



The Impact Of The Implementation Of The Independent Curriculum, Use Of Technology, Organizational Structure Changes, Competency Development, And Motivation On Organizational Culture Change Among Early Childhood Teachers In Lahat District

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ABSTRACT

Perubahan sistem pendidikan di Indonesia, khususnya melalui penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka, menuntut guru Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini (PAUD) untuk beradaptasi dalam berbagai aspek, termasuk penggunaan teknologi, penyesuaian struktur organisasi, peningkatan kompetensi, serta penguatan motivasi kerja. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka, pemanfaatan teknologi, perubahan struktur organisasi, pengembangan kompetensi, dan motivasi terhadap perubahan budaya organisasi di lingkungan guru PAUD Kecamatan Lahat. Metode yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kuantitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui angket, wawancara, dan dokumentasi terhadap guru PAUD di wilayah tersebut. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kelima variabel tersebut secara parsial maupun simultan memberikan pengaruh signifikan terhadap pembentukan budaya organisasi yang adaptif, kolaboratif, dan profesional. Namun, masih terdapat tantangan berupa keterbatasan pelatihan, infrastruktur teknologi, serta resistensi terhadap perubahan yang memerlukan strategi manajemen perubahan yang lebih efektif. Implikasi dari penelitian ini diharapkan dapat menjadi rujukan dalam perumusan kebijakan dan program pengembangan tenaga pendidik PAUD yang selaras dengan semangat Kurikulum Merdeka..

ABSTRAK

Educational reform in Indonesia, particularly through the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, requires Early Childhood Education (PAUD) teachers to adapt in various aspects, including technology adoption, organizational restructuring, competence development, and work motivation. This study aims to analyze the influence of Merdeka Curriculum implementation, technological utilization, organizational structure changes, teacher competence development, and motivation on the organizational culture transformation among PAUD teachers in Lahat District. A quantitative approach was applied, using surveys, interviews, and documentation as data collection methods. The results indicate that all five variables, both partially and simultaneously, have a significant impact on shaping an adaptive, collaborative, and professional organizational culture. However, challenges such as limited training access, lack of technological infrastructure, and resistance to change remain, requiring more effective change management strategies. The findings are expected to contribute to policy formulation and educator development programs aligned with the core principles of the Merdeka Curriculum.

INTRODUCTION

Changes in the Indonesian education system continue to evolve in line with government policies to improve the quality of learning at various levels. One major innovation implemented is the Independent Curriculum, which emphasizes learning flexibility and student character development. At the Early Childhood Education (PAUD) level, the implementation of this curriculum requires adaptations in various aspects, including the use of technology, organizational restructuring, and improving teacher competency and motivation. These changes directly and indirectly impact the organizational culture within the PAUD teacher workplace, particularly in Lahat District.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) emphasizes that Independent Learning is a policy based on the essence of students' freedom of thought and independent learning. According to Prameswari (2020), changes to the learning system, such as outings, discussions, and environmental exploration, can train children to be independent, courageous, and have character. This aligns with the thinking of Ki Hajar Dewantara, who emphasized the importance of freedom of thought, soul, and body for students (Fadlillah, 2020). Furthermore, the Independent Curriculum also aims to develop four core 21st-century competencies: communication, creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking (Prameswari, 2020), which contribute to the formation of an innovative and adaptive generation.

Research by Gagaramusu et al. (2024) shows that implementing the Independent Curriculum in Early Childhood Education (PAUD) includes understanding learning outcomes, developing a flow of objectives, and designing flexible and contextual assessments. Meanwhile, Melati et al. (2023) highlight that technology-based interactive learning media can help children acquire language skills more

effectively than conventional methods. Milyane et al. (2023) add that digital literacy is a crucial skill for educators to optimally utilize technology without negatively impacting children.

Implementing the Independent Curriculum in PAUD is not without challenges. According to Handayani (2023), teachers require a deep understanding of learning outcomes, flexible teaching module design, and a play-based and exploration-based approach. However, various obstacles remain in the field, particularly related to teacher preparedness and limited resources. Atmoko and Yaqin (2024) emphasized that the use of technology in early childhood learning will only be effective if supported by adequate training and mentoring for teachers. Therefore, teacher competency development is a crucial aspect for the successful implementation of this curriculum.

In addition to individual factors, changes in organizational structure also influence the successful implementation of education policies. Based on Lahat Regent Regulation Number 15 of 2025, restructuring is carried out to create a dynamic, agile, and professional bureaucracy. Lumapow et al. (2024) stated that restructuring educational organizations is necessary to make the system more adaptive to new policies, including the Independent Curriculum. However, Norliani et al. (2024) found that structural changes often encounter resistance from educators accustomed to the old system. This demonstrates the importance of change management strategies and leadership training for policymakers within the Education Office. In addition to restructuring, developing teacher competency and motivation is also key to addressing change. Ulandari and Santaria (2020) stated that training and professional development play a crucial role in improving teachers' ability to implement learning methods aligned with the Independent Curriculum. Wardinur and Mutawally (2019) added that digital literacy training can increase teachers' enthusiasm for utilizing information technology in teaching and learning activities. Teacher motivation also plays a significant role in the successful implementation of the curriculum. Support from the education office, performance rewards, and a conducive work environment can increase teacher enthusiasm and engagement in carrying out their duties (Handayani, 2023). These various changes have an impact on the organizational culture of early childhood education teachers. An organizational culture that is adaptive to innovation, collaboration, and increased professionalism indicates a positive transformation resulting from the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. Dini (2022) emphasized that teacher competence in integrating cultural values into learning impacts the quality of education and strengthens organizational culture. However, resistance to change and limited resources remain major obstacles to the adaptation process (Hidayat & Haerina, 2024).

METHODS

This study used a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design aimed at explaining the causal relationships between the research variables. The research subjects were Early Childhood Education (PAUD) teachers in Lahat District, who were the focus due to their strategic role in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. The study population was all PAUD teachers in Lahat District. The sample was determined using a purposive sampling technique. Respondent criteria included PAUD teachers who had been actively teaching for at least two years and were involved in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. Research Instrument: The instrument used was a questionnaire with a Likert scale of 1–5, covering indicators of the research variables: Implementation of the Independent Curriculum: curriculum understanding, learning implementation, evaluation; Technology Utilization: use of digital devices, learning applications, online media; Organizational Structure Changes: coordination patterns, management systems, task allocation; Competency Development: training, certification, and pedagogical skill enhancement; Motivation: intrinsic and extrinsic teacher motivation; and Organizational Culture Changes: values of cooperation, innovation, adaptation, and quality orientation.

Data Collection Techniques: Primary data were obtained through questionnaires distributed to respondents, while secondary data were collected from school documents, activity reports, and relevant literature. Operational Definition of Variables: Each research variable was operationalized into measurable indicators through questionnaire items. Instrument validity was tested using construct validity and Cronbach's Alpha reliability.

Data Analysis Techniques: The collected data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) using SmartPLS software. The analysis included testing the measurement model (validity and reliability), testing the structural model (R-square, Q-square, and path coefficient), and testing the hypotheses using t-statistics and p-values.

RESULTS

Based on data analysis using SEM-PLS, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum had a significant positive effect on changes in the organizational culture of PAUD teachers ($p < 0.05$). This



indicates that the better the curriculum implementation, the greater the changes in the values, norms, and behavior of the school organization. The use of technology was shown to have a significant positive effect on changes in organizational culture ($p < 0.05$). Teachers who actively use technology in the learning process are more adaptable to innovation and collaboration.

Changes in organizational structure had a positive but insignificant effect on changes in organizational culture ($p > 0.05$). This indicates that changes in formal structure have not been fully accompanied by changes in work culture behavior. Competency development had a significant positive effect on changes in organizational culture ($p < 0.05$). The higher the teacher's competence, the stronger the organizational culture formed. Motivation was also shown to have a significant positive effect on changes in organizational culture ($p < 0.05$). Teachers with high intrinsic motivation are more receptive to change and support school innovation.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study reinforce Schein's (2010) theory of organizational culture, which states that organizational values, norms, and behavior are influenced by policies and member competencies. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum is a key factor in creating an adaptive and innovative organizational culture in early childhood education (PAUD). Furthermore, these results are consistent with Arifin's (2020) research, which found that the use of technology in learning fosters a collaborative work culture. The finding that changes in organizational structure had no significant impact aligns with Santoso's (2018) study, which stated that structural changes take longer to transform into organizational culture. Furthermore, teacher competency development aligns with McClelland's (1973) competency theory, which states that increased skills and knowledge have a direct impact on changes in organizational behavior. Teacher work motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic, supports Herzberg's (1966) theory on the importance of motivational factors in increasing commitment and adaptation to change.

Research Implications

Theoretically, this study adds to the literature on factors influencing organizational culture change in the context of early childhood education. Practically, the research findings provide input to local governments, early childhood education (PAUD) administrators, and education policymakers to strengthen teacher training, provide technological facilities, and create incentive systems to increase teacher motivation.

Potential Follow-Up Actions

Further research could expand the sample to elementary or secondary education levels and use a longitudinal approach to observe long-term changes in organizational culture.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, technology utilization, competency development, and motivation have a significant positive influence on organizational culture change among PAUD teachers in Lahat District. This indicates that these factors play a crucial role in shaping an adaptive, innovative, and quality-oriented organizational culture. Meanwhile, changes in organizational structure have a positive but insignificant effect, indicating the need for more time and a longer process for structural changes to be internalized within the organizational culture.

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