



The Effectiveness of Independent Curriculum on Learning Interest and Character Development of Students with Special Needs: CIPPO Analysis

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Abstract :

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the Independent Curriculum in fostering learning interest and character development among students with special needs at SLB A-Aisyiyah Ponorogo. Employing the CIPPO evaluation model (Context, Input, Process, Product, Outcome), the research involved 14 respondents, including vice principals and teachers, with data collected through Likert-scale questionnaires. The results indicated high performance across all CIPPO dimensions: context (84.57%), input (83.33%), process (85.43%), product (85.00%), and outcome (82.24%), all categorized as very good. These findings demonstrate that the Independent Curriculum effectively enhances students' learning motivation, academic achievement, self-confidence, independence, and social adaptation. The CIPPO-based evaluation provided a comprehensive perspective on the curriculum's strengths and areas for improvement, highlighting practical implications for teachers, school leaders, and policymakers seeking to optimize inclusive education strategies. This study contributes to academic literature by offering evidence-based insights into inclusive curriculum implementation and supporting sustainable practices that promote the holistic development of students with special needs, reinforcing the importance of tailored educational approaches in inclusive settings.

INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education has become a critical component of national education policies worldwide, aimed at guaranteeing equitable learning opportunities for all students, regardless of ability, background, or social status (Juliandari et al., 2024; Pradhan & Naik, 2024). The societal relevance of this policy lies in its alignment with principles of social justice and human rights, emphasizing that every child, including students with special needs (SEN), has the right to develop optimally according to their potential (Bessarab et al., 2025; Hulpia & Valcke, 2004). Failure to implement inclusive education effectively can lead to

educational marginalization, social inequality, and unfulfilled potential among vulnerable student populations. Evidence suggests that countries investing in inclusive practices experience higher levels of social cohesion, academic achievement, and long-term societal benefits, including workforce readiness and civic engagement. Therefore, examining the effectiveness of inclusive programs is essential not only for individual development but also for societal well-being, demonstrating why evaluating innovative curricular approaches, such as the Independent Curriculum, is crucial for ensuring equitable educational outcomes and supporting broader human capital development in Indonesia.

This study draws upon multiple theoretical foundations to analyze the impact of the Independent Curriculum on SEN students. Self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) explains that learning motivation increases when students experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which the Independent Curriculum emphasizes through flexible and project-based learning (Ali et al., 2006; Bailey et al., 2015). Character development is conceptualized using Berkowitz and Grych's (2000) moral education framework, emphasizing the cultivation of virtues, social responsibility, and self-regulation through structured yet adaptive learning experiences. Additionally, the Profil Pelajar Pancasila framework provides normative guidelines for Indonesian education, defining essential competencies and character traits expected from students (Fitri et al., 2024; Lubaba & Alfiansyah, 2022). Integrating these theoretical perspectives allows for a comprehensive analysis of both affective and cognitive dimensions of learning. The CIPPO evaluation model (Context, Input, Process, Product, Outcome) complements this framework by operationalizing assessment dimensions, facilitating systematic measurement of curriculum effectiveness, instructional quality, resource adequacy, and the impact on student learning motivation and character development (Imam et al., 2020; Moreira et al., 2015).

Despite the clear policy emphasis on inclusive education, practical implementation remains challenging in Indonesian schools, particularly for SEN students (Nowak et al., 2024; Sari et al., 2022). Schools face structural constraints, such as shortages of specialized teachers, limited adaptive learning materials, and insufficient teacher training on differentiated instruction. As a result, a gap emerges between the intended curriculum objectives and actual classroom practices, reducing the potential for SEN students to achieve both academic and socio-emotional development. Furthermore, traditional teaching approaches often fail to engage SEN students effectively, decreasing motivation, self-confidence, and social adaptation. These systemic problems highlight the urgency of evaluating innovative curricular approaches capable of addressing diverse learning needs. The Independent Curriculum, with its flexible, student-centered design, aims to overcome these barriers, yet its empirical effectiveness remains underexplored. Addressing these challenges is crucial for ensuring equitable educational opportunities, supporting human rights in education, and fostering broader social inclusion outcomes, reinforcing the societal necessity of this research.

Previous studies on the Independent Curriculum have highlighted its

potential to improve student engagement, autonomy, and academic outcomes through differentiated and project-based learning (Ali et al., 2006; Bailey et al., 2015; Rahmi et al., 2024). Research also emphasizes its role in promoting character development, including self-confidence, independence, and social responsibility (Berkowitz & Grych, 2000). For SEN students, early investigations indicate that adaptive curriculum elements can facilitate meaningful participation, increased motivation, and better social integration (Citrawati, 2024a; Rybnicek et al., 2019). These findings provide a preliminary theoretical and empirical basis suggesting that curriculum flexibility and learner-centered strategies are critical to inclusive education success.

However, significant research gaps remain. Existing studies largely focus on general student populations or theoretical frameworks without rigorous evaluation of SEN-specific outcomes (Nowak et al., 2024; Tedesco, 2013). Evidence regarding the impact on both learning motivation and character development is fragmented, with few studies employing comprehensive evaluation frameworks like CIPPO to analyze multi-dimensional effectiveness (Hardy & Woodcock, 2015). This gap underscores the need for systematic empirical research, positioning this study to provide actionable insights, fill a critical knowledge void, and inform both practice and policy in inclusive education, thereby contributing to advancing educational equity and evidence-based curriculum innovation.

The novelty of this study lies in its application of the CIPPO evaluation model to assess the Independent Curriculum specifically within inclusive education for SEN students. While prior research has highlighted conceptual benefits and pilot interventions, few studies provide a structured, multi-dimensional assessment that captures context, input, process, product, and outcome simultaneously (Imam et al., 2020; Moreira et al., 2015). By integrating motivational, cognitive, and character development metrics, this study addresses the complexity of inclusive education implementation, offering evidence-based insights into curriculum effectiveness. This approach is state-of-the-art because it not only evaluates educational outcomes but also identifies practical barriers, resource gaps, and teacher readiness, providing actionable recommendations. The results are expected to inform both classroom practice and national educational policy, contributing to sustainable and equitable learning environments for SEN students, and establishing a methodological benchmark for future research in curriculum evaluation within inclusive education contexts.

Based on the identified gaps, this study investigates how the Independent Curriculum affects learning motivation and character development among SEN students, operationalized through CIPPO evaluation dimensions. The central hypothesis is that a well-implemented Independent Curriculum significantly enhances motivation, academic achievement, self-confidence, independence, and social adaptation. Preliminary theoretical reasoning suggests that curriculum flexibility, learner-centered strategies, and project-based approaches directly support these outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Berkowitz & Grych, 2000; Ali et al., 2006). Empirically, by collecting data from teachers and vice principals using structured instruments, the study can validate or challenge these assumptions

while providing practical guidance for schools. The findings will offer both theoretical contributions to inclusive education literature and actionable recommendations for policy and practice, addressing urgent societal and educational challenges, closing existing research gaps, and supporting the effective implementation of equitable, sustainable, and student-centered curricula in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach with an evaluative design to assess the effectiveness of the Independent Curriculum in enhancing learning interest and character development among students with special needs. The quantitative approach was selected because it allows for objective measurement of teachers' and vice principals' perceptions regarding curriculum implementation, producing data that can be analyzed statistically to determine performance across multiple dimensions (Burke & Hennessy, 2021a; Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 1985). The evaluative design was chosen because the focus extends beyond academic outcomes to include long-term effects, such as motivation, independence, and social adaptation. The CIPPO model (Context, Input, Process, Product, Outcome) was adopted as the analytical framework to provide a comprehensive, multi-dimensional assessment of curriculum effectiveness (Imam et al., 2020; Moreira et al., 2015).

The study was conducted at SLB A-Aisyiyah Ponorogo, a special school that has fully implemented the Independent Curriculum (Rasid et al., 2024; Widayanto et al., 2021). This location was selected because the school possesses sufficient experience in curriculum implementation and adequate resources to support inclusive education. Additionally, SLB A-Aisyiyah Ponorogo represents inclusive educational practices in Indonesia, making the findings relevant and generalizable to similar contexts. The location also offers accessibility to qualified respondents, including teachers and vice principals, who can provide professional insights into curriculum implementation.

Data were collected using a four-point Likert-scale questionnaire administered online via Google Forms. The questionnaire was designed to evaluate the five CIPPO dimensions: context, input, process, product, and outcome. Respondents consisted of 14 professionals, including teachers and vice principals, who provided their perspectives on the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in an inclusive learning context (Anne & Rashid, 2024; Page et al., 2024). The instrument measured aspects such as student learning motivation, academic achievement, engagement in learning activities, independence, and social adaptation, enabling a comprehensive assessment of the curriculum's contributions to students with special needs (Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Rose & Meyer, 2006).

The collected data were analyzed quantitatively by calculating the mean and standard deviation for each CIPPO indicator. Implementation levels were classified into five categories: very good, good, fair, poor, and very poor, based on percentage scores (Widayanto et al., 2021). This analysis allowed for systematic evaluation of curriculum effectiveness, including goal alignment,

adequacy of resources, quality of instructional delivery, student engagement, and long-term impacts on character development (Hattie & Zierer, 2024; Schutz & Carter, 2022). The approach provides an objective overview of both strengths and challenges in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum.

Data validity and reliability were ensured through questionnaire reliability testing and triangulation of respondents. Reliability testing confirmed the consistency of respondents' scores, while validity testing ensured that the questionnaire items aligned with the study's objectives and CIPPO indicators (Hardy & Woodcock, 2015; Li, 2021). Triangulation involved incorporating multiple professional perspectives, including teachers and vice principals, to reduce subjective bias and ensure that the quantitative findings accurately reflect the effectiveness of the Independent Curriculum. These measures provide a solid foundation for drawing conclusions regarding curriculum impact in inclusive education settings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Context

The context aspect in evaluating the Independent Curriculum covers relevance, objectives, and institutional support. The data indicate that the assessment scores range from 80% to 90%, with an overall average of 85%, categorized as very good. The relevance of the curriculum scored 85%, confirming its alignment with the learning needs of students with special needs. The objectives reached the highest score of 90%, reflecting that the curriculum goals are clear, well-directed, and consistent with the school's vision. Institutional support ranged from 80% to 84%, categorized as good to very good, though further reinforcement is still needed in providing facilities and workplace practice opportunities. Overall, the context aspect of the Independent Curriculum is classified as very good, since it demonstrates strong relevance, well-defined objectives, and significant support from the school.

Input Evaluation

The input aspect of the Independent Curriculum, which includes teachers, facilities, learning materials, obtained an average score of 84.29%, categorized as very good. The teacher component received the highest score of 87.14%, indicating that both the vice principal and teachers consider the educators' competence in mastering content and managing instruction to be very strong. This highlights that teacher quality is a key factor in the successful implementation of the curriculum. Meanwhile, facilities, learning materials, and time allocation received average scores of around 81.43%, which fall into the good category. School facilities are considered adequate, although further improvement is still needed to enhance completeness and accessibility. Learning materials are aligned with the curriculum but require more innovation to be fully contextualized for students with special needs. The allocated learning time is sufficient but would benefit from greater flexibility to match the learning pace of the students. Overall, the input aspect effectively supports the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, with some components still requiring reinforcement.

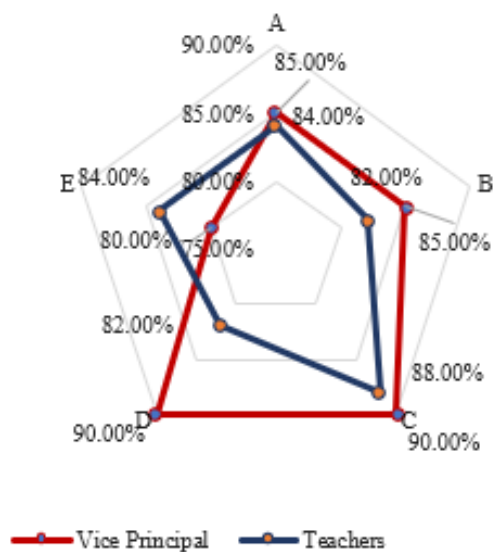


Figure 1. Radar Chart in Context Evaluation

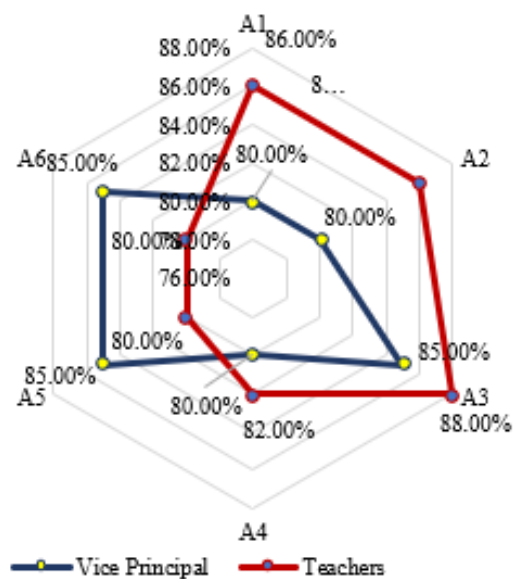


Figure 2. Radar Chart in Input Evaluation

Process Evaluation

The process aspect in this evaluation research focuses on four components, namely: 1) methods, 2) interaction, 3) involvement, and 4) evaluation. Data were obtained through questionnaires distributed to both instructors and participants. The results indicated that the process aspect was generally in the good to very good categories, with percentages ranging from 80.00% to 92.00% (see Figure 1). Specifically, the assessment showed that (P1) the training methods gained a score of 85.00%, which is categorized as very good. (P2) the interaction aspect ranged between 80.00% and 90.00%, reflecting both good and very good levels. (P3) the involvement of participants obtained scores from 82.00% to 92.00%, consistently classified as very good. (P4, P5, P6, P7, and P8) the evaluation component achieved high scores of up to 92.00%, also falling into the very good category. Overall, the average results reinforced this positive performance. The lowest mean score was 82.86% (equivalent to 4.14), which is still considered good, while the highest mean score reached 89.29% (equivalent to 4.46), included in the very good category. The combined mean score of all process indicators was 86.43% (equivalent to 4.32), showing that the process aspect of the training program was conducted effectively and met the required competency standards.

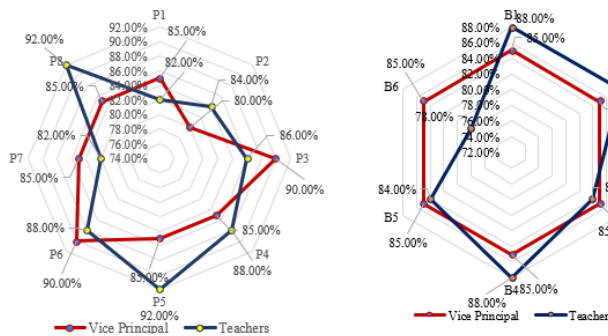


Figure 3. Radar Chart in Process Evaluation

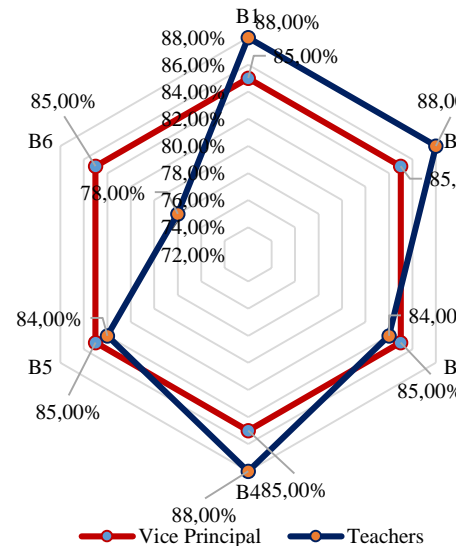


Figure 4. Radar Chart in Product Evaluation

Product Evaluation

The product aspect in this evaluation focuses on four key components, namely: 1) learning interest, 2) academic achievement, 3) self-confidence, and 4) activity. Data were obtained from observations, daily evaluations, job sheets, assignments, and practice results. Overall, the product aspect of the training program was classified into good to very good categories, with scores ranging from 78.00% to 88.00% (see Figure 4). The findings indicated that (B1) learning interest reached 85.00% and was categorized as very good. (B2) academic achievement was also recorded at 85.00%, falling into the very good category. (B3) participants' self-confidence showed results between 84.00% and 88.00%, still within the very good level. Meanwhile, (B4, B5, and B6) participants' activity during training was assessed between 78.00% and 88.00%, ranging from good to very good. In general, the overall mean score of the product aspect was 85.00%, which is included in the very good category. These results demonstrate that the training program effectively enhanced participants' academic performance, encouraged learning interest, built confidence, and supported active involvement throughout the training process.

Outcome Evaluation

The outcome aspect in this evaluation research refers to two main components, namely: 1) independence and 2) social adaptation. Based on the results of data collection through questionnaires and observation, the assessment of the outcome aspect of the training program fell into the good to very good category, with percentages ranging from 82.00% to 90.00% (see Figure 5). In detail, the assessment showed that (1) the independence of participants was consistently rated at 90.00% in several indicators, placing it in the very good category.

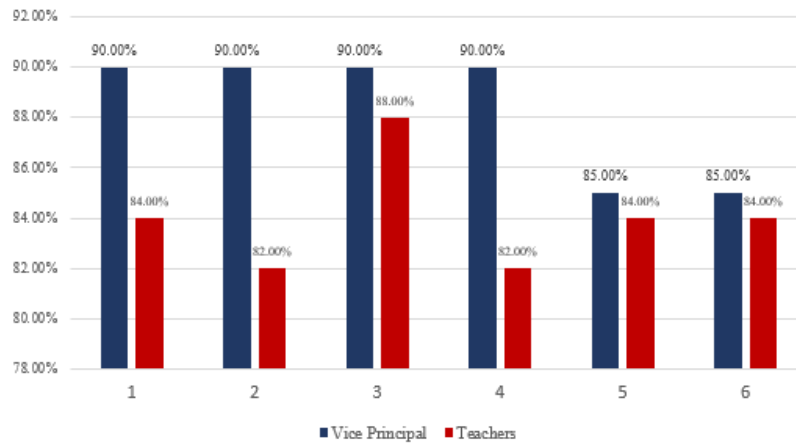


Figure 5. Radar Chart in Outcome Evaluation

Meanwhile, (2) the social adaptation aspect obtained values between 82.00% and 88.00%, which are categorized as good to very good. Overall, the combined average results confirm that the outcome aspect of the training program has been successfully achieved, with participants demonstrating strong independence and good ability to adapt socially after undergoing the training process. This indicates that the program not only improved technical competencies but also positively influenced participants' readiness for the workplace and their integration into the social environment.

Table 1. Evaluation of achievement in overall aspects of research respondents

No	Variable	Evaluation		Overall Evaluation		Decision
		Vice Principals	Teachers	Average	Percentage	
1	Context	86.00%	84.00%	4.229	84.57%	Very Good
2	Input	82.50%	83.67%	4.167	83.33%	Very Good
3	Process	85.63%	86.75%	4.321	85.43%	Very Good
4	Product	85.00%	85.00%	4.250	85.00%	Very Good
5	Outcomes	88.33%	84.00%	4.262	82.40%	Very Good

The overall evaluation of the training program shows that all aspects context, input, process, product, and outcomes achieved results in the good to excellent category. The context aspect gained an average of 84.57% (4.229), while the input aspect reached 83.33% (4.167), both categorized as excellent. These results indicate that the initial planning, availability of resources, and the overall readiness of the program were well-prepared and effectively implemented

according to standards. Meanwhile, the process aspect scored 85.43% (4.321), reflecting that training methods, interaction, involvement, and evaluation were carried out successfully. The product aspect also achieved a high score of 85.00% (4.250), demonstrating improvements in participants' learning interest, academic achievement, confidence, and activity. Finally, the outcome aspect reached 82.24% (4.262), showing that the training program effectively fostered participants' independence and social adaptation. These findings confirm that the training program overall produced positive impacts and met its objectives.

Discussion

The results of this study confirm that the Independent Curriculum plays a significant role in enhancing both learning interest and character development among students with special needs at SLB A-Aisyiyah Ponorogo. Within the CIPPO framework, the context and input dimensions showed that the program aligns well with students' needs and is supported by adequate resources, including teacher competence and adaptive teaching materials. This finding aligns with Burke and Hennessy (2021b), who emphasized that curriculum relevance and professional teacher readiness are critical to the success of inclusive education initiatives. Similarly, Moon (2023) and Slusareva et al. (2019) demonstrated that teacher preparedness and alignment of curriculum objectives with learners' characteristics positively influence the quality of learning outcomes, underscoring the importance of well-prepared instructional staff and contextually relevant curricula for special needs learners.

Regarding the process and product dimensions, the study highlights the effectiveness of adaptive teaching strategies, active student involvement, and formative evaluations in enhancing motivation and academic performance (Apriliani et al., 2023; Widyastuti et al., 2023). These results are consistent with Adhikari (2025) and Waly et al. (2025), who reported that interactive learning approaches under the Independent Curriculum framework improve both motivation and engagement for diverse learners. Moreover, Alexander et al. (2004) and Salomoni et al. (2007) noted that flexible pedagogical practices enhance not only academic achievement but also non-academic competencies such as cooperation and self-confidence. Collectively, these findings demonstrate that the Independent Curriculum provides a holistic approach that accommodates the unique learning profiles of students with special needs more effectively than previous curricula.

From the outcome perspective, the study found that the Independent Curriculum supports the development of independence and social adaptation, which are essential for the long-term integration of students into broader society (M. N. Rahmawati et al., 2024; Rasid, 2025). This complements prior research by I. Rahmawati and Basith (2023) and Selasi and Budiyanto (2025), emphasizing that integrating character education within the curriculum significantly contributes to life skills and social competence. The positive outcomes reinforce the idea that curricula targeting both academic and personal development are crucial for preparing SEN students to navigate social and educational

environments successfully.

Despite these positive impacts, the study also identifies areas requiring further attention. Strengthening collaboration between schools and parents, improving adaptive learning facilities, and providing continuous professional development for teachers are necessary to optimize curriculum effectiveness. By applying a comprehensive CIPPO-based evaluation, this research not only confirms the benefits of the Independent Curriculum but also highlights gaps that require policy intervention and practical improvements. These findings extend prior studies by offering a systematic, multi-dimensional assessment, providing actionable insights to enhance inclusive education strategies and ensuring sustainable, holistic student development.

CONCLUSION

The primary finding of this study is that the Independent Curriculum at SLB A-Aisyiyah Ponorogo effectively enhances both learning interest and character development among students with special needs, as evidenced by very good ratings across all CIPPO dimensions. Key lessons from the research indicate that aligning curriculum goals with student needs, ensuring teacher readiness, and employing adaptive instructional strategies are critical for fostering motivation, academic achievement, self-confidence, independence, and social adaptation. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of active student engagement and interactive learning processes in achieving holistic outcomes. These insights reinforce the value of designing inclusive educational programs that balance academic objectives with personal and social development.

From an academic perspective, this study contributes to the literature on inclusive education by providing a systematic, multi-dimensional evaluation of curriculum effectiveness using the CIPPO framework, offering both theoretical and practical insights. Nevertheless, the research has limitations, including a relatively small sample size restricted to one school and reliance on self-reported data from teachers and vice principals. Future studies should expand the sample to multiple schools, incorporate direct observations of classroom practices, and explore longitudinal outcomes to validate and extend these findings. Such research would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the long-term impact of the Independent Curriculum on diverse populations of students with special needs.

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