

# THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM: TEACHERS' PERCEPTION AND DIFFICULTIES ON DEVELOPING A LESSON PLAN

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## ABSTRACT

The national education curriculum in Indonesia has been shifted from Curriculum 2013 to Independent Curriculum (*Kurikulum Merdeka*) in some schools. It ended up with quite many changes in various aspects which required teachers to adapt to it. Adapting to a new curriculum is not that simple as reflected by multiple problems occurring in the previous curriculum that is still happening now. This research article aims to report the implementation of the Independent Curriculum as the current curriculum applied in Indonesia. The implementation focused on its lesson plan practice. This study investigated the English teachers' perception and difficulties in developing a lesson plan based on the Independent Curriculum. This study employed a mixed method design with 9 participants of English teachers from 8 different high schools (junior high school, senior high school, and vocational high school) around Bandung Regency, Indonesia. The instrument used to gather the data was a questionnaire consisting of statements and open-ended questions. The result of this study revealed that most English teachers have a good perception on developing a lesson plan in Independent Curriculum. Despite it, the teachers still faced some difficulties in developing a lesson plan based on the format of the Independent Curriculum, such as determining the lesson objectives by themselves, understanding the format of the lesson plan, developing the indicators of achievement, assessment, and enriching the instrument, developing a lesson plan which is suitable with students' needs, and understanding the terms in the Independent Curriculum. Therefore, it is considered a crucial act to do more socialization, supervision, and training for teachers to improve their quality in terms of understanding the Independent Curriculum, lesson plan, and its implementation.

Keywords: *Independent Curriculum, Lesson plan, teachers' perception, teachers' difficulty*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of the world in this globalization era has impacted many aspects of our life. To catch up with the current condition of the world, it is important to have a revised curriculum that will be compatible with the demands of today's era. The latest curriculum of education in Indonesia is Independent Curriculum (*Kurikulum Merdeka*). Independent Curriculum is developed from the concept of freedom of learning policy released by The Ministry of Education in 2019. However, there are some problems that happen in the practice of Independent Curriculum in Indonesia.

The Independent Curriculum is relatively new to be implemented. The policy of freedom to learn (*Merdeka Belajar*) launched by the Ministry of Education in December 2019 marked the change of curriculum in Indonesia. The policy explains several important changes to be applied in the Indonesian curriculum, among others

replacement of the national examination (UN) to minimum competency assessment and character survey, schools' role in national standard school examination (USBN), simplification of the lesson plan, and expansion of the zoning system (excluding remote areas) (Kemendikbud, 2019a). The launch of the program shows that the Independent Curriculum has just started in 2020 which means that the curriculum has just been implemented 2 years ago.

Given the fact that the curriculum is still new, there is still insufficient information regarding the curriculum. Rizky and Fakhrunisa (2022) found that there are a lot of teachers in multiple educational institutions who have no adequate access to information since the leaders of the schools do not socialize the curriculum well and supervise the teachers concerning Independent Curriculum practice. The lack of information among teachers could be a reason that causes confusion to them when they are developing a lesson plan. Furthermore, the spread of Covid-19 in the last 2 years could also hamper the implementation of the curriculum since the system of education is negatively affected by it.

Teachers' lack of understanding of the curriculum could lead to difficulties in developing a lesson plan as one of the new components in the curriculum. Despite independence given to the teachers in Independent Curriculum, there are still many of them who are still incapable of creating an appropriate lesson plan (Arifa, 2022). Even if some teachers already have sufficient knowledge about it, there is no guarantee that the curriculum is appropriately implemented. Hence, there is the likelihood of poor implementation of the curriculum that result in not optimally accomplishing the objectives of the study. Arifa (2022) also reported that most teachers still use the teacher-centered method which might decrease the effectiveness of the curriculum in Indonesian education.

In addition, the curriculum is quite different from the previous curriculum in many aspects, including the lesson plan as a core aspect of every curriculum. The Circular Letter of the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture No.14 of 2019 announces that out of 13 elements of a lesson plan, only 3 core elements must be included, namely objectives of learning, steps of learning, and assessment, and the rest are just complementary (Kemendikbud, 2019b). The changes in the current curriculum especially in its lesson plan could be one of the reasons why teachers find it confusing when it comes to developing a lesson plan.

There have been several studies conducted in regard to the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. However, there are hardly any studies found concerning the English teachers' perception of developing a lesson plan in the Independent Curriculum. Some related studies about teachers' perception of developing a lesson plan did not investigate it from the Independent Curriculum point of view, but from the previous curriculum which is Curriculum 2013. Besides, some previous studies did not focus on teachers in the ELT context but on the general context. Therefore, it is necessary to know teachers' perceptions on developing a lesson plan based on the curriculum which is being used in the present moment especially in the context of ELT.

Pertiwi and Pusparani (2021) investigated the teachers' perspectives on the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in terms of its concept and lesson plan. The study reported that teachers still lack understanding regarding the program of Freedom of Learning and the practice of developing the lesson plan is still not in line with the curriculum. Despite that, the teachers entirely agree with the Independent Curriculum implementation in Indonesia. Aulia (2021) also researched teachers' perception of the new policy called Merdeka Belajar concerning a page of the lesson plan. The research found that the participants perceive 3 main points necessary to be added in a lesson plan and the other elements are still needed in a lesson plan. Others think that it is good to have a simple yet solid lesson plan.

Wicaksono (2022) investigated elementary school teacher perspectives on the simplification of a lesson plan. The study found that teachers find it easier to create a lesson plan as the format is simpler than before. Despite the ease, the teachers still encounter difficulties such as integrating multiple subjects in a short lesson plan. Some efforts done by schools to implement the program better are peer tutors, KKG training, and internet sources. In addition, Apriani et al. (2020) studying about English teachers' problems in designing a good lesson plan in the new normal era at MAN Rejang Lebong reported that English teachers still have problems in developing a lesson plan. The problems found are a limited amount of time, many aspects of designing a lesson plan, difficulties in determining method, strategy, material, and difficulty in creating an evaluation.

The aforementioned problems are evidence that adapting to new things is not an easy task. It also raises a possibility that teachers find some obstacles in developing a lesson plan too as the new curriculum most likely comes with a new type of lesson plan. Hence, it is crucial to investigate teachers' experience in developing a lesson plan in accordance with the latest curriculum, Independent Curriculum. Investigating the perceptions of English teachers is one good measure to know their experience during the implementation of developing a lesson plan. The data is hopefully useful for us to see whether the teachers have had a good experience and to know the challenges they faced during their activity.

Knowing the portrayal of teachers' experience in developing a lesson plan by investigating their perception and difficulties could be an evaluation for schools and the government in the future. It could give a description of which parts teachers find hard to create a lesson plan. The result could indicate teachers' need regarding developing a lesson plan. Additionally, the result could be a reference for the government to give more dissemination in the form of a teacher development program regarding the needs, such

as teacher training, workshop, or supervision. Besides, it could also be an evaluation for the improvement of teacher development programs that have been conducted before by making better quality in terms of content, system, program length, and others. As a guideline in this paper, the following questions are addressed: (1) What are English teachers' perceptions on developing a lesson plan on the Independent Curriculum? and (2) What are English teachers' difficulties in developing a lesson plan on the Independent Curriculum?

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Independent Curriculum

The Ministry of Education and Culture launched 4 main points in the policy of freedom of learning (Merdeka Belajar), namely the replacement of the national examination (UN) to minimum competency assessment and character survey, schools' role in national standard school examination (USBN), simplification of the lesson plan, and expansion of the zoning system (excluding remote areas) (Santosa, 2021). This policy surely will affect the system of education in Indonesia which is the curriculum that regulates its system (Maipita, 2021). The policy of freedom of learning is then known as the Independent Curriculum which replaced the previous curriculum (K13).

The concept of freedom to learn can be described as giving Indonesian students a comfortable, calm, and free experience of studying by considering the needs and interests of each learner, expecting that the system of the curriculum can produce human resources with high competence in the era of industrial revolution 4.0 (Azmi, 2021). Yuhastima et. Al (2020) also stated that the program of freedom of learning is intended to create a society who have good quality and readiness for the fourth industrial revolution. It indicates that the Independent Curriculum is made based on a student-oriented concept and to prepare the students to face the current era.

As explained above, the development of Indonesian curriculum shows relevance with the advancement of the world as well. It is hoped that with the implementation of the Independent Curriculum the youth of Indonesia manage to have the qualities of industrial revolution 4.0 human resources. There are several qualities that students need to possess to be able to face the industrial revolution 4.0, among others critical thinking and problem-solving skills, communication and collaboration skills, creativity and innovation skills, information and communication technology literacy, contextual learning skills, and information and media literacy skills (Rachmadtullah et. al, 2020).

In addition to preparing good quality human resources, the Independent Curriculum is intended to give freedom to teachers in developing the learning material and lesson plan based on the students' needs as mentioned in the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture No.14 of 2019 concerning the simplification of the lesson plan. Kemendikbud (2019c) also stated that the development of Independent Curriculum is an important part of trying to repair the long learning crisis in Indonesia caused by steep educational disparities across regions and social groups in Indonesia and the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic. It means that teachers might determine their own learning objectives since they are the ones who know best about the quality of their students. That

way, the students will likely achieve the goal of the learning process and follow the process of learning well.

## 2.2 Lesson Plan

Planning a lesson is one of the key aspects that every teacher has to master. It has something to do with teachers' ability in preparing what it takes and what to do in the teaching and learning process they will do. With poor preparation, there is a good chance that the learning process will not go well and not achieve the expected outcomes. Nesari and Heidari (2014) stated that a lesson plan is a detailed explanation of the method, the materials, the time and the location of education and the ways of assessing the pupils. Raval (2013) added that a lesson plan is a detailed description of the learning process for one class made by a teacher as a guidance of instruction.

Putri (2016) mentioned that to accomplish the learning objectives, it is important for teachers to create creative and innovative plans to be implemented in the process of learning and teaching. Emiliasari and Jubaedah (2019) also stated that a lesson plan is helpful for teachers in organizing the course and preventing dead ends, making teachers more confident in the teaching process. In line with it, Woodward (2001) argued that preparing a lesson plan is crucial since it will make teachers feel more certain, reduce panic, and manage the activities and time flow better in the courses.

To create a lesson plan, teachers need to know the core aspects that are usually included in a lesson plan. There are several versions from different sources that propose what to have in a lesson plan. It indicates that the format of a lesson plan might vary among teachers around the world. Despite the variety of formats, most lesson plans need to contain some important aspects that will be found in most lesson plans. One of the formats is proposed by Brown. In the key components, a lesson plan needs to have the goal, objective, material and equipment, procedure, evaluation, and extra class work (Brown, 2000).

Besides the format proposed by Brown, there are some other formats argued by other experts as well. Gower, R., Philips, D., and Walters, S. (2005) state that the format of a lesson plan should cover aims, procedure, approaches and activities, materials, aids and equipment, information about the students and the classroom circumstances, and anticipated problems. In addition, Harmer (2007) stated that the elements of a lesson plan include aim, class profile, assumptions, personal aims, skill and language focus, timetable fit, potential learner problems and possible solutions, and success indicators. The aforementioned information affirms that the format of the lesson plans actually consists of core elements that most teachers around the world have in common.

## 2.3 Developing Lesson Plan in Independent Curriculum

The format of a lesson plan in the newest curriculum is different from the previous one. It means that teachers in Indonesia should adapt the way of creating a lesson plan in accordance with the newest regulation in the Independent Curriculum. The regulation about a lesson plan of the Independent Curriculum was released by the Ministry of Education through The Circular Letter of the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture No.14 of 2019 concerning the simplification of a lesson plan.

The circular letter explains some points that teachers need to know regarding the new format of the lesson plan. There are four key points presented in the circular letter. The first point states that the arrangement of a lesson plan is conducted with the principles of efficiency, effectiveness, and student orientation. The point indicates that teachers need to be effective and efficient in creating a lesson plan to accomplish the goal of learning. Besides, the lesson plan is made based on the students whom the teachers teach in the class. The students' needs and interests are considered in arranging a lesson plan.

The second point explains the key components that teachers must have in the lesson plan. The format of the lesson plan in the Independent Curriculum is simpler in comparison to that of the previous curriculum (K13). In the Curriculum 2013, there are 13 components that teachers need to include in a lesson plan, but in Independent Curriculum the main components only consist of three things, namely objective of learning, steps/procedures of learning, and assessment. However, teachers are also given the freedom to add more components as needed since the other components are complementary to add.

The third point informs about the freedom given to teachers to make, develop, choose, and use the lesson plan. This freedom is granted for the sake of students' success in the learning process. It is compatible with the first point of the circular letter that mentions that the arrangement of a lesson plan should be based on a student-oriented principle. Meanwhile the fourth point states that the existing lesson plans already made by the teachers should be adapted based on points 1, 2, and 3 before they use the lesson plans.

## 3. METHODS

### 3.1 Design

This study employed a mixed method design. Mixed methods integrate the practice and data of quantitative and qualitative studies in the research. (Creswell, 2014). The objective of mixed method design is to combine the strength and synergy that can be found in qualitative and quantitative methods to comprehend an issue more holistically than using quantitative or qualitative methods only (Gay, Mills, and Airasian, 2011). The concurrent mixed method enables the researchers to gather two forms of data simultaneously as well as combine the interpretation of information in the overall results (Creswell, 2009). The mixed method is good to understand an issue of research through the use of separate yet dialectically related approaches (Dawadi et al., 2021). However, the qualitative data was the focus of this study rather than the quantitative data in describing the participants' experience in developing the lesson plan in the Independent Curriculum because the issue is particularly focused on the context of English teachers who teach in high schools around Bandung Regency area.

Choosing a mixed method is also intended when a certain sort of research (qualitative or quantitative) cannot provide a deep answer to research questions and is not enough to address the problems of the study (Creswell, 2012). It is needed to gain more data from research question 1 in this research study. Therefore, the researcher added research question 2 by asking open-ended questions to the participants. The quantitative design was used to see teachers' tendency toward the activity of developing a lesson plan in the Independent Curriculum (RQ1). Furthermore, the qualitative design was used by the researcher to collect deeper analysis in

regard to the perception of the teachers concerning their experience of developing a lesson plan in the Independent Curriculum (RQ2). Besides, it is considered not enough to only present the data quantitatively as the number of participants is not that big to properly represent the population. Based on that consideration, qualitative data was employed on all participants as well to get better information in regard to their experience and difficulties in developing a lesson plan. The data is hopefully useful to give a clearer description of the data from quantitative design.

### 3.2 Participant, Site, and Instrument

The participants of this research study are English teachers from different vocational high schools, junior high schools, and senior high schools. This research study used a purposive sampling technique that focuses on groups being observed and based on certain characteristics of the sample fitting in this research problem. The participants chosen as the sample in this study are those who have experience in developing a lesson plan for the Independent Curriculum especially in English subject. Furthermore, the participants in this research are from different schools located around Bandung Regency, West Java Province. The total participant of this study is 9 English teachers who teach in 8 different high schools. Teachers who teach from various schools will be good representatives to gain data.

To gain the data from the subjects, this research study used a questionnaire consisting of 5 close-ended statements and 3 open-ended questions. The statements in the questionnaire were used to investigate the teachers' perception of developing an English lesson plan. Meanwhile the simple open-ended questions were used to get in-depth information regarding teachers' perception as well as the difficulties they faced in developing a lesson plan. Furthermore, it is needed to know deeper elaboration on teachers' perceptions and difficulties in developing a lesson plan since the number of participants does not cover a large scale of participants. Therefore, a qualitative approach was used to elaborate on participants'

experiences and difficulties in developing a lesson plan by asking the questions to all participants included. The instrument of this study was adapted from Saputra (2019) who conducted a research study regarding teachers' perception of developing a lesson plan and teaching material in Curriculum 2013.

The statements and open-ended questions in the questionnaire were both put on a Google form to be sent to all participants. The instrument of this research study was distributed to the participants through Whatsapp chat. It is considered effective and flexible to utilize such a way in collecting the data because the respondents can answer the questions on the Google form anytime and anywhere. Besides, the researcher could approach the teachers way more easily.

### 3.3 Data Analysis

The data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. The numerical data gained from the statements of the questionnaire was presented, analyzed, and described in percentage form to show the tendency of teachers' perceptions on developing a lesson plan. Furthermore, the answers to open-ended questions were analyzed and described to elicit more understanding of teachers' perception and their difficulties in developing a lesson plan. Eventually, the researcher drew a conclusion from the result and description and suggested some points related to the research.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the analysis of the result gained from the statements and open-ended questions in the questionnaire, two main topics came up, namely the English teachers' perception of developing the lesson plan and English teachers' difficulties in developing the lesson plan. The topics represent the main issue to be investigated in this research. The following section presents the results from the statements and open-ended questions and discusses the two main topics of this paper.

**Table 1. Questionnaire Result**

| No | Statement   | Scale                         | F/Percentage |
|----|---|-------------------------------|--------------|
| 1  | Since Independent Curriculum ( <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> ) is implemented in my school, I am ..... to develop the lesson plan. | 1. very unhappy               | 1. -         |
|    |   | 2. unhappy                    | 2. 1/11.1%   |
|    |   | 3. happy                      | 3. 7/77.8%   |
|    |   | 4. very happy                 | 4. 1/11.1%   |
| 2  | Since Independent Curriculum ( <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> ) is implemented in my school, I am ..... to develop the lesson plan. | 1. strongly not encouraged    | 1. -         |
|    |   | 2. not encouraged             | 2. 1/11.1%   |
|    |   | 3. encouraged                 | 3. 8/88.9%   |
|    |   | 4. strongly encouraged        | 4. -         |
| 3  | Since Independent Curriculum ( <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> ) is implemented in my school, I am ..... to develop the lesson plan. | 1. very unenthusiastic        | 1. -         |
|    |   | 2. unenthusiastic             | 2. 4/44.4%   |
|    |   | 3. enthusiastic               | 3. 5/55.6%   |
|    |   | 4. very enthusiastic          | 4. -         |
| 4  | When I develop the lesson plan, my objectives in teaching English are .....   | 1. completely not facilitated | 1. -         |
|    |   | 2. not facilitated            | 2. 1/11.1%   |
|    |   | 3. facilitated                | 3. 7/77.8%   |

|   |   |                            |            |
|---|---|----------------------------|------------|
|   |   | 4. completely facilitated  | 4. 1/11.1% |
| 5 | When I develop the lesson plan, my objectives in teaching English are ..... | 1. completely not achieved | 1. -       |
|   |   | 2. not achieved            | 2. 1/11.1% |
|   |   | 3. achieved                | 3. 6/66.7% |
|   |   | 4. completely achieved     | 4. 2/22.2% |

From the result of the questionnaire shown in the table above, it is clear that most teachers have a good perception of developing a lesson plan in the Independent Curriculum. Overall, options 3 and 4 which mean a positive attitude toward the statement are mostly chosen by the teachers. More than half of them indicate a good perception regarding the statements given in the questionnaire. However, some of them also show a lack of positive responses by choosing the number 2 or 1.

Statement 1 shows us whether the teachers are very unhappy, unhappy, happy, or very happy when developing a lesson plan in Independent Curriculum. The result shows that 7 teachers or 77.8% of the teachers are happy with developing a lesson plan in the Independent Curriculum at the school where they teach. One teacher chose number 4 which indicates that he/she is very happy with the statement. Meanwhile, only one teacher chose number 1 representing that he/she is unhappy with the statement.

Statement 2 shows us whether the teachers are strongly discouraged, discouraged, encouraged, or strongly encouraged in developing a lesson plan in Independent Curriculum. The result

shows that 8 teachers or 88.9% of them are encouraged by the statement. Meanwhile, only 1 teacher feels discouraged to develop a lesson plan in Independent Curriculum.

Statement 3 represents teachers' enthusiasm for developing a lesson plan in the Independent Curriculum. The result shows that 5 teachers or 55.6% of the teachers are enthusiastic about developing a lesson plan in the Independent Curriculum. On the other hand, 4 teachers or 44.4% of them chose number 2 showing that they are unenthusiastic about the statement of developing a lesson plan in the Independent Curriculum.

Statement 4 shows us that 7 teachers or 77.8% of them think that their objectives are facilitated when they develop the lesson plan. And 1 teacher feels that their objectives are very facilitated within the lesson plan. Meanwhile, only 1 teacher chose number 2 representing that his/her objectives are not facilitated in the lesson plan. On the other hand, 6 teachers or 66.7% of them think that their objectives are achieved in the lesson plan as shown in statement 5. And 2 teachers feel that their objectives are completely achieved in the lesson plan. Meanwhile, only 1 teacher feels that his/her objectives are not achieved in the lesson plan.

**Table 2. Open-ended Question Result**

| No | Question  | Answer  |
|----|---|---|
| 1  | What do you think about developing a lesson plan in Independent Curriculum? Do you like it or not? Why? | <b>Respondent 1:</b> Yes, I like the change in some learning materials, there is a change in terms and forms in the learning planning, and there is a P5 activity that requires considerable mature and long preparation.   |
|    |   | <b>Respondent 2:</b> I like it very much because it is simpler and freer to determine the learning objective by collaborating with other English teachers in my school.   |
|    |   | <b>Respondent 3:</b> Yes, I do. Because I think that the independent curriculum helps us (teachers and students) to improve our creativity, teamwork, and many things in a positive way.  |
|    |   | <b>Respondent 4:</b> Not so. I think it's the same way as the previous curriculum, but with different terms   |
|    |   | <b>Respondent 5:</b> Actually, it is a big hope for me that the "independent curriculum" gives me freedom in developing the lesson plan, but, in the actual implementation, it doesn't. Too many aspects should be paid attention to, which makes the teacher quite confused. However, I still like it since the developed lesson plan will hopefully be used to achieve students' high potential later |
|    |   | <b>Respondent 6:</b> At first, I felt confused to develop the lesson plan with the independent curriculum and of course I did not like it. I think that it is hard to be constructed the lesson plan, but after following some workshops and education about that, now I feel this curriculum make it easier to develop a lesson plan.  |
|    |   | <b>Respondent 7:</b> I like it but I dont really for it's still new and confusing   |

|   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
|   |  | <b>Respondent 8:</b> I quite like this method, because of giving free expression to students related to teaching and learning activities in class  |
|   |  | <b>Respondent 9:</b> I do like it. Because it seems a bit similar to the previous one.   |
| 2 | Do you find any difficulties in developing a lesson plan in accordance with Independent Curriculum ( <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> )? If yes, what are those and why? | <b>Respondent 1:</b> I felt a bit uneasy because I had to adapt to the new curriculum again, as well as learn some really new things in the curriculum.  |
|   |  | <b>Respondent 2:</b> The difficult one is we have to determine the lesson objective by ourselves. Thus, we have to be more creative and more inovative in this case.   |
|   |  | <b>Respondent 3:</b> Yes, the difficulty I found in the independent curriculum was the 'format' of how to make a lesson plan   |
|   |  | <b>Respondent 4:</b> No, I don't   |
|   |  | <b>Respondent 5:</b> Yes, I do. I find it difficult to develop learning tools especially in developing the indicators of achievements or competencies, assessment, and even in enriching the instruments. It is still hard for me to choose words and describe the indicators according to the importance, urgency, etc. |
|   |  | <b>Respondent 6:</b> Yes, I have to develop a lesson plan which is suitable for student needs so it is the difficult one I think   |
|   |  | <b>Respondent 7:</b> I find it difficult to understand the term in <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i>  |
|   |  | <b>Respondent 8:</b> Not too found a difficulties  |
|   |  | <b>Respondent 9:</b> Yes. There is a lack of support in developing a lesson plan and not enough facilities.  |
| 3 | Can you achieve your teaching objectives without having the lesson plan? Why is it so?   | <b>Respondent 1:</b> I think not achieved, because a lesson plan makes the material more compacted and fits the need.  |
|   |  | <b>Respondent 2:</b> I don't think so. In my opinion, it will be easier and clearer to make such a plan in order to gain an objective.   |
|   |  | <b>Respondent 3:</b> No, I can't   |
|   |  | <b>Respondent 4:</b> No. Lesson Plan is important, so we did as planned to reach the learning objectives   |
|   |  | <b>Respondent 5:</b> Yes, I guess. The lesson plan is only the written form of what I intended to apply in the classroom.  |
|   |  | <b>Respondent 6:</b> No I can't. Because without having a lesson plan our teaching process will not be arranged well   |
|   |  | <b>Respondent 7:</b> Actually it is not, as the guidance for the lesson plan is important to teach in class  |
|   |  | <b>Respondent 8:</b> I think I can achieve it by writing some resume points  |
|   |  | <b>Respondent 9:</b> Yes, as a teacher we should try to fit the lesson with the students' needs as long as it stays on the basic competence that mentions in <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> .  |

The first question investigates teachers' opinions in regard to the implementation of developing a lesson plan in Independent Curriculum. As presented in the table, most answers from the teachers indicate a good attitude to the question. However, some teachers also said that the practice of developing a lesson plan in the Independent Curriculum still raised some confusions.

Respondents 2, 3, and 8 presented their reasons why they like the activity. Respondents 2 and 8 said that the format of the new lesson plan is simpler and there is freedom for teachers to construct the learning objective and learning activities. Respondent 3 added that the curriculum could improve teachers' and students' creativity and teamwork. Meanwhile, respondents 4 and 9 stated that the lesson

plan is not much different from the lesson plan in the previous curriculum. On the other hand, respondents 5, 6, and 7 showed their opinion concerning confusion about the lesson plan. Some teachers find it quite hard to develop the lesson plan since there was confusion caused by unfamiliar terms that they do not understand. Besides, some teachers think that the curriculum is still new. Hence, it becomes something confusing for them initially, including developing the lesson plan.

The second question deals with teachers' difficulty in developing lesson plan in Independent Curriculum. As seen in the table above, most of the teachers still encountered several difficulties in developing a lesson plan. Despite it, respondents 4 and 8 stated that they did not really face any difficulties during their experience in developing a lesson plan. The other teachers (respondents 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 9) mentioned some difficulties that they found in developing the lesson plan. Some difficulties faced by the respondents include having to adapt to new curriculum and learn new things in it (respondent 1), determining the lesson objective by themselves (respondent 2), understanding the format of the lesson plan (respondent 3), developing the indicators of achievement, assessment, and enriching the instrument (respondent 5), developing a lesson plan which is suitable with students' needs (respondent 6), understanding the terms in Independent Curriculum (respondent 7), and lacking support and facilities in developing lesson plan (respondent 9).

The third question asks the teachers if they can achieve the learning objectives without having a lesson plan. As presented in the table, most of the teachers answered that they need to have a lesson plan in order to achieve the learning objectives. Respondents 3, 4, and 7 argued that having a lesson plan is important in teaching to reach the learning objectives. Furthermore, respondent 2 said that the lesson plan will make the learning objectives clearer and easier to be achieved. Respondent 6 added that the teaching process will not be arranged well without having a lesson plan. In addition to that, respondent 1 and 9 argued that a lesson plan will make the learning objectives in line with the needs of students and the learning competence in the Independent Curriculum. However, 2 teachers (respondents 5 and 8) stated that it is still possible to achieve learning objectives without a lesson plan. Respondent 8 said that the learning objectives can be achieved by writing some resume points. Furthermore, respondent 5 stated that she can still achieve the learning objectives without a lesson plan because a lesson plan is only a written form of what she intends to apply in the class.

- **English Teachers' Perception of Developing a Lesson Plan in Accordance with Independent Curriculum (*Kurikulum Merdeka*)**

The research finding demonstrates that English teachers have a good perception concerning their experience in developing the lesson plan in Independent Curriculum. Almost every participant feels happy to develop the lesson plan in accordance with the Independent Curriculum. Only one teacher out of 8 teachers feels unhappy about the activity. Furthermore, the teachers are also encouraged about developing the lesson plan in Independent Curriculum. Only one teacher feels not encouraged about the activity. In addition, 5 of them are enthusiastic to develop the lesson plan in the Independent Curriculum. Despite their good perception, there are 4 teachers who feel unenthusiastic about developing the lesson plan.

The teachers' opinion in regard to developing a lesson plan in Independent Curriculum also affirms that they have a good perception of it. The finding from the open-ended questions shows that some of the teachers find it simpler and easier to develop a lesson plan in Independent Curriculum. Furthermore, there is freedom for teachers to construct the learning objective and learning activities. It is in line with a study from Wicaksono (2022) that found that most elementary school teachers have a good perception of developing a lesson plan in the Independent Curriculum since they find it easier to create a lesson plan as the format is simpler than before. Furthermore, one of the teachers also perceived that the curriculum could improve teachers' and students' creativity and teamwork. The positive experience stated by the teachers could be the reasons why they have a good perception in developing the lesson plan.

In regard to achieving learning objectives, most teachers agree that it is important to have a lesson plan for learning activities. Most of them feel that the objectives are facilitated and achieved when they develop the lesson plan. Only one teacher considers that the objectives are not facilitated and achieved when they develop the lesson plan. In the open-ended question, one of the teachers also said that the lesson plan is only a written description of what to do so that it is possible to achieve the learning objectives without a lesson plan. The open-ended question result also affirms that if the teachers perceive that it is needed to have the lesson plan in the class to achieve the learning objectives. Some of them also argued that a lesson plan could make the learning objectives clearer, create a well-arranged teaching process, and stick the learning objectives to the learning achievements of the Independent Curriculum. Putri (2016) affirmed in her study that to accomplish the learning objectives, it is important for teachers to create creative and innovative plans to be implemented in the process of learning and teaching. In addition, Woodward (2001) argued that preparing a lesson plan is crucial since it will make teachers feel more certain, reduce panic, and manage the activities and time flow better in the courses.

- **English Teachers' Difficulties in Developing a Lesson Plan in Accordance with Independent Curriculum (*Kurikulum Merdeka*)**

The teachers also showed some difficulties in developing a lesson plan in Independent Curriculum. Some of the teachers argued that they still find it confusing about the new curriculum, such as new terms that are unfamiliar to them. Another teacher also argued that he needs to adapt to the new curriculum by studying new things. The other types of problems experienced by the teachers are determining the lesson objective by themselves, understanding the format of a lesson plan, developing the indicators of achievement, assessment, and enriching the instrument, developing a lesson plan which is suitable to students' needs, and understanding the terms in Independent Curriculum. The difficulties stated by the teachers show us that the implementation of the lesson plan still needs to be improved, especially in things that most teachers find hard to do. One of the teachers also said that there is still a lack of support and facilities in developing a lesson plan.

The problems raised in this study are also related to some previous studies that reported quite similar problems to those of this research study. Rizky and Fakhrunisa (2022) found that there are a lot of teachers in multiple educational institutions who have no adequate access to information since the leaders of the schools do not

socialize the curriculum well and supervise the teachers concerning Independent Curriculum practice. Arifa (2022) also stated that despite the independence given to the teachers in Independent Curriculum, there are still many of them who are still incapable of creating an appropriate lesson plan. Pertiwi and Pusparani (2021) also investigated the teachers' perspectives on the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in terms of its concept and lesson plan. The study reported that teachers still lack understanding regarding the program of Freedom of Learning and the practice of developing the lesson plan is still not in line with the curriculum.

From the descriptions above, it is quite clear that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum still needs more supervision and intensive training. The facts found in this research that the teachers still find quite confusing about the curriculum is proof of not well-spread information, supervision, and training among the English teachers. It is in line with the study from Rizky and Fakhrunisa (2022) that showed that some leaders of the school are not aware yet about the socialization and supervision concerning the new curriculum ending up with inadequate information among the teachers. Pertiwi and Pusparani (2021) also reported that many teachers still have a lack of understanding of the Independent Curriculum. The finding of this research also revealed that there is still a lack of support and facilities in developing lesson plan as stated by one of the teachers in the open-ended questions. The difficulties faced by teachers in developing lesson plan might also be influenced by the lack of understanding of the curriculum.

Pertiwi and Pusparani (2021) showed that the practice of developing the lesson plan is still not in line with the curriculum. Furthermore, Arifa (2022) stated that there are still many teachers who are still incapable of creating an appropriate lesson plan despite the independence given in the Independent Curriculum. The freedom to develop a lesson plan shows us that it does not necessarily bring ease to teachers. It is also demonstrated by the result of the open-ended questions in this research that the teachers have to develop the lesson plan by themselves which requires them to be more creative and innovative. The parts in which they find hard are developing objectives, determining the indicator of achievement, and matching the lesson plan with students' needs. It will be surely challenging for them if they are not equipped with adequate knowledge regarding the Independent Curriculum and developing its lesson plan.

## 5. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that most of the teachers in this research study have a good perception of developing a lesson plan in accordance with the Independent Curriculum. They are happy and quite enthusiastic about developing the curriculum. In addition, most of them agree that the lesson plan is needed in order to achieve the learning objectives, since developing a lesson plan could give them a clearer objective, and a well-arranged teaching process, as well as stick the objectives to the learning achievements in the Independent Curriculum.

Despite the good perception the teachers have, there are several difficulties they faced in developing the lesson plan. Most of them still find it confusing to understand the new curriculum which is Independent Curriculum since there are many unfamiliar things that they are yet to know, primarily the terms. The difficulties vary among teachers, such as determining the lesson objective by themselves, understanding the format of the lesson plan,

developing the indicators of achievement, assessment, and enriching the instrument, developing a lesson plan which is suitable for students' needs, and understanding the terms in the Independent Curriculum.

## 5.1 Recommendation

The findings of this research study shows that there is still a lot of work to do to improve the quality of English teachers in developing the lesson plan. It is also important for the teachers to be more familiar with Independent Curriculum since it will be extremely helpful for them in developing a lesson plan in accordance with Independent Curriculum. The authorized body (government and school) needs to disseminate more information and make sure that the implementation of the curriculum works well including the activity of developing the lesson plan. Activities such as better supervision, workshop, seminar, discussion, etc might still be necessary to be conducted for teachers.

In terms of research study, there might be several things that could be improved or fixed. Other researchers can still further the investigation of the problem by focusing on specific difficulties in developing a lesson plan. It is also crucial to have more respondents in gathering the data to see a better description of how English teachers perceive the activity of developing a lesson plan in the Independent Curriculum if other researchers want to emphasize quantitative data. Besides, the next research study could focus more on digging for information with qualitative data by developing more questions from the open-ended questions in this research study.

## 6. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors would like to thank all English teachers who have been willing to participate in this research study. Without whom the authors will not get valuable data to be presented in this research article.

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