

## INTO THE EMANCIPATED CURRICULUM: TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE CURRICULUM CHANGE

**Maulidiya Kusumawati<sup>1</sup>, Nabila Yumna Istiadi<sup>2</sup>, Shinta Fristiana<sup>3</sup>**

Universitas Negeri Semarang<sup>1,2,3</sup>

[nabilayuumna@gmail.com](mailto:nabilayuumna@gmail.com)<sup>2</sup>

### ABSTRACT

*The transition from the 2013 Curriculum to the Emancipated Curriculum represents a pivotal change in Indonesian education aimed at improving educational quality and relevance. This study explores teachers' perceptions of this curriculum change, focusing on its implementation challenges and benefits. Employing a qualitative descriptive research design, the study utilizes narrative inquiry through semi-structured interviews with teachers directly involved in the transition process. Key findings reveal challenges such as reduced teaching time and curriculum constraints, alongside benefits including increased creativity and enhanced integration of technology. Teachers' perceptions underscore the critical role of adaptability in navigating curriculum change effectively. The study highlights implications for enhancing educational practices and student outcomes in Indonesia, emphasizing the need for supportive policies and professional development to facilitate successful curriculum implementation. By understanding teachers' experiences and insights, this research contributes to refining educational strategies that align with current needs and aspirations, promoting a more responsive and effective educational system.*

*Keywords: Curriculum Change, Educational Reform, Emancipated Curriculum, Indonesia, Teacher Perceptions*

### INTRODUCTION

Curriculum changes are pivotal in shaping the quality and relevance of education systems worldwide. In Indonesia, ongoing changes seek to enhance educational outcomes by adapting to contemporary demands and fostering critical skills among students (Ellen & Sudimantara, 2023). The introduction of the 2013 Curriculum marked a significant departure for Indonesian education, emphasizing critical thinking and problem-solving (Lapasi, 2022). Subsequently, the Emancipated Curriculum aimed to further empower teachers by granting them greater autonomy in curriculum design

and teaching methods, thus promoting a student-centered learning environment (Mardiant & Damayanti, 2024).

The successful implementation of these changes hinges greatly on how teachers (2022). Their attitudes and experiences are instrumental in shaping perceive and adapt to new curriculum frameworks (Hidayah et al., 2022). Their attitudes and experiences are instrumental in shaping the effectiveness of educational reforms. Therefore, this study aims to compare the 2013 Curriculum with the Emancipated Curriculum in Indonesia. It seeks to explore differences in teaching methodologies, learning approaches, and the perceived challenges and benefits encountered during their implementation. Understanding these aspects is crucial for evaluating the impact of curriculum changes on educational practices and student outcomes (Miles et al., 2014).

Central to this investigation is an examination of teachers' perceptions on transitioning from the structured 2013 Curriculum to the more flexible Emancipated Curriculum. The curriculum transition not only affects teaching strategies and assessment methods but also influences broader aspects of educational delivery (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Insights into how teachers perceive these changes will contribute significantly to assessing the effectiveness of the Emancipated Curriculum in enhancing educational quality in Indonesia.

Moreover, the shift to the Emancipated Curriculum brings about specific changes in subjects like English, highlighting both challenges and opportunities for teachers (Harefa, 2024). This transformation necessitates adjustments in teaching styles and resource allocation to support new pedagogical approaches effectively. Addressing teachers' concerns promptly is essential for mitigating disruptions and ensuring a smooth transition that enhances teaching efficacy and student learning outcomes.

Despite its potential benefits, the transition poses several critical issues that require attention. These include the need for adequate teacher training, availability of educational resources, and alignment with institutional values and objectives (Power et al 2020). Moreover, the Emancipated Curriculum's emphasis on project-based learning and soft skill development aligns with the Pancasila Students Profile, emphasizing global citizenship and modern competencies (Fitriyani et al., 2023).

A notable research gap lies in the comparative analysis of teacher perceptions before and after the curriculum transition from the 2013 Curriculum to the Emancipated Curriculum. Existing studies offer insights into general perceptions of curriculum changes but lack specific focus on this crucial transition in Indonesia (Harefa, 2024; Hidayah et al., 2022; Power et al., 2020; Aboagye & Yawson, 2020). By addressing this gap, this study aims to provide nuanced insights into how teachers adapt to and perceive new curriculum, thereby informing more effective implementation strategies and enhancing educational outcomes.

In summary, understanding teachers' perceptions on the Emancipated Curriculum is essential for refining educational practices and ensuring its successful integration into Indonesian schools. By exploring these perceptions comprehensively,

this study aims to contribute valuable insights that can guide policy-makers and teachers towards more responsive and impactful educational reforms.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design, focusing on providing detailed accounts of events (Turale, 2020). Specifically, it utilized narrative inquiry to explore the transition from the 2013 Curriculum to the Emancipated Curriculum. This method was chosen to capture the nuanced experiences and perceptions of teachers, thereby shedding light on the complexities inherent in educational change. Through narrative analysis, the study aimed to uncover both the challenges and successes encountered during this curriculum shift, emphasizing the pivotal role of teachers' perceptions in facilitating effective transitions.

The participants in this study were selected using purposive sampling, a method aimed at identifying and selecting individuals who could offer the most informative insights related to the research objectives (Campbell et al., 2020). Purposive sampling ensures that participants have direct involvement or expertise pertinent to the transition from the 2013 Curriculum to the Emancipated Curriculum. Specifically, the sample included an English teacher and a curriculum developer, both chosen for their roles in implementing and shaping the new curriculum.

Data collection was primarily conducted through semi-structured interviews with the selected teachers and curriculum developers. These interviews were designed to elicit comprehensive information regarding the implementation of the Emancipated Curriculum. By focusing on themes such as challenges faced, impacts on teaching practices, and the perceived effectiveness of the new curriculum, the interviews provided rich qualitative data essential for understanding the curriculum change process.

The semi-structured interviews were developed to explore the complication of transitioning from the 2013 Curriculum to the Emancipated Curriculum, with a focus on capturing the teachers' perception. These interviews were instrumental in gathering detailed narratives and in-depth reflections on the implementation process.

Data analysis proceeded through several stages to derive meaningful conclusions from the collected data. Initially, data condensation involved extracting pertinent information from the interviews and other sources, organizing them into coherent themes (Shava et al., 2021). Subsequently, data display techniques were employed to visually present the structured data, facilitating a clearer understanding of key findings and trends. Finally, drawing conclusions involved synthesizing the analyzed data to identify patterns, relationships, and actionable insights relevant to the study's objectives.

To enhance the validity of findings, triangulation was employed by cross-referencing data from multiple sources (Santos et al., 2020). This approach involved comparing and corroborating information obtained from interviews with data from other relevant sources, thereby strengthening the credibility and reliability of the study's conclusions.

## FINDING

### a. Curriculum Implementation and Changes

The implementation of educational curriculum plays a pivotal role in shaping academic experiences and outcomes within schools. Insights from teachers provide valuable perceptions on the ongoing transitions and adaptations within Indonesian educational frameworks.

*“In the past, all schools taught the same material [...] Each school just has the same theme, but the content of the learning process is different.”* – Participant 1.

Participant 1 mentioned the school's transition from the 2013 curriculum to the Emancipated Curriculum. This change affects different grade levels differently, with the 12th grade using the revised 2013 curriculum, while grades 10 and 11 adopt the Emancipated Curriculum, soon to be renamed the National Curriculum. This highlights a shift from standardized content to more varied approaches in educational delivery.

The transition from the 2013 Curriculum to the Emancipated Curriculum marks a significant evolution in Indonesian education. Participant 2 elucidates this shift.

*“Because of the effect of the changes, the 2013 curriculum changed to the Emancipated Curriculum. So in this school, the 12th-grade uses the 2013 curriculum (revision). Then those in 10 and 11 grade students using Emancipated Curriculum.”* – Participant 2.

This adoption of the Emancipated Curriculum, soon to be renamed the National Curriculum, reflects ongoing efforts to update and unify educational standards across different grade levels.

The implementation of the Emancipated Curriculum has sparked discussions among teachers about its structural implications, particularly in subjects such as English and History. These discussions are crucial as they shape how teaching strategies and learning outcomes are approached in classrooms nationwide. The adaptation process involves not only aligning content but also adjusting pedagogical methods to better engage students and enhance overall educational quality.

Furthermore, the transition process highlights the dynamic nature of curriculum development, where adjustments are made to meet evolving educational goals and societal needs. This evolution is essential for ensuring that Indonesian students receive a relevant and robust education that prepares them for future challenges.

In summary, the ongoing curriculum changes in Indonesian schools reflect broader efforts to improve educational standards and outcomes. Teachers play a pivotal role in navigating these transitions, offering insights that contribute to shaping effective educational practices. As Indonesia continues to refine its educational frameworks, the impact of these changes will be instrumental in fostering a more responsive and effective learning environment for all students.

## **b. Challenges and Benefits in the adaptation of Curriculum Implementation**

The implementation of educational curriculum, such as the 2013 Curriculum and the Emancipated Curriculum, faces several challenges and benefits as revealed by insights from participants in the interviews.

### *a. Challenges*

#### 1) Reduction in Teaching Time

Participant 1 highlighted a challenge related to reduction in teaching time.

*"In the past, English took 5 hours or 4 hours. So, from 5 and 4, then dropped for 2 hours."* – Participant 1.

The reduction in teaching hours over time from 5 or 4 hours to just 2 hours per week limits the depth and breadth of the material that can be covered, affecting the students' overall language proficiency and retention.

#### 2) Curriculum Constraints

Participant 1 also discussed challenges stemming from national curriculum constraints, particularly concerning English language education at the elementary level.

*"That's a rule from the Ministry of Education and Culture. Then in elementary school there was no English course either."* – Participant 1.

National curriculum constraints prevent English from being taught at the elementary level, placing the burden of foundational language education solely on secondary education, which might be too late for some students to achieve proficiency.

#### 3) Transition Period Confusion

Participant 2 pointed out challenges arising from uncertainties during the transition between different curriculum.

*"So in this school, the 12th-grade uses the 2013 curriculum (revision). Then those in 10 and 11 grade students using Emancipated Curriculum. But then the plan will change its name to Kurikulum Nasional. The difference is only in the structure of the class subjects. Actually, this is still being discussed at the supervisory level. So, we have not been able to determine the curriculum and cannot provide more complete information."* – Participant 2.

The school is experiencing a period of transition between different curriculums (2013 Curriculum, Emancipated Curriculum, and the upcoming National Curriculum). This uncertainty makes it difficult for the school to plan effectively since the supervisory level has not finalized the details. This lack of concrete information hampers curriculum planning and implementation.

#### 4) Implementation Clarity

Participant 2 highlighted issues related to clarity in implementing new curriculum, especially regarding continuity for students transitioning between grades.

*"And now the question for grade 10 who are going up to grade 11, is whether they will follow the changes or still follow the Emancipated Curriculum, that is."*

– Participant 2.

There is confusion regarding whether the current 10th graders transitioning to 11th grade will continue with the Emancipated Curriculum or switch to the National Curriculum. This uncertainty makes it challenging to ensure continuity and consistency in students' education.

#### *b. Benefits*

##### 1) Engagement through Creative Projects

Participant 1 noted a key benefit of the new curriculum, emphasizing increased creativity through project-based learning.

*"The benefit is that teachers and students must be more creative because there are projects that must be carried out. The project is adjusted to the learning material."* – Participant 1.

The new curriculum emphasizes creative projects, which enhance student engagement and practical application of language skills, fostering a more interactive and hands-on learning environment.

##### 2) Use of Technology

Participant 1 highlighted the integration of technology as a significant advantage under the new curriculum.

*"We use our e-learning web, it is called Esmatus."* – Participant 1.

The integration of an e-learning platform like Esmatus helps streamline the learning process, making materials and assessments more accessible. It also facilitates remote learning, which is especially useful during disruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic.

##### 3) Enhanced Curriculum Focus

Participant 2 discussed improvements in curriculum focus, particularly regarding increased instructional hours for English language learning.

*"So, in the Emancipated Curriculum and the previous Curriculum, English only had 2 hours of lessons for grades 10, 11, or 12. But in the National Curriculum, it is 3 hours of lessons."* – Participant 2.

The increase in English lesson hours from 2 to 3 per week under the National Curriculum allows for more comprehensive language instruction. This can enhance students' proficiency and better prepare them for higher education and global opportunities.

#### 4) Curriculum Adaptability

Participant 2 pointed out the flexibility of the Emancipated Curriculum in elective subjects as a benefit.

*"In the Emancipated Curriculum there is no science or social studies. The only difference is the elective subjects; as I said earlier, in English and history subjects."* – Participant 2.

The Emancipated Curriculum's flexibility in elective subjects allows schools to adapt the curriculum to better meet the needs and interests of their students, fostering a more personalized and engaging learning experience.

### c. How Teachers Deal with Curriculum Changes

As educational standards and expectations evolve, teachers are often required to adapt their teaching methods and curriculum frameworks. This section explores how two teachers, referred to as Participant 1 and Participant 2, manage the transition to new curriculum.

#### *Participant 1's Approach*

Participant 1 exemplifies a proactive and adaptable approach to handling curriculum changes, particularly with the introduction of the Emancipated Curriculum. She emphasizes the necessity for increased creativity among teachers and students under this new framework.

*"The Emancipated Curriculum is grades 10-11. The benefit is that teachers and students must be more creative because there are projects that must be carried out."* – Participant 1.

Her commitment to integrating project-based learning reflects her readiness to align teaching practices with evolving educational standards. By encouraging both teachers and learners to embrace creativity, she effectively navigates the demands of the new curriculum, ensuring a dynamic and engaging educational experience.

#### *Participant 2's Strategy*

Participant 2 navigates curriculum changes by overseeing the transition from the 2013 curriculum to the Emancipated Curriculum at his school. He anticipates further adjustments with the proposed shift to the National Curriculum, acknowledging uncertainties in its implementation.

*"The 2013 curriculum changed to the Emancipated Curriculum. So, in this school, the 12th-grade uses the 2013 curriculum (revision). Then those in 10 and 11 grade students using Emancipated Curriculum. But then the plan will change its name to Kurikulum Nasional. The difference is only in the structure of the class subjects. Actually, this is still being discussed at the supervisory level."* – Participant 2.

This highlights Participant 2's role in managing the transition from the 2013 curriculum to the Emancipated Curriculum and his anticipation of further changes with the proposed National Curriculum. It underscores his acknowledgment of uncertainties in the implementation process and the ongoing discussions at the supervisory level regarding the future curriculum framework. By staying informed and involved in these discussions, he ensures that his school is prepared for potential changes and can smoothly transition to new educational standards.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings from the participants' insights reveal significant themes surrounding the implementation and adaptation of educational curriculum in Indonesia, highlighting both the challenges and benefits inherent in this transition. This discussion delves into these themes, providing a nuanced analysis and interpretation of the data, supported by relevant literature.

One of the primary challenges noted is the reduction in teaching time, particularly for subjects like English. Participant 1 highlighted the decrease from 5 or 4 hours to just 2 hours per week. This reduction significantly impacts the depth and breadth of material that can be covered, potentially hindering students' language proficiency and retention. The literature corroborates this concern, as research indicates that sufficient instructional time is critical for effective language acquisition (Liu, 2021).

Additionally, curriculum constraints pose another significant challenge. As mentioned by Participant 1, national policies prevent the inclusion of English in the elementary curriculum, placing the burden of foundational language education solely on secondary education. This delay can disadvantage students, as early language learning is crucial for achieving fluency (Isadaud et al., 2022).

The transition period confusion further complicates curriculum implementation. As Participant 2 indicated, the concurrent use of different curriculum (2013 Curriculum for 12th grade and Emancipated Curriculum for 10th and 11th grades) creates uncertainty and planning difficulties. This reflects a broader issue in educational policy implementation which overlapping and changing frameworks can lead to inconsistencies in educational delivery (Kusnawan, 2019).



Implementation clarity is another concern, as highlighted by Participant 2's uncertainty regarding whether current 10th graders will continue with the Emancipated Curriculum or switch to the National Curriculum. Such ambiguity can disrupt educational continuity and consistency, which are essential for effective learning (Bahri et al., 2024).

Despite these challenges, several benefits emerge from the adaptation to the Emancipated Curriculum. One significant advantage is the increased emphasis on creative projects. Participant 1 noted that this approach necessitates greater creativity from both teachers and students, aligning with educational theories that advocate for project-based learning to enhance engagement and practical application of knowledge (Paula et al., 2021).

The integration of technology, such as the use of the e-learning platform Esmatus mentioned by Participant 1, also represents a significant benefit. This digital approach facilitates remote learning and makes educational resources more accessible, a crucial adaptation in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond (OECD, 2023).

The enhanced curriculum focus, particularly the increase in English lesson hours from 2 to 3 per week under the National Curriculum, is another positive development. Participant 2 highlighted this change, which aligns with research suggesting that increased instructional time can lead to better learning outcomes (Barrios-Fernández, 2022).

Finally, the adaptability of the Emancipated Curriculum, as noted by Participant 2, allows for a more personalized and engaging learning experience. The flexibility in elective subjects enables schools to tailor the curriculum to better meet the needs and interests of their students, fostering a more student-centered approach to education (Wang et al., 2023).

The proactive and adaptable approaches of teachers, as illustrated by Participants 1 and 2, are crucial in navigating these curriculum changes. Participant 1's emphasis on project-based learning and Participant 2's role in overseeing curriculum transitions underscore the importance of teacher agency and leadership in implementing educational reforms (Wang et al., 2023).

The transition from the 2013 Curriculum to the Emancipated Curriculum in Indonesian schools presents both significant challenges and notable benefits. While issues such as reduced teaching time, curriculum constraints, and implementation clarity pose hurdles, the increased emphasis on creativity, technology integration, and curriculum adaptability offer promising opportunities for enhancing educational outcomes. The insights from teachers highlight the critical role they play in navigating these changes, underscoring the need for supportive policies and professional development to facilitate effective curriculum implementation.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the transition from the 2013 Curriculum to the Emancipated Curriculum in Indonesia represents a significant attempt aimed at elevating educational

standards and outcomes. While challenges such as reduced teaching time, curriculum constraints, and implementation uncertainties persist, concerted efforts in policy alignment and administrative clarity are essential for ensuring smooth transitions and consistent educational delivery. Nevertheless, the adaptation to the Emancipated Curriculum offers valuable opportunities, including enhanced student engagement through creative projects, leveraging technology for improved learning accessibility, and a strengthened focus on critical subjects like English. The curriculum's flexibility enables schools to adjust learning experiences, fostering personalized education that meets diverse student needs. Central to successful implementation are teachers' proactive roles in fostering creativity, managing transitions, and advocating for student-centered learning. Looking ahead, addressing these challenges while capitalizing on the curriculum's benefits will be crucial for sustaining educational improvements and preparing Indonesian students effectively for future global challenges. Continued collaboration among teachers, policymakers, and stakeholders will be vital in refining curriculum frameworks that align with current educational goals and future demands.

## REFERENCES

- Aboagye, E., & Yawson, J. A. (2020). Teachers' Perception of the New Educational Curriculum in Ghana. *African Educational Research Journal*, 6-12.
- Bahri, S., Yanto, M., & Pratiwi, D. P. (2024). Problems of the Emancipated Curriculum policy in efforts to improve the academic quality of students at SMPN. *Indonesian Journal of Pedagogy and Teacher Education*, 2(1), 20. <https://doi.org/10.58723/ijopate.v2i1.177>
- Barrios-Fernández, A. (2022). Instruction time and educational outcomes: Understanding differences in returns to expansions of instruction time. Centre for Economics Performance (LSE) and VATT Institute for Economic Research. Retrieved from [https://andresbarriosf.github.io/instruction\\_time\\_iza\\_wol.pdf](https://andresbarriosf.github.io/instruction_time_iza_wol.pdf)
- Campbell, S., Greenwood, M., Prior, S., Shearer, T., Walkem, K., Young, S., & Walker, K. (2020). Purposive sampling: complex or simple? Research case examples. *Journal of research in Nursing*, 652-661.
- Ellen, K. K., & Sudimantara, L. B. (2023). Examining Emancipated Curriculum Development in Middle Schools: A Case Study. *PANYONARA: Journal of English Education*, 165-188.
- Fitriyani, F., Sunaryati, T., & Surya, V. M. (2023). Implementation Of Project-Based Learning Oriented To The Merdeka Learning Curriculum In The Form Of A Pancasila Student Profile With Global Diversity. *Buana Pendidikan: Jurnal Fakultas Keguruan Dan Ilmu Pendidikan Unipa Surabaya*, 115-124.
- Harefa, C. T. (2024, January). Teachers Views On Curriculum Changes In Indonesia. *Sintaksis : Publikasi Para ahli Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris*, 2(1), 206-211. <https://doi.org/10.61132/sintaksis.v2i1.369>
- Hargreaves, A., & Fullan, M. (2012). *Professional Capital: Transforming Teaching in Every School*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

- Hidayah, R., Wangid, M. N., & Wuryandani, W. (2022). Elementary School Teacher Perception of Curriculum Changes in Indonesia. *Pegem Journal of Education and Instruction*, 77-88. <https://doi.org/10.5590/JOSC.2018.10.1.0>
- Isadaud, D., Fikri, M. D., & Bukhari, M. I. (2022). The urgency of English in the curriculum in Indonesia to prepare human resources for global competitiveness. *DIAJAR: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran*, 1(1), 51-58. <https://doi.org/10.54259/diajar.v1i1.177>
- Kusnawan, W. (2019). Inconsistency of curriculum of education in Indonesia. *ISTAWA: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam (IJPI)*, 4(1). Retrieved from <http://journal.umpo.ac.id/index.php/istawa/>
- Lapasi, L. (2022). Curriculum 2013: Addressing the Needs of High Ability Learners in Indonesian Secondary Schools.
- Liu, Xueying. (2021). A Review on the Effects of Instructional Time and Teacher Quality on Language Learning Performance. *OALib*. 08. 1-14. 10.4236/oalib.1107834.
- Mardiant, R., & Damayanti, I. L. (2024). Exploring Vocational High School EFL Teacher's Role in the Problem-based Learning: Emancipated Curriculum Context in Indonesia. *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 558-569.
- Miles, M.B., Huberman, A.M. and Saldana, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook*. Sage, London
- OECD. (2023). Digital equity and inclusion in education: An overview of practice and policy in OECD countries (OECD Education Working Paper No. 299). Retrieved from [https://one.oecd.org/document/EDU/WKP\(2023\)14/en/pdf](https://one.oecd.org/document/EDU/WKP(2023)14/en/pdf)
- Paula, M., Ferreira, M., & Veloso, B. (2021). Improving student engagement with project-based learning: A case study in software engineering. *IEEE Revista Iberoamericana de Tecnologias del Aprendizaje*, 16, 21-28. <https://doi.org/10.1109/RITA.2021.3052677>
- Santos, K. D., Ribeiro, M. C., Queiroga, D. E., Silva, I. A., & Ferreira, S. M. (2020). The use of multiple triangulations as a validation strategy in a qualitative study. *Ciencia & saude coletiva*, 655-664.
- Shava, G., Hleza, S., Tlou, F., Shonhiwa, S., & Mathonsi, E. (2021). Qualitative content analysis. 2454-6186.
- Turale, S. (2020). A brief introduction to qualitative description: A research design worth using. *Pacific Rim International Journal of Nursing Research*, 289-291.
- Wang, C., Zhang, M., Sesunan, A., & Yolanda, L. (2023). Technology-driven education reform in Indonesia: A look into the current status of the Merdeka Belajar program. Retrieved from <https://repositori.kemdikbud.go.id/30538/1/Indonesias-K-12-Education-Quality-Improvement-English-05122023.pdf>