

# IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM POLICY AT THE SEKOLAH MENENGAH PERTAMA (SMP) PERSATUAN GURU REPUBLIK INDONESIA (PGRI) PASIRJAMBU BANDUNG REGENCY

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## Abstract

This research, conducted from October to December 2024, investigates the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum policy at SMP PGRI Pasirjambu, Bandung Regency. The study aims to identify how the policy is being implemented, the inhibiting factors, and the efforts made to overcome these obstacles. The research is based on Edward's theory of public policy implementation (Subarsono, 2011: 90-92), which includes four key variables: communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. A qualitative approach was employed, utilizing literature review, observation, interviews, and other relevant data collection methods. The data were analyzed through triangulation. Key informants were selected for their deep understanding of the topic. The findings reveal that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum policy at SMP PGRI Pasirjambu is generally progressing well, although several challenges remain. These include limited socialization, insufficient supporting facilities, and complex administrative procedures. Efforts to address these challenges include organizing workshops, constructing office buildings, and providing training for less experienced teachers.

**Keywords:** Policy Implementation, Merdeka Curriculum, Communication, Resources, Bureaucratic Structure

## A. INTRODUCTION

Education is the fundamental foundation in building a nation with intelligent and civilized citizens. To achieve this, it is necessary to create a learning environment and process that aligns with students' interests and encourages them to be active in developing their existing potential. This process helps students gain spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the skills necessary to benefit themselves, their community, the nation, and the country. Through national education organized by the government, human resources can be holistically developed. The objectives of national education are mandated in the 1945 Constitution Article 31, Paragraphs 3 and 5, which emphasize that education must improve faith and piety (IMTAQ) as well as science and technology (IPTEK), support religious values, and promote national unity to enhance civilization and human welfare. The success of national development heavily depends on the success of the education system. As stated in Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, the goal of national education is to develop the potential of students and shape dignified character and civilization to enlighten the nation. It aims to nurture students to become believers in God Almighty, possess noble character, be healthy, knowledgeable, skilled, creative, and independent, and become democratic and

responsible citizens. To improve the quality of education in SMP PGRI Pasirjambu, Bandung Regency, one of the efforts undertaken is curriculum reform through the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. With an improved education system, it is expected that the quality of human resources (HR) will also improve, which in turn will positively impact other sectors, including the economy.

Based on Government Regulation No. 57 of 2021 (as amended by Government Regulation No. 4 of 2022) concerning National Education Standards, the Merdeka Curriculum must align with national standards covering content, process, educators, graduate competencies, facilities and infrastructure, financing, assessment, and inclusivity standards that support its effective implementation. To support national standards, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) issued Regulation No. 12 of 2022 regarding the Merdeka Curriculum. This regulation provides schools with the flexibility to design and implement curricula suited to students' needs and local context. The policy emphasizes a student-centered approach that promotes the development of student competencies, knowledge, skills, and character necessary to face the evolving demands of civilization. Further, this was reinforced by Circular Letter No. 025/H/KR/2022 (revised to No. 022/H/KR/2023) from the Head of BSKAP, which provides technical guidelines for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. It outlines detailed directions to support educational improvement and gives educational units more autonomy in applying the new policy. In response, the West Java Provincial Education Office issued Circular Letter No. 32817/Pk 05.02/Sekre/2022 emphasizing the importance of incorporating local content, such as the Sundanese language, into the curriculum. This fosters cultural identity and pride while remaining aligned with national goals for student competence development. In 2023, the Bandung Regency Education Office responded with Circular Letter No. 800/01871-Disdik/2023, which allowed for the optimal implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at the regional level, especially after the transitional phase from the Masagi Curriculum in 2022.

At SMP PGRI Pasirjambu, based on observations and initial findings, the school has officially implemented the Merdeka Curriculum, as outlined in Decision Letter No. 106/Satdik.SMP.PGRI/III/21/O.2023. This indicates the school's strong commitment to the curriculum's flexible and student-centered framework aimed at preparing students to face future challenges.

However, various implementation challenges remain. According to the principal, Mr. Arif Rakhman, S.Pd., these include poor communication between the government and teachers, lack of socialization, limited resources, and underqualified teaching staff. For example, 7 out of 17 teachers are still pursuing higher education and lack the experience needed for effective implementation.

Initial observations revealed several core issues, including inadequate communication from the government regarding curriculum objectives and methods, insufficient resources such as classrooms and facilities, underdeveloped teacher disposition due to inexperience, and a lack of clear bureaucratic structure or implementation guidelines.

#### 1). Problem Identification

Based on preliminary research, several core issues were identified regarding the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP PGRI Pasirjambu:

1. Communication: There has been a lack of effective communication and socialization from the government regarding the purpose, benefits, and methods of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. As a result, many teachers are confused about how to implement it properly.

2. Resources: The school lacks adequate infrastructure and human resources. Of the 17 teachers, 7 are still pursuing higher education and have limited teaching experience, which affects the curriculum implementation.
3. Disposition: Several teachers still lack commitment and readiness to adopt the Merdeka Curriculum due to limited experience and ongoing educational commitments.
4. Bureaucratic Structure: The absence of clear operational guidelines or standard procedures for implementing the curriculum has made it difficult for the school to fully integrate it.

From these findings, the problem statement of this study is: The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum policy at SMP PGRI Pasirjambu, Bandung Regency, has not been optimal.

## 2). Problem Formulation

Based on the background and problem statement, the research questions are:

1. How is the Merdeka Curriculum policy implemented at SMP PGRI Pasirjambu, Bandung Regency?
2. What factors hinder the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum policy at SMP PGRI Pasirjambu?
3. What efforts are made to overcome the obstacles in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum policy at SMP PGRI Pasirjambu?

## 3). Research Objectives

- a. To understand how the Merdeka Curriculum policy is implemented at SMP PGRI Pasirjambu, Bandung Regency.
- b. To identify the factors that hinder the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum policy.
- c. To analyze the efforts made to overcome these implementation challenges.

## 4). Significance of the Study

- a. Theoretical Significance: This research is expected to contribute to the development of public administration science, particularly in the area of policy implementation in education.
- b. Practical Significance: The findings may assist policymakers and educational institutions in making informed decisions and developing strategies to address issues in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP PGRI Pasirjambu.

## B. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Public Policy Implementation Theory

The theory of public policy implementation proposed by George C. Edwards III emphasizes that the success of policy implementation is determined by four key variables: communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure (Subarsono, 2019). Edwards argues that a policy will not achieve its intended outcomes if there is distortion or inconsistency in communication between policymakers and implementers. Furthermore, the availability of both human and material resources is a decisive factor in ensuring effective implementation. Disposition refers to the attitudes and commitment of policy implementers, which significantly influence how the policy is executed, while bureaucratic structure pertains to the degree of procedural complexity that may either facilitate or hinder coordination. This theory provides a systematic framework to analyze how educational policies, such as the Merdeka Curriculum, are implemented at the school level and to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors that affect policy success. Indicators:

- Effectiveness of communication between policymakers and implementers.
- Availability of resources (human, financial, and infrastructural).
- Implementers' attitudes, commitment, and willingness to act.

- Bureaucratic structure and standard operating procedures.

### **Policy Implementation Theory**

Van Meter and Van Horn define policy implementation as the actions undertaken by individuals, groups, or governmental agencies to achieve predetermined policy goals (Winarno, 2016). Their model identifies six variables influencing implementation success: policy standards and objectives, resources, inter-organizational communication and relationships, characteristics of implementing agencies, socio-economic and political conditions, and the disposition of implementers. The theory highlights the importance of alignment between policy objectives and the organizational capacity of implementers. In the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, this framework helps explain the extent to which a national education policy can be localized and operationalized within schools such as SMP PGRI Pasirjambu, which faces resource constraints and limited teacher capacity. Indicators:

- Clarity of policy standards and objectives.
- Availability and sufficiency of implementation resources.
- Coordination and relationships among implementing organizations.
- Characteristics and capacity of implementing institutions.
- Socio-economic and political conditions of the environment.
- Implementers' attitudes toward policy objectives.

### **Administrative and Organizational Theory**

Sondang P. Siagian's theory of administration and organization asserts that the effectiveness of public organizations depends on the synergy between human resources, structural arrangements, and administrative processes (Siagian, 2008). According to Siagian, coordination, internal communication, and a clear division of responsibilities are essential determinants of organizational performance. Public institutions, including schools, that possess a functional organizational structure, efficient communication channels, and participative leadership are more capable of adapting to policy changes. This theory is particularly relevant to assessing how organizational management and internal governance within schools influence the effectiveness of educational policy implementation, such as the Merdeka Curriculum. Indicators:

- Coordination among units and individuals within the organization.
- Clarity of structure and task distribution.
- Leadership quality and work motivation.
- Efficiency of internal communication mechanisms.
- Organizational adaptability to policy change.

## **C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Object**

The object of this research is the area or location where the study is conducted. This study was carried out at SMP PGRI Pasirjambu, located in Pasirjambu Sub-district, Bandung Regency. This region has unique geographical and socio-economic characteristics, with the majority of its population relying on agriculture and livestock sectors. These conditions pose challenges to the access and availability of educational facilities and resources, especially in implementing more modern education policies such as the Merdeka Curriculum.

SMP PGRI Pasirjambu, a private junior high school, began implementing the Merdeka Curriculum following the introduction of the policy. Despite having only about 89 students and 17 teaching staff, the school faces various obstacles, including limited infrastructure and facilities, insufficient socialization of the Merdeka Curriculum by the government, a lack of

teaching experience among educators, and administrative complexities in the policy's implementation.

Given these circumstances, this research aims to analyze the extent to which the Merdeka Curriculum has been implemented at SMP PGRI Pasirjambu and to identify the factors that support or hinder its successful execution.

### **Research Method**

This research employs a qualitative descriptive method. The qualitative approach was chosen to gain an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the phenomena being studied, particularly regarding the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP PGRI Pasirjambu.

According to Bogdan and Taylor in Bandur (2016:31), qualitative research is "a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior." This definition implies that qualitative research focuses on describing phenomena in detail by collecting data in the form of words, behavior, or events occurring in the field. Thus, written and spoken data, as well as individual or group behavior, are valid components of qualitative research. This study aims to thoroughly describe how the Merdeka Curriculum policy is implemented at SMP PGRI Pasirjambu. It explores how various stakeholders school administrators, teachers, students, and parents receive and interpret the policy, and how it is applied in daily learning activities. Data are collected through interviews, field observations, and relevant document analysis, which are then processed into narratives describing the process, challenges, and impact of the policy's implementation.

Anggito and Setiawan (2018:11) state that qualitative research involves gathering detailed data to reflect actual situations in the field, supported by quotations from interviews and observations.

In line with Sugiyono (2017:9), qualitative research is based on post-positivist philosophy and is used to examine natural phenomena. It emphasizes understanding the meaning and context of a phenomenon rather than merely measuring or generalizing it. In qualitative research, the researcher acts as the primary instrument, directly involved in data collection and analysis. Data collection is conducted through triangulation, using various methods or data sources to enrich the information gathered.

### **Data Collection Techniques**

Data collection is a crucial part of any research, as the data gathered form the basis for answering research questions. In this qualitative study, several techniques were used to obtain comprehensive and in-depth data:

#### **1. Literature Review (Library Research)**

This involves collecting data by studying books, documents, and records related to the research topic. For example, relevant literature on the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP PGRI Pasirjambu was reviewed. This includes books on educational policy, school administration, and policy implementation theory, providing a theoretical foundation to support the field analysis. Additionally, document analysis was conducted by collecting relevant documents such as curriculum implementation guides, school policies, program schedules, and activity reports. These documents offer insight into how the policy is applied and help identify alignment between theory and practice. In the current era, literature review also includes online data, such as information obtained from official government websites, online journals, and educational portals. These sources provide up-to-date data that enrich understanding of the policy context.

#### **2. Observation**

Observation is the process of observing, noting, and recording relevant information directly from the research setting. It aims to obtain accurate, real-context data without

researcher interference. This technique is useful for understanding behavior patterns or relationships not always captured in written data. In this research, participatory observation was used, allowing the researcher to take part in and observe teaching and learning processes, teacher-student interactions, and program implementation. Observational notes were detailed and served to complement interview and documentation data.

### **3. Interview**

Interviews were conducted to gather information directly from individuals such as teachers, the principal, vice-principal, and other stakeholders at SMP PGRI Pasirjambu. The study employed unstructured (open-ended) interviews, allowing respondents to provide deep and personal responses based on their experiences and perspectives. Interviews explored the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, challenges faced, and strategies adopted. To ensure reliability and data validity, triangulation was applied cross-referencing statements from different interviewees (first party, second party, third party), to ensure data accuracy and eliminate bias.

### **Data Processing Techniques**

According to Finaldin (2017:37), data processing is a systematic activity carried out by researchers to obtain accurate and accountable research results. The data processing techniques in this study consisted of the following stages:

#### **1. Data Collection Stage**

At this stage, all data from various sources written, verbal, field notes, interview results, audio-visual recordings, and documents were collected comprehensively. This included data from observations, interviews, document studies, triangulation, as well as supplementary information from books and websites. The goal was to ensure all relevant information was available for analysis.

#### **2. Data Selection and Classification**

Collected data were then selected and grouped according to their relevance to the research focus. Irrelevant data were excluded. Data were sorted by type (e.g., interview data, documentation, or observation) and categorized by topic to facilitate the subsequent analysis process.

#### **3. Data Analysis Stage**

The classified data were analyzed using relevant theories and concepts. The analysis aimed to reveal patterns, key themes, and relationships among the data. A triangulation approach was applied to validate findings and generate scientifically accountable conclusions.

#### **4. Final Analysis and Interpretation**

From the beginning of fieldwork to the completion of data collection, data analysis was ongoing to identify deeper meanings. In this stage, the researcher identified patterns and themes from the reduced and presented data, leading to a gradual and grounded conclusion that accurately reflected field conditions.

## **D. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **General Overview**

SMP PGRI Pasirjambu is an educational institution established with the primary goal of providing improved access to education for the community in the Pasirjambu area, Bandung Regency. The school was founded under the initiative of the Persatuan Guru Republik Indonesia (PGRI – Indonesian Teachers Association), which holds a strong commitment to enhancing the quality and equity of education throughout Indonesia, particularly in underdeveloped regions.

Prior to the establishment of SMP PGRI Pasirjambu, the Pasirjambu area faced limitations in educational facilities that could meet the needs of junior high school-aged children. The

presence of SMP PGRI Pasirjambu has since enabled the local community to access nearby and decent educational opportunities, in alignment with Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, which prioritizes the equitable distribution of education across the country, including in less developed areas. The foundation of SMP PGRI Pasirjambu is based on Establishment Decree No. 209/102-KEP/E/1983, issued on January 5, 1983. This decree provides the legal and administrative basis for the school's establishment and operations, as part of efforts to improve access to junior secondary education in Pasirjambu.

As part of the founding process, the school also obtained an operational permit allowing it to legally carry out educational activities. On September 4, 1982, SMP PGRI Pasirjambu was granted Operational License Decree No. 019/PPLP PGRI/V/KTP/1982, confirming that the school met all administrative and technical requirements for delivering education in accordance with government standards. Over the years, SMP PGRI Pasirjambu has consistently developed and endeavored to comply with prevailing education regulations. The school adheres to the principles outlined in the National Education System Law and Government Regulations regarding National Education Standards, ensuring that all citizens regardless of socio-economic background have the right to quality education. In line with this principle, SMP PGRI Pasirjambu continuously strives to improve the quality of education it provides. This includes the enhancement of physical infrastructure, the curriculum used, and the development of teacher competencies. Development efforts are not limited to improving facilities but also include adapting the teaching and learning process to meet the demands of a changing era. One such effort involves the introduction of technology in classroom instruction to facilitate access to information and improve the effectiveness of learning at SMP PGRI Pasirjambu.

The school also places strong emphasis on character education, integrating moral, ethical, and social values into daily learning activities. Guided by Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, SMP PGRI Pasirjambu does not only focus on academic aspects but also on shaping students into responsible, honest individuals with a deep sense of patriotism.

Furthermore, SMP PGRI Pasirjambu continuously seeks innovation in response to the evolving needs of education. In the era of digitalization and technological advancement, the school embraces technology as a tool to enhance the quality of instruction. The use of tech-based learning media allows students to become more creative and productive, thereby preparing them to face global challenges. Through all its efforts, SMP PGRI Pasirjambu remains committed to producing a generation that is not only academically excellent but also possesses strong character and adaptability to change. In every step, the school upholds its vision and mission to provide quality, equitable, and character-based education to all students. Continued support from the community, government, and PGRI as the managing institution is essential to ensure that SMP PGRI Pasirjambu remains a relevant, high-quality educational institution capable of meeting future educational challenges.

### **Vision and Mission of SMP PGRI Pasirjambu**

The vision, mission, and objectives of SMP PGRI Pasirjambu have been formulated through a mutual agreement among all stakeholders, aimed at realizing both the school's specific educational goals and national education objectives. The school's vision reflects its ideals, aspirations, and core values that serve as guiding principles in achieving its desired outcomes specifically, forming a young generation rooted in religious values, intellectuality, and relevant social norms.

### **Vision of SMP PGRI Pasirjambu**

"To become an excellent school that produces a young generation with the BISA character (Brave, Innovative, Ready, Trustworthy) to build an intelligent society."

Vision Achievement Indicators:

<https://jurnal.panengeninsani.com/index.php/djods>

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1. The establishment of the BISA culture (Brave, Innovative, Ready, Trustworthy) among all school stakeholders.
2. Continuous improvement of students' academic and non-academic achievements.
3. Graduates of SMP PGRI Pasirjambu are prepared to pursue higher education and compete in the global era.
4. Strengthening collaboration between school, parents, and the community.
5. Becoming a school recognized and respected by the local community.

### Mission of SMP PGRI Pasirjambu

The school's mission and corresponding indicators of achievement are as follows:

1. To provide creative, innovative, and effective learning to optimally develop students' potential.
2. To build students' BISA character through moral education, discipline, and leadership development.
3. To improve teacher and staff professionalism through continuous training and development.
4. To ensure the availability of school facilities and infrastructure that support a conducive learning environment.
5. To foster synergistic cooperation with parents and the community in supporting school development.

### Organizational Structure

The organizational structure defines the framework for the distribution of tasks, authority, and responsibilities within the school.



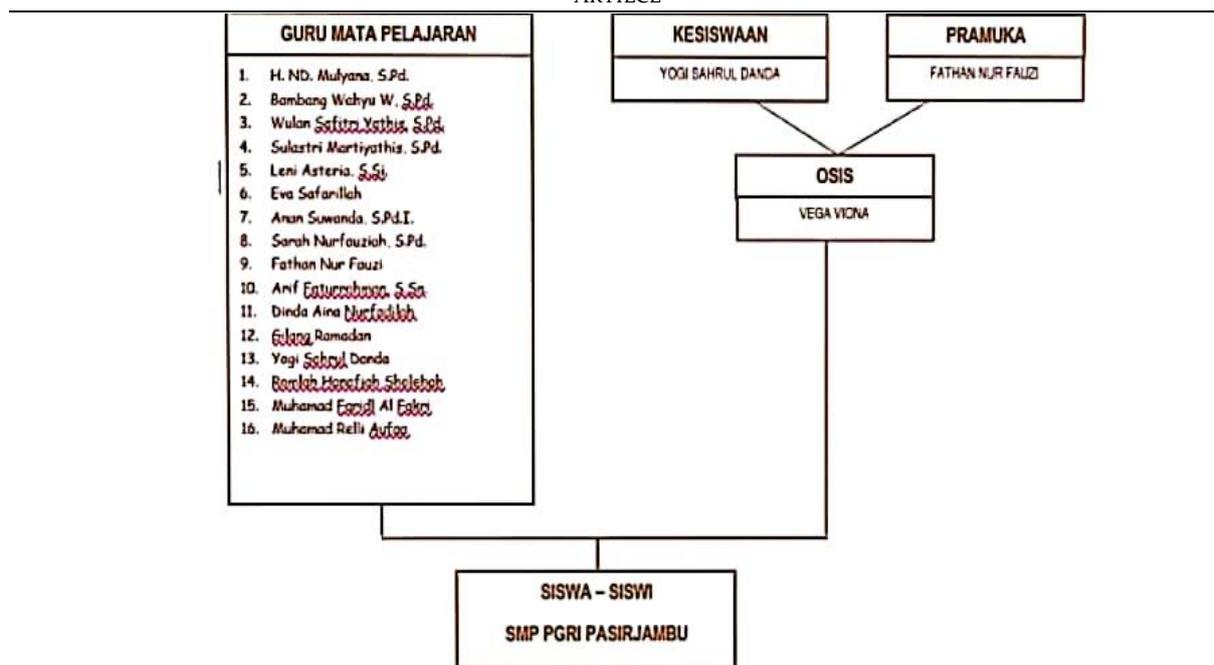


Figure 1 Organizational Structure of SMP PGRI Pasirjambu

## Main Duties and Functions

### Main Duties (Core Responsibilities)

SMP PGRI Pasirjambu holds the primary responsibility of delivering quality basic education at the junior high school level, with the goal of nurturing an intelligent generation, endowed with noble character, and equipped to face global challenges. The school's main duties include:

- Organizing education and teaching activities in accordance with the applicable curriculum, including both the 2013 Curriculum (Kurikulum 2013) and the Merdeka Curriculum.
- Providing equal educational services to all students, regardless of background, while taking into account the diverse characteristics and needs of learners.
- Preparing students to pursue higher levels of education and to contribute positively to society.
- Conducting regular evaluations and assessments of student learning outcomes to monitor both academic and non-academic development.
- Creating a safe, comfortable, and supportive learning environment that fosters intellectual growth and character development.

### Functions

To achieve the aforementioned objectives, SMP PGRI Pasirjambu carries out several key functions, which include:

- Teaching and Learning: Designing and implementing learning plans tailored to student needs and aligned with government education policies.
- Academic Administration Management: Managing academic records, including attendance, grades, and student progress tracking.
- Curriculum Implementation: Executing the established curriculum including the Merdeka Curriculum which prioritizes skill development and the exploration of student potential.

- **Human Resource Development (HRD):** Providing training and continuous professional development opportunities for teaching staff to enhance their competencies in line with the demands of the latest curriculum.
- **Character Development:** Guiding students in character formation through extracurricular activities, discipline programs, and counseling services.
- **Planning and Program Management:** Developing annual plans, work programs, and activity reports as part of efforts to monitor and evaluate the education process.
- **Community Engagement:** Actively collaborating with parents and the surrounding community to foster synergy in the educational process.

Driven by a strong commitment to these responsibilities, SMP PGRI Pasirjambu strives to create a conducive learning environment that supports both academic achievement and character development. By integrating moral values and competency-based learning approaches, the school is dedicated to producing a young generation that is ethical, creative, and equipped with relevant skills to meet the demands of an ever-evolving world.

Table 1 Data on Teachers at Pasirjambu PGRI Middle School

<b>NO</b>	<b>Full name</b>	<b>NUPTK</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Additional Tasks</b>
1	Arif Rakhman, S.Pd,Gr.	444759661200053	Kepala Sekolah	-
2	Bambang Wahyu W.,S.Pd.	3251742643200013	HUMAS	-
3	H. ND. Mulyana, S.Pd.	3947739642200032	Wakasek Sarpas	Guru MTK
4	Hj. Wulan Safitri Yathis, S.Pd.	0953762663300092	-	Guru B. Indonesia
5	Sulastri Martiyathis, S.Pd.	7640768669130072	-	Guru B. Inggris
6	Leni Asteria, S.Si.	4142770671230273	Wali Kelas IX	Guru TIK
7	Eva Safarilah, S.Pd.	2342746649300143	-	Guru B. Sunda
8	An An Suwanda, S.Pd.I.	2940756658200032	Wakasek Kesiswaan	Guru PAI
9	Sarah Nurfauziah, S.Pd.	1655777678230012	-	Guru BK
10	Fathan Nur Fauzi	-	Wali Kelas VIII	Guru PPKN
11	Arif Faturakhman	-	Wakasek Kurikulum	-
12	Dinda Aina Nurfadilah	-	Wali Kelas VII	Guru IPS
13	Gilang Ramadhan	-	-	Guru PJOK
14	Romlah Hanafiah Solehah	-	Tata Usaha	Guru PSPJ
15	Muhammad Faridl Ak Fakhri	-	-	Guru SBK
16	Muhamad Relli Aufa	-	-	Guru BK
17	Yogi Sahrul Danda	-	Kesiswaan	Guru IPA

Source: Processed by Researchers, 2025

## **Implementation of the Independent Curriculum Policy at the PGRI Pasirjambu Junior High School, Bandung Regency**

Based on observations and interviews conducted at SMP PGRI Pasirjambu, Bandung Regency, several factors influence the implementation of the Independent Curriculum Policy, as outlined in the Bandung Regency Education Office Circular Letter No. 800/01871-Disdik/2023. To describe and classify these influencing factors more clearly, the researcher grouped them according to the four main dimensions proposed by George C. Edwards, as cited in Subarsono (2019: 90–92). These four dimensions are communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure.

### **Communication**

In public policy implementation, effective communication is essential, especially among all parties involved in the policy process. Good communication facilitates the achievement of implementation goals. In the case of the Independent Curriculum implementation at SMP PGRI Pasirjambu, communication involves various stakeholders, including the Bandung Regency Education Office, the West Java Provincial Education Office, and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (KemendikbudRistek).

However, field observations and interviews revealed communication barriers between the government and the school. There was a lack of socialization from authorities regarding the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. As a result, the policy has not been optimally implemented due to the lack of intensive communication between the Ministry of Education Office and the school, especially concerning the technical implementation, expected goals, and concrete steps that teachers should take.

Teachers and educational staff have not received adequate information about how to properly implement the Independent Curriculum. Many teachers expressed confusion about how to adapt their teaching methods to align with the student-centered, project-based learning principles, and talent development emphasized in the Independent Curriculum. This limited communication also resulted in a lack of understanding about the policy's objectives, causing many teachers to continue using traditional approaches instead of adopting flexible, student-centered methods as intended.

The lack of relevant training and information also made it difficult for teachers to prepare appropriate teaching materials and assess student outcomes comprehensively. These issues highlight the need for improved support in the transition process to ensure the policy is effectively implemented. Enhancing communication and providing more intensive training for teachers are crucial steps to overcome these challenges and ensure that the learning process aligns with the curriculum's objectives.

### **Resources**

Resources are a critical component in achieving policy goals. In the context of SMP PGRI Pasirjambu, resources refer to both human resources and supporting infrastructure that facilitate the successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum.

Significant barriers exist at SMP PGRI Pasirjambu related to both human resources and facilities. The school currently has only three classrooms, and due to space limitations, classrooms are used for multiple purposes. For example, Grade 8 is partially used as an administrative office, and Grade 9 serves as both a classroom and a library. These space constraints impact the quality of teaching and learning, especially in implementing interactive, student-centered learning promoted by the curriculum.

The absence of a dedicated library limits students' access to reading materials, thereby hindering the development of literacy and independent learning. Moreover, the shared office space reduces administrative efficiency, affecting data management, scheduling, and the execution of educational programs.

In terms of human resources, most of the teachers are honorary staff, and about 7 out of 17 have not completed their undergraduate degrees. Two teachers are also teaching subjects outside their field of expertise, which compromises instructional quality. These factors negatively affect the implementation of a curriculum that requires creativity, competency-based teaching, and a deep understanding of educational content.

Improving teacher qualifications and providing continuous professional development are crucial steps in addressing these challenges.

### **Disposition**

Disposition refers to the willingness and commitment of implementers teachers and staff in this case to carry out the assigned tasks related to the policy. The principal and teachers at SMP PGRI Pasirjambu have shown a generally positive disposition toward implementing the Independent Curriculum.

The school has assigned specific roles and responsibilities to each teacher through a clear job description system. The annual Teacher Performance Assessment (PKG), based on the Ministry of Education Regulation No. 16 of 2007, is also conducted to monitor implementation. This evaluation helps identify areas of improvement and ensures accountability in policy execution.

Such a supportive disposition indicates that, despite challenges in other areas, the willingness and dedication of the implementers support the success of the curriculum implementation.

### **Bureaucratic Structure**

A well-functioning bureaucratic structure is vital for successful policy implementation. SMP PGRI Pasirjambu has a basic organizational structure consisting of three vice principals overseeing curriculum, student affairs, and facilities, which supports the realization of educational goals. However, bureaucratic challenges remain. The administrative workload required for curriculum implementation is often overwhelming and confusing for teachers. They must prepare various documents such as learning syllabi, lesson plans, student assessments, annual and semester programs, all aligned with national standards. These administrative demands pose significant burdens on teachers and may divert their focus from teaching to paperwork, which hinders effective policy implementation.

### **Factors Hindering the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum at SMP PGRI Pasirjambu**

From the observations and interviews, the following key obstacles were identified:

#### **1. Lack of Government Socialization**

Limited socialization from government agencies has led to a poor understanding of the curriculum among teachers, who are the primary implementers. This gap reduces the effectiveness of curriculum execution and undermines efforts to provide student-centered, project-based learning.

#### **2. Inadequate Supporting Facilities**

The school has only three classrooms, forcing the use of hybrid spaces such as shared libraries and administrative offices. These conditions hinder the creation of a conducive learning environment, affecting students' ability to focus and learn effectively.

#### **3. Limited Human Resource Quality**

Seven out of 17 teachers are still completing their undergraduate degrees, and two are teaching outside their areas of expertise. This situation limits the school's capacity to implement the curriculum optimally, which requires high competence and subject mastery.

#### **4. Complex Administrative Processes**

The administrative burden associated with the Independent Curriculum is significant. Teachers must prepare multiple documents without sufficient guidance or technical assistance.

This not only delays implementation but also shifts the teachers' focus away from delivering innovative, student-focused lessons.

### **Efforts to Overcome Implementation Barriers of the Independent Curriculum at SMP PGRI Pasirjambu**

In response to the challenges identified above, several strategic measures have been taken:

#### **1. Workshops and Training Participation**

The principal actively attends training and coaching sessions from the local education office, although information transfer to teachers remains suboptimal due to limited practical applications. To address this, the school organized a workshop on literacy and numeracy on November 19, 2024, led by Mr. R. Komarudin Shaleh, M.P.D from the Ministry of Education. The school also participated in external workshops, such as one held at SMP Al Wafa Ciwidey on July 10, 2024.

#### **2. Community-Driven Fundraising**

On August 7, 2024, the school launched a fundraising initiative involving parents, teachers, and the wider community. The goal is to build a dedicated office space and library. The planned library will serve as a literacy center to support project-based learning and research aligned with the Independent Curriculum.

#### **3. Support for Teachers Pursuing Higher Education**

Teachers still completing their degrees are given priority in training and receive intensive mentoring. Workshops are focused on helping these teachers understand the curriculum's principles, prepare lesson plans, and apply innovative teaching methods. Collaboration between senior and junior teachers is also encouraged to foster shared learning and support.

#### **4. Strengthening Teacher Solidarity**

A culture of mutual support among teachers has been established. Teachers who complete their administrative tasks early assist others who face challenges. This approach reduces individual workload, enhances collaboration, and ensures that all required documents such as syllabi, lesson plans, and semester programs are completed efficiently and to standard.

## **E. CONCLUSION**

The findings of this study reveal that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum Policy at SMP PGRI Pasirjambu, Bandung Regency, has begun but has yet to reach optimal effectiveness. Based on George C. Edwards' theoretical framework, only the disposition dimension has been successfully executed, while communication, resources, and bureaucratic structure still face significant challenges. This indicates that although the teachers and school leaders show strong commitment, the lack of adequate infrastructure, limited teacher qualifications, and complex administrative procedures hinder the realization of the policy's objectives. The research objective to analyze the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum Policy through Edwards' four dimensions has been achieved, and the study contributes by highlighting the specific institutional and human resource barriers faced by rural schools in adapting national curriculum reforms. Therefore, it is recommended that Kemendikbudristek intensify direct and practical socialization efforts, while SMP PGRI Pasirjambu should continue conducting internal capacity-building workshops and improving infrastructure such as computer and science laboratories. Future research may expand the scope by employing a comparative or mixed-methods approach across several schools to gain broader insight into curriculum implementation dynamics. Given the current study's limited focus on a single school, further investigation is needed to generalize findings and inform evidence-based policy adjustments that strengthen the alignment between national education policy and local school readiness.

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