



Implementation of Student-Centered Learning

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54099/ijesd.v3i2.1603>

ARTICLE INFO

Research Paper

Article history:

Received: 4 August 2025

Revised: 15 October 2025

Accepted: 24 November 2025

Keywords: Student-Centered Learning, Independent Curriculum, Active Learning

ABSTRACT

This qualitative descriptive study explores the implementation of Student-Centered Learning (SCL) at MTsN 1 and MTsN 2 Bukittinggi through interviews, observations, and documentation. At MTsN 1, active learning strategies such as discussions, project-based learning (PBL), and differentiated instruction are being applied, particularly in classes using the Independent Curriculum and Semester Credit System (SKS). Teachers act more as facilitators, and students show increased engagement and independence. Meanwhile, MTsN 2 shows a slower shift toward SCL, with teacher-centered approaches still dominant and low student participation. Limited digital learning use, weak reflective practices, and inadequate teacher training hinder effective SCL implementation. NVivo 12 was used to analyze and visualize emerging themes and patterns. The study suggests that to enhance SCL, schools need to strengthen teacher competence, improve learning infrastructure, and build a culture of reflection to support inclusive, student-focused education. These findings offer valuable insights for policymakers and educators aiming to improve 21st-century learning environments in Islamic secondary schools.

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INTRODUCTION

21st century education demands a change in the learning paradigm from teacher-centered to student-centered learning (*Student-Centered Learning/SCL*). This approach positions students as active subjects in the learning process, which is expected to enhance independence, creativity, collaboration, and critical and reflective thinking skills. In line with this, the Independent Curriculum, which is being gradually implemented at various levels of education in Indonesia, provides more space for teachers and students to conduct flexible and contextual learning, including at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) level.

However, the implementation of SCL in educational institutions does not always run smoothly. This change requires teacher readiness, adequate facilities, and a supportive learning culture. In Bukittinggi City, MTsN 1 and MTsN 2, state madrasahs under the auspices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, have begun implementing the Independent Curriculum with the hope of optimally adopting the SCL approach. However, differences in internal conditions, teacher competency, and managerial support can impact the success of implementation. This research is crucial to determine the extent to which SCL has been implemented in both madrasahs, identify supporting and inhibiting factors, and understand how teachers and students respond to this learning transformation. The findings are expected to provide

strategic input for madrasas and policymakers to strengthen the implementation of more student-centered learning in a concrete and sustainable manner.

Research Problems or Gaps in the use of the approach *Student-Centered Learning (SCL)* While widely introduced through the Independent Curriculum and various teacher training programs, its implementation in the field remains uneven. In many educational institutions, including madrasas, learning still tends to be teacher-centered, with a predominance of lecture methods and minimal active student involvement in the learning process. This gap demonstrates the inconsistency between the ideal concept of student-centered learning and actual classroom practice.

At MTsN 1 Bukittinggi and MTsN 2 Bukittinggi, there are few studies that thoroughly examine the extent to which SCL principles have been implemented, the supporting and inhibiting factors, and the responses of teachers and students to this approach. The differences in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum and the credit system (SKS) also create interesting variations in practice that are worth analyzing. Therefore, this research is important to fill the gap in empirical data regarding SCL implementation at the MTs level within the Ministry of Religious Affairs, particularly in Bukittinggi City.

The research objectives are to 1) **Analyze the level of implementation of student-centered learning (SCL)** at MTsN 1 and MTsN 2 Bukittinggi, both in terms of learning strategies, teacher roles, student involvement, and the use of learning media. 2) Identifying supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of student-centered learning in both madrasas. 3) Describing the efforts of teachers and madrasahs in overcoming obstacles to the implementation of SCL and adapting the learning approach to the needs of students. 4) Presenting a comparative overview of the implementation of SCL between MTsN 1 and MTsN 2 Bukittinggi to determine best practices and areas that need improvement.

While the benefits of research for This study contributes to the development of student-centered learning (SCL) theory, particularly in the context of its implementation in madrasas. The results of this study can serve as a reference for further research related to active and constructivist learning approaches in junior high school education. This research is also beneficial for **Teacher** in provide more effective and participatory learning practices, and encourage reflection on the role of teachers as facilitators and motivators in learning. The next benefit is to **Head of Madrasah** in providing concrete data regarding readiness, challenges, and strategic steps that need to be taken to strengthen the implementation of SCL, including in terms of policies, training, and provision of learning resources. Create a **pstudents** This research encourages the creation of learning that is more enjoyable, inclusive, and tailored to the needs and potential of individual students. Furthermore, **for the Ministry of Religion and Education Stakeholders** as material for evaluation and policy making based on empirical data, especially in developing strategies to improve the quality of learning in madrasas through a student-oriented approach.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In facing the demands of 21st-century education, learning approaches that place students at the center of the learning process are becoming increasingly relevant and urgent. One widely developed and recommended approach is Student-Centered Learning (SCL), which emphasizes active student involvement in learning activities and the development of their holistic potential. The implementation of SCL aligns with the policy direction of the Independent Curriculum, which encourages flexibility, independence, and meaningfulness in the learning process. Therefore, a study of the concepts, principles, and implementation of SCL in the madrasah context, particularly at MTsN 1 and MTsN 2 Bukittinggi, is crucial to assess the alignment between policy and practice (Driyastutik et al., 2025; Iskanto et al., 2022; Siswanto & Daniswara, 2022).

Student-Centered Learning (SCL) is a learning approach that places students at the center of all learning activities. According to Weimer (2002), SCL emphasizes students' active role in the learning process, from information exploration, problem-solving, teamwork, and reflection. In this approach, the teacher

serves as a guiding facilitator, not the sole source of information. SCL is considered effective in fostering the development of 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity (Trilling & Fadel, 2009).

Some of the basic principles of SCL include active learning, student participation in designing learning, a focus on the process (not just the outcome), and a reflective approach. The Ministry of Education and Culture (2020) stated that student-centered learning is highly aligned with the Independent Curriculum, as it allows each student the freedom to choose their own learning style, interests, and pace.

In the madrasah context, implementing SCL presents a unique challenge, requiring adjustments to school culture, teacher competency, and the availability of facilities and infrastructure. Research by Hamalik (2019) indicates that teacher training, support from madrasah principals, and the use of technology are crucial factors in the successful implementation of SCL in Islamic educational settings. Teachers in the SCL approach are required to have strong pedagogical competencies and the ability to create a conducive, collaborative, and reflective learning environment. Feedback and learning evaluation are essential in building a culture of reflection that encourages students to understand their strengths and weaknesses (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

Digital media such as learning videos, interactive quiz apps, and online platforms significantly support the implementation of SCL. According to Warschauer (2011), ICT integration can expand access to information, accelerate feedback, and increase student motivation. In the madrasah context, technology utilization also serves as a means to bridge differences in student learning styles. The Independent Curriculum implemented by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology fully supports the principles of SCL. This curriculum provides autonomy for teachers and students to design contextual, meaningful, and needs-based learning activities. MTsN, as religious-based educational institutions, are also required to integrate character values into participatory and collaborative learning approaches (Herwina, 2022; Iskanto & Yapentra, 2018; Iskanto & Yulihardi, 2017).

Several relevant previous studies have shown that the Student-Centered Learning (SCL) approach has been proven to encourage active student engagement in the learning process. A study by Fitriyani (2021) entitled "Implementation of Student-Centered Learning in Improving Student Learning Activities at SMP Negeri 2 Sleman" found that the use of discussion, project, and presentation methods can increase active participation and a sense of responsibility for their learning. This is in line with findings at MTsN 1 Bukittinggi, where most teachers have begun implementing cooperative and project methods to encourage student engagement. Furthermore, Iskandar (2020) in his study entitled "The Role of Teachers in Implementing the Independent Curriculum Based on Student-Centered Learning" stated that the role of teachers as facilitators is crucial in creating effective learning. Obstacles such as limited learning media, teacher preparedness, and lack of training are inhibiting factors. This condition was also found at MTsN 2 Bukittinggi, where the implementation of SCL is still suboptimal due to the dominance of lecture methods and minimal use of digital media.

Research by Ningsih & Haryanto (2022) in the journal *Eduhumaniora* shows that reflection and feedback are important indicators in strengthening the SCL approach. However, interviews with teachers at both madrasahs indicate that the practice of reflection has not yet become fully ingrained in the culture. This requires special attention to ensure that the implementation of SCL is not merely a formality but a comprehensive and in-depth learning process.

In another study, Rahmawati (2023) examined the use of the NVivo application in analyzing qualitative data related to the implementation of active learning. The results showed that using assistive software like NVivo can facilitate researchers in identifying patterns, key themes, and relationships between learning elements. This supports the data analysis approach in this study, which also used NVivo to map SCL practices in two madrasahs.

METHODS

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach to provide an in-depth description of the implementation of Student-Centered Learning (SCL) at MTsN 1 and MTsN 2 Bukittinggi. The study was conducted in the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. **Research subjects** consisting of teachers, madrasah principals, and students from both MTsN. Informant selection was done purposively by considering their active involvement in the learning process. Data collection was conducted through: 1) in-depth interviews (4 teachers, 2 madrasah principals, and 6 students), 2) classroom observations (participatory and non-participatory), 3) documentation of teaching materials and learning media.

Data were analyzed thematically using NVivo 12 software. The analysis process included data reduction, coding, pattern identification, visualization of relationships between concepts, and interpretation. Relationship maps were used to map the interrelationships between learning strategies, student engagement, madrasah support, and challenges in SCL implementation. To ensure validity, this study employed data triangulation by comparing interview results, observations, and documentation. Member checking techniques were also used to ensure the validity of informant data.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research results show that MTsN 1 Bukittinggi has gradually begun implementing student-centered learning, particularly in grades VII and VIII, which use the Independent Curriculum and the credit system. Observations indicate that most teachers have implemented methods such as group discussions, project-based learning (PJBL), and problem-solving (PBL). Teachers act as active facilitators, and students appear enthusiastic and actively involved in the learning process. Interview results support this finding, highlighting teachers' awareness of accommodating differences in learning styles and providing space for student participation in reflection and feedback.

On the other hand, implementation at MTsN 2 Bukittinggi still demonstrates the dominance of traditional, teacher-centered approaches. Some teachers have implemented SCL, but most still rely on lecture methods and have not consistently integrated active learning strategies. Observations indicate that student engagement remains low, the classroom atmosphere is less conducive, and the use of digital learning media is very limited. Interviews with students also revealed boredom, a lack of motivation, and the lack of a reflective culture. Some of the main challenges faced by both madrasahs include limited digital facilities, uneven teacher competency in implementing SCL, and low active student participation, particularly at MTsN 2. Furthermore, collaboration between teachers and parents remains limited. Meanwhile, support from madrasah management, the credit system (SKS), and internal training are key factors at MTsN 1 Bukittinggi.

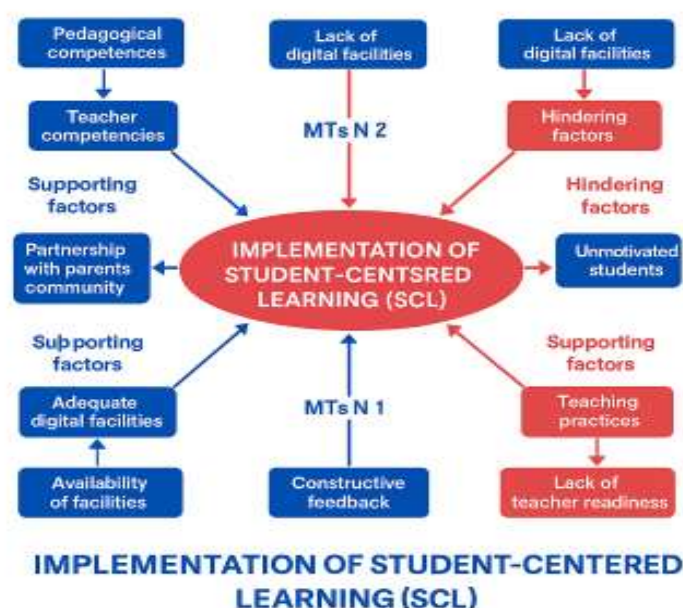
This finding corroborates previous studies (Satriaman et al., 2019; Aini et al., 2023) which stated that the success of SCL implementation is greatly influenced by teacher readiness, student participation, and the learning environment. *NVivo 12* The analysis shows a close relationship between active methods, the teacher's role as a facilitator, and student engagement as indicators of successful SCL implementation. Furthermore, the relationship map visualization shows that increased reflection, the use of digital media, and positive communication are effective drivers of SCL implementation in MTs. Thematic Findings from Observations and Interviews This research produced several main themes obtained from the observation and interview process, namely: 1) Understanding and Practice of SCL Learning at MTsN 1 Bukittinggi, most teachers understand the concept of Student-Centered Learning (SCL) and have begun to apply it through group discussions, collaborative projects, and the role of teachers as facilitators. Students are actively involved and show high enthusiasm for learning. In contrast, at MTsN 2 Bukittinggi, the approach is still dominant *teacher-centered*, with the lecture method as the main strategy. Student participation tends to be low, and the practice of reflection or feedback has not been cultivated. 2) Class Management and Student Engagement MTsN 1 applies grouping strategies, method variations, and learning differentiation. Teachers build a conducive classroom atmosphere. Meanwhile, at MTsN 2 Bukittinggi, there are still teachers who teach from their seats without dynamic interaction. Some students appear passive, sleepy,

or come and go in and out of class. 3) Use of Media and Learning Technology at MTsN 1 Bukittinggi has begun to utilize digital media such as projectors, videos, and the internet in the learning process and at MTsN 2 Bukittinggi, the use of learning media is still very limited, most teachers only rely on whiteboards and textbooks. 3) Reflection and Feedback At MTsN 1 Bukittinggi, some teachers provide feedback verbally and written, although not yet systematically integrated. And at MTsN 2 Bukittinggi, reflective practice is still not carried out consciously and consistently. 4) Collaboration with parents and the environment at MTsN 1 Bukittinggi and at MTsN 2 Bukittinggi, is carried out through digital communication and parent-teacher meetings. Meanwhile, only one madrasah principal mentioned the form of parental involvement in learning.

The following is a comparison of SCL practices at MTsN 1 Bukittinggi and MTsN 2 Bukittinggi.

No	Aspect	MTsN 1 Bukittinggi	MTsN 2 Bukittinggi
1	Curriculum	Merdeka (class VII-VIII) + SKS	Independence (grades VII-VIII) (initial implementation)
2	Learning strategies	Discussion, PBL, PJBL, exploratory	Lectures, individual assignments
3	The Role of Teachers	Active facilitator	Dominant as a lecturer
4	Student Participation	Active, enthusiastic	Low, passive
5	Learning Media	Digital, varied	Limited
6	Feedback & Reflection	Started to be done	Still minimal
7	Parent Collaboration	There is communication & involvement	Still minimal

The following is the result of the relationship map visualization from the analysis using NVivo 12. This visual shows the relationship between SCL practices, challenges, and supporting factors in both madrasahs:



The explanation of this visualization is: SCL (Student-Centered Learning) is the main element (red oval in the middle): Implementation of Student-Centered Learning (SCL). Supporting factors (blue): namely teacher competence, active learning practices, availability of digital facilities, constructive feedback, partnerships with parents/communities and inhibiting factors (red): namely lack of digital facilities (especially in MTsN 2), low teacher readiness, lack of student motivation

Conceptually, Student-Centered Learning (SCL) positions students as active subjects in learning (Weimer, 2002; Biggs & Tang, 2011). This theory emphasizes independent learning, exploration, problem-solving, and collaboration. Practices at MTsN 1 Bukittinggi show partial alignment with this theory, particularly in the use of active and participatory methods, but still need to be strengthened in terms of reflective evaluation and community involvement. In contrast, practices at MTsN 2 Bukittinggi are not fully aligned with SCL theory. The dominance of teachers as the center of learning, minimal feedback, and a lack of method variety are major challenges in implementing the principles of student-centered learning.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study indicate that the implementation of Student-Centered Learning (SCL) at MTsN 1 Bukittinggi has been running quite well. Teachers have begun to apply active learning methods such as group discussions, project-based learning (PJBL), and problem-based learning (PBL). Students are actively involved, and teachers act as facilitators. This practice indicates that the level of SCL implementation at MTsN 1 Bukittinggi is in the developing category, although there is still room for improvement in reflection and formative assessment. Meanwhile, at MTsN 2 Bukittinggi, learning is still predominantly teacher-centered, student participation is low, and method variations are limited. Therefore, the level of SCL implementation at MTsN 2 is still in its early stages and requires further guidance.

Supporting factors Factors contributing to the success of SCL include support from madrasah management, the use of credit units (SKS), the use of digital media, and teacher awareness of the importance of student participation. Conversely, inhibiting factors identified include limited facilities, low teacher preparedness, a minimal culture of reflection, and a lack of collaboration with parents. To address these challenges, teachers at MTsN 1 Bukittinggi have adapted with a more flexible and participatory approach, while at MTsN 2 Bukittinggi, solutions still need to be developed institutionally.

Suggestions for Learning Practice are 1) **For MTsN 1 Bukittinggi** It is recommended to strengthen the culture of reflection and consistent feedback, expand the use of authentic assessments such as portfolios and learning journals, and optimize teacher training based on real practices that support differentiated learning. 2) **For MTsN 2 Bukittinggi** It is recommended that the madrasah conduct intensive SCL training, improve classroom management, and provide digital learning tools gradually. Teachers need to be encouraged to shift their mindset from teacher-centered to student-centered through collaborative mentoring.

Thus, the answers to the research questions indicate that SCL implementation is significantly influenced by teacher competence, student participation, and management and facility support. This study recommends that to ensure the success of student-centered learning, all elements of the madrasah need to be actively and sustainably involved in developing a conducive, participatory, and adaptive learning climate that addresses student needs.

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