



TEACHERS' DIFFICULTIES IN IMPLEMENTING THE 2013 CURRICULUM AT THE MADRASAH IBTIDAIYAH LEVEL

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Abstract:

This research aims to uncover the various difficulties faced by teachers in implementing the 2013 Curriculum (K-13) in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI). Through a descriptive qualitative approach, data was collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation of MI teachers who have implemented K-13. The results of the study showed that teachers had difficulties in understanding the basic concepts of the curriculum, preparing lesson plans such as lesson plans, carrying out thematic and scientific learning, and in implementing authentic assessments as a whole. External factors such as administrative burden, lack of training, and limited support facilities also exacerbate this condition. This study also found a gap between the national curriculum policy and the real conditions in madrasas. Therefore, a strategy to increase teacher capacity, simplify administration, and provide more contextual curriculum assistance is needed so that the implementation of K-13 in MI can run more optimally and meaningfully. These findings make an important contribution to the development of education policies that are more adaptive to the needs of teachers in madrasas.

Keywords : Curriculum 2013, Teachers' Difficulties, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah

INTRODUCTION

The 2013 Curriculum (K-13) is an update of the Education Unit Level Curriculum (KTSP) which emphasizes scientific approaches, strengthening character education, and integration between attitudes, knowledge, and skills. This curriculum is implemented nationally, including in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), which is an important part of the Islamic basic education system in Indonesia. However, its implementation at the MI level is inseparable from the various obstacles faced by teachers as the main implementers of curriculum policies. (Mulyasa, 2013)

The 2013 Curriculum (K-13) is a national education curriculum developed by the Indonesian government with the aim of forming students who are not only academically intelligent, but also have spiritual, social, and 21st century skills. This curriculum prioritizes a scientific approach, activity-based learning, and authentic assessments that touch on aspects of attitudes, knowledge, and skills holistically. Thus, the 2013 Curriculum not only focuses on mastery of the material, but also on strengthening character, developing self-potential, and forming a complete personality. (Hamalik, 2013)

At Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), the 2013 Curriculum was adapted and combined with the peculiarities of the Ministry of Religion's curriculum, which emphasizes the integration of Islamic values in the learning process. This means that the implementation of K-13 at MI not only covers general subjects such as Indonesian, Mathematics, and Natural Sciences, but also contains typical Islamic



subjects such as the Qur'an Hadith, Akidah Akhlak, Fiqh, Islamic Cultural History (SKI), and Arabic. This aims to form students who are not only intelligent, but also have a strong spiritual and moral foundation. (Sani, 2014)

The integrative thematic approach that characterizes K-13 at the elementary school level is also applied at MI. Teachers are required to integrate various subjects in a single theme that is relevant to students' lives, as well as relate them to Islamic values. For example, when discussing the theme of the environment, teachers can also associate it with Islamic teachings about maintaining cleanliness and preserving nature as part of worship. In this way, students not only understand concepts academically, but are also able to internalize religious values in daily life.

The implementation of the 2013 Curriculum (K-13) in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) is a challenge for teachers, especially in areas with limited resources and technical support. MI as a basic educational institution with Islamic characteristics is not only required to convey academic competence, but also to form Islamic character and values. (Zubaedi, 2011) In this context, the success of the implementation of K-13 is highly determined by the readiness of teachers to understand and implement the curriculum philosophy in its entirety. (Rahmawati, 2020)

A phenomenon that occurs in the field shows that MI teachers often have difficulty in translating the concept of integrated thematic learning and scientific approaches into classroom practice. This situation is exacerbated by the high administrative burden and the pressure of strict curriculum achievements. On the other hand, social conditions such as low technological literacy, limited learning facilities, and lack of continuous training are significant inhibiting factors. (Aunurrahman, 2012)

The change in national education policy that continues to move from KTSP to K-13, and now to the Independent Curriculum, has created a situation that confuses some teachers, especially those who are used to the old approach. Unpreparedness in dealing with these changes not only affects the quality of learning, but also on teacher motivation and performance.

In practice, MI teachers face pressure to meet the demands of planning documents such as lesson plans, teaching modules, daily journals, and assessment of students' attitudes, knowledge, and skills. This administrative burden takes up teachers' time that should be focused on developing effective and fun learning strategies. (Ningsih, 2018)

The issue of K-13 implementation becomes increasingly complex when it is associated with the local social context of madrasahs, such as the surrounding community environment, school culture, and diverse student characteristics. Many teachers admit that it is difficult to relate the theme of learning to the real lives of students, even though this is the essence of thematic and contextual learning. (Majid, 2014)

This situation creates an urgent need for deeper and contextual research on the difficulties of MI teachers in implementing K-13. Qualitative research is the right approach because it allows researchers to capture the realities

experienced by teachers directly, including emotional, strategic, and social dynamics that cannot be revealed through surveys alone.

Previous research by Fitri (2019), entitled *Analysis of Teachers' Difficulties in Curriculum Implementation 2013 at MI NW Tebaban*, found that most teachers had difficulty in understanding the concept of K-13 in its entirety, especially in the aspects of authentic assessment and integration of learning themes. However, the study has not explored in depth aspects of teachers' adaptation strategies to local conditions and limited facilities, so there is room to expand understanding in terms of teachers' direct experience in various madrasah contexts.

Therefore, this study aims to reveal in depth the various difficulties experienced by MI teachers in implementing K-13, both in terms of curriculum understanding, learning strategies, technical and socio-cultural constraints. Through a descriptive qualitative approach, this study will record teachers' real experiences in facing curriculum challenges, as well as the efforts they make in adapting learning to the demands of K-13 (Widodo, 2015).

This research is important because it will provide a contextual and realistic picture of the condition of MI teachers in curriculum implementation. The findings in this study are expected to be considered in designing teacher training policies, curriculum assistance, and simplifying the burden of educational administration in madrasahs.

Academically, this research will enrich the treasure of contextual-based curriculum studies in basic Islamic educational institutions. In addition, the results of the research are expected to be useful for policy makers, educators, and teacher training institutions, in order to be able to develop a more adaptive and responsive approach to the field reality faced by Madrasah Ibtidaiyah teachers.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive type. (Putra, 2013) The goal is to deeply understand the difficulties of teachers in implementing the 2013 Curriculum at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. The research subjects were selected purposively, namely MI teachers who have used K-13 for at least two years. Data collection techniques include in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. The data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which consisted of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. (Miles, 1994) To ensure the validity of the data, triangulation of sources and techniques is used, as well as confirmation of findings to informants (member check). This approach is expected to be able to portray the reality and experience of teachers in their entirety in facing the challenges of curriculum implementation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to describe in depth the difficulties faced by Madrasah Ibtidaiyah teachers in implementing the 2013 Curriculum (K-13). Based on the results of interviews, observations, and documentation, several main themes were found that describe the challenges in the field. The following discussion is

prepared based on four main focuses, namely understanding the curriculum, learning planning, learning implementation, and learning outcome assessment. In addition, external supporting and inhibiting factors were also found that affected the quality of implementation.

Incompleteness of Teachers' Conceptual Understanding of the 2013 Curriculum

One of the main findings in this study is the low understanding of some teachers of the philosophy and basic concepts of the 2013 Curriculum. Many teachers still understand K-13 as simply a change in the format of learning administration, rather than as a comprehensive pedagogical approach. Scientific approaches, which involve the process of observing, questioning, trying, reasoning, and communicating, are considered difficult to implement because not all teachers understand these steps in a complete and functional way. As one of the informants put it:

"We have participated in K-13 training, but it feels only limited to theory. The training time is very short, not enough to understand it thoroughly, let alone to put it into practice right away." (MI Teacher A)

These findings are in line with the results of the study Fitri (2019), which states that Madrasah Ibtidaiyah teachers in various regions are still confused in internalizing scientific approaches and competency-based learning in teaching and learning activities. This shows that the training organized by the government still does not touch the practical needs of teachers. (Subkhan, 2016)

Administrative Burden in Learning Planning

Another dominant difficulty is in learning planning, especially in the preparation of Learning Implementation Plans (RPP). Even though the government has simplified the format of the lesson plan into one sheet, many teachers at MI still feel burdened because they have to adjust to various demands of core competencies, basic competencies, learning objectives, scientific activities, to assessment of attitudes, knowledge, and skills in one document.

The teachers who became informants mentioned that due to limited time and energy, they often took lesson plans from other teachers' colleagues or from the internet without contextually adapting to the classroom conditions and student characteristics. This has an impact on the low relevance between the lesson plan and real practice in the classroom. (Sari and Haryanto, 2020)

Practical Challenges in the Implementation of Thematic and Scientific Learning

In the implementation of learning, teachers face quite complex challenges, especially in applying integrative thematic learning and scientific approaches consistently. Thematic learning requires teachers to be able to integrate several subjects in one big theme. However, teachers often feel insecure due to limited competence and references.

In addition, the scientific approach is considered incompatible with the characteristics of most MI students who are still at the stage of concrete thinking. Some teachers admit that students tend to be passive and not used to expressing questions or opinions. Questioning and communicating activities often do not go

as well as they should ideally because students are less trained.

This is also exacerbated by the lack of supporting facilities and infrastructure, such as props, interactive media, and access to technology. This limitation is very felt in madrasahs that are located in suburban areas or have not received adequate infrastructure support. (Sani, 2014)

Difficulties in Authentic and Comprehensive Assessments

The 2013 curriculum emphasizes the importance of authentic assessments that include three aspects: attitudes, knowledge, and skills (Kunandar, 2013). However, based on the findings of the study, many teachers have difficulty in designing and implementing valid and reliable assessment instruments, especially for aspects of attitudes and skills.

Many teachers still use the written test as the only evaluation tool because it is considered the most practical (Priyanto, 2020). Project assessments, behavioral observations, and portfolios have not been implemented optimally. In addition, managing assessment results for each student requires a lot of time and effort, while teachers have to teach several classes at once. One of the informants said:

"If we want to assess it completely, let's be honest, we can't. Especially if there are many students. So, yes, the assessment is still the main one for daily test scores and exams."
(MI B Teacher)

Limitations of Professional Support and Ongoing Training

In addition to internal factors, this study also found that support from external parties such as madrasah heads, supervisors, and local governments has not been optimal. Many teachers admitted that they did not receive regular applicable training. If there is, the training is formal and there is no ongoing assistance afterwards. In this case, the role of the principal in providing continuous support and training for teachers in order to create a good teaching and learning process (Lestari, 2019)

Teachers feel the need for a Professional Learning Community that allows them to share experiences, best practices, and practical solutions in overcoming the difficulties of K-13 implementation. However, this collaborative culture has not been firmly formed in most madrasah environments. (Sulaiman, 2019)

The Gap Between Curriculum Policy and Field Reality

The above findings reflect the gap between the idealism of the national curriculum policy and the reality of implementation at the madrasah level. The 2013 curriculum, although designed with the spirit of active and character-based learning, has not been fully implemented by teachers due to various limitations. This condition needs to be a serious concern for the government and policy makers so that the curriculum design in the future is more realistic and based on field conditions.

As affirmed by Hamalik (2013), the success of curriculum implementation depends not only on the quality of curriculum documents, but also on the readiness of resources, teacher training, and support for the education system as a whole.

Implications of Research Findings on Policy Development

Based on these results and discussions, it can be concluded that the

challenges of implementing K-13 at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah are multidimensional. Therefore, the solutions offered must also touch on various aspects, ranging from improving teacher competence through practical training, simplifying learning administration, providing learning media, to strengthening the culture of collaboration between teachers. (Bafadal, 2016)

Furthermore, the results of this study show the importance of a participatory approach in curriculum development, where teachers are not only used as policy implementation objects, but also as strategic partners in the evaluation and decision-making process.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research that has been carried out, it can be concluded that the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah still faces various difficulties, both in terms of conceptual understanding of teachers, learning planning, implementation of the teaching and learning process, to the aspect of assessment. MI teachers generally still experience obstacles in understanding and applying scientific approaches, compiling lesson plans that are in accordance with student characteristics, and conducting authentic assessments thoroughly. These difficulties are exacerbated by high administrative burdens, limited facilities and infrastructure, and a lack of ongoing training and mentoring.

In addition, the findings also show that there is a gap between the idealism of curriculum policy and the reality on the ground. Teachers are often policy implementers who are less involved in the curriculum formulation and evaluation process. As a result, the 2013 Curriculum, which was supposed to be a tool for educational transformation, has become a technical burden that makes it difficult for teachers to carry out their duties effectively.

For this reason, strategic efforts are needed from various parties, especially the government and educational institutions, in providing applicable training, simplifying learning administration, and creating a collaborative space between teachers so that the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum at MI runs more optimally. This research makes an important contribution in describing real conditions in the field as well as being an input for educational policy making based on the needs of teachers and students. In the future, strengthening teacher capacity and aligning the curriculum with the context of madrasahs will be the key to the successful transformation of basic education based on Islamic values and the character of the nation.

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