



## Curriculum management in Primary Schools in Indonesia

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### Abstract

The aim of this research is to determine the stages, obstacles, and efforts in curriculum management implemented at Inpres Syuru Elementary School and Mbait 2 State Preparatory Elementary School, Agats District, Asmat Regency, Indonesia. The research was conducted at Mbait 2 State Preparatory Elementary School and Inpres Syuru Elementary School located in Agats District, Asmat Regency, using a qualitative approach with a phenomenological type. The results of this research indicate that (1) curriculum management at Inpres Syuru Elementary School and Mbait 2 State Preparatory Elementary School, Agats District, Asmat Regency consists of three stages: the planning stage, which includes the formation of a curriculum development team and preparation of learning tools; the Implementation Stage; and the Evaluation stage. (2) Obstacles in curriculum management include teachers not understanding learning objectives, teachers not comprehending learning standards, teachers lacking understanding of student characteristics, and teachers not grasping the principles of effective learning. (3) Efforts to overcome these obstacles involve training and developing teacher competency, organizing KKG (Teacher Working Group), and implementing MBS.

**Keywords:** Curriculum management, Primary School, education

### Introduction

The curriculum and learning are interconnected components within a regulatory framework that work together to accomplish educational objectives. The curriculum serves as a framework for structuring the process of acquiring knowledge. Put simply, the curriculum is a strategic blueprint that serves as a means to carry out the educational process. The curriculum has a crucial strategic role in enhancing the overall quality of education. The curriculum consists of two primary components: a written text and its practical application. The interdependence of these two elements is inherent to the learning process. The curriculum serves as a directive for teachers to follow while incorporating it into the educational process. The curriculum has a crucial role in determining the objectives and trajectory of education. However, its primary emphasis lies in designing the specific learning experiences that cater to the individual needs of each student and effectively organising these experiences within their lives (Mulyasa, 2021) [15].

In order to enhance the education system in Indonesia, it is imperative to have a well-defined vision and direction for curriculum reform and development. The curriculum called K13 was introduced in 2013. The implementation of K13 was prompted by the findings of an international research assessing the performance of Indonesian students on a global scale, as stated by the former minister of education and culture. The survey reveals that a mere 5% of Indonesian students had the capability to handle complex thinking problems, yet a significant 78% of students are capable of solving simpler memorising tasks. In addition, the 2009 PISA Programme (Programme for International Student Assessment) put Indonesia 10th from the bottom among the 65 member countries. In addition, the primary objective of implementing the 2013 Curriculum is to enhance the overall standard of education and specifically improve student learning outcomes. Teachers have a crucial role in guiding and directing pupils in their educational

activities within the school. Teachers bear the duty of enhancing the overall calibre of student learning achievements, with the aspiration that this will subsequently enhance the quality of education as a whole in the future. In addition to the curriculum, the effectiveness of an educational institution is also contingent upon the administration of the institution (Supriani *et al.*, 2022) [24]. Hence, the management of curriculum in schools plays a crucial part in endeavours to enhance student academic performance.

The curriculum aims to cultivate students' knowledge, comprehension, skills, values, and attitudes, enabling them to perform tasks or activities with expertise, precision, and achievement, while assuming complete accountability. This can be accomplished by educational institutions through the adoption of learning programmes aligned with their curriculum. The curriculum significantly influences the dynamics of education and the formation of students' cognitive patterns in the future. Through the implementation of a curriculum tailored to meet the fundamental requirements of pupils, education possesses the capacity to cultivate a youthful cohort that is intellectually astute, proficient, and possesses exemplary character. Every educational institution has its own policy for executing the curriculum based on the specific requirements and circumstances of the school. In the rural regions of Papua, particularly in the Agats District of the Asmat Regency, Papua province, a number of schools have effectively implemented curriculum management. This accomplishment demonstrates the school's proficiency in successfully executing the programme. These schools are acknowledged as benchmark institutions with standards that are equivalent to those of state schools. Two schools in Agats District, Asmat Regency are Inpres Syuru Elementary School and Mbait 2 State Preparatory Elementary School.

Upon early surveys, it has been determined that both Inpres Syuru Elementary School and Mbait 2 State Preparatory Elementary School have successfully incorporated the 2013

curriculum in their management practices. Nevertheless, each of them possesses distinct attributes in the executed curriculum management. In addition, both of these colleges offer benefits, such as a substantial student population. This is attributed to the pedagogical method employed by teachers at Inpres Syuru Elementary School and Mbait 2 State Preparatory Elementary School, wherein they tailor the learning experience to align with the specific traits and attributes of the local pupils. In addition, from an administrative standpoint, the teacher learning tools at these two schools have been meticulously prepared in advance to ensure that the learning process adheres to the intended plans and objectives, despite encountering a few difficulties along the way. These advantages are expected to significantly influence curriculum management in a good manner. Hence, it is imperative to undertake study on Curriculum management at Inpres Syuru Elementary School and Mbait 2 State Preparatory Elementary School, located in the Agats District of Asmat Regency. The objective of this study is to present a comprehensive analysis of curriculum management practices at two specific schools, namely Inpres Syuru Elementary School and Mbait 2 State Preparatory Elementary School in Agats District, Asmat Regency.

This research examines three issues related to problem formulation: (1) The implementation of curriculum management at Inpres Syuru Elementary School and Mbait 2 State Preparatory Elementary School in Agats District, Asmat Regency; (2) The obstacles faced in implementing curriculum management at these schools; and (3) The steps taken to overcome these obstacles in curriculum management at Inpres Syuru Elementary School and Mbait 2 State Preparatory Elementary School in Agats District, Asmat Regency. The three problem formulations are expected to offer a comprehensive understanding of curriculum management at Inpres Syuru Elementary School and Mbait 2 State Preparatory Elementary School.

## Research Method

### Research Type

In this research, researchers used qualitative research with a phenomenological approach. According to Creswell, explained by Ruslam Ahmadi in his work, qualitative research is a process of investigating understanding that is based on clear methodological traditions of inquiry that explore human problems (Ahmadi, 2017) <sup>[1]</sup>. Meanwhile, phenomenology is a qualitative research approach that aims to understand human life experiences subjectively (Tumangkeng & Maramis, 2022) <sup>[27]</sup>. This approach focuses on how individuals experience and give meaning to a phenomenon or event. A phenomenological research approach can provide in-depth insight into curriculum management at Inpres Syuru Elementary School and Mbait 2 State Preparatory Elementary School, Agats District, Asmat Regency. This approach can help us understand how individuals experience and give meaning to the environment around SD Inpres Syuru and SD Negeri Mbait 2 Preparatory Elementary School, Agats District, Asmat Regency.

### Research Settings

The research was conducted at Inpres Syuru Elementary School located on Jl. Dendew Syuru and Mbait 2 State Preparatory Elementary School are located on Jl. New Pier. These two schools are located in Agats District, Asmat

Regency. The reason for choosing a research location is that the research location provides diversity in curriculum management practices. By selecting two differently located schools, research can explore differences in implementation and curriculum management challenges that may arise from different geographic and social contexts. In addition, by selecting representative research locations, it is hoped that the research can provide useful and relevant information for understanding curriculum management in these schools, as well as contributing to improving education in the area. Meanwhile, the research period is from February to August 2023.

### Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

The data utilised in this study can be classified into two groups: primary data, which was collected directly from research subjects (specifically, teachers and school principals who have direct administrative and technical involvement in the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum); and secondary data, which was acquired indirectly from these individuals. Documentation data pertaining to the attributes of the subject of study constitute secondary data, which is obtained from varied other sources. The data collection methods employed encompass the following: (1) Interviews, wherein the interview guide serves as the research instrument; (2) Participatory Observation, wherein researchers record and review diverse documents or archives pertaining to the implementation of curriculum management; and (3) Documentation, wherein researchers conduct observations while actively participating in classes where curriculum management is implemented.

### Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis methods used in qualitative research using a phenomenological approach to curriculum management at Inpres Syuru Elementary School and Mbait 2 State Preparatory Elementary School focus on understanding research subjects' experiences and meaning. Transcription converts interview data or field notes into text. For subsequent analysis, transcription data must be understood accurately; (2) Descriptive Approach: Detailing data-driven phenomena and experiences. Focus on words and phrases that reflect the subject's curriculum management experiences. This may require a memorable quote; (3) Coding: Coding identifies data themes and concepts. These codes reflect subject-specific curriculum management characteristics; (4) Pattern Search (Clustering): Combining similar codes to find themes. This helps interpret curriculum management experiences; (5) Abstraction: General notions come from patterns or themes in abstraction. Researchers seek to comprehend curricular management experiences' essence; (6) Phenomenological Description: Detailing the subject's curricular management experiences. This requires a detailed explanation of data meanings; (7) Validation and Confirmation: Checking with research subjects to make sure the researcher's interpretations match their experiences; (8) Narrative Writing: Explains findings in narratives or stories that cover the subject's curricular management experiences. This narrative gives qualitative context and detail.

### Findings and Discussion

#### Curriculum Management

Curriculum is open to both general and narrow interpretations. In the limited sense, "curriculum" refers to

written materials, curricular activities, or even a collection of subjects/courses. Conversely, a comprehensive curriculum can be understood as encompassing all instructional plans and experiences that seek to enhance the growth and progress of students under the supervision, accountability, and direction of the educational institution or madrasah (Muhaimin, 2016) <sup>[14]</sup>. Curriculum management comprises the entirety of collaborative endeavours aimed at enhancing the calibre of teaching and learning interactions while facilitating the attainment of educational goals. Curriculum management prioritises the implementation of a productivity-driven curriculum system in which the curriculum is designed with the learner in mind and with the intention of facilitating the attainment of desired learning outcomes.

The curriculum functions as a framework for organising, overseeing, and directing the content that educational establishments will teach. It provides direction for the execution of learning activities with the intention of attaining specific educational objectives. Curriculum management is a methodical, exhaustive, and collaborative framework for overseeing the curriculum with the ultimate goal of attaining its objectives (Saajidah, 2018) <sup>[22]</sup>. The delegation of autonomy to educational institutions or madrasas regarding the independent management of the curriculum, with a focus on meeting needs and objectives outlined in their vision and mission statements, does not disregard nationally recognised policies. Curriculum administration in madrasas consists of activities such as planning, implementation, and evaluation, all of which are designed to guarantee the effective and efficient execution of all educational endeavours. Curriculum management is the study of the way in which schools organise their extant resources to facilitate the efficient and effective execution of curriculum management activities.

The meaning of "management" in the context of curriculum planning refers to the ability to "manage," which refers to skills in curriculum planning and organization. Aspects that need to be considered in the curriculum planning process include the accountability of who is responsible for planning the curriculum and how the curriculum planning can be carried out with skill and professionalism. In an "administrative approach," the curriculum is planned by the leadership and then delivered to subordinate units, including teachers. In this approach, decisions and initiatives come from superiors and are carried out from the top down, without the active involvement of teachers. Teachers act as implementers in the field, while the development of ideas, ideas and main initiatives come from the leadership (Hamalik, 2010). The steps in planning curriculum management in elementary schools include (a) analysis of Graduate Competency Standards (SKL); (b) Identifying Learning Objectives (c) compiling teaching materials; (c) Determine learning methods; (d) designing learning evaluation

In implementing curriculum management, the school principal acts as a monitor for predetermined planning, assisted by representatives of the curriculum sector. The school principal monitors whether the plan that has been set is running well and identifies the weaknesses or strengths of the plan. Curriculum implementation consists of two levels, namely at the school level and at the class level. At the school level, the principal plays the main role, while at the classroom level, the teacher plays the main role. Even

though there are differences in duties between school principals and teachers in implementing the curriculum, as well as differences in administrative levels (class level and school level), both of them still have a mutual connection and responsibility in carrying out the curriculum administration process. At the school level, the principal has the responsibility to implement the curriculum in the school environment he leads. The school principal has the obligation to carry out activities such as preparing annual plans, preparing schedules for implementing activities, leading meetings and compiling meeting minutes, making statistics and compiling reports. At the class level, the division of teacher duties must be arranged administratively to ensure the smooth implementation of the curriculum in the classroom environment. This division of tasks includes three types of administrative activities, namely the division of teaching tasks, the division of extracurricular coaching tasks, and the division of tutoring tasks (Nasbi, 2017) <sup>[18]</sup>.

Evaluation is carried out to improve the implementation of the curriculum, including improvements, renewals or developments based on the stage of student development and the demands of the times. Evaluation is an integral part of the management framework involving planning, organization, implementation, monitoring and evaluation stages. The curriculum itself is planned, organized, implemented, and finally monitored and evaluated (Triansyah *et al.*, 2023) <sup>[26]</sup>. Evaluation is very important because without it it is difficult to assess the performance of the curriculum from planning to implementation, as well as the results it produces. In this research, curriculum planning is identified as a very crucial first step in curriculum management. Careful and goal-oriented planning provides a solid foundation for effective curriculum development and achieving desired learning. This research highlights that curriculum planning must consider various factors, including educational objectives, human resources (HR), student characteristics, community needs, and learning facilities.

### **Challenges in Curriculum Management in Primary Schools**

In curriculum management at Inpres Syuru Elementary School and Mbait 2 State Preparatory Elementary School, Agats District, Asmat Regency, there are several obstacles. First, many teachers in the research area do not have sufficient skills and competencies to implement the curriculum, including in terms of compiling learning tools and adapting them to the new curriculum. These limitations in skills and competencies become obstacles for teachers in implementing learning. Therefore, teachers need to improve their skills and competencies to be able to provide effective learning to students. Teachers who have adequate skills and competencies will be able to provide effective and quality learning to students.

Second, the implemented curriculum is the national curriculum from 2013. However, the majority of educators continue to lack a comprehensive understanding of this curriculum. Due to educators' inadequate knowledge of the curriculum, the development of instructional materials is hampered. Consequently, educators encounter challenges when it comes to developing instructional resources that align with the objectives and benchmarks established in the curriculum. An instructor's inadequate knowledge of the curriculum may also detrimentally affect the educational

experience. Educators who lack comprehension of the curriculum will encounter challenges when it comes to devising efficacious instructional plans, selecting suitable learning materials, and implementing suitable learning methodologies. The current predicament arises due to a deficiency in comprehensive teacher training and skill enhancement. Developing and training the competency of educators is regarded as one approach to enhancing their comprehension of the curriculum. Teachers must receive sufficient training in order to effectively implement the curriculum. In the event of curriculum modifications, it is critical that educators acquire supplementary training to ensure they can effectively impart knowledge in accordance with the new standards.

Further, the quality of instructional materials is critical to the learning process and can serve as a foundational support for quality and effective learning. A deficiency in the proficiency of educators in creating instructional resources is a determinant that may impede the calibre of learning. The function of instructional materials in facilitating effective learning is crucial. Certain educators, for instance, utilise only national textbooks in the classroom, which can be particularly problematic in the Asmat area. This is because nationally supplied texts might not always be suitable for the local environment. The environment-dependent characteristics and difficulties of each school influence the implementation of the curriculum and necessitate special adjustments.

### **Efforts to Overcome Curriculum Management Obstacles in Primary Schools**

Despite facing several obstacles at SD Inpres Syuru and SD Negeri Mbait 2 Preparatory Elementary School, Agats District, Asmat Regency, certain efforts have been made. First, in an effort to facilitate their comprehension and efficient implementation of the curriculum, curriculum-related training sessions have been conducted by educators. This comprises instruction on pedagogical approaches that align with the novel curriculum methodology. As an essential measure to enhance their calibre, training and development of teacher competency is regarded as a crucial endeavour. Pedagogical, professional, social, and personality competencies, among others, are enhanced to a positive degree when teacher competency training and development is implemented. It is anticipated that the development of superior learning outcomes will be facilitated by the enhancement of teachers' competencies and skills. Moreover, by creating instructional methods that are more engaging and significant for students, training and developing the competencies of educators can foster their innovation and creativity.

In order to overcome the challenges mentioned above, School Based Management (SBM) was implemented. SBM gives schools the authority to formulate internal policies that suit the specific needs and conditions of the school, aimed at improving the quality of education. In the previous year, SBM was only introduced conceptually and as a discourse, but had not yet been realized in practice. However, due to several obstacles in curriculum management at Inpres Syuru Elementary School and Mbait 2 State Preparatory Elementary School, Agats District, Asmat Regency, the implementation of SBM was carried out. Some of the advantages of SBM include: (1) Socializing the basic concepts of school-based education management, especially

to the community. (2) Collect input to ensure that management concepts can be implemented easily in accordance with cultural diversity in Indonesia. (3) Expanding the knowledge of the school community and individuals who care about education, especially in improving the quality of education. (4) Motivate the school community to think actively about improving the quality of education. (5) Encourage participatory awareness of the school community so that they are actively and dynamically involved in supporting improving the quality of education.

These efforts must be carried out on an ongoing basis and based on an in-depth analysis of the school's needs and context. A combination of these strategies can help overcome various obstacles in curriculum management at the elementary school level. The theory of change (Change Theory) states that changes in the curriculum focus on the way the organization or educational system manages and facilitates these changes. It involves strategies for understanding, planning, and implementing change effectively. To ensure curriculum management in elementary schools runs optimally, curriculum management principles need to be considered. First, productivity must be the focus, with the results of curriculum activities considered to ensure students achieve learning goals in accordance with the curriculum. Second, democratic principles must be integrated in the implementation of curriculum management, where managers, implementers and students are placed in appropriate positions with full responsibility for achieving curriculum goals. Third, positive cooperation from the various parties involved is needed so that curriculum objectives can be achieved. Fourth, effectiveness and efficiency must be the main consideration in a series of curriculum management activities to achieve useful results with efficient costs, energy and time. Fifth, the curriculum management process must strengthen and direct the vision, mission and goals set out in the curriculum.

### **Conclusion**

The administration of the elementary school curriculum comprises multiple stages. In the initial phase of curriculum development, a team is assembled to create instructional materials and learning aids, including Prota, Promes, Syllabus, and RPP. FGD is also utilised in this procedure to develop learning programmes. The second phase, implementation, entails educators executing the developed learning plans through the creation of curriculum-aligned learning aids. Furthermore, evaluations are conducted in order to enhance curriculum management. Input for these evaluations is solicited from various stakeholders, including instructors, curriculum assistants, student parents, and others.

Nevertheless, curriculum administration at the elementary school level is beset by a number of challenges, including teachers' ignorance of effective learning principles, learning standards, learning objectives, and student characteristics. In an effort to surmount these challenges, a number of initiatives have been undertaken: (1) Facilitation of teacher competency training and development; (2) Active engagement in the KKG (Teacher Working Group) forum; and (3) Application of School Based Management (MBS).

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