

## Investigating freedom to learn program as a form of education decentralization in Indonesia

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### ABSTRACT

Education is one of Indonesia's goals as stated in the fourth paragraph of the 1945 Constitution. However, the decentralization problem of education through transformational schools found various obstacles. This study aims to explore the problems of decentralization of education of the Freedom to Learn program through transformational schools spread throughout Indonesia. This study used the literature study method obtained from literature and books and with VOSViewer software which analysed 2.339 social articles discussing decentralization. The results of the research showed that decentralization implementation of education through transformational schools met obstacles such as inadequate facilities and many teachers are struggling to use technology, so the decentralization process is not maximal. The researchers suggest that the government should provide space for policy targets from lower levels spread throughout Indonesia so that the education decentralization process can run.

**Keywords:** *Education decentralization; freedom to learn program; transformational schools*

### INTRODUCTION

Education is a system that is very much needed in the context of levels of citizen intelligence in all various aspects of life (Sumpena et al., 2022). The decentralization system has been operated since 1999, then Law Number 22 concerning Regional Government and Law Number 25 of 1999 concerning Financial Balance between the Central and Regional Governments was issued. However, the decentralization system has been officially implemented in 2001. Due to the current political system that is happening quickly, the law above was refined through Law Number 32 of 2004 concerning Regional Government and Law Number 33 of 2004 (Rahim, 2022). Through this law, regional governments carry out their respective regional autonomy, including matters in the education sector. This process is the decentralization of education.

In essence, the decentralization of education runs local government and has a role from the central government to local government with a top-down system. The impact of decentralization which has been stated in Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government then every school must have immediate readiness which is useful for the execution of the implementation of a central government policy (Sumpena et al., 2022). A decentralized system of education can change and strengthen development in the field of education (Kurniawan et al., 2022). The form of educational decentralization is the process of providing education. One example is that schools as educational institutions are given full facilities by the central government to develop a school curriculum based on local wisdom (Sugiyono, 2021). The uniqueness of this, it is a strength possessed by the Indonesian people in the world of education (Maulida & Aryani, 2022). Indonesia is currently experiencing a crisis of learning problems in formal and non-formal schools which harms education in Indonesia, namely the gap in the quality of education in every region in Indonesia (Priantini, 2022).

The implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka, the Freedom to Learn Curriculum, is the latest curriculum issued by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia in 2022. It requires a lot of time to adjust related to facilities and infrastructure. The decentralization system here

provides policies from the central government down to the provincial and city/district governments. However, for the Senior High School level, it is run directly by the respective provincial governments. Even though the implementation of the decentralization of education related to this curriculum experienced sudden obstacles, the school was required to be able to implement this curriculum properly in each of its institutions. The Freedom to Learn curriculum aims to maximize the potential and increase human resources for teachers and students. Based on the Regulation of the Director General of Teachers and Education Personnel No. 6565/B/GT/2020 concerning Competency Models in Teacher Professional Development states that teachers must develop professionalism at least through education and/or education and training (Rahayu et al., 2022).

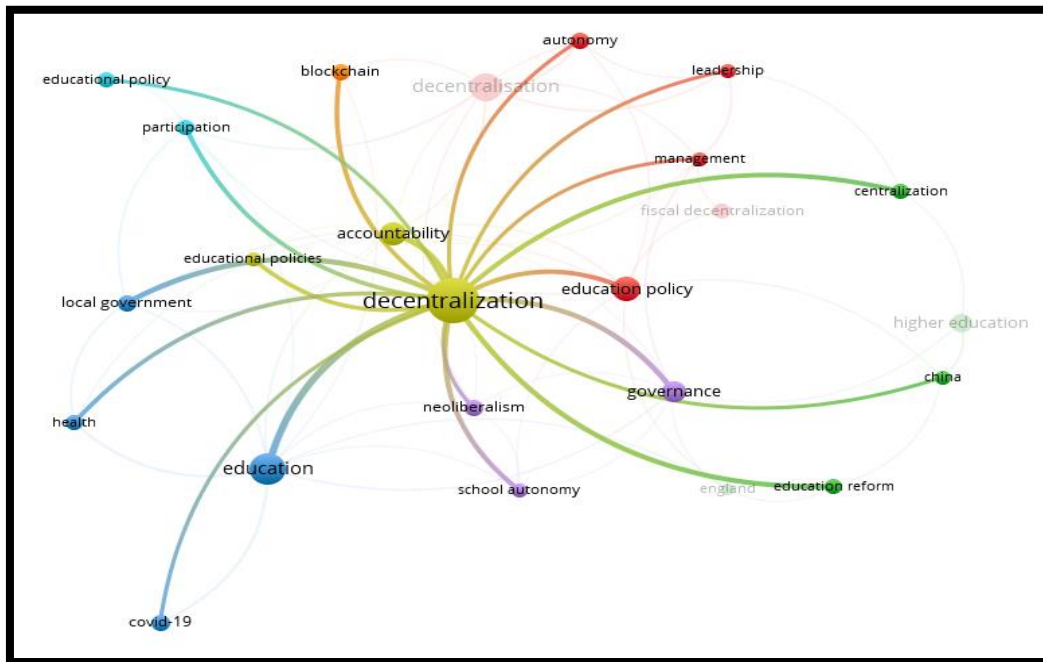
One form of Freedom to Learn Curriculum activity is the existence of the principle of Pancasila (the Five Principles, Indonesian State Ideology) program which encourages schools to become independent. Because in their activities students will convey their talents and interests through this program. The P5 program is also an indicator for transformational schools. This means that the academic community in schools can provide an overview or interpretation of a lesson so that schools can register to become transformational schools. Transformational School is a program that collaborates with the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Regional Government. Through this transformational school program, it will accelerate the increase in the quality of education in each region. What will happen from this program is that it will become a reference area for other regions to practice this program. This is in line with the decentralization of education which runs a national program involving the provincial government and district. Therefore, this article will discuss the problem of decentralization of education in the Freedom to Learn program through transformational schools that use the literature study method.

### **METHODS**

The article used the literature study method by collecting data from various literature to scientific references such as books, scientific articles, and several research results related to the topic. Researchers employed tools or software, namely VOSviewer, to analyse the value of novelty related to research. The VOS viewer is

used for looking at research trends in the world with the theme of educational decentralization. The following are the results of the VOSviewer analysis on Scopus:

**Figure 1**  
*VOSviewer Decentralized Education*



*Source: taken from Scopus processed through VOSviewer by researchers*

Researchers used the reference articles obtained from 1999 to 2023 since the decentralized system began to develop in 1999 in Indonesia. Researchers focused their search on the title, abstract, and keywords. Researchers also determined article limitations and the scope of social science. The results from VOSViewer explained that previous researchers have not conducted research related to educational decentralization in Scopus. Previous researchers mostly discussed the decentralization of education policy. This makes researchers discuss the decentralization of education towards a curriculum in the field of education.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Decentralization of education within the scope of the Freedom to Learn program provides dynamics of pros and cons in implementation. For the community, the Freedom to Learn program provides innovation for work and thinking. However,

the contra side for academics is that this curriculum is not ready to be implemented. The government is trying to improve the quality of Indonesian education. So, the intent and purpose of the Indonesian government to improve the system of education is to provide provisions for both academic and non-academic activities (Batubara & Aman, 2019). The Freedom to Learn program was initiated by the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia, Nadiem Makarim. The content of this program teaches people to think and innovate freely. The Freedom to Learn program that is implemented at various levels of education in Indonesia finds several very complex cases. This curriculum focuses on essential material so that the learning process is more focused and in-depth. The values in the Freedom to Learn program prioritize cooperation for all parties to implement this curriculum.

The findings that occurred at SD Muhammadiyah Manyar Gresik and SD Islam Al-Amin Probolinggo explain that teachers are required to master the creative world to design learning modules so that in practice the teacher cannot get out of the module made. Schools are a means of strengthening the Pancasila learning profile (Jannah et al., 2022). The problems that occurred in Elementary School 17 Rejang Lebong started from the implementation planning and learning assessment stages. The teacher begins to analyse Learning Outcomes (Capaian Pembelajaran/CP) into Learning Objectives (tujuan pembelajaran/TP), constructs a Learning Objectives Flow system (alur tujuan pembelajaran/ATP), and creates the appropriate module form. Teachers encounter difficulty in using technology in learning such as learning media applications to technology-based student assessment processes due to the age factor. In the process of project-based learning, the teacher has difficulty determining the type of project and allocating more time for its implementation (Zulaiha & Triana, 2023). For the SMK level that occurs at SMKN 2 Pacitan in Mathematics, there are difficulties in the learning process such as ineffective learning media, monotonous material, learning processes that are not supported by technology to the point of view of students who are lacking in mathematics (Oktavia & Qudsiyah, 2023).

Policies that have been implemented by the central government to provide freedom for local governments in administering education and provide breadth to

carry out a broad learning process for students at the tertiary level. Following the Decree of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia No. 162/M/2021 Concerning the Transformational School Program in Chapter II of the Mechanism for Implementing the Transformational School Program describes the selection stages involving the local government for implementing the transformational school program. Research in Purwodadi District, Grobogan Regency explained that 80% of elementary teachers in transformational schools experienced obstacles and 20% of teachers did not experience obstacles in the learning process. In previous research, the results of the transformational school curriculum training were that 90% of teachers experienced obstacles and 10% of teachers did not experience obstacles (Rahayu et al., 2022).

Previous research took a sample of 27 Mathematics teachers at elementary schools in West Java Province. The results explained that there were obstacles in the implementation of transformational schools, in the planning stage, implementation, and evaluation stages. In the planning stage, the teachers do not understand how to translate CP for learning purposes, the backgrounds of the students are different, a lack of references to learning models, they have limited facilities and infrastructure, and they have limited initial knowledge and material. The implementation obstacles include limitations on opening questions, psychological limitations of students, and translation of knowledge into language that is easily understood by students. Furthermore, in the evaluation obstacles are the unfinished preliminary assessment paradigm, limitations in the learning process, and limitations in understanding the assessment process (Nurchayono & Putra, 2022).

In the previous research, the transformational school seems to have experienced 9 difficulties in reaching the goal. The Central Government through the Regional Government aims to manage human resources so that it will improve the quality of each region this will complicate it and the possibility of being left behind in a region will occur. Lack of decentralization often occurs in education in several studies above paragraphs. Hardiyanto (2004) argues that the decentralization of education is a management model in the education sector whose goal is to become a transformational school force in the decision-making process and forms of efforts to

improve the quality of education to human resources including teacher professionalism which has recently been troubling because the deficiencies in the decentralization of education will add to the backwardness of the quality of education which has implications for various groups, both locally and internationally.

In principle, in the process of implementing educational decentralization, all levels of education must be involved in its implementation. On the other hand, the decentralization of education is the impact of the running of a democratic government. Through the government or local government, it is obligatory to fund and even invest funds for education units in the form of grants or social assistance following applicable regulations. However, the research above states that the infrastructure is not sufficient and one of them is being hit by the budget. This is also not under the provisions in the applicable regulations. In Law Number 24 of 2014 concerning Regional Government relating to the provision of funds to the regions which will later be used to purchase facilities.

From the presentation of several previous studies, the obstacle in the process of decentralization of education is communication that arises and sinks from superiors to subordinates. Evidenced by the information that teachers have not been able to fully accept regarding transformational schools. Limited funds resulting in the purchase of learning media also provide obstacles to the process in class. Even though the Freedom to Learn program includes a new curriculum which was previously an expansion of the 2013 Curriculum, it is necessary to involve the level of the education sector, such as regional teachers in frontier, remote, and underdeveloped areas by involving them will add insight into what field activities are like. In France, for example, the French State Government budgets as much as 23% of state revenue for free education for kindergarten to high school and the provision of large teacher salaries of around 50 to 60 million per month. The Government of Finland through the Ministry of Education and Culture implements a single curriculum meaning that basic education is taken for 9 years, and the first 6 years will be led by the same teacher. For teacher qualifications in Finland, at least it must be a master's program so that in terms of quality it already has a fairly high position. Even in Finland, there is a special agency

called "The National Board of Education" which aims to monitor the education curriculum directly in synergy with the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The Ministry of Education and Culture prevents problems within the education curriculum by implementing a freedom for researchers to develop and find innovations. The result of further development and research provides intensive knowledge about the business that output becomes a national educational innovation. In its implementation, Finland involves actors such as industry, universities, research institutions, and the government. Meanwhile in Iran, through the Ministry of Education, it performs the task of providing education funds and controlling the administration of education from elementary to secondary levels. As well as at the local level to supervise the running of the education system from the provincial government to the district government. Then the Ministry of Education is tasked with overseeing the national exam, monitoring standards, training teachers, developing educational curricula, and developing learning materials and school maintenance. There is a legislative body, namely the Council of Higher Education whose job is to approve all policies and all regulations related to education in Iran.

### CONCLUSIONS

From the results of the literature study above, researchers still find several obstacles starting from the uneven budget, the appointment of transformational schools that not all can get even though transformational schools are mandatory for equal distribution of the quality of human resources in the regions and educational development, the availability of infrastructure in the learning process such as unfulfilled supporting technological tools for the learning process in the classroom as well as many requirements so that teachers have difficulty understanding.

We argue that the implementation of a decentralized education system in Finland which involves the central line to the sub-district level could be implemented in Indonesia as the solution. The division system of tasks can be adopted by Iran which divides tasks and authorities clearly and separately so that in certain matters it will be easy to carry them out. For further research, we can look at studies evenly related to conditions in the field from the district to the national level in the form of presentations or distributing online questionnaires filled out by all school principals in each



education unit from the early childhood, kindergarten, elementary, junior high, high school, and tertiary levels. Furthermore, the indicators in the recipients of transformational schools can be adjusted to the conditions in the field so that the acceptance of transformational schools can be evenly distributed so that the quality of the area can increase, and other regions will be encouraged. Face-to-face training needs to be carried out because the transition to the online world requires massive adjustments for teachers who are aged, even though everyone can accept them, they still need to pay attention to the little things in them.

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