

## Research Article

# Leadership Principal In improving teacher's ability to implement Independent Curriculum at State Elementary School 134 Palembang

Mustika Sari Mahfirah<sup>1</sup>, Meilia Rosani<sup>2</sup>, Mahasir<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Master of Educational Management, PGRI University of Palembang  
[mustikasari2018@gmail.com](mailto:mustikasari2018@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> Master of Educational Management, PGRI University of Palembang  
[meiliarosani5@gmail.com](mailto:meiliarosani5@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup> Master of Educational Management, PGRI University of Palembang  
[mahasirnasir@gmail.com](mailto:mahasirnasir@gmail.com)

\* Corresponding Author : Mustika Sari Mahfirah

**Abstract.** This study aims to provide a detailed and in-depth description of school leadership, obstacles, and solutions in improving teachers' abilities to implement the Merdeka Curriculum at SD 134 Palembang. The research was conducted from December to February 2025 at SD 134 Palembang, involving 48 teachers and 7 educational staff as samples. The study employed a qualitative descriptive research approach, utilizing data collection techniques through interviews, field observations, and triangulation. The principal of SD 134 Palembang has fostered a positive school environment, evident in their active role in enhancing teachers' competencies in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. The Merdeka Curriculum grants schools and teachers greater autonomy in designing learning that aligns with students' needs and potential. This necessitates teachers possessing adequate capabilities to effectively implement the Merdeka Curriculum. This study aimed to improve teachers' abilities at SD 134 Palembang in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum through training and mentoring. The study employed a qualitative method with a classroom action research design. The research subjects were the teachers at SD 134 Palembang. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Data were analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques. The findings revealed that training and mentoring were effective in enhancing teachers' capabilities in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum.

**Keywords:** Merdeka Curriculum, School Principal Leadership, teacher competence.

Received: 14,march,2025;

Revised: 28,April,2025;

Accepted: 11,May,2025;

Online Available : 14,May,2025;

Curr. Ver.: 14,May,2025;



Copyright: © 2025 by the authors.  
Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY SA) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)

## 1. Introduction

One of the areas that plays an important strategic role in producing skilled and competitive national workforce is Education. In Indonesia, the development of Education is still carried out in line with the demands of society and international guidance. Implementing an autonomous curriculum that is intended to provide teachers and students with flexibility in the learning process in line with the potential, interests and requirements of students is an example of innovation in Education policy.

One of the Indonesian government's initiatives to achieve more flexible learning that focuses on developing students' potential and based on their needs and interests is the independent curriculum. However, the implementation of this curriculum requires fundamental changes in teacher skills, teaching styles, and perspectives. This includes the use of projects

to strengthen the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5), to make learning more meaningful and developing more relevant and contextual teaching materials.

According to the Regulation of the Minister of National Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Number 16 of 2007 Article (1) Every teacher is required to meet the nationally applicable academic qualification and teacher competency standards. Teacher competency is defined as a set of knowledge, skills and behaviors that must be possessed, internalized and mastered by teachers in carrying out their professional duties.

This is in accordance with the Decree of the Minister of National Education No. 045 of 2002 concerning the core curriculum of higher education. He explained that competence is a set of intelligent, responsible actions that a person has as a requirement to be considered capable by the community in carrying out tasks according to certain jobs. Article 10 of the Teachers and Lecturers Law (UUGD) states that teacher competence includes pedagogical competence, personality competence, social competence, and professional competence. Among the four competencies that must be possessed by a teacher, researchers only limit professional competence that is considered to have a fairly close influence on teacher ability.

## 2. Literature Review

### Leadership Theory

According to Damayanti et al. (2020) defines leadership as a process in which one individual influences other group members towards achieving defined group or organizational goals, while a leader is an individual in a group or organization who has the most influence on others, meaning that leadership is the process of inviting, seducing or persuading people around them to achieve common goals.

Amiruddin et al. (2019:12) Leadership is also a key factor and determinant of political action in an organization and is a very important factor in determining the achievement of predetermined organizational goals. This is the core of organizational management and the main resource and focus of all activities in the organization. Efforts to improve organizational quality depend heavily on the quality of leadership and effective management. Only when management is truly capable and extraordinary can support from below be seen consistently. Therefore, leadership is very important when looking for the quality needed in any school. Schools thrive when the principal has a vision and has the leadership and personal integrity to improve quality.

### Principal Leadership

Educational leadership is the ability of a leader to influence school components so that they can work together to achieve common goals, and is the sole leader in the school who has the responsibility and authority to organize, manage and organize activities in the school so that the goals of the school are achieved (Damayanti et al., 2020).

According to Rohmat (2010) Educational leadership is the ability of educational leaders to influence teachers, administrative staff and students in achieving educational goals and optimizing educational resources. The behavior of educational leaders is an example for all educational personnel which can ultimately create a more advanced educational culture. The resources owned by education are human resources in the form of teachers, administrative staff, and students and resources in the form of facilities and infrastructure. The educational culture is good habits (discipline, politeness, order) which also support a conducive atmosphere for achieving educational goals.

#### Teacher Ability

According to Sadirman (2011) teacher ability is a combination of competencies, skills, and knowledge possessed by teachers to carry out the task of educating, teaching, and training students. Sadirman emphasized that this ability includes pedagogical, professional, social and personality aspects, all of which must complement each other to support the learning process.

According to Suparlan (2006) teacher ability is defined as the basic skills that must be possessed by an educator in guiding, educating and training students. According to him, this ability is not only understanding the subject matter but also includes managerial abilities such as class management and character building of students.

### Independent Curriculum

Quoting the Kemendikbudristek page, the independent curriculum is a curriculum with diverse intracurricular learning. Where the learning content will be more optimal if the concept is more emphasized on competence. On the other hand, teachers have the freedom to choose differentiated learning methods according to students' learning needs.

According to Mulyasa (2023:19), the independent curriculum is one of the government's efforts to solve various problems currently being faced by the world of education, especially in entering the new normal era after the pandemic. Any change will produce something new, whether it is completely new or a modification and development of the old one, as well. It appears that the Independent Curriculum, which was officially delivered by the Minister of Education and Culture on the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture's YouTube channel on February 11, 2021, has the characteristics of constructivist learning theory. Constructivism is a school of thought that originates from cognitive learning theory. The purpose of using the Constructivist approach in learning is to help improve student understanding. Constructivism is closely related to the discovery learning method and meaningful learning. Both of these learning methods are in the context of cognitive learning theory. Constructivism is learning that provides students with the freedom to build their own knowledge based on the learning model design created by the teacher. This is one of the characteristics of learning applied to the independent learning curriculum.



Independent Curriculum Structure Image

### 3. Proposed Method

According to Sugiyono (2015), method study is method scientific For get data with purpose and use certain . In research This use approach qualitative descriptive , namely describe about situation or arranged events in a way systematic , factual , actual and accurate about the facts as well as current phenomena investigated or observed . thing This agree with according to Sudaryana (2018) turning on that study descriptive used For develop theory that is built through the data obtained in the field . Sukmadinata in Sudaryana (2018) stated that study qualitative is research used For describe and analyze phenomena , events , social activities , attitudes beliefs , perceptions and people individually and group . Research objectives descriptive This is For define a condition or phenomenon in a way What existence .



## 4. Results and Discussion

### Research result

#### 1. Description of Management Data in Support Implementation Independent Curriculum

Development learning in form system integrated or planning learning consists of from a number of interrelated components related . 29 Planning implementation curriculum Independence Day at State Elementary School 134 Palembang begins with an initial assessment . Based on results interview head school to explain that implementation independent Study the first of all conduct an initial assessment use For know level understanding student .

In activities learning the process that must be be noticed that is planning , implementation , to evaluation . Planning the become step beginning For prepare implementation in order to be able to effective , and evaluation done after activity learning as results For see whether learning that is done succeed or no . For give time for teachers, principals school and service education For learning , curriculum autonomous implemented in a way gradually . All aspect system education surely must adapt self with change framework curriculum .

#### 2. Role of the head school in support implementation curriculum independent

The Principal is leader in school all behavior and performance head school naturally will seen by all inhabitant school , even will exemplified and emulated , but behavior that will emulated naturally is positive behavior like high discipline , attitude friendly and open to work , fellow teachers and staff education . M has high empathy , honest and good professionalism as well as own high motivation and enthusiasm For move Moving forward together is behaviors that can emulated by all inhabitant school .



**Picture of the Principal as Ceremony Instructor at SD N 134 Palembang**

Based on results interview , observation as well as documentation that has been done show that head Elementary School 134 Palembang Besar has show attitudes and behaviors that can So example for all over inhabitant school own high discipline , professionalism and positive behavior to school . Referring to with theory function and role head school show that head school . So to conclude that head school Already researcher can carry out his role with Good that is as a leader.

#### 3. Challenges and obstacles Leadership Principal in Increase Teacher's Ability to Implement Independent Curriculum at State Elementary School 134 Palembang

In running leadership in schools a head school naturally will experience various type challenges and obstacles . In theoretical leadership , tasks head school as a supervisor is monitor teacher performance , completeness teacher administration , as well as to do assessor to

method teaching teacher at the moment is at in the class and do supervision clinical others . Observation and interview results with head Public Elementary School 134 Palembang.

Based on results interview , observation as well as documentation that has been conducted by researchers show that head The school and teachers of State Elementary School 134 Palembang have carry out his job with full not quite enough answer , even though Still there is a number of obstacle head school Already give role model and role model for teachers though No all teachers can accept it with easy . So in matter This researcher can conclude that head school at State Elementary School 134 Palembang has carry out evaluation to teacher's ability to implement curriculum independence at school and becoming leader learning at school .

#### 4. Leadership Principal in motivate and empower teachers to develop competence and skills Carry out Independent Curriculum at State Elementary School 134 Palembang

Head SDN 134 Palembang school empowers teachers with give autonomy and trust to the teacher for take decision and implement his job in a way independent . Head The school also encourages teachers to innovate and develop his creativity in learning . Results of observations and interviews with head Public Elementary School 134 Palembang

As for the efforts made head school For increase teacher's ability to implement Curriculum independence at State Elementary School 134 Palembang , namely with to form community learn . Community studying at State Elementary School 134 Palembang is carried out every Saturday from 10.00-12.00 WIB. In the activity This all active teachers follow him as for Contents activity start from reflection teach every week and share practice good teachers for learning together starts from discussion Topic curriculum , teacher administration , assessment and development self through community This head school can with easy monitor teacher's ability and can become receptacle For carry out curriculum independent .



No	Tanggal	Uraian Kegiatan
1	13 Januari 2024	Pemilihan Kepengurusan Komunitas Belajar Terpisah
2	27 Januari 2024	Assesmen Awal Pembelajaran Komunitas Belajar
3	17 Februari 2024	Berbagi praktik baik mengenai Tips dan Trik
4	9 Maret 2024	Lojos Validasi di PMM
5	23 Maret 2024	Mereriew modul ajar / RPP
6	27 April 2024	Mereriew materi kurikulum merdeka
7	11 Mei 2024	Merancang media pembelajaran yang
8	25 Mei 2024	Merancang pembelajaran yang
9	8 Juni 2024	Merancang refleksi pembelajaran
10	22 Juni 2024	Menjaga motivasi belajar siswa
11	20 Juli 2024	Berbagi akasi nyata di PMM
12	10 Agustus 2024	Berbagi praktik baik pembelajaran
13	24 Agustus 2024	Merancang kisi-kisi
14	14 September 2024	Merancang penit
15	28 September 2024	Merancang pe

#### Image of the Learning Community Activity Program at SD Negeri 134 Palembang

Another effort made by the principal of SD Negeri 134 Palembang is to actively participate in supervision activities, the principal involves teachers to become a peer supervisor team because of time constraints the principal asks teachers to observe each other in class periodically when the principal experiences obstacles then this program is run, in addition the teachers are also active in checking the administration of other teachers.

#### Discussion

Based on the results of the data obtained in study This through results observation , interview as well as studies documentation about Leadership Principal in Increase Teacher's ability to implement The Independent Curriculum at State Elementary School 134 Palembang includes a number of results study that is as following:

From the description discussion about leadership head school in increase teacher performance at SD Negeri 134 Palembang above in line with research conducted Faudi & Muchsin (2021) level skills required according to characteristic organization , different existence . Skills possessed by the leader organization allow organization That reach profit double . Benefits double can obtained If his leader have skills conceptual , manual, skills Work The same with other institutions, the ability negotiate with government , maturity analyze opportunities . etc.

The skills possessed by the heads school shown in effort reach objective education and maturity child educate .

From the data obtained in study This through results observation , interview as well as studies documentation Still there is a number of obstacles faced head school in increase teacher's ability to implement curriculum independent teachers at school , still there are teachers who violate discipline Work like come late , permission go out school Because There is affairs personal , teaching use inadequate methods and media varied , and weakness understanding and use of IT in teach become problem for senior teachers. Problems This Can just due to too Lots the rules made with No involving teachers ' voices comprehensive so that become burden for some teachers, and teacher readiness in operate a program must under review in a way ripe from aspect mental, physical and ability readiness inhabitant school in run it .

Leadership head school is very important in motivate and empower teachers to develop competencies and skills required in carry out Independent Curriculum . With implement the right strategies , head school can help teachers to become a professional and competent teacher in carry out curriculum new the .

## 5. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research conducted by researchers regarding the leadership of the principal in improving the ability of teachers to implement the independent curriculum at SD Negeri 134 Palembang, from the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. In this case, researchers can conclude that the leadership of the principal at SD Negeri 134 Palembang in improving the ability of teachers to implement the independent curriculum is as follows:

- 1.The principal's leadership has been very good in improving the ability of teachers to implement the independent curriculum at SD Negeri 134 Palembang. The principal has been able to condition teachers to be orderly in learning administration such as ATP (Syllabus), CP (Learning Achievements), KKTP, Prosem, Teaching Modules (RPP), KKTP (KKM), provide assessments, carry out learning evaluations, carry out follow-up assessments, master learning study materials. The principal has been able to carry out his duties and roles with a full sense of responsibility, for example, providing motivation, carrying out class observations, being able to lead all school residents to achieve the vision and mission set by the school, being able to provide consultations regarding problems in classroom learning, being able to demonstrate exemplary behavior for all school residents, and being able to develop the teaching profession both through teacher working groups (KKG), school learning communities and Principal Working Groups (K3S).

- 2.Factors that hinder the principal's leadership in improving teacher performance at SD Negeri 134 Palembang are: the lack of awareness of teachers to follow the development of science and technology, as can be seen from the low interest of teachers in participating in training activities or educational seminars held online independently, as well as creativity in teaching which still needs to be improved in accordance with the learning needs of students who are increasingly advanced and developing today.

- 3.Principal leadership is very important in motivating and empowering teachers to develop the competencies and skills needed to implement the Merdeka Curriculum. By implementing the right strategies, principals can help teachers become professional and competent teachers in implementing the new curriculum.



## References

1. Alrizka, D. (2023). Development and implementation independent curriculum. Jakarta: Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia.
2. Amiruddin, A., Annisa, A., & Arianto, A. (2019). Quality educational leadership. *SABILARRASYAD: Journal of Education and Science Education*, 4(2), 57–68. <https://doi.org/10.46576/jsa.v4i2.741>
3. Anita, Y., Kenedi, A. K., Hamimah, H., Azizah, Z., Arwin, A., Safitri, S., & Khairani, R. (2023). Training development project strengthening profile Pancasila based students technology for elementary school teachers. *MONSU'ANI TANO Journal Community Service*, 6(2), 367–380. <https://doi.org/10.32529/tano.v6i2.2652>
4. Anwar, Z., & Sukiman, S. (2023). Literature review: Learning differentiating in the independent curriculum in elementary madrasahs. *PGMI Partners: Journal MI Education*, 9(2), 80–89. <https://doi.org/10.46963/mpgmi.v9i2.1004>
5. Arismunandar, A., Nurhikmah, N. H., & Ardiansyah, M. (2018). Management principal (development of policy model appointment principal based on research results). Makassar: Publishing Agency of Makassar State University.
6. BSKAP Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia. (2022). Project strengthening profile Pancasila students. Jakarta: Education Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment Agency, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia.
7. Dahlan, M., Arafat, Y., & Eddy, S. (2020). The influence of school culture and training on teacher performance. *Journal of Education Research*, 1(3), 218–225. <https://doi.org/10.37985/jer.v1i3.25>
8. Damayanti, T., Arafat, Y., & Eddy, S. (2020). The influence of principal leadership and work motivation on teacher performance. *Journal of Innovation in Teaching and Instructional Media*, 1(1), 46–57.
9. Faudi, F., & Muchsin, M. (2021). Principal leadership in improving teacher performance. *Veranda Tarbawi*, 9(1), 33–44. <https://doi.org/10.32672/tarbawi.v9i1.5051>
10. Fitria, H. F., & Martha, A. (2020). Principal leadership management in improving the performance of honorary teachers. *Journal of Innovation in Teaching and Instructional Media*, 1(1), 85–89. <https://garuda.kemdikbud.go.id>
11. Foreign, A. P. (2013). Human resources management. Bandung: PT Remaja Karya.
12. Juariah, Y., Fitria, H., & Rohana, R. (2022). The role of principal leadership in improving teacher performance during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Tambusai Journal of Education*, 6(1), 2770–2780. <https://doi.org/10.31004/jptam.v6i1.3320>
13. Juniarti, E., Ahyani, N., & Ardiansyah, A. (2020). The influence of principal leadership and teacher discipline on teacher performance. *Journal of Education Research*, 1(3), 193–199. <https://doi.org/10.37985/joe.v1i3.21>
14. Khoirurrijal, F., Sofia, M., Gandi, S., Muin, A., Tajeri, F., & Hamdani, S. (2022). Development of independent curriculum. Malang: Eternal Media Literacy.
15. Miles, M., & Huberman, A. (2014). Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook (3rd ed.). USA: Sage Publications.
16. Moleong, L. J. (2007). Metodologi penelitian kualitatif. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya.
17. Moleong, L. J. (2018). Metodologi penelitian kualitatif (Edisi revisi). Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya.
18. Mulyasa, E. (2019). Becoming professional principal. Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya.
19. Mulyasa, E. (2023). Implementation of independent curriculum. Jakarta: Bumi Aksara.
20. Muzayanah, A. (2022). Principal leadership in improving teacher performance at Muhammadiyah 1 Junior High School in Purwokerto. Purwokerto: State Islamic Institute of Purwokerto.
21. Renita, R. (2023). Development of HOTS-based LKPD and problem-based learning to increase mathematical creative thinking ability of students of MAN 3 Jambi City. Jambi: University of Jambi.

22. Riyanto, Y. (2010). *Methodology of educational research*. Surabaya: SIC Publisher.
23. Rohani, I., Fitria, H., & Rohana, R. (2020). Influence of principal leadership and teacher work discipline on the performance of elementary school teachers in the Sembawa District. *Tambusai Journal of Education*, 4(3), 1883–1894. <https://doi.org/10.31004/jptam.v4i3.661>
24. Rohmat, M. (2010). *Educational leadership*. Purwokerto: STAIN Press.
25. Rozalina, R., Fitria, H., & Rohana, R. (2020). Leadership of the principal of State Senior High School (SMAN) 1 Banyuwangi III. *Journal of Education Research*, 1(2), 165–176. <https://doi.org/10.37985/joe.v1i2.17>
26. Rusman, R. (2013). *Learning models*. Jakarta: Rajawali Press.
27. Setiyadi, B., & Rosalina, V. (2021). Principal leadership in improving teacher performance. *Edunesia: Journal of Education Science*, 2(1), 75–84. <https://doi.org/10.51276/edu.v2i1.81>
28. Sintani, L., Fachrurazi, H., Mulyadi, S. E., Nurcholifah, I., Fauziah, M. M., Hartono, S., & Jusman, I. A. (2022). *The basics of leadership*. Batam: Cendekia Mulia Mandiri.
29. Srisiska, S., Ahyani, N., & Missriani, M. (2021). The influence of discipline and work motivation on teacher performance. *Tambusai Journal of Education*, 5(1), 1456–1465. <https://jptam.org/index.php/jptam/article/view/1119/1002>
30. Sudaryana, B. (2018). *Research methods: Theory and practice of quantitative and qualitative*. Yogyakarta: Deepublish.
31. Sugiyono. (2017). *Metode penelitian bisnis*. Bandung: Alfabeta.
32. Sulaiman, D. (2023). Transformational leadership model in life skill development towards profile Pancasila students in elementary school. *Bangun Rekaprima*, 9(1), 124–136. <https://doi.org/10.32497/bangunrekaprima.v9i1.4696>
33. Supardi, D. (2016). *Teacher performance*. Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo.
34. Wirawan. (2014). *Leadership: Theory, psychology, organizational behavior, application and research*. Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada.
35. Yulia, Y., Ahyani, N., & Wardarita, R. (2021). The influence of principal work discipline and motivation on the performance of public elementary school teachers. *Jurnal Pamator: Jurnal Ilmiah Universitas Trunojoyo*, 14(2), 122–127. <https://doi.org/10.21107/pamator.v14i2.11478>