

## ANALYSIS OF MATHEMATICS LEARNING MOTIVATION FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADE 7 IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE KURIKULUM MERDEKA

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### Abstract

Learning motivation is one of the crucial factors that influence students' success in understanding subject matter, including mathematics which is often considered challenging. This study aims to examine the level of student motivation in learning mathematics in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, identify various factors that influence learning motivation, and evaluate the effectiveness of the Independent Curriculum itself. Using a qualitative descriptive approach through interview and observation methods, this study found that most students showed learning motivation at a moderate level, while only a few were at a high or low level of motivation. Various factors that influence learning motivation consist of internal and external factors. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum is considered to provide flexibility for students with high motivation, but has not fully supported students with low motivation due to limited teacher training and learning resources. The conclusion of this study is that the Independent Curriculum has a great opportunity to increase student learning motivation if supported by the implementation of personal learning strategies, increasing teacher competence, and utilizing innovative learning technology.

**Keywords:** Learning motivation, junior high school students, Merdeka Curriculum

### Abstrak

Motivasi belajar merupakan salah satu faktor krusial yang memengaruhi keberhasilan siswa dalam memahami materi pelajaran, termasuk matematika yang kerap dianggap menantang. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji tingkat motivasi siswa dalam pembelajaran matematika pada penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka, mengidentifikasi berbagai faktor yang memengaruhi motivasi belajar, serta mengevaluasi efektivitas Kurikulum Merdeka itu sendiri. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif melalui metode wawancara dan observasi, penelitian ini menemukan bahwa sebagian besar siswa menunjukkan motivasi belajar pada tingkat sedang, sementara hanya sedikit yang berada pada tingkat motivasi tinggi atau rendah. Berbagai faktor yang memengaruhi motivasi belajar terdiri dari faktor internal dan eksternal. Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka dinilai memberikan fleksibilitas bagi siswa. dengan motivasi tinggi, namun belum sepenuhnya mendukung siswa dengan motivasi rendah karena keterbatasan pelatihan guru dan sumber daya pembelajaran. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini adalah bahwa Kurikulum Merdeka memiliki peluang besar dalam meningkatkan motivasi belajar siswa apabila didukung dengan penerapan strategi pembelajaran yang bersifat personal, peningkatan kompetensi guru, dan pemanfaatan teknologi pembelajaran yang inovatif.

**Kata kunci:** Motivasi Belajar, Siswa SMP, Kurikulum Merdeka

### INTRODUCTION

Motivation is one of the important elements that affect the effectiveness of students' learning processes, encouraging them to be actively involved in learning activities. (Wahab, 2016). Learning motivation is one of the key aspects in determining learning success, especially in mathematics subjects that are often considered difficult by some students.

(Sardiman, 2018). Learning motivation creates the passion and enthusiasm needed to achieve learning goals (Uno, 2016). Mathematics at the junior secondary level aims to build an understanding of basic concepts that are essential to support mastery of more complex material at the next level of education (Ruseffendi, 2010). However, challenges in learning mathematics do not only come from the level of difficulty of the material, but also from the low motivation of students to learn, which can significantly affect learning outcomes (Schunk, 2014).

The Independent Curriculum, designed by the Ministry of Education and Culture, aims to provide flexibility to schools and teachers in arranging learning that suits the needs of students (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022). This curriculum also emphasizes freedom in the learning process, with teachers acting as mentors and students being given the opportunity to more actively explore learning materials (Asrifan, 2023). The curriculum also emphasizes a project-based approach and One of the main goals of the Independent Curriculum is to increase students' motivation to learn through flexible learning that is relevant to daily life. However, the effectiveness of this curriculum is still a challenge, especially in subjects such as mathematics which tend to be less in demand by students (Azizah & Firmansyah, 2020).

Various previous studies have shown that students' learning motivation is influenced by a number of factors, both intrinsic such as interest and confidence (Frandsen, 2015), and extrinsic such as teacher and parental support (Tambunan, 2015). This study focuses on analyzing the level of students' motivation to learn mathematics, identifying the factors that affect it, and evaluating the effectiveness of the Independent Curriculum in increasing learning motivation. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on mathematics subjects in the context of the Independent Curriculum, which until now has been limited to discussing in the academic literature.

## METHODS

This study aims to evaluate the level of student learning motivation, influencing factors and how the implementation of the Independent Curriculum can support increasing motivation to learn mathematics. Descriptive qualitative research is designed to understand, explain, and interpret a phenomenon in depth. (Moleong, 2017) defines qualitative research

as research that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from the people observed. According to (Sugiyono, 2016), descriptive qualitative research is a type of research that aims to understand, describe, and interpret phenomena or events in depth based on the experiences, views, and perceptions of the people involved.

This research was conducted at MTs Ar-Royyan, Malang City, East Java, with a implementation time of November 2024. The subject of the study was a 7th grade student. The selection of subjects was carried out by stratified purposive sampling technique, which is a sampling technique based on certain strata that is relevant to the research (Sugiyono, 2018). Students were grouped into three strata based on the level of learning motivation, namely low, medium, and high, which were identified through observation results.

The research instruments included semi-structured interview guidelines and observation sheets. The interview guidelines include indicators of intrinsic motivation, perseverance, engagement, and extrinsic motivation. Observations are made during mathematics learning to observe student behavior and teacher teaching methods. Data collection techniques include direct interviews and classroom observations. (Arikunto, 2010) Interviews are a question and answer process between interviewers and respondents that aim to collect certain information (Arikunto, 2010). The interviews were conducted to dig deeper into the various factors that affect students' motivation to learn. Observation is the process of understanding a subject by using all available tools, such as observation, smell, hearing, touch, and taste (Arikunto, 2010). Observation is used to find out the behavior and involvement of students during the learning process. Data analysis involves the process of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The validity of the data is maintained by triangulating the method, which is comparing the results of interviews and observations (Moleong, 2017).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of observations and interviews, students' motivation to learn mathematics is divided into three categories. First, students with a high level of motivation amounting to 3 students (16.67%). They show high curiosity, enthusiasm for completing tasks, and have clear specific goals. Second, students with a moderate level of motivation are the majority, namely 14 students (77.78%). Their motivations tend to be situational, depending

on external pressures such as rewards or punishments. They often rely on friends, teachers, or certain incentives to stay motivated. Third, students with a low level of motivation which only amount to 1 student (5.56%). These students exhibit a passive attitude, lack confidence, and find math difficult and irrelevant to their goals.

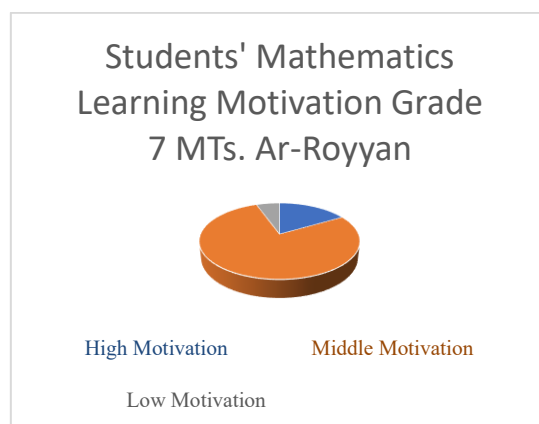
The factors that affect students' motivation to learn are divided into two, namely internal and external. Internal factors include interest in math, self-confidence, and personal goals or ideals. Meanwhile, external factors include parental and teacher support, interactive teaching methods, and a conducive learning environment. The effectiveness of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at MTs. Ar-Royyan shows that this curriculum provides learning flexibility, especially for highly motivated students. However, there are obstacles such as lack of teacher training and limited learning aids, which have an impact on students with low motivation.

**Tabel 1. Observation Results**

Name	Indikator				Total	Category
	Intrinsic Motivation	Perseverance	Involvement	Extrinsic Motivation		
PWT	10	8	9	11	38	High
SEL	10	7	8	11	36	Middle
SKS	9	6	8	11	34	Middle
SAS	8	7	7	11	33	Middle
APF	12	8	8	11	39	Middle
ADP	7	5	5	11	28	Middle
RPB	10	6	9	11	36	Middle
NAL	6	8	9	11	34	Middle
SUF	8	7	9	11	35	Middle
SK	7	5	7	11	30	Middle
DAPH	12	11	12	11	46	High
BSA	9	6	9	11	35	Middle
CBM	11	11	11	11	44	High
MAP	10	7	9	11	37	Middle
FH	10	3	6	11	30	Middle
AM	9	7	7	11	34	Middle
AAR	7	7	6	11	31	Middle
MNA	6	3	3	11	23	low

The results of this study show that the majority of students have motivation to learn mathematics which is in the medium category. This is in line with the theory (Sardiman, 2018), which states that learning motivation is influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Students with high motivation show a great interest in mathematics, are confident in facing challenges, and have specific goals, as expressed by (Dweck, 2017), that clear goals can improve study perseverance. Conversely, students with low motivation tend to find math difficult and

irrelevant, which is in line with research (Tambunan, 2015), that external support is indispensable to increase learning motivation.



**Diagram 1. Student Learning Motivation Level**

The Merdeka curriculum is proven to support highly motivated students because it offers flexibility and a project-based approach that is relevant to individual needs. However, students with low motivation still face challenges in understanding the material, even though this curriculum provides freedom in learning. This underscores the importance of intensive training for teachers to meet the needs of students with varying levels of motivation. The study revealed that most students have a moderate level of motivation to learn mathematics, which is influenced by internal factors such as interest and confidence, as well as external factors such as parental and teacher support. This finding is in line with the view of Sardiman (2018) who explains that a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors affects learning motivation. In addition, highly motivated students tend to show determination and have clear learning goals, supporting Dweck's (2017) theory that specific goals can increase perseverance. Conversely, students with low motivation often find it difficult to understand mathematics and need more outside support, as mentioned by Tambunan (2015), that external support, especially from teachers and learning methods, is essential to increase learning motivation. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum, although beneficial for students with high motivation, still faces obstacles in helping students with low motivation. This supports the research of Azizah and Firmansyah (2020) who found that the challenge of this curriculum lies in the difficulty of students understanding subjects such as mathematics.

This research makes a positive contribution by highlighting students' learning motivation in the context of mathematics learning based on the Independent Curriculum. However, the scope of research that is limited to one junior secondary education institution is one of the limitations that need to be considered. Therefore, the results of this study need to be generalized carefully. To increase the effectiveness of the Independent Curriculum, it is recommended that teachers attend intensive training, use technology-based learning aids, and implement a personalized approach for students with low motivation so that their interest in mathematics increases. This research also emphasizes the need to personalize learning and improve teacher competence to maximize the effectiveness of the Independent Curriculum.

## CONCLUSION

This study reveals that students' motivation to learn mathematics varies, namely; High, medium, and low levels. The majority of students are in the medium category. This motivation is caused by internal factors, such as interests, confidence, and career goals, as well as external factors, such as the support of teachers, parents, and teaching methods. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum has provided flexibility in learning and demonstrated effectiveness for students with high learning motivation. However, students with low learning motivation have not been fully helped, considering the limitations in teacher training, the availability of resources, and the application of learning methods that have not been maximized. The novelty of this research lies in an in-depth analysis of the relationship between student learning motivation and the effectiveness of the Independent Curriculum in mathematics learning.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that teachers increase the use of interactive methods and technology-based teaching aids to make mathematics learning more engaging. Teachers are advised to take part in training that is relevant to the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in order to design a learning process that suits the needs of students. Students are expected to develop a positive mindset towards mathematics by understanding its relevance in daily life and the future Parental involvement has a crucial role in providing emotional support and positive motivation to children to improve their enthusiasm for learning. For further research, this research can be used as a reference It is important to

further explore various other factors that can affect student motivation in student learning, especially with a focus on personalizing learning for students with low motivation.

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