

Challenges of Elementary Education: Curriculum Incompatibility Towards Students Learning Motivation at Bangbayang Elementary School

Rahmania Khoerunnisa¹, Dewitri Yulianti², Rifky Aditya Ramadhan³

Universitas Muhammadiyah Sukabumi, Sukabumi, Indonesia
Corresponding Author: rahmaniakhoerunnisa048@ummi.ac.id

Abstract. This study aims to examine the challenges faced in implementing the curriculum at the elementary school level, particularly regarding the incompatibility of the curriculum with the learning motivation of students at SDN Bangbayang. The method used is a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of the study show that most of the material in the curriculum has not been fully adapted to the local context, interests, and learning needs of students. This has an impact on the lack of learning motivation, active participation, and student involvement in the learning process. In addition, limited resources and teacher training in implementing the curriculum flexibly are also inhibiting factors. This study recommends the need to adjust the curriculum based on student needs and teacher training so that learning is more contextual and motivating. Thus, it is hoped that a more relevant curriculum can improve the quality of education and encourage students to be more active in learning. This adjustment is also important to create a learning environment that is more inclusive and responsive to student needs.

Keywords: curriculum, learning motivation, basic education, elementary school students, incompatibility.

1 Introduction

Education is a crucial aspect in shaping an individual's character and enhancing their contribution to society. Education is a planned effort to create a learning environment that enables students to develop their potential in various aspects, such as spirituality, personality, intelligence, and skills [1]. States that education is an effort to develop physical and mental potential in accordance with societal values [2]. The role of education in human resource development and national progress is crucial.

The educational process encourages the birth of creative and innovative ideas to address the dynamics of societal change [3]. One effort to improve the quality of education can be achieved through curriculum improvements. In Indonesia, the curriculum has undergone various changes since 1947. These changes include the introduction of the Competency-Based Curriculum and the School-Level Curriculum. Most recently,

the government launched the 2013 Curriculum, which was subsequently revised in 2018 [4]. These changes reflect the government's efforts to adapt the education system. The 1947 curriculum prioritized character education, national and social awareness, subject matter related to daily activities, and focused on arts education and physical education [1]. Meanwhile, the 2006 Curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements regarding the objectives, content, and subject matter, as well as the methods used as guidelines for conducting learning activities to achieve specific educational objectives [2]. The 2013 curriculum policy changes include four changes to the curriculum, namely Graduate Competency Standards (SKL), Content Standards (SI), Process Standards, and Assessment Standards (Ananda and Hudaiah, 2021) the demands of the times.

The Merdeka Curriculum, currently under development, emphasizes originality, critical thinking, and independent learning. It aims to create a dynamic and inclusive learning environment and improve the quality of national education by providing flexibility for schools and teachers in the teaching process [5]. However, at the elementary school level, its implementation faces serious challenges, particularly for teachers who must act as facilitators. Teachers need to develop students' individuality through innovative pedagogical strategies that require careful adaptation and preparation.

In the context of this research, there are several important variables that need to be considered. These variables include the educational curriculum, student learning motivation, and environmental factors that influence the teaching and learning process. A curriculum that does not align with students' needs and interests can reduce their learning motivation. This low learning motivation will impact students' academic outcomes [6]. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the relationship between curriculum mismatch and student learning motivation at Bangbayang elementary education.

Initial observations at SDN Bangbayang showed dissatisfaction among students with the teaching materials presented. Previous studies have also shown that the mismatch between the curriculum and the needs of students is a common problem at various levels of education [3]. The curriculum is considered inappropriate because it is not fully aligned with the characteristics, social conditions, and culture of the students. The main impact is the misalignment of learning content, where the material taught is not relevant to the needs and realities of students. As a result, there is contextual irrelevance, which makes it difficult for students to understand or apply knowledge in their daily lives.

The problem faced in this study is how the mismatch in the basic education curriculum at Bangbayang elementary education affects students' learning motivation. Abraham Maslow proposed the hierarchy of needs theory as a humanistic approach that places physiological needs to self-actualization as the basis for the formation of learning motivation [2] [4].

This theory encourages a more personalized approach in designing teaching spaces and materials. Teachers are encouraged to create an environment that is not only safe but also supports students' emotional and cognitive development [9]. The purpose of this study is to identify the factors causing this mismatch and its impact on students' learning motivation, as well as to provide recommendations for improvement.

Teachers' lack of understanding of the curriculum is exacerbated by a lack of professionalism due to a lack of training and seminars. Frequent changes to the curriculum cause confusion for teachers and ultimately make the teaching and learning process at

SDN Bangbayang irrelevant to conditions in the field. Therefore, it is hoped that the benefits of this research will provide insight for educators, policy makers, and other relevant parties in designing a curriculum that is more relevant and appropriate to the needs of students. According to [5], well-defined objectives provide guidance for teachers in developing appropriate curricula and selecting effective teaching methods. Thus, it is hoped that students' motivation to learn will increase, which will ultimately contribute to improving the quality of education at SDN Bangbayang and its surroundings.

2 Methods

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, aiming to provide an in-depth description of the phenomenon of curriculum mismatch with student learning motivation at Bangbayang elementary school. Qualitative research is descriptive in nature and typically adopts an inductive analysis approach. Therefore, this study emphasizes the processes and meanings derived from the subject's perspective [11]. This approach was chosen based on the need to fully understand the natural context and perspectives of the research subjects.

The research was conducted at Bangbayang Elementary School, located in an area with limited educational infrastructure and digital access. Subjects included teachers, fifth and sixth grade students, and the vice principal as key informants. The researchers also used learning documents as supporting data.

Data collection techniques included direct observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. Observations were used to directly observe the classroom learning process, interviews to explore the experiences and perspectives of teachers and students, and documentation to examine the syllabus, lesson plans, and teaching materials used at the school. Interviews were conducted with two fourth- and fifth-grade teachers and ten students from both grades. In addition, the researcher interviewed the vice principal to gain a broader perspective on curriculum implementation at the school.

3 Results And Discussion

3.1 Results

General conditions of students and learning environment.

Observations show that the community at Bangbayang elementary school comes from diverse economic backgrounds, ranging from lower-middle to upper-middle class. Access to digital learning media is very limited due to the school's location being difficult to reach by telecommunications networks, resulting in limited learning resources in the forested area. This exacerbates the challenges of creating effective and inclusive learning.

Mismatch of material with students' needs.

Interviews with the vice principal at Bangbayang Elementary School revealed that the national curriculum is not aligned with student needs. Learning is designed to consider students' current developmental stage and achievement levels, in accordance with their learning needs [12]. A concrete example of this research is classroom learning, where the material taught tends to be mismatched with students' needs

Low learning motivation among students.

In-depth interviews with several students revealed that many of them felt that learning was monotonous, with no two-way interaction between students and teachers, making classes boring. According to [6], lack of motivation to learn is caused by a lack of student engagement, such as not submitting assignments on time and not responding when the teacher asks questions. [7] adds that family, environment, and teacher factors also contribute to the lack of learning motivation. This is also evident at SDN Bangbayang, where student learning motivation tends to be low.

The results of a survey conducted among teachers at SDN Bangbayang also support these findings. The majority of teachers reported that students were often passive in discussions, tended to procrastinate on assignments, and lacked initiative in seeking additional information outside of class. Thus, student motivation at this school cannot be said to be optimal, as reflected in their lack of active involvement and initiative in the daily learning process.

Teachers' responses to the curriculum.

At Bangbayang elementary education, teachers expressed that the curriculum was too dense and only tailored to the students' needs. The positive response to the curriculum implementation was evident in the teachers' enthusiasm for participating in independent training and their mastery of the curriculum [15]. Although the curriculum has been introduced to students, its implementation has not been optimal, so further efforts are needed to improve learning effectiveness

Lack of contextual learning resources.

Documentation shows that the textbooks used are centrally sourced and do not reflect the realities of students and their local needs, requiring adaptation to the local context. Furthermore, no additional teaching materials were developed locally by teachers, resulting in a lack of connection between the subject matter and students' real-life experiences. This situation hinders relevant and meaningful learning for students and reduces their motivation to learn

3.2 Discussion

The results of the study revealed that there was a mismatch between the curriculum and teaching practices at SDN Bangbayang. First, some teachers still had difficulty understanding the curriculum. This difficulty was experienced only by some teachers who were unable to adapt the learning material to the needs of the students. This was related

to the limited opportunities to attend training or seminars, so that the professional competence of teachers had not reached an optimal level. Second, frequent changes to the curriculum caused confusion among teachers in its implementation. As a result, the learning process becomes less structured and has an impact on the lack of student motivation to learn.

The selection of SDN Bangbayang as the research location was not only based on geographical factors, but also because this school reflects the real conditions where curriculum policies are not yet fully aligned with learning needs in the field. Therefore, although the results of this study are not intended to be generalized, the findings obtained still make an important contribution to understanding the challenges of implementing the curriculum in elementary schools

The research results show a discrepancy between the curriculum used at Bangbayang elementary school and the nationally designed curriculum. Teachers still don't fully understand how daily teaching and learning activities will be implemented, leading to a mismatch between the government's expectations and those of the educational unit [16]. Therefore, this mismatch not only impacts learning effectiveness but can also lead to low student motivation, which should be the primary focus of basic education at Bangbayang elementary school.

A uniform national curriculum fails to consider local geographic, social, economic, and cultural conditions. At Bangbayang elementary school, a gap was found between student needs and the existing curriculum. This is evident in the limited availability of digital learning media due to the school's difficult access to telecommunications networks, thus reducing learning motivation. Shows that social and cultural inequality in education in Indonesia is a complex issue involving access, facilities, curriculum, policies, and the representation of cultural identity in learning [17].

Learning motivation is a crucial factor in determining the success of the learning process in elementary schools. Motivation can be defined as a state within a person that drives their desire to engage in specific activities to achieve a goal [18]. Meanwhile, learning motivation at Bangbayang Elementary School is relatively low, as the learning is designed to be monotonous and not contextual to their daily lives. Furthermore, limited infrastructure, such as limited internet access and a lack of digital devices, further complicates students' lack of interest in participating in the learning process.

Basic education must prioritize social justice and local relevance to create meaningful learning and increase student participation and motivation. A uniform national curriculum can hinder the goal of inclusive education. Therefore, Bangbayang elementary education requires a curriculum that is flexible and adaptable to local conditions. The central government should provide space for schools in remote areas to modify their curriculum to increase student motivation and participation

4 Conclusion

This study shows that the mismatch between the national curriculum and the needs, characteristics, and local context of students at Bangbayang elementary school significantly impacts low learning motivation. An uncontextualized curriculum, monotonous

teaching methods, minimal learning resources, and limitations in infrastructure and teacher training are the main factors hindering effective and meaningful learning. This imbalance demonstrates the importance of flexibility in curriculum implementation, particularly in areas with diverse social and geographic conditions.

To address this issue, curriculum adjustments are needed to better address students' real needs. The government and schools need to encourage the development of contextual teaching materials and provide adequate training for teachers to design relevant and engaging lessons. This is expected to make learning at Bangbayang elementary school more effective, participatory, and sustainably enhance student motivation

References

1. Government of Indonesia. (2023). Law on Internal Quality Assurance, Number 53 of 2023. State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia Year 2023 Number 53..
2. MASKUR, M. (2023) 'The Impact of Curriculum Change on Elementary School Students', *Journal of Teacher Training and Education (JKIP)*, 1(3), pp. 190–203. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.61116/jkip.v1i3.172>.
3. Anita, A., Fadhila, HIA, Muhsin, M., Febrianti, N., Jamilah, S., & Pratiwi, DA (2025). Challenges of Teacher Adaptation in the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum at SDN Semangat Dalam 2. *MARAS: Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 3 (2), 608-618.
4. Ulinniam, Hidayat, & Barlian, UC (2021). Implementation of the 2013 Revised Curriculum During the Pandemic at SMK IBS Tathmainul Qullub Indramayu. *Indonesian Journal of Education*, 2(1), 118–126
5. Mandasari, NK, Harahap, NM, & Humayroh, AP (2025). Analysis of the Implementation and Challenges of the Independent Curriculum for Teachers at SDN 101766 Bandar Setia. *Sadewa Journal: Publication of Educational Sciences, Learning, and Social Sciences*, 3(2), 63–70.
6. Rahmatulloh, G., Ghani, A., Mustofa, M., Octafiona, E., & Isti'ana, A. (2025). The Effect of the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum and Learning Environment on Student Learning Motivation in Vocational High Schools. *JIP-Scientific Journal of Educational Sciences*, 8 (1), 807-812.
7. Mulkan, LM, & Zunnun, LMA (2024). Curriculum Implementation Analysis: Challenges and Strategic Solutions in the Educational Environment. *PRIMER: Multidisciplinary Scientific Journal*, 2 (2), 112–120. <https://doi.org/10.55681/primer.v2i2.324>
8. Magfirah, NR, Yurfiah, Y., & Syamsurijal, S. (2024). Analysis of Factors Influencing Learning Motivation of Fourth Grade Students in the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Elementary Schools. *Prose: Journal of Elementary School Teacher Education Research*, 2 (3), 923-932.
9. Utari, D., & Putra, ED (2021). Analysis of Learning Motivation of Second Grade Students in Public Elementary Schools. *Qalamuna: Journal of Education, Social, and Religion*, 13(2), 491–502. <https://Doi.Org/10.37680/Qalamuna.V13i2.1015>.
10. Ni'mah Afif, Z., & Fatmawati, N. (2024). Curriculum Management of Entrepreneurship Learning Programs in Vocational High Schools. *At Tadbir: Islamic Education Management Journal*, 2(1), 66–77. <https://doi.org/10.54437/attadbir.v2i1.1624>.
11. Fadli, MR (2021). Understanding qualitative research method design. *Humanika*, 21(1), 33–54. <https://doi.org/10.21831/hum.v21i1.38075>

12. Ahmad, TP (2024). Planning meaningful learning and independent curriculum assessment. *Scientific Journal of Pedagogy* , 20 (1), 75–94.
13. Maryono, & Budiono, H. (2020). *Basicedu Journal*. *Basicedu Journal*, 5 (5), 3 (2), 524–532. <https://journal.uui.ac.id/ajie/article/view/971>
14. Alfiah, S., Istiyati, S., & Mulyono, H. (2021). Analysis of the causes of low learning motivation in social studies learning for fifth-grade elementary school students. *Didaktika Dwija Indria* , 9 (5), 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.20961/ddi.v9i5.49328>
15. Marwan, M. (2023). Teacher and Student Responses to the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Islamic Religious Education Learning at SMKN 1 Puloampel. *Rabbani: Journal of Islamic Religious Education*, 4 (1), 40–50. <https://doi.org/10.19105/rjpai.v4i1.8030>
16. Putri, RA, & Handayani, SL (2021). Development of Android-Based SiMach Land Media in Elementary Schools. *Basicedu Journal*, 5 (4), 2541–2549. <https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v5i4.1230>.
17. Indriaty, D., Astriani, D., Sabrifha, E., & Aqilla, L. (2025). Educational Policy Strategies in Facing Social and Cultural Inequality . 5 (2), 551–565.
18. Sahib, Abdul. "Analysis of Factors Contributing to Low Student Learning Motivation." *Journal of Education and Instruction* 3.1 (2020): 304-312.
19. Ananda, A.P. and Hudaidah, H. (2021) 'The Development of Education Curriculum in Indonesia from Time to Time', *SINDANG: Journal of History Education and Historical Studies*, 3(2), pp. 102–108. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.31540/sindang.v3i2.1192>