

Freedom Learning  
Management: Pedagogical  
Competence, Material  
Development and Teaching  
Skills of Primary School  
Teachers in Samarinda,  
Indonesia

*by Warman Warman*

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# Freedom Learning Management: Pedagogical Competence, Material Development and Teaching Skills of Primary School Teachers in Samarinda, Indonesia

Warman

Mulawarman University, Samarinda, Indonesia

[nina.herlina@unpad.ac.id](mailto:nina.herlina@unpad.ac.id)

Corresponding Author: Email: [waman@fkip.unmul.ac.id](mailto:waman@fkip.unmul.ac.id)

## Abstract

This study aims to investigate teachers' perceptions of freedom of learning on Pedagogic Competence, Material Development and Teaching Skills in elementary schools in Samarinda City, Indonesia. The research design used is qualitative research. The findings reveal that the freedom of learning towards Pedagogic Competence, Material Development and Teaching Skills of teachers has not been fully felt by teachers in elementary schools in Samarinda City. The findings indicate that in practice, freedom of learning which should be a great opportunity in order to improve the skills of teachers is experiencing various obstacles in the field. As a result, material development is not optimal and teaching and learning interactions with students also do not work as expected. During the Covid 19 pandemic, teachers had difficulty adjusting the development of learning materials using technology. The expected implication is that the government can support freedom of learning by dedicating the budget in order to improve the quality of modern teachers in primary schools.

## Keywords

Freedom Learning, Pedagogical Competence, Material Development, Teaching Skills

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## Introduction

The progress of the nation and state is largely determined by the world of education to support the creation of productive and potential human resources. Therefore, the role of professional teachers in developing teaching materials and skills is very much needed. In its development, freedom of learning is equally important for the progress of the nation in the aspect of education. Without the freedom of learning, both teachers and students will feel psychologically depressed and feared that it will lead to SARA behavior. What is clear, freedom of learning must be controlled because the consequences can lead to brutal freedom. In order to improve the quality of human resources, the Minister of Education and Culture (Mendikbud) through a Press Release Number: 408/sipres/A.5.3/XII/2019, has established four main programs for the education policy "Freedom of Learning" which includes the National Standardized School Exam (USBN), National Examination (UN), Learning Implementation Plan (RPP), and Zoning New Student Admission Regulations (PPDB). These four basic principles are the initial foundation for realizing freedom of learning. Freedom of learning in schools transforms an educational system that is creative and has character and is able to promote pedagogic competence (Prabu, 2016; Futaqi, 2021). Unfortunately in Indonesia, the freedom of learning is still very far from being felt by schools, especially in remote areas. Because, radicalism in schools, and the existence of discrimination that makes certain students and teachers experience pressure conditions both psychologically, socially and economically. Not all teachers are ready to quickly adapt to changes in modern technology in the midst of the Covid-19 Pandemic situation (Aditya, 2021). In addition, extreme ideologies become obstacles and challenges in the process of freedom of learning.

The main key to the quality of education lies in the teacher. In Indonesia, the number of teachers based on statistics from the Ministry of Education and Culture for the 2019/2020 school year reached 2,698,103 people. While the number of students reached 45,544,371 people. With these data, it can be said that the number of teachers is only about 6% of the total number of elementary school students. It is very important to improve the quality of existing teachers and increase the number of primary school teachers considering that the number is not significant compared to the number of students in Indonesia, especially in cities in Central and Eastern Indonesia, such as Kalimantan and Papua. The number of teachers in the region is less than 50,000 people and not even 15,000 people in each part (Slamet, 2020). Therefore, factors that are able to accommodate the quality of teachers are needed. One of them is the aspect of freedom of learning in schools with the aim of quality control and development. Previous findings state that learning freedom determines student learning needs and learning outcomes (Guseinova, 2018). The literature finds that it is important for teachers to master pedagogic competencies (Susanto, Rozali, & Agustina, 2019; Kurniawan, Eva, Dafip, & Sriyanto, 2011). It is further explained that learning freedom is able to influence the teacher's pedagogic competence which has an impact on the personality development of students (Mirzagitova & Akhmetov, 2015; Anggiana, Yusnira, & Rizal, 2020). Recent studies explain that freedom of learning helps individuals to develop skills, in growing self-confidence, and adaptability to the environment (Bektaş, 2021). Freedom of learning is also able to improve the ability of teachers in developing learning materials for students, especially during the Covid 19 Pandemic (Latorre-Coscolluela et al., 2021; Shabbir et al., 2021). Another study found that learning freedom was correlated with pedagogic competence, professional competence, and social competence of teachers in schools (Bakar, 2018). Online learning is allegedly more comfortable and fun for students and allows greater freedom for the development of student and teacher skills (Abbasi et al., 2020; Sulaimani, Sarhandi & Buledi, 2017; Sumarsono et al, 2021). In this case, the researcher focuses on investigating more deeply the relationship between learning freedom and the three factors that are interrelated with each other. The novelty of the research shows that the research theme focuses on aspects of freedom of learning that affect the three factors. This research is important to be studied more deeply considering that government programs in education focus on independent learning. Previous research has not revealed much about the interrelationships of these three factors in order to support the government's idea of "Free Learning and Motivating Teachers" for a better future for the nation's next generation.

### Research Questions

Based on the background of the problem raised by the researcher, the researcher focuses on investigating the impact felt by teachers with the Freedom of Learning in Elementary Schools on Pedagogic Competence, Material Development and Teaching Skills. From this theme, research



problems were formulated, namely: "What are Teachers' Perceptions of Freedom of Learning in Elementary Schools on Pedagogic Competence, Material Development and Teaching Skills?"

## Review Of Literature

### Freedom to Learn

<sup>2</sup>Merdeka (or freedom) has three meanings, namely: 1) free (from inhibitions, colonialism, and so on); 2) not affected or exempt from prosecution; 3) not bound, not dependent on certain people or parties, free (Honneth, 2021). While learning is a mental process that occurs within the individual that causes changes in behavior. Freedom of learning means providing the widest possible learning opportunities for students to study quietly and avoid pressure. The goal is that students will be able to grow and develop according to their potential and abilities (Gorley & Elcock, 1969). It should be noted that the freedom of learning in question is in a positive sense which means far from irresponsible behavior such as not being serious in learning, neglecting to do assignments, and being undisciplined (Boland & Muñoz, 2021).

Freedom of learning can be understood as a form of freedom for students to express themselves during the learning process at school. Free from all forms of psychological pressure that smells of SARA (Shabbir et al., 2020; Wibowo, 2020). Freedom is not anarchism (Schubert, 2021). In this case, students must be free to express themselves, but still, obey the rules that apply in schools and the state curriculum. In addition, students carry out an attitude of tolerance in exercising their freedom as a form of obtaining equal rights. Teachers also have the freedom to be maximal in teaching but still have to obey the applicable rules. If learning freedom is fulfilled, then learning becomes comfortable (Houlden & Veletsianos, 2021).

### Pedagogic Competence

Pedagogic competence is the ability or skill possessed by someone in managing something. While the pedagogic competence of teachers leads to the ability to manage the learning process or teaching and learning interactions with students. There are seven aspects of pedagogic competence, namely: 1) the characteristics of the students; 2) learning theories and learning principles that educate students; 3) school curriculum development; 4) learning that educates students; 5) development of appropriate potential for students; 6) good communication and empathy towards students; and effective assessment and evaluation of student learning. Pedagogic competence can be obtained through the learning process of each teacher continuously and systematically. This learning process can be obtained both academically during a teacher and before becoming a teacher (teacher candidate education period) (Fiet, 2001). Pedagogic competence can stimulate students' motivation and performance (Burguillo, 2010). Previous studies found that there was a role for teachers' pedagogical competence in learning in elementary schools (Khofiatun & Ramli, 2016). Other studies suggest support from teaching materials as a form of material learning evaluation that aims to improve students' pedagogical competence (Silalahi & Sitanggang, 2018). The pedagogic abilities of prospective teachers are also allegedly able to improve students' critical thinking skills and skills through practice-based learning (Sudargo, 2010).

### Skill Theory

Skill is the ability to use reason, thoughts, and ideas as well as creativity that aims to work on, change, or make something more meaningful so as to produce value from the work done. There are two types of skills, namely soft skills and hard skills. Soft skills are skills related to one's personality to support work and interpersonal relationships when individuals are in their work environment. While hard skills are skills related to a job (Vanpatten & Williams, 2007). Previous studies have stated that improving skill development and character education, it can be done by providing responsible learning freedom (Ainia, 2020).

Preparing to become a teacher requires several types of skills, namely: 1) basic skills such as writing, reading, and listening; 2) conceptual skills in coordinating and integrating all interests and activities; 3) administrative skills in planning, drafting, and supervising; 4) technical skills in using procedures and techniques in certain fields; 5) skills to develop harmonious relationships among

all members; 6) skills in decision making; 8) skills to use time as productively as possible, and 9) skills to master or use technology. There are 4 kinds of skill indicators, namely technical skills, management skills, external skills, and personal maturity skills (Levelt, 1978).

## Methods

### Research Design

The research design used is qualitative research proposed by Patton (2005). The purpose of the study was to investigate the teacher's perception of the freedom of learning in elementary schools on pedagogic competence, material development and teaching skills. Data collection was carried out using field observation methods, online interviews, and documentation. From the research objectives obtained 4 themes that are focused on freedom of learning, pedagogic competence, material development, and teaching skills. The four themes were then searched for data for further qualitative analysis in 3 steps, namely collecting data, reducing it and presenting data to draw valid conclusions. The study was conducted for one semester, in March 2021 and ending in June 2021. This research is located in an elementary school in the City of Samarinda, East Kalimantan Province, Indonesia.

### Participant

The participants of this study were 30 people. The criteria used by the researcher to determine the participants were elementary school teachers in Samarinda with more than 5 years of teaching experience. Participant descriptions are summarized in table 1.

**Table 1.**  
Respondent Identity

	Respondent	Information
Education	S.Pd	30 participant
Gender	Female & Male	12 Female dan 18 Male
Respondent Age	Average age <51 year	30< year 16 participant; <51 year 14 participant
Teaching experience	>5 year & >10 year	> 5 year 9 participant; >10 year 21 participant
Taught class	VI,V, dan VI	Class IV 4 participant; Class V 5 participant; Class VI 20 participant

### Instrument

Researcher develops instruments with the aim of obtaining information objectively. The data collection guide focuses on two aspects, namely: 1) learning freedom based on teacher perception; and 2) its impact on pedagogical abilities, material development, and teaching skills. The instrument is designed with question items that represent each theme.

**Table 2.**  
Interview and Observation Instruments

<b>What are Teachers' Perceptions of Freedom of Learning in Elementary Schools on Pedagogic Competence, Material Development, and Teaching Skills?</b>	
Freedom of learning	Knowledge of learning freedom
Pedagogic Ability	Knowledge of pedagogical abilities, orientation to learning, and knowledge of students' understanding in learning
Material Development	Knowledge of strategies and representations of learning material development
Teaching Skills	Knowledge of study skills

The feasibility of the instrument has been through construct testing, where the research is said to be valid if the research question items have met the standards that have been set. Standard

setting is carried out by experts in the field of education who understand scientific concepts according to the research theme. In the next stage, the validity test was carried out using the product moment correlation using SPSS 17. The results of the validity test of the question items showed that all question items had rcount greater than (more than) rtable, so they were declared valid and could be used in research. Reliability testing with internal consistency using Cronbach's Alpha formula obtained the r value of the four themes greater than 0.60, so the instrument is said to be reliable.

**Table 3.**  
Validity and Reliability Test Results

theme	Validity	Reability (Cronbach's Alpha)
Freedom of learning	0,492; Valid	0,914
Pedagogic Ability	0,782; Valid	0,811
Material Development	0,620; Valid	0,907
Teaching Skills	0,380; Valid	0,702

### Data Collection Procedures

Data collected by means of interviews containing questions, observations, and documentation sheets in the form of collecting evidence from relevant research (scientific articles, primary law, and notebooks). Primary legal data is sourced from Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers.

The data that has been collected and stored aims to provide basic information in an organized manner. The first step begins with a direct interview process complete with health protocols due to the situation during the research during the Covid 19 pandemic. Data collection tools are entered into the researcher's notes and recording devices. The second step is to observe the participants. Researchers observed directly the activities of research participants. Interviews and observations were carried out in an elementary school room that had been provided properly and correctly. Interviews were conducted for 2 hours and were divided into 4 sessions for every 5 participants. During the interview process, participants were asked to share their views on freedom of learning and how they felt related to pedagogical abilities, material development, and teaching skills while serving as elementary school teachers, especially during the Covid 19 pandemic. The coding is then evaluated to obtain valid results.

### Data Analysis

The qualitative data analysis technique consists of three stages, namely reducing data by focusing on themes, presenting data in narrative form, and drawing credible conclusions (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2013). The first stage is to reduce data by developing a research design and determining the location where observations and interviews are conducted to collect data sources. Next, prepare the research instruments that have been made. The second step is the data that has been collected and then presented in the form of a narrative. The third step is to analyze the findings to draw conclusions using the descriptive-analytical.

## Results And Discussion

### Teachers' Perceptions About Freedom of Learning in Elementary Schools on Pedagogic Competence, Material Development and Teaching Skills

The findings reveal teachers' perceptions of freedom of learning on Pedagogic Competence, Material Development and Teaching Skills at Samarinda elementary schools. The findings show that the participants (teachers) feel that there is freedom to learn which has a positive impact on them and students. The point is that by giving teachers and students the freedom to try various kinds of teaching and learning activities, they can provide a greater opportunity to discover their intelligence, which makes them far superior to forcing them to have academic intelligence that is not necessarily beneficial for future life. More deeply, the expected abilities are pedagogic competence, material development, and teaching skills. Even though in its implementation, 75%



or 23 participants stated that there were obstacles to online learning that were felt during the Covid 19 pandemic, which is summarized in table 3 below:

**Table 3.**  
Impacts and Constraints on Freedom of Learning

Impacts and Constraints on Pedagogic Competence	Impacts and Constraints on Material Development	Impacts and Constraints on Teaching Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers have the opportunity to hone skills during the learning process or teaching-learning interactions with students (impact)</li> <li>Some teachers are not familiar with various types of online learning applications (obstacles)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers are able to develop learning materials more practically and efficiently (impact)</li> <li>Some teachers have not been maximally able to adapt online material development so that students have difficulty understanding the material given by the teacher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers are able to improve technical skills, management skills, external skills, and personal maturity skills.</li> <li>Some teachers have limited knowledge to improve online teaching skills</li> </ul>

Based on table 3, it can be understood that during the implementation of freedom of learning in online learning there are obstacles. Moreover, this happened because the participants were over 50 years old. Even though they have more than 10 years of experience educating students, in reality they also have various difficulties in technology. According to the participants, students also felt that they were not maximally absorbing the material and doing assignments because they were virtually limited. This can be seen through the evaluation of online learning 2 semesters ago, where the value of assignments and memorization was not as optimal as in previous years using offline learning. Based on Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, Article 10 paragraph (1) states that,

*"Teacher competencies as referred to in Article 8 include pedagogic competence, personality competence, social competence, and professional competence obtained through professional education.."*

It is clear that the standard of teacher pedagogical competence is included in the core competencies that are a must for teachers in elementary schools. Previous studies found that teachers should improve pedagogic competence because it has an impact on students' personality development. It is important to organize a training process for prospective teachers so that the methods, receptions and ways of transferring material to students have a positive effect (Mirzagitova & Akhmetov, 2015). This strategic step is only possible with a combination of educational training with developing the formation of the pedagogical competence of primary school teachers..

The existence of freedom of learning makes teachers continue to train their abilities and skills in managing the right learning process for students. Teachers become more flexible in determining appropriate learning methods and theories for their students, which of course are limited to applicable rules. The study states that effective online teaching abilities and skills support a better learning process (Albrahim, 2020). Thus the teacher's skills become a separate value for improving the learning achievement of elementary school students. However, the new rules regarding the National Examination and changes to the curriculum, especially during the Covid 19 pandemic, had a major impact on the online learning system carried out. Short time to adjust to current conditions, makes teachers have to work extra in determining how to communicate and evaluate good learning for their students. Especially in Samarinda elementary schools, the internet network is not as good as in the capital's big cities. This is a challenge and obstacle for teachers and students.

Freedom of learning has its own value for the development of teaching materials and skills of teachers in Samarinda elementary schools. In Law Number 20 of 2003 it is stated that:

*"Education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills needed by themselves, society, nation and state."*

Freedom to learn does not mean that students are free to be undisciplined in learning and doing assignments. Freedom of learning is more about responsible behavior, obeying rules and procedures, especially in completing learning tasks given by the teacher without putting pressure on students. The teacher will try to make the learning situation more comfortable and enjoyable, thus allowing students to remember the material more and longer. The online learning evaluation conducted in this semester shows that students have improved academically. Although some students complained that the internet network was often problematic, it did not reduce the enthusiasm of students to memorize and submit assignments on time.

A fun learning process designed by skilled teachers is certainly an important element for progress. Teachers' skills in teaching are able to generate creativity to support the progress of their students in learning. Based on the contents of government regulations as explained above, it is realized that freedom of learning is able to support education through the development of teaching materials and skills for teachers to explore the potential of their students. As educators, teachers have a responsibility to improve the quality of human resources. Of course, this requires support from various aspects, one of which is freedom of learning. To make it happen, the teacher must attend training and workshops. Participants stated that,

*"During the COVID-19 pandemic, many trainings and workshops are available online. Some are paid and some are free. This is quite helpful for us in improving our ability and skills in designing learning methods and good communication with students. Especially online learning, which makes us have to learn to use technology to help the learning process."*

The COVID-19 pandemic situation has had its own impact on teachers. It becomes easier for them to participate in various online trainings and workshops so as to minimize operational costs that should be incurred. But on the other hand, of course, it will be much more effective if training and workshops become the focus of developing pedagogical abilities that have separate budgets from schools and the government. According to Pujilaksono (2019), the first step is to prepare the environment, then design the substance. Freedom from all forms of psychological pressure that smells of SARA is certainly the most reasonable hope. Participants explained that,

*"School exams are carried out to assess student competencies which are carried out in the form of written tests and other forms of assessment such as student attendance, writing assignments, and drawing as well as school practicals. Even during the current pandemic, some of the assessment criteria have been adapted to online learning. With various forms of assessment carried out, schools are more independent in assessing student learning outcomes. Unfortunately, training to support the capacity of teachers and schools to improve the quality of learning is still not optimal."*

The results of the interviews show that teachers and schools need a large enough budget for the development of a better quality of education, especially to support the freedom of learning program. In this case, the government must of course prepare a budget for the National Standard School Examination (USBN) for efforts to develop the capacity of teachers and schools. The Minister of Education and Culture explained that the 2021 National Examination (UN) will be changed to a Minimum Competency Assessment and a Character survey consisting of the ability to reason using language (literacy), the ability to reason using mathematics (numbering), and strengthening character education. In response to this, participants responded as follows,

*"I do not agree if the National Examination is abolished. The reason is that the UN should be improved in quality, not abolished. It is clear that the abolition of the National Examination is a setback if it is not accompanied by an appropriate follow-up for Indonesian children."*

Several participants agreed that efforts to improve the quality of the National Examination were



not by eliminating it. Not without reason, in the era of the 70s, the UN has contributed greatly in creating the best graduates of its time, and in the digital era of course the UN requires revolutionary efforts to make it happen again so that technical problems do not occur. The consideration is that so far, the UN only needs efforts to improve its quality. Even if it has to be abolished, it should be very important to prepare the right Learning Implementation Plan (RPP), maintain quality control, and the direction of its development. Participants explained that,

*"As teachers, we have the freedom to choose, create, use, and develop lesson plans. The most important thing is that it must comply with standards, namely the learning objectives carried out, learning activities, and assessments. RPP writing must also be thorough and as effective and efficient as possible so that we have more time to prepare and evaluate the learning process.."*

3

In accepting new students (PPDB), the Ministry of Education and Culture uses a zoning system that aims to accommodate inequality in access and quality in various regions. The PPDB composition of the zoning pathway can accept a minimum of 50% students, the affirmation path of at least 15%, and the maximum transfer path of 5%. While the achievement path or 0-30% is adjusted to the regional conditions of each school. In this case, the region has the authority to determine the final proportion and determine the PPDB zoning area. Participants think that,

*"The zoning system is likely to hinder open competition and the freedom to choose primary schools. Because not all elementary schools have the same facilities and quality. The government needs to equalize access and quality of education accompanied by initiatives from all stakeholders."*

Online learning that is student-centered and focuses on teacher skills means giving teachers and students freedom of learning to study harder. Therefore, the role of media culture and modern pedagogical technology in the formation of virtual communicative competence should also be considered (Halimovna et al., 2019). The study states that the role of modern pedagogic technology can support the improvement of individual competencies and skills (Halimovna et al., 2019). Along with the times, the use of technology has an impact on individual behavior, economic development and has a million benefits in various aspects of life (Abidin, Suryanto, & Utami, 2020; Utami, Basrowi, & Nasor, 2021). Therefore, elementary schools are continuously adapting to existing technology.

In the end, the teacher's perception of freedom of learning on Pedagogic Competence, Material Development and Teaching Skills at Samarinda elementary schools had a good enough impact on teachers and students but not optimal because there were various obstacles in the field. In theory, freedom of learning is able to give freedom to teachers and students to try various kinds of teaching and learning activities. Freedom of learning is a great opportunity to improve technical skills, management skills, external skills, and personal maturity skills. In addition, freedom of learning can hone skills during the learning process or teaching-learning interactions with students. Teachers need several types of skills that are adapted to the current pandemic conditions, namely: 1) basic online learning skills; 2) conceptual skills in integrating all online learning activities; 3) skills in planning and compiling learning materials; 4) technical skills in using online learning procedures; 5) skills to develop harmonious relationships during semester learning; 6) skills in student learning evaluation decision making; 8) skills to use time as productively as possible; and 9) skills to master or use technology.

Unfortunately, during the Covid 19 pandemic, teachers also had difficulty adapting material development to existing technology, especially when the internet network was inadequate. So that in the future, both primary schools and the government need to improve the expected capabilities in pedagogic competence, material development, and teaching skills by conducting more comprehensive training for teachers. Freedom of learning is a great opportunity and potential for teachers, it would be very unfortunate if this had to be technically constrained. These findings empirically have the novelty of previous research which shows that teachers as the main key to the quality of education need support from the government to be able to create the next generation of people who have freedom of learning. The reason is because currently teachers are experiencing various obstacles in utilizing the freedom of learning towards pedagogic competence, material development, and teaching skills. Recent studies have found that Freedom of learning helps teachers and students to develop skills and adapt easily to the

environment (Bektaş, 2021).

Teachers' teaching methods using technology are found to be more comfortable and more enjoyable and allow greater freedom for skill development (Sulaimani et al., 2017). In fact, developing skills and adapting to a virtual-based environment is not easy even if it is supported by freedom of learning. Various other factors need to be taken into account to support freedom of learning. What is clear, the freedom referred to in this finding is freedom from all forms of psychological pressure that smells of SARA and freedom to express, but still, comply with the rules that apply in schools and the state curriculum.

## Conclusion

This study aims to investigate teachers' perceptions of freedom of learning on Pedagogic Competence, Material Development and Teaching Skills in Samarinda elementary schools. From the findings obtained, it can be concluded that learning freedom has a less than optimal impact on Pedagogic Competence, Material Development and Teacher Teaching Skills. The findings indicate that in practice, the freedom of learning which should be a great opportunity to improve the skills of teachers is experiencing technical problems. As a result, the development of material during the learning process or teaching-learning interactions with students also does not work as expected. During the Covid 19 pandemic, teachers also had difficulty adjusting material development using available applications. In this case, the teacher must work hard to improve his skills. Even if the freedom of learning is able to support this, other factors such as technology and training and infrastructure must also be met.

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