

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM LEARNING MODULE TO INCREASE STUDENT LEARNING MOTIVATION IN INDONESIAN LANGUAGE SUBJECTS

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the implementation of the Independent Curriculum learning module and to analyze students' learning motivation in Indonesian language learning for Grade X at MAN 3 Banda Aceh City. The study employed a qualitative field-research approach. The informants were an Indonesian language teacher and Grade X students, while the student sample was purposively selected from class X-1. Data were collected through interviews, observations, questionnaires, and documentation and were analyzed descriptively, with percentage calculations used to support the questionnaire

findings. The results indicate that the Independent Curriculum learning module was implemented through its principal components, including module identity, learning outcomes and objectives, meaningful understanding, trigger questions, learning activities, assessment, and reflection. The module supported more student-centered learning through discussions, presentations, simple projects, diagnostic assessment, and reflection activities. Students demonstrated greater classroom participation, confidence, learning independence, and interest in Indonesian language learning. Although implementation was constrained by limited instructional time, differences in student ability, and limited supporting media, the teacher was able to adjust the learning activities to classroom conditions. Therefore, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum learning module can support students' learning motivation by providing learning experiences that are more flexible, meaningful, participatory, and responsive to learner needs.

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INTRODUCTION

Technology in the 21st century has experienced rapid progress, with electronics becoming increasingly sophisticated. Information technology (IT) can make a tremendous contribution to the dissemination of information materials throughout the world. The presence of information technology is a bright spot expected to contribute positively to improving the quality of education. The development of information and communication technology has impacted changes in the learning process, where students are required and

required to possess skills, knowledge, and abilities in the fields of technology, media, and information. As Mardhiyah et al. (2021) argue, 21st-century learning is a knowledge era that demands students have the skills and abilities to think critically, solve problems, and utilize technology, media, and information.

According to Law Number 20 of 2003, education is a conscious and planned effort to realize the learning process so that students actively develop their potential. To achieve an educational goal, there are several things that must be prepared, especially those related to educational issues, namely the factors of teachers, students, curriculum, learning media, learning models, learning facilities and infrastructure. Education can be said to play an important role as a bridge that will later connect individuals with the environment, especially in the midst of the increasingly developing era of globalization, so that it is hoped that individuals will be able to play a role as quality Human Resources (HR) for the future. In connection with this, the government has certainly taken various ways to improve education in Indonesia, such as developing and improving the curriculum, improving educational facilities, developing and providing teaching materials that can later provide training for teachers or other educational staff (Jeanne, 2013).

One of the government's efforts to improve the quality of education in Indonesia is by implementing the "Merdeka Curriculum" (independent curriculum) in school learning. The "Merdeka Curriculum" (independent curriculum) incorporates a variety of intracurricular activities and optimized content, allowing students sufficient time to deepen concepts and strengthen learning competencies (Usanto, 2022).

Teachers have the freedom to choose various teaching tools so that learning can be tailored to learning needs and interests (Voni et al., 2022). The implementation of the independent curriculum emphasizes the achievement of competencies in attitudes, knowledge, and skills. The implementation of the learning curriculum plays a role in student learning competencies. The applied curriculum will directly influence students' subsequent activities. This will influence learning motivation, material mastery, and learning outcomes. Learning motivation can be said to be one of the main factors that causes students to be active and serious in participating in learning, so that it is hoped that learning objectives can be achieved and the results obtained are also optimal. Motivation can be defined as the difference between being able to implement and being willing to implement.

Motivation is more closely related to the desire to carry out tasks to achieve goals (Hamzah, 2021). Factors influencing student learning motivation are also crucial in determining their level of motivation. Furthermore, student learning motivation is closely

related to the implementation of the current curriculum, which ultimately determines student success in the learning process. Based on this statement, the researcher's reason for using the independent curriculum is because its implementation is expected to increase student learning motivation, as this curriculum is fundamentally student-centered. Teachers serve only as facilitators, mediators, and motivators for students, ensuring their enthusiasm for learning and achieving positive results.

MAN 3 Banda Aceh City is one of the Madrasahs located on the UIN Arraniry campus ring road, Rukoh Village, Syiah Kuala District, and has implemented the independent curriculum. However, currently MAN 3 Banda Aceh City has only implemented the independent curriculum in one class, namely in class X. Therefore, the researcher is interested in further research regarding the implementation of the independent curriculum in Indonesian language lessons in class AJLE / 4.2; 17-23; 2025 19. The researcher wants to see how the independent curriculum is implemented in Indonesian language learning and what factors influence student motivation in learning Indonesian. Therefore, the researcher took the title "Implementation of the Independent Curriculum Learning Module in Increasing Student Learning Motivation in Indonesian Language Subjects for Class X at MAN 3 Banda Aceh City."

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a qualitative research. According to Lexy J. Moleong (2017), Qualitative research is a research that intends to understand the phenomena about what is experienced by the research subjects such as behavior, perception, motivation, actions, and others. This research is located at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 3 Banda Aceh City. The research subjects who are used as research informants are Indonesian language teachers and students in class X MAN 3 Banda Aceh City. The population in this study is all class X students at MAN 3 Banda Aceh City. The sample that the researcher used in this study is only one class, namely class X-1. In determining the sample, the researcher used a purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is a data source sampling technique with certain considerations (Syadiah, 2013).

Data collection was carried out using field research to obtain concrete data that occurred in the field. Data collection techniques include: a. Interviews, conducted with informants to seek information related to the implementation of independent curriculum learning in increasing student learning motivation in Indonesian language subjects in class X-1 MAN 3 Banda Aceh City. In this case the researcher prepared an interview instrument

in the form of an interview sheet containing important things to be asked. b. Observations, conducted directly to find out the implementation of the learning process using the independent curriculum learning module and observing student learning motivation directly to find out the learning motivation of class X-1 students where the results of the data will be processed using a rating scale to find out the learning motivation category of class X MIA 1 students in the Language subject c. Questionnaires, researchers will give a number of questionnaires to class X-1 students totaling 27 students.

The series of questions in the questionnaire are related to indicators of student learning motivation towards the Indonesian Language subject. The number of questions contained in the questionnaire is 13 questions with two answer choices, namely "YES" and "NO". d. Documents, documentation collected by researchers in this study is in the form of independent curriculum learning modules on the Indonesian Language subject used by the teacher concerned during the teaching and learning process. Analysis of data collected through questionnaires on all students of class X-1, will be processed using statistical formulas by tabulating based on the percentage formula as follows:

$$P = F/N \times 100$$

Where: P = percentage answered by respondents

F = frequency

N = number of respondents

100 = percentage number.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

1. Implementation of the Independent Curriculum Learning Module

The observation results show that teachers have implemented the Independent Curriculum learning module in accordance with the established components, namely module identity, learning outcomes, learning objectives, meaningful understanding, trigger questions, learning activities, assessment, and reflection. In the initial stages of learning, teachers conduct diagnostic assessments to determine students' initial abilities. Next, they convey learning objectives and ask probing questions related to everyday life to help students connect the material to their own experiences. In core activities, teachers implement student-centered learning through group discussions, presentations, simple project-based learning, and reflection activities. Teachers act as facilitators, guiding students throughout the learning process.

2. Student Learning Activities

Based on observations, student learning activities improved after using the Independent Curriculum learning module. Students appeared more active in participating in discussions, asking questions to the teacher, responding to classmates' opinions, and confidently presenting group work. Students also demonstrated improved collaborative skills compared to before the module's implementation. Learning was no longer teacher-dominated, but instead actively involved students in every stage of the learning process.

3. Student Learning Motivation

The results of the questionnaire showed that students' learning motivation increased in the following indicators.

- a. Diligence in learning; Most students complete assignments on time, prepare materials before learning begins, and show sincerity when completing exercises given by the teacher.
- b. Interest in learning; Students stated that learning Indonesian became more interesting because the material was linked to everyday life and supported by varied learning activities.

- c. Self-confidence

Students are more confident in expressing opinions, asking questions, and making presentations in front of the class.

- d. Learning independence

Students are able to search for information from various sources and complete assignments without always relying on teachers.

4. Teacher Interview Results

Teachers reported that using the Independent Curriculum learning modules facilitated learning because the activity steps were systematically structured. It also made it easier for teachers to implement differentiated learning based on student needs. According to teachers, the most visible change is increased student participation during learning. Students are more active in discussions, asking questions, and expressing ideas more openly.

5. Student Interview Results

Most students stated that learning using modules was more engaging than previous learning. They found it easier to understand the material because it was presented step-by-

step, used examples relevant to everyday life, and was supported by group activities and simple projects.

6. Implementation Constraints

The research also identified several obstacles, including limited learning time, diverse student abilities, and limited learning support media. Teachers addressed these obstacles by providing support to students who needed it and utilizing the learning media available at the school.

Discussion

The research results show that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum learning module can improve students' motivation in Indonesian language. This improvement is evident in changes in students' learning behavior, which has led to them becoming more active, independent, confident, and showing a higher interest in learning compared to before the module was implemented.

The implementation of learning modules provides students with the opportunity to learn more flexibly, tailored to their individual characteristics and abilities. This aligns with the Independent Curriculum concept, which places students at the center of learning (student-centered learning). Teachers are no longer the sole source of information, but rather serve as facilitators, helping students construct knowledge through meaningful learning experiences.

The increase in student learning activity indicates that the learning module successfully created a more interactive learning environment. Group discussions, presentations, projects, and learning reflections encouraged students to actively participate throughout the learning process. This demonstrates that a variety of learning methods can increase student engagement, resulting in more effective learning.

The findings of this study also indicate an increase in students' intrinsic motivation. Persistence in completing assignments, courage to express opinions, and curiosity about the learning material are indicators that students possess an intrinsic drive to learn. Intrinsic motivation is a crucial factor in improving learning success because students learn not solely to earn grades but also to understand the material.

The results of this study align with the learning motivation theory proposed by Uno, Hamzah B., which states that learning motivation is characterized by a desire to succeed, a need for learning, future expectations, appreciation for learning, engaging learning activities, and a conducive learning environment. The implementation of the Independent

Curriculum learning module successfully meets most of these indicators through the presentation of engaging and meaningful learning activities.

Furthermore, the research findings support Sardiman A.M.'s view that learning motivation increases when students are given the opportunity to actively participate in the learning process. Learning activities involving discussion, collaboration, and problem-solving provide a more meaningful learning experience than teacher-centered learning.

The successful implementation of learning modules is also influenced by teachers' ability to design learning activities that are appropriate to student characteristics. Teachers are able to integrate diagnostic assessments, differentiated learning, and formative assessments so that the learning process occurs systematically. This demonstrates that the quality of learning planning significantly influences the successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum.

However, this study also identified several challenges. Differences in student abilities mean teachers need to provide different support to each student. Furthermore, limited learning time and learning media pose challenges in implementing all the activities contained in the module. However, these challenges do not reduce the effectiveness of the module's implementation, as teachers are able to adapt to suit school conditions.

Overall, the research results demonstrate that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum learning modules has a positive impact on increasing student motivation in Indonesian language learning. The learning modules not only assist teachers in implementing the learning process systematically but also provide more meaningful learning experiences for students. Therefore, the use of the Independent Curriculum learning modules needs to be continuously developed as a strategy to improve the quality of Indonesian language learning in schools.

Finally, the results need to be interpreted in relation to the study design. The research was conducted in one class and relied on qualitative field data supported by questionnaire percentages. Consequently, the findings provide a contextual description of implementation rather than evidence of a causal effect that can be generalized to all schools. Future research could compare several classes or schools, use pretest-posttest measures of learning motivation, and examine how specific module components contribute to motivational change. It would also be useful to investigate whether increased motivation is sustained over a longer period and whether it is associated with measurable improvements in Indonesian language achievement. Such research would strengthen the evidence base

for the Independent Curriculum while preserving the contextual insights provided by classroom-based qualitative studies.

These findings also have practical implications for the sustainable implementation of the Independent Curriculum. The positive classroom changes observed in this study should not be interpreted as evidence that a module alone automatically increases motivation. The module functions as an instructional framework, while its effectiveness depends on teacher competence, classroom interaction, available learning resources, assessment practices, and responsiveness to student diversity. The systematic review by Erwanti and Suratno (2026) highlights the relationship between student-centered learning, motivation, self-regulated learning, and academic achievement in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum. Accordingly, schools need to support teachers through collaborative lesson planning, reflection, sharing of teaching modules, and access to appropriate learning media. Such institutional support is particularly important for addressing the constraints identified in this study, including limited instructional time and learning resources.

The element of choice in learning activities may further explain students' increased interest. Patall, Cooper, and Robinson (2008), through a meta-analysis, found that providing choice can enhance intrinsic motivation, effort, performance, and perceived competence. In the Independent Curriculum, teachers have greater flexibility in selecting learning tools and students can be given meaningful options in how they explore or demonstrate learning. However, choice should remain purposeful and manageable. Too many options without guidance can create confusion, whereas carefully designed options can make students feel that they have ownership of the learning process. Thus, the effectiveness of the module depends not only on the written format of the teaching module but also on the teacher's pedagogical decisions when translating the module into classroom activities.

The increase in learning independence observed among students can also be connected with self-regulated learning. Zimmerman (2002) describes self-regulated learners as students who actively plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning. Pintrich and De Groot (1990) found that self-efficacy, intrinsic value, and self-regulation are closely associated with cognitive engagement and academic performance. The Independent Curriculum module creates conditions that can support these processes through clear objectives, independent information seeking, project completion, and reflection. Students who are accustomed to identifying what they need to learn and evaluating what they have achieved may gradually become less dependent on direct teacher instruction. This finding

is particularly relevant to Indonesian language learning because literacy activities require students to read, interpret, formulate ideas, communicate, and revise their understanding independently.

The diagnostic and formative assessment components of the module also deserve attention. Diagnostic assessment helps teachers identify students' initial knowledge, while formative assessment enables teachers to monitor progress and adjust instruction. Black and Wiliam (1998) emphasized that formative assessment can improve learning when information about student performance is used to modify teaching and learning activities. Hattie and Timperley (2007) further explain that effective feedback helps learners understand where they are going, how they are progressing, and what they should do next. In this study, assessment and reflection are integrated into the learning module, which means students receive opportunities not only to complete tasks but also to recognize their learning progress. Such experiences can strengthen perceived competence and encourage students to continue participating, particularly when feedback is constructive and focused on improvement.

Another important feature of the module is differentiated learning. The study found differences in students' initial abilities and showed that the teacher provided additional support to students who needed it. This is consistent with the principle that instructional activities should respond to learner readiness and needs. Agusta et al. (2024) reported that differentiated instruction can positively influence motivation and learning outcomes by providing more appropriate learning experiences, while Muchson, Afandi, and Sugiono (2025) found that differentiated learning within the Merdeka Curriculum can support improved learning outcomes. More recent evidence also indicates that differentiated learning can strengthen motivation when students receive learning opportunities aligned with their readiness and characteristics (Faradiba et al., 2026). Therefore, the teacher's adaptation of the module should be viewed as a strength of implementation rather than a deviation from the curriculum.

The use of project activities and collaborative tasks in the module may also contribute to the observed increase in motivation. A recent meta-analysis by Wijnia et al. (2024) found that problem-based, project-based, and case-based learning produce a small-to-moderate positive effect on student motivation compared with more teacher-centered approaches. Zhang and Ma (2023) likewise reported positive effects of project-based learning on learning outcomes, while Chen and Yang (2019) found an overall positive effect on academic achievement. These findings strengthen the interpretation that simple projects in

Indonesian language learning can provide students with a clearer purpose for using language skills. When students prepare a presentation, discuss a text, solve a language-related problem, or produce a project, learning becomes connected to an authentic task rather than limited to receiving information from the teacher.

The finding that students became more confident, persistent, and willing to ask questions also indicates stronger behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris (2004) describe student engagement as a multidimensional construct involving participation, emotional connection, and investment in learning. The results of this study show indications of all three dimensions. Behavioral engagement is reflected in students' increased participation in discussions and presentations; emotional engagement is reflected in stronger interest and enthusiasm; and cognitive engagement is visible in students' willingness to search for information and complete tasks more independently. This perspective is important because learning motivation should not be understood only as a score or a temporary feeling. Motivation becomes educationally meaningful when it is expressed in observable learning behavior and sustained effort.

The combination of student autonomy and instructional structure is also relevant to the present findings. Jang, Reeve, and Deci (2010) found that engagement is strengthened when teachers provide both autonomy support and clear structure. This helps explain why the learning module was effective even though the teacher no longer dominated classroom interaction. The module still provided learning objectives, activity sequences, assessments, and reflection, while allowing students to engage in discussion, presentation, and project work. In other words, the Independent Curriculum does not remove teacher guidance; it changes the form of that guidance. Students are encouraged to take greater responsibility, but the learning process remains organized. This balance is particularly important for Grade X students who are still adapting to new academic demands and may need explicit expectations while gradually developing learning independence.

The motivational change identified in this study can be interpreted more deeply through self-determination theory. Ryan and Deci (2000) explain that motivation becomes stronger when learning environments support students' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. The Independent Curriculum learning module used in this study provides space for students to participate in discussions, make learning decisions, work collaboratively, and reflect on their learning. These characteristics are important because autonomy does not simply mean that students are left to learn on their own; rather, students

receive meaningful choices within a clear instructional structure. Research by Reeve and Jang (2006) similarly shows that autonomy-supportive teaching behaviors can strengthen students' willingness to participate in learning activities. In the context of Indonesian language learning at MAN 3 Banda Aceh City, the teacher's role as a facilitator therefore appears to be one mechanism through which the module can encourage students to become more active and motivated.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The implementation of the Independent Learning curriculum module provides freedom of expression. Learning activities provide opportunities for students and teachers to freely express themselves, from expressing opinions to discussions without creating psychological pressure, especially for students. Several factors can influence student learning motivation, including parents, teachers, learning facilities, and the learning environment. Therefore, students' motivation to continue learning well can be developed, improved, or changed through learning and practice. In other words, these factors are drivers of student learning, enabling students to obtain appropriate assistance in overcoming difficulties or problems in learning.

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