Curriculum control and lesson planning: History teacher autonomy in different school contexts

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Article Info

Abstract

The curriculum is important in controlling national policies and implementing education. In Indonesia, the national curriculum is changing from the 2013 Curriculum to Merdeka Curriculum, which promotes "independent learning". This study explores the nature of curriculum control and history teachers' autonomy in lesson planning in different school contexts. The research draws on interviews with 12 history teachers in three different schools: Senior High School 1 Kejobong (a general-based public school), Purbalingga Public Madrasah Aliyah (a religious-based public school), and Muhammadiyah Purbalingga Senior High School (a private school belonging to Muhamamdiyah organisation). Teaching module documents were also analysed to complement the research data. The data were analysed following Hopmann's curriculum control model by developing macrocodes (deductive approach) and subcodes (inductive approach). The research findings indicate the existence of three models of curriculum control, with overlapping characteristics among the four models observed in different school contexts. These models suggest that outcomes-based education practices influence the underlying ideological profiles of different schools. Although the education authority accommodated all three schools well, variations in history teachers' autonomy in lesson planning were evident. In particular, history teachers' autonomy seems closely related to the practical stage of lesson planning rather than aligned with the educational outcomes the government idealises. This research highlights how a national policy that, on the one hand, provides freedom in concept but, on the other hand, also standardises schools potentially contradicts the policy goal of promoting educational diversity.

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Introduction

Political reform in Indonesia in 1998 paved the way for changes in the national education system characterised by the decentralisation of education from various forms of governance divisions at the national, provincial, regency and private ownership levels (Dharmawan & Suryadarma, 2021; Kholiq et al., 2022; Muhammad, 2021). Changes continue to occur in Indonesia, including in 2021, with the national curriculum changes from Curriculum 2013 to Merdeka Curriculum. This curriculum campaigns to give freedom to educational institutions, public or private, to conduct contextualised "independent learning (*Merdeka belajar*)" (Junaidin et al., 2022; Sihombing et al., 2021). With this education reform, the private sector also has an important influence in fulfilling the goal of school diversity to promote choices to society (Keddie et al., 2023; Lundström, 2015). There is an assumption that increased freedom and diversity of school choice alternatives can lead to improved quality of education, which is also understood as the democratisation of education services, especially in developing a local curriculum (Jatuporn, 2022).

Thus, it can be said that teachers work with various policies at different school levels, including history teachers. Centralised national policies and local policies at each school level are diverse. Different levels of policies place high demands on history teachers to conduct learning practices oriented towards student learning outcomes (Orakci & Durnali, 2023; Tan et al., 2022). Many researchers have argued the need to improve local curriculum practices and routines at different school levels (e.g., Bergh, 2015; Cribb & Gewirtz, 2007; Harris et al., 2020; Ormond, 2017; Raya & Vázquez, 2022). Moreover, some researchers focus more on taking a social approach and teaching locally-contextualised history in each school (e.g., Gershon, 2014; López, 2014; Muhammad, 2021). However, few researchers have interpreted curriculum policy statements that conflict with the diversity of different school governance. Furthermore, it is interesting to know whether history teachers have been working autonomously in designing the learning process; this perception is based on the fact that independently established schools are not always followed by teachers who are given autonomous rights (Alemdar & Aytaç, 2022; Hangartner & Svaton, 2022). At the school level, history teachers' work practices have the potential for varying degrees of autonomy, depending on how the national curriculum is developed.

History teachers' autonomy in lesson planning has the benefit of customising learning materials to students' local historical context. This allows students to develop a more diverse and in-depth understanding of history directly relevant to their lives, thus increasing their interest and engagement in the lessons. With autonomy, history teachers can choose from various learning resources, including articles, visual resources and diverse online resources (Saefudin et al., 2023). This helps to bring a broader perspective to history teaching, allowing students to see historical events from different points of view (Suharso et al., 2020). In the Indonesian context, historical issues that are still controversial can lead to conflicts between local history and national history. Such material can have several implications, such as eliminating opportunities for history teachers to portray history holistically (Riyani et al., 2021). However, many local history works can be used as references in learning, claimed to be the result of collaboration between various parties, including academics and schools. These institutions have a role in setting local history learning content and assessment and evaluation guidelines, allowing schools to use them as a foundation for teaching local history (Brown, 2013; Heffernan, 2018). Therefore, in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, efforts continue to be made to strengthen the diversity of local history and develop it according to the conditions and capabilities of each school. This aligns with the principle that the curriculum provides ample space for teachers to determine learning approaches, resulting in diverse interpretations and varied learning practices (Harris et al., 2020).

There is an opportunity for greater involvement of teachers, students, and parents in driving change and development, including forming alternative education organisations instead of solely relying on state-centric education policies (Pimthong et al., 2017). A deeper understanding of the implications of history teachers' autonomy in teaching local history is crucial to ensure that these efforts strengthen national identity while also appreciating and respecting the diverse local histories of the people. Consequently, it is pertinent to examine education policies prioritising the freedom of various school types and how teachers interpret the curriculum in their lesson planning practices. The researcher's interest lies in exploring this phenomenon, making it essential to investigate the specifics of curriculum control and history teacher autonomy in planning, particularly in the context of the recently launched Merdeka Curriculum by the Indonesian government. Therefore, this study aims to address the gaps in

previous research by focusing on the following research objectives: (1) identifying the characteristics of curriculum control in public and private schools in Indonesia; and (2) understanding how history teachers interpret autonomy, particularly in the process of lesson planning across different schools.

Literature Review

This study's paradigm considers curriculum an important tool in national policy practice and education implementation (Apple, 2018; Salokangas & Ainscow, 2017). Moreover, from another perspective, the curriculum is an effective medium for stabilising between public policies and individual actors responsible for implementing national education policies (Deng, 2010; Gülşen & Atay, 2022; Hopmann, 1999). Specifically, Hopmann's (1999) work is used to study the value and variation of ideas from diverse school systems in educational contexts. These variations can be linked to different curriculum models and can control the work of teachers following different learning approaches. Hopmann (1999) divides four basic models of curriculum control: (1) the philanthropic model, (2) the licence model, (3) the examination model, and (4) the assessment model. In the philanthropic model, the state plays a major role in controlling educational ideas through curriculum policy regulations. The licence model also involves the role of the state, in addition to being the compiler of the national curriculum, controlling learning, and schools are responsible for implementing in their way and potential. A division of labour between the state, local education agencies, schools and teachers characterises it. In contrast, the exam model emphasises the content and methods of education without state intervention. It is characterised by the fact that student learning outcomes are linked to university entrance requirements, making early learning planning irrelevant. The assessment model focuses more on controlling teachers' work through competency tests provided by external educational institutions. Like the previous model, the assessment model does not involve direct government control.

Specifically, Hopmann (1999) makes an important note that these models cannot be found in the form of one pure curriculum model. In fact, these models of curriculum control often overlap. However, a common understanding occurs in the context of different schools in educational settings. This understanding of curriculum control divides along two main lines: curriculum

models that focus more on learning content and models determined by individual administrators that focus on student learning outcomes. The latter model is less rigorous in the curriculum implementation process. These two models provide different degrees of freedom for teacher autonomy and are used to frame the theoretical framework in this study. These models of curriculum control are not fully adapted to the Indonesian context, but they can serve as a reference in studying the space for history teacher autonomy in the context of curriculum control in different schools.

Hopmann's (1999) curriculum control model focuses on considerations and decisions related to determining what will be taught, how it will be taught, and how student progress and learning outcomes will be assessed. This approach focuses on those controlling the learning process, such as teachers, governments or educational institutions. In essence, this framework aims to understand the interaction between educational goals, curriculum content, teaching methods, and student learning outcomes. Hopmann's (1999) framework has been used in various studies to analyse aspects of the curriculum, such as the mapping between learning objectives, teaching methods, and assessment of learning outcomes (e.g., Dieudé & Prøitz, 2022; Gülşen & Atay, 2022; Spillane & Anderson, 2019). This framework has helped previous researchers understand a curriculum's efficiency and effectiveness, so Hopmann's curriculum control model was used in this study's context.

Finally, each curriculum model provides different autonomy spaces for history teachers to interpret educational policy messages. Inspired by the analytical framework of Wermke et al. (2022), such is used as the main analysis to explore this further at a practical level. Autonomy is defined as a teacher's competence to make important decisions about learning content and school management or the ability to control constraints arising from such decisions (Alemdar & Aytaç, 2022; Hangartner & Svaton, 2022). Thus, the analysis focused on aspects of autonomy to control or decide on the work of individual history teachers in accordance with the research objectives. This analytical tool is built on the argument that teacher autonomy is multidimensional and context-dependent (Wermke et al., 2022). That is, different types of autonomy can be obtained through different dimensions of a teacher's job, depending on the characteristics of the school. These dimensions are, for example, the classroom dimension (the history teacher has autonomy over the content of the lesson) and the school dimension (the relationship with the principal). More broadly, history teachers may develop assessments

(educational dimension), discipline and professionalise students (social dimension), undertake professional development (development dimension), and perform administrative tasks in the school (administrative dimension) (Cheng et al., 2016). To reduce complexity, this article only zooms in on the dimensions of curriculum interpretation in the context of teacher planning. Based on this explanation, the conceptual framework can be arranged in the form of Figure 1 as follows:
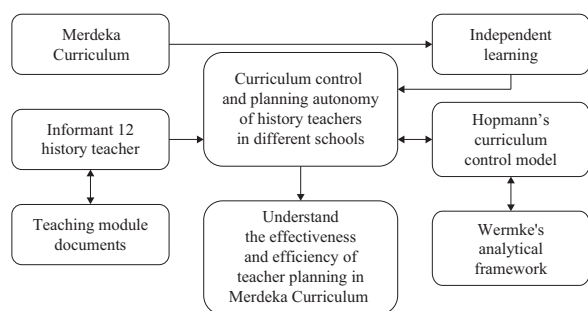

Figure 1 Conceptual framework

Methodology

Data Collection

This article focuses on analysing teachers' interpretations of curriculum control in three different schools: a public school, a religious school and a private school. These schools were selected for the reason of sample balance for different parameters. To explore the interpretation of history teachers in different schools, three schools have been selected: Senior High School 1 Kejobong (*SMA Negeri 1 Kejobong*: a general public school), Purbalingga Public Madrasah Aliyah *(MA Negeri Purbalingga*: a religious public school), and Muhammadiyah Purbalingga Senior High School (*SMA Muhammadiyah Purbalingga*: a private school belonging to the Muhammadiyah organisation). All schools are located in Purbalingga City, Central Java, Indonesia. The three schools have different characteristics, but there is a basis of equivalence as the curriculum must be framed by the national curriculum in accordance with the National Education System Law in Indonesia. This level of education is conducted in grades 10 to 12 (students aged 15–18). Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 12 history teachers conducted in February-April 2022. One important question is how teachers plan history learning in Merdeka

Curriculum. The research data was supplemented with teaching module documents created by history teachers based on the prevailing national curriculum: Merdeka Curriculum.

Data Analysis

It was inspired by Dieudé and Prøitz (2022); Spillane and Anderson (2019), who developed macrocodes and subcodes. This research does the same. Macrocodes are overarching coding categories that describe the theoretical assumptions of curriculum control; hence, macrocodes are defined with a deductive approach. While subcodes result from a dialogical interpretation process using an inductive approach, which requires reciprocity between the theory of teacher autonomy and the analysis of the coded data to focus on the similarities and differences between teachers' interpretations in different school contexts.

The curriculum control analysis followed Hopmann's (1999) model to identify the different power structures in each school in controlling teachers' work. Therefore, the researcher described macrocodes as a specialised model of curriculum control. Macrocode provides contextualised information on how to control the curriculum, what is controlled and by whom. Macrocodes are associated with the following specialised models of curriculum control: (1) the philanthropic model, (2) the licence model, (3) the examen model, and (4) and the assessment model. Furthermore, Wermke et al. (2022) inspired the analysis of teacher autonomy, using interview data as the basis for subcodes.

Results

Curriculum Control in Different School Contexts

Three models of curriculum control with characteristics that overlap with the four models proposed by Hopmann (1999) can be seen in different school contexts. Senior High School 1 Kejobong is a public school that follows the philanthropic model of curriculum control and is governed by the nationally applicable Merdeka Curriculum. Merdeka Curriculum defines the competency objectives that history teachers in public schools must deliver by adapting their learning for heterogeneous classes within the ideology of "schools for all citizens without exception". It also stipulates the content that must be taught and additional regulations and guidelines that define assessment standards.

Purbalingga Public Madrasah Aliyah school provides a curriculum control model where the curriculum and its guidelines restrict the teacher profile by giving general education components and descriptions of classes that are anticipated to be in line with the Islamic religion exemplified by NU (*Nahdhatul Ulama*). While still constrained by national regulations, curriculum control in the public high school Senior High School 1 Kejobong and the faith-based public school Purbalingga Public Madrasah Aliyah employs a licence model. In these institutions, history teachers are given the autonomy to select pedagogical approaches and teaching strategies. For example, at Senior High School 1 Kejobong, the principal defines an independent curriculum to promote local potential and emphasise the potential of each student. However, the freedom to raise local potential is an instruction in the Merdeka Curriculum.

History teachers in both public schools were given freedom in lesson planning, although interviews showed a shift towards "political will" in general public schools and added "the will of NU-based Islamic religious ideology" in religious-based public schools. Curriculum control in both schools is different from that in Muhammadiyah Purbalingga Senior High School. The difference is that Muhammadiyah Purbalingga Senior High School has significantly more freedom to fulfil the new Indonesian education policy. In this private school, the right of authority is held by the Muhamadiyah organisation, including school management and governance. The curriculum also emphasises aspects of Islam but is characterised by Muhammadiyah ideology. The school must still follow the national curriculum as the primary reference, although it is not compulsory. The education profile's overarching goal is to emphasise Muhammadiyah's teachings while being controlled by the state's ideology.

The researcher further observed Hopmann's (1999) model, which describes schools as overlapping in different school contexts. This occurs due to aspects related to state policies and current trends in educational development. In the Indonesian context, the highly regulated private school sector curriculum must comply with the state's laws. Thus, despite their different profiles, the three schools share a similar curriculum model grounded in national discourse and focusing on teaching-learning outcomes. This model is also linked to the exam model, which focuses on and prepares students for university entrance. Student learning outcomes become one of the most critical components of a school's reputation, with national exam results serving as the foundation for advertising to draw in new students. The researcher then discusses how history instructors view these curriculum restrictions and explores whether they can offer varied places for history teacher autonomy.

History Teachers' Planning Autonomy

An interesting finding in this section is that history teachers seem to have similar autonomy in interpreting the curriculum, particularly in lesson planning in different school contexts. One common finding is that history teachers tend to limit their direct use of the curriculum and restrict interpretation by following the system and making pre-determined decisions. The extent of the local government's relationship with the central government is represented in public schools, while it is left to the organisation's discretion in private schools. Although dependent on government policy, faith-based schools emphasise Islamic religious subjects with their ideological streams. The management of this is left to the school, which develops tangible objectives to guide the work of the history teacher by following the educational ideas and ideologies on which the school is based. In other words, history teachers experience a different form of autonomy; for example, although history teachers are allowed to follow the format provided by the education authority, teachers are still allowed to create their format. This means that the interpretation of the curriculum at the school level gives autonomy to history teachers, but the established educational framework still limits the autonomy given to teachers. The autonomy means history teachers in different school contexts can choose the content and teaching strategies and conduct the final assessment. Teachers must also adapt materials and integrate creative elements or personal experiences to enhance classroom learning.

The autonomy of history teachers in Senior High School 1 Kejobong is seen in the creation of teaching module documents although their policy-making remains constrained within the framework of government regulations. Like the licence model, this approach shows that teachers have considerable professional autonomy to learn and decide what good learning for students is. Teachers also have greater decision-making freedom in assessment while working with daily formative assessments, which history teachers conduct independently over the planning of daily in-class tests. The teaching module documents are one example of adopting planning by developing individual students. This teaching module document is a guideline during the learning process

and results from the history teacher's autonomous work. As the history teacher explained, the primary purpose of the learning outcomes of Senior High School 1 Kejobong is that the teacher presents the primary material in the lesson through in-depth planning and then connects it with the local history around. This can be seen from the teaching module document, part of the flow of teaching objectives point 11.5, which is to explain the struggle to maintain independence. In the document, the assessment indicator is to convey, understand and appreciate by doing work (in the form of writing or video) about events that are included in local history events. The quality of teaching module documents is the source of teachers' language to their students. History teachers have a significant say in learning content guided by the national curriculum. A history teacher can modify the course outline depending on student-related aspects to make room for local history to be more contextualised:

> *I have the national history teaching module documents that I connect with local history. I can decide whether to take it or not from the format provided by the government (...), such as including material on the 1945-49 Indonesian independence revolution that took place in Purbalingga that is not in the national curriculum*

(History Teacher Senior High School 1 Kejobong, March 10, 2022).

At the inter-school level, academic development and decision-making are realised in monthly meetings by the History Subject Teachers' Association (*Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran Sejarah, MGMP*) to discuss teaching activities and responsibilities, such as local history lesson planning. The supervision of the principal school limits various sources of control over teachers' work, then the education office and, to some extent, the local government. The autonomy of history teachers at Purbalingga Public Madrasah Aliyah is similar to that of Senior High School 1 Kejobong in that the autonomy of history teachers to plan lessons is expressed within the boundaries set by the national curriculum. Although public, history teachers' framework in this school seems to be more inclined towards the teachings of *Nahdlatur Ulama*, Indonesia's largest religious organisation. However, history teachers expressed a desire to use their knowledge to plan concrete activities. For example, one history teacher noted a challenging understanding of the concept of learning history:

> *I give an assignment to the children to make a schedule of visits to historical places. So the children will see the real thing, whether together or individually, making students' understanding of history more contextualised. Students do not just learn from academic books but relate it to actual actions*

(History Teacher Purbalingga Public Madrasah Aliyah, March 18, 2022).

Teachers at Purbalingga Public Madrasah Aliyah seem to have wide autonomy to apply various methods in planning history lessons. However, this freedom is highly dependent on competence and independence from dependence on history textbooks. The decision-making of history teachers at Purbalingga Public Madrasah Aliyah in using learning resources should not only be from one source, just like the case at Senior High School 1 Kejobong. For example, history teachers use learning materials that are already structured and only give additions to do the planning. Other sources of inspiration can be taken from digital or audio-visual platforms. However, history teachers in the history learning process are always guided by the policy framework: learning should not be dictated only from one textbook source and must be directed towards contextualised action.

In Senior High School 1 Kejobong and Purbalingga Public Madrasah Aliyah, performance in national examinations is an external control on teachers' work to plan lessons. These schools are tied to the national exam as a determinant of student graduation. However, history teachers claim that the assessment does not affect their work in lesson planning. Meanwhile, the autonomy of history teachers at Muhammadiyah Purbalingga Senior High School also has its own description when planning. History teachers put more emphasis on planning lessons that are integrated with the objectives of the history subject. In this assessment system, history teachers are directed to use criteria in designing appropriate tasks. History teachers at Muhammadiyah Purbalingga Senior High School provide examples of how to conduct assessment-based planning:

> *I have to customise the criteria for assessing students' national exam materials and then design a plan. The final assessment is carried out to all units (...), so it is a directed assessment; it is quite good to have this as the final assessment*

(History Teacher Muhammadiyah Purbalingga Senior High School, March 20, 2022).

The criteria are continuously discussed with students; for example, each unit works on organising and analysing criteria at the beginning of the meeting. Furthermore, the history teacher's choice of method is linked to a particular approach; the chosen learning method should link the planning and the learning outcomes. These frameworks and approaches show that the autonomy of history teachers remains limited although teachers are left to design their lesson plans and processes. History teachers' work with planning at the classroom level is closely linked to Muhammadiyah Purbalingga Senior High School's rules for interpreting the curriculum; however, within agreed boundaries, history teachers retain decision-making over the selection of content and learning methods.

At the school level, collaboration in planning is an important standard and practice within the Muhammadiyah organisation that requires agreement with the school. This means that history teachers must contribute to a collaborative team, which takes place in various agendas throughout the year, such as meetings after school or at designated times. These meetings are usually led by the curriculum coordinator, who must bridge and direct teachers to align their vision with the criteria of the Muhammadiyah organisation. In these meetings, there is mutual reflection, discussion, and sharing of opinions on curriculum development and classroom experiences; however, these meetings then decide what autonomy should be given to teachers and, on the other hand, limit teachers' decision-making. Like in public and religious schools, the autonomy of history teachers at Muhammadiyah Purbalingga Senior High School in interpreting the curriculum is controlled by student learning outcomes measured by national exams. The results of the study can be summarised in Table 1.

Discussion

Common Pedagogical Ideas in Different Schools

As already shown in the research results, the specific characteristics of curriculum control give history teachers autonomy differently. The findings show that the three schools formed similar curriculum control aspects. In particular, the analysis of history teachers' autonomy in the three schools is closely related to the results-first education system, which is characterised by the monitoring of national exam results. The policy of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum since 2021, which is applied in public and religious schools, seems to have led to increased standardisation of curriculum structure in the three schools, drawing on common pedagogical ideas. Private schools were more flexible in choosing an outcome-based approach and had responsive actions to deal with the new curriculum change policy, as was the case at Muhammadiyah Purbalingga Senior High School. This analysis shows a shift in the general pedagogical ideas programmed by the national policy framework to focus more on student learning outcomes. This shift was understood to build a common pedagogical foundation for teachers and schools rather than focusing on the basics to facilitate heterogeneous education (see Buyruk & Akbas, 2021; Cheng et al., 2016; Lennert da Silva, 2022; Wright et al., 2018).

This phenomenon seems to contradict education policies that legitimise the freedom of policy-making in private schools, based on the logic that increased diversity in school choice can improve the quality of education. This is also the case in many parts of the world, such as in America and Europe, where highly regulated education systems can limit the role of promotion and private involvement in education (see Hangartner & Svaton, 2022;

Table 1 Characteristics of history teachers' planning autonomy and curriculum control

School Name	School Characteristics	Curriculum Control Model Type	Documentation of Teaching Modules	Organisational Authority
Senior High School 1 Kejobong	Public schools with a general national ideology	Philanthropic Model and Licence Model	Personal autonomy and collaboration with MGMP	Government of Indonesia, regency-level education office
Purbalingga Public Madrasah Aliyah	Public schools with Nahdatul Ulama religious ideology	Philanthropic Model and Licence Model	Personal autonomy and collaboration with MGMPs	Indonesian government, regency-level religion department
Muhammadiyah Purbalingga Senior High School	Private schools with Muhammadiyah religious ideology	Licence Model and Examination Model	Personal autonomy and collaboration with MGMP and Muhammadiyah organisations	Muahmmadiyah organisation, regency-level education office

Rakoma & Matshe, 2014;). Tensions in schools will occur when the space for freedom and diversity in practice is restricted, and the regulated system increasingly insists on a logic of increased accountability and profit orientation that causes several consequences (Apple, 2018; Salokangas & Ainscow, 2017). On the one hand, public schools seem to lose their general pedagogical ideas, as in the case of Senior High School 1 Kejobong and Purbalingga Public Madrasah Aliyah. On the other hand, history teachers in public schools see the restriction and regulation of diversity as positive. This is because restrictions on autonomy allow teachers to deal with the complexities and risks of the teaching job. Wermke et al. (2022) refer to this as the 'autonomy paradox', where restrictions still positively impact teachers' work.

History Teachers' Autonomy from Various Interpretations

The analysis shows that there are limits to the autonomy of history teachers to develop lesson plans. Initially, private school teachers appear to have greater autonomy, and national policy instruments guide history teachers in public schools. However, the autonomy of history teachers in private schools is equally limited, mainly by the organisational framework. Teachers in private schools feel that they have greater autonomy in lesson planning although this is not explicitly stated. History teachers in public schools are moulded by clear frameworks and seem to be at odds with the 'freedom to learn' that the Merdeka Curriculum campaigns for (see Junaidin et al., 2022; Sihombing et al., 2021), having a licence to do the 'right thing' according to national frameworks. Although, private schools work flexibly and eventually lead to a focus on university entrance requirements.

In private schools, having a national curriculum and following the organisation's ideology simultaneously can make the autonomy of history teachers to plan lessons more complex (Gershon, 2014; Muhammad, 2021); however, history teachers are mostly supported by collaborative work with various additional tools. In contrast to public schools, teachers' autonomy is affected by limited planning formats and the accountability of the assessment system. In history teacher autonomy, collaboration does not necessarily eliminate personal autonomy. Working with various parties supports autonomy, such as expanding knowledge of co-designing curriculum, understanding different perspectives, and achieving better learning outcomes (Dieudé & Prøitz, 2022). There is consistency between the desire to pursue "national standards" and the responsibility of

history teachers to teach other local histories (Hopmann, 1999). Curriculum control in public schools, categorised by the philanthropic model, seems to overlap with other models of curriculum control (Hopmann, 1999). Their professional experience also shapes teachers' dependence on national frameworks in public schools.

Teacher autonomy and the lesson planning process significantly impact students' history learning outcomes, both in public and private schools. In the lesson planning process, clear and relevant learning objectives are set. Well-defined objectives help guide history teachers in designing suitable and targeted learning experiences so that students can develop a deep understanding of historical material (Salokangas & Ainscow, 2017). On the other hand, teachers' autonomy allows them to select and customise learning materials that are more appropriate to students' needs and interests. As a result, students' understanding becomes deeper as they can better connect with contextualised learning materials. To better understand this research, the curriculum control experienced by history teachers can be understood in Figure 2.
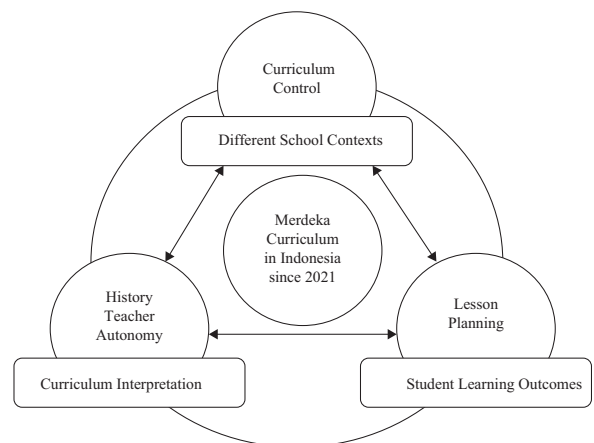

Figure 2 Forms of curriculum control and history teacher autonomy

The government's shift to stricter standards in schools is questionable, as it indirectly impacts parents' opportunity to exercise their right to choose the best school for their children (Bencze & Giuseppe, 2006; Supriyoko et al., 2022). At the same time, the organisational position in private schools seems to significantly influence history teachers' work compared to public schools. The tight control of private organisations to improve educational services is the most important factor in recruiting students. To better

understand this influence, future researchers could further investigate how private organisations should improve educational services so that parents are more interested in sending their children to private schools compared to public schools (see Cheng et al., 2016; Dieudé & Prøitz, 2022). One implication of this study is the need for further investigation into different parental responses and willingness to question the job demands of teachers.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This research shows that outcomes-based education practices influence the basic ideological profiles of different school contexts, and most differences seem to remain in history teachers' choices for planning methods. At the same time, the restrictive system makes the private sector less developed, although, in the Indonesian context, the freedom to organise schools is still open. Furthermore, the different spaces in education between educational actors and curriculum instruments further condition history teachers' expectations and realities. This can be interpreted as positive support for teachers to resolve the complexity of professional work by overcoming contingencies in education. However, it must be accepted as a consequence that the educational space becomes more controlled, and this dual policy of the government is directly utilised and manifested into classroom teaching practices.

With the rise of populist governments in this era of decentralisation, it is important to debate further how this space can safeguard issues of democracy, the role of teacher autonomy and accountability in education. At the same time, this study shows how public and religious schools are governed by different types of curriculum control and autonomy granting. This research recommends strengthening the concept launched by the Indonesian government so that the Merdeka Curriculum implemented is not just a name but can be implemented at a practical level by teachers in schools. The findings can serve as study material for future research on curriculum control and lesson planning to strengthen the implementation of ideal education policies with the demands of the times.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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