

# The Implementation of Independent Curriculum Through Project Based Learning at TK ABA VII Kediri

<sup>1\*</sup>Anik Lestaringrum, <sup>2</sup>Efi Rofiqoh, <sup>3</sup>Stella Natanie

<sup>1,3</sup> PG-PAUD, Universitas Nusantara PGRI Kediri, <sup>2</sup>TK ABA VII Kota Kediri

E-mail: <sup>1</sup>anikl@unpkediri.ac.id, <sup>2</sup>Efirofiqoh1970@gmail.com

<sup>3</sup>nathaniestella2@gmail.com

\*Corresponding Author

**Abstract**—The new paradigm of learning experiences dynamics along with the development of the world of education with increasingly complex and dynamic technology. These changes also impact the early childhood education environment, where playing as a way of learning will be strengthened again so that children are optimally fulfilled in all aspects of development. Moreover, the impact of the learning process during the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in the interruption of direct interaction with distance learning resulting in children lacking concentration and easily triggered by emotions. At the same time, early childhood is a fundamental period. The government also issued policies related to changes in learning in line with the new curriculum, namely the independent curriculum. Implementing an independent curriculum based on children's needs will be used to improve learning. This study aims to get an overview of the implementation of the independent curriculum at the Kindergarten level, especially in the city of Kediri. This study used a descriptive qualitative method with data collection techniques using observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis used descriptive analysis as a narrative that tells about the expected research objectives. The results of this study can be used as initial insight into how to implement an independent curriculum at the early childhood level, especially Kindergarten in the target school program for the first period, namely the age of 5-6 years.

**Keywords:** independent curriculum; early childhood; play; how to learn

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**Corresponding Author:**

Anik Lestaringrum,  
PG-PAUD,  
Universitas Nusantara PGRI Kediri,  
Email: [anikl@unpkediri.ac.id](mailto:anikl@unpkediri.ac.id)



## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Education policies constantly change along with the development of conditions for the spread of Covid-19 in the State of Indonesia, starting with policies issued by the government (Antonius Purwanto, 2021). Health is considered the main priority for determining the policy of learning activities. In addition, based on government evaluations, there is a need for face-to-face learning from students who experience problems in implementing distance learning. Therefore, vaccination intervention for educators and education personnel is needed to accelerate returns to face-to-face learning besides applying strict health protocols (Keputusan Bersama Panduan Penyelenggaraan Pembelajaran Di Masa Pandemi Coronavirus Disease 20 19 (COVID- 1 9), 2021). The letter of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Number 7 of 2022 concerning the Discretion for the Implementation of Joint Decrees of 4 (FOUR) Ministers concerning Guidelines for the Implementation of Learning in the Covid-19 Period has been revised. Then, the regulation of limited PTM in 2022 states that parents/guardians of students can choose limited PTM or PJJ for their children until the first semester of the 2021/2022 academic year ends. Starting from the second semester of the academic year or the 2021/2022 academic year (January 2022), all students must take limited PTM (DITPSD KEMDIKBUD, 2022).

Along with these policy changes, the curriculum also needs to be adjusted, and the curriculum must constantly change to suit the times, especially nowadays when science and information technology has grown more massive and uncontrollable. Curriculum changes might impose negative or positive impacts on the quality of education. The positive impact is that students can learn by following the developments of an increasingly advanced era. Literature on the importance of managing an institution that can survive during pandemic conditions prioritizes the implementation of increasing competence in technology using digital media because of the high usage of digital applications for learning during distance learning (Lestarinigrum, 2021a). Developing educators' competence will bring the essence of maintaining children's education by playing (F. Wahyuni & Azizah, 2020), in which children's way of learning through playing is prioritized. Referring to Ki Hajar Dewantara's learning (Istiq'faroh, 2020), freedom to play is based on the child's independence (Noventari, 2020), not through commands but by providing good example guidance (Magta, 2013). In this case, it highlights the differentiation or diversity and uniqueness of early childhood, which becomes the concept of developing an independent curriculum for early childhood education (Lestarinigrum, n.d.).

Independent curriculum-based learning will be designed by considering students' current stage of development and level of achievement according to learning needs. It will reflect the characteristics and development of diverse learners so that learning becomes meaningful and

enjoyable (Kemdikbud, 2021). The government also prepares it in the form of guidelines concerning a centred and pro-student learning and assessment dedicated for educators at the education unit level in implementing an independent curriculum. The learning program will bring out children's happiness with the application of learning without coercion, subject to the stages of child development (Handayani & Rohman, 2020). From the explanation, it can be inferred that what lies behind the emergence of curriculum changes, in addition to adapting to technological developments and adjusting to the government's policy changes while still considering students' needs, is a learning centre that will prioritize students' needs.

## II. RESEARCH METHOD

Qualitative research is a research process to understand human or social phenomena by creating a comprehensive and complex picture that can be presented in words, reporting detailed views obtained from informants and carried out in the natural setting of (Fadli, 2021). The research is conducted in specific settings in real life (natural) to investigate and understand phenomena: what happened, why it happened, and how it happened. This research will refer to a qualitative approach that put together a combination of literature studies (Darmalaksana, 2020) where the design is as shown below

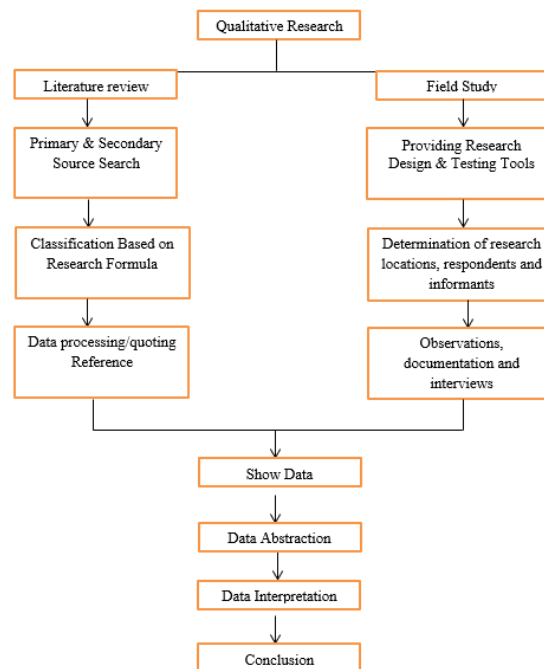


Figure 1: Qualitative Research Design Literature Study & Field Study (Darmalaksana, 2020)

Figure 1 is the scenario of the qualitative research determined by a combination of literature and field studies. The research stages begin by collecting primary and secondary library sources. This study classifies the data based on the research formula (Darmalaksana, 2020). The next stage is processing data or citing relevant references. The field study stage involves preparing research designs and testing field tools to achieve the research objectives. Research location, respondents, and informants are gathered from TK (Kindergarten) ABA VII in Kediri. The respondents are all educators and education staff as the main actors of the independent curriculum implementation program. One supervisor also acts as an auditor during the data processing. Field research is implemented using data collection techniques in the form of observation, documentation, and interviews. The results of the literature study and the results of field studies are presented as research findings, abstracted to obtain complete information, and interpreted to produce knowledge for concluding. As for the interpretation stage, data triangulation analysis, member checking, and auditing are used to make a logical conclusion and credibility can be fulfilled finally (Fadli, 2021).

This research was conducted from October 2021 to July 2022 since the government's appointment of the 'school mover' program through assigning expert trainers for the completion of the first-year assignment and a review of the curriculum for the new academic year 2022-2023. The main steps in assisting the preparation of an independent curriculum, learning planning, implementing project-based learning, and strengthening the profile of Pancasila students, require the presence of researchers directly so that the conclusions can be accounted for and reveal an actual description of the research results.

### **III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**


#### **Independent Curriculum Study for Early Childhood Education**





The definition of curriculum, according to Law Number 20 of 2003 (M. Wahyuni et al., 2018), is a set of plans and arrangements regarding the objectives, content, learning materials, and methods used to implement learning activities to achieve certain educational goals. Meanwhile, a complete description of the operational curriculum of the education unit contains the entire plan for the learning process held in the education unit as a guide for the full implementation of learning. The operational curriculum of the education unit is developed according to the context and needs of the students and the education unit to give specific meaning to it. The central government establishes the basic framework and curriculum structure as a reference for developing the operational curriculum of education units. The components in the operational

curriculum are structured to assist the thinking process and learning development within the educational units. It is where the essence of independence is developed according to what was conveyed by Ki Hajar Dewantara, that educators are like farmers who will sow seeds according to their respective natures. They are supposed to nurture and guide, not only command. (Noventari, 2020).

The application of an independent curriculum, which has the characteristics of the learning process, will be maximized because students have enough time to explore concepts and strengthen their competencies based on their respective abilities, not on the achievement targets of their class groups. Teachers can freely choose methods and tools by including the profile of Pancasila students as an inseparable part of producing long-life learners. The process can be done by cultivating the values of Pancasila in students from an early age through fun activities (Lestarinigrum, 2021b). Implementing Pancasila values is undoubtedly embedded into fun play activities since being 'happy' is the essence of independent learning at an early age. At the foundation stage, educational units must support creating a comfortable, safe, and fulfilling environment to generate happiness for young learners (Handayani & Rohman, 2020). Early learners have a unique way of learning something different from adults. Playing is a learning activity for children where they can undergo the process with pleasure and without coercion. Still, it involves patterns expected to result in good development, which is vital for the child to continue to the next stage of education (Utomo, E & Haenilah, E, 2019).

Table 1: Application of the Independent Curriculum in Kindergarten ABA VII Kediri City

No	Documentation	Description of Activity Observation & Interview to Principal
1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FGD to compile curricula for school operational unit curricula are led by direct researchers as expert trainers in the school mover program and supervisor assistants.</li> <li>• The results achieved are the formulation of CP, determining themes chosen in the project, selecting the topic programs of activities to be carried out in 1 semester</li> <li>• Preparing for the next stage, namely independent training of learning devices (teaching modules)</li> </ul>
2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of material on analyzing CP (Learning Outcomes)</li> <li>• Presentation of material on</li> </ul>

No	Documentation	Description of Activity Observation & Interview to Principal
		<p>compiling teaching modules (RPP)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practice compiling teaching modules for ages 5-6 years</li> <li>The presentation of the learning committee's work results continued with a discussion on the strengths and weaknesses.</li> <li>Preparation of the follow-up activities project module.</li> </ul>
3		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presentation of material on the components of the project module</li> <li>Understand project guidelines for early childhood education</li> <li>Determination of themes and topic selection</li> <li>Practice compiling project modules</li> <li>Presentation of the results of the project module exercise to obtain input from participants to find agreements on activities to be carried out</li> <li>Preparation of socialization activities for the independent curriculum</li> </ul>
4		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Socialization of the independent curriculum as a new paradigm of learning in parenting activities with parents to get input on school programs from the parents.</li> <li>Formation of class associations and parental involvement activities in project program implementation</li> <li>Preparation of partner development (cooperation)</li> </ul>
5		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The signing of the cooperation script for Kindergarten ABA VII Kediri in the fields of education, research, and community service</li> <li>Developing an initial follow-up program for partnerships in the field of education, namely as a place for student practice lectures, especially project learning</li> </ul>
6		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The head of the research team, together with the members of research implementers (university students) planning a comparative</li> </ul>



No	Documentation	Description of Activity Observation & Interview to Principal
		<p>study at TK ABA VII</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparing a schedule of activities to be carried out as well as dividing the tasks to coordinate with schools and students of PG PAUD 2019 and 2020 regular classes</li> </ul>
7	 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visiting activities by students of PG-PAUD FKIP UNP Kediri to directly see the learning process that prioritizes playing as a way of learning for children</li> <li>• The principal, accompanied by the teachers, explains directly the implementation of project learning in the independent curriculum</li> <li>• Participants or students can be directly involved in the activities</li> <li>• Coordination of activity evaluation with the research team and student representatives</li> <li>• Develop a follow-up activity plan</li> </ul>
8	 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent curriculum review 2022-2023</li> <li>• Checking policies on the latest PAUD level learning outcomes</li> <li>• Preparation of annual activity program</li> <li>• Selection of the theme of the Pancasila student profile project</li> <li>• Preparation for the socialization of the 2022-2023 independence curriculum</li> </ul>

### **Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5)**



Pancasila Student Profile is in line with the vision and mission of the Ministry of Education and Culture, namely realizing Indonesian students as lifelong learners with global competence and whose behavior reflects the values of Pancasila. The six elements of the Pancasila Student Profile include faith, fear of TYME and noble character, global diversity, cooperation, independence, and critical and creative reasoning (Sherly et al., 2021). The Pancasila Student Profile can be implemented through habituation, coaching, and learning (Sulistiyati, 2021). Pancasila students embody Indonesian students as lifelong learners with global competence and behave according to the values of Pancasila. According to Ki Hajar Dewantara, the influence of teaching generally liberates humans from their lives from birth, while the freedom of inner life comes from education. An independent man is a human whose life is physically and mentally not dependent on others but relies on his/her strength (RAHAYUNINGSIH, 2022).

To optimize the internalization of Pancasila values through the Pancasila Student Profile, the Ministry of Education and Technology 2021 developed the "Merdeka Mengajar" Platform, one of which discusses the Pancasila Student Profile and its implementation via smartphones or computers (Susilawati et al., 2021). Educators will easily access and also carry out independent learning and adapt to the conditions of their respective schools. Especially in the management of early childhood learning, where understanding the characteristics of students is done by understanding the advantages and disadvantages. Educators can then organize play-based learning according to the stages of development where the activeness and creativity of educators are expected (Sum & Taran, 2020). This creativity is manifested in selecting learning activities through projects and appropriate media and methods, so they are carried out in pleasant conditions.

The following are the various implementations of the Pancasila student profile project, which can be described as follows:



Table 2: Implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project in Kindergarten ABA VII Kediri City

No	Documentation	Description of Activity Observation & Interview with Principal
1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youtube link <a href="https://youtu.be/hNizRoV40Hk">https://youtu.be/hNizRoV40Hk</a> related to new paradigm learning activities</li> <li>• Implementation of learning process using the project's method and experiment</li> <li>• The teacher always gives children the opportunity to explain what they have done</li> </ul>
2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project performance to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students where children and teachers demonstrate their learning skills related to independence, courage, and creativity to be displayed with their parents</li> <li>• The school designs a project in collaboration with parents and guardians in the parent class association</li> </ul>

The elaboration of the independent curriculum and the implementation of the project aimed to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students have empowered the project's concept to develop students' character from an early age through the daily application of Pancasila values. Cultivating Pancasila values in early childhood (Fernando, 2020) is part of maintaining the state's ideology through the nation's next generation. Besides, teachers should improve their skills in information technology (Myori et al., 2019) to implement an independent curriculum since they require skills to open the teaching platform application, not only as users but also as material uploaders to share the best practices. Today, collaboration is essential (Sudibjo et al., 2020), which means when projects are conducted, it is vital to prioritize cooperation to solve problems through multiple techniques which will demonstrate children's creativity. Collaboration also

occurs among all educators and education staff in managing the learning process (Ramadhani & Nopriansyah, 2019). Especially for early childhood education units, classroom management must understand the uniqueness of children and pay attention to children's learning process and the basic concept of playing. The characteristics of playing are (Ardini & Lestaringrum, 2018) children can do it voluntarily without coercion, and there are activities to explore meaningful experiences that are directly involved during activities. Through the implementation of an independent curriculum, the level of early childhood education will be a solid foundation phase through lifelong learning in character internalization in the Pancasila student profile strengthening project. The character which is taught, exemplified, and accustomed to through the habits of everyday life becomes basic skills children can do in their habituation (Ginting, 2017).

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

Through this research, it can be concluded that the independent curriculum for early childhood learning in the foundation phase should still prioritize fun learning with embedded Pancasila values to achieve long-life learning projects. The implementation should be conducted in stages where they are not only the sole responsibility of schools but also require collaboration with parents as the first teachers within the family. Adaptation to the community is also crucial in compiling the programs to optimize implementation.

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