teachers' work discipline also contributes significantly to improving the quality of learning. Teachers who demonstrate high discipline through punctual attendance, structured learning implementation, and professional responsibility are able to create an orderly, productive, and conducive learning atmosphere. This has an impact on increasing student engagement and shaping positive character [26,27,28,29]. Teachers' work discipline has proven to be the foundation for maintaining a consistent learning rhythm, strengthening an excellent school culture, and enhancing teachers' professionalism in the eyes of students and the community [30,31].

Simultaneously, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and teachers' work discipline complement each other in building holistic learning quality. The Merdeka Curriculum encourages differentiated and innovative learning, while teacher work discipline ensures consistency, sustainability, and regularity in its implementation [32,33,34]. Partial correlation analysis shows that each variable remains significantly influential on the quality of learning even when one of them is controlled. This means that both the Merdeka Curriculum and teacher work discipline have independent strengths in improving the quality of learning [35,36].

Thus, the quality of elementary school education in Central Lombok Regency can be optimally improved if the Merdeka Curriculum is implemented consistently, adaptively, and collaboratively, accompanied by high teacher discipline. These two variables are important foundations that not only support the achievement of learning objectives but also shape an inclusive, excellent, and sustainable school culture.

## V. CONCLUSION

Based on the research data analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum has a positive and significant impact on learning quality. Teacher work discipline also has a positive and significant impact on learning quality. The simultaneous implementation of the Independent Curriculum and work discipline contributed 96.3% to learning quality.

## VI. SUGGESTIONS

The researcher suggests that schools need to strengthen teacher training on the Independent Curriculum and discipline monitoring systems. Teachers are advised to improve discipline in implementing Independent Curriculum-based learning. Further research can examine other variables such as principal leadership or parental participation.

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