

Implementation of The Kurikulum Merdeka in Primary Schools

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ABSTRACT

Many changes to the curriculum in Indonesia have also been made because they follow current developments or could also be due to other things such as changes in leaders including the minister of education, evaluation of the previous curriculum which was deemed less effective, and so on. Various problems that arise during curriculum development need to be reviewed further in depth and analyzed carefully. *Pe*This study uses a literature review research method. Literature review research is the result of analyzing various information and conceptual data, qualitative data and quantitative data from several research articles published earlier and containing theories related to the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka in elementary schools. Results With this curriculum, it is hoped that it can produce advanced teaching in Indonesia, can deepen the potential of students, so this curriculum is deliberately made simple and flexible. In the process of implementing this curriculum, teachers are often faced with various challenges and obstacles. Of course, all elements of education have an important role in improving things that can hinder the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka. Therefore, in further studies, a more appropriate arrangement or strategy is needed so that it can be used as an alternative or solution to the obstacles experienced by teachers in the process of implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka in elementary school.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a fairly important part of human life. This sentence means that to obtain educational services, every individual will get the same rights (Sobri et al., 2023). For that reason, it is not surprising that education is a topic that never stops being discussed from time to time. (Long et al., 2022). A process to develop the potential of each individual for their survival so that they can become educated individuals, from an affective, cognitive and psychomotor perspective, the process is the meaning of education. In developing Human Resources (SDA), education has a very important role in order to be able to compete in the 21st century world. One aspect that is objectionable The measure of a country's progress is seen from the field of education, thus the Indonesian government also pays serious attention to education. As a formal educational institution, schools provide various types of systematic learning environments which can provide many opportunities for teaching and learning activities for students. In achieving national education goals, the formal education system in the form of schools

has a very big role. This can be achieved through directed student development and growth and of course the support of various learning opportunities (Irsalulloh & Maunah, 2023). Curriculum and education are two concepts that must be understood first before discussing curriculum development (Pane & Aly, 2023). Schools as formal education units design a diverse and systematic learning environment for the many different activities that students have, namely an environment that is able to facilitate more opportunities. Because of this, the desired goals can be achieved through supported and guided student growth and development. This is all shaped by the curriculum implemented in the teaching and learning process.

Looking at what has been explained above, the curriculum plays a crucial role in the running of the education system to be able to create an innovative, creative, and reliable generation and have a sense of responsibility. The curriculum contains teaching materials, procedures, content, and learning objectives which are a set of learning plans that will later be used as a reference during teaching and learning activities in order to achieve national education goals. The curriculum is a design file that contains learning methods and tactics that can be developed later; goals to be achieved; what materials and learning experiences must be carried out by students; evaluation materials that are useful for seeing the achievement of goals; and real action from what has been designed (Azzahra et al., 2022). In achieving a better life and existence, the curriculum plays a role in determining a person's experience and the type and quality of knowledge.

Many changes to the curriculum in Indonesia have also been made because they follow current developments or could also be due to other things such as changes in leaders including the minister of education, evaluation of the previous curriculum which was deemed less effective, and so on. Various problems that arise during curriculum development need to be reviewed further in depth and analyzed carefully. In order to achieve educational goals optimally, the curriculum must be prepared in line with what is needed by today's society and be guided by increasingly rapid changes in the times. (Indarta et al., 2022). In Indonesia itself, the curriculum has undergone many changes and developments in its implementation, starting from the 1952 curriculum to the current Kurikulum Merdeka. The journey of curriculum development began in 1947, 1964, 1968, 1973, 1975, 1984, 1994, 1997 (1994 curriculum revision), 2004 (KBK, Competency Based Curriculum), 2006 (KTSP, Educational Unit Level Curriculum), 2013 (Kurtilas) Through the Ministry of National Education, the government changed the existing curriculum in 2018 (Revised Curriculum) due to revisions in the 2013 curriculum, and now a new curriculum has emerged called the Kurikulum Merdeka. (Andrea, 2016). The Kurikulum Merdeka is a learning guide that has a variety of intracurricular learning systems, the content presented is maximal for the reason that students have sufficient time to deepen learning concepts and strengthen competencies. (Tussakdiah, 2023).

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a literature review research method. Literature review research is the result of analyzing various information and conceptual data, qualitative data and quantitative data from several research articles published earlier and containing theories related to the formulation of the research problem (Zakariah et al., 2020). The problem discussed in this study is to determine the "Implementation of the Elementary School Kurikulum Merdeka". In this research, concepts and theories were studied based on existing literature, especially articles published in various scientific publications. Literature review functions to build concepts or theories that underlie research studies. The data sources used were taken from various accurate sources, namely reference books, journals and previous research. Literature review or literature study is a mandatory activity in research, especially academic research whose main aim is to develop both theoretical and practical aspects that are useful (Zakariah et al., 2020). So, by using this research method, the author can solve the problem to be researched easily.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Kurikulum Merdeka Concept in Elementary Schools Curriculum is a lesson plan, teaching materials, and learning experiences that have been programmed in advance. The curriculum is a reference for every educator in implementing the teaching and learning process. Curriculum changes cannot be separated from developments in the digital era. The Kurikulum Merdeka is a curriculum initiated by the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) Nadiem Anwar Makarim which was launched as a means to overcome the learning crisis in Indonesia (Manalu et al., 2022).

The Kurikulum Merdeka program in education with the concept of independent learning in elementary schools provides "freedom" for education implementers, especially teachers and school principals, in compiling, creating and implementing educational programs based on the potential and needs of students and schools. (Dessya Mas Ningrum, 2023). An Kurikulum Merdeka frees teachers to organize learning that emphasizes fundamental order by considering characteristics so that the learning outcomes achieved are more important, enjoyable and in-depth. Business activities that are arranged according to stages and in accordance with natural conditions provide assistance to students to build character and competence within themselves.

In planning the development of educational modules in schools, school principals must consider the characteristics of students, school potential and regional potential. Minister of Education, he stated the superiority of the Kurikulum Merdeka. First, it is simpler and deeper because this curriculum will focus on essential material and developing student competencies in each phase. Then, teaching staff and students will be more independent because for students, as well as other supporters related to this Kurikulum Merdeka, it is said to be more relevant and interactive, namely through project activities it will provide wider opportunities for students to actively explore actual issues, for example environmental, health and other issues to support the development of character and competency of the Pancasila Student Profile (Sumarsih et al., 2022).

The Pancasila student profile can be a reflection of Indonesia's superior students who have world-class insight, character, competence and behavior in accordance with Pancasila values, as the main reference that serves as a guide for instructive approach numeracy as a reference for teachers in building students' character. Realizing the character of Pancasila students includes creating Pancasila students who reason critically, are creative, are independent, have faith, are devoted to God Almighty, and have noble character, work together and have global diversity through the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka.

In the Kurikulum Merdeka, the Pancasila learning profile applied in the focus of elementary school education is the emphasis on the formation of student character, where the independent learning curriculum policy emphasizes the talents and intelligence of each student. This is because students have different abilities in their respective fields. (Sulistiyani et al., 2022). It is hoped that the new policy system related to the independent learning curriculum will be able to produce students who are ready to work and are competent with high morals and can be useful for the community environment.

Application of the Kurikulum Merdeka in SD/MI

The Kurikulum Merdeka emphasizes that an educator must pay attention to student learning outcomes, not just teach to complete the material like traditional education. Quoting from the Ministry of Education and Culture, in this regard, the Kurikulum Merdeka has several learning outcomes which are arranged based on phases at elementary school level, namely (Iskandar et al., 2023): (1) Phase A class I to II SD/equivalent; (2) Phase B class III to IV elementary school/equivalent; (3) Phase C classes V to VI Elementary School/equivalent.

There are also several changes from the 2013 Curriculum to the Kurikulum Merdeka, these changes are that the Natural Sciences (IPA) and Social Sciences (IPS) subjects are combined into IPAS which aims to enable students to carry out their natural and social lives simultaneously, the application of computational thinking learning, carried out in Indonesian, Mathematics and Natural Sciences subjects, English subjects are used as elective subjects, while Arts subjects are used as skills subjects. The following are several options for implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka, namely (Barlian & Solekah, 2022): (1) Independent Learning Category where the education unit or school continues to apply the 2013 curriculum but contains the principles and rules of the Kurikulum Merdeka, usually called the emergency curriculum. (2) The Independent Category has changed, when the 2022/2023 academic year begins, the educational unit will use the Kurikulum Merdeka, where the teaching tools that will be used in learning are available on the Merdeka Mengajar Platform according to the level of the educational unit. The teaching tools available at elementary school level are classes I and IV. (3) Independent Sharing Category, later the education unit will implement or apply the Kurikulum Merdeka and develop its own teaching tools that will be used for class I and class IV of elementary school which of course starts in the 2022/2023 school year.

The Kurikulum Merdeka also has three types of characteristics of learning activities, namely Intracurricular or systematic learning which in its implementation refers to differentiated learning (Pertiwi et al., 2023). Then there is Curricular Learning, namely deepening the knowledge learned at the intracurricular stage, deepening here focuses on strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile which leads to general competencies and character of students. The last is Extracurricular Learning, which is learning that is adjusted to the interests of students and also in accordance with the resources in the Education unit.

The implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka in Elementary Schools (SD) is an initiative that is currently developing in Indonesia. The Kurikulum Merdeka provides flexibility for schools to develop learning content, methods, models and assessments in accordance with the characteristics of the local environment, culture and student potential (Zumrotun, 2024). The implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka has shown positive results in several studies, such as the Driving School which showed positive results in the first year and continues to be developed in many schools (MASKUR, 2023).

Management of facilities and infrastructure is important in implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka in elementary schools. Good planning regarding facilities and infrastructure is needed so that the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka can run smoothly (Irmayanti, 2023). Apart from that, strengthening teacher readiness and digital literacy training are also a focus in implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka. Elementary school teachers

were targeted for training to equalize perceptions regarding the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka and the importance of digital literacy in learning (Septiana & Hanafi, 2022).

Apart from that, the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka in Elementary Schools has become the focus of research which aims to understand the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka in various aspects, starting from mathematics learning (Susanti, 2024) to the management of facilities and infrastructure (Wasilah, 2023).

The Holistic principle is a project that in its implementation looks at something as a whole and whole, without being differentiated or separated. Then there is the Contextual principle, which is based on real or concrete experiences experienced by oneself in daily activities. The principle is centered on students, which means that students will be used as subjects in learning and the implementation will still be carried out independently. And finally, the Explorative principle, in other words, is related to opening up space or exploring students' self-development.

Problematics faced by Teachers in Implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka in Elementary Schools

Teachers in Elementary Schools face a number of problems in implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka. Some of the obstacles that arise include the lack of adequate facilities and infrastructure, the need to increase teacher competence in using technology, difficulties in conducting learning evaluations, the varying conditions of students, parents and environments, as well as the unevenness of government policies (Marlia et al., 2024). Apart from that, teachers also experience difficulties in adapting learning concepts to the new curriculum, especially in terms of the use of technology and learning evaluation (Tampubolon et al., 2024). There are still some teachers who are technologically illiterate and entering old age who have difficulty adapting to the Kurikulum Merdeka (Mujiyanto, 2024).

Problems faced by teachers in implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka also include teacher readiness in facing curriculum changes, lack of supporting tools, motivation and teacher self-competence, as well as support from the school ecosystem (Muhafid & Retnawati, 2022). In addition, obstacles in the process of adapting to the Kurikulum Merdeka are also challenges faced by teachers (Safitri & Fajar, 2023). Teachers also experience obstacles related to Human Resources (HR) in inviting fellow teachers to change their thinking to get out of their comfort zone (Princess, 2023).

Apart from that, the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka also requires teachers to have creativity and a strong role in the learning process. Teachers need to learn more about the Kurikulum Merdeka, consider projects according to the student's phase, and develop learning media independently (Hartoyo & Rahmadayanti, 2022). Teachers also need to classify students based on ability and develop simple but effective learning media to provide an understanding of basic concepts in mathematics learning (Susanti, 2024).

Apart from that, the role of school supervisors is also key in overcoming the obstacles faced by educators in implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka. It is hoped that steps to optimize the role of supervisors regarding obstacles to implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka can help schools face existing challenges. Increasing teacher competency is also a main focus, with the Ministry of Education and Culture seeking to improve teacher performance and competency through the Merdeka Teaching Platform as an important component in implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka (Aulia et al., 2023).

In facing these various obstacles, teacher training and mentoring is the solution provided. Teachers need to receive assistance in compiling teaching modules, getting to know the learning tools in the Kurikulum Merdeka, and compiling learning tools for implementation (Sthephani & Octa Hadiyanti, 2023). Through these various important activities, it is hoped that teachers will be able to recognize and develop learning tools in the Kurikulum Merdeka for implementation (Leasa et al., 2023).

Thus, the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka in elementary schools faces a number of problems involving teacher readiness, the role of school supervisors, increasing competency, as well as the need for training and mentoring for educators. Collaborative efforts between teachers, supervisors and other related parties are key in overcoming obstacles that arise in implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka at the elementary school level. Research and concrete actions need to continue to be carried out to ensure that teachers can overcome existing challenges and provide meaningful, deep and enjoyable learning in accordance with the principles of the Kurikulum Merdeka.

Strategies in Implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka in Elementary Schools/Islamic Elementary Schools

In the context of implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka in Primary/Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (SD/MI), appropriate strategies are very important to ensure the successful implementation of this new curriculum. Several studies have highlighted the challenges faced by schools and teachers in adapting the Kurikulum Merdeka. One

of them is the difficulty in designing appropriate strategies for implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka (MASKUR, 2023). Teachers also experience difficulties in adapting the Civics Education (PKN) learning concept to the Kurikulum Merdeka (Tampubolon et al., 2024). However, research shows that optimizing the management of facilities and infrastructure in schools can be an effective strategy in supporting the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka (Wasilah, 2023).

Implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka also requires a deep understanding of the changes from the 2013 Curriculum to the Kurikulum Merdeka (Firmansyah, 2023). Other research highlights the role of the Ki Hajar Dewantoro Tri Education Center in the transformation of the Kurikulum Merdeka, where through the role of the family, students can develop their potential optimally (Pakaya, 2023). In addition, the implementation of clinical supervision is also considered important in the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka in elementary schools, where good implementation techniques can support the implementation of optimal supervision (Anridzo et al., 2022).

Teachers are also faced with various problems in implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka, such as studying problems in the Independent Learning Curriculum which raise challenges that need to be overcome (Recently, 2024). The results of the analysis of teacher perceptions show that there are four sub-themes found in the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka, namely strategies, challenges, support and benefits (Aulia, 2024). Apart from that, implementing a technological approach is also important in developing the Kurikulum Merdeka in SD/MI (Prasetyo, 2024).

Socialization of the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka based on the introduction of the Merdeka Mengajar platform shows that the implementation of the curriculum in driving schools has been carried out optimally, although there are still shortcomings and obstacles in its implementation (Simangunsong et al., 2023). Teachers also have a strategic role in the successful implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka, where they must become facilitators and catalysts to improve the quality of education (Saring, 2023). Apart from that, in-house training is also considered important in fostering a democratic, creative and innovative culture for teachers and students in facing the Kurikulum Merdeka (Rijal, 2024).

In the context of teacher preparation, phenomenological studies show that the obstacles faced by teachers in preparing to implement the Kurikulum Merdeka include a lack of supporting tools, motivation, personal competence, and support from the school ecosystem (Muhafid & Retnawati, 2023). In addition, the analysis of teacher readiness in junior high schools also highlights that the successful implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka is influenced by the willingness and ability of school principals and teachers to make changes (Kurniati, 2023).

In terms of decision making regarding the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka, research shows that there are four main themes that need to be considered, namely reasons for decision making, positive impacts, strategies and suggestions for the government (Paluvi, 2024). Apart from that, analysis of curriculum development designs is also important in meeting society's needs in the current digital era (Kusno & Wijayani, 2021). Thus, strategies for implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka in SD/MI require an in-depth understanding of the challenges faced, the role of teachers, optimization of facilities and infrastructure, as well as the use of technology to support the implementation of this new curriculum.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Curriculum changes were carried out to adapt to the times and existing conditions. The latest curriculum change is the Kurikulum Merdeka initiated by the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) Nadiem Anwar Makarim which was launched as a means to overcome the learning crisis in Indonesia. This Kurikulum Merdeka was created with the aim of covering lessons missed due to Covid-19. With this curriculum, it is hoped that it can produce advanced teaching in Indonesia, can deepen students' potential, so this curriculum is deliberately made simple and flexible. In the process of implementing this curriculum, teachers are often faced with various challenges and obstacles. Of course, all elements of education have an important role in correcting things that can hinder the process of implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka. Therefore, in the next study a more appropriate structure or strategy is needed so that it can be used as an alternative or solution to the obstacles experienced by teachers in the process of implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka in elementary schools.

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