Twenty Years of Change : A Systematic Literature Review of Indonesian Teachers' Responses to Curriculum Change

Innarcaya Nadiar Nasution*, Stephanie Yuanita Indrasari
Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Indonesia.
*Corresponding Author. Email: innarcaya@gmail.com

Abstract: This study investigates Indonesian teachers' responses to curriculum changes over the past twenty years, involving four curriculum changes. This study employed a qualitative approach, conducting a systematic literature review conforming to PRISMA 2020 guidelines. Utilizing databases such as Scopus, ERIC, EBSCO, ProQuest, Taylor & Francis, Science Direct, and Google Scholar with selection criteria focused on empirical studies capturing Indonesian teacher's responses toward curriculum changes within the last 20 years (2003-2023). Screening and quality assessment resulted in 26 studies for detailed content analysis. The findings showed teachers' general openness and acceptance of new curricula, yet this does not translate into effective implementation and reliance on traditional methods. Persistent difficulties include struggles applying student-centered learning, developing learning material, authentic assessment, digital proficiency, and tailored curriculum. These challenges were attributed to inadequate training, resource constraints, student difficulties, cultural factors, and teacher practical competence. This review implied the need to shift schools and local government towards hands-on in-service teacher training and for policymakers to enhance effectiveness through a system of monitoring and incentives. It also suggested a re-evaluation of pre-service training and teacher recruitment criteria, ensuring teachers were equipped for transforming educational practices in Indonesia.

Introduction

Over the past twenty years, Indonesia has experienced significant educational transformations with four major curriculum changes, including the 2004 Competition-Based Curriculum (KBK), the 2006 Education-Unit Level Curriculum (KTSP), the 2013 curriculum, and the most recent introduced by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (MOECRT) of the Republic of Indonesia, Merdeka curriculum in 2022 (Mukminin et al., 2019; MOECRT, 2022a). These reforms, aiming at a shift from teacher-centered to student-centered learning, intended to provide schools and teachers more autonomy in teaching methods and curriculum decisions, thereby equipping students with skills relevant for the future (Suryadi & Budimansyah, 2016; Rahmadayanti & Hartoyo, 2022). However, the implementation of these changes has not been without challenges.

The phrase "Ganti Menteri, Ganti Kurikulum" ("New Minister, New Curriculum") captures the widely held perception that such change is often politically motivated in educational policy, which leads to instability and frustration among educators, affecting their ability to adapt and effectively implement new curricula (Catherine & Prabowo, 2022; MOECRT, 2022b; Alhamuddin et al., 2020). Once these curriculum changes were introduced, Indonesian teachers often faced challenges adapting to new practices

(Mahdiannur et al., 2022; Fifani et al., 2023), often without adequate support (Mustofa et al., 2023). This lack of support and doubts about the reasons behind these policy changes sometimes made teachers wary and skeptical (Yip et al., 2022; Mustofa et al., 2023).

The way teachers respond to these changes is important. Their attitudes and willingness to adopt new methods can make a big difference in these reforms' success. This can affect how they teach and how well students learn and stay motivated (Ma et al., 2009; Prasetyono et al., 2021; Mei Kin et al., 2018; Peskova et al., 2019; Tang & Hu, 2022). Fullan's (2001) framework emphasizes that the success of educational reform is connected to teachers' response to it, particularly in how they perceive, interpret, and implement these changes in their classrooms. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate how teachers have been responding to the changes in the curriculum.

Studies on teachers' responses to curriculum change in Indonesia were conducted mainly through individual studies involving teachers in specific regions or schools. While there is a wealth of literature addressing Indonesian teachers' reactions to areas such as STEM education (Ilma et al., 2023), inclusive education (Rante et al., 2020), and values education (Mohamad et al., 2020), a comprehensive systematic review capturing teacher responses to curriculum changes remains absent. This gap signifies the need for a systematic literature review to provide an understanding of teachers' responses, experiences, and challenges during these educational reforms. Such an analysis is crucial in an era of globalization and uncertainty where educational change is necessary to cope with the rise of a new society (Morrison, 1998). A systematic literature review in this area would provide essential insights for informing future educational policies and practices, ensuring they are in tune with the practical realities and needs of teachers who frequently navigate curriculum changes.

Research Method

This study used a qualitative approach with a systematic literature review method that adheres to PRISMA 2020 guidelines (Page et al., 2021), focusing on Indonesian teachers' responses to curriculum changes. Research from databases like Scopus, ERIC, EBSCO, ProQuest, Taylor & Francis, Science Direct, and Google Scholar was utilized, with Google Scholar alone revealing 322,000 entries. Adhering to Haddaway et al.'s (2015) advice, the first 300 Google Scholar results were analyzed, articles missed by other databases were identified, and the search was finalized on December 22, 2023. Key search terms included combinations like "teacher AND Indonesia AND curriculum" along with specific curriculum names (KBK OR CBC OR KTSP OR K-13 OR Merdeka OR Freedom OR "independent learning") to collect studies related to curriculum. Due to the scarcity of research focusing on this topic in Indonesia, broad criteria were applied. These encompassed national and international journal articles that covered Indonesian teachers' perceptions, understanding, responses to implementation, and attitudes, all within Fullan's (2001) theoretical framework.

The screening process, illustrated in Figure 1, include empirical studies (quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods) collecting Indonesian teacher's responses on curriculum from 2003 to 2023, published in English, peer-reviewed, and with data relevant to the study's focus. Full-text analysis was conducted for quality assessment, focusing on research findings and method descriptions. Studies by the same researchers were merged for response diversity, and those lacking sufficient instrument or scoring descriptions were excluded, resulting in 52 studies being excluded and 26 advancing for data analysis. Data analysis was primarily conducted through thematic content analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It involved compiling

data and searching for themes to capture important information. Each article underwent a manual review to confirm its relevance, with keywords and themes extracted.
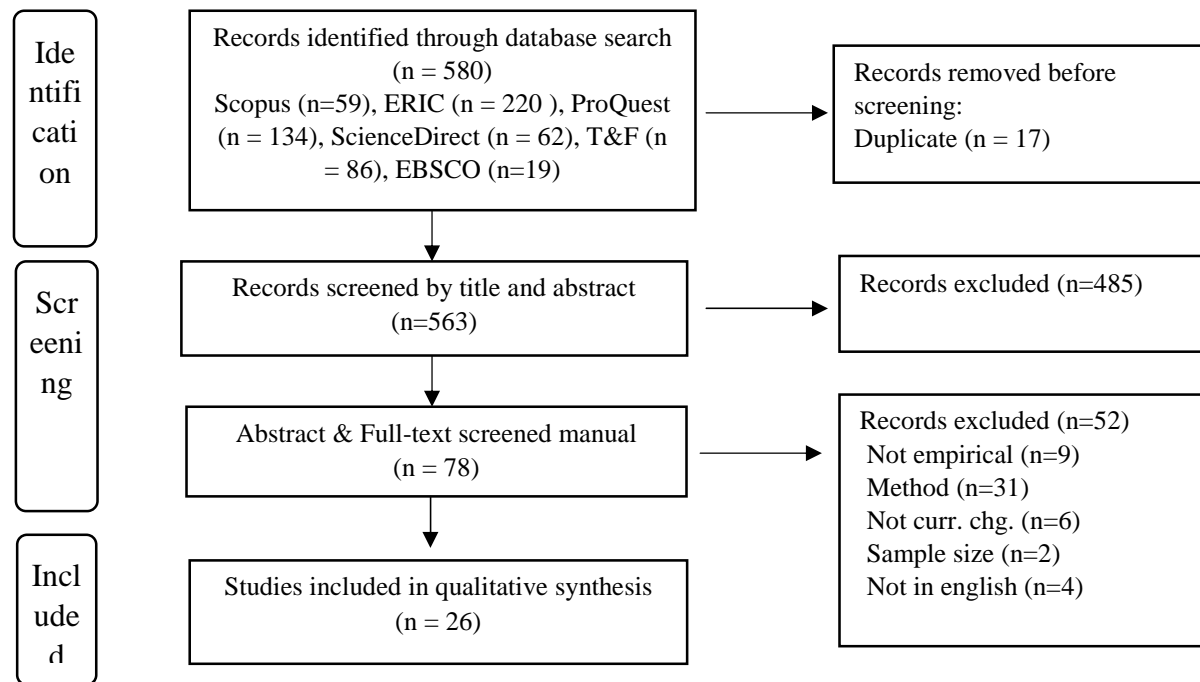

Figure 1. Flow diagram PRISMA 2020

Results and Discussion

Spanning from 2005 to 2023, the research encapsulates nearly two decades of scholarly work, displaying a notable surge in publications from 2016, peaking in 2021 and 2022. This trend suggests an escalating interest in the field, potentially reflecting evolving paradigms and emerging challenges within educational psychology. Methodologically, the studies exhibit a rich diversity: qualitative methods dominate with 14 articles, emphasizing an in-depth, context-sensitive exploration of educational phenomena, followed by seven articles employing mixed methods, integrating qualitative depth with quantitative breadth, and quantitative approaches are used in five articles. Three studies focused on KBK or competency-based curriculum in 2004, 2 studies on KTSP in 2006, 16 studies in curriculum 2013, and 5 studies on the Merdeka curriculum. A summary of retained articles can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Analysis of Studies Capturing Teachers' Responses Towards Curriculum Change

Author (Year), Curriculum	Location and Participants	Method	Main Finding on Teachers' Response
Basalama (2010), KBK	orontalo, 20 vocational high-school teachers	Qualitative	Teachers tried a student-centered method, but failed, leading to skepticism about such teaching changes. They criticized the training for not effectively supporting the implementation of the new curriculum.
Saito et al. (2006), KBK	Malang and Bandung, eight teachers	Qualitative	Collaborative teacher engagement in Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran (MGMP) and key persons support play a significant role in the successful adaptation of the new curriculum
Utomo (2005), KBK	Jakarta and Bandung, 286 teachers	Quantitative	Teachers claim to understand the curriculum but struggle with its classroom implementation, often reverting to the old method, which they found more familiar and comfortable.
Chodidjah (2012), KTSP	Indonesia, 12 middle school	Qualitative	Teachers attempted to integrate KTSP into their lesson plans but often defaulted to using textbooks and familiar teaching methods due to

	teachers		difficulties in understanding and applying KTSP effectively.
Diem (2016)	Palembang, 107 secondary school English teachers	Quantitative	Teachers attempts attempted to implement the School-Based Curriculum (KTSP) but faced challenges. Their understanding varied, and many continued using a familiar teaching method.
Arrafii (2021); Burhanuddin & Arrafii (2022), K-13	Lombok, 15 secondary school teachers	Qualitative	Teachers expressed difficulties and a lack of support; the barrier outweighed the opportunities when implementing new curriculum. They try to apply learner agency practices, but inconsistently and artificially, reverting to the traditional approach, some express skepticism on their practicality in the classroom.
Dewantara (2020), K-13	Bali, 60 elementary teachers, and 305 pre-service teacher	Mixed-method	Teachers struggled with thematic learning due to a lack of understanding and resources, facing challenges in planning and material development, and observing minimal improvement in student outcomes.
Faridi et al. (2016), K-13	Kendal, 20 vocational high-school English teachers	Mixed-method	Teachers faced challenges in describing learning indicators, formulating learning activities, and encouraging student participation while managing time for unit coverage. This is hindering implementation despite recognizing its importance.
Gunawan (2017), K-13	Malang, teachers, principals, and supervisors from 7 elementary schools	Qualitative	Teachers face obstacles in planning lessons, implementing scientific approaches, and assessing students' attitudes, knowledge, and skills. Assistance activities for teachers are suggested as alternative solutions; teachers face obstacles in planning lessons, implementing scientific approaches, and assessing students' attitudes, knowledge, and skills. Assistance activities for teachers are suggested as alternative solutions.
Hasibuan et al. (2021), K-13	Jambi, 70 science teachers	Quantitative	Teachers predominantly used traditional teaching such as lecturing, minimally utilizing inquiry-based teaching instruction (IbTI) as recommended by the national curriculum, due to lack of time, large student numbers, insufficient facilities, and inadequate knowledge, skills, and experience in implementing IbTI.
Hidayah et al. (2022), K-13	Yogyakarta, 56 elementary teachers	Quantitative	Teachers' perceptions of curriculum change are still in the "selection stage," where they know and still choose aspects to adopt but have not yet reached the stage of understanding and integration into daily teaching.
Hidayat & Setyawan (2020), K-13	secondary school teachers	Qualitative	Teachers' responses to the curriculum were mixed, with some adopting innovative and mathematics practices. In contrast, others reverted to traditional methods due to student challenges and struggle with real-life context on certain topic.
Maba (2017); Maba & Mantra (2018), K-13	Denpasar, teachers, and headmaster; 10 teachers	Qualitative	Teachers appreciated the 2013 curriculum's thorough assessment approach but struggled with its practical execution and complex reporting. There are discrepancies between planned lessons and actual implementation, alongside limitations in their understanding and competence.
Muazza et al. (2019), K-13	Indonesia, 452 teachers on survey, 15 teachers interviews	Mixed-method	Teachers recognize the importance of effective classroom management but face challenges in implementing it. Attributed to large class size, lack of technological competence, insufficient school facilities, and student discipline issues.
Prasetyono et al. (2021), K-13	Jabodetabek, 26 high school and vocational school teachers, 420 students	Mixed-method	Teachers face inconsistencies in teaching approaches due to the implementation of dual curricula. At the same time, also struggle to utilize the 2013 curriculum effectively because of limited facilities, guidance, teacher competencies, and reliance on traditional teaching methods to develop more effective student engagement in learning tasks.
Pratiwi et al. (2020), K-13	Jember, 54 teachers	Quantitative	Teachers' responses do not match the new curriculum. Teachers primarily using traditional lecture methods and insufficient learning media, resulting in difficulties in developing student analytical skills and a need for enhanced government supervision for effective implementation.
Puad & Ashton (2022), K-13	Lombok, six islamic boarding school teachers	Qualitative	Teachers struggle with Indonesia's top-down K-13 curriculum, questioning formative assessment's relevance and effectiveness and perceive it as foreign and diminishing their autonomy, leading to a preference for traditional testing and a call for culturally aligned

			policies.
Qoyyimah (2018); Qoyyimah (2020), K-13	East Java, nine English teachers	Qualitative	Public school teachers, backed by government support, effectively applied diverse strategies in character education, while resource-limited private school teachers relied on copied lesson plans and reactive approaches focusing on student misbehavior.
Retnawati et al. (2016), K-13	Yogyakarta, 22 vocational high school English teachers	Qualitative	Teachers did not fully comprehend the assessment system within the new curriculum. They found it challenging to navigate the four scales rubric of competencies, conversing value to verbal scoring, while lack of training and socialization.
Rusman (2015), K-13	Bandung, 25 elementary school teacher	Quantitative	Teachers positively adapted to the K-13 curriculum despite a minority struggling in implementation. They are embracing new planning, teaching, and assessment methods while recognizing the need for continuous professional development and collaboration through KKG.
Suyanto (2017), K-13	Central Java, 200 teachers, 33 headmasters, 200 student	Mixed-method	The readiness of schools to implement K-13 was generally low. Some teachers attributed this to a lack of books, insufficient training, limited ICT access, and a low understanding of the curriculum. They rely on lesson plans made by MGMP and struggling to implement assessments (rubric).
Alliyah, (2023). KM	West Java, 38 elementary teacher	Qualitative	Teachers encountered challenges in applying an independent curriculum during COVID-19, needing support in technology and infrastructure, and utilized strategies like SWOT analysis for adaptability and improved student-centered learning
Damayanti & Muhroji (2022), KM	Boyolali, 12 elementary school teachers	Qualitative	Teachers have made an effort to implement such as creating a working group, attend have made an effort to implement such as creating a working group, attending training, and looking for references on the internet. However, they still lack understanding and face difficulties compiling thematic learning instruments (Bloom's taxonomy indicators).
Mustofa, (2023). KM	Surabaya, 6 elementary teacher	Qualitative	Some teachers showed skepticism and resistance due to perceived vagueness and lack of practicality, while others shows enthusiasm but concerned on improved competence expectation and requirements. Highlighting the need of support, and clarity in policy implementation.
Reza et al. (2023), KM	Malang & Nusa Tenggara Barat, 170 secondary English teachers	Mixed-method	Teachers face challenges like understanding the concept and how to implement it, translating its component (CP, TP, ATP), creating Modul Ajar, all with limited IT skills, and pressure to adapt. They also seek more school supervision and feedback.
Werdiningsih et al. (2022), KM	Malang, 309 teachers	Mixed-method	Most teachers actively implement and view KM as fair, recognizing its potential benefit despite some challenges. 40% with note the curriculum brings sufficient improvement, 37% see significant benefits, and the minority report minimal gain.

Note KM is the Merdeka curriculum. K-13 is 2013 curriculum. Some of the study titles are compressed due to limited space.

Teachers perception and respond to curriculum changes

Acceptance but major gap in implementation. Indonesian teachers have expressed mixed responses to curriculum changes over the last two decades. Generally, each time a new curriculum was introduced (KBK, KTSP, K-13, and Merdeka curriculum), teachers perceive the change with willingness, openness, and acceptance to try to implement. Such as acknowledging the benefits of the new curriculum in making the student more motivated during K-13 (Arrafii, 2021) and showing enthusiasm for potential creativity and autonomy offered by Kurmer (Mustofa et al., 2023). Teachers also show a willingness to collaborate with peers to develop lesson plans (Saito et al., 2006) and positively engage in implementing curricula such as K-13 (Rusman, 2015; Gunawan, 2017; Muazza et al., 2019; Werdiningsih et al., 2022).

However, these acceptances are often accompanied by gaps and surface-level implementation. Teachers consistently faced practical challenges when it came to the actual

implementation of curriculum. Some teachers claim to understand the new curriculum but are lost in actual classroom implementation and end up returning to former practice (Utomo, 2005). Difficulties they face lead to reluctance and inability to implement effectively (Diem, 2016), skepticism viewing the new curriculum as vague (Mustofa et al., 2023), pessimism viewing the barriers as irremovable (Basalama, 2010), and disengagement viewing new method as irrelevant to their condition (Puad, 2022). Furthermore, teachers may feel anxious about upcoming curriculum change, since they feel not fully mastered implementing previous curriculum yet, but the new one is coming already (Chodijah, 2012). With such challenges, responses, and perceptions, most teachers end up reverting to traditional teaching practices (Arrafii, 2021; Burhanuddin & Arrafii, 2022; Pratiwi et al., 2020; Hasibuan et al., 2021; Prasetyono et al., 2021; Qoyyimah, 2018). This reversion indicates either a resistance to change or a coping mechanism for dealing with the complexities and demands of the new curriculum. However, these findings highlight the need for more supportive, structured, and realistic planning based on teachers' understanding and practical ability in curriculum development and implementation.

Persistent Difficulties. Most studies found that teachers responded to curriculum changes by confronting a range of persistent difficulties which have shown a consistent pattern over time, including the struggle to implement student-centered learning approaches, the development of learning material, instruments, and lesson plans, create authentic assessments, maintain digital proficiency, and formulate school-based curricula. Teachers have consistently struggled with the adoption of student-centered methods due to unfamiliarity. They struggle with reflecting the approach into syllabi, mastering discussion-based techniques, and handling students' prevalent passive learning tendencies (Saito et al., 2006; Diem, 2016; Chodijah, 2012; Basalama, 2010; Prasetyono et al., 2021; Maba, 2017; Faridi et al., 2016). The development of learning materials with evolving curricula and incorporation of higher-order thinking skills has also been a hurdle. Covering how to break down indicators to instruction, utilizing learning media, and adapting materials to students' comprehension level (Basalama, 2010; Damayanti, 2022; Pratiwi, 2020; Muazza et al., 2019).

Although most teachers recognized the importance of authentic assessment, many struggled with developing rubrics, unfamiliar scoring systems, and facilitating formative peer assessment (Utomo, 2005; Arrafii, 2021). Digital proficiency, particularly in resource-limited areas, and the lack of competence in digital technologies have also posed significant obstacles (Reza et al., 2023; Alliyah, 2023; Muazza et al., 2019; Prasetyono et al., 2021). Finally, teachers express a lack of clear guidance, often resulting in schools copying curricula without customizing them to their context (Utomo, 2005; Chodijah, 2012) and difficulties in tailoring lesson objectives like CP, TP, and ATP in the Merdeka curriculum to match students' needs (Damayanti & Muhroji, 2022).

Teachers' Practice

Resilience and Innovative

Despite challenges, some Indonesian teachers have shown resilience and innovation. Basalama (2010) discovered that one-third of 'empowered' identity teachers used self-evaluation questionnaires to address students' needs and improve teaching. In Malang City, teachers exhibited resilience in implementing K-13, engaging in training, forming lesson study groups, and undertaking clinical supervision to adapt to the curriculum's scientific approach (Gunawan, 2017). Teachers simplified complex concepts to give students real-life examples (Hidayat & Setyawan, 2020). In Bandung, they developed innovative learning implementation plans and monitored student progress with methods like "star" stickers for

Jurnal Kependidikan:
Jurnal Hasil Penelitian dan Kajian Kepustakaan
di Bidang Pendidikan, Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran
https://e-journal.undikma.ac.id/index.php/jurnalkependidikan/index

Vol. 10, No. 1 : March 2024
E-ISSN: 2442-7667
pp. 100-112
Email: jklppm@undikma.ac.id

positive reinforcement (Rusman, 2015). Teachers formed working groups, attended training, and conducted online research to implement Merdeka curriculum (Damayanti & Muhroji, 2022).

Revert to Traditional Teaching

However, a dominant trend found in this review has been teachers reverting to traditional practices in response to curriculum reforms. Basalama (2010), Hasibuan et al. (2019), and Qoyyimah (2018) cite resource limitations as a contributing external factor. Inadequate materials, lack of support, and limited professional development opportunities are significant barriers. Mustofa (2023) highlights a need for more understanding and support for the Merdeka curriculum reform, leading to skepticism. The complexity of lesson concepts also drives teachers to rely on traditional methods (Chodidjah, 2012; Pratiwi et al., 2020). Internally, teachers' personal beliefs about students' inability to adapt to new teaching and their comfort with familiar teacher-centered methods significantly influence this reversion (Basalama, 2010; Diem, 2016). Limited skills in student-centered techniques, interactive discussion, and the integration of new methods like inquiry-based contribute to their reliance on traditional methods (Diem, 2016; Pratiwi et al., 2020; Hidayat & Setyawan, 2020).

Teachers' main challenges implementing curriculum

Training Constrain

Most studies identified lack of training as either attributed to challenges teachers faced or as a recommendation for successful curriculum change. Practical training is essential for successful curriculum changes in Indonesia as it could improve teachers' decision-making and curriculum adaptation skills (Qoyyimah, 2018; 2020). However, in-service teachers also report that training sessions are often emphasized on theory and misaligned with their practical needs (Basalama, 2010; Arrafii, 2021; Suyanto, 2017; Retnawati et al., 2016). A gap exists even in pre-service training, where student teachers feel unprepared for practical classroom applications (Dirgantoro & Soesanto, 2023). This disparity leaves many Indonesian teachers unprepared for classroom realities (Revina et al., 2020).

Government efforts to improve teaching competencies are often seen as inadequate (Arrafii, 2021; Maba, 2017) and lack supervision to guide teachers during implementation (Reza et al., 2023; Pratiwi et al., 2020). Teachers attend training for certification portfolios (Diem, 2016) rather than genuine professional development. Kusumawardhani (2017) notes that the high job security of teachers as civil servants can lead to a lower prioritization of performance enhancement. This observation is supported by Setiawati (2020), who reports no significant difference in teaching quality between certified and non-certified teachers despite salary discrepancies.

Resource Constrain

Teachers face challenges from inadequate facilities and resources, from lab materials, internet, and audio-visual aids, which hinder effective teaching, to disparities in teacher welfare (Hasibuan et al., 2019; Basalama, 2010; Arrafii, 2021; Muazza et al., 2019). Curriculum demands outweigh teacher's time and resources to learn new methodologies (Faridi et al., 2016; Hasibuan et al., 2019). The absence of clear guidelines as supporting resources for formative assessment and curriculum implementation constrains teachers' access to learning (Maba & Mantra, 2018; Puad & Ashton, 2022).

Student Concerns

Large class sizes and varied student abilities complicate classroom management and the implementation of student-centered approaches (Basalama, 2010; Hasibuan et al., 2019; Arrafii, 2021), with some facing real students' disciplinary issues (Muazza et al., 2019) and misbehavior (Qoyyimah 2018; 2020). Teachers perceive many students as having low

learning capacities and motivation and being passive in class (Basalama, 2010; Arrafii, 2021; Faridi et al., 2016), which hinders innovative teaching approaches. Additionally, students showed a preference for teacher-guided learning also conflicts with curricular aims for autonomous learning (Basalama, 2010).

Culture and Teacher Competence

The influence of traditional values and institutional demands also limits teachers' autonomy and agency, affecting their engagement and investment in new teaching methods (Basalama, 2010; Saito et al., 2006; Diem, 2016; Chodijah, 2012). Top-down policy in Indonesia leads to disconnection from policy directives and difficulties in embracing changes (Utomo, 2005; Puad & Ashton, 2022). Strong hierarchical between teachers and students hinder formative assessment practice and perceived as foreign (Puad & Ashton, 2022). The dynamic between junior and senior teachers also found to play a role where junior teachers often lack confidence in front of seniors, impacting their ability to implement new teaching approaches (Basalama, 2010).

Furthermore, while most factors discussed are external, there is inevitably an internal factor at play, which is teacher competence, that has been found repeatedly across studies. Both junior and senior teachers struggle with student-centered approaches (Werdiningsih et al., 2022; Utomo, 2005; Diem, 2016; Alliyah, 2023). Fundamental aspects of teaching competencies, such as mastering variations of teaching methods such as interactive discussion and engaging students, are found to be constant hurdles (Utomo, 2005; Diem, 2016; Faridi et al., 2016; Prasetyono et al., 2021). Teachers need help to engage passive students (Faridi et al., 2016) but also feel overwhelmed managing active ones (Saito, 2006). Moreover, discrepancies were found between planned lessons, claimed understanding, and actual implementation (Utomo, 2005; Maba, 2017; Maba & Mantra, 2017; Suyanto, 2017). Zulfikar (2010) reports that Indonesian teachers lack teaching competence, often ascribed to the long tradition of teacher-centered teaching and rote learning in Indonesian classrooms. The pedagogical ability of teachers is often neglected during recruitment and evaluation, resulting in poor student academic achievement (Zulfikar, 2010).

Conclusion

In the past 20 years, Indonesia has had curriculum changes with teachers who have shown a mix of openness and acceptance but with surface-level implementation. Despite some teachers demonstrating resilience in their attempt to apply curriculum policy, the majority continue to struggle, reverting to traditional methods due to persistent challenges. The persistent pattern found during adopting student-centered learning, developing learning material, lesson plans, authentic assessments, school-based curriculum, and digital proficiency. Teachers often attribute curriculum implementation difficulties to external factors like limited resources, student challenges, and cultural barriers, with many studies highlighting inadequate training as a critical concern. However, teachers perceive those training as too theoretical and lack effectiveness in enhancing their practical classroom skills, highlighting the need for a more practical, hands-on approach.

Thus, reflecting on persistent practical challenges faced by teachers, the minimal impact of training, and the prevalent reliance on traditional teaching over time, it becomes evident that a more realistic and practical-based approach is needed to support teachers in classroom implementation. Furthermore, a consistent pattern of teachers attempting but failing to overcome obstacles and implement new curricula, regardless of experience, school level, and region over twenty years, calls for a more systemic re-evaluation of teacher recruitment and pre-service training processes.

Recommendation

To address the curriculum, change challenges faced by Indonesian teachers, a two-pronged strategy is suggested. First, schools and local governments need to reorient in-service teacher training towards practical, hands-on methods that align with real classroom experiences. This shift may include specialized workshops focusing on real-life teaching scenarios related to the new curriculum, complemented by targeted evaluations, immediate feedback, and collaboration with universities, NGOs, and local organizations to provide additional practical training resources. Second, it is recommended that policymakers systematically establish continuous monitoring and incentives to encourage effectiveness in in-service and pre-service training. Moreover, refining recruitment criteria is needed to ensure teachers are equipped with necessary, adaptable competencies for the evolving educational landscape.

References

Alhamuddin, Fanani, A., Yasin, I., & Murniati, A. (2020). Politics of Education in Curriculum Development Policy in Indonesia from 1947 to 2013: A Documentary Research. Jurnal Pendidikan Islam, 9(1), 29–56. https://doi.org/10.14421/jpi.2020.91.29-56

Aliyyah, R. R., Rasmitadila, Gunadi, G., Sutisnawati, A., & Febriantina, S. (2023). Perceptions of elementary school teachers towards implementing the independent curriculum during the COVID-19 pandemic. Journal of Education and e-Learning Research, 10(2), 154–164. https://doi.org/10.20448/jeelr.v10i2.4490

Arsyad Arrafii, M. (2023). Assessment reform in Indonesia: contextual barriers and opportunities for implementation. Asia Pacific Journal of Education, 43(1), 79–94. https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2021.1898931

Basalama, N. (2010). English teachers in Indonesian senior high schools in Gorontalo: A qualitative study of professional formation, identity and practice. Faculty of Arts, Education and Human Development, August.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3, 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Burhanuddin, & Arrafii, M. A. (2023). Unfolding the typology and quality of the learner agency practices in the teachers' implementation of the 2013 curriculum in Indonesia: the normalisation process theory perspective. Asia Pacific Education Review, 24(4), 545–561. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12564-022-09806-0

Cohen, D. (1990). More voices in babel? educational research and the politics of curriculum. The Phi Delta Kappan, 71(7), 518-522.

Chaterine, R. N., & Prabowo, D. (2022). Bicara Ganti Menteri Ganti Kurikulum Nadiem: Tidak Ada Pemaksaan Kurikulum Merdeka. Kompas. https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2022/02/11/13422041/bicara-ganti-menteri-ganti-kurikulum-nadiem-tidak-ada-pemaksaan-kurikulum. Accessed in 15 October 2023.

Chodidjah, I. (2012). Teachers' perception towards KTSP as the main direction to plan a lesson and conduct teaching and learning process. Journal of English in Education, 1(1), 32–46.

Damayanti, G. A., & Muhroji, M. (2022). The Difficulties of Elementary School Teacher in Developing Thematic Learning Tools for the Merdeka Curriculum. Jurnal Kependidikan: Jurnal Hasil Penelitian dan Kajian Kepustakaan di Bidang Pendidikan, Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran, 8(3), 703. https://doi.org/10.33394/jk.v8i3.5770

Dewantara, I. P. M. (2020). Curriculum changes in Indonesia: Teacher constraints and students of prospective teachers' readiness in the implementation of thematic learning

at low grade primary school. Elementary Education Online, 19(2), 1047–1060. https://doi.org/10.17051/ilkonline.2020.696686

Diem, C. D., Yusfardiyah, Koniaturrohmah, B., & Lismalayani. (2016). Implementation of school-based curriculum as perceived by secondary school teachers of English. Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 5(2), 167–175. https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v5i2.1341

Dirgantoro, K. P. S., & Soesanto, R. H. (2023). Towards a Paradigm Shift: Analysis of Student Teachers' and Teacher Education Institutions' Readiness on Kurikulum Merdeka. Jurnal Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 8(2), 185-201.

Effendi-Hasibuan, M. H., Harizon, Ngatijo, & Mukminin, A. (2019). The inquiry-based teaching instruction (IbTI) in Indonesian secondary education: What makes science teachers successful enact the curriculum? Journal of Turkish Science Education, 16(1), 18–33. https://doi.org/10.12973/tused.10263a

Faridi, A., Bahri, S., & Nurmasitah, S. (2016). The Problems of Applying Student Centered Syllabus of English in Vocational High Schools in Kendal Regency. English Language Teaching, 9(8), 231. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v9n8p231

Fifani, N. A., Safrizal, S., & Fadriati, F. (2023). Analisis Kesulitan Guru Dalam Penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka Di SD Kota Batusangkar. Pendas Mahakam: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran Sekolah Dasar, 8(1), 19-27.

Fullan, M. G., & Miles, M. B. (1992). Getting reform right: What works and what does not. Phi delta kappan, 73(10), 745-752.

Fullan, M. (2001). The new meaning of educational change. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203986561

Gunawan, I. (2017). Indonesian Curriculum 2013: Instructional Management, Obstacles Faced by Teachers in Implementation and the Way Forward. 128(Icet), 56–63. https://doi.org/10.2991/icet-17.2017.9

Haddaway, N. R., Collins, A. M., Coughlin, D., & Kirk, S. (2015). The role of Google Scholar in evidence reviews and its applicability to grey literature searching. PloS one, 10(9), e0138237.

Hidayah, R., Wangid, M. N., & Wuryandani, W. (2022). Elementary School Teacher Perception of Curriculum Changes in Indonesia. Pegem Egitim ve Ogretim Dergisi, 12(2), 77–88. https://doi.org/10.47750/pegegog.12.02.07

Hidayat, A. S. E., & Setyawan, F. (2020). Analysis of secondary school mathematics teachers' pedagogical content knowledge and intended teaching in curriculum reformation. Journal of Physics: Conference Series, 1613(1), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/1613/1/012082

Ilma, A. Z., Wilujeng, I., Nurtanto, M., & Kholifah, N. (2023). A Systematic Literature Review of STEM Education in Indonesia (2016-2021): Contribution to Improving Skills in 21st Century Learning. Pegem Journal of Education and Instruction, 13(2), 134-146. https://doi.org/10.47750/pegegog.13.02.17

Jenkins, G. (2020). Teacher agency: the effects of active and passive responses to curriculum change. Australian Educational Researcher, 47(1), 167–181. https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-019-00334-2

Kusumawardhani, P. N. (2017). Does teacher certification program lead to better quality teachers? Evidence from Indonesia. Education Economics, 25(6), 590-618. https://doi.org/10.1080/09645292.2017.1329405

Loucks-Horsley, S., Stiles, K. E., Mundry, S., Love, N., & Hewson, P. W. (2009). Designing professional development for teachers of science and mathematics. Corwin press.

Maba, W. (2017). Teacher's Perception on the Implementation of the Assessment Process in 2013 Curriculum. International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities (IJSSH), 1(2), 1. https://doi.org/10.21744/ijssh.v1i2.26

Maba, W., & Mantra, I. B. N. (2018). The primary school teachers' competence in implementing the 2013 curriculum. SHS Web of Conferences, 42, 00035. https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/20184200035

Manurung, L. (2019). Sejarah Kurikulum di Indonesia. Jurnal Ilmiah Wahana Pendidikan, 5(2), 88-95.

Mei Kin, T., Abdul Kareem, O., Nordin, M. S., & Wai Bing, K. (2018). Principal change leadership competencies and teacher attitudes toward change: the mediating effects of teacher change beliefs. International Journal of Leadership in Education, 21(4), 427–446.

Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia. (2022a). Siaran Pers: Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka tetap Berjalan Sesuai Rencana. Nomor: 413/sipers/A6/VII/2022. Retrieved from https://ditpsd.kemdikbud.go.id/artikel/detail/siaran-pers-implementasi-kurikulum-merdeka-tetap-berjalan-sesuai-rencana

Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia. (2022b). Jangan Salah Paham! Ganti Menteri Tidak Ganti Kurikulum. Retrieved from https://pauddikdasmen.kemdikbud.go.id/media-berita/jangan-salah-paham-ganti-menteri-tidak-ganti-kurikulum

Mohamad, N., Sihes, A. J., & Bohari, N. M. (2020). Teachers Attitudes towards Values Across the Curriculum: A Systematic Literature Review. International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation, 24(5), 1075. https://doi.org/10.37200/IJPR/V24I5/PR201782

Morrison, K. (1998), Management Theories for Educational Change, Paul Chapman, London

Mukminin, A., Habibi, A., Prasojo, L. D., Idi, A., & Hamidah, A. (2019). Curriculum reform in Indonesia: Moving from an exclusive to inclusive curriculum. Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal, 9(2), 53-72.

Muazza, M., Mukminin, A., Habibi, A., Rahma Sari, S., Haryanto, E., & Hidayat, M. (2019). Indonesian teachers' perception on classroom management: A sequential exploratory study on the process and problems. Pegem Egitim ve Ogretim Dergisi, 9(4), 1159–1182. https://doi.org/10.14527/pegegog.2019.038

Mustofa, Lin, C. Y., & Chen, H. H. (2023). Elementary teachers' beliefs and practices pertaining to freedom of learning curriculum reform policy: A qualitative study. International Journal of Education and Practice, 11(2), 166–179. https://doi.org/10.18488/61.v11i2.3289

Ng, S. W. (2009). Why did principals and teachers respond differently to curriculum reform? Teacher development, 13(3), 187–203.

Page, M. J., McKenzie, J. E., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D., et al. (2021). The PRISMA 2020 statement: An updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. PLoS Medicine, 18(3), e1003583. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1003583

Park, M., & Sung, Y.-K. (2013). Teachers' perceptions of the recent curriculum reforms and their implementation: What can we learn from the case of Korean elementary teachers? Asia Pacific Journal of Education, 33(1), 15-33. https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2012.756391

Peskova, K., Spurná, M., & Knecht, P. (2019). Teachers' acceptance of curriculum reform in the Czech Republic: One decade later. CEPS Journal, 9(2), 73-97.

Prasetyono, H., Abdillah, A., Djuhartono, T., Ramdayana, I., & Desnaranti, L. (2021). Improvement of teacher's professional competency in strengthening learning methods to maximize curriculum implementation. International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (Ijere), 10(2), 720. https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v10i2.21010

Prasetyono, H., Abdillah, A., Djuhartono, T., Ramdayana, I. P., & Desnaranti, L. (2021). Improvement of teacher's professional competency in strengthening learning methods to maximize curriculum implementation. International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education, 10(2), 720–727. https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v10i2.21010

Pratiwi, C. E., Alsabila, R., Febrianti, V. E., Sari, E. A., Abdillah, M. F., & Rozaq, D. A. (2020). The Teachers' Responses to Curriculum Changes in Indonesia. Basic and Applied Education Research Journal, 1(2), 41–46. https://doi.org/10.11594/baerj.01.02.01

Puad, L. M. A. Z., & Ashton, K. (2023). A critical analysis of Indonesia's 2013 national curriculum: Tensions between global and local concerns. Curriculum Journal, 34(3), 521–535. https://doi.org/10.1002/curj.194

Purnama, H. I., Wilujeng, I., & Jabar, C. S. A. (2023). Blended learning in elementary school science learning: A systematic literature review. Int J Eval & Res Educ ISSN, 2252(8822), 1409.

Qoyyimah, U. (2018). Policy implementation within the frame of school-based curriculum: a comparison of public school and Islamic private school teachers in East Java, Indonesia. Compare, 48(4), 571–589. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2017.1334536

Rahmadayanti, D., & Hartoyo, A. (2022). Portrait of an Independent Curriculum, a Form of Independent Learning in Elementary Schools. Basicedu Journal, 6(4), 7174-7187.

Rante, S. V. N., Helaluddin, Wijaya, H., Tulak, H., Umrati. (2020). Far from expectation: A systematic literature review of inclusive education in Indonesia. Universal Journal of Educational Research, 8(11B), 6340-6350. https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2020.082273.

Retnawati, H., Hadi, S., & Nugraha, A. C. (2016). Vocational high school teachers' difficulties in implementing the assessment in curriculum 2013 in Yogyakarta Province of Indonesia. International Journal of Instruction, 9(1), 33–48. https://doi.org/10.12973/iji.2016.914a

Revina, S., Pramana, R. P., Fillaili, R., & Suryadarma, D. (2020). Systemic constraints facing teacher professional development in a middle-income country: Indonesia's experience over four decades (Vol. 20, p. 054). RISE Working Paper.

Reza, F., Rohmah, Z., & Abdullah, N. N. (2023). Challenges in Implementing Kurikulum Merdeka for EFL Teachers. JEELS (Journal of English Education and Linguistics Studies), 10(2), 439–469. https://doi.org/10.30762/jeels.v10i2.1899

Rusman. (2015). Curriculum Implementation at Elementary Schools: A Study on "Best Practices" Done by Elementary School Teachers in Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating the Curriculum. Journal of Education and Practice, 6(21), 106–112. http://search.proquest.com/docview/1773225459?accountid=8330

Saito, E., Hendayana, S., Imansyah, H., Ibrohim, Isamu, K., & Hideharu, T. (2006). Development of school-based in-service training under the Indonesian Mathematics and Science Teacher Education Project. Improving Schools, 9(1), 47–59. https://doi.org/10.1177/1365480206061999

Setiawati, L. (2020). Impact of teacher certification toward learning quality: a case study in elementary school.. https://doi.org/10.2991/aebmr.k.200108.036

Suryadi, A., & Budimansyah, D. (2016). Advance School Leadership, Progress Teaching Approach and Boost Learning: The Case of Indonesia. New Educational Review, 45, 76-86.

Suyanto, S. (2017). A reflection on the implementation of a new curriculum in Indonesia: A crucial problem on school readiness. AIP Conference Proceedings, 1868. https://doi.org/10.1063/1.4995218

Tang, Y., & Hu, J. (2022). The impact of teacher attitude and teaching approaches on student demotivation: Disappointment as a mediator. Frontiers in Psychology, 13, 985859.

Utomo, E. (2005). Challenges of curriculum reform in the context of decentralization: The response of teachers to a competence-based curriculum (CBC) and its implementation in schools (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pittsburgh).

Werdiningsih, D., Sunismi, S., Umamah, A., & Wahyuni, S. (2022). Indonesian Redesigned Curriculum : Teachers ' Recognition Profiles and Perception of Its Implementation and Impacts. International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding, 9(1), 535–544.

Yip, J. W., Huang, J., & Teng, M. F. (2022). Identity and emotion of university English teachers during curriculum reform in China. Language Culture and Curriculum, 35, 421-439.

Yuen, T. W., Cheung, A. C., & Man Wong, P. (2012). A study of the impact of the first phase of the curriculum reform on student learning in Hong Kong. International Journal of Educational Management, 26(7), 710-728.

Zulfikar, T. (2010). The making of Indonesian education: An overview on empowering Indonesian teachers. Journal of Indonesian Social Sciences and Humanities, 2, 13-39.