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SCHOOL-BASED CURRICULUM POLICY IN INDONESIA: THE NEED FOR AUTONOMOUS AND INNOVATIVE TEACHERS AND DEMOCRATIC SCHOOLS

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Abstract

The writing investigates the importance of school-based curriculum (SBC) in line with the issue of democratizing schools. The emergence of this relatively new curriculum seems to have encountered the fact that not all teachers are accustomed with independence and innovative habits to design their teaching and other educational roles. If such an issue cannot be anticipated, this curriculum in practice seems the same as the previous curriculum which tends to ignore teachers' instructional initiatives. At this point, teachers appear to be passive practitioners rather than to be creative teaching designers. This circumstance can become a barrier to create a more qualified school. In order to maximize this existing curriculum's impact on building teachers' and schools' capacities, by making use of a couple of related references, this study tries to analyze the nature of SBC, strategies of optimizing teachers' educational innovation and roles, and possible efforts to project a school as a democratic miniature society. Having analyzed some conceptual perspectives, this study shows that SBC is more than giving teachers opportunities to design their teaching practices but, instead, promoting their autonomy to make particular educational decisions. As well as improving their own teaching design quality and innovation, teachers need to be supported to build on their wide range of educational cooperation with other colleagues in regard to either their teaching practices or professional development. Besides, SBC will be practically enhanced if such democratic values as freedom, openness and equality are to be institutionalized in a school. Thus, teachers' capacity and institutional democratization are fundamentally strategic to implement SBC.

Key words: School-Based Curriculum; Autonomous Teachers; Innovative Teachers; Democratic Schools.

Introduction

One of the most significant current discussions in educational policy is the curriculum model. Although the term 'curriculum' has varied definitions, the meaning of it is simply related to 'subjects taught in schools' (Alkin, 1992, p.287). Such an understanding seems to have been issued by many States including Indonesia and everywhere else in which what students' learn must fit with in particular structured curricula in their schools. However, each country might have certain curriculum model issued, implemented and renewed for certain periods of time. Indonesia for instance has longer practiced nationally-controlled curriculum until the emergence of the idea and the practice of educational reform taking place since the 2000s simultaneously along with the mainstream of de-centralization. The recent curriculum has then emphasized on more wide range of participations of schools' communities including principals, teachers

and parents. This sort of curriculum called 'Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan' (KTSP issued in 2006) which might be equivalent of the term 'School-Based Curriculum' (SBC) is actually in the spirit of widening school community's participation. As a completion of the previous one known as 'Competency-Based Curriculum' (CBC issued in 2004), SBC has primarily reoriented the role of teachers as the central figures, for instance, in making syllabi and learning plans. However, a major problem with this kind of curriculum is that to what extent can teachers make innovation and development of their learning? Is it practically accomplished by returning curriculum planning to them? How to create school cultures and environment supporting the role of teachers in implementing that curriculum? These issues might be relevant to address since the change from the centrality to the decentrality of education still needs to be broadly discussed.

Researchers have recently shown an increased interest in the notion that even if the existing curriculum take an emphasis on 'school-based', not merely 'competencybased', not all principals and teachers have been available and kept motivated to develop and innovate their schools or learning processes (Depdiknas, 2007). It is because of the fact that many of them have longer become receivers of technical educational policies and programs from the government rather than becoming innovators of instructional designs and practices. Changing the nomenclature from 'competency-based' to 'school-based' indicates that schools' managers should not mean the framework of national education standards as a barrier for them to make possible innovations. However, in practice, it seems reasonable to be aware of the notion that competency-based learning is philosophically influenced by behaviorism which tends to force students to master a certain skill even if in practice 'students can be given a wide range of alternative skills they individually interest' (Hillier, 2005, p.79). Accordingly, teachers can be trapped in imposing their notions or learning forms to students. It means that on the one hand teachers have had more chances to innovate their teaching but on the other they can be less democratic instead of becoming egalitarian since their students only become learning consumers. At this point, the main challenge for teachers is how to treat their students equally and 'students are able to decide important issues' in their classroom (Zajda, 2005, p.). Thus, the possible issue emerging in line with the practice of SBC is the role of teachers in dealing with the extent to which students' participation or in a general term 'learning democratization' can be improved.

By referring to several studies, the KTSP has principally offered the basic guidelines such as competency standards and basic competencies which must be nationally prioritized by schools in Indonesia. In practice, furthermore, every school also must locally produce a particular curriculum design (Muslich, 2009; Khaeruddin, et.al., 2009). However, according to Stenhouse (1975), the curriculum model as proposed by Tyler (1949) for example, emphasizing on fixed objectives of learning is undermining the complexity of learning process because the learning interaction has been determined earlier than adapted and managed to the ongoing process of learning (cited in Alkin (1992, p.257). Even though schools can create their own curriculum, Pollard and Triggs (2002, p.136) argue that 'an overemphasis on focused, basic instruction risks undermining curriculum engagement and the self-belief of children as learners'. In the sense, teachers have a significant position to be, say, 'educational brokers' who are capable of not merely transmitting what they have constructed in their schools' curricula, but of creatively and democratically reinterpreting and adapting the existing curricula to the students' needs, differences and potentials instead. The tricky and

strategic way teachers may be able to carry out seems not to be convenient because "there is always a tension between a teacher's capacity to act on their individual judgment and to conform to external constraints" (Bartlett and Burton, 2009, 75). Reducing the external impositions from either national agencies or schools as a system is likely to be inevitable to strive for. This essay, therefore, tries to examine the essence of SBC to enhance the teachers' roles and quality and to make schools become more democratic learning environment. This paper systematically begins by discussing the notion of curriculum decentralization as part of educational democratization in general. It will then go on to

analyse SBC as conceptualized and being practiced in Indonesia. Furthermore, it will emphasize that the centrality of teachers along with their autonomy and innvation, and a democratic schools' system are crucial parts of succeeding the actualization of the

existing curriculum.

Democratizing education is de-centralizing curriculum?:

Literature review in brief

A considerable amount of literature has been published on the importance of curriculum decentralization--which can be defined as reduction or even devision of the degree of curriculum decision making centralized on the top system given to the lower or sub-systems. Generally speaking, the issue of educational decentralization has emerged as both a response to the limitation of the central system—say, the government—to cover all educational aspects and needs on the one hand, and an effort to cultivate local potentials and power to build education on the other. Moreover, there have been varied and complicated issues of formal or non-formal education actually taking place in each region with/to which the central government could not deal and anticipate. The evidence of this trend, for instance, can be seen from the fact that in terms of curriculum, there have been many teaching materials which do not consider local dinamism. For instance, the books of the government system during Suharto's, the former President, era tended to impose the Javanese political system to other local political systems. This political domination or as Gramsci calls 'hegemony' is likely to have diminished the local wisdom. Some of other localities have longer had different trends in terms of politic, socio-cultures and economy. In the sense, it can be said that preserving and developing local diversity seem to be appropriate by fostering decentralized education including curriculum.

In their analyses of the notions of whether centralized or de-centralized curriculum which is necessarily to disseminate, Kelley (2009) compares between Schon's and Havelock's models, each of which consists of three models while Meaghan (2007) classifies five models of curriculum construction. Their studies can be shown in the

following table:

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Market Section 1	Table 1		Construction an	d Disseminatio	on Models
	's Models	Havelo	Meaghan's models		
Model	Essence			Model	Essence
Centre- peripher y	Centrally controlled and managed curriculu m	RDD (Research, Developm ent and Diffusion)	There is a developer who identifies the problem and a receiver who is essentially a passive of the curriculum innovation	imposed curriculum the imposed interpretative	fully decided by persons or a group of people under the State adults becoming teachers have a possibility to interpret the imposed materials curriculum which gives 'top priority to the skills of learning themselves since they are seen as permanent in contrast to specific blocks of information'
Proliferation of Centres	Creating secondary centers led to reach the efficiency of the primary centre	Social Interaction (SI)	The interaction between members of the adopting groups and social climate of the receiving body (the Schools Council, etc)	the consultative curriculum	curriculum with which students have opportunities to regularly consult certain programs but, however, 'the veto is firmly retained by the teacher who decides whether the feedback can be incorporated into the existing scheme of the things'
Shifting Centres	The absence of any clearly establishe d centre	Problem- Solving (PS)	The problem is identified by the consumer and there is a mutual collaboration between the external support agent and the consumer	the negotiated curriculum the democratic curriculum	'the degree of power sharing increases', the teacher is in the role of persuader and uses reason than the veto'; some negotiated are timetable, program will be delivered, etc A group of learners write, implement and review their own curriculum starting out with a blank piece
Course: Vo	llav 2000 n	- 12C 120. N	Meaghan 1988	22.20./	of paper

Source: Kelley, 2009, pp.126-128; Meaghan, 1988, pp.32-39 (modified)

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Such a perspective might be influenced by the notion that there is no single determinant factor or even perspective of appropriately putting curriculum into practice. It is quite similar to Bartlett and Burton's (2009, p.77) statement that 'in modern state education systems, the curriculum is likely to derive from a complex amalgam of different ideologies rather than from one completely consistent, clearly defined paradigm'. With regard to these different standpoints, I would argue that taking account of democratic curriculum construction and dissemination is necessarily linked to the extent to which each level of curriculum centers and practices accommodate research and development or, in other words, receive 'a possible change'. There is a likelihood that the central government changes or develops its curriculum construction fitting with the dynamism of local schools and communities. Furthermore, Meaghan's model might be true to assert that in practice teaching can develop the role of both a teacher and students variously in which, for instance, the teacher sometimes determines and leads his/her teaching plan and process, and in another time, students can be optimally participative to initiate their learning process, timetable, classroom discipline, evaluation system, and so on. However, which is an appropriate circumstance of learning that is able to shape the type of curriculum construction? Is it based on each teacher's mood, interest and knowledge or the criterion of endorsing much more wide range of students' needs, participation and enhancement? The latter consideration, I argue, students' activism and participation which are endorsed by teachers' commitment of improving their teaching quality and innovation might be able to be the criteria of democratic curriculum construction and dissemination in the schooling process.

Review and Discussion

School-Based Curriculum (SBC) in Indonesia

Over the last decade, there has been an intensive discourse and practice of more integrated and humanistic curriculum in many countries (Pollard, 2008; Hillier, 2005) including in Indonesia. From some literature, it might be clear that during the New Order regime, the type of curricula constructed and implemented in the 1968, 1975, 1984 and 1994 were both politically centralized due to, in particular, elites' political domination and, more over were conceptually partial because they tended to emphasize on cognitive or intellectual domains of students. Since the reform era in the 2000s, however, the mainstream of de-centralizing and even democratizing curriculum has directed to the awareness of the need for fulfilling the concept of a student as an integrated human being. Quite interestingly, Anam (2005), for instance, has tried to differentiate between curriculum issued in 1994 and 2004 as follows:

Table 2 The Difference between the 1994 and 2004 Curricula

Dimensions	The 1994 Curriculum	The 2004 Curriculum	
Learning Target Content and Evaluation	Content mastery Cognition-oriented	Competency The emphasis on students' cognition, affection and behaviors and classroom-based	
Learning Method	Teacher-centered learning,	assessment. Student-centered learning; joyful	
Management	Details of curriculum are nationally controlled	Principals and teachers have a responsibility to arrange and develop syllabi referring to	

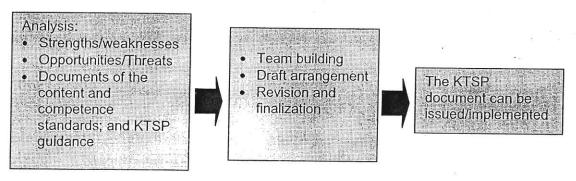
national standards.

Source: Anam, S., 2005, pp. 235-242 (modified)

The table shows that the 2004 curriculum known as 'Competency-Based Curriculum' (CBC) was drawing attention to the objectives or particular skills students have to attain rather than becoming proficient in understanding many contents of curriculum. The prior curriculum clearly took an emphasis on 'content mastery,' as a result, students tended to merely become consumers of knowledge or as Freire (1970) termed a 'banking concept of education' in which students only memorize what their teachers talk about. Within this CBC is the practice of learning where students have a great deal chances of expressing and accomplishing their work individually or collectively very often called 'Student-Centered Learning' (SCL). In terms of curriculum construction and dissemination, CBC gives teachers a golden opportunity to create their syllabi and teaching plans provided they refer to the framework of national curriculum. The 2004 curriculum then became the starting point of the emergence of the existing curriculum usually called 'KTSP' or SBC (School-Based Curriculum).

KTSP has officially been implemented in the academic year 2006/2007. Different from a couple of previous curricula, this kind of curriculum must be arranged and managed by every single educational level (Muslich, 2009, p.v.). This type of curriculum however must refer and base on educational national standards issued by the government (The Government Regulation Number 19, 2005). Such standards consist of the contents and competencies students must master and achieve (The Government Regulation Number 22 and 23, 2006). It seems that KTSP similar to the concept of SBC has recently been assumed as a bridge or an alternative to reduce certain imposed curriculum that have been proved to be failed in disseminating innovation primarily from outside schools (Kelley, 2009, p.134). By using Schon's and Havelock models, KTSP has reduced and even changed 'the center-periphery' and 'RDD models' which are inconsistent to the idea of building schools' participation. In this framework, KTSP gives an emphasis on what schools' communities can accomplish, not what the government must issue.

To clearly understand how KTSP is constructed, the following picture might be relevant:



Scheme 1 The Steps of KTSP Development (Source: Muslich, 2009, 28)

The scheme generally illustrates the process of designing KTSP where schools must assess themselves in line with 'SWOT' (Strenghts, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis and take account of the national standards for education documents and other curricula guidance. These basic analyses are small part of the complexity of the real curriculum. The main point that may not appear on the picture is that the involvement of the school's community consisting of a principal, teachers, students,

parents and social elements such as social, economic and religious figures to create this sort of curriculum is considerable. It is important to note, therefore, because the term 'school-based' replacing 'competency-based' focuses attention on the school stakeholders' involvement.

According to Kelley (2009, pp.134-135), the major principles of SBC consists of:

1) endorsing a more democratic activity for both teachers and learners; 2) fitting schools with their environment; 3) adapting and developing educational processes based on research and development. These principles can be compared with the work of Muslich (2009, p. 49-51) explaining that KTSP offers several basic instructional principles: first, learning processes centered on students; second, learning by doing; third, all personality aspects such as intellectuality, emotions, spirituality and social dimensions covered; fourth, life-long learning; and fifth, independent learning and learning to make cooperation. Both experts seem to examine that SBC or KTSP does not terminate in teachers' creativity by which they are professional and independent but uphold students' activities to attain their main and additional competencies. By taking consideration of the term 'life-long learning', it indicates that KTSP tries to reach more than what students can learn from their classrooms, instead, what students can take from the environment called 'local cultures or wisdoms' and other social atmospheres where they live in.

Teachers' qualities: Autonomous, cooperative and innovative
To discuss the role of teachers in the context of SBC design and implementation, below
is an illustration of a possibility of the learning process which might be able to be
practiced:

Table 3 The Two Different Learning Circumstances

Teacher-Centred	Learning Circumstances
A L 1	Student-Centred ""
A teacher is explaining the differences	Students are reading it
suc sumanties between presidential	and discussing in pairs the differences and
- personal citary pystern	the similarities between presidential and
	parliamentary system. After that a teacher
	clarifies what students have learnt.

The first column demonstrates that the teacher seems to teach fixed and patterned materials of teaching while the second column shows that the teacher provides more flexible interaction even if the materials taught are generally controlled. However, the latter tends to fit with the more democratic and negotiated curriculum design than the former. It seems that the instructional behavior of teachers as shown in teacher-centered learning eliminates the possibility of active and participatory learning processes. Here, as Kelley (2009: p.15) said, there seems a kind of 'thought-police'. She considers that what controls teachers is not probably teachers' thought themselves but is the upper system or government which produces the curriculum and then controls 'the activities of teachers'. Consequently, in the learning process, teachers only become transmitters of politically controlled-knowledge. Similar to this type of transmitted knowledge, Hillier (2005) said that,

"We do not teach in a vacuum. We are products of complex social and personal circumstances that affect anything we do. Some of the things that we think are a result of the influences of ideology, what Gramsci (1971) called hegemony" (p.6).

To reduce the influence of certain ideology which pays less attention to and undermines students' participation has been popularized the type of student-centered learning as described in the second column being promoted by the government through SBC. This type of learning endorses teachers' and students' engagement simultaneously and all of this leads to enhance students' achievement and quality. To optimize this kind of learning orientation is probably difficult if the teachers' characteristics might not support it. To fulfill the need, Pollard (1997) states that teachers need to reflect on what they have done in their classrooms and to improve their competencies and professionalism. To accomplish such a process effectively, Pollard proposes some individual capacities namely,

"... open-mindedness, active concern with aims and consequences of teaching, ability to employ methods of enquiry, ability to employ self-reflection and also collaboration with peers, ability to engage in a dialogue with colleagues" (cited in Hillier, 2005, p. 11).

Those qualities as stated by Pollard contain teachers' competencies needed to support the sustainability of SBC. In short, teachers should be autonomous figures who are able to facilitate their students to explore and possibly develop knowledge. Autonomy here could be defined as 'the possession of self-government' (Concise Oxford English Dictionary (Eleventh Edition)) which means that, along with their students, teachers should be able to manage what to be learnt and how to learn in their classrooms. In the sense, as SBC has guided that curricula taught in classrooms must be fitted with 'the national standards', every teacher should respond to this regulation not just as a barrier but, rather, as a challenge to creatively break down the national rules into practice. Therefore, the meaning of teachers' autonomy in the framework of SBC is in line with their capacities and attitudes to deepen and develop particular subjects they teach, not merely to follow a book or reference referring to the national standards, to imitate others' practices without critical thinking or to take others' designs for granted.

In order for teachers' autonomy to be educationally optimized, there has been one of the types of research the government supports since 2006 called 'Classroom Action Research' (CAR). As far as it is concerned, the Ministry of National Education (now is the Ministry of Education and Culture) has allocated the budget to facilitate Universities' and schools' educators to practice this sort of research. Theoretically speaking, the idea and practice of classroom action research is an effort of analyzing and overcoming classrooms' problems individually or collaboratively accomplished by teachers instead of only making use of research results from outsiders and of educational policies (Dana and Yendol-Silva, 2003, p.1). Given that, the concept of autonomous teachers is not to isolate them from their colleagues, rather, to make them get involved in their learning community more confidently and responsibly. The following is probably linked to such a notion:

"...Good teachers are necessarily autonomous in professional judgment ... This does not mean that they do not welcome access to ideas created by other people at other places or in other times. But they do not know that ideas and people are not of much real use until they are disgested to the point where they are subject to the teacher's own judgment ..." (Stenhause (1984) cited in Hopkins, 1993, p.34).

From that Stenhause's work, it might be clear that the capability of a teacher to transform certain ideas and practicalities into his or her specific work, and to take into

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account and decide certain standpoints is his or her real autonomy. Based on the notion, I argue that teachers need for having so-called 'responsible autonomy'. The term refers to the spirit of making judgment by basing on convincing ideas and practices. It is important to take into consideration since there has been a perspective that tends to completely reject others' notions without respect on the one hand, or to receive particular standpoints without criticism on the other. They are actually a quite harmful approach if becoming teachers' mind and attitude sets. For that reason, as a educational notions and practices.

Referring to that responsible autonomy, it can be said that teachers should be familiar with cooperative habits. As mentioned earlier, the work of Pollard (2008), Dana and Yendol-Silva (2003) and Stenhause (1984) accentuates on teachers' open-mindedness in order for them to be professionally enhanced. Without this commitment, teachers' competency development could be evolutionary or even stagnant. By practicing CAR for instance, teachers could observe, assess and give a feedback to each other. In the framework of SBC, team teaching might become one of the ways of dealing with classrooms' challenges for teachers collectively. Thus, it is clear that cooperation among teachers in designing and implementing SBC related to their own subjects is by means crucial to suggest to be practiced in their classrooms.

Furthermore, another issue broadly discussed is innovation and its sustainability a teacher or a group of teachers possibly create. Put simply, something innovative might demonstrate 'new methods or original ideas' (Concise Oxford English Dictionary (Eleventh Edition)). In the context of SBC, teachers should try something new such as teaching methods and aids practiced in their classrooms, or try to develop learning-teaching techniques and other instructional activities which highly endorse students' literacy, intelligence, emotional and spiritual development. What a teacher carries out when promoting learner-centered learning as illustrated in table 3 for example needs particular innovation. To practice such a relatively new method could be hard because beginning something new in a classroom might result in 'a chaotic situation'. However, by continuously evaluating and reflecting on such condition taking place in the classroom, a teacher would be more aware of the possible problem and, further, more trained to deal with and overcome it.

As a practical way of sustaining innovation, teachers could take account of the following Kyriacou's work which gives some examples of key questions in line with the reflection to develop sustainable instructional innovation as follows:

Do I regularly consider my current practice with a view to identifying aspects that can be usefully developed? Do I make adequate use of evaluating my lessons in informing my future planning and practice? Do I make use of systematic model of collecting data about my current practice that may be helpful? Do I try to keep well-informed about developments in teaching, learning and assessment in schools that have implications for my teaching? Do I make use of a variety of different ways of developing a particular teaching skill (e.g. attending workshops, using training manuals, collaborating with colleagues)? Do I make the best use of my involvement in a scheme of teacher appraisal to consider my development needs? How well do I help colleagues to appraise and develop their classroom practice? Do I regularly review how I can organize my time and effort to better effect? Do I use a range of useful strategies and techniques to deal with sources of stress effectively? Do I help create a supportive climate in my school to help colleagues discuss and overcome problems? (cited in Pollard, 2008, p.134).

Such questions might be able to lead teachers to optimize their potentials and to sustain their possible creativity. In contrast to the ideal type of those reflective teachers, in fact, many teachers found tend to feel difficult to develop their potentials. There is evidence that the problem of SBC implementation is linked to teachers' engagement. Referring to my students' observation to some teachers who are in charge of designing KTSP or SBC at their schools in Yogyakarta district (Indonesia), SBC construction and dissemination are unlikely to create more completely and to clearly conceptualize teachers' instructional orientations (Observed in December 2011). Therefore, it can be said that sustainable instructional innovation in the context of SBC implementation seems to be far-reaching practices which need to be comprehensively evaluated.

Schools' capacity: Democratization

By making use of Suryadi and Budimansyah (2004)'s idea of school's categorization towards autonomy as below, the implementation of SBC can also be taken into account.

Table 4 Schools' Categories and Their Capacity Building

Category	Condition	Capacity Building
Pre-formal	Lack of resources (humans and non-humans)	
Formal	The number of human and technical resources is already fulfilled.	
Transitional	More qualified and creative human resources and improved learning processes	
Autonomous		Developing indicator system of measuring attainment targets

Source: Suryadi and Budimansyah, 2004, pp. 150-151 (modified)

Based on the table, if teachers become main determinants, SBC might be able to be easily practiced in the category of autonomous school because professional teachers would be likely to more quickly adapt to change and innovation. However, schools' cultures which support openness, equality and participation are urgent to accelerate and expand teachers' contribution. O'Meara (2007, p.1) adds that the benchmark of a democratic school actually emphasizes 'transparency, accountability and community participation'. In details, the position of a principal and teachers for instance is like 'a educational broker' who redefines and endorses school's curriculum to be more democratic rather than just imposing certain curriculum from the government or its agency.

According to Kelley (2009, pp. 136-137), SBC is dependent upon three key features: change agents (principals, senior teachers, creative minority in a school, etc); outside support agency (the School Councils/Education Boards/National Board for Educational Standards, schools' committee, etc); and the centrality of the teacher (through in-service training, research and development—including CAR). By taking account of these pillars, SBC in Indonesia seems to focus on the improvement of teachers' contribution and more democratic schools. Their principals for instance should promote open mindedness and desires for change. Without such qualities, teachers' creativity might be terminated before coming into existence. Furthermore, Nielsen (cited

in Jalal and Supriadi, 2001, p.178) also offered the possible communities' contribution such as 'support', 'involvement, 'partnership' and 'full ownership' of parents and other communities in generating SBC to improve Indonesia's educational practicalities.

Conclusion

The challenge of implementing School-Based Curriculum in Indonesia which is the so-called 'KTSP' seems not only at the level of the government policy, but also at that of schools and teachers' participation and innovation. The teachers' qualities such as autonomous, cooperative and innovative would become indicators of SBC implementation and its sustainability. Besides, more democratic schools would also support their teachers to be highly innovative. Therefore, it can be inferred that to succeed SBC in Indonesia, the government should pay more attention to teachers' capacities and educational environment where they take part in educating young generations.

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