



## Effectiveness of Independent Curriculum in Improving Student Learning Motivation Class V on PKN Lessons at SDN 064965 Sidodame City of Medan

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the effectiveness of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in increasing the learning motivation of fifth-grade students in Civics at SDN 064965 Sidodame, Medan City. The background of this study is based on the important role of the curriculum as a reference in the learning process, where the Independent Curriculum is presented as an effort to restore post-pandemic learning with a more flexible, student-centered approach, and prioritizing student interests and talents. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with observation, interviews, and documentation methods. The subjects in this study were class teachers and fifth-grade students. The results show that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum has a positive influence on increasing student learning motivation. Students become more active, creative, and enthusiastic in participating in Civics learning. However, in its implementation, several challenges remain, such as teachers' limited understanding of the new curriculum and a lack of supporting facilities and infrastructure. Nevertheless, in general, the Independent Curriculum has proven quite effective in building student learning motivation through an approach that is fun, contextual, and appropriate to the needs and potential of individual students.

**Keywords :** Independent Curriculum, Learning Motivation, PKN

### Introduction

Education is a learning process carried out by a person to obtain information and develop their potential, so that they can be useful for the country and the surrounding environment. Education has a large contribution to the progress of a country. If the education system in a country is implemented well, it will create superior human resources, highly competitive, and make the country advanced. In the National Education System Law Number 20 of 2003 CHAPTER I Article 1 Paragraph 1 that Education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have spiritual religious strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble morals, and skills needed by themselves, society, nation, and state. Based on the aforementioned laws, careful planning is necessary for learning to activate student motivation in the classroom, allowing students to freely develop their potential and achieve academic success. Lambok (2014) states that learning is a change in a person caused by experience. Learning plays a vital role in a person's development, attitudes, habits, beliefs, personality, goals, and perspectives. Teaching and learning activities in Indonesia are guided by the curriculum. Curriculums are developed and refined to keep pace with the rapid development of science and technology and the evolving society. The COVID-19 pandemic has seen significant changes in education, particularly in Indonesia, as in-person classroom learning transitions to distance learning based on digital technology.

Based on the results of observations and initial interviews conducted at SDN 064965 Sidodame, Medan, the researchers conducted direct interviews with teachers and students. In the interviews, the researchers asked several questions that had been prepared regarding the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum on learning motivation in the learning process at SDN 064965 Sidodame, where the main obstacle experienced by many schools was a lack of understanding and preparation from teachers. Thus, teachers, as the main agents in the success of learning, are required to have a deep understanding of the principles and methods of the Merdeka Curriculum. However, in practice, many teachers still struggle to adapt due to limited training and time available to understand the concept of this new curriculum (Suprihatin, 2019). This causes the learning process to be unable to fully optimize the objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum. Furthermore, limited resources such as textbooks, teaching aids, and supporting learning facilities also pose a significant challenge. Many schools still rely on textbooks and guidebooks, while the Independent Curriculum requires more varied teaching materials to accommodate project-based learning and student interests (Panginan, 2022). These limitations have the potential to hinder the curriculum's effectiveness, as teachers struggle to provide materials and media that optimally stimulate student learning motivation. Another factor is the diversity of students' interests and talents. Elementary school students generally have highly varied abilities, interests, and talents. The Independent Curriculum, which focuses on developing individual interests, may not always meet the needs of all students, especially in situations where teachers lack sufficient experience in differentiated learning (Endang, 2020). Thus, based on this background, the researcher is interested in conducting a study entitled "The Effectiveness of the Independent Curriculum to Increase Learning Motivation of Class V Students in Civics Lessons at SDN 064965 Sidodame".

### *Understanding the Independent Curriculum*

Etymologically, the curriculum comes from the Greek words *curir*, meaning to learn, and *curare*, meaning a place to race. Thus, the term curriculum originates from the world of sports in ancient Rome in Greece, meaning the distance a runner must cover from the starting line to the finish line. The distance here can be understood to mean the curriculum, with its content and subject matter, which is used as a timeframe for students to complete to obtain a diploma. In Arabic, the word curriculum commonly used is *manhaj*, meaning the bright path that humans take in various areas of life. The educational curriculum (*manhaj al-dirasah*) in the *tarbiyah* dictionary is a set of plans and media used as a reference by educational institutions in realizing educational goals. As for the benefits from curriculum independent as follows : (1) the implementation of the independent curriculum provides broad creative space because teachers are given the freedom to design learning programs that suit the characteristics of students. Strengthening Indonesia as a diverse and harmonious nation. (2) can increase creativity in both teaching staff and students (3) can create generations of independent and creative students. There are many terms whose meanings are almost the same as the concept of independent learning (4) Independent learning is beneficial for happiness. Why is it called happiness? Because the policy on Independent Learning is a program to create or organize learning that is fun, a happy atmosphere and makes students comfortable or teachers feel happy to dedicate the knowledge they have to students. In terms of the School Mover Program, the Minister of Education and Culture stated that the Independent Curriculum has several characteristics according to (Mustaghfiroh Siti 2020), such as: (1) Project-based learning involves various project activities, which makes learning activities more relevant and interactive (2) focuses on important material and gradually improves students' abilities (3) This curriculum allows learning to be more flexible. free, because it provides various freedoms to students, educators, and educational institutions.

### *Understanding Learning Motivation*

Motivation is the fundamental drive that drives a person to behave. This drive resides within a person, leading them to act in accordance with their inner drive. Motivation can also be defined as the difference between being able to perform and being willing to perform. Motivation is more closely related to the desire to carry out a task to achieve a goal. Motivation comes from the Latin word "*Movere*," meaning "push" or "driving force." Motivation has a very influential role in learning because every activity must be motivated, which in turn can shape the level of student learning outcomes. Students who are highly motivated will learn better than students who are not motivated. (Sadirman 2018) states, there are 3 functions of learning motivation, namely: (1) Human motivation to act; the main drive in every job that will be done (2) Determining the direction of action; namely towards the hopes that are to be achieved, so that motivation can provide inspiration to carry out activities. (3) Selecting actions means determining what activities must be carried out so that they are the same in achieving the desired expectations, while separating useless actions from these activities. Motivation encourages the emergence of behavior and influences and changes behavior. In this regard, there are three functions of motivation according to (Leni, 2022), namely: (1) Encouraging the emergence of a behavior or an action. Without motivation, no action will arise, such as learning (2) Motivation functions as a director. This means directing actions to achieve the desired goal (3) Motivation functions as a driver, it functions as an engine for a car. The size of the motivation will determine how fast or slow an action is.

## Research Methodology

The type of research used in this study is descriptive qualitative research. According to Sugiyono (2020) , qualitative research methods are research approaches used to understand social phenomena from the perspective of the research subjects. Qualitative research aims to explore the meaning, experiences, and perspectives of individuals or groups within their social context, thereby providing a deeper understanding of a phenomenon. The research was conducted at SD Negeri 064965 Sidodame, Medan Timur District, Medan City Regency, North Sumatra Province. The research period will be held in June to July 2025. The subjects in this study were the researcher himself, 40 fifth grade students , fifth grade teachers, and the Elementary School of 064965 Sidodame Medan . Meanwhile, the object of this study was the effectiveness of the Independent Curriculum in Increasing the Learning Motivation of Fifth Grade Students in Civics Lessons. data sources used in this research are primary data and secondary data . In this study, the primary data sources used are The data from this research were obtained through observation activities, interviews, questionnaires and documentation results. Meanwhile, in this study, secondary sources used in this study were student lists, documents, and photographs of teaching and learning activities in the classroom. This data collection method focused on descriptive and analytical data collection, which can be in the form of interviews, observations, document results , and questionnaires . Data analysis used qualitative descriptive. Analysis of research data results using the Miles and Huberman model, namely, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions .

## Results and Discussion

Based on observations made to 40 fourth grade students of SDN 064965 Sidodame During 4 weeks of learning , the following data was obtained :

**Table 1. Recapitulation of observation results of class V students (N = 40)**

No.	Question	Yes	No
1	Students show full attention when the teacher explains the PKN material	47.5	52.5
2	Students actively ask teachers or friends about material they don't understand.	45	55
3	Students are enthusiastic about participating in project-based learning activities.	52.5	47.5
4	Students show joy when taking PKN lessons	47.5	52.5
5	Students complete the assignments given by the teacher on time	62.5	37.5
6	Students show a desire to get good grades in Civics lessons	62.5	37.5
7	Students are able to work together with friends during learning	55	45
8	Students remain enthusiastic about following lessons even though they face difficulties.	50	50
9	Students bring complete study equipment during Civics lessons	50	50
10	Students provide responses or opinions during class discussions	42.5	57.5

From the table above it can be seen that Based on the results of observations of the ten indicators of learning motivation, it was found that the Independent Curriculum has begun to have a positive influence on students' learning motivation, but has not yet run optimally in all aspects. Table 2 presents the results of interviews with 40 fifth-grade students conducted individually and in small groups to obtain comprehensive data on the effectiveness of the Independent Curriculum in Increasing Fifth-grade Students' Learning Motivation in Civics Lessons.

**Table 2. Summary of Interview Results for Grade V Students (N=40)**

No.	Question	Yes (%)	No (%)	Don't know (%)
1	Knowing what the independent curriculum is, and the differences felt compared to the previous curriculum	27.5	50	22.5
2	Student activity and motivation in learning teaching and learning activities in class	55	25	20
3	Student involvement in doing P5 activities and difficulties encountered	42.5	37.5	20
4	Support and obstacles in carrying out learning activities in the classroom	62.5	35	2.5

For a clearer picture of the percentage of interviews with students regarding the independent curriculum in the Civics subject in grade V, please see the following image: Table 3. shows the results of the student learning questionnaire conducted on all devices. in PKN learning in the independent curriculum grade V for one academic year. by distributing a questionnaire to 40 students consisting of 15 statements. In order to obtain scores from positive and negative statements.

**Table 3. Recapitulation of student questionnaire results (N=40)**

No	Indicator	Aspect	Presentation (%)	Category
1	Having a Desire and Wish to Succeed	1. Students are enthusiastic about learning	50.83	Enough
2	The Existence of Motivation and Need in Learning	2. Students are motivated to succeed	49	Enough
		3. Students realize the importance of learning	50.5	Enough
		4. Students are motivated to learn	61.25	Tall
3	There are interesting activities in learning	5. Students are not bored with learning	47.5	Enough
4	Having a conducive learning environment enables students to learn well.	6. Students are interested in learning	49	Enough
		7. The Environment Comfortable for Learning	67	Tall
		8. Students are comfortable with the learning environment Conducive	59.5	Enough

### *Effectiveness of the Independent Curriculum*

Based on the results of research conducted at SDN 064965 Sidodame, it can be seen that that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum has a significant impact to improvement learning motivation of fifth grade students in the subject Civics lessons. This is shown through observation and interview results to students, who reveal existence change student learning behavior towards being more active, independent, and enthusiastic in

participating in the learning process. In its implementation, the Independent Curriculum provides room freedom for teachers to develop learning strategies that suit student characteristics. Teachers are no longer just act as a transmitter material, but rather as a facilitator who guides students to understand material through activity projects, discussions , and exploration Independent. This condition makes students feel more appreciated and directly involved in the learning process, thus increasing their sense of responsibility answer and interest to civics lessons. Based on interviews with several students, they stated that method applied learning feels more fun and not boring. Students are given opportunity to work on tasks related to experience real as well as linking matter with life everyday. This is in line with the opinion of Hamzah (2016), who stated that Interesting and meaningful learning activities can grow students' learning motivation more optimally. Thus, the results of this study confirm that The Independent Curriculum is effective in creating an atmosphere more democratic, enjoyable, and student- centered learning. The effectiveness of this reflected from increasing learning motivation, participation active, and students' interest in PKN lessons which previously tended to considered boring and monotonous memorization solely.

#### *Student Learning Motivation*

Based on the results of research conducted in class V of SDN 064965 Sidodame , it was found that that student learning motivation in the subject civics lessons show quite a significant increase since its implementation Independent Curriculum . The learning motivation shown by students is visible. from a number of indicators such as high curiosity, involvement active in learning , as well enthusiasm in completing tasks, both individually and group. From the results of observations and interviews , many students stated that current civics learning feels more interesting and no longer boring as before. This is in line with Hamzah's opinion (2016) that Fun learning activities that are tailored to students' interests can increase internal motivation . The Independent Curriculum emphasizes learning based projects and freedom express give space for students to develop their potential. In the learning process, students are more active ask, discuss, and express his opinion with confidence self. Overall, the results of this study indicate that learning motivation of fifth grade students at SDN 064965 Sidodame is in a fairly high category, especially in Civics lessons. The Independent Curriculum plays a role big in creating atmosphere Interactive and meaningful learning, so that students are encouraged to learn actively and enjoyably. Thus, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum is consistent and supported by all parties. will further increase students' motivation and quality of learning in the future.

#### *Impact Independent Curriculum on Learning Motivation*

The results of research conducted at SDN 064965 Sidodame show that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum brings impact positive to learning motivation of fifth grade students, especially in the subject Citizenship Education (PKN) lessons. The curriculum is designed with a learning approach based the interests and needs of these students were met successfully create a more enjoyable, meaningful and liberating learning atmosphere method student thinking. One of the most obvious impact is increased confidence students' self in delivering opinion, ask to teachers, and participate in activities class discussions. Students become more active and involved in the learning process, especially during learning based project implemented. Activities varied and contextual learning encourage students to be more enthusiastic about following lessons and feel that what they learned relevant to life daily. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum also has an impact on motivation intrinsic student qualities, such as curiosity , desire to achieve, and enthusiasm completing tasks independently. This is in line with the opinion of Deci & Ryan (2019) who stated that motivation will increase if students feel own autonomy in learning and being given room to develop himself themselves. In PKN learning, students are given opportunity to observe problem social in their environment, discuss, and formulate solution, so they feel that learning is not just to get values, but also to shape attitudes and character. In addition, the Independent Curriculum provides impact to motivation extrinsic students. Teachers as facilitators give praise, appreciation, and positive feedback that triggers student enthusiasm. With flexibility the time and methods that teachers have, the classroom atmosphere becomes more inclusive and less pressuring students, so that grow feeling comfortable and safe in learning. However thus, the impact positive it is not yet fully evenly Because Still found a number of constraints, such as limitations learning facilities and their uneven distribution teacher's understanding of implementation curriculum. Although thus, the majority of students remain show enthusiasm tall to based learning Independent Curriculum. Teachers also start show adjustment role as a motivator and capable guide facilitate student development .

#### **Conclusion**

Based on the results of research conducted through observation, interviews, and questionnaires, it can be concluded that the Effectiveness of the Independent Curriculum in Increasing the Learning Motivation of Class V Students in Civics Lessons at Sdn 064965 Sidodame, Medan City, can be concluded as follows:

1. The effectiveness of the Independent Curriculum in increasing fifth-grade students' learning motivation in Civics (PKN) is quite effective. This curriculum is evident in the increased active participation of students in

teaching and learning activities, both through class discussions, group projects, and openly expressing opinions. Questionnaire data shows that most students feel more comfortable, more motivated, and more interested in participating in Civics learning after the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. This is supported by interview results, which stated that students showed greater enthusiasm in participating in lessons and were able to learn independently in several aspects.

2. The impact of the Independent Curriculum on student learning motivation is evident in changes in student attitudes and behavior in the classroom. Students become more confident, actively participate in discussions, are able to collaborate, and demonstrate a greater interest in civics lessons. This indicates that this curriculum not only builds cognitive knowledge but also develops students' social skills and character. However, the full effectiveness of the Independent Curriculum depends heavily on teachers' readiness in classroom management, as well as adequate support from the school and parents in creating a holistic learning environment.
3. In terms of student learning motivation, data shows an increase after the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. Based on the questionnaire recapitulation, students demonstrated high motivation in the indicators of a comfortable learning environment (67%) and students being motivated to learn (61.25%). This indicates that the learning environment created through this curriculum approach is quite supportive of students' psychological and cognitive development. However, several other motivational aspects, such as interest in learning and persistence in learning, are still considered adequate (below 50%), indicating the need to develop more engaging, interactive, and challenging learning strategies.

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