



MERDEKA BELAJAR CURRICULUM AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the innovation and obstacles of Implementation Merdeka Belajar Curriculum at junior high school number 7 of Palembang. This type of research is qualitative in a descriptive way. The key research instruments are observation, questionnaires, and interviews. The data source for this research is the results of interviews with the assistant principal of academic affairs and curriculum sector as well as 10 teachers who teach using the Merdeka Belajar curriculum. The results found by researchers are : 1). Innovation from the implementation of Merdeka Belajar Curriculum at Junior High School Number 7 of Palembang has been running and implemented in accordance with the content of merdeka belajar curriculum, which focuses on the Strengthening Pancasila Student Profile Project (P5). An innovative project of an independent school curriculum is called "Merdeka dari Sampah", 2). The implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum at Junior High School Number 7 of Palembang is very effective for teachers and students, 3). There are no obstacles to implementing the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum at Junior High School Number 7 of Palembang.

Keywords: *Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, Implementation, Innovation, Obstacles.*

1. INTRODUCTION

As mentioned by Sudjana (2005) that the curriculum is the goal and hope that educators in schools put into the shape of instructional plans and activities. The teaching and learning process serves as the implementation, while the curriculum serves as the intention and strategy. Education professionals and students are participating in the process. Thus, it can be said that the curriculum serves as the cornerstone of a teaching approach that seeks to provide students with high quality education.

The government led by The Ministry of Education, announced a plan for enhancing the independent curriculum as the final effort to restore learning that had been disrupted by the pandemic Yudhawasthi, C.M & Christiani (2021) as an additional option to re-establish pickup in 2022-2024, this instructional program is provided to training units.

In 2024, the government will evaluate the public education system and provide assessments during the period of learning recovery. The model educational program now

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goes by the name “Merdeka Curriculum” which was duly dispatched by The Ministry of Education and Technology. Schools are still allowed to choose the curriculum that will be used in each of their individual training units, educational program decisions include 2013, emergency, and independent curriculum. As explained by Supriyono (2022) The independent learning curriculum is crisis education program that was launched to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is development and execution can be compared to a turn of events, understanding independent learning is a process that is used to allow students to select the things that interest them.

According to Kania (2022) the goal of independent learning is to prevent progress from going backwards during the Covid-19 pandemic. Schools can use the 2013 curriculum as they get ready to implement this new lesson plan. Depending on each teaching unit’s individual availability, the independent curriculum can be implemented in stages. The educational program, as a training strategy, occupies a crucial role because it serves as the culmination of all instructive activities. It should be constructed in earnest when the educational plan’s purpose is to serve as a hub for informative activities. Due to the distinctive concept of the educational plan, which is always evolving and reacting to the needs of the learners, educational plans are advanced.

The local area and the people who have opportunities for growth also change

Tedjokoesoemo et al (2021) so the most important stage in developing and educational program is an analysis of the situation (circumstance investigation), keeping in mind what is happening in the learning environment for a full understanding, the situation of students, and the situation of future educators who will conduct exercises. As stated by Sari, S.Y (2020) it is important for educators and students to complete the growing experience, which is why educational program advancement is important. The information imparted should continuous expand as a nation develops Faiz A., & Purwati (2021) Therefore, the development of this developing experience starts with an improved educational strategy. However, the educational curriculum offered should also take into account the abilities of students in a given nation. Try not to mention the educational strategy, but the understudies human resources are sufficient to ignore the example. Because of this, students would be unable to focus properly and effectively, which could result in their failing.

As explained by Arifin, S., & Muslim (2020) The deployment of an emergency curriculum during a pandemic served as the basis for the creation of this curriculum, specifically through curriculum simplicity that let pupils concentrate on key skills. According to the evaluations findings, using emergency curriculum can dramatically lessen signs of learning loss during the pandemic for both reading and numeracy accomplishments. The understanding that occurs is that the concept of independent learning is independence in

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thinking. Related to this understanding, the essence of freedom of thought must first be owned by educators. Without starting with the main actor, namely educators, it is possible for other actors, namely students. This has been conveyed by Nadiem by giving examples of many criticisms of the various policies that have been implemented, such as the policy with the returns of the assessment of the national examination to each school respectively.

Therefore, there are various criticisms in mentioning that many heads are unprepared schools and educators and do not have competence in creating individual judgments. Thus, it is necessary to have the ability to translate various basic competencies from the curriculum so that this affects the learning that occurs, an educator without going through a process of interpretation, reflection, and independent thinking and forms of how to assess his competence and translate basic competencies into a good learning implementation plan (RPP). The Ministry of Education and Culture stated that learning will occur when an educators is capable of translating the curriculum properly. Thus, independent paradigm learning is an effort to respect the changes that must occur for learning in schools today. The idea of independent learning's conclusion is a proposal for reforming the public education system.

Restructuring the educational system is necessary to promote progress and a society that can evolve with the times. In a sense, this

is going back to the original purpose of education, which is to liberate people or to make them more human. The relationship between teachers and students is a topic in the independent learning idea. In other words, teacher and students work together to seek the truth rather of using the teacher as a source of information. This indicates that the teacher's role in the classroom is to explore truth, student's capacity for reason, and their critical perception of the world and its phenomena rather than to impart or standardize the teacher's version of reality.

The drive to learn independence is being fueled by opportunities for the development of technology and the internet, thus it can undermine a restrictive or non-liberal education system. Reducing the amount of time teachers and school spend on administrative tasks is one such improvement. Therefore, educational institutions, professors, and students can all exercise the freedom to experiment, study independently, and be creative. Teachers and students currently have individual experiences that extend to the environment. Additionally, lessons learned from past experience will be covered in educational settings.

As stated by Etty (2022) that active learning requires learning media that can be directly used by students as learning resources. The development of information technology capable of processing, packaging, and displaying, as well as disseminating learning information either offline or online learning. Where in reality learning is not difficult, not

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even limited by space or time. So students can choose learning that they feel comfortable and easy to understand, which is introverted 1 (closed/prefers online learning) and extroverted (open/prefers offline learning. This new literacy process must serve as a catalyst for the transformation of the educational system for the Industrial Revolution 4.0 age.

Students in the industrial era 4.0 have extensive knowledge of the visual or digital environment of today. Additionally, it is the responsibility of educators to guide, lead, and discover the crucial potential and power of their students. An educational ecosystem is created during the learning process to support the expansion and development of students' character, innovation, independence, comfort, and competence. In the industrial 4.0 era, independent learning might then constitute a superior resource or quality to fulfill educational possibilities with the objective of advancing the country and state. Given the backdrop, it is critical to investigate and test out different teaching strategies for the independent learning school system.

Indonesian students have difficulties improving their speaking abilities when learning English. It involves not only linguistic expertise but also personality, cultural context, and instructional techniques. Because of their shyness, hesitation, and uneasiness, students in Asian countries are reluctant to use English (Jaya, 2016). A teacher must employ the proper strategies in order to effectively accomplish the objectives of the teaching and learning process. The teacher will

need to use a lot of ingenuity to do this. They must be able to select and apply the proper methods and media to meet the educational requirements of the students. The teacher can then assist the pupils in more efficiently and thoroughly understanding the lessons (Mortini et al, 2023).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW**Definition Curriculum**

As mentioned by Alhamuddin (2019) that the curriculum fundamentally serves as a plan that directs how the educational process is carried out. The educational planning has a big impact on what is written in the plan. The educational philosophy chosen by planners colors their ideas on the necessity of education. It should be mentioned that every person, including educational experts, has a unique perspective on what the curriculum means. Experts dispute that viewpoint. The curriculum can be viewed from two perspectives, the traditional perspective and the modern perspective.

Sudin (2014) because of the traditional viewpoint, there is a belief that curriculum in schools consists solely of lesson plans. According to the conventional viewpoint, the curriculum is made up of a number of lessons that students must complete while they are in school, making it appear as though schoolwork consists solely of reading textbooks that have been designated as study materials. The curriculum, on the other hand, is thus seen as something that actually happens in the

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educational process in schools, in accordance with the modern viewpoint, and it is more than just a lesson plan. This viewpoint differs as a process from a fact. When done by kids, this activity can offer educational opportunities. In addition to learning about various gardening topics, kids can gain knowledge through sports, scouting, student organizations, teachers, and school officials. Every academic experience is viewed as part of the curriculum.

The two definitions of the terms “traditional” and “(narrow) meaning “of curriculum” can be used to explain what is meant by curriculum that only includes a limited number of subjects for teachers and is taught to students with the intention of obtaining diplomas and certificates. According to the modern perspective, the curriculum is understood to encompass all of the experiences that a student is expected to have while being guided by a teacher, not just a set of subjects. As a result, this encounter is built on both life events and learning. As explained by Lismina (2017) that the definition of curriculum is fairly broad because it encompasses all of the experiences expected of students while being guided by teachers, rather than only being restricted to a few specific courses. This experience can take place both inside and outside of the classroom and be intra-curricular, co-curricular, extracurricular. This kind of curriculum’s definition is quite general but less operational, which will lead to misunderstanding when it is put into practice in the real world.

Definition Merdeka Belajar Curriculum

Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum that includes a variety of intra-curricular learning opportunities, where the subject matter will be maximized to provide students enough time to explore ideas and build competency. In order to tailor learning to the interests and learning needs of students, teachers have the freedom to select a number of teaching materials. The independent curriculum is a component of the recovery effort in education. Previously known as a *prototype* curriculum, it later evolved into a more flexible curriculum framework while maintaining a focus on fundamental knowledge, character development, and student competencies. Main characteristics this curriculum that supports the recovery of learning is:

- a. Project based learning for soft skills and character development fit the Pancasila student profile
- b. Focusing on the essentials so that you have enough time to grasp the fundamentals in depth, including literacy and numeracy
- c. Flexibility for teachers to adapt the material and context locally and to alter instruction based on students ability.

Merdeka Belajar Curriculum Goals

Numerous domestic and foreign research demonstrate that Indonesia has long had a learning dilemma. These studies demonstrate that a large number of Indonesian kids are unable to comprehend elementary reading or fundamental math concepts. The stark disparity in education between Indonesia’s regions and

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social groups is also demonstrated by this finding. The Covid-19 pandemic's breakout made this problem worse (Direktorat PAUD, Dikdas, 2021).

Systemic adjustments are required to address the crisis and the difficulties, and one method to do this is through the curriculum. The materials covered in class are determined by the curriculum. The pace and teaching strategies that teachers employ to fulfill the requirements of their pupils are also influenced by the curriculum. In order to accomplish this, The ministry of education and culture created an autonomous curriculum as a crucial component of the protracted crisis we had to overcome. The independent curriculum's goal is to restore learning, and it also gives teachers the freedom to select and modify teaching strategies that meet the requirements of a given educational setting. This allows students to properly deepen concepts and strengthen competencies in accordance with their interests and learning needs (Kemendikbudristek, 2022) It can be concluded that the purpose of the Independent curriculum is an effort to restore learning.

The Characteristics of Merdeka Belajar Curriculum

The mobilizing school program has been implemented in 2,500 educational units using the Merdeka Curriculum, formerly known as the prototype curriculum. In light of prior experience, including the mobilizing school program. The Ministry of Education and Culture noted that this Independent Curriculum has a number of qualities, including:

a. Project - based learning through the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5)

Because learning occurs through a variety of project activities that can give students more opportunities to actively explore real-world issues to support the development of character and competency in the Pancasila Student Profile, Project-based learning involves more interactive and relevant learning activities. When student's education is over, they will need to be able to work in groups, generate works, collaborate, think creatively, and actively develop their character, according to the Ministry of Education and Culture.

b. Focus on the essential material so that you have enough time to deepen basic competence (literacy and numeracy)

Learning is made easier and more in depth with an individual curriculum, which concentrates on the crucial information and gradually builds student competencies. In order for the execution of the independent curriculum to be meaningful, leisurely, and enjoyable. Additionally, standard outcomes are significantly simpler, giving teachers more time to explain complex ideas.

c. Flexibility in differentiated learning with adjust students abilities, as well as context and local content

Learning becomes more independent with this curriculum since it grants students, instructors, and schools a variety of freedoms. There is no specialized program for students at the high school level, so they can select the

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right topics with their passions, skills, and goals. Students are not divided according to their majors in science or social studies. The freedom to teach in accordance with student development and crime stages is granted to teachers. As long as the teacher is compelled to keep pursuing material attractions without taking into account the needs of students who are falling behind in their studies. Schools are granted the power to create and oversee learning curriculum based on the features of each educational setting, each student, and each school.

Curriculum Implementation

As described by Larson (2018) Implementation is a component of total curriculum management, which also entails curriculum development, implementation, feedback, evaluation, modification, and construction of the curriculum. Provides an example of how curriculum management encompasses all of the steps involved in integrating the curriculum's objectives and material into classroom instruction. Each curriculum includes ideas and concepts that are reflected in goals, programs, and approaches in the learning process as well as in the evaluation system. In terms of new ideas from new curriculum Altrichter (2006):

“As a result, a new curriculum can be thought of as an effort to alter teaching and learning procedures that also entails the modification of a few pre-existing ideas and understandings in the environment that is being altered. By offering a documented curriculum, text books, suggestions for

effective teaching methods, workbooks for students, and perhaps even brand-new learning artifacts, it typically excels on the material side”

It can be concluded given what Herbet said earlier, it is clear that every new curriculum has implication that can be referred to as a change. These adjustments take place at the level of applied learning as part of a renewal process. The Implication is that books and reading materials, learning methodologies, and other tools and learning mediums are required, together with legislative support and availability. As a result, management approach that raises numerous concepts or ideas was necessary for the implementation of the new curriculum in order to achieve curricular modifications.

3. METHODS

The researcher of this study took a qualitative descriptive technique. With qualitative descriptive research, the problem is formulated in such a way that it directs the investigation into or documentation of social circumstances that will be thoroughly, broadly, and in-depthly examined. A qualitative approach is a research method that generates descriptive data in the form of spoken or written words from people and observed behavior, as mentioned by Bogdan and Taylor, who were cited by Maleong (2007) with a focus on social issues, qualitative research gives voice to the thoughts and views of the participants. The descriptive-qualitative research method, which employs observation,

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questionnaire, interviewing, and document analysis, focuses on issues that go beyond the level of facts. In order to gain a general understanding of the subject and execute the independent learning curriculum in educational units, this method was selected as one of the writing techniques.

The data for this study were collected from Junior High School Number 7 of Palembang. Each sample in this study consisted of 10 teachers who taught using Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, The assistant principal of academic affairs and curriculum, The Principal Junior High School Number 7 of Palembang. The data was obtained through interviews conducted with the assistant principal of academic affairs and curriculum and the Principal Junior High School Number 7 of Palembang and distributing questionnaires to 10 teachers who applied Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, this was done so that the data collected was valid and correct.

The information needed for this research is the implementation merdeka belajar curriculum and in addition, the involvement of teachers in improving education and teaching programs that are more efficient, simple, in-depth, independent, more relevant and interactive. The researcher uses interviews and documentation as tools of observation to obtain data. Researcher analyze the teachers answers in depth to determine what are the challenges faced by teachers in teaching using Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, Innovation, and Implementation.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**Questionnaire**

The results of the data analysis that researcher found here come from interviews with the assistant principal of academic affairs and curriculum at Junior High School Number 7 of Palembang and the principal of Junior High School Number 7 of Palembang. The researcher asked several questions regarding the implementation of Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, the challenges faced by teachers and the innovation of Merdeka Belajar Curriculum implemented at Junior High School Number 7 of Palembang. The results of the data analysis are as follows.

Table 1. The Result Teacher Questionnaire

No	Name	Score	Score		Code
			Percentage %	Result	
1	R.A	120	100%	Strongly Agree	4
2	O.T	119	99%	Strongly Agree	4
3	R.F	85	70%	Agree	3
4	D.A	85	70%	Agree	3
5	N.A	109	90%	Strongly Agree	4
6	M.S	110	91%	Strongly Agree	4
7	R.Y	106	88%	Agree	4
8	D.A	91	75%	Agree	3
9	N.M	94	78%	Strongly Agree	4
10	I.M	107	89%	Strongly Agree	4

Interview

Based on the results of the interview, the researcher found:

- 1) Teachers have the ability to teach by implementing this curriculum namely Merdeka Belajar curriculum.
- 2) School have access to finding references to learning materials that have been provided by the ministry of education, so there are no obstacles to finding reference materials.
- 3) The facilities and infrastructure at this school are sufficient for the learning process using the Merdeka Belajar curriculum.
- 4) The school has implemented several innovations, such as P5 and the Pancasila Student Profile, and the innovation that has been implemented is merdeka dari sampah.
- 5) There are no obstacles to implementing this innovation.
- 6) As discussed earlier, Pancasila Student Profile has been implemented in this school.
- 7) The use of modules is very effective for students in the teaching and learning process, and for teachers, the use of teaching modules is optimal because teaching modules are made by the teacher, so teachers are more flexible in giving and teaching material to students without obstacles.

5. CONCLUSION

The innovation of Merdeka Belajar Curriculum implementation at Junior High School Number 7 of Palembang has been

running and implemented in accordance with the contents of merdeka belajar curriculum, which focuses on the Project to Strengthen Pancasila Student Profiles (P5), according to the findings of the previous chapter. An innovative project from the school's independent curriculum is called "Merdeka dari sampah." In actuality, the initiative is anticipated to give kids the chance to get knowledge and experiences as a way of developing their character and as a way of truly learning from their social surroundings.

The implementation of Merdeka Belajar curriculum at Junior High School Number 7 of Palembang is very effective for teachers and students. Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, as is well known, allows independence for all elements of the educational system, including schools, teachers, and students. One of the curricula that altered Indonesia's educational system was Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. Merdeka Belajar curriculum offers instructors an independent learning curriculum with a lighter workload, more straightforward lesson planning, and other benefits. As a result of the teacher's lack of burden, learning may be carried out freely, and the administrative workload is lighter, making it more pleasant to carry out one's duties as a teacher.

The design of the implementation of learning can be made simpler by adopting a merdeka belajar curriculum, which can provide teachers with more freedom to create, use, and build lesson plans while still having rules for the evaluation process. In order to improve the quality of learning, creating an engaging and

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enjoyable learning environment helps keep teachers and students from finding learning activities tedious, freedom of expression. The application of learning gives students and teachers the chance to express themselves freely, starting with having a conversation without feeling under pressure, especially for students.

There are no obstacles to implementing Merdeka Belajar Curriculum at Junior High School Number 7 of Palembang. Teachers also have freedom in choosing the teaching tools to use. All teachers are enthusiastic and active; all teachers are free to innovate and be creative in implementing this curriculum; and students also have the freedom to choose the subjects they want according to their individual talents and interests.

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