



Journal of Educational Sciences

Journal homepage: <https://jes.ejournal.unri.ac.id/index.php/JES>



P-ISSN
2581-1657

E-ISSN
2581-2203

The Impact of the Independent Curriculum on 21st Century Skills on Grade IV Students of SDN 24 Palu

Herlina*, Wulandari, Muchdar, Nashrullah, Nuraini

Elementary school teacher education, Tadulako University, Palu City, 94111, Indonesia

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 24 April 2025

Revised: 26 April 2025

Accepted: 27 April 2025

Published online: 05 May 2025

Keywords:

Independent curriculum,
21st century skills

* Corresponding author:

E-mail: herlina@untad.ac.id

Article Doi:

<https://doi.org/10.31258/jes.9.3.p.1170-1178>

This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](#) license.



ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the impact of the independent curriculum on 21st century skills in grade IV students of SDN 24 Palu. This study uses a qualitative research approach of phenomenological studies. The subjects in this study are teachers and grade IV students of SDN 24 Palu. The instruments in this study are questionnaires, interviews, observations and documentation. The data collection techniques used were questionnaires, interviews, observations and documentation. Then the collected data is analyzed through the process of data reduction, data presentation and conclusion drawn. The results of the study show that the independent curriculum encourages students to be more active, creative and independent by emphasizing critical thinking, communication, creativity, collaboration, character and citizenship skills so that it has a positive impact on the development of 21st century skills in grade IV students of SDN 24 Palu even though the results of student observation in its application are still low so it needs further improvement. Through various learning methods such as discussions, group assignments, students get used to expressing ideas, making decisions together and working together with their friends. However, the results of teachers' observations on the implementation of the independent curriculum are sufficient so that there is still a need to improve teachers' understanding, learning strategies and support from various parties.

1. Introduction

According to M.J. Langeveld in (Drajat, 2020) Education is an effort, influence and assistance to children to become adults so that they can carry out their own life tasks. Through education, a person can develop their potential and develop skills in themselves. 21st century skills are still related to the 4 pillars of life consisting of Learning to know, learning to do, learning to be and learning to live together (Jayadi et al., 2020). 21st century skills are skills that consist of thinking at a higher level of learning outcomes and the ability to communicate as described by Saavedra in (Fajri et al., 2021) 21st century skills are included in 4 categories, namely: First, how to think: Critical thinking, creativity and innovation, decision-making, problem solving and learning how to learn (metacognition), second: How

to work: How to communicate in a group and be able to work together, third: tools for work such as general knowledge and information communication technology (ICT) literacy, and lastly, living as a citizen: Citizenship, life and career, and personal and social responsibility as well as having competition and cultural awareness. In realizing education that is in accordance with 21st century skills, it is necessary to adjust the educational curriculum.

The educational curriculum is the main pillar in learning activities. Some experts say that the curriculum is the heart of education, the good or bad educational results depend on the curriculum used (Angga et al., 2022). Because of the importance of the curriculum in the world of education, therefore changes to the curriculum are made to adjust to educational needs. Changes to the curriculum were made to complement the shortcomings of the previous curriculum. This curriculum change is adapted to the times (Anis Aprianti & Siti Tiara Maulia, 2023). Curriculum changes began to be made to the competency-based curriculum, then the curriculum of educational units (KTSP), until the 2013 curriculum.

The 2013 curriculum is considered as a strategic curriculum to improve the quality of education in controlling national development. However, several obstacles were found in this curriculum that gave rise to debates that required a change in the curriculum (Baitty Aqilatun Nufus et al., 2024). . Currently, the curriculum will change. Starting from the 2013 curriculum, it will become an independent curriculum. The independent curriculum is also called the prototype curriculum. This curriculum is a flexible curriculum on essential materials, student character development and student competition. The independent curriculum applies interactive and collaborative methods and this curriculum is also considered more flexible than the previous curriculum (Lestari et al., 2023).

Research relevant to this study is research conducted by (Lubis et al., 2023) revealed that the Merdeka curriculum is designed to provide freedom and independence to students, while emphasizing the development of 21st century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, digital literacy, and problem-solving. This curriculum aims to prepare students for change in a complex and connected world. Thus, 21st century skills-oriented education will prepare students to be independent, creative, collaborative and change-ready individuals.

Based on the results of observations at SDN 24 Palu, especially in grade IV, it is known that grade IV has implemented an independent curriculum since 2022. The results of an interview with a grade IV teacher with the initials AS said that teachers have applied 21st century skills through the learning process. The teacher also said that in the process of applying 21st century skills in the independent curriculum, students have been able to work together in groups and communicate well.

The objectives of this study are 1) To find out the implementation of the independent curriculum. 2) To know the application of 21st century skills. 3) To

find out the impact of the independent curriculum on 21st century skills in grade IV students of SDN 24 Palu. To achieve this goal, research was carried out using a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collection using observation, interviews, questionnaires and documentation.

2. Methodology

This research was conducted using a descriptive qualitative research approach. Descriptive research tends to require in-depth analysis. Descriptive qualitative is also defined as a method of finding and describing events narratively (Kaharuddin, 2020). The research time was carried out in the even semester of the 2024/2025 teaching at SDN 24 Palu, Jl Jendral Ahmad Yani, East Palu District, Palu City, Central Sulawesi. The subjects were students of class IV A with a total of 28 people and IV B with a total of 30 orrangs as well as teachers of classes IV A and IV B. In this study, the researcher used a qualitative research approach of phenomenological study research design. This phenomenological study argues that each individual experiences an event consciously.

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore information on the subject regarding his experience in an event (Mansah et al., 2022). To collect these data, the researcher uses data collection techniques such as observation, interviews, questionnaires and documentation. This research instrument uses observation sheets, interview guidelines, questionnaire sheets and documentation.

According to sukardi in (Makbul, 2021) The function of the instrument is to obtain the data needed by researchers when collecting information in the field. The data obtained through the instrument was then analyzed using data analysis techniques according to Miles and Huberman. Data analysis techniques are the process of sequencing data and organizing it into patterns, categories and basic descriptions (Nurdewi, 2022). The mileage and huberman data analysis technique has 3 stages, namely: data reduction, data display and conclusion (Alfath et al., 2023). The mileage and huberman data analysis techniques can be seen in the image below.

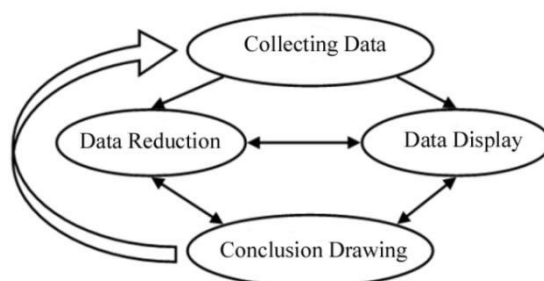


Figure 1. Data analysis techniques Miles and Huberman (1992)

3. Result and Discussion

Implementation of the Independent Curriculum

The independent curriculum is a curriculum that is implemented by developing the profile of students so that students have a soul and values in accordance with the 5 precepts of Pancasila as well as the basics or provisions in their lives (Jannah & Atmojo, 2022). To find out the implementation of the independent curriculum, observations and interviews were conducted with grade IV teachers of SDN 24 Palu. The results of the observations obtained can be seen in the Table 1.

Table 1. Results of Observation Implementation of the independent curriculum

Component	Respondents	Respondent Results	Percentage (%)
Implementation of the 1	67		3,35
Independent Curriculum 2	68		3,4
Total Percentage (%)			3,37

The average percentage of the two respondents was 3.37. The results of observations in the category are lacking. In accordance with the results of observations that are included in the category of less (Triasmanto & Dewi, 2019) said that there are several factors that cause gaps in the implementation of the independent curriculum, namely: The first factor: Teacher perception, The second factor: The implementation of learning guided by the teacher, The third factor: Support for teachers in the implementation of the curriculum.

The results of the interview were also obtained stating that grade IV of SDN 24 Palu had carried out an assessment in learning as proof that they had implemented one of the parts of the implementation of the independent curriculum. Based on the statement (Mawaddah, 2023) said that the independent curriculum focuses on learning outcomes that are in accordance with students' abilities. Therefore, a learning design that suits the needs of students is needed. One way to measure students' abilities and needs is through assessment (assessment).

Application of 21st century skills in learning

To find out how to apply 21st century skills in learning, questionnaires, observations, and interviews were carried out. From the results of the questionnaire that has been filled out by all grade IV of SDN 24 Palu with a total of 51 students, 38.16% of students said that teachers always apply 21st century skills in learning. This percentage shows that although some students have experienced the application, there is still a need for improvement in 21st century skills in learning. Based on the statement, according to (Srirahmawati et al., 2023), 21st century skills have an important role in achieving success in the world of work and in community life, so there is a need to increase this in the world of education even from elementary school age. Then, from the results of observations of students and teachers, it can be seen in the Table 2.

Table 2. The results of students' observations on the application of 21st century skills in Learning

Component	Respondents	Respondent Results	Percentage (%)
21st century skills	IV A	64	2,66
	IV B	81	3,37
Total Percentage (%)			3,01

Based on the results of students' observations regarding the application of 21st century skills in learning, the total percentage obtained was 3.01, this shows that the results of the application of 21st century skills in learning are in the category of lacking. From the results of these observations (Sukmanasa et al., 2023) He said that through the development of 21st century skills in learning, it is hoped that students will have the skills to live in the 21st century with various opportunities and challenges that will be faced in the era of technological and information advancement. To see the results of the teacher's observations, you can see the Table 3.

Table 3. Results of teachers' observations on the application of 21st century skills in learning

Component	Respondents	Respondent Results	Percentage (%)
21st century skills	1	60	2,5
	2	84	3,5
Total Percentage (%)			3

Based on the results of teachers' observations on the application of 21st century skills in learning, the percentage of application of 21st century skills in learning in grade IV was 3, this shows that the results of the application of 21st century skills are in the category of lacking. Based on the results of these observations (Chusna et al., 2024) He said that the application of 21st century skills in learning teachers are required to have a solid foundation that allows them to remain leaders in facing the changing times.

Teachers need to have a broad understanding of 21st century skills and how to integrate them into the curriculum and methods used. From the results of interviews with the two teachers, it was also obtained that teachers have applied 21st century skills in teaching such as students are asked to work in groups to complete assignments, students are asked to express their ideas, teach students how to express opinions well and always communicate with teachers when there are things that are not yet known. According to the septicarus in (Muthmainnah, 2023) Not only are educators required to apply 21st century skills to students, but this is also a demand for students. Students are required to be able to develop 21st century skills just as students must be able to think critically and problem-solving (*Critical thinking*), Creative thinking (*Creativity*), Communicate (*Communication*), Collaborate (*Collaboration*) or 4C.

The impact of the independent curriculum on 21st century skills in grade IV students of SDN 24 Palu

To find out how the impact of 21st century skills on grade IV students of SDN 24 Palu, a lecture was conducted on teachers. The results of the interviews show that the independent curriculum has a positive impact on the development of 21st century skills in students. This curriculum encourages students to be more active, creative, and independent in learning. Students are encouraged to think critically, ask questions, and express their ideas and opinions. In addition, through various activities such as group projects and presentations, students learn to work together, collaborate, and improve communication skills.

The independent curriculum also helps students in mastering literacy, technology, and character development to face future challenges". The phrase is supported by the statement (Maturrahmi et al., 2024) who said that in the independent curriculum, teachers as facilitators who guide and direct their students in the learning process, in addition to shaping the character of students, the curriculum also requires students to think critically, collaborate and actively communicate. This is in line with behavioristic theory because in its approach it uses feedback. The teacher provides stimulus and stimulus while the students are active in the discussion and learning process. The results of the interviews can be seen in the Table 4.

Table 4. Results of Interviews on the Impact of the Independent Curriculum

What do you think about the change in the way students learn after the implementation of the independent curriculum?	If I see it, the students are more active, they ask more questions, learning is more relaxed. Those who used to be silent like they used to be, now they are more free to develop their own ideas so don't always follow the textbook constantly.
In learning activities, do students show critical and creative thinking skills?	Yes. Like group discussion time, My students now like to ask questions like they may not understand the subject matter or are students who usually giveask questions outside of the new ideas whose ideas are lesson. And usually there are sometimes unexpected. also students who answer questions from their friends.
How does the independent curriculum impact 21st century skills on students?	The Merdeka CurriculumThe impact of the Merdeka curriculum on 21st century encourages them to actively find curriculum on 21st century out, ask questions, give them skills in grade 4 helps students opportunities to express theirdevelop the skills needed to face ideas, develop their creativityfuture challenges then students through activities, carry outbecome more active and group projects, presentations,creative, students are also able they work together, expressto communicate well, help opinions, listen to opinions, andstudents develop character and collaborate in groupmaster literacy, skills and cooperation. technology

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of research conducted at SDN 24 Palu regarding the impact of the independent curriculum on 21st century skills, it can be concluded. The implementation of the independent curriculum is still in the category of lacking. However, the results of the interviews show that the two grade IV teachers have carried out assessments as part of the implementation of the independent curriculum. The assessments carried out include diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments with the aim of understanding students' characteristics, initial abilities, and learning styles. This shows that although in general the implementation is not optimal. From the results of the research, it was obtained that the application of 21st century skills in learning in grade IV is still less than optimal.

However, teachers have tried to integrate 21st century skills into the learning process. Teachers of grades IV A and IV B said that learning has involved discussions, providing opinions, cooperation and joint decision-making. Teachers of grades IV A and IV B explained that the independent curriculum has encouraged students to be active in learning activities such as discussions, group work and presentations. This curriculum provides space for students to develop creativity, think critically, express opinions and collaborate. The independent curriculum is also considered to help students in mastering literacy, using technology, and building character that is adaptive to the challenges of the 21st century. Based on these conclusions, further research can focus on efforts to increase the effectiveness of the implementation of the independent curriculum in developing 21st century skills.

References

- Alfath, A., Usman, A., & Utomo, A. P. (2023). Analysis of Student Learning Motivation in the Implementation of Differentiated Learning. *Education Journal : Journal Educational Research and Development*, 7(2), 132–140. <https://doi.org/10.31537/ej.v7i2.1250>
- Angga, A., Abidin, Y., & Iskandar, S. (2022). The Application of Character Education with a 21st Century Skill-Based Learning Model. *Journal of Basic Education*, 6(1), 1046–1054. <https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v6i1.2084>
- Anis Aprianti & Siti Tiara Maulia. (2023). Education Policy: The Impact of Educational Curriculum Changes on Teachers and Students. *Journal of English Education and Literature*, 3(1), 181–190. <https://doi.org/10.55606/jupensi.v3i1.1507>
- Baitty Aqilatun Nufus, Nindia Ananta Zalfa Wijaya, & Muhammad Noer Falaq Al-Amin. (2024). Analysis of decision-making in the change of the 2013 curriculum to the Merdeka curriculum with the fishbone diagram analysis approach. *Journal of Academic Media (JMA)*, 2(5). <https://doi.org/10.62281/v2i5.291>
- Chusna, I. F., Aini, I. N., Putri, K. A., & Elisa, M. C. (2024). Literature Review: The Urgency Of 21st Century Skills In Students. *Journal of Learning*,
-

-
- Guidance, and Educational Management*, 4(4), 1.
<https://doi.org/10.17977/um065.v4.i4.2024.1>
- Drajat, M. (2020). Re-orientation of the Islamic Education Curriculum. *Journal for Islamic Studies*, 3(2).
- Fajri, I., Yusuf, R., & Mohd Yusoff, M. Z. (2021). Project Citizen Learning Model as a Learning Innovation in Improving 21st Century Skills. *HURRIAH JOURNAL: Journal of Education and Research Evaluation*, 2(3), 105–118. <https://doi.org/10.56806/jh.v2i3.30>
- Jannah, D. R. N., & Atmojo, I. R. W. (2022). Digital Media in Empowering 21st Century Critical Thinking Skills in Science Learning in Elementary Schools. *Journal of Basic Education*, 6(1), 1064–1074. <https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v6i1.2124>
- Jayadi, A., Putri, D. H., & Johan, H. (2020). Identification of 21st century skills debriefing on the aspect of problem-solving skills of Bengkulu city high school students in Physics subjects. *Journal of Coil Physics*, 3(1), 25–32. <https://doi.org/10.33369/jkf.3.1.25-32>
- Kaharuddin, K. (2020). Qualitative: Characteristics and Character as Methodology. *Equilibrium: Journal of Education*, 9(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.26618/equilibrium.v9i1.4489>
- Lestari, D., Asbari, M., & Yani, E. E. (2023). *Independent Curriculum: The Essence of Curriculum in Education*. 02(05).
- Lubis, M. U., Siagian, F. A., Zega, Z., Nuhdin, N., & Nasution, A. F. (2023). The development of the Independent Curriculum is an effort to improve 21st century skills in education. *ANTHOR: Education and Learning Journal*, 2(5), 691–695. <https://doi.org/10.31004/anthor.v1i5.222>
- Makbul, M. (2021). *Data Collection Methods and Research Instruments*. <https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/svu73>
- Mansah, A., Alam, A., & Putri, A. D. (2022). *Phenomenological Study: Payment Methods In The Marketplace Are Seen From The Perspective Of Islamic Economics*.
- Maturrahmi, A., Nisa, S., & Ladiva, H. B. (2024). *The Role of Behavioristic Learning Theory on the Independent Learning Curriculum in the 2nd Century*. 7(1).
- Mawaddah, F. S. (2023). *Assessment in the Independent Learning Curriculum*. 3(1).
- Muthmainnah, A. (2023). *The role of teachers in developing 21st century skills of elementary school students*. Sec. 9.
- Nurdewi. (2022). Implementation of Smart ASN personal branding as a manifestation of pride in serving in North Maluku province. *SENTRI: Journal of Scientific Research*, 1(2), 297–303. <https://doi.org/10.55681/sentri.v1i2.235>
- Srirahmawati, A., Deviana, T., & Wardani, S. K. (2023). *Improving the skills of 21st century (6C) grade IV elementary school students through the Based Learning project model in the independent curriculum*. 08.
- Sukmanasa, E., Anwar, W. S., & Novita, L. (2023). Application of 21st century skills in Grade V primary school. *Journal of Basic Education*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.20961/jpd.v11i1.69704>
- Triasmanto, M., & Dewi, L. (2019). Analysis of determinant factors in the
-

implementation of the local content curriculum. *Journal of Educational Sciences Research*, 12(1), 1–13.
<https://doi.org/10.21831/jpipfip.v12i1.20144>

How to cite this article:

Herlina., Wulandari., Muchdar., Nashrullah., & Nuraini. (2025). The Impact of the Independent Curriculum on 21st Century Skills on Grade IV Students of SDN 24 Palu. *Journal of Educational Sciences*, 9(3), 1170-1178.
