
	Profetika: Jurnal Studi Islam P-ISSN: 14110881   E-ISSN: 25414534 Vol. 27, No. 2, 2026, pp. 497–512 <a href="https://doi.org/10.23917/profetika.v27i02.18447">https://doi.org/10.23917/profetika.v27i02.18447</a>	
	Received August 17, 2025	

# Integrating SDGs into the Independent Curriculum in IRE and Ethics: Evidence from North Jakarta High Schools

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## Abstract

**Objective:** This study examines the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum in Islamic Religious Education (IRE) and Ethics subjects at two North Jakarta high schools. In line with SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals), the research aims to: (1) analyze curriculum planning; (2) describe classroom implementation; (3) explain the evaluation system; and (4) identify driving and inhibiting factors in integrating SDGs-oriented learning. **Theoretical framework:** The theoretical framework draws upon constructivist learning theory, curriculum reform theory, and Islamic character education, emphasizing student-centered, values-based, and transformative learning. **Literature review:** A review of recent literature highlights that integrating SDGs into religious education strengthens global citizenship, ethical awareness, and social responsibility, yet empirical evidence in Indonesian IRE contexts remains limited. **Methods:** This research employs a qualitative naturalistic field approach. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation at SMA Al Jihad and SMA Al Khairiyah, and analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model. **Results:** Findings reveal that curriculum planning involves a structured selection and training process for school leaders and comprehensive preparation of teaching documents. Implementation in Grade X applies TaRL (Teaching at the Right Level) and PJBL (Project-Based Learning), incorporating community resource persons to contextualize SDGs values. Evaluation adopts Assessment of Learning, for Learning, and as Learning, utilizing diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments conducted transparently and accountably. Driving factors include strong leadership readiness, teacher collaboration, parental involvement, and supportive socio-cultural environments. Inhibiting factors involve limited teacher references, insufficient experience, and inadequate learning facilities. **Implications:** The study implies that systematic SDGs integration in IRE and Ethics enhances ethical competence, social piety, and institutional accountability. **Novelty:** The novelty lies in providing empirical evidence of SDGs mainstreaming within Indonesia's Independent Curriculum in Islamic secondary education.

**Keywords:** sdgs integration, independent curriculum, ire, ethics education, sustainable education policy.

## INTRODUCTION

The integration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into national education systems has become a global priority, particularly in advancing SDG 4 (Quality Education),

SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). In Indonesia, the Independent Learning Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka) represents a transformative reform designed to promote student-centered learning, flexibility, and character development. While policy documents emphasize the importance of aligning education with global sustainability agendas, empirical research examining how SDGs are operationalized within specific subject areas—especially Islamic Religious Education (IRE) and Ethics—remains limited [1].

Existing studies on the Independent Curriculum largely focus on general pedagogical transformation, assessment reform, and teacher readiness. Other research explores character education and religious instruction from theological or moral perspectives. However, few studies explicitly analyze how SDGs values are systematically embedded in curriculum planning, classroom implementation, and assessment practices within IRE and Ethics subjects. This gap is significant because religious education plays a strategic role in shaping ethical awareness, social responsibility, environmental stewardship, and peaceful coexistence—core principles aligned with the SDGs framework [2].

Moreover, previous research tends to emphasize policy discourse at the national level without sufficiently examining school-based realities, particularly in urban contexts such as North Jakarta. There is limited field-based evidence explaining how principals, teachers, and stakeholders translate SDGs-oriented goals into concrete teaching modules, project-based learning activities, and holistic assessment models. The interplay between institutional readiness, socio-cultural environment, and implementation challenges also remains underexplored. Therefore, a critical research gap exists in understanding the practical integration of SDGs within the Independent Learning Curriculum in IRE and Ethics subjects. Addressing this gap is essential to evaluate whether curriculum reform genuinely contributes to sustainable development values or remains confined to normative policy rhetoric. This study seeks to provide empirical insights into how SDGs integration is planned, implemented, evaluated, and influenced by contextual factors at the secondary school level [3].

Education is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, morals, beliefs, and habits. Through education, people can have an understanding of something that makes them critical human beings in thinking and acting. Curriculum is one of the most important variables in the national education system. According to Johnson's curriculum "prescribes (or at least anticipates) the result of instruction. The curriculum is an educational plan, providing guidelines and guidelines on the type, scope, and sequence of content, as well as the educational process. The quality of students must refer to the objectives of National Education article 3 of the National Education System Law number 20 of 2003, namely: The development of students to become human beings who believe and are devoted to God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic citizens. Facing the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, which emphasizes the concept of independent learning, every educational institution is expected to have competitiveness and innovation that can collaborate so as not to be left behind. In the era of revolution 4.0, the education system is expected to be able to realize students who can think critically and can solve problems, are creative and innovative, and have the skills to communicate and collaborate [4].

In the current era of education, namely through the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud), namely by Mr. Nadiem Makarim, an educational program known as the "Merdeka Belajar" program was born. In the program, many activities can be carried out by the entire educational community in schools, especially by teachers. The programs include: School KIP, School Digitalization, Achievement and Character Strengthening, Teacher Mobilization, New Curriculum, Revitalization of Vocational Education, Independent Campus/School, and Cultural and Language Promotion. Therefore, this program is very dependent on teachers as the main pillar of education, it is necessary to see how far these teachers have implemented these programs [5].

One of the subjects or themes of lessons in high school is Islamic Religious Education (IRE) where this lesson or theme by most students is considered difficult. With the existence of the Merdeka Belajar program above, it is hoped that IRE lessons or themes in particular will be easier for students because of various innovations from teachers who implement these Merdeka Belajar programs. An interesting phenomenon to be studied is the existence and sustainability of this Merdeka Belajar education program which is still widely discussed among academics and its application in schools, where it is known that many pros and cons occur both in the field, various opinions arise and develop along with the implementation of this policy. The application of this program, namely the independent learning curriculum, is generally considered suitable for the implementation of scientific learning or project-based learning, but some parties feel that it is not appropriate in the processes of implementing doctrine-based learning and literacy assessment such as Islamic Religious Education (IRE). The author indicates that the values of freedom and activeness of students in the Merdeka Belajar program are not fully capable, and the limitation of the teacher's role as a facilitator of learning in the process also has the potential to eliminate the efficiency and effectiveness of instilling Islamic values in IRE learning related to awareness in worship, Islamic morals, and Islamic morality, in learning in the classroom [6].

That condition is the basis for the author to conduct further research on the implementation of Merdeka Belajar in IRE learning at SMA Al Jihad and SMA Al Khairiyah in the North Jakarta area, where the object of this research in the implementation of learning in the classroom has begun to process by carrying out activities and learning activities to train the ability to understand concepts in real life to develop experience and life skills [7], to his learners in the classroom. Al Jihad High School is one of the formal educational institutions under the Sholahuddin al 'Ayubi Islamic Foundation which aims to prepare its graduates to be ready to compete in higher education levels and have a global outlook. This can be seen from the vision and mission of SMA Al Jihad "To produce students who have high intellectuals, and have a global outlook and have a noble character". Based on the results of initial observations in schools, it is known that Al Jihad High School, in terms of preparing for the implementation of the independent learning policy, there is a strategy carried out as the first step in the implementation of independent learning, by being ready to implement the independent learning curriculum from various sides, such as the preparation of teacher competence, student readiness, the implementation of new learning, and so on [8].

The results of the interview with the principal revealed that the curriculum process carried out at SMA Al Jihad North Jakarta uses the independent learning curriculum launched by the government through the Ministry of Education, especially in class X at the institution, and gradually all grade levels will use the independent learning curriculum, starting this year in grade X and then continuing with other classes in the next period. As is known, the Independent Curriculum is more flexible, focusing on its essential material on competencies, namely literacy and numeracy, as well as project-based learning to develop soft skills and character according to the Pancasila student profile, where the definition of the Pancasila student profile is that the Pancasila Student Profile is some character traits and competencies that are expected to be achieved by students, which are based on the noble values of Pancasila. So it is a big task for the teacher council at Al Jihad High School to understand it and try to carry it out properly [9].

This condition becomes attractive to the author with planning and preparation as well as his wishes on the part of the educational institution to be studied. In addition, in terms of the quality of academic and non-academic achievements, as obtained by the author during initial observations, it is known that Al Jihad High School, which is planning to implement the Independent Learning Curriculum at all levels in the institution, it attracts the author's interest to be the object of this study [9].

Planning and preparation for the implementation of the independent learning curriculum is carried out by the school starting from the principal, curriculum wakasek, teacher council,

and also the school committee including students at Al Jihad High School. The form in terms of learning begins with the introduction of several learning methods in independent learning more intensely, PJBL learning (Project Based Learning), As well as the involvement of the community environment that clicks on classification in sharing experiences that support the learning process, is carried out gradually, even the school also involves the parents of students to fill in classroom learning related to Islamic religious lectures. In addition, due to the achievements that can be achieved this year, namely Al Jihad High School was able to achieve champion achievements in the field of accounting implemented by Tri Sakti University, the champion in Tilawatil Al-Qur'an, the school actively carries out short story reading literacy activities at school as an effort to meet the abilities and insights of students and also non-academics who won 2nd place in the Pencak silat competition in North Jakarta in the 2022 period [10], as well as various activities and achievements achieved by students and teachers in previous periods that cannot be mentioned one by one here make this school an object of research relevant to the application of the independent learning curriculum that will be studied by the author [11].

The problem with education is that there are still many restraint efforts. Teachers and students have not felt enough autonomy to determine the direction of learning and teaching wisdom because it is still regulated by binding regulations. Results of the study of Sherly literature to implement the "Merdeka Belajar" program, it is necessary to transform the school curriculum and learning; transform national education management, and transformation of regional education management and school autonomy. The independent learning policy becomes a learning reform that has an impact on the demands of educators' paradigm shifts in designing curriculum, developing learning, and evaluating it. Freedom of learning makes learning very flexible about content, strategies, and places of learning; so based on these phenomena and descriptions, the author is interested in taking the title of the study: Implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum in IRE and Ethics subjects at Al Jihad High School and Al Khairiyah High School, North Jakarta [12].

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The integration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into educational systems has attracted increasing scholarly attention, particularly in relation to SDG 4 on Quality Education. Education is widely recognized as a transformative instrument for promoting social justice, environmental sustainability, ethical awareness, and global citizenship. Within this framework, curriculum reform is viewed as a strategic entry point for embedding sustainability values into teaching and learning processes. In Indonesia, the Independent Learning Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka) has been positioned as a flexible and student-centered reform designed to foster critical thinking, character formation, and contextual learning [13].

Relevant literature highlights several key concepts underpinning this reform. Constructivist learning theory emphasizes active student engagement and meaningful learning experiences, aligning with approaches such as Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) and Project-Based Learning (PjBL). Character education theory, particularly within Islamic Religious Education (IRE), underscores the cultivation of moral integrity, social responsibility, and spiritual consciousness. Additionally, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) provides a conceptual bridge between global sustainability goals and local educational practices, promoting values-based and transformative learning that connects knowledge with action [14].

Despite these theoretical advancements, gaps and controversies remain. Many studies discuss SDGs integration at the policy level but provide limited empirical evidence of classroom implementation, especially in religious education contexts. Research on IRE often focuses on theological content and moral instruction without explicitly linking learning objectives to sustainability frameworks such as SDG 16 on peace and strong institutions or SDG 17 on partnerships. Furthermore, debates persist

regarding teachers' readiness, curriculum overload, and the tension between global agendas and local religious-cultural identities. Consequently, there is a need for field-based research that examines how SDGs are concretely embedded in curriculum planning, pedagogical strategies, and assessment systems within IRE and Ethics subjects under the Independent Learning Curriculum [15].

## METHODOLOGY

Based on the main problems studied, namely the implementation of the independent learning curriculum in IRE subjects at Al Jihad High School and Al Khairiyah High School in North Jakarta, in this study, the author uses a qualitative type of research. In simple terms, it can be said that the purpose of qualitative research is to find answers to a phenomenon or question through the systematic application of scientific procedures using a qualitative approach. In qualitative research, the methods that are usually used are interviews, observations, and the use of documents. In this study, the author used a qualitative type of research. Denzyme and Lincoln stated that qualitative research is research that uses a natural setting, to interpret phenomena that occur and is carried out by involving existing methods. In qualitative research, the methods that are usually used are interviews, observations, and the use of documents [16].

This type of research can be classified as field research that is qualitative, descriptive, and naturalistic which aims to find out the implementation of the independent learning curriculum in IRE subjects at SMA Al Jihad and SMA Al Khairiyah North Jakarta. The qualitative research method is a research method used to examine the natural condition of objects, (as opposed to experiments) where the author is the key instrument, and the results of this research are not for generalization, but for the meaning of phenomena [17].

**Table 1. Research Methodology Framework with SDGs Integration**

Component	Description	SDGs Alignment
Research Design	Qualitative research with a descriptive and naturalistic field approach to explore the implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum in IRE subjects.	Supports SDG 4 (Quality Education) through contextual evaluation of curriculum reform.
Research Sites	SMA Al Jihad and SMA Al Khairiyah, North Jakarta.	Contributes to local educational transformation aligned with SDG 4.
Research Focus	Implementation processes including planning, teaching practices, evaluation systems, and supporting/inhibiting factors in IRE learning.	Strengthens ethical education and institutional accountability linked to SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions).
Data Collection Techniques	In-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis (teaching modules, syllabus, assessment reports).	Encourages participatory and inclusive approaches reflecting SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).
Research Instrument	The researcher as the key instrument, supported by non-human instruments such as official documents and observational field notes.	Ensures reflective and transformative educational analysis supporting SDG 4.
Data Analysis Technique	Interactive model of Miles and Huberman: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.	Promotes systematic and accountable research practices aligned with SDG 16.
Research Objective Orientation	Understanding meaning and contextual realities rather than statistical generalization.	Encourages sustainable educational development and contextual policy improvement under SDG 4.

The use of a qualitative approach in this research approach is because the author sees the nature of the problem under study can develop naturally according to conditions and situations in the field. Research will be carried out at Al Jihad High School and Al Khairiyah

High School in North Jakarta which always experience good development from the learning process carried out at school. In this study, the author acts as an instrument as well as a data collector. To maintain the objectivity of this research, the most expected in addition to the interview results are non-human instruments such as documents and events during observation and in-depth observation throughout this research [17].

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Planning for the Implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum on IRE

Findings from interviews and observations of documentation conducted by researchers, the first step in planning an independent curriculum at SMA Al Jihad and SMA Al Khairiyah North Jakarta is to compile the Operational Curriculum of the Education Unit or KOSP. Where the KOSP consists of the characteristics of the educational unit, the vision mission, and goals of Al Jihad High School and Al Khairiyah High School North Jakarta, the organization of learning, academic regulations, and the educational calendar [18]. This is relevant to Law Number 20 of 2003 Article 1 Paragraph (19) concerning the National Education System which states that the curriculum is that in achieving educational goals, learning activity guidelines will be implemented which include a set of designs and regulations covering content, objectives, and subject matter. Based on the KOSP (Operational Curriculum of Education Units) of SMA Al Jihad and SMA Al Khairiyah North Jakarta (2022) in compiling teaching modules, teachers at SMA Al Jihad and SMA Al Khairiyah North Jakarta took steps to develop teaching modules as follows:

1. Identify learning objectives that can be grouped in one scope of material. One Teaching Module may include one learning objective or multiple learning objectives.
2. Conducting diagnostic assessments identifies the mastery of students' initial competencies.
3. Determine summative assessment techniques and instruments along with indicators of the success of summative assessment to be carried out at the end of the scope of material.
4. Specifies the period or number of JPs required.
5. Determine formative assessment techniques and instruments based on learning activities.
6. Create a series of learning activities from start to finish.
7. Ensure learning activities are aligned with learning objectives.
8. Each activity is equipped with understanding, meaning, and essential questions that become references.
9. Prepare learning sheets, learning materials, and learning media by the readiness, interests, and learning profiles of students.
10. Attach assessment instruments such as checklists, rubrics, or observation sheets as needed.

The preparation that should be done mentions the determination of goals to be obtained through a thorough investigation of needs and documents, then determines the methods that must be done to obtain these goals. Planning in terms of learning as a method of preparing learning materials, the use of learning media, learning methods and approaches, and assessment at a time that will be carried out at a certain time to obtain predetermined goals according to the theme in the material taught. After this process, the existence of teaching modules is carried out by the teachers, then continued with the writing of lesson plans consisting of learning objectives, learning activities, and assessments on 1 page and several appendices to rubrics and assessment sheets. The concept of independent learning (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2019) states that productive TKR teachers can choose to create use, and develop the RPP format including core components: 1) learning objectives; 2) learning activities; 3) Assessment in 1 page is sufficient, this policy aims to give teachers more time to prepare and evaluate the learning process [19].

The results of interviews related to research questions about the process of planning, implementing, and evaluating learning, seen in both high schools, answers from waka curriculum and teachers of Islamic Religious Education and Ethics subjects, learning planning in RPP refers to the results of curriculum synchronization with the theme and results of student competency mapping, teachers are free to be creative in determining learning methods and strategies, teaching materials and determining the stages of thinking from SK, KD and indicators of competency achievement (GPA) to be achieved and determine the GPA of each KD by paying attention to the stages of thinking SK and KD that have been synchronized with industry. The implementation of learning is carried out by dividing the class into discussion/practice groups, one group consisting of students with high, medium, and low abilities. The discussion group is given troubleshooting/problems related to aqidah to be resolved by communicating with each other, and the results of the discussion are presented in front of the class. Learning evaluation pays attention to the interaction process in discussion groups to the extent of the effectiveness of communication between students [20].

According to Mustaghfiroh, in Baedhowi the concept of freedom of learning is similar to the school of progressivism which has the principles 1) children must be free and develop naturally; 2) hands-on experience is the best experience in learning; 3) Teachers must be able to guide and be good facilitators; 4) The educational institution should be an educational laboratory for student change; 5) Activities in educational institutions and at home must be cooperative. The basic principle of freedom of learning is freedom in learning and in preparing for learning. This concept is similar to John Dewey's philosophy of progressivism, this school is one of the schools of modern educational philosophy that wants fundamental changes to the implementation of education in a better, quality direction and provides real benefits for students, so that qualitatively students can do and understand the subject matter of Islamic Religious Education and Ethics well according to the ability and direction of the themes that have been compiled in the curriculum Merdeka Belajar is especially related to the creed and ahklak of those who are included in the Phase E group in the Merdeka Belajar curriculum [21].

### **Implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum on IRE and Ethics Subjects**

Process implementation deep Learning that using the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, the implementation is basically at SMA Al Jihad and SMA Al Khairiyah North Jakarta, students (class X) are given the freedom to be creative and find solutions from troubleshooting provided by teachers as facilitators the implementation of the concept of independent learning. Based on the findings of the interview results of participants, the implementation of the independent learning curriculum at the driving schools of Al Jihad High School and Al Khairiyah High School, North Jakarta, namely conducting learning by the curriculum structure in the independent curriculum, intracurricular learning activities, namely routine and scheduled activities based on the content of learners, as well as learning activities for the profile of Pancasila with project making. Competency assessment is directed to be able to provide a stronger impetus towards innovative teaching and oriented towards the development of reasoning, not just memorization [21].

The character survey is intended to measure aspects that reflect the implementation of Pancasila values in schools, such as student character and climate in schools which include diversity, anti-bullying behavior, and learning quality. Teachers and students have the freedom in innovating, able to learn independently and creatively. The learning method in independent learning education responds to the era of revolution 4.0. Freedom of learning in Nadim Makarim's definition means "freedom of thought". The values of freedom to learn in the Minister of Education and Culture program begin with liberating the thoughts or thinking patterns of teachers first. The changes implemented give freedom to teachers to be able to improve their capacity or ability to manage education. The policy related to changing UN to USBN provides opportunities for teachers to be able to carry out their assessments,

as well as develop and interpret Learning Implementation Plans (RPP) independently. Teachers who deal directly with students have better and more appropriate abilities and understanding related to the needs of their students [22].

The first step is to recognize the input factor. The steps are as follows;

1. Identify needs. Is an important factor in the learning design process. Needs identification comes from a needs assessment concerning a particular curriculum;
2. Identify contents. The content comes from the needs of the student, to clarify what will be taught;
3. Identify Goals and Objectives. To determine what students can do after the learning process. Learning outcomes categories include intellectual skills, cognitive strategies, verbal information, motor skills, and attitudes. Goals and objectives contain skills, knowledge, and attitudes. Skill elements include psychomotor skills and intellectual skills. To learn to develop muscle action and intellectual skills, they develop cognitive activities such as discrimination, execution, and problem-solving. Goals and objectives are derived from needs and content assessments;
4. Establish learning methods. Learning methods must be related to content and objectives because learning objectives will be achieved with appropriate methods;
5. Identifying learning media is a way of sending messages in the learning design process. Types of learning media include traditional learning media and modern learning media. Books, journals, graphics, models, pictures, posters, cartoons, newspapers, dioramas, travel, whiteboards, and others are traditional learning media. While multimedia, film, radio, telephone, television, computers, data projection, internet including modern learning media. Traditional media and modern media have the main purpose of the media to apply communication activities and learning activities. Identification of learning media based on the study of needs, content, objectives, and teaching methods. Learning media should motivate learners to learn and make it easier to build new knowledge in long-term memory.

The second step is the process. The three steps in the process phase include prototype testing, redesigning learning, and learning activities. The first step is to test the prototype. In this step, the teacher is ready to try the planned learning with the learners to know which stages are successful and which stages are unsuccessful. During prototype testing, problems in learning design will be identified. The second step is to redesign learning. Learning designers reorganize learning activities. An important role in designing effective learning is the pre-testing stage. Learning objectives will be well achieved if learning is well designed. The third step is learning activities. Teachers begin to apply learning content and methods to achieve learning objectives with the help of learning media. The third step is outputs, including assessment activities and learning revisions. Assessment activities, teachers assess learning activities in a learning design model. Educators in learning design apply formative and summative evaluation methods to examine goals and objectives. This process requires educators to implement assessment tools in determining whether learners demonstrate the skills, knowledge, and attitudes described by the teacher in the learning objectives or not. Learning measurement and evaluation processes must be carried out by teachers to provide results about what learners learn from learning activities [22].

The teacher analyzes the results and makes decisions about the effectiveness of learning. The revision step is carried out after the educator evaluates all learning activities. If the educator finds a problem, then the educator revises the part that has the problem. The fourth step is feedback. If during the implementation phase, the teacher finds that the students are not learning according to plan or not according to what the students want to learn or they are not enjoying the learning process that is happening, the teacher goes back to the previous step and tries to revise some aspects of their learning to better enable the students to achieve the learning objectives. For example, if there is a problem at the input stage, the learning designer will return to the input stage. Then, the learning designer will make changes and start the process from the input stage. This process will be carried out until all learning

objectives are learned or achieved by the learners. During this stage, educators can return to any step regarding the problem as it occurs. The fifth step is the learning stage. This stage can be achieved if the previous stage does not experience problems in creating a full learning mode. The learning stage has one part, namely "long-term learning" [23].

The learning process involves full learning. As a final point, long-term learning occurs when something is practiced. If something is practiced, then it means it has meaning for learners. If the learner does not practice the knowledge and that knowledge is not meaningful to the learners themselves, it means that the teacher must go to the beginning of the model, and do the same from beginning to end. During the learning process, teachers ensure that learners learn according to the lesson plan. If at this stage, the teacher finds that the learners achieved their goals in the learning activities, the teacher can proceed to the new learning activities. It can be said that the determinant of the success of this independent learning program is the teacher. The success or failure of an education is largely determined by how the role of teachers. Throughout the process, education needs teachers. The role of the teacher begins with how the teacher positions himself as an educator. Often teachers do not understand their position as an educator, where an educator is a person who never stops learning, and continues to develop his capacity to be able to maximize himself in helping students become good learners. So far, teachers are too busy with administrative matters, with the presence of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, it is hoped that teachers will be able to develop their abilities and capacities and change their mentality and character. So that teachers have sensitivity to the needs of students and the context faced now [24].

### **Independent Learning Curriculum Evaluation System**

The existence of a learning evaluation system is a process to obtain the data and information needed to determine the extent and how learning has been running to make the assessments and improvements needed to maximize the results. The evaluation carried out by SMA Al Jihad and SMA Al Khairiyah North Jakarta is to assess both formative and summative assessments, then carry out class advancement criteria, and finally graduation criteria. Based on the results of interviews with principals and teachers as well as documentation at Al Jihad High School and Al Khairiyah High School, North Jakarta, it shows that they have carried out learning assessments or evaluations, the implementation of the independent curriculum includes carrying out diagnostic assessments, carrying out and processing formative and summative assessments and reporting learning outcomes. The signs at the beginning of the independent curriculum implemented in this driving school, according to interviews with the principal, are still designed by the school itself, so the school has not been able to implement them properly. For the assessment on the E-report card, they made their application to enter data according to the learning outcomes in each subject, especially in 2021, they made and designed their own summative and formative assessment [25].

Assessment is an important activity carried out in learning, including in the application of the Independent Curriculum. Assessment serves to determine learning needs as well as the development and achievement of student learning outcomes. Unfortunately, the implementation of assessment has not been used as feedback for learning improvement because it has not been used as feedback for improvement. Based on its function, assessment consists of three types, namely assessment as a learning process (assessment as learning), assessment for the learning process (assessment for learning), and assessment at the end of the learning process (assessment of learning). All three can be carried out both by summative and formative assessment methods. Therefore, for the implementation of assessment to be in line with the objectives to be achieved, educators are expected to pay attention to the characteristics and functions of assessment as learning, assessment for learning, and assessment of learning, Explanation below:

### 1. Assessment As Learning

This assessment aims to reflect on the learning process and serves as a formative assessment. Students should be actively involved in this assessment activity. Students are given the experience to learn to be assessors for themselves and their friends. Self-assessment (self-assessment) and peer assessment are examples of assessment as learning. This type of assessment has several functions, namely to diagnose the initial abilities and learning needs of students, as feedback to improve the learning process and learning strategies, diagnose material absorption, and spur changes in the classroom atmosphere [26].

### 2. Assessment For Learning

This assessment aims to improve the learning process. Assessment for learning can be done in the format of formative assessment as well as summative assessment. When the education unit conducts a summative assessment at the end of the scope of the material, it can also be categorized as an assessment for learning. Assessment for learning serves as a measuring tool to find out the achievement of student learning outcomes, reflect on learning, become feedback to design improvements to the learning process and see the strengths and weaknesses of student learning [27].

### 3. Assessment at the end of the learning process (assessment of learning)

Assessment of learning serves as a measurement tool for achieving learning outcomes through achievement values, becoming feedback to design/improve the learning process, as well as seeing the strengths and weaknesses of student learning. This assessment itself can be categorized as a formative or summative assessment. In the context of semester summative assessment, the education unit can do a summative at the end of the semester if the education unit feels the need to confirm the final summative results of the scope of the material to obtain more complete data [28].

In the new paradigm learning concept carried by the Independent Curriculum, educators are expected to focus more on formative assessment than summative and use the results of formative assessment for continuous improvement of the learning process. This is in line with the monitoring system that can help teachers to optimize the quality of education. Teachers report that by participating in projects, they improve their professional skills, pedagogic mastery, and self-study skills, and increase their self-esteem and motivation. Evaluation is an activity to collect information about the work of something, which then the information is used to determine the right alternative in making a decision. Evaluation is carried out using a method, facilities and infrastructure, personal budget, and time determined in the planning stage. Evaluating is intended to find out whether the curriculum implemented is by the goals to be achieved or not. Evaluation function: (1) to obtain data on the achievement of objectives or the level of mastery of curriculum content by students, which is also known as the summative function; (2) To see the effectiveness of the learning process, whether the program prepared can be considered perfect or needs improvement, which is also called a formative function [29].

The results of this study are also in line with research conducted by Nurjanah, (2015) that the evaluation was carried out covering three aspects, namely cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects in the form of formative and summative tests carried out during the learning implementation process, the end of learning and observation in the school environment to determine the increase in student achievement in religion and the value of student learning outcomes in six subjects contained in the special curriculum program.

## **Driving and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum**

Based on the results of interviews and data collection conducted by the researcher on participants, the driving and inhibiting factors of the implementation of the independent

curriculum at SMA Al Jihad and SMA Al Khairiyah North Jakarta can be stated here the driving factors are stated Driving factors. The leadership factor of the principal and teachers who are highly motivated in providing updated material makes the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum at SMA Al Jihad and SMA Al Khairiyah North Jakarta run well and relevant. The aspect of education personnel that supports the learning process is also this very encouraging atmosphere and teaching that occurs. In addition, students are very influential because the curriculum is developed and designed according to the needs and interests of students. Therefore, the pattern used is centered on teaching materials in the form of content or material to be taught to students [30].

Economic factors have a considerable influence because the economy can develop and encourage curriculum development ranging from policy actors to actors in the field/school. Factors of technological development where at this time the mindset of the community is complex so that it is required to see, adjust, and follow the changes that occur in society, and this factor also encourages teachers and students to be more active in exploring knowledge and information related to relevant themes in the subjects of Islamic Religious Education and Ethics. The inhibiting factors for the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in implementing it can be known from the following things:

#### 1. Lack of References

For learning that differentiates in the process of teaching activities in the classroom, teachers also still do not optimally understand differentiated forms of learning. The mindset of senior teachers or those who are about to retire also hampers the implementation of this independent curriculum, because they do not want to change and do not abide by the guidelines of the independent curriculum. The readiness of students to make curriculum changes is also one of the obstacles to the implementation of the independent curriculum, where there are still students who are not too enthusiastic about learning in class. Inhibiting factors in preparing RPP are: a. financial limitations, b. Lack of mastery of the theory of perfect RPP preparation, c. limitations of supporting media. The same thing was also conveyed by Selani in their research said that the learning process was carried out by making plans in the form of Learning Implementation Plans (RPP), media studies, and learning material studies [31]. The same was conveyed by K.A Rahman that educational facilities and infrastructure need to get a good arrangement to provide the maximum benefit for education users.

#### 2. Inexperienced Teacher

From the results of the research, the obstacle to the implementation of the independent curriculum is that some teachers are less experienced in the use of technology, especially the use of technology-based learning media, such as Canva, PowerPoint, YouTube, and so on. Educators of Al Jihad High School and Al Khairiyah High School in North Jakarta have not all been able to utilize digital learning media to increase learning efficiency and effectiveness. With the availability of sufficient electricity and internet facilities, the school will facilitate educators to get training in making IT-based learning media (Information Technology), so it is expected that in the 2022/2023 academic year, all educators will be able to utilize learning media in increasing learning efficiency and effectiveness [32].

The results of this study there are obstacles or obstacles in the independent learning program for teachers, including:

##### a) Get Out of the Convenient Zoning of Learning Systems

The first obstacle for teachers is the difficulty of getting out of the comfort zone of the learning system that has been carried out so far. Usually, the learning system is carried out by providing material, explanation, or exposure to students amounting to 60% of all learning time in class. This certainly makes students passive in class because they only listen and then take notes.

b) Do not have experience of the Merdeka Belajar program

Because teachers do not have experience teaching with independent learning programs, it becomes a challenge for them. There are at least two obstacles felt by teachers to change the way they teach, the first is not having the experience of independent learning, and the second is they are used to listening to explanations from teachers during school or college. The lack of personal experience of teachers can affect the way they teach in the classroom.

c) Limitation of References

Limited references to the delivery of material, both in lesson texts and in teacher books published by book centers or private publishers. Because of this limited reference, it makes it difficult for teachers to obtain references for material delivery and facilitate learning in students effectively.

d) Teaching skills

A teacher must be able to upgrade teaching skills through the independent learning program. Where the teacher is to give freedom to students to argue, argue, or give questions with high-level thinking skills (HOTS questions). Unfortunately, there are still many teachers who do not understand the HOTS problem model until now. Instead, teachers can give simple problems that require students' freedom of thought.

e) Lack of Facilities and Quality of Teachers

It is feared that the independent learning program can increase education inequality because some schools may not be ready for the freedom of the program. This is due to the lack of facilities and the quality of teachers to create their assessment system. Of course, this is a big challenge that must be faced. The results of research conducted by (Efyanto, 2021) regarding obstacles in the implementation of the independent curriculum, namely. 1) The fulfillment of industrial competence requires programmatic improvement of teacher competence; (2) Teachers do not have field experience in the application of industrial competencies; (3) Dynamic changes in industry competency standards require continuous curriculum development and fulfillment of adequate infrastructure; (4) Difficulty facilitating learning effectively by industrial culture [33].

In line with policy implementation, there are several weaknesses first, policy implementation fails because of the vague content of the policy, meaning that what is the goal is not detailed enough, the means and implementation of priorities, or policy programs are too general or completely absent. Second, due to the lack of internal and external provisions of the policy to be implemented. Third, the policy to be implemented can also show significant shortcomings. Fourth, other causes of failure to implement a public policy can occur due to deficiencies involving auxiliary resources, for example, those concerning time, costs/funds, and human labor [34].

According to Sudarwan: Several factors influence efforts to improve the quality of education, including: 1). Leadership from the principal. 2). Learners as the center. 3). Engage teachers to the maximum. 4). Dynamic curriculum. 5). Good cooperation network [35]. To improve the quality of the school, the principal must have a clear vision and mission of work, be able and willing to work hard so that the school can create the expected curriculum, and have work motivation and work encouragement. The school can provide optimal services and high work discipline to improve the quality of education also requires a network of cooperation in addition to the school environment and the community around the school and can also communicate with other organizations and companies so that the output of the school can be absorbed in the world of work [36].

The factors that affect curriculum management itself include internal factors such as principals, educators, and students while external factors are the education office and education supervisors. It can also be known from informant data and discussion studies that where there are weaknesses in its implementation, which tend to be subjective and students

are sometimes inconsistent, the results are less accurate and students do not understand their abilities. In addition, to problems in the assessment of knowledge competitions, the techniques used in this assessment are written tests, oral tests, and assignments. The problem is that some students cannot follow the lesson well so extra attention must be given to these students [37].

Differences and limitations in students' intellectual abilities in learning, can certainly hamper the teaching and learning process carried out. These obstacles and limitations in students' intellectual abilities can cause students to have difficulty in learning. Limitations and obstacles related to the intellectual abilities of students or students are natural aspects that cannot be avoided. However, the problem of obstacles to students' intellectual abilities is not insurmountable, teachers must be able to identify the extent of student abilities and to what extent they can affect learning. After that, solutions can be sought and applied to how these obstacles can be overcome or at least minimized so as not to interfere and make the achievement of learning goals fail [38].

The independent learning curriculum will certainly have implications or consequences distinctive to learning, especially the learning of Islamic Religious Education and Ethics. In independent learning, teachers are given flexibility in preparing lesson plans, namely teaching modules. Teachers can choose or modify teaching modules that have been prepared by the government and adjusted to the character of students and arrange modules individually according to the material and character of students. In the existence of this freedom, teachers are required to have the right learning strategies and methods by the needs of students so that learning goals and outcomes can be achieved. For example, a teaching module is used as a guideline in fostering the spirit of learning as well as the cultivation and formation of competency standards and basic competencies that must be possessed by students. Teaching modules are prepared based on active learning methods with a student-centered learning model (student center) to encourage enthusiasm for learning, motivation, interest, creativity, initiative, inspiration, innovation, and independence [39].

The application of the concept of student-centered learning or student center, aims to make students more active and independent in the learning process, responsible and initiative in finding sources of learning information to be able to answer their needs. So that the implementation of a learner-centered independent learning curriculum learning approach in IRE learning effectively has positive implications for the IRE learning process with the hope that the material and substance can be understood properly and correctly, and please teachers as the spearhead of curriculum implementation, it is hoped that it can prepare and open up to several possibilities for change. Teacher readiness is more important than curriculum success. Teachers play an important role in the success of the curriculum because in the implementation of the curriculum, teachers aim to encourage students, teachers are better able to observe, ask, reason, and communicate (present), what they get or know after receiving learning material [40]. Through these four objectives, students are expected to have much better attitude competencies, skills, and knowledge.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, several important conclusions can be drawn regarding the implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum in IRE and Ethics subjects at SMA Al Jihad and SMA Al Khairiyah, North Jakarta. First, curriculum planning has been systematically organized. School leadership is prepared through a three-stage selection process consisting of administrative selection, teaching simulation, interviews, and training. Teachers are also required to complete comprehensive instructional documents, including teaching modules, annual and semester programs, syllabus, minimum competency criteria, independent and structured assignments, and lesson plans. This structured preparation demonstrates institutional commitment to improving educational governance in line with SDG 4 and SDG 16 principles. Second, classroom implementation for Grade X students reflects student-centered and differentiated

learning strategies. The use of TaRL (Teaching at the Right Level), Project-Based Learning, and Problem-Based Learning encourages active engagement, critical thinking, collaboration, and contextual understanding of ethical and religious values. The involvement of parents as guest resource persons further strengthens school–community collaboration, reflecting the partnership spirit promoted in SDG 17. Third, the evaluation system applies a comprehensive assessment model consisting of Assessment of Learning, Assessment for Learning, and Assessment as Learning. Teachers conduct diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments in an integrated, transparent, educative, economical, and accountable manner. Simplified report cards and the absence of student complaints indicate a more supportive and meaningful assessment culture, consistent with SDG 4 quality standards. Finally, driving factors include leadership readiness, teacher collaboration, parental involvement, and supportive socio-cultural environments. However, limitations such as insufficient references, limited teacher experience, and inadequate learning facilities remain challenges. Overall, the study confirms that structured curriculum reform can strengthen sustainable, ethical, inclusive, equitable, transformative educational development aligned with SDGs principles.

### Acknowledgments

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to all individuals and institutions that supported the completion of this study through academic guidance, constructive feedback, administrative assistance, and encouragement throughout the research and publication process.

### Author Contribution

All authors contributed equally to the main contributor to this paper, some are as chairman, member, financier, article translator, and final editor. All authors read and approved the final paper.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article. No financial, personal, institutional, or professional relationships influenced the research process, findings, interpretation, or conclusions presented.

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