



TEACHER'S DILEMMA: FACING ENDLESS CURRICULUM CHANGES

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Abstract. *This article discusses the dilemma faced by teachers in the face of endless curriculum changes. Constant changes in education standards require teachers to be adaptive and innovative, although they often lack adequate training and support. This difficulty highlights the importance of approaches involving professional capacity building, collaboration between teachers and psychosocial support to help teachers navigate these challenges. With the right strategies, it is hoped that teachers will be more competent and motivated to implement the new curriculum, resulting in significantly improved learning quality and student achievement.*

Keywords: *Teacher's Dilemma, Curriculum Change, Endless*

Abstrak. Artikel ini membahas dilema yang dihadapi guru dalam menghadapi perubahan kurikulum yang tiada henti. Perubahan konstan dalam standar pendidikan menuntut guru untuk adaptif dan inovatif, meskipun mereka sering kali kekurangan pelatihan dan dukungan yang memadai. Kesulitan ini menyoroti pentingnya pendekatan yang melibatkan pengembangan kapasitas profesional, kolaborasi antara guru dan dukungan psikososial untuk membantu guru menavigasi tantangan ini. Dengan strategi yang tepat, diharapkan guru akan lebih kompeten dan termotivasi untuk menerapkan kurikulum baru, yang menghasilkan peningkatan kualitas pembelajaran dan prestasi siswa secara signifikan.

Kata Kunci: Dilema Guru, Perubahan Kurikulum, Tak Berujung

Introduction

Education is one of the main pillars in sustainable nation building. An effective education system not only provides students with basic knowledge, but also equips them with relevant skills and knowledge to face future challenges. (Sitopu et al., 2024); (Guna et al., 2024). Therefore, updating and improving the education curriculum is a natural thing to do. However, in Indonesia, curriculum changes that often occur in a short period of time without adequate preparation pose a serious dilemma for teachers.

The history of curriculum change in Indonesia dates back to independence and continues to evolve in line with changing educational needs and government policies. Initially, the 1947 Curriculum, also known as the 1947 Lesson Plan, was introduced as an

early form of the national curriculum that prioritised character education and the national spirit (Christison & Murray, 2021b). This curriculum was later refined into the 1952 Curriculum which emphasised systematic subject matter. Subsequently, the 1964 Curriculum was introduced with a focus on the Pancawardhana programme which covered five aspects of development, namely moral, intellectual, emotional/artistic, skills, and physical. (Muharrom et al., 2023)..

Significant changes occurred with the arrival of the 1975 Curriculum, which focussed on the general and specific instructional objectives approach, as well as the application of the module system in the learning process. Then, in 1984, came the 1984 Curriculum known as 'How to Learn Students Actively' (CBSA), aiming to involve students more in the teaching and learning process. In 1994, the curriculum was again revised to balance the knowledge and skills aspects under the name Curriculum 1994. (Aslan, 2016). An educational revolution occurred with the introduction of the Competency-Based Curriculum (KBK) in 2004, which emphasised the competencies that must be mastered by students. Subsequently, the 2006 KTSP (Education Unit Level Curriculum) authorised schools to develop the curriculum according to their needs, which was then followed by the 2013 Curriculum which emphasised core competencies and basic competencies with revisions that continue to be made to perfect it until now (Christison & Murray, 2021a). (Christison & Murray, 2021a).

The curriculum has a very important role in the education system because it serves as the main guide in the learning process at school. The curriculum determines the educational objectives, subject matter, teaching methods, as well as the evaluation that must be carried out to ensure that education runs in accordance with the vision and mission that has been set. (Christison & Murray, 2021b). With a structured and relevant curriculum, students are expected to develop the academic competencies and life skills needed to face future challenges. In addition, the curriculum also plays a role in ensuring that education at every level and type of school has the same quality standards, thus creating equitable learning opportunities for all learners in Indonesia (Christison & Murray, 2021c). (Christison & Murray, 2021c).

These curriculum changes are often implemented without adequate preparation and training for teachers. This results in increased workload and confusion in implementing changes that sometimes lack clarity and consistency.

Teachers as the spearhead of education in schools are faced with various challenges, ranging from understanding the new curriculum, preparing lesson plans in accordance with the changing curriculum, to having to align teaching methods with the expected changes. On the other hand, rushed adaptation without adequate support often leads teachers to lack confidence and experience stress, which ultimately impacts on the quality of learning. (Aslan, 2023); (Astuti et al., 2023).

This situation not only affects teachers, but also students who are confused by the frequency of changes in teaching methods and teaching materials. The balance between administrative demands and the essence of the teaching and learning process is a tough challenge that must be faced day in and day out. (Christison & Murray, 2021d). Therefore, it is imperative to re-evaluate curriculum change policies to make them more structured, planned and sustainable, and provide the necessary support for teachers to better adapt to change.

This research explores the impact of frequent curriculum changes on teacher performance and welfare and identifies the steps that need to be taken to overcome this dilemma. By doing so, it is hoped to create a curriculum system that is not only dynamic but also stable and sustainable for the advancement of education in Indonesia.

Research Methods

The study in this research uses the literature method, which is a research approach that involves collecting, analysing, and interpreting information from various written sources such as books, scientific journals, articles, and other documents relevant to the research topic. This method is used to understand the development of theories, concepts, and previous research findings related to the problem being studied. (JUNAIDI, 2021); (Abdussamad, 2022). One important aspect of literature research is the ability to critically review existing sources, highlight knowledge gaps, and formulate new research questions. Thus, literature research not only provides a strong foundation for further research but also helps researchers to formulate theoretical frameworks and develop hypotheses that are more mature and relevant to the context of the study being conducted. (Wekke, 2020).

Results and Discussion

Dilemmas Facing Teachers

Teacher performance refers to the effectiveness and efficiency of a teacher in carrying out his or her educational duties and responsibilities, which include planning instruction, implementing the learning process, evaluating learning outcomes, and mentoring and developing students. Teacher performance is not only measured by their academic ability to deliver subject matter, but also by their classroom management skills, ability to motivate and inspire students, and their active role in supporting students' emotional and social development. (Aytaç, 2023). In addition, teacher performance also includes participation in school activities, collaboration with colleagues, and continuous professional development to improve competence and adaptability to changing educational needs. Good teacher performance contributes significantly to the achievement of optimal learning outcomes and the formation of young people with character and competence (Christison & Murray, 2021e). (Christison & Murray, 2021e).

Teacher performance is influenced by various interacting factors and can be divided into internal and external factors. Internal factors include professional competence, which includes knowledge of subject matter, teaching ability, and classroom management skills. (Erwan et al., 2023); (Sulastri et al., 2023). In addition, work motivation, interest, and personality also greatly affect how well a teacher can carry out their duties. Emotional sensitivity and interpersonal skills also play an important role, considering that the teacher's job is not only to teach but also to guide and support students' development holistically. (Eliyah et al., 2021).

On the other hand, external factors include the working environment and support from educational institutions, such as the physical condition of the school, adequate facilities and infrastructure, and supportive school policies and management. Support from leaders, colleagues, and parents can also influence teacher morale and commitment. (Fitriani et al., 2024).. In addition, ongoing professional development programmes and opportunities for

additional education and training contribute to improving teacher competence and performance. Therefore, efforts to optimise teacher performance should consider and integrate these various factors to create a conducive environment for effective and quality learning processes (Christison & Murray, 2021e). (Christison & Murray, 2021e).

Teachers are often faced with various dilemmas that challenge their competence and integrity in carrying out their educational duties. One of the main dilemmas is the conflict between administrative demands and the time available for teaching. Many teachers feel trapped in time-consuming administrative tasks, such as making reports, attending meetings, and developing learning tools, which sometimes reduce their time to focus on planning and implementing effective learning and direct interaction with students. (Shin, 2020).

Another dilemma is the balance between providing equitable education and accommodating individual differences in the classroom. Teachers often face the challenge of integrating teaching methods that can meet the needs of all students, including those with different learning abilities, special needs, or diverse socio-economic backgrounds. (Kyun, 2023). Providing appropriate attention and support for each student in heterogeneous classroom conditions requires careful management skills and pedagogical approaches and sometimes exposes teachers to difficult situations in making appropriate educational decisions (Jang & Dhoi, 2023). (Jang & Dhoi, 2022).

In addition, teachers often experience ethical dilemmas in their interactions with students and parents. They must maintain professionalism and certain boundaries despite sometimes being faced with complex and emotional situations, such as dealing with problematic student behaviour or pressure from parents who have high expectations and excessive demands. Teachers must be able to navigate these interpersonal relationships tactfully, maintain a balance between empathy and fairness, and remain true to the ethical principles of the profession. All these dilemmas require expertise, wisdom, and dedication in order to perform their duties as educators well and effectively. (Lim, 2021).

Faced with these dilemmas, teachers need to develop effective strategies and find innovative and flexible solutions. One approach is to improve time management skills and find ways to simplify or lighten the burden of administrative tasks. For example, by utilising technology for administrative task management so that more time can be allocated for direct learning activities. Collaborating with peers, sharing experiences and discussing solutions together in a teaching community can also help teachers find ways to overcome these dilemmas. (Sinclair et al., 2023).

In addition, teachers are also expected to continue developing their competence in managing a diverse classroom with a differentiated learning approach. By understanding the characteristics and needs of each student, teachers can develop more personalised and inclusive lesson plans. Training and workshops that focus on teaching techniques that emphasise diversity, as well as effective communication skills with students and parents, can also be very beneficial. These efforts can help teachers address the challenges of classroom heterogeneity and support the academic achievement and personal development of each student. (Wood, 2021).

Thus, the dilemmas faced by teachers are a reflection of the complexity of their role in the education system. Although this task is full of challenges, with the right approach and

constant learning and adjusting, teachers can overcome these dilemmas and remain focused on their main goal of providing quality education for every student. In this context, support from the school, government and community is also crucial so that teachers can perform their duties optimally and their welfare as teachers is maintained.

Impact of Curriculum Change

Curriculum change occurs when there are updates or improvements in the structure, content, methods or learning strategies used in the education system. This includes revisions to learning objectives, teaching materials and evaluation methods to better suit the times, the needs of society and the demands of the world of work. Curriculum changes can be initiated by the government, educational institutions, or private parties who have a concern for the quality of education. (Aslan, 2017); (Aslan & Wahyudin, 2020).

The importance of curriculum change lies in its ability to adapt education to the development of science and technology, as well as socio-cultural dynamics. Along with rapid global changes, an adaptive curriculum allows students to acquire competencies that are relevant and necessary in the future. For example, by adding digital technology and data literacy content to the curriculum, students can be better prepared to face challenges in the Industry 4.0 era. In addition, curriculum changes are also important to ensure that education does not only pursue cognitive aspects, but also emphasises character development and soft skills. (Suhardi et al., 2020).

Periodic and planned curriculum changes can have a significant positive impact. One of them is an increase in the overall quality of education, which can be seen from better student learning outcomes that are relevant to the needs of the times. (Wood, 2021). A dynamic and responsive curriculum also helps teachers to implement innovative and creative teaching methods, thereby increasing student participation and motivation to learn. In addition, curriculum changes can encourage the active participation of all education stakeholders in education delivery, such as parents, communities and industries, in creating a better and more inclusive learning ecosystem (Anderson & Tully, 2024). (Anderson & Tully, 2024).

Curriculum changes have a direct effect on learners, both in terms of competency development and learning motivation. An updated curriculum is usually designed to be more relevant to the needs of the times, for example by incorporating the latest learning materials related to technology, digital literacy and 21st century skills. This helps students to be better prepared for real-life challenges and increase their competitiveness in the labour market. In addition, curriculum changes that emphasise active and collaborative learning approaches can increase student engagement in the teaching and learning process, resulting in improved motivation and learning outcomes. (Ke, 2021).

Curriculum changes require teachers to continuously develop their competencies and teaching methodologies. Teachers need to attend training and workshops to understand and implement the changes effectively. While this may initially pose challenges, such as additional workloads and adjustments to new teaching materials, in the long run it will encourage teachers to be more innovative and creative in delivering materials (DEWANTARA, 2020). The learning process becomes more dynamic and interactive, with the use of various technologies and more varied teaching methods, so that the classroom

atmosphere becomes more enjoyable and productive. (Rinehart, 2021).

At a more macro level, curriculum changes can impact the education system as a whole and society. Adaptive and relevant curricula can improve the quality of national education, so that graduates have skills that are in line with industry needs and global developments. (Butters, 2023). This will also contribute to improving the quality of human resources in a country, which in turn can drive economic growth and social welfare. In addition, the involvement of various stakeholders in curriculum development and implementation creates an educational ecosystem that is more inclusive and responsive to the needs of society, both in the local and global context. (Kayır & Toraman, 2021).

While curriculum changes bring many benefits, there are also a number of challenges that must be faced. One of them is the readiness of education infrastructure, especially in remote areas that may not have adequate access to the latest technology and learning resources. In addition, resistance to change from those who are comfortable with the old system can also occur. (Darmawati, 2022). Therefore, strong support from the government, educational institutions and communities is needed to ensure a smooth transition. Continuous training for teachers and adequate facilities are crucial to the successful implementation of the new curriculum.

With proper implementation, curriculum changes can have a long-term positive impact on the quality of education. Students educated with the latest curriculum are expected to have high critical thinking skills, creativity and adaptability. This will equip them with the ability to innovate and play an active role in an ever-changing society. (Waruwu, 2024). In the long run, these qualified graduates will be able to contribute better in various fields, both at the national and international levels, thus improving the nation's image and competitiveness in the global arena. (Zai, 2024).

Thus, curriculum change has a significant impact on various aspects of education, ranging from learners, teachers, to the education system and society at large. The resulting positive impacts include increased relevance of learning materials, innovation in teaching methods, and the contribution of graduates in society and the world of work. Although it faces challenges in its implementation, with the right support and strong readiness, curriculum change can become one of the important pillars in improving the quality of national education. Therefore, the success of curriculum change requires co-operation and commitment from all parties involved to create a better and sustainable education ecosystem.

Factors Affecting Teacher Adaptation

One important factor influencing teachers' adaptation to changes, such as a new curriculum, is preparedness and adequate training support. Systematic and continuous training equips teachers with the latest knowledge and skills needed to teach under the curriculum. Without sufficient training, teachers may feel overwhelmed by the new expectations and changes they have to implement in the classroom. (Kim, 2022).

Supporting infrastructure plays a crucial role in helping teachers adapt to educational change. The availability of technology, up-to-date learning materials and adequate facilities support teachers in delivering materials according to the new curriculum standards. In areas where infrastructure is lacking, adaptation becomes more difficult and this can hinder the

overall teaching and learning process. (Buckova & Dostal, 2020).

In addition to external factors, teachers' adaptability and personal motivation also determine the extent to which they are able to adapt to change. Teachers who have the skills to learn new things quickly and who are highly motivated to improve their teaching quality tend to be more successful in adjusting to change. This motivation can be fuelled by a sense of professional responsibility and a desire to contribute to learners' success (Harwood, 2022). (Harwood, 2022).

A supportive work environment also affects how teachers adapt. Support from peers, principals and the rest of the education community can help reduce pressure and increase teachers' confidence in dealing with change. Collaboration and sharing experiences between teachers creates a positive work culture and helps to collectively find solutions to the challenges faced in the adaptation process. (GÜNEŞ & ÖZDAŞ, 2023).

Clear policies and visionary leadership from the school also play an important role in teachers' adaptation process. Policies that support innovation in teaching, as well as inclusive and communicative school leaders, can encourage teachers to be more confident in trying new approaches. Effective leadership creates an environment where teachers feel valued and supported in developing their skills. (Wyk, 2020).

Thus, teachers' adaptation to changes and developments in education is influenced by various factors, ranging from training and infrastructure support, personal ability and motivation, to school policies and leadership. Successful adaptation requires collaboration between various stakeholders in the education system. With comprehensive support, teachers can more easily overcome challenges and contribute effectively to improving the quality of education. Thus, active and participatory learning can be achieved, providing long-term positive impacts for learners and society in general.

Strategies for Overcoming the Teacher's Dilemma

One of the main strategies that can be used to address the teacher dilemma is to increase the quality and frequency of professional training. Regular and continuous training allows teachers to stay up-to-date with the latest teaching methods, educational technology and curriculum developments. With relevant training, teachers can feel more prepared and confident in facing challenges in the classroom. (Fakude & Mdhlalose, 2021).

A collaborative approach in the work environment is also an effective strategy to address teachers' dilemmas. Forming a working group or community of practice among teachers can be a platform for sharing experiences and solutions to problems faced. Teachers can work together to design lesson plans, evaluate teaching practices, and provide emotional support to each other. In addition, this collaboration can also reduce feelings of isolation that teachers may experience. (Decuyper et al., 2023).

Teachers are often faced with time management dilemmas, especially in balancing administrative and teaching responsibilities. A possible strategy is effective time management, such as creating an organised schedule and identifying priority tasks. In addition, the use of technology to automate some administrative tasks can also help teachers allocate more time for teaching preparation and interaction with students. (White, 2021).

Psychosocial support and a focus on teacher wellbeing are important aspects in addressing the dilemmas faced by teachers. Schools can provide counselling, emotional wellbeing programs and relaxation activities to help reduce the stress experienced by teachers. A work environment that cares about teachers' physical and mental wellbeing can boost morale and motivate teachers to continue developing their competencies to face the challenges of education. (Browne, 2022).

By implementing these strategies, it is hoped that the dilemmas faced by teachers can be resolved more effectively. This comprehensive support from various aspects will create a conducive working environment for teachers, which in turn will have a positive impact on the quality of learning and learner achievement.

Conclusion

The dilemma faced by teachers in the face of endless curriculum changes is a complex challenge. Uncertainty and constantly changing education standards require teachers to be adaptive and ready to innovate. This difficulty is often compounded by the lack of adequate training and support from the school and government. Therefore, to help teachers navigate these changes, a collective and strategic effort involving intensive training, collaboration among teachers and support from authorities is needed.

In general, overcoming this dilemma requires a systematic approach that combines teacher professional capacity building, efficient time management and strong psychosocial support. By doing so, teachers will not only be better prepared and competent in implementing the new curriculum, but also more motivated and prosperous in their profession. As a result, the quality of learning and student success in facing the demands of today's education can be better achieved.

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