

# Evaluative Study of the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Physical Education Elementary School Level Using the CIPP Model

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## Abstract

This research aims to evaluate the use of the Independent Curriculum in Physical Education Learning at the elementary school level using the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) model approach. This research uses a qualitative case study approach in 12 public elementary schools in Mojogedang District, Karanganyar Regency, Indonesia. Data was obtained through observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. The significance of this research is Penjas learning at the elementary school level. The main focus of this research lies in the need to ensure the effectiveness of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. As a result of this research, it was found that there were significant variations in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum between schools. Although the context aspect highlights the importance of developing students holistically, there are differences in the ideal concept and its implementation. Input evaluations show significant differences in school readiness, especially in teacher capabilities and resource availability. Product evaluation shows various differences in efforts to develop student competencies. The results of this research conclude that a more differentiated and contextual implementation strategy is needed, as well as getting sustainable support in teacher professional development and improving educational infrastructure.

## Keywords

Independent Curriculum; Physical Education; CIPP Evaluation; Elementary School; Curriculum Implementation

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a key factor in the progress of a nation, with the quality of human resources being highly determined by quality implementation of the education system (Arman et al., 2020; Wardina et al., 2019). Improving the quality of education, the Indonesian government has made a series of curriculum updates, with the latest being the Merdeka Curriculum, which began to be implemented in 2022 (Darma, 2019; Iqbal et al., 2023). The Merdeka Curriculum is designed to provide flexibility and focus on developing the character and competence of students to the demands of the 21st century (Huliatunisa et al., 2021). In implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, the subject of Physical Education



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(Penjas) has a strategic role in students' character formation and skill development (Vo et al., 2017).

However, implementing the new curriculum often faces various challenges and obstacles. Based on initial observations in public elementary schools in Mojogedang District, it was found that this research was significant between the ideal concept of the Merdeka Curriculum and the reality of its implementation, especially in Penjas learning. Some obstacles identified include teachers' lack of understanding of project-based learning and limited supporting facilities and infrastructure. (Karcı Aktaş & Gündoğdu, 2020). The supporting facilities and infrastructure that contribute to these successes and challenges (Revelle, 2019).

Students fall between the cracks and do not get the help they require, which can have detrimental effects like aggravating mental health issues or even increasing stress. Schools must prioritize mental health education and resources for students and teachers. To overcome this main issue, a comprehensive evaluation of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is needed, especially in Penjas learning at the elementary school level. The CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) evaluation model developed by Stufflebeam (1971) is effective for evaluating curriculum implementation. The effectiveness of the CIPP model lies in its ability to provide a comprehensive and systematic evaluation, covering four main aspects: context, input, process, and product (Zhang et al., 2011). This model allows evaluators to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the program at each stage and provide useful information for decision-making and continuous improvement (Mirzazadeh et al., 2016).

Implementing the CIPP Model is a comprehensive evaluation framework for assessing programs, projects, personnel, products, institutions, and systems. (Diharja et al., 2023; Musifuddin et al., 2024; Shaoying, 2024). The model consists of four main components: Context, which evaluates needs, problems, and opportunities as a basis for determining goals and priorities; Inputs that assess alternative approaches, action plans, and resource allocation; Process, which reviews the implementation of the plan to assist in the interpretation of results; and Product that identifies and assesses expected and unexpected outcomes, both short-term and long-term. The uniqueness of the CIPP model lies in its systematic approach and ability to provide comprehensive and contextual information for decision-making. (Lippe & Carter, 2018).

The CIPP model is effective if it can provide a comprehensive and systematic evaluation that includes four main aspects. Research that has applied this model allows evaluators to identify program strengths and weaknesses at each stage, provides useful information for decision-making and continuous improvement, and enhances professional practice, curriculum design, and program evaluation (Mirzazadeh et al., 2016; Sopha & Nanni. Various countries, such as Malaysia, have used this model (Mustapha et al., 2020). In addition, the CIPP model is also flexible and can be adapted to different types of programs and evaluation contexts, making it highly relevant for evaluating the implementation of new curricula such as the Merdeka Curriculum (Toosi et al., 2021).

Several previous studies have used the CIPP model to evaluate educational programs. A research (Derakhshan et al., 2022; Toosi et al., 2021) is using the CIPP model to evaluate the curriculum in the medical faculty, while another research (Duan et al., 2023; Sankaran & Saad, 2022) is applying it in evaluating educational groups at the Faculty of Polytechnics. However, these studies have not specifically examined the implementation of the new curriculum in the context of Penjas learning in elementary schools. The novelty of this study lies in its specific focus on the evaluation of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in Penjas learning at the elementary school level using the CIPP model. This is important considering the unique characteristics of Penjas subjects that combine cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects and their vital role in shaping students' character according to the demands of the 21st century.

The problem with this research in the syllabus for compulsory school is that the aim clearly states, 'teaching in physical education and health should aim at pupils developing all-around movement capacity and an interest in being physically active and spending time outdoors in nature.' This is stated

in the subject "KD," stating that "the Merdeka curriculum structure has no impact on teachers' teaching hours for certification because it is very flexible and is used as P5". Previous research confirmed that there is no change in total lesson hours. It is just that the independent curriculum states that the lesson hours for each subject are allocated for two hours of learning activities. These activities include intracurricular learning and projects to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students.

The urgency of this research lies in the need to ensure the effectiveness of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, especially in Penjas learning at the elementary school level. A comprehensive evaluation using the CIPP model will provide valuable information for policymakers, principals, and teachers in efforts to improve and develop the curriculum in the future. (Toosi et al., 2021) and can improve language program evaluation and curriculum design, benefiting educators in a variety of contexts (Sopha & Nanni, 2019). The purpose of this study is to evaluate the application of the Merdeka Curriculum in Physical Education learning at the elementary school level using the CIPP model, which includes aspects of *context*, *input*, *process*, and *product*. The study results are expected to provide concrete recommendations for optimizing the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, especially in Penjas learning at the elementary school level.

## 2. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to evaluate the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in Physical Education in elementary schools using the CIPP model. This study was conducted in 12 State Elementary Schools in Mojogedang District, Karanganyar Regency, during the 2023/2024 school year. Informants were selected using snowball sampling, starting from the principal and physical education teachers.

The selection of schools is based on the following criteria: (1) having implemented the Merdeka Curriculum for at least one year, (2) having certified Physical Education teachers, and (3) representing a variety of school characteristics in the sub-district. Informants were selected using snowball sampling, starting from the principal and physical education teachers. Data collection uses the triangulation method, combining passive participant observation of physical education classes, semi-structured interviews with school principals and teachers, and analysis of curriculum documents, lesson plans, and learning materials.

The data analysis technique used is descriptive qualitative. Data analysis follows procedures. (Huberman & Saldana, 2014; Miles & A.M, 1992) which consists of (1) raw data transcription, qualitative research conducted by researchers to see the evaluation study of learning physical education, (2) data coding based on CIPP components, (3) data categorization and organization about the financing and benefits that will be carried out for activities in schools where available income and resources are used to develop and maintain school programs obtained from conditions that vary such as national conditions, (4) data interpretation and theme extraction of interviews, and (5) conclusion drawing and verification about interviews and observation data. To ensure the validity of the data, this study uses triangulation of sources and methods. The CIPP evaluation model framework guides the analysis, focusing on the context, inputs, processes, and products of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in Physical Education at the primary school level. The interview grid can be seen in Table 1. Below.

**Table 1.** Interview Guide Grid

CIPP model	Indicator	Sub Indicator
Context	Goals and Objectives	Goals and objectives of the independent curriculum in Physical Education subjects.
	Strength	The strength of the independent curriculum in Physical Education subjects.

<i>Inputs</i>	Weakness	Weaknesses of the independent curriculum in Physical Education subjects
	Curriculum Structure	Intracurricular Project to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students. Extracurricular
	Physical Education Teacher Competencies	Pedagogical competence Professional competence Personality competency Social competence
	Learners	Affective Cognitive Psychomotor
	Availability of Facilities and Infrastructure	Field conditions Availability of learning tools and materials
	Teaching materials	Availability of teaching materials
	Implementation of Learning	Implementation of Physical Education Learning
<i>Process</i>	Implementation of Assessment	Rated aspect The form of assessment used.
	Program Achievements	Effectiveness of using the curriculum in PJOK subjects Analysis of student learning outcomes and Changes to behavior

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### Findings

##### *Context Evaluation (Context)*

Based on the data that has been analyzed as part of the evaluation of the physical education learning context in the independent curriculum at State Elementary Schools in Mojogedang District for the 2023/2024 academic year, several important findings are based on the context evaluation. In general, the goals and objectives of the independent curriculum in Physical Education subjects focus on the holistic development of students, not only physical aspects but also mental, social, emotional, and intellectual. This is reflected in the statements of several informants. The principal of SD Negeri 01 Buntar emphasized that,

*"The goals and objectives of the independent curriculum in Physical Education subjects are a student-centered curriculum."* (Interview results, Monday 15 January 2024).

In line with that, the PJOK teacher at SD Negeri 01 Gentungan added,

*"In overall child development, it is not only about physical activities but also mental, social, emotional, intellectual and overall health development."* (Interview results, Wednesday 17 January 2024).

The principal of SD Negeri 01 Mojogedang also emphasized the motor skills aspect by stating,

*"The goals and objectives of the Independent Curriculum in Physical Education subjects are to develop students' motor and physical skills holistically and encourage students' active participation in physical activities and sports."* (Interview results, Thursday, 11 January 2024).

The main strength of the independent curriculum in Physical Education lies in its flexibility in adapting learning to students' needs, interests, and talents and adding perspectives of local and global relevance. The principal of SD Negeri 01 Buntar stated:

*"The strength of the Merdeka Curriculum is that learning is tailored to students' needs."* (Interview results, Monday 15 January 2024).

The PJOK teacher at SD Negeri 01 Gebyog emphasized the aspect of freedom and fun by saying,

*"Allowing students to move according to their pleasure using facilities prepared and designed by the teacher to form an attitude of knowledge and skills."* (Interview results, Wednesday 10 January 2024).

*"The Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes learning relevant to local and global needs. Physical education can enable students to learn through physical activities and sports appropriate to their environment and culture."* (Interview results, Thursday, 11 January 2024).

However, implementing the independent curriculum also faces several significant challenges. The main weakness identified is the need for greater resources regarding time, infrastructure, and human resource capacity. The principal of SD Negeri 01 Buntar said,

*"A free curriculum in physical education requires greater time and resources and active student participation."* (Interview results, Monday 15 January 2024).

*"Weaknesses in the independent curriculum require support from adequate budget infrastructure and technology to implement quality learning."* (Interview results, Thursday, 1 February 2024).

A lack of readiness for preparation and planning is also an obstacle. The fifth-grade teacher at SD Negeri 02 Gebyog highlighted this problem by stating,

*"The weakness is that the preparation is not yet mature, the system is not well planned, there is a lack of resources and educational accessibility."* (Interview results, Tuesday 6 February 2024).

*"Physical education has several weaknesses regarding the changes to the independent curriculum. Firstly, it is not mature enough in its preparation. Secondly, the teaching system has not been planned in detail. Finally, lacking human resource capacity makes what is given to students difficult to adapt well"* (Interview results, Tuesday, February 6, 2024).

Context evaluation also revealed potential gaps in curriculum implementation between urban and rural areas. The PJOK teacher at SD Negeri 01 Munggur explained,

*"Another weakness of the curriculum is limited educational resources and accessibility. Even though this curriculum provides freedom in choosing subjects, not all schools have adequate resources to provide a variety of subject choices, especially in rural areas and areas with limited accessibility. More subjects are available. effective specifications may be limited, making the gap in educational opportunities between students in urban and rural areas very different."* (Interview results, Tuesday 16 January 2024).

From the context assessment, it can be concluded that the independent curriculum in Physical Education subjects at Mojogedang District Elementary School shows promising potential in overall student development. However, several significant challenges must be overcome to optimize implementation effectiveness. The flexibility and relevance of the curriculum to student needs are important aspects and are the main strengths. However, there are several obstacles, such as limited resources, unpreparedness in implementation, and potential gaps between regions to strengthen the

relevance of learning materials with the Independent Curriculum to achieve a higher level of achievement. These findings indicate that comprehensive efforts are needed to improve school readiness, strengthen teacher capabilities, and optimize the use of resources. Therefore, a more flexible and contextually appropriate approach is needed to overcome the gap between the ideal concept of an independent curriculum and its implementation in the field. This aims to ensure that the goal of comprehensive development of students through Physical Education can be achieved.

### ***Input Evaluation***

Evaluation of physical education learning inputs in the independent curriculum at State Elementary Schools in Mojogedang District for the 2023/2024 academic year revealed complex and varied findings, reflecting the dynamics of implementing this new curriculum. In-depth analysis of data collected from various sources in the schools studied shows significant variations in understanding and implementation of key components of the independent curriculum.

The independent curriculum structure in physical education is generally understood as a competency-based curriculum with flexible learning and Pancasila characteristics. However, implementation varies between schools. The principal of SD Negeri 01 Buntar stated,

*"The structure of the independent curriculum in Physical Education subjects is based on flexible learning competencies and flexible learning and has a Pancasila character "* (interview results, Monday 15 January 2024).

*"The curriculum structure is divided into two main learning activities, namely regular or routine learning, which is an extra-curricular activity, and a project to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students"* (interview results, Tuesday 16 January 2024).

These variations indicate that although there is a general understanding of the principles of independent curriculum, their implementation in practice still varies, perhaps due to differences in interpretation, available resources, or the local context of each school. The competency of Physical Education teachers in implementing the independent curriculum shows significant variations. Some schools report highly competent teachers, while others recognize the need for increased competency. The PJOK teacher at SD Negeri 01 Pendem said,

*"In implementing the independent curriculum in physical education subjects, teachers really need several special competencies to ensure effective learning and by these principles "* (interview results, Thursday, 1 February 2024).

On the other hand, the Principal of SD Negeri 01 Sewurejo stated,

*"For our teachers, although there are still terms like workshops and increasing competence for teachers, I think there is still a need to increase competence for teachers, especially in this independent curriculum "* (interview results, Wednesday, 7 February 2024).

These findings indicate a teacher competency gap that needs to be addressed for effective curriculum implementation.

Students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies show interesting patterns. Many informants reported that students were superior in affective and psychomotor aspects to cognitive aspects. The fifth grade teacher at SD Negeri 01 Ngadirejo stated,

*"As far as I know, children do not really master cognitive knowledge, but when they get out of practice, it is effective, and they can master their psychomotor skills well"* (interview results, Tuesday 6 February 2024).

These findings indicate the need for more attention to developing cognitive aspects in physical education learning while maintaining strengths in affective and psychomotor aspects. The availability of facilities and infrastructure is a major challenge in most schools. Many informants reported limited

facilities that hampered optimal curriculum implementation. The principal of SD Negeri 01 Pereng said,

*"The availability of infrastructure for applying physical education learning is certainly inadequate. Usually, students only play using the tools and facilities available. Sports learning can be implemented using various approaches, including the tactical game approach, namely the approach using games"* (interview results, Tuesday 16 January 2024).

These findings indicate the need for further investment in physical education infrastructure and the development of creative strategies to maximize the use of limited resources. Teaching materials show variations in quality and suitability to the independent curriculum. Some schools reported adequate teaching materials, while others experienced shortages. The principal of SD Negeri 01 Pereng stated,

*"The analysis of teaching materials and materials is one of the planning processes that determines the success of learning in a semester or academic year. The analysis of teaching material needs includes three stages: analysis of the curriculum, learning resources, and determining the type and title of teaching materials for Physical Education subjects"* (interview results, Tuesday 16 January 2024).

*"The teaching materials are still limited because even the number of books from the government does not cover all of them, sir"* (interview results, Wednesday, 7 February 2024).

These findings indicate the need for more systematic and equitable development and distribution of teaching materials. In general, the input evaluation indicates that although there is potential for holistic student development in the independent Physical Education curriculum, its implementation is still faced with various challenges. Each school has unique challenges that arise from variations in teacher competency, available resources, and student readiness. These findings emphasize the importance of obtaining a more comprehensive strategy to overcome the difference between the ideal concept and the reality of its implementation in the field. These findings show the importance of coordinated and sustainable efforts to improve school readiness, strengthen teacher capacity, and optimize the effective use of resources. In order to ensure that the goal of overall student development through Physical Education at the elementary school level is achieved, a more adaptive and contextual approach to implementing the independent curriculum is needed. Apart from that, it needs to be emphasized how important it is to carry out continuous evaluations and adapt the new curriculum responsively. It also requires close collaboration between policymakers, school administrators, teachers, and communities to address identified and increasing challenges.

### **Process Evaluation**

Evaluation of the physical education learning process in the independent curriculum at State Elementary Schools in Mojogedang District for the 2023/2024 academic year revealed several important findings related to the implementation of learning and assessment. Analysis of data collected from various sources in the schools studied shows variations in the implementation of learning and assessment processes per the principles of the independent curriculum. In implementing learning, it was found that most schools have attempted to implement an approach based on the principles of an independent curriculum, although with varying interpretations and implementation. Several schools reported using a differentiation approach in learning, as expressed by the Principal of SD Negeri 01 Buntar:

*"The learning process uses a more differentiated approach"* (interview results, Monday 15 January 2024).

Meanwhile, the Principal of SD Negeri 02 Gebyog emphasized developing students' potential holistically:

*"The implementation of independent curriculum learning in physical learning is not only physical activity, but also develops all students' potential and wholeness through physical activity"* (interview

results, Tuesday 6 February 2024).

These findings indicate that there are efforts to integrate the holistic development of students through physical activity while still considering the context and resources available at each school. Some schools also reported using initial assessments as part of the learning process. The fifth grade teacher at SD Negeri 01 Pereng stated:

*"Teachers carry out an assessment first to map students' competencies, interests and talents. This assessment is to measure the cognitive and non-cognitive aspects of each student. Furthermore, the teacher uses the assessment results to implement differentiated learning patterns and processes for each student "* (results interview, Tuesday 16 January 2024).

In the implementation aspect of the assessment, significant variations were found in the approaches and methods used. Some schools report using comprehensive assessments covering cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. The principal of SD Negeri 01 Buntar stated:

*"The first formative and summative diagnostic assessment of the three domains is useful in the independent curriculum learning process in physical education subjects in our elementary school "* (interview results, Monday 15 January 2024).

Meanwhile, the Principal of SD Negeri 01 Pereng emphasized a more holistic assessment approach:

*"The assessment process is carried out in 3 ways: assessment as a learning process (assessment as learning), assessment for the learning process (assessment for learning), and assessment at the end of the learning process (assessment of learning)"* (interview results, Tuesday 16 January 2024).

Some schools also reported the use of competency-based assessments. However, some schools also report challenges in implementing these complex assessments. The principal of SD Negeri 01 Kaliboto and teachers stated:

*"The assessment process in the independent curriculum in physical education subjects refers to a competency-based assessment approach which covers various aspects of student abilities"* (interview results, Thursday, 1 February 2024).

*"The evaluation implementation process in the independent curriculum at a time when physical education subjects are more complex is more complicated if the teaching staff does not really understand "* (result of interview, Wednesday, 10 January 2024).

These findings show that although there have been efforts to apply the principles of an independent curriculum in physical education learning and assessment, variations and challenges must still be faced in its implementation. Differences in interpretation, availability of resources, and teacher preparedness levels may account for these variations across schools. These findings indicate that teachers need to receive more structured and sustainable support to carry out learning and assessment processes per the independent curriculum. To achieve better results, efforts need to be made to provide more intensive training, provide more detailed guidance, and establish forums for schools to share best practices. In addition, it is also important to have flexibility in its implementation so that it can adapt to each school's unique conditions and needs without forgetting the main principles of the independent curriculum.

### **Product Evaluation**

Evaluation of physical education learning products in the independent curriculum at State Elementary Schools in Mojogedang District for the 2023/2024 academic year revealed several important, interrelated findings regarding the achievements and results of implementing this curriculum. The first finding focuses on project-based learning to realize the Pancasila student profile. The principal of SD Negeri 01 Buntar stated:

*"By prioritizing project-based learning to realize the six dimensions of the Pancasila student profile"*



(interview results, Monday 15 January 2024).

These findings reflect efforts to align physical education learning with the main objectives of the independent curriculum. The second finding relates to the overall development of student competence. The principal of SD Negeri 01 Mojogedang explained:

*"The achievement of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in Physical Education subjects can be assessed from several aspects, including the development of student competencies, the relevance of learning to everyday life, integration of local wisdom, and active participation of students in learning "* (interview results, Monday 5 February 2024).

These findings indicate that there are efforts to integrate various aspects of learning in physical education. The third finding reveals achievements in terms of student attitudes and character. The PJOK teacher at SD Negeri 01 Mojoroto stated:

*"The product that has been achieved in implementing the Independent Curriculum in Physical Education subjects is a positive attitude, honest sportsmanship, discipline, responsibility and cooperation, self-confidence and democracy "* (interview results, Monday 15 January 2024).

These findings show that the implementation of the independent curriculum does not only focus on physical aspects but also character development. However, the fourth finding revealed variations in achievement levels between schools. Some schools reported good achievements, as expressed by the Principal of SD Negeri 01 Pereng:

*"The achievement of implementing the independent curriculum in Physical Education subjects has been achieved well "* (interview results, Tuesday 16 January 2024).

Meanwhile, other schools reported less than optimal achievements. The principal of SD Negeri 01 Sewurejo stated:

*"I think there are still minimal products for physical education here because not all of the children's abilities and interests can be achieved or not all of them can be improved because the abilities or competencies possessed by teachers here are still limited "* (interview results, Wednesday 7 February 2024).

The fifth finding relates to implementation challenges, especially teacher readiness. The PJOK teacher at SD Negeri 01 Ngadirejo said:

*"The achievement of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in Physical Education subjects is less than optimal; teachers are still implementing gargling only half-and-half, not fully"* (interview results, Tuesday 6 February 2024).

Although there have been significant efforts and several positive achievements in implementing the independent curriculum in physical education, there are still various challenges and varying levels of success. Achievements include developing students' overall competencies, instilling character values, and efforts to connect learning with everyday life. However, not all schools can achieve the same success because some face teacher readiness and resources obstacles. These findings indicate the urgency of developing a separate strategy for implementing the independent curriculum, taking into account the situation and capabilities of each school. For teacher competence to increase, sufficient resources are provided, and a deeper understanding of the principles of the independent curriculum must be ensured among educators. Therefore, a more structured monitoring and evaluation system is needed to identify best practices and areas that need improvement. This aims to support the continuous adjustment and development of an independent curriculum in physical education at the school level.

## Discussion

Evaluating research on the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in Physical Education at the primary school level using the CIPP model has presented complex and interrelated results,

providing an in-depth understanding of the implementation journey of this new curriculum. The study found significant differences in curriculum implementation in different schools, indicating the complexity of changes in primary education.

In the context aspect, the findings show that the goals and objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum in Physical Education subjects focus on holistic student development. This is in line with the concept of the "whole child approach" put forward by (Darling-Hammond, 2017) and (Smith, 2022), which emphasizes the importance of education that simultaneously pays attention to cognitive, social-emotional, and physical aspects. However, this study also reveals a gap between the ideal concept and implementation in the field, which reflects the "implementation gap" that often occurs in education reform. This is in line with research from (Molope & Oduaran, 2020) The CIPP model shows a lack of alignment between the needs of community development practitioners and learning activities due to poor planning and a lack of appropriate learning activities.

The main strength of the Merdeka Curriculum lies in its flexibility, which allows for adjustment to local needs. These findings reinforce the argument. (Kiki Fatmawati, 2024) The importance of "curriculum making" at the school level is to ensure the relevance and contextualization of the curriculum. However, this flexibility also creates challenges in standardization and quality assurance, as expressed by (Voogt & Roblin, 2012).

The input evaluation revealed significant variation in the readiness of schools to implement the Merdeka Curriculum. The findings on the teacher competency gap are in line with the results of the research (Bastian et al., 2023; Gayatri Basuki et al., 2023; Mutmainah et al., 2024; Yuhastina et al., 2020), which identified the lack of understanding and skills of teachers as a major obstacle in the implementation of the new curriculum. The limitations of infrastructure found in this study reinforce the argument (Azzarah et al., 2024) about the importance of infrastructure support in the success of education reform.

Another interesting finding is the pattern of student competence, where the affective and psychomotor aspects tend to be more developed than the cognitive aspects. This raises questions about the balance in the development of student competencies, which is in line with the debate on "21st-century skills" (Gayatri Basuki et al., 2023; González-Pérez & Ramírez-Montoya, 2022; Stehle & Peters-Burton, 2019). In the process aspect, this study reveals efforts to implement learning approaches based on the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, including the use of initial assessment and differentiation approaches. These findings enrich our understanding of curriculum implementation practices at the grade level, which aligns with the proposed concept of "adaptive teaching." (Kadir, 2024, 2024; Mabunda, 2023). Variations in the implementation of assessments indicate a diverse interpretation of the new curriculum principles, reflecting the complexity of changing assessment practices automatically.

Product evaluations reveal diverse achievements between schools. Some schools report success in developing student competencies holistically and instilling character values, while others face challenges in achieving curriculum targets. This variation reflects the "differential effects" of education reform, which shows that the effectiveness of education reform is highly dependent on the context and capacity of schools (Jury, 2018). This variation underscores the importance of recognizing how differences in model specifications affect schools identified as more effective (Moore, 2022).

Researchers found the data to be analyzed based on interviews with the principal. These findings add to our insight into the complexity of implementing the new curriculum, especially in the scope of physical education at the elementary level. This study shows that although the Merdeka Curriculum has the potential to improve the quality of education, the various obstacles it faces require a more detailed and situational approach. Thus, it is necessary to implement more different strategies, considering the level of readiness and the local situation in schools. Physical education teachers should have social competency because They can interact with pupils more successfully and inspire them to be

active. Besides social skills, teachers' qualifications and experience significantly impact the student's success. Lesson plans that are interesting and successful are more likely to be created by teachers who have advanced degrees and specialized training in physical education, according to research. Additionally, seasoned educators can better manage a range of student demands and modify their pedagogical approaches accordingly (Jansson et al., 2022).

Overall, the program's success and the instruction's caliber are greatly influenced by the credentials and background of physical education teachers. Based on the results of interviews with 20 physical education teachers, the answers were all normative in that all had good communication links with fellow teachers at school; however, several had additional notes regarding differentiating students in the realm of physical education skills. The final aspect assessed is the professional competence of physical education teachers (Jurakulovich, 2022). The researcher used two indicators to guide observation and interviews in this case. These indicators are mastery of material, structure, concepts, and the scientific mindset that supports the subjects being taught and developing professionalism through reflective action. This aligns with the "differentiated implementation" concept proposed by (Hyytinen et al., 2017). In addition, findings on teacher competency gaps indicate the need for greater investment in teacher professional development (Darling-Hammond, 2017).

These findings increase our insight into the complexity of implementing the new curriculum, especially in the scope of Physical Education at the elementary school level. This study shows that although the Merdeka Curriculum has the potential to improve the quality of education, the various obstacles it faces require a more detailed and situation-related approach. Thus, it was necessary to implement more differentiated strategies, considering the level of readiness and local situation in schools. This is in line with the concept of "differentiated implementation" proposed by (Mahoney et al., 2021). Additionally, findings regarding teacher competency gaps indicate the need for greater investment in teacher professional development.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Overall, in evaluating the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Physical Education in elementary schools using the CIPP model, a deep understanding of the challenges of implementing the new curriculum has been obtained. The main focus in ongoing and contextually adapted professional development for teachers is increasing their understanding of the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum and mastering the skills to apply them; Increasing the distribution of support for infrastructure and learning resources, especially in schools with limitations; Improved monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are needed so that adjustments in curriculum implementation can be made quickly; Joining a community of practitioners from various schools has the same goal, namely to share experiences and effective strategies in implementing the Independent Curriculum.

This research also highlights that when implementing a new curriculum, it is best to consider very important socio-cultural factors. To implement the Merdeka Curriculum in the context of Physical Education, additional steps need to be taken to consider local wisdom and community values in more depth. Future research must better understand how this curriculum impacts future generations of Indonesian students; longitudinal research is needed.

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