

INDONESIAN LANGUAGE TEACHERS' OBSESSION IN FACING CURRICULUM CHANGES

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to describe the forms of internal conflict among Indonesian language teachers in facing curriculum changes and solutions for overcoming this internal conflict. The research data sources are informants in the form of words and actions, written sources, and photographs. Data were collected through interviews, observation, and documentation. Data were analyzed using qualitative analysis. The results of the study indicate that the forms of internal conflict among Indonesian language teachers in facing curriculum changes, in this case the independent curriculum, are anxiety, obsession, guilt, inadequacy, and fear. The form of internal conflict among Indonesian language teachers in facing curriculum changes is mostly in the form of obsession. This internal conflict triggers teachers to actively read guides, attend seminars, and analyze new teaching modules independently. In a specific context, this internal conflict in the form of obsession can shift into a positive form of internal conflict if interpreted as professional obsession or professional commitment. Solutions to overcome internal conflict among Indonesian language teachers in facing curriculum changes include developing professional capacity, aligning basic competencies, and strengthening support and collaboration. Research suggestions for Indonesian language teachers are expected to be proactive in studying learning approaches that are appropriate to the characteristics of today's students through official platforms and actively participating in Teacher Working Groups (KKG) and Subject Teacher Deliberations (MGMP) to solve common difficulties collaboratively.

Keywords: obsession; Indonesian language teacher; curriculum;.

1 INTRODUCTION

Indonesia experiences transformation every time there's a change in leadership in education, often as a measure of curriculum change. This is a phenomenon typically associated with shifts in educational policy and often unstable politics. Over time, the curriculum is constantly updated and revised from its previous version. These changes are not solely political in nature but can also be driven by necessity, where the previous curriculum is deemed no longer appropriate to the current situation.

The curriculum is a guide for implementing learning, encompassing plans and regulations related to objectives, materials, and teaching materials. A written plan containing the ideas and thoughts of curriculum developers will then become a curriculum document, forming a curriculum system and teaching methods, and serving as a guide for teachers in the teaching and learning process (Fauzan & Arifin, 2022). According to Ralph Tyler, there are four components to the curriculum: objectives, content, methods, and evaluation (Listiana, 2016). This relatively short period of curriculum change not only requires teachers to revise their curriculum implementation, teaching techniques, assessment methods, and interactions with students, but also requires continuous professional development, which is often insufficient to adequately support this transition.

Teachers face significant challenges in adapting to the rapid and continuous development of the curriculum. Curriculum changes in Indonesia occur rapidly, reflecting the global trend of educational reform, but are implemented at the local level with high frequency. Numerous challenges have emerged in the Indonesian education sector, and solutions remain elusive. Many teachers experience internal conflict due to the frequent government-imposed curriculum changes, ranging from teaching methods and learning styles to additional tasks that can make it difficult for them to perform their duties effectively.

Teachers are a crucial asset in supporting students in ensuring the success and effectiveness of learning. However, ongoing challenges resulting from policy changes can create obstacles (Putra, Fauzi, & Rosyadah, 2025). Challenges related to the curriculum, which is constantly changing, sometimes within a relatively short period of time, can create stress and a heavy adaptation burden for

teachers as a result of repeated reforms. The curriculum essentially serves as a guideline for implementing the learning process. What is contained within the curriculum is a plan for education (Alhamuddin, 2019). Curriculum changes, such as the transition from KTSP to K13, then to Kumer, require continuous adaptation from teachers, which can create new problems, uncertainty, and even conflict. This conflict arises when there are inconsistencies in activities.

Internal conflict or inner conflict is a problem faced by an individual within themselves. This inner conflict occurs in feelings and thoughts, in a person's soul (Nurgiyantoro, 2015). Inner conflict that occurs within a person can also be caused by an inability to fulfill their needs. According to Abraham Maslow, human behavior is influenced by personal drives to achieve goals to increase happiness and satisfaction in life. These needs include: basic needs (physiology), a sense of security, love or affection, appreciation, and to realize one's potential (Dewi & Meidariani, 2024). Meanwhile, regarding the forms of inner conflict that are relevant in studying the dynamics of inner conflict, Muis put forward, including: anxiety, obsession, frustration, guilt, inadequacy, fear, and hurt (Barchiya, Suciarti, dan Fatimah, 2024:14–15).

The Curriculum 2013 (K13) and the Independent Curriculum (Kumer) represent changes involving interpretation, reaction, and adjustment to significant changes in teaching methods. In the implementation of the Curriculum 2013 and the Independent Curriculum (Kumer), many Indonesian language teachers are facing a paradigm shift, moving from conventional teaching methods to more relevant, interactive approaches focused on improving life skills. While some teachers may view these changes as an opportunity to improve teaching quality and stimulate student creativity, most teachers face difficulties adapting to new methods and evaluating their impact on student learning outcomes. Nevertheless, the majority of teachers feel conflicted as they must reconcile their understanding of Indonesian literature and culture with the expectations of the new curriculum, which prioritizes aspects of everyday life. The role of literacy is increasingly necessary in the implementation of the new curriculum, requiring Indonesian language teachers to improve their reading, writing, and thinking skills, adding to the emotional tension they experience.

The results of the initial research conducted by the author on January 5, 2025, obtained from interviews with Indonesian language teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Adiwarna, SMP Negeri 2 Pangkah, and SMP Negeri 1 Gedung Banteng, Tegal Regency, revealed that many teachers, including Indonesian language teachers, experienced obstacles such as a lack of adequate socialization, a lack of preparation time, and a lack of in-depth understanding of the new curriculum concept. This led to doubts about their ability to implement the curriculum effectively. There are demands for teachers to be more competent and adaptive, but in the field, they face limited resources, facilities, and infrastructure that do not support this. This gap between the ideal expectations of the curriculum and practical reality can trigger internal conflict. This research will only focus on the internal conflict of Indonesian language teachers in the form of obsession.

Research results (Putra et al., 2025), which stated that although some teachers were able to adapt, many teachers faced challenges and felt difficulties due to structured guidelines and insufficient time to understand and efficiently implement curriculum changes. Research results (Susmita, Agustina, & Juita, 2024), showed that teachers had different views regarding curriculum changes, some of them felt ready and welcomed the changes, while others faced difficulties. The main problems faced were a lack of understanding, limited resources, high workload, and an inability to adapt to change.

Indonesian language teachers play a crucial role as educators, facilitators, motivators, and evaluators tasked with fostering students' language skills, literacy, and character. Their main tasks include compiling learning materials, guiding the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), and evaluating learning outcomes. Therefore, this research is important because it focuses on the human dimension (psychology of Indonesian language teachers) in facing changes in educational policy, not only on the technical aspects of curriculum implementation. The goal is to understand more deeply how this inner conflict affects the performance and well-being of Indonesian language teachers, so that more effective support strategies can be formulated in the future. Therefore, the author is interested in examining the conditions of Indonesian language teachers regarding curriculum changes in the form of a thesis entitled "The Obsession of Indonesian Language Teachers in Facing Curriculum Changes."

2 METHODOLOGY

This research approach uses qualitative research, namely research based on an inductive mindset, with a focus on objective observation through direct involvement in the social phenomena being

studied (Hadi, Asrori, & Rusman, 2021). Specifically, this research is more directed at applying descriptive methods, namely research that defines or describes events that can be captured by the researcher, by presenting actual data. Understanding these events can be based on the researcher's skill and dedication in investigating an event to obtain factual information (Abdussamad, 2021).

The research procedures included: pre-research, research work, and data analysis. The research data sources included primary and secondary data, consisting of words and actions, written sources, and photographs. The research data collection techniques included interviews, observation, documentation, and triangulation. Data analysis employed qualitative analysis using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, encompassing the following activities: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Mahardhani, 2022).

3 RESULTS

Obsession is a form of inner conflict or internal conflict in which a person is constantly haunted by certain thoughts, ideas, or feelings that cannot be separated from his head. This study examines the inner conflict of Indonesian language teachers in facing curriculum changes, especially in the form of obsession. The research data comes from documentation and interviews with informants, namely Indonesian language teachers from SMP Negeri 1 Adiwerna on June 9, 2026, SMP Negeri 2 Pangkah on June 11, 2026, and SMP Negeri 1 Gedung Banteng, Tegal Regency on June 12, 2026. The informants in this study amounted to 10 respondents, consisting of 4 Indonesian language teachers from SMP Negeri 1 Adiwerna, 3 Indonesian language teachers from SMP Negeri 2 Pangkah, and 3 Indonesian language teachers from SMP Negeri 1 Kedungbanteng.

This data is taken from excerpts from interviews between Indonesian language teachers and researchers, as well as documentation from observations and school documents related to the Indonesian language teachers' internal conflicts in the face of curriculum changes. The interviews revealed 31 instances of internal conflict among Indonesian language teachers in the face of curriculum changes. The following is a summary of the internal conflict data from the interviews.

Table 1. Recapitulation of Inner Conflict Data

No	Form inner conflict	Amount	Percentage	No. Data
1	Anxiety	10	32,26%	01, 06, 07, 09, 11, 17, 22, 26, 27, 28
2	Obsession	11	35,48%	02, 05, 08, 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 21, 24, 25
3	Guilt	6	19,35%	04, 10, 20, 29, 30, 31
4	Inadequacy	2	6,45%	03, 16
5	Fear	2	6,45%	12, 23

Based on the data in table 1 above, the number of data on inner conflict is 31 data. Inner conflict of Indonesian language teachers in facing curriculum changes in the interviews found four forms of inner conflict, namely anxiety as many as 10 data (32.26%), obsession as many as 11 data (35.48%), guilt as many as 6 data (19.35%), inability as many as 2 data (6.45%), and fear as many as 2 data (6.45%). So the form of inner conflict of Indonesian language teachers in facing curriculum changes is mostly in the form of obsession. The following are the results of the data analysis of the form of inner conflict of Indonesian language teachers in facing curriculum changes.

3.1 Indonesian Language Teachers' Obsession in Facing Curriculum Changes

Obsession is a symptom experienced by someone who is constantly experiencing feelings or haunted by thoughts that continually dominate their consciousness. The research found 11 data points, or 35.48%, of obsessive internal conflicts. The following is an analysis of the data on Indonesian language teachers' obsessions in facing curriculum changes.

Data (1)

"Of course, I'm ready. Teachers must always be ready for any curriculum changes. When the independence curriculum demands digitalization, teachers must also be ready to learn about various digital platforms." (02/KB/IPM/9/6/26)

The context of data (1) relates to the implementation of learning methods in the new curriculum. Curriculum changes will also alter learning methods. The independence curriculum demands digitalization, making teachers obsessed with learning about various digital platforms. This conflict is a type of approach-approach conflict. Curriculum changes demand digitalization, which also requires

teachers to learn about various digital platforms and be ready to implement new curriculum learning methods. This is reinforced by documentation of teachers attending seminars.



Figure 1. Teachers Attending Seminars and Training

Figure 1 above shows teachers obsessed with learning about various digital platforms and ready to implement the new curriculum learning methods by attending seminars and training. This condition is also evident in data 2, as follows:

Data (2)

"Initially, I was confused, but after slowly participating in training and seminars, I gained some understanding." (05/KB/ARA/9/6/26)

The context of data (2) relates to the changes in learning objectives in the independent curriculum. ARA initially felt anxious and confused when first implementing the learning objectives in the new curriculum because she didn't understand the terminology of the new learning methods. However, ARA became obsessed and attempted to attend training and seminars to gain understanding. This conflict is a type of approach-approach conflict, where the goal of the independent curriculum is to create flexible, meaningful, and student-centered education. This led teachers to learn more by attending training and seminars to understand the learning objectives in the new curriculum.

Data (3)

"Ready or not, we must be ready, because it's about the learning strategy. The methods, strategies, and that also meet the needs of students, so that the goals previously mentioned can be achieved. Yes, the methods and strategies must change and adapt." (08/KB/ARA/9/6/26)

The context in data (3) relates to the implementation of the learning methods required by the new curriculum. The learning methods in the independent curriculum are student-centered and focus on developing soft skills and character. This places a heavy burden on teachers, requiring them to continuously learn and use various learning methods to adapt to the students' conditions. This conflict is a type of approach-distance conflict. ARA dislikes the changing learning methods, as it requires them to learn various methods and use various learning methods to suit the students' conditions, which she considers a burden.

Data (4)

"I feel burdened, because of that. What I learned in college is very different from what I'm facing now." (13/KB/RS/9/6/26)

The context in data (4) relates to adapting teaching materials to the learning methods required by the new curriculum. Because the learning methods required by the Merdeka curriculum differ from those previously taught in college, RS feels burdened and has to relearn the methods required by the Merdeka curriculum. This conflict is a type of approach-distance conflict. RS dislikes the changes in learning methods required by the new curriculum, and RS also feels burdened by having to relearn learning methods not yet taught in college. However, RS continues to strive and is obsessed with learning new things.



Figure 2. Teachers Studying Teaching Material

The learning methods required by the Merdeka Curriculum differ from previous teaching methods. Many teachers feel burdened and have to relearn the teaching methods required by the Merdeka Curriculum. Figure 2 shows teachers studying teaching methods and subject matter, obsessed with adapting teaching materials to the appropriate teaching methods to meet the demands of the new curriculum.

Data (5)

"I'm ready, God willing, I'm ready. If the human resources are sufficient, it will be easier for me to face it." (14/KB/RS/9/6/26)

The context of data (5) concerns the implementation of the learning methods required by the new curriculum. Although RS stated he was ready, he felt a nagging feeling of relearn the learning methods required by the Merdeka Curriculum. This conflict is a type of close-approach conflict. RS feels his human resources are sufficient to be a teacher, and he will also strive to learn the learning methods required by the Merdeka Curriculum to make them easier to implement.

Data (6)

"Yes, actually, if we were to change to a new curriculum, it would be difficult, Miss. It was difficult at first, but over time, we were able to adapt to the old and new learning styles, including the curriculum language. In the past, it was better, the children could follow the teacher, whatever the teacher wanted." (15/KB/S/9/6/26)

The context of data (6) relates to the changes in learning objectives expected in the new curriculum. S experienced difficulties at the beginning of the new curriculum change, but over time, through his obsession, S was able to adapt to the new learning. This conflict is a type of distancing conflict. S found the changes in learning objectives expected in the new curriculum difficult, and S also disliked the demands that teachers follow the students, unlike the previous curriculum where students followed the teacher in the learning process.

Data (7)

"I don't think I'm burdened, ma'am, because the material is always the same year after year. However, it's true that nowadays, lecturing isn't enough; we have to explain and see, so we can see how students think. That's why we need visual aids, both direct and indirect." (18/KB/S/9/6/26)

The context in data (7) relates to adapting all teaching materials to the demands of the new curriculum. Lectures alone aren't enough to teach students in the independent curriculum. Therefore, S is trying to learn various learning methods and master the various teaching aids needed in the learning process. This conflict is a type of distancing conflict. Lectures alone aren't enough to teach students in the new curriculum. Furthermore, teachers must also master various learning methods and the use of the necessary teaching aids during the learning process. This is a burden for S, who feels he's getting older.

Data (8)

"Yes, I'm ready or not, ma'am. Especially since I'm getting older, so what should I do? I really have to be prepared." (19/KB/S/9/6/26)

The context of data (8) relates to the implementation of the learning methods required by the new curriculum. As explained in the previous data, S felt burdened by the curriculum changes because the learning methods had also changed. However, as a teacher, S must always be ready and continuously strive to learn and understand the learning methods required by the Merdeka curriculum. This conflict is a type of distancing conflict. The change in learning methods makes it difficult for teachers to implement them. This condition also places a burden on teachers to learn because of their advanced age.

Data (9)

"Sometimes I'm confused, perhaps because of my age. When I'm confused, I sometimes like to ask younger students. Actually, the learning objectives of the new curriculum are the same, just the terminology and the use of words are different." (21/KB/SHB/11/6/26)

The context of data (9) relates to the changes in the learning objectives expected in the new curriculum. The changes in learning objectives in the Merdeka curriculum made SHB obsessed with

learning and understanding them. This conflict is a type of distancing conflict, where SHB is confused by the terms in the independent curriculum, whose learning objectives include achieving three aspects of competence (knowledge, skills and attitudes), on the other hand SHB also feels burdened to learn these terms due to age factors.



Figure 3. Older Teachers Ask Younger Teachers

Curriculum changes often cause confusion and psychological stress, especially for senior teachers who are accustomed to previous teaching methods. Their confusion and numerous questions are perfectly normal reactions as they must adapt to new systems, administration, and technology. Figure 3 shows older teachers asking younger teachers about the independent curriculum. This situation is also evident in data 10.

Data (10)

"e-report cards are a bit of a hassle, but I'm trying to learn little by little to get the hang of it. Sometimes I ask for help from younger teachers." (24/KB/SHB/11/6/26)

The context of data (10) concerns the new evaluation or assessment system. According to SHB, the new assessment system using e-report cards is a bit of a hassle, but SHB is obsessed with learning little by little and sometimes asks for help from younger teachers. This conflict is a type of approach-distance conflict. The e-report assessment system is considered troublesome by SHB, and SHB, who is no longer young, feels burdened by the need to learn the e-report assessment system.

Data (11)

"Yes, this new assessment is indeed a bit troublesome, because it covers various aspects. So it's not just cognitive, but also moral, so it's a bit troublesome, especially since it has to take into account individual differences. That's the problem." (25/KB/HS/11/6/26)

The context in data (11) also relates to the new evaluation or assessment system. According to HS, the new assessment system is quite troublesome because it covers various aspects, not just cognitive but also moral aspects. However, HS is still trying to implement the assessment system effectively. This conflict is a type of approach-distance conflict. The new assessment system is quite troublesome, and it must take into account individual differences, which HS believes is a problem.



Figure 4. Individual Differences

In the Independent Curriculum, assessments are designed to be highly flexible and student-centered. Teachers are required to consider individual differences such as learning styles, interests, and student readiness levels to ensure that evaluations are fair and support each child's optimal development. Figure 4 illustrates student differences in learning styles and readiness. This situation makes teachers obsessed with understanding student differences so that the assessment system can be implemented optimally.

The primary obsession of Indonesian language teachers in facing curriculum changes is the desire to make language an instrument for critical thinking and character building, amidst demands for adapting to material flexibility and technology integration. Teachers are challenged to learn various learning methods expected by the new curriculum. Teachers go beyond lecturing to optimize digital devices and platforms as interactive learning media for the current generation and adapt both teaching and assessment to the demands of the Independent Curriculum. This inner conflict motivates teachers to actively read guides, attend seminars, and independently analyze new teaching modules. In the specific context of the inner conflict experienced by Indonesian language teachers facing curriculum changes, this obsession can shift into a positive form of inner conflict if interpreted as a professional obsession or a deep professional commitment.

3.2 Solutions to Overcoming Inner Conflicts of Indonesian Language Teachers in Facing Curriculum Changes

When individuals face conflict, they will seek solutions or ways to resolve it. According to Lewin, two concepts—valence and vector—are needed to link individual motivation to psychologically directed actions. While both concepts can guide individual action toward a problem, this study uses the concept of valence to identify steps taken to resolve internal conflict. Valence determines the purpose of the action within an individual's psychological context, preventing it from pushing individuals away from that psychological context. Valence consists of three aspects: positive valence, negative valence, and neutral valence.

Internal conflict among Indonesian language teachers during curriculum changes often arises from shifts in methods, administrative burdens, and material adjustments. Solutions include strengthening digital literacy, utilizing learning communities, and shifting the focus of teaching from teacher-centered to student-centered. Based on interviews with Indonesian language teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Adiwerna, SMP Negeri 2 Pangkah, and SMP Negeri 1 Kedungbanteng, it was discovered that internal conflict among Indonesian language teachers during curriculum changes often arises due to shifts in methods, administrative burdens, and adjustments to materials. Teachers' solutions include professional capacity development, alignment of core competencies, and strengthening support and collaboration.

- a. Professional capacity development is carried out by improving competencies and skills through independent training, seminars, and workshops to master a student-centered learning approach. Teachers can also access official teaching modules through the Merdeka Mengajar Platform for independent modules and independent training.
- b. Alignment of core competencies is carried out by making curriculum changes a forum for creativity, combining text-based materials with digital literacy that students prefer. This alignment focuses on flexibility, essential materials, and character development according to each student's potential, both in the application of learning methods, adjustments to teaching materials, and assessment systems.
- c. Strengthening support and collaboration are key pillars of the Merdeka Curriculum's success. The core spirit of the Merdeka Curriculum is mutual cooperation. Solid collaboration can be achieved through the use of Learning Community platforms at both the school and MGMP levels to ask questions, share good practices, and develop collaborative teaching modules. Furthermore, adequate infrastructure is essential, as implementing the Independent Curriculum requires infrastructure that supports interactive and project-based learning, such as digital resources, practice tools, and interactive libraries.

Each individual has their own evaluation of specific situations, known as the internal environment. Several solutions to address the internal conflict faced by Indonesian language teachers in the face of curriculum changes demonstrate a positive valence, as the teacher's actions are aligned with the intended objectives. For example, when teachers are unable or lacking mastery of the learning methods required by the curriculum, they conduct training, seminars, workshops, and so on.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The forms of inner conflict among Indonesian language teachers facing curriculum changes, specifically the independent curriculum, were anxiety (10 items) (32.26%), obsession (11 items) (35.48%), guilt (6 items) (19.35%), incompetence (2 items) (6.45%), and fear (2 items) (6.45%). Therefore, the majority of inner conflict among Indonesian language teachers facing curriculum

changes is obsession. This inner conflict encourages teachers to actively read guides, attend seminars, and independently analyze new teaching modules. In specific contexts, this inner conflict, in the form of obsession, can shift into a positive form of inner conflict if interpreted as professional obsession or professional commitment.

Solutions to address inner conflict among Indonesian language teachers facing curriculum changes include developing professional capacity, aligning core competencies, and strengthening support and collaboration. Several solutions implemented to address inner conflict among Indonesian language teachers facing curriculum changes demonstrate a positive valence, as teachers' actions are aligned with the intended objectives. For example, when teachers are unable or lack mastery of the learning methods required by the curriculum, they engage in training, seminars, or workshops.

In accordance with the conclusions outlined above, the author has the following suggestions:

- a. For the Government, providing face-to-face technical guidance and ongoing mentoring can reduce the burden of integrating Learning Outcomes into learning objectives. Furthermore, the government needs to grant greater autonomy to Indonesian language teachers to use literature as an aesthetic experience or character development tool, rather than simply an object of rote analysis. To allow teachers more time to mentor students, the government is expected to reduce the complexity of reporting and administration on the Merdeka Mengajar Platform.
- b. For Teachers, they are expected to proactively explore learning approaches that suit the characteristics of today's students through official platforms and actively participate in Teacher Working Groups (KKG) and Subject Teacher Consultations (MGMP) to collaboratively solve common challenges. Teachers should also try to gradually map student needs and interests and design flexible teaching modules tailored to school conditions.
- c. For Students, they are expected to communicate their challenges or preferred learning styles to subject teachers and actively participate in reading, writing, and classroom discussions to hone critical thinking skills, which are a key focus of learning. Students also need to be open to new learning methods, such as group discussions, project presentations, or digital literacy, which are key requirements in the current curriculum.

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