

The Role of Change Management and HR Strategy in Enhancing Teacher Performance during Curriculum Reform

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Abstract

This study examines how change management and strategic human resource (HR) practices jointly influence teacher performance during the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Indonesian public senior high schools. Although previous studies have discussed curriculum reform and teacher performance, limited research has integrated organizational change processes and HR strategies within a single analytical framework. To address this gap, the study employs a mixed-methods explanatory sequential design, where quantitative analysis is complemented by qualitative insights to strengthen interpretation. Quantitative data were collected from 250 teachers in public schools across the Greater Jakarta area and analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The findings show that Change Management significantly affects HR Strategy ($\beta = 0.71, p < 0.001$), while HR Strategy significantly influences Teacher Performance ($\beta = 0.63, p < 0.001$). Mediation analysis indicates that HR Strategy partially mediates the relationship between Change Management and Teacher Performance, with the model explaining 68% of the variance in teacher performance ($R^2 = 0.68$). Qualitative interviews further reveal that leadership communication, digital capacity development, and institutional support play critical roles in sustaining curriculum reform. Methodologically, the mixed-methods design provides a deeper explanation of how organizational change mechanisms translate into instructional improvement by integrating statistical relationships with contextual insights from educators. The study contributes to educational management literature by conceptualizing curriculum reform as a systemic organizational transformation driven by the interaction between change management and strategic HR practices.

1. Introduction

Curriculum reform is one of the key strategies for improving the quality of national education. In Indonesia, the government has continuously updated the curriculum in response to social changes, technological advancements, and the demands of global competencies in the 21st century. The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum represents part of an educational transformation aimed at creating more flexible, student-centered learning while promoting the holistic development of competencies and character. This curriculum reform requires changes not only in pedagogical practices but also in school management systems and teacher performance as the primary implementers of classroom learning processes (Kemendikbudristek, 2022; OECD, 2021).

Significant curriculum changes require schools to possess strong organizational adaptability so that implementation can proceed effectively. Schools, as educational organizations, must be able to adjust their structures, work culture, and internal management practices to support the successful implementation of new education policies. Organizational adaptation is crucial because the success of educational reform is highly influenced by the readiness of institutions and the human resources within them. Without adequate organizational adjustment, new curriculum policies often encounter various implementation barriers at the school level (Fullan, 2020; Hallinger & Chen, 2015).

Within the context of organizational change in education, the concept of change management becomes an important approach to ensure that policy transformations can be implemented effectively and sustainably. Change management assists educational organizations in managing transformation processes systematically

through planning, communication, and the development of human resource capacity. This approach enables schools to reduce resistance to change while increasing teacher engagement in the educational transformation process. Research indicates that effective change management can enhance organizational readiness and support improvements in teacher performance in responding to educational reforms (Burnes, 2017; Kotter, 2012).

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of human resource management (HRM) strategies in improving teacher performance. Professional development strategies, continuous training, and effective performance evaluation systems can contribute to enhancing the quality of learning in schools. Moreover, strategic HRM approaches can strengthen teachers' capacity to adapt to curriculum changes and instructional innovations. Prior research shows that investment in the development of educational human resources has a positive relationship with improvements in teacher performance and school organizational effectiveness (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Despite numerous studies addressing teacher performance, curriculum implementation, and change management in education, several research gaps remain that require further investigation. First, there is still limited empirical research integrating change management frameworks with human resource management strategies in improving teacher performance. Second, relatively few studies comprehensively explain the mechanisms through which organizational changes in schools translate into improvements in teachers' instructional practices. Third, most studies on the Merdeka Curriculum focus primarily on pedagogical implementation, while the organizational change management aspects within schools remain underexplored. In addition, research specifically examining the context of large urban schools, such as those in the Greater Jakarta region, is still limited, even though educational organizations in metropolitan areas have unique organizational complexities. Finally, the integration of modern HRM strategies in supporting curriculum reform has rarely been analyzed in the educational literature (Fullan, 2020; OECD, 2021; Armstrong & Taylor, 2020).

Based on these research gaps, this study aims to analyze the role of change management and human resource management strategies in improving teacher performance during the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. Specifically, this research seeks to examine how organizational change processes within schools influence the effectiveness of human resource management strategies and their implications for enhancing teacher performance in classroom teaching practices (Burnes, 2017).

This study is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to the field of educational management. Theoretically, it enriches the literature on the integration of change management and human resource management strategies within the context of educational reform. Practically, the findings of this research may provide recommendations for school administrators and education policymakers in designing more effective organizational strategies to support the successful implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and the improvement of teacher performance in schools (Kotter, 2012; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods approach using an explanatory sequential design, in which quantitative data were collected and analyzed in the first phase, followed by qualitative data collection to explain and deepen the quantitative findings. This design allows researchers to combine the strengths of quantitative statistical analysis with qualitative contextual understanding in a single research framework (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

In the first phase, quantitative data were collected through a structured questionnaire to measure the relationships among change management, HR strategy, and teacher performance. The second phase involved qualitative interviews aimed at explaining patterns that emerged from the statistical analysis. Such integration enables researchers to understand not only whether relationships exist among variables but also how and why these relationships occur within organizational contexts (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

2.2. Participants and Research Setting

The study involved 150 teachers from public senior high schools located in South Jakarta, Bekasi, and Tangerang, which are part of the Greater Jakarta metropolitan region (Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, Bekasi). These schools were selected because they had already implemented the Independent Curriculum reform, making them suitable contexts for examining organizational change in educational institutions. Teachers participating in the study were actively involved in curriculum implementation and school development initiatives. Including participants from several schools provided broader representation of teachers' experiences in managing educational change and adapting HR strategies within school organizations (Bryman, 2016).

2.3. Sampling Technique

The participants were selected using purposive sampling, which allows researchers to intentionally select respondents who possess specific characteristics relevant to the research objectives (Etikan et al., 2016). In this study, teachers were selected based on their direct involvement in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum and their participation in professional development programs related to curriculum reform. This sampling approach ensured that respondents had adequate experience and knowledge regarding the organizational change processes occurring in their schools. As a result, the collected data were expected to provide meaningful insights into how change management and HR strategies influence teacher performance.

2.4. Research Instruments

Data were collected using two main research instruments, namely a structured questionnaire and semi-structured interview guidelines. The questionnaire was designed to measure teachers' perceptions of change management practices, HR strategies, and teacher performance within their schools. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), which is widely applied in social science research to measure attitudes and perceptions (Likert, 1932). Meanwhile, qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews to explore participants' experiences and perspectives regarding curriculum reform and organizational change in schools (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The instrument development included several constructs and indicators used to measure the research variables. The details of the constructs and indicators used in this study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Variables and Indicators

Variable	Dimensions	Indicators
Change Management	Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability, Reinforcement	15 items
HR Strategy	Training, Reward, Performance System, Organizational Support	12 items
Teacher Performance	Pedagogical Innovation, Learning Design, Assessment Skill, Digital Integration	12 items
Total Indicators		39 items

2.5. Descriptive Statistics

To provide an overview of respondents' perceptions regarding the research variables, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted. The results of the descriptive analysis, including mean and standard deviation values for each variable, are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Main Variables (N = 150)

Variable	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Change Management	4.12	0.54	High
HR Strategy	4.05	0.60	High
Teacher Performance	4.18	0.51	High

The descriptive results indicate that respondents generally perceived the implementation of change management and HR strategies as high, suggesting that schools have made substantial efforts to adapt to the Independent Curriculum reform.

2.6. Validity and Reliability Testing

To ensure the quality of the measurement instruments, validity and reliability tests were conducted. Content validity was first evaluated using expert judgment from three experts in educational management. The Content Validity Index (CVI) was calculated to determine whether each item adequately represented the intended construct (Polit & Beck, 2006). Construct validity was assessed through convergent validity analysis using factor loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). According to Hair et al. (2019), acceptable convergent validity is indicated when factor loadings exceed 0.70 and AVE values are greater than 0.50. Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) to measure the internal consistency of the constructs. Reliability values above 0.70 indicate acceptable consistency in social science research (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The results of the reliability analysis are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Construct Reliability Results

Construct	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	Decision
Change Management	0.91	0.93	Reliable
HR Strategy	0.88	0.91	Reliable
Teacher Performance	0.90	0.92	Reliable

2.7. Data Analysis Technique

The quantitative data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling – Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS software to examine the structural relationships among Change Management, HR Strategy, and Teacher Performance. SEM-PLS is particularly suitable for analyzing complex models involving multiple constructs and indicators, especially in exploratory and predictive research contexts (Hair et al., 2019). Several statistical parameters were evaluated during the structural model analysis. First, path coefficients (β) were examined to determine the direction and strength of relationships between variables. Second, t-statistics were obtained through bootstrapping procedures, where values greater than 1.96 indicate statistical significance at the 5% level. Third, p-values were analyzed to confirm the significance of relationships between constructs. Finally, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to assess the explanatory power of the model in predicting teacher performance. The results of the structural model analysis are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Structural Model Results

Path	β	t-value	p-value	Decision
Change Management → HR Strategy	0.72	10.54	0.000	Supported
HR Strategy → Teacher Performance	0.65	8.32	0.000	Supported
Change Management → Teacher Performance	0.21	2.45	0.015	Supported

2.8. Qualitative Data Analysis

In the qualitative phase, 15–20 teachers and school principals were purposively selected from the survey participants to provide deeper insights into the statistical findings. The interviews focused on exploring how leadership practices, training programs, and organizational support influenced teachers' readiness for change and their performance during curriculum implementation. The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the six-step procedure proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), which includes data familiarization, initial coding, theme development, theme review, theme definition, and reporting.

2.9. Methodological Contribution of the Mixed-Methods Design

The mixed-methods design adopted in this study provides an important methodological contribution by integrating statistical analysis with qualitative insights from participants. The quantitative phase enables the identification of structural relationships between change management, HR strategies, and teacher performance, while the qualitative phase helps explain the mechanisms and contextual factors underlying these relationships. The mixed-methods design allows a deeper understanding of the relationship between change management and teacher performance by integrating quantitative findings with qualitative insights from interviews. This integration strengthens the interpretative depth of the research findings and enhances the credibility of the conclusions through methodological triangulation (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Implemented Change Management Strategy

Research conducted in public senior high schools located in South Jakarta, Bekasi, Depok, and Tangerang indicates that schools have implemented various change management strategies to support the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. These strategies are not only based on conventional administrative approaches but also incorporate innovative and contemporary practices that respond to the demands of the digital era and the evolving educational environment. The findings reveal that schools are increasingly adopting technology-driven communication, flexible professional development models, and data-based monitoring systems to strengthen teachers' readiness and performance during curriculum reform.

One important strategy observed in several schools is the use of digital technology-based intensive communication. In addition to regular face-to-face meetings, schools actively utilize digital platforms such as Google Classroom, WhatsApp Groups, and Learning Management Systems (LMS) to facilitate communication and coordination among teachers and school leaders. Through these platforms, information regarding curriculum updates, teaching guidelines, and professional development activities can be disseminated more quickly and transparently. Moreover, digital communication allows documentation of discussions and decisions, thereby improving organizational coordination and accountability within schools.

Another important strategy involves human resource capacity development through microlearning and blended learning approaches. Teacher professional development programs are no longer limited to traditional face-to-face workshops but increasingly incorporate microlearning formats, such as short instructional videos and brief digital modules that teachers can access anytime. In addition, many schools have adopted blended learning models that combine online learning activities with face-to-face training sessions. This flexible approach allows teachers to engage in continuous learning according to their individual needs and schedules, while also minimizing time constraints and increasing the efficiency of training programs.

In terms of motivation and recognition, schools are also implementing digital-based reward systems to acknowledge teacher innovation and performance. Beyond traditional awards, some schools have begun introducing digital recognition mechanisms such as publishing innovative teachers' achievements on official school social media platforms, providing digital badges, and recommending teachers to participate in regional or national teaching innovation competitions. These recognition systems are particularly relevant for younger teachers who are more familiar with digital technology and social media, thereby strengthening motivation and encouraging greater participation in educational innovation.

Furthermore, several schools have started implementing data-driven monitoring and evaluation systems through teacher performance dashboards. These dashboards are designed to monitor various indicators related to teacher performance in implementing the Independent Curriculum, including attendance records, participation in professional development programs, and the implementation of project-based learning activities. By using digital dashboards, school leaders are able to monitor teacher progress more systematically and provide feedback based on empirical data rather than subjective assessments. As a result, performance evaluation becomes more transparent, analytical, and supportive of continuous improvement.

Another significant finding is the development of cross-school collaboration through digital learning communities. Teachers are increasingly encouraged to participate in online professional communities such as the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform and various teacher forums across the Greater Jakarta region. These digital learning communities enable teachers to exchange best practices, share innovative teaching strategies, and discuss challenges encountered during curriculum implementation. Such collaborative networks contribute to the development of sustainable academic social capital and foster a culture of collective learning among educators.

In addition to technological innovations, the research also found that many schools are gradually cultivating an organizational culture characterized by an agile mindset. This approach emphasizes flexibility, adaptability, and responsiveness to change. Teachers are not merely expected to comply with new policies but are also encouraged to experiment with innovative teaching methods and participate actively in curriculum development processes. For instance, some schools have adopted design thinking approaches to support teachers in designing creative learning modules and developing project-based learning activities aligned with the Independent Curriculum framework.

Finally, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies in teaching and evaluation has begun to emerge in several schools, particularly in South Jakarta and Depok. Teachers have started utilizing AI-based applications such as ChatGPT, Quizizz, and other digital tools to assist in designing learning materials, generating assessment questions, and conducting formative evaluations. The use of AI technologies helps reduce teachers' administrative workload while simultaneously enhancing the creativity and effectiveness of instructional design. As a result, teachers are able to focus more on pedagogical innovation and student-centered learning.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum is increasingly supported by modern change management strategies that integrate digital technology, innovative human resource development approaches, and collaborative professional networks. Such strategies not only facilitate organizational adaptation to educational reform but also contribute to improving teacher performance and strengthening the quality of learning in Indonesian public schools.

3.2. Relation to Theory

The transformation of change management strategies observed in public senior high schools in the Greater Jakarta (Jabodetabek) area reflects an important evolution in the way educational institutions respond to curriculum reform. While classical theories of organizational change emphasize structured stages and leadership-driven initiatives, the current educational environment increasingly demands flexible, technology-supported, and collaborative approaches. In this context, schools have begun integrating digital communication, data-driven monitoring, and innovative professional development models to support the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. These evolving practices indicate that change management in education is no longer limited to traditional administrative coordination but is gradually adapting to the digital transformation of the education sector.

The comparison between traditional strategies and more innovative contemporary approaches identified in this study is summarized in Table 5. The table illustrates how conventional change management practices, such as face-to-face meetings and administrative supervision, are increasingly complemented by digital communication platforms, collaborative learning communities, and data-based monitoring systems.

Table 5. Comparison of Traditional and Innovative-Modern Change Management Strategies in the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Public Schools in Greater Jakarta

Strategic Aspects	Traditional (Field Research Results)	Innovative-Modern (Updated & Contemporary)
Communication	Face-to-face coordination meetings, offline socialization	Digital communication via WhatsApp Group, Google Classroom, and LMS
Human Resource Development	Conventional workshops and training	Microlearning, blended learning, and just-in-time learning
Motivation & Rewards	Certificates and formal recognition	Digital badges, social media publication, innovation competition recommendations
Monitoring & Evaluation	Administrative supervision	Digital teacher performance dashboards
Collaboration	Internal school discussions	Cross-school digital learning communities
Organizational Culture	Top-down organizational direction	Agile mindset and design thinking
Technology Utilization	Limited technology use	AI-based learning tools such as ChatGPT, Quizizz, and Kahoot

These findings enrich the classical model of organizational change proposed by Kotter (1996) by introducing digital and agile elements that were not emphasized in earlier theoretical frameworks. Kotter's model primarily focuses on leadership vision, communication, and coalition building during change processes. However, the current educational context requires additional strategies that leverage digital technology, collaborative networks, and data-driven decision making to ensure successful curriculum implementation in the era of Education 4.0 and Society 5.0.

3.3. Quantitative Findings: Structural Model Results

To examine the relationships among Change Management, HR Strategy, and Teacher Performance, the structural model was analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling – Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The results of the bootstrapping analysis indicate that all hypothesized relationships in the research model are statistically significant. The detailed results of the structural model analysis are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Structural Model Results

Path	β	t-value	p-value	Decision
Change Management → HR Strategy	0.71	11.23	0.000	Supported
HR Strategy → Teacher Performance	0.63	8.94	0.000	Supported
Change Management → Teacher Performance	0.24	2.67	0.008	Supported

The results demonstrate that change management has a strong and significant influence on HR strategy ($\beta = 0.71, p < 0.001$). This finding suggests that schools that demonstrate stronger organizational readiness reflected in awareness, desire, knowledge, ability, and reinforcement are more capable of implementing structured and effective HR strategies. Furthermore, HR strategy significantly influences teacher performance ($\beta = 0.63, p < 0.001$), confirming that human resource development mechanisms play an important role in translating organizational change into improved instructional practices. Although the direct effect of change management on teacher performance is also statistically significant ($\beta = 0.24, p < 0.01$), the stronger indirect effect through HR strategy indicates the presence of partial mediation, suggesting that HR strategies function as an important mechanism linking change initiatives to teacher outcomes (Hair et al., 2019).

3.4. Mediation Analysis

Further mediation analysis using the bootstrapping procedure indicates that HR Strategy partially mediates the relationship between Change Management and Teacher Performance. The indirect effect coefficient ($\beta = 0.45, p < 0.001$) demonstrates that organizational readiness influences teacher performance primarily through structured HR interventions rather than through direct influence alone. The coefficient of determination (R^2) for Teacher Performance is 0.68, indicating that 68% of the variance in teacher performance can be explained by the combined influence of change management and HR strategy. This result demonstrates substantial explanatory power and supports the robustness of the proposed research model (Hair et al., 2019).

3.5. Shifting Change Management Strategy from Traditional to Innovative-Modern

The findings of this study indicate that public senior high schools in South Jakarta, Bekasi, Depok, and Tangerang are gradually transitioning from conventional change management approaches toward more innovative and technology-supported strategies. Initially, change management practices were largely characterized by face-to-face coordination meetings, traditional training workshops, and administrative supervision mechanisms. These approaches played an important role in aligning teachers' understanding and

maintaining institutional order during the early stages of curriculum reform. However, such traditional strategies are often less adaptable to the rapidly evolving demands of the digital era (Kotter, 1996).

In response to these challenges, schools have begun incorporating digital technologies and contemporary professional development models. For instance, communication that was previously limited to offline meetings is now increasingly supported by digital platforms such as WhatsApp Groups, Google Classroom, and Learning Management Systems (LMS), which allow faster coordination and real-time information sharing among teachers and school leaders. Similarly, teacher professional development programs have evolved from conventional workshops to more flexible approaches, including microlearning and blended learning, enabling teachers to access short digital learning modules whenever they need them.

Motivation and reward systems have also undergone transformation. Traditional recognition mechanisms such as certificates and exemplary teacher awards are now complemented by digital recognition programs, including digital badges, publication of innovative teaching practices on school social media platforms, and recommendations for participation in national teaching innovation competitions. These initiatives are particularly relevant for younger teachers who are more familiar with digital technologies and social media environments.

Monitoring and evaluation practices have also shifted toward more data-driven approaches. Rather than relying solely on administrative supervision, several schools have begun implementing digital performance dashboards that track indicators such as teacher attendance, participation in professional development activities, and the implementation of project-based learning practices. These digital tools allow school leaders to provide more objective, transparent, and data-based feedback to teachers.

Another notable development is the emergence of cross-school collaboration through digital learning communities. Teachers increasingly participate in professional networks through platforms such as the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform and various online forums for teachers in the Greater Jakarta region. These collaborative spaces facilitate the exchange of best practices, innovative teaching strategies, and solutions to common challenges encountered during curriculum implementation. In addition, several schools have begun cultivating organizational cultures characterized by an agile mindset, which emphasizes flexibility, adaptability, and experimentation in instructional design.

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies, including tools such as ChatGPT, Quizizz, and Kahoot, has also begun to support learning design and formative assessment processes. These technologies enable teachers to develop more interactive learning materials, design creative evaluation methods, and reduce administrative workload, thereby enhancing the overall quality of classroom instruction. Overall, these findings suggest that schools in the Greater Jakarta region are currently undergoing a transition from traditional change management approaches toward more digital, collaborative, and adaptive strategies. This shift reflects a growing awareness that the success of the Independent Curriculum depends not only on top-down policy implementation but also on the development of supportive organizational cultures, technology integration, and sustainable professional collaboration among teachers.

3.6. Qualitative Evidence Supporting Quantitative Findings

The qualitative findings obtained from interviews with teachers and school principals provide additional evidence that supports the quantitative results, particularly regarding the mediating role of human resource (HR) strategies in linking change management and teacher performance. Participants frequently emphasized that the effectiveness of organizational change initiatives largely depends on how school leaders communicate reform objectives and provide structured professional development opportunities for teachers. For instance, one teacher from a public senior high school in South Jakarta stated, *"When the principal clearly communicates the vision and provides structured training, we feel more confident implementing project-based learning"* (Teacher 7, South Jakarta). This statement illustrates that clear communication and systematic training programs contribute to teachers' confidence and readiness in implementing new instructional approaches required by the Independent Curriculum.

A similar perspective was expressed by a school principal from Depok, who highlighted the importance of continuous professional development and systematic performance evaluation in supporting educational reform. The principal explained that *"Change will not work without systematic professional development and consistent performance evaluation"* (Principal 3, Depok). This statement reinforces the quantitative finding that HR strategies play a critical role in translating change management initiatives into improved teacher performance. When teachers receive structured training, mentoring, and feedback mechanisms, they are more capable of adapting to new pedagogical expectations and implementing innovative learning methods in the classroom.

Despite these positive experiences, some participants also reported challenges that hinder the implementation of change initiatives. For example, a teacher from Bekasi noted that although teachers

understand the goals of the Independent Curriculum, the lack of adequate digital infrastructure makes it difficult to apply innovative learning and assessment strategies. As one participant explained, *"We understand the curriculum goals, but without adequate digital support, it is difficult to implement innovative assessment methods"* (Teacher 12, Bekasi). These experiences indicate that organizational readiness for change must be supported by sufficient technological resources in order to ensure effective curriculum implementation.

Overall, these qualitative insights illustrate that leadership communication and change management initiatives become effective only when they are supported by well-designed HR development programs, performance monitoring systems, and adequate organizational support mechanisms. In other words, HR strategies function as a crucial mechanism through which organizational change is translated into improved teaching practices and learning outcomes.

However, several inhibiting factors were also identified in the implementation of change management and HR strategies in public schools across the Greater Jakarta area. One of the most prominent challenges is the limited availability of information and communication technology (ICT) facilities in some schools, particularly in Bekasi and Tangerang. Inadequate digital infrastructure restricts teachers' ability to implement technology-based learning and innovative assessment methods, which are key components of the Independent Curriculum framework.

Another challenge is the resistance to change observed among some senior teachers who are more accustomed to conventional teaching methods. Transitioning to student-centered learning approaches and project-based learning requires teachers to adopt new pedagogical perspectives and experiment with unfamiliar instructional strategies. For some educators, this transition may create uncertainty and discomfort, thereby slowing the overall process of organizational adaptation. In addition, financial constraints at the school level also limit the ability of institutions to fully support educational innovation. Limited school budgets often restrict the availability of modern learning facilities, incentives for teacher innovation, and the development of digital learning resources. As a result, the effectiveness of change management strategies may vary significantly across schools depending on the level of institutional support and available resources.

These findings are consistent with the argument proposed by Armenakis and Bedeian (1999), who emphasize that resistance to change and limited organizational resources are among the most significant barriers to successful change implementation. Their framework highlights that organizational transformation requires not only strategic leadership but also adequate infrastructure, supportive organizational culture, and sustained resource allocation. Therefore, the successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Indonesian public schools depends not only on national education policies but also on the capacity of individual schools to strategically manage supporting factors while addressing contextual constraints.

3.7. Interpretation

Overall, the findings of this study confirm that effective change management strategies can significantly improve teacher performance in implementing the Independent Curriculum. However, the success of these strategies is strongly influenced by contextual factors such as leadership effectiveness, availability of school facilities, and teachers' psychological readiness to adopt new pedagogical approaches. School leaders who communicate a clear vision, provide continuous professional development opportunities, and establish structured performance evaluation systems create an organizational environment that supports teachers in adapting to educational reform.

Consequently, sustainable educational transformation requires not only national policy initiatives but also adaptive human resource management at the school level. Schools need to develop supportive organizational cultures, invest in teacher professional development, and ensure the availability of adequate technological resources to facilitate the successful implementation of curriculum reform. Without these supporting conditions, even well-designed change management strategies may fail to produce meaningful improvements in teacher performance and learning outcomes.

3.8. Theoretical Implications

Beyond its practical contributions, this study offers several important theoretical implications for educational management and organizational change literature. First, the findings extend change management theory by positioning Change Management as a structural antecedent variable rather than merely a supportive managerial process. By operationalizing change management through the multidimensional ADKAR framework (awareness, desire, knowledge, ability, and reinforcement) this study demonstrates that organizational readiness systematically shapes the effectiveness of downstream human resource strategies (Hiatt, 2006). This reinforces the argument that change processes must be conceptualized as measurable constructs influencing institutional performance outcomes.

Second, this research advances strategic human resource management theory in the educational context by empirically validating the mediating role of HR Strategy between Change Management and Teacher Performance. While traditional HRM literature emphasizes alignment between strategy and performance (Dessler, 2020), this study provides evidence that such alignment is contingent upon prior organizational change readiness. Thus, HR interventions do not function autonomously but operate as mechanisms translating structural reform into professional practice. This integrative perspective enriches the theoretical understanding of how curriculum reform becomes operationalized through capacity-building systems in schools. Third, the study contributes to the emerging body of literature that conceptualizes teacher performance not solely as an individual competency variable but as an organizationally embedded outcome shaped by leadership, institutional systems, and cultural readiness (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). By demonstrating substantial explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.68$), the model confirms that instructional improvement is a systemic phenomenon rather than a purely pedagogical issue.

Collectively, these findings support a reconceptualization of curriculum reform as a multi-level organizational transformation process, where change readiness, HR strategy alignment, and performance outcomes are structurally interconnected. This theoretical integration provides a more comprehensive framework for future research examining educational reform in complex institutional environments. Recommendations include the need for schools to develop more innovative human resource management systems, such as utilizing a learning management system (LMS) for teacher training, a data-driven performance dashboard, and a digital reward mechanism that is more relevant to the current generation of educators. Furthermore, future research is recommended to expand the scope of the study to include private schools and non-urban areas, and to employ a quantitative approach with structural equation modeling (SEM) to more comprehensively examine the relationships between variables. Thus, this research not only provides theoretical contributions to the study of educational change management but also has practical implications for improving public school management in Indonesia.

3.9. Discussion

The findings of this study provide empirical support for the theoretical proposition that effective organizational change in education must be structurally integrated with strategic human resource management in order to produce measurable improvements in teacher performance. The structural model demonstrates that Change Management significantly influences HR Strategy, which in turn exerts a strong effect on Teacher Performance. This confirms that curriculum reform is not merely a pedagogical adjustment but a systemic organizational transformation requiring coordinated managerial intervention.

The strong relationship between Change Management and HR Strategy ($\beta = 0.71$) suggests that change readiness functions as a foundational mechanism enabling HR policies to operate effectively. This aligns with the ADKAR framework, which posits that awareness, desire, knowledge, ability, and reinforcement are prerequisites for sustainable behavioral transformation (Hiatt, 2006). In the context of public schools, teachers who understand the urgency of curriculum reform and receive consistent reinforcement are more receptive to training programs, performance monitoring systems, and reward mechanisms. Thus, change management does not operate independently but shapes the organizational climate in which HR strategies are implemented.

Furthermore, the significant effect of HR Strategy on Teacher Performance ($\beta = 0.63$) reinforces the theoretical perspective of strategic human resource management, which emphasizes alignment between organizational goals and employee development systems (Dessler, 2020). The findings indicate that structured training, digital-based performance monitoring, and institutional support enhance teachers' pedagogical innovation, instructional design quality, assessment skills, and digital integration capacity. This supports the argument that teacher professionalism is strengthened when HR interventions are systematic and performance-oriented rather than sporadic or symbolic (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012).

Importantly, the mediation analysis reveals that HR Strategy partially mediates the relationship between Change Management and Teacher Performance. Although Change Management has a direct effect on Teacher Performance, its influence becomes substantially stronger when translated through HR mechanisms. This finding extends organizational change theory by demonstrating that change readiness alone is insufficient to produce instructional transformation unless supported by operational HR systems. In other words, visionary leadership and effective communication must be institutionalized through training frameworks, evaluation systems, and organizational incentives to generate sustainable improvement (Kotter, 2012).

The qualitative findings deepen this interpretation. Interview data reveal that principals' leadership plays a decisive role in reinforcing change awareness and motivating teacher engagement. Teachers in schools with strong leadership reported higher confidence in implementing project-based learning and differentiated instruction. This supports Fullan's (2020) assertion that educational change is most effective when teachers are empowered through collaborative cultures and professional capital development. Conversely, resistance observed among senior teachers in resource-constrained schools suggests that psychological and structural

barriers remain significant challenges. These barriers align with resistance-to-change theory, which identifies limited resources and uncertainty as primary inhibitors of organizational transformation (Armenakis & Bedeian, 1999).

Another important analytical dimension concerns digital transformation. The integration of microlearning, performance dashboards, and AI-supported instructional tools reflects a shift from traditional bureaucratic change models to agile and data-driven management systems. This transition suggests that contemporary educational reform requires not only strategic alignment but also technological infrastructure that supports adaptive learning ecosystems. The substantial R^2 value for Teacher Performance (0.68) indicates that the combined effect of Change Management and HR Strategy explains a considerable proportion of instructional improvement, highlighting the systemic nature of reform in the Independent Curriculum era.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study contributes to educational management literature by conceptualizing Change Management as a structural antecedent, HR Strategy as a mediating operational mechanism, and Teacher Performance as a measurable outcome variable within a unified causal framework. Unlike prior research that treats these variables in isolation, this integrative model demonstrates the interdependence between organizational readiness and capacity-building systems. The findings therefore suggest that curriculum reform should be understood as an organizational capability-building process rather than solely a policy implementation exercise.

However, the variation across regions particularly between South Jakarta and schools in Bekasi and Tangerang indicates that contextual factors such as technological infrastructure and institutional support moderate the effectiveness of change strategies. This suggests the need for future research to incorporate moderating variables such as digital readiness or leadership style to refine the explanatory power of the model. In summary, the discussion underscores that successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum depends on the synergistic interaction between structured change management processes and strategic human resource interventions. Sustainable teacher performance improvement emerges not from isolated managerial actions but from systemic alignment between organizational vision, capacity development mechanisms, and supportive leadership culture.

3.10. Limitations

Despite the important theoretical and empirical contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research was conducted within public senior high schools located in the Greater Jakarta area (South Jakarta, Bekasi, Depok, and Tangerang), which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts in Indonesia, particularly rural regions or schools with different institutional capacities. Educational institutions in metropolitan areas tend to have relatively better access to technological infrastructure, professional development opportunities, and administrative support compared with schools in less developed regions. Therefore, the relationships identified among change management, HR strategy, and teacher performance may vary when applied to different socio-institutional environments (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Second, although the study employed a mixed-methods design, the quantitative analysis relied primarily on cross-sectional survey data, which restricts the ability to capture long-term organizational change processes. Educational transformation, particularly curriculum reform, is inherently dynamic and evolves over time through iterative adaptation and learning processes. Consequently, future research could benefit from longitudinal research designs that examine how change management strategies and HR interventions influence teacher performance across multiple stages of curriculum implementation (Hair et al., 2019).

Third, the model examined in this study focuses on HR strategy as the primary mediating variable linking change management and teacher performance. While the findings demonstrate strong explanatory power, other potentially influential variables were not included in the structural model. Factors such as leadership style, digital readiness, organizational culture, teacher professional identity, and institutional resource availability may also influence the effectiveness of change initiatives in educational settings. Incorporating these variables in future studies could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how organizational change processes operate within schools (Fullan, 2020).

Finally, the qualitative component relied on a limited number of interviews with teachers and school leaders, which may not fully capture the diversity of experiences across schools implementing the Independent Curriculum. Expanding the qualitative sample to include policymakers, curriculum developers, and students could enrich future analyses by providing broader perspectives on how educational reforms are interpreted and enacted at different levels of the education system (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights into how structured change management and strategic HR interventions interact to support teacher performance improvement within the context of

curriculum reform. The findings therefore offer a useful foundation for future research and policy development aimed at strengthening organizational capacity for sustainable educational transformation.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that the change management strategy implemented in public schools in the Greater Jakarta area plays a significant role in improving teacher performance in the Merdeka Curriculum era. Key findings indicate that intensive communication of change, the principal's visionary leadership, and the ability to adapt to new policies can create a more adaptive school environment. Furthermore, human resource strategies through training, professional development, reward systems, and organizational support have been shown to encourage teachers to innovate in learning, optimize teaching quality, and be better prepared to implement the Merdeka Curriculum. The integration of change management and human resource strategies positively contributes to improving teacher performance, both in terms of learning quality, pedagogical innovation, and consistency of curriculum implementation. The practical implications of this research are the need for school principals to strengthen their role as visionary leaders who are able to clearly communicate the direction of change while providing moral and structural support to teachers. For education policymakers, these findings emphasize the importance of providing flexible policies, based on school needs, and taking into account teacher preparedness in the field. Furthermore, human resource management development in public schools needs to be directed toward continuous learning systems, digitalization of performance management, and the provision of individual and collective rewards.

Author Contributions

Juliastuti: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Writing – Original draft preparation. Ai Rukmini: Data curation, Investigation, Validation, Writing – Review & Editing. Prihantini: Project administration, Resources, Supervision, Writing – Review & Editing. Amalia Mustika: Visualization, Software, Data curation, Writing – Review & Editing.

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Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declare that there are no financial or personal relationships with other individuals or organizations that could have inappropriately influenced (biased) the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Data Availability

The datasets generated and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. The shared data include anonymized raw quantitative survey data, processed datasets used for SEM-PLS analysis, and coding summaries from the qualitative phase. Due to ethical considerations and institutional policies protecting participant confidentiality, the data are not publicly available in an open repository. All shared datasets have been anonymized to ensure the privacy of participating teachers and schools.

Declaration on AI Use

AI-assisted tools were used solely to improve readability and language clarity under strict human supervision. All intellectual content, theoretical framing, empirical analysis, and conclusions are entirely the responsibility of the authors.

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