TEACHER’S STRATEGY IN IMPLEMENTING THE INDEPENDENT LEARNING CURRICULUM IN THE LEADING REGIONS, REMOTE, AND LEFT BEHIND (3T)

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Abstract
This study aims to determine the strategies teachers use in carrying out independent learning curriculum learning in frontier, remote, and disadvantaged schools and to explain the limitations in frontier, remote, and disadvantaged areas. The method used in this research is qualitative with a case study approach. This research was conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Amandraya in South Nias district, North Sumatra province. Data collection techniques were carried out through interviews, observation, and documentation. Informants in this study consisted of 10 teachers, principals, and 20 students. Data analysis was done using data reduction, presentation, and conclusion. The results of the study show that the teacher’s strategy in implementing the independent learning curriculum in frontier, remote, and disadvantaged areas is that the teacher optimizes the use of available learning facilities, the teacher utilizes learning tools and materials that are made naturally, and the teacher uses internal creativity in supporting learning by independent learning curriculum. Teacher competence in implementing the independent learning curriculum has limitations, namely the need for teacher training and professionalism. In addition, the results of implementing the independent learning curriculum have yet to experience changes in student learning outcomes fully. Therefore, the researchers suggest that local governments focus on developing human resources and learning facilities in frontier, remote, and underdeveloped regional schools to create young people who can compete nationally and internationally.

Keywords
Independent Curriculum, SMP Negeri 2 Amandraya, Teacher Strategy, 3T Region

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INTRODUCTION

The transformation of the 2013 curriculum into an independent learning curriculum can cause various problems in its application in schools that have a shortage of facilities and infrastructure. Apart from the lack of facilities and infrastructure in schools, the application of the independent learning curriculum in frontier, remote, and disadvantaged (3T) areas is also influenced by inadequate teacher professionalism. Education in frontier, remote and underdeveloped areas is regulated in the regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia number 23 of 2020 concerning guidelines for determining special areas in the implementation of the national education policy article 2 paragraph 1 states that “special areas are determined to implement a fair and equitable education policy” accordance with the goals of national education.

The previous study conducted by Sa’o et al. (2023) shows that the professionalism of teachers in preparing learning administration is still relatively low, so training is carried out for less competent teachers. The lack of school facilities in the 3T areas consists of a lack of internet connection in the school environment, difficulty accessing roads to schools, and a lack of student reading books in the library. Researchers have found preliminary observational data regarding the implementation of the independent learning curriculum in frontier, remote, and disadvantaged areas, namely, the teacher does not prepare teaching modules for every class because they cannot compile teaching modules according to the independent learning curriculum. In addition to the teacher not preparing teaching modules, the teacher also still uses conventional learning methods that focus on the teacher using the lecture method. According to a study done by Maulida (2022), states that teachers who are unable to make teaching modules in the independent curriculum are teachers who do not understand learning content, teachers who are unable to apply fun learning, and whose learning does not run systematically. Therefore, the implementation of the independent learning curriculum in frontier, remote and disadvantaged areas can cause students to lag in participating in learning according to national standards.

Previous research suggests the results of research from the implementation of the independent learning curriculum in educational institutions show that the independent curriculum strongly supports student independence in accessing various references following the learning objectives implemented (Hattarina et al., 2022). The implementation of the independent learning curriculum in driving schools can run smoothly under the objectives of the independent learning
curriculum (Rahayu et al., 2022). Research on the implementation of the independent learning curriculum carried out by Hutabarat et al. (2022) shows that the implementation of the independent learning curriculum in schools in Padang Sidempuan is running effectively and efficiently even though the results have not met 100% according to the expectations of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia. From the trend of existing studies, it shows that research related to the implementation of the independent learning curriculum in frontier, remote and disadvantaged areas is very important to be carried out to find out and analyze the problems faced by teachers and principals in implementing the independent learning curriculum. Therefore, previous research shows that there has been no research that analyzes the independent learning curriculum in the 3T area, which is hampered by various school facilities and infrastructure that do not accommodate student independence.

The teacher’s strategy is a teacher's tips or techniques in overcoming educational problems faced to adjust learning according to learning objectives (Putera & Rhussary, 2018);(Prananda & Hadiyanto, 2021). According to Akbar (2021), the ability of teachers to overcome various educational problems is needed to realize quality education. Educators who do not have special abilities to overcome the shortage of educational facilities and infrastructure can produce students who are unable to compete on the national or international level (Hidayat et al., 2021). The teacher’s strategic ability that does not adapt to the situation and conditions of the school can be a big problem that will be faced by the school and students who study at the school. The teacher’s strategy that is needed in adjusting learning according to the independent learning curriculum is preparing learning according to predetermined stages, including the preparation stage, the implementation stage, and the evaluation stage (Kusumawati, 2022). These stages are carried out by applying student-centered learning and project-based learning to develop students’ ability to solve problems (Anitah, 2022). Therefore, to realize quality education through the independent learning curriculum, a student-centered learning strategy is needed.

The teacher’s strategy becomes very important in the learning process. According to (Anitah, 2022), teacher strategy is careful planning by the teacher in achieving learning objectives in dealing with educational problems. The stages of the learning strategy must be implemented in a structured and targeted manner (Botutihe et al., 2020). In the view of Afandi, 2021, the stages of learning strategies that must be mastered by the teacher are the preparation, implementation, and evaluation stages.
Education in frontier, remote and underdeveloped areas has limited infrastructure which impacts the quality of education in 3T areas (Falah & Hadna, 2022). Equitable development can foster quality education that is on par with urban areas, but in frontier, remote and underdeveloped areas, there are still various problems faced by teachers and students in adapting learning according to the independent learning curriculum design. The 3T area is an area that is included in the low quality of infrastructure development and human resources so that it has an impact on various social needs, for example, the low quality of education and the high cost of logistics caused by the difficulty of community mobility (Rosmana et al., 2023). Based on (Masing & Astuti, 2021) 3T area is an area that has a high crime rate compared to urban areas because most young people do not go to school. It becomes a trigger for problems in society. Education in the 3T area can have an impact on high crime rates, so the government needs to solve the problem of good infrastructure to reduce crime. Therefore, the government’s role is needed in solving problems in the 3T areas to reduce the crime rate caused by high dropout rates.

This research complements the shortcomings of existing studies by looking at how the independent learning curriculum is implemented in the 3T areas. The challenges faced by teachers and principals in the 3T areas may require a specific strategy to adjust learning according to the independent learning curriculum goals. In particular, this paper answers how the independent learning curriculum is implemented in the 3T areas, as well as examines the teacher’s strategy in implementing the independent learning curriculum in the 3T areas. Therefore, this research was carried out to explain the phenomena that occur in the 3T areas in implementing the independent learning curriculum, as well as teaching strategies in adapting learning to the objectives of the independent learning curriculum.

Based on the data that the author has explained, this study aims to find out the strategies used by teachers in carrying out independent learning curriculum learning in frontier, remote, and disadvantaged schools and to describe the limitations that exist in frontier, remote, and disadvantaged areas.

**METHOD**

This research is qualitative by using case studies. This research was carried out by describing the phenomena that occur in the 3T area to make suggestions to schools and the government in implementing an independent learning curriculum so that the local government can pay serious
attention to the problems faced by schools in frontier, remote, and underdeveloped areas. This research was conducted at Amandraya 2 Public Middle School. The selection of research objects was carried out based on the decision of the Ministry of Education and Culture, which indicated that the school implemented the independent learning curriculum in 2022/2023, which is in the 3T area. Administratively, this school is located in the Amandraya sub-district, South Nias district, North Sumatra province.

This research was conducted by interviewing school principals, teachers, and students. The object of this research is the implementation of the independent curriculum in the 3T area of SMP Negeri 2 Amandraya. Determination of research informants carried out by researchers when conducting research in the field directly. The determination of research informants was carried out using a purposive sampling technique. According to Sugiyono as cited in (Yulianah, 2020), purposive sampling is a technique for determining research informants based on certain considerations and criteria, namely by selecting people who are considered to know more about the object of research. The determination of research informants using purposive sampling technique by considering research informants who are considered to know more about the object of research. Therefore, the informants for this study consisted of school principals, teachers, and students, who were considered to know more about the object to be studied. The determination of research informants was based on the background of the informants who were selected according to the research object, namely, people who were directly involved in implementing the independent learning curriculum, namely the principal, teachers, and students.

Data collection techniques are carried out by interview techniques, observation, and documentation. The interview technique carried out by the researcher was to carry out questions and answers to informants repeatedly at different times to obtain in-depth data by the research objectives. The observation technique that the researchers used was observing the implementation of the independent learning curriculum in schools and documenting the stages of implementing the independent learning curriculum in the 3T areas. In addition, documentation techniques are carried out by analyzing various important documents related to the policy of implementing the independent learning curriculum in the 3T areas. In addition to analyzing important documents, researchers also analyzed various student grade archives that had been stored as school documents. Therefore, the implementation of data collection techniques in this study was carried out in-depth so that the research objectives could be achieved.
Data analysis techniques carried out by researchers are data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data reduction was carried out by researchers by classifying data that was deemed unnecessary by discarding data mentioned by informants repeatedly. The presentation of data is carried out by compiling data based on the sequence so that conclusions can be drawn from the data. Concluding is carried out by researchers by analyzing data that is broad in nature so that researchers carry out verification to obtain detailed and rooted data.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Strategy for Implementing the Independent Curriculum in 3T Regions

SMP Negeri 2 Amandraya is located in the Amandraya sub-district and is a junior high school that has introduced an innovative concept called the independent curriculum. The main objective of this independent curriculum is to provide comprehensive and relevant education according to the needs of students in the modern era. In order to achieve these goals, teacher strategies are needed in implementing the independent learning curriculum in frontier, remote, and underdeveloped areas. Implementation of the independent learning curriculum in frontier, remote, and disadvantaged areas requires teacher strategies in adapting learning to the situation and conditions of the school (El Syam et al., 2023). The ability of teachers is the basis for educational progress in encouraging creative and innovative students to pursue higher education.

The limited educational facilities and infrastructure at Amandraya 2 Public Middle School fostered teacher creativity to adapt learning to the school situation. The strategy implemented by the teacher is a learning innovation in improving the quality of education in frontier, remote and underdeveloped areas. The teacher’s strategy in implementing the independent learning curriculum can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Implementation Strategy for the Independent Learning Curriculum at SMP Negeri 2 Amandraya

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Teachers optimize the use of available school facilities</td>
<td>The teacher distributes reading books to students in groups because of the limited number of books available in the school library.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The teacher identifies the needs of students</td>
<td>The teacher must know the learning interests of students and the needs needed by students.</td>
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</table>
Limited internet access in the school environment causes students to be unable to apply digital-based literacy. After the teacher knows the learning interests and abilities of students, the teacher looks for tools that support students’ abilities naturally. For example, students have an interest in learning in the visual arts section, which consists of decorating, painting, and drawing, so the teacher makes use of tools made from nature, such as painting using natural materials, such as watercolors made from fruits or plants.

The implementation of the independent learning curriculum in 3T regional schools, as shown in Table 1, requires strategies to adapt learning according to the objectives of the independent learning curriculum. Specific strategies used by teachers in implementing the independent learning curriculum can be seen in Table 1 above. The research findings in the table above show that the teacher’s ability to adapt learning to school situations and conditions that do not accommodate student independence can be resolved by the teacher’s creativity in implementing learning strategies that are by student learning interests. Table number one above shows that teachers use available school facilities by grouping students and distributing reading material to study together in groups. Limited reading materials in the school library are not an obstacle for teachers in increasing student literacy. The teacher’s strategy in increasing student literacy is a form of teacher expertise in solving the problem of limited reading material in the school library.

The teacher’s ability to identify students’ needs is very important to take follow-up according to students’ learning interests. The needs of students that must be known by the teacher are student learning tools and materials that are by student learning interests. For example, for students who have an interest in learning in the arts, the teacher must find solutions to complete the tools needed by these students. Limited school facilities and infrastructure can cause various deficiencies in student learning facilities so that teachers can find other solutions to meet student needs. The solution taken by teachers in the 3T areas is for teachers to optimize the use of available facilities and look for natural tools that support student learning activities. The teacher’s way of identifying student learning abilities is to take a personal approach to students, and then the teacher starts the conversation by asking which student’s interest in learning so that the teachers know the tools and
materials needed by students to achieve student desires. The solution implemented by the teacher is a learning innovation that does not focus on the limitations of school facilities that accommodate students' independence in learning.

The teacher's strategy applied in 3T regional schools shows that the implementation of the independent learning curriculum runs effectively even though the teacher has limited facilities provided by the school, but the teacher has innovations in adjusting learning according to the independent learning curriculum procedures. The condition of schools in the 3T areas is very interesting because the limited facilities and infrastructure mean that students are unable to compete with the quality of education in urban areas. In addition to the limited school facilities and infrastructure, teacher competence is also important in implementing the independent learning curriculum. Inequality in teacher competence in implementing the independent learning curriculum can cause the implementation of the independent learning curriculum to not run effectively and efficiently because the number of teachers who apply learning strategies according to the independent learning curriculum procedures is very small compared to the number of teachers who cannot develop strategies that can foster creativity student. Thus, the learning strategies that have been implemented by some teachers can relate to the competence of teachers in 3T regional schools, as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Teacher Competency in the Implementation of Independent Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lack of teacher training in implementing the independent learning curriculum</td>
<td>Teacher training was carried out in a very short time, namely once every two hours, organized by the district education office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lack of professional teachers in certain fields</td>
<td>Professional teachers can be seen from the number of teachers who have received educator certificates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Several teachers who do not complete their bachelor’s degree</td>
<td>Teachers in frontier, remote, and disadvantaged areas have some teachers who do not complete an academic degree, either a diploma or bachelor’s degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The principal recruits honorary teachers because of the limited number of teachers</td>
<td>Limited human resources in teaching so that principals can recruit honorary teachers</td>
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</table>
Teacher training in implementing the independent learning curriculum is very important in increasing the ability of teachers to develop learning tools according to the independent learning curriculum. Based on the results of interviews conducted by researchers, one of the teachers as an informant stated that "the implementation of teacher training in frontier, remote, and lagging schools was carried out once, and we also did not understand how to prepare learning tools according to the independent learning curriculum." The informant's statement was said many times by different informants, so the researcher concluded that the statement was true by the implementation in leading, remote, and underdeveloped schools. Teacher training in 3T schools should be carried out repeatedly because the 3T areas have limited learning facilities that cannot accommodate students' independent learning (Sa’o et al., 2023).

Based on this theory, it can be concluded that teacher training is very important to be carried out repeatedly and continuously to improve the ability of teachers in the 3T areas to optimize the implementation of the independent learning curriculum in schools that have limited school facilities and infrastructure. The various stages of teacher training should be maximally implemented so that teachers have expertise in preparing learning tools and preparing learning methods according to the independent learning curriculum.

Teacher training can increase professionalism so that the implementation of learning can bring out teacher innovation and creativity. Based on observations carried out by researchers, schools in the 3T area have a limited number of professional teachers based on the criteria for receiving professional teacher allowances or teachers who have completed professional teacher education. Teachers in 3T regional schools also teach in fields of study that are not by the education they are occupied with or not linear with the majors studied in academic studies. In addition, teachers do not prepare learning tools when teaching in class. Researchers observed that the actions of some teachers in implementing the independent learning curriculum were very inconsistent with the independent learning curriculum. (Rindayati et al., 2022) Reveals that teachers who do not prepare learning tools are teachers who do not master learning methods. This theory can be understood that teachers who do not have methods and strategies for implementing the independent learning curriculum in frontier, remote, and disadvantaged areas are unprofessional because schools with limited educational facilities need special strategies by teachers in adapting learning to the provisions of an independent curriculum. Study. Thus, teacher training is closely related to teacher professionalism, so in improving teacher professionalism, it is necessary to carry
out training for teachers to carry out their roles with their competencies.

Limited teacher training and professionalism have caused school principals to carry out the recruitment of honorary teachers to fulfill human resources in teaching in frontier, remote and underdeveloped schools. In the recruitment of non-permanent teachers in schools, several teachers do not complete a diploma or bachelor’s degree, so this is a new problem in the field of education personnel, which is increasingly weakened. Based on interviews and observations conducted by researchers, several informants (teachers) stated that "some teachers who only graduated from high school were made teachers at this school." (Noor, 2020) states that the criteria for educational staff must complete a bachelor's degree or diploma and have an educator certificate. Based on these criteria, it can be understood that teachers must complete a diploma or bachelor's degree, but in reality, in frontier, remote, and lagging schools, educators with high school graduates are still needed. According to the school principal, "the appointment of high school graduates in 3T schools was carried out due to the limited number of certified teachers and the lack of educators assigned by the government to 3T areas". Therefore, limited human resources in the 3T areas utilize teachers who graduated from high school to become temporary teaching staff.

**Table 3. Implementation of Free Learning Curriculum in 3T Regions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Findings</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Increased teacher creativity</td>
<td>Limited school facilities and infrastructure can increase teacher creativity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>in optimizing available school facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Categorization of student learning interests</td>
<td>The teacher gives freedom to students to learn according to the learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>interests of the students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The decline in the end-of-the-semester</td>
<td>Students deepen learning according to learning interests so that not all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>students as a whole</td>
<td>subjects get good grades cumulatively, but student scores increase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>according to student learning interests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Lack of use of technology in carrying out the</td>
<td>Limited school facilities and infrastructure in the 3T areas mean that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>independent learning curriculum</td>
<td>students and teachers do not get stable internet access, so they do not use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>technology-based learning</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The teacher’s ability to overcome the lack of student learning facilities greatly determines the success of implementing the curriculum. Some of the innovations and creativity that have been carried out by teachers in supporting the implementation of the independent learning curriculum in 3T schools are teachers optimizing the use of learning facilities available at schools, utilizing tools that are made naturally to meet students’ learning needs, and teachers preparing learning media.
based on manual (non-technological) for example the teacher prepares learning media made of manila paper then the teacher presents by displaying it directly in front of the students so that students can easily respond to the learning conveyed by the teacher. According to (Pribadi, 2017), learning media is not only applied using technology but in areas that do not yet support technological sophistication. It can be adapted to the teacher’s creativity based on the situation and conditions of the school. According to one informant who works as a teacher, he stated that "The teacher prepares lessons long before learning because manual-based learning media takes quite a long time. Therefore the teacher must prepare a week before learning to be studied before being practiced in class". Therefore, teacher creativity plays a very important role in implementing the independent curriculum in the 3T areas.

Teacher creativity can increase student learning interest so that students have the freedom to choose topics to study. This is in line with the provisions of the independent learning curriculum. According to (Rahmadayanti & Hartoyo, 2022), the independent learning curriculum can provide absolute freedom to students in finding learning resources and determining the topics to be studied following student learning interests. One teacher, as an informant, stated that "students are free to choose topics according to the wishes and abilities of students. Therefore the teacher acts as a supporter of student interest in learning both in preparing the tools and learning materials needed by students". The informant’s statement shows that the implementation of the independent learning curriculum has been realized even though teachers face challenges in preparing student learning tools and materials according to students’ learning interests. Grouping students' learning interests is carried out by the teacher through the teacher observing students' interests and learning styles with stages, namely the teacher directly asking students what learning styles are most liked by students and what are the students' learning interests. The results of these observations indicate that some students have different learning styles and student learning interests, so teachers can meet the interests and learning styles that are most liked by students by applying creativity that supports the continuity of student learning. From the various stages carried out by the teacher, it can increase students' understanding of the material presented by the teacher.

The implementation of the independent learning curriculum in the 3T areas has limited digital access digital-based learning cannot run effectively. For example, digital-based literacy and access to digital learning resources are lacking. This limitation can have an impact on student learning outcomes which cannot accommodate student independence in learning according to their
wishes, but the teacher has tried according to the abilities possessed by each teacher even though the results are still far from expectations. Based on research conducted by researchers, a student as an informant stated that "We also want to study like learning in urban areas, but limited facilities and infrastructure mean that we are not able to compete optimally compared to children who have complete learning facilities." The limited learning facilities make students not confident to compete with students who graduate from urban areas. (Priharsanti, 2016) postulates that students from remote areas drop out more and are not confident to continue their education at a higher level because the abilities of students are very limited compared to students who graduate from urban areas. This causes bullying of students who come from remote areas. Therefore, the quality of education of students in remote areas needs to be improved by improving the quality of teachers.

Discussion

The results of the research presented in the table above indicate that the application of the independent learning curriculum fosters teacher strategies in adapting student learning needs to the educational facilities available at Amandraya 2 Public Middle School. The teacher's strategy in implementing the independent learning curriculum is a learning innovation in the school because it requires teachers to be creative in finding solutions to problems of facilities and infrastructure in the 3T areas. Limited teacher competence is a new problem for schools in implementing the independent learning curriculum because several teachers are not professional in their respective fields. The results of the implementation of the independent learning curriculum have not achieved maximum changes in student learning because several teachers are unprofessional and less creative in their respective fields. The results of previous studies regarding the independent learning curriculum show that the implementation of the independent learning curriculum goes according to the objectives of the independent curriculum (Baharuddin, 2021; Khusni et al., 2022; Nasution, 2022).

The tendency of the results of implementing the independent learning curriculum in frontier, remote, and underdeveloped regional schools compared to schools that have fairly good educational facilities and infrastructure shows different results even though teachers in 3T regional schools use special strategies in adjusting learning, but the results have not reached the objectives of the independent curriculum learn to the fullest. Based on the results of the research carried out according to the author, the implementation of the independent learning curriculum in frontier, remote and disadvantaged areas is not feasible to continue in the academic year of 2024/2025.
CONCLUSION

The teacher’s strategy that has been implemented in frontier, remote, and lagging regional schools in adapting learning to the independent learning curriculum is that the teacher optimizes the use of available learning facilities, the teacher utilizes learning tools and materials that are made naturally, and the teacher uses internal creativity in supporting learning according to the independent learning curriculum. Teacher competence in implementing the independent learning curriculum has limitations, namely the lack of teacher training and teacher professionalism. In addition, the results of implementing the independent learning curriculum have not experienced changes in student learning outcomes to the fullest.

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