



Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Islamic Religion Subjects

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Abstract: This research aims to explain how the Merdeka Curriculum is implemented in Islamic Religious Education subjects at Harapan Mandiri Middle School in Medan. The research method is qualitative using a critical discourse analysis approach, namely observing facts that actually occurred and comparing them with related documents and testing the level of achievement. The research results obtained are, firstly, the Merdeka curriculum at Harapan Mandiri Middle School in Medan includes three activities, namely diagnostic assessment, P5 (Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project), and PMO (Project Management Office). Both PAI teaching processes with the Independent Curriculum at Harapan Mandiri Middle School in Medan have fully adopted the Independent Curriculum approach in planning, implementation and assessment. The three student learning outcomes when the Merdeka Curriculum was applied to Islamic Religion subjects at Harapan Mandiri Middle School in Medan showed a significant increase in the cognitive and psychomotor aspects, but the affective aspect experienced a less significant increase. The four obstacles in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in Islamic Religion subjects at Harapan Mandiri Middle School in Medan involve senior teachers who are less familiar with technology as an internal problem, and parents who do not understand the Merdeka Curriculum as an external problem. The recommended solution to overcome obstacles in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum at Harapan Mandiri Middle School in Medan is that teachers must improve their pedagogical competence by reading educational books, writing scientific papers, following the latest news, and taking part in training. Parents of students who do not understand the Merdeka Curriculum are advised to can communicate effectively and provide regular explanations regarding the independent curriculum.

Keywords: Implementation, curriculum, Islamic Religious Education

Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka dalam Mata Pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan bagaimana Kurikulum Merdeka diterapkan dalam mata pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) di SMP Harapan Mandiri Medan. Metode penelitiannya kualitatif dengan menggunakan pendekatan analisis wacana kritis, yaitu mengamati fakta yang sebenarnya terjadi dan membandingkan dengan dokumen yang terkait serta menguji tingkat ketercapaian. Hasil penelitian yang diperoleh yakni, pertama kurikulum Merdeka di SMP Harapan Mandiri Medan mencakup tiga kegiatan, yakni asesmen diagnostik, P5 (Proyek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila), dan PMO (Project Management Office). Kedua proses pengajaran PAI dengan Kurikulum Merdeka di SMP Harapan Mandiri Medan telah sepenuhnya mengadopsi pendekatan Kurikulum Merdeka dalam perencanaan, pelaksanaan, dan penilaian. Ketiga hasil belajar siswa saat Kurikulum Merdeka diterapkan pada mata pelajaran Agama Islam di SMP Harapan Mandiri Medan menunjukkan peningkatan yang signifikan pada aspek kognitif dan psikomotorik, namun aspek afektif mengalami peningkatan yang kurang signifikan. Empat kendala dalam menerapkan Kurikulum Merdeka pada mata pelajaran Agama Islam di SMP Harapan Mandiri Medan melibatkan guru senior yang kurang akrab dengan teknologi sebagai masalah internal, dan orang tua siswa yang belum memahami Kurikulum Merdeka sebagai masalah eksternal. Solusi yang disarankan untuk mengatasi kendala dalam penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka di SMP Harapan Mandiri Medan adalah guru harus meningkatkan kompetensi pedagogik dengan membaca buku-buku pendidikan, menulis karya ilmiah, mengikuti berita terkini, serta mengikuti pelatihan dan Orang tua siswa yang belum memahami Kurikulum Merdeka disarankan untuk bisa berkomunikasi secara efektif dan memberikan penjelasan secara rutin mengenai kurikulum merdeka.

Kata kunci: Implementasi, kurikulum, Pendidikan Agama Islam.

1. Introduction

The independent curriculum began with mitigation measures by the government to recover from the learning loss that occurred at the beginning of 2020. In fact, learning loss in Indonesia during the Covid-19 pandemic was around 5-6 months. However, in 3T areas it can take up to 8-10 months due to learning being stopped and distance learning not being able to be carried out optimally. This condition worsens the education crisis in Indonesia that has actually occurred in the past 20 years, which can be seen from the low PISA scores for literacy, numeracy and science. Around 70 percent of Indonesian students only achieve below minimum competency in literacy and numeracy.

Seeing this fact, the government through the Ministry of Education and Culture quickly rose to restore national education through the implementation of an emergency curriculum as an alternative to the 2013 curriculum. This was considered successful in mitigating national education to be safe from learning loss. There are around 31 percent of schools that consciously chose the Emergency Curriculum which is simpler in material than the 2013 Curriculum. For the most part, those who followed the 2013 Curriculum showed a decline in learning achievement for about five months, while those who followed the Emergency Curriculum showed a decline for about one month.

With the introduction of the Independent Curriculum, the hope is that students can optimize the development of their potential and abilities. The Merdeka Curriculum offers a critical, quality, expressive, applicable, diverse and progressive learning approach. Implementing this new curriculum requires cooperation, strong commitment, perseverance and real effort from all parties. The aim is so that the values of Pancasila can be firmly embedded in students. Because of the aim of this research is to analyze the independent curriculum activity program at SMP Harapan Mandiri Medan, to analyze the implementation of PAI learning with the independent curriculum at Harapan Mandiri Middle School in Medan and to analyze student learning outcomes in implementing the independent curriculum.

2. Method

The research in SMP Harapan Mandiri Medan uses qualitative methods, especially in the form of critical discourse analysis. Qualitative methods are research processes that produce descriptive data such as speech, writing, or behavior that can be observed from the subject

himself (Furchan, 2004). The critical discourse analysis research method is an example of using qualitative methods to explain something. In using the critical discourse analysis method, the focus of analysis is centered on linguistic aspects and the context related to these aspects. Context here refers to the use of linguistic aspects for certain purposes or practices.

Critical discourse analysis in this research adopts a critical paradigm by observing actual facts, comparing them with related documents, and evaluating consistency and level of achievement. Therefore, this methodology places great value on objectivity. However, subjectivity cannot be avoided because the reality found in real situations and documents is the result of the researcher's interpretation.

3. Results and Discussion

Implementation is the execution of a plan that has been formulated carefully and in detail. Generally, implementation is carried out after planning is deemed optimal. In Nurdin Usman's opinion, implementation involves activities, actions, actions, or mechanisms in a system. This is not just an ordinary activity, but a planned activity with a special purpose. (Usman, 2002: 15). The Merdeka Curriculum is a diverse learning program in a curricular environment. It aims to give students enough time to understand the concepts and improve their abilities (Kemendikbud, 2019). Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum will begin in 2021, for the first time it will be implemented at the Driving School (Satriawan et al., 2021, p. 45). In 2022, the Ministry of Education and Culture, Research and Technology will collect data which will be the basis for implementing the Independent Curriculum in the future. There are several independent implementation strategies for the Independent Curriculum that have been planned (Sibagariang et al., 2021, p.121).

There are five findings in this research: first in a more ideal application, a diagnostic assessment should be carried out by each subject teacher in order to determine student learning styles by analyzing students' interests and talents assessed through diagnostic assessments, as in Sekar & Kamarubiani's research, the Cognitive Diagnostic Assessment is carried out periodically, both at the beginning when the teacher introduces a new learning topic, at the end when the teacher completes the explanation of certain material, and at other times during the semester (every two weeks/month/ quarter /semester).

Each student in one class has diverse abilities and skills. There are those who quickly understand certain material, there are also those who take longer to understand it. Intelligence in understanding one material does not guarantee the level of intelligence in understanding other material. (RY Sekar & N Kamarubiani, 2020)

The facts that occurred in the field were slightly different from what was discussed above, namely that the diagnostic assessment carried out at Harapan Mandiri Middle School in Medan was carried out only on new students at the beginning of the new school year. The diagnostic assessment was also designed and carried out by the deputy principal for curriculum. The rationale for carrying out diagnostic assessments like this is for the sake of effectiveness and efficiency, however, in the researchers' opinion, an ideal conception from any aspect will produce the most effective and efficient results.

In the Merdeka Curriculum Framework, students are asked to create a project that helps them develop their potential and skills in various fields. The Strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile (P5) Project is an integral part of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. This project activity is the main part of P5, is divided into two stages, namely conceptual and contextual. Students have the freedom to learn, the structure of learning activities becomes more flexible, and learning time can be adjusted to increase student effectiveness and involvement because they can experience real learning in accordance with the surrounding environment.

This activity is expected can improve the various skills possessed by Pancasila students. Implementing P5 is a learning method that takes into account differences in interests and learning preferences as well as students' enthusiasm for achieving the best learning outcomes. (Nugraheni Rachmawati et al., 2022). From the quote above, it can be concluded that P5 activities from the Merdeka Curriculum have an important role in the overall implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. P5 activities at Harapan Mandiri Middle School in Medan have been carried out on the basis of very good understanding, this can be seen from the planning, implementation and evaluation stages.

Harapan Mandiri Middle School, chose three themes, namely (Sustainable Lifestyle, Local Wisdom & Bhinneka Tunggal Ika), then the guiding team consisted of four subject teachers, P5 was carried out three times a year, in one project the processing time was two weeks. The project is carried out in class by forming groups, then four teachers will be on duty as directors and

guides. Students work freely, because PBM is eliminated so one full day every day for two weeks will be used to work on P5. The results of the project will be assessed and evaluated by the teacher and the results will be reported to the head of curriculum and the school principal. Analysis has been carried out on aspects that have the potential to be improved and improved in order to increase the optimal learning experience for students. This approach is in line with the thoughts of Sulistyaningsih and Fathurrahman as expressed in their writing: P5 as part of the Merdeka Curriculum offers the opportunity to provide a more meaningful learning experience for students. In practice, students are asked to collaborate with classmates, create objects or events related to projects, and acquire skills in solving problems to achieve desired results satisfactory. This research aims to evaluate the implementation of P5 activities as an integral part of the project to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students in the school environment and its impact on students (Sulistiyaningrum & Fathurrahman, 2023).

Harapan Mandiri Medan Middle School carries out PMO guided by a team of driving school facilitators assigned by the department. Harapan Mandiri Medan Middle School itself no longer carries out IKM because in practice it has implemented the independent curriculum since 2021 and is now at the sharing level and has become a driving school.

Second paying attention to the facts that occur in the field, supported by information from Islamic teachers and supported by the head of the curriculum field related to the process of implementing PAI learning with the independent curriculum at Harapan Mandiri Middle School in Medan, shows that from three main aspects (planning, implementation and evaluation/assessment) PAI learning in Harapan Mandiri Middle School has fully implemented the independent curriculum.

The Islamic religion teacher at Harapan Mandiri Middle School appears to start the lesson by reflecting on the students' understanding of the learning at the previous meeting and reflecting on the students' understanding of the material to be taught. Next, the teacher appears to start differentiated learning based on the results of the diagnostic assessment that was previously obtained. The differentiated learning process runs smoothly (not rigidly) and is flexible in its application. After completing the intracurricular aspect, the Islamic religion teacher then appears to enter the co-curricular aspect by giving project assignments related to the theme

of the teaching material, then closing by reflecting on the students with a quiz and the teacher's reflection on the way they teach by listening to feedback from the students.

Next is the assessment stage, conceptually, assessment refers to a structured and continuous process or activity in collecting data about student learning processes and outcomes, with the aim of making decisions based on predetermined criteria. (Matondang et al., 2019). The results of this assessment are used to determine students' needs in the learning process in order to achieve the learning objectives that have been set.

Driving schools in assessing student learning follow assessment guidelines adapted from the Merdeka Curriculum. There are fundamental differences in the assessment system between the Merdeka Curriculum and the 2013 Curriculum. In the 2013 Curriculum, formative and summative assessments are carried out by educators to monitor and evaluate student progress and learning outcomes on an ongoing basis. Meanwhile in the Independent Curriculum, the emphasis on formative assessment is to plan learning based on assessment results, according to student achievements. The difference is, in the 2013 Curriculum, assessments are carried out on attitudes, knowledge and skills, whereas in the Merdeka Curriculum there is no separate assessment of these three aspects. (Kemendikbud, 2019).

In general, assessment in the Independent Curriculum consists of three types, namely diagnostic (initial) assessment, formative assessment and summative assessment. The focus of this review is on formative and summative assessments, because diagnostic assessments are already part of the learning stage. In the context of Islamic learning at Harapan Mandiri Middle School in Medan, formative assessment is carried out through giving project assignments at the end of learning a material. Meanwhile, summative assessment is carried out through Mid-Semester Exams and Final Semester Exams, using questions in the form of Multiple Choice (PG) and Essays. Based on the explanation above, the researcher concludes that the Islamic religion subject teacher at Harapan Mandiri Middle School in Medan has carried out the Merdeka Curriculum learning process well, in accordance with three aspects (planning, implementation, and evaluation/assessment).

Third student learning outcomes are the end of a series of learning, from the preparation phase, implementation, to the evaluation phase. Learning outcomes are often referred to as

academic achievement, referring to all abilities and achievements obtained through an educational journey at school which are expressed through numbers or assessments based on evaluation of learning achievement. (Sutrisno, 2021).

Students' learning outcomes regarding learning can be quite varied, there are students with very satisfying learning outcomes, there are students with satisfactory learning outcomes and there are also students with unsatisfactory learning outcomes. This diversity of student learning outcomes is possible and in practice is greatly influenced by the learning methods, models and strategies presented by the teacher. In the context of implementing the independent curriculum at Harapan Mandiri Middle School in Medan, the significant increase in student learning outcomes in the PAI subject was caused by the effectiveness of implementing diagnostic assessments and also the application of differentiated learning delivered by PAI subject teachers. According to researchers, these two factors are a strong enough foundation to support significant increases in student learning outcomes. It didn't stop there, the researcher then also observed that the willingness and enthusiasm of PAI subject teachers in implementing differentiated learning was also a supporting factor which then made the learning atmosphere run according to expectations. For example, PAI subject teachers are willing to become more tired because they have to think and apply differentiated learning in each teaching material.

Moving on from Suanto's previous opinion which said that learning outcomes are students' changes in 3 aspects, namely affective, cognitive and psychomotor. So at Harapan Mandiri Middle School in Medan, researchers found two aspects that experienced a good increase, namely the cognitive and psychomotor aspects. Cognitive can be seen from student learning outcomes in the form of report cards, while psychomotor can be seen from the level of student creativity, especially from the results of the P5 projects that students work on. The cognitive aspect did not experience a significant spike.

From all the descriptions above, the researcher can conclude that the majority of student learning outcomes in implementing the independent curriculum in Islamic religious subjects at Harapan Mandiri Middle School in Medan have experienced quite significant improvements in two aspects, namely cognitive and psychomotor aspects. The affective aspect has experienced less improvement. This

significant increase in student learning outcomes was caused by the effective implementation of diagnostic assessments and differentiated learning. Fourth observing the facts that occurred in the field, the researchers found several things that were problematic in the implementation of the independent curriculum in Islamic religious subjects at Harapan Mandiri Middle School, Medan. There are two problems, firstly, senior teachers who are technologically illiterate and apathetic towards the demands of developments in the world of education, thereby burdening other teachers, including teachers of Islamic religious subjects, and secondly, parents of students who do not yet understand the differences between the 2013 curriculum and the independent curriculum.

The first problem is internal, namely senior teachers who are technologically illiterate. Technological illiteracy can be interpreted as someone who cannot operate technology properly due to ignorance of current technological advances. Ideally, this should not happen in the development of the world of education, considering the very rapid development of the times. This is in line with what Novia and Eva conveyed in their writing published in a journal: Teachers as the main actors as educators must be able to develop and implement technological advances so that the teaching and learning process is fun and not boring. Teachers are required to keep up with the increasingly developing times and be able to use technology to improve the competencies required by the law. The main rule for a teacher as an educator to be more efficient in learning is to be able to understand pedagogical competence, personality competence, professional competence, social competence. (Shofia dan Ahsani 2021)

Based on the quote above, it can be understood that a teacher is fundamentally required to have four competencies, namely pedagogical competence, personality competence, professional competence and social competence. Therefore, teachers are required to adapt to current developments, including mastering technology in order to obtain its benefits for educational progress. In relation to mastery of technology, its relevance is to professional competence.

The second problem is external, namely parents of students who do not yet understand the independent curriculum, so they cannot distinguish and understand things that have changed from the previous 2013 curriculum to the independent curriculum. In fact, many

parents of students are wondering why their children are taking longer to come home and the assignments they are doing (P5) seem irrelevant to the subject at hand.

Parents of students are a crucial part in educating their children. When children are enrolled in school, the parents' war does not stop, in fact what happens must be the creation of good collaboration between teachers at school and parents at home. This is in line with what Munirwan wrote in his article published in a journal: parents are the people who have the main responsibility for children's education. Parents determine their children's future. However, in recognizing the limitations and opportunities they have, parents ask other outside parties to help educate their children. The other party is a teacher at school. However, once children are entrusted to school, parents remain responsible for the success of their children's education. Parents play an important role in determining the educational success of their children.

Parent roles and responsibilities can, among other things, be realized by guiding the continuity of children's learning at home in accordance with the program that the children have studied at the learning school. Guiding children to study at home can be done by supervising and helping organize school assignments and completing the instruments and infrastructure for children to study. (Munirwan Umar, 2015)

From all the descriptions above, the researcher concludes that there are two main things that are problematic in the implementation of the independent curriculum in Islamic religious subjects at Harapan Mandiri Middle School, Medan. First, senior teachers who are technologically illiterate, which is then referred to as an internal problem. and the second are parents of students who do not understand the independent curriculum which is then referred to as external.

4. Conclusions and Suggestions

Based on the analysis of the findings and results of the research discussion in the discussion above, it can be concluded as follows: First there are three independent curriculum activities at Harapan Mandiri Middle School in Medan, namely diagnostic assessment, P5 (Project for Strengthening Pancasila Student Profiles) and PMO (Project Management Office).

Second the process of implementing PAI learning with the independent curriculum at Harapan Mandiri Middle School in Medan was examined in three aspects at once, namely

planning, implementation and evaluation that fully used the independent curriculum. Third The majority of student learning outcomes in implementing the independent curriculum in Islamic religious subjects at Harapan Mandiri Middle School in Medan experienced quite significant improvements in two aspects, namely cognitive and psychomotor aspects. The affective aspect has experienced less improvement. This significant increase in student learning outcomes was caused by the effective implementation of diagnostic assessments and differentiated learning. Fourth problems in implementing the independent curriculum in Islamic religious subjects at Harapan Mandiri Middle School in Medan. First, senior teachers who are technologically illiterate, which is then referred to as an internal problem. and the second are parents of students who do not understand the independent curriculum which is then referred to as external.

Solutions implemented in dealing with problems in the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum at Harapan Mandiri Middle School, Medan. Firstly, senior teachers who are technologically illiterate are recommended to equip their pedagogical competencies by diligently reading educational books, reading and writing scientific papers, following actual news from the news media and participating in training. Parents of students who do not yet understand the independent curriculum need good communication and regular explanations.

For teachers of PAI subjects to be able to maintain their pedagogical skills specifically in the independent curriculum, for school principals to consistently make adjustments, accelerate and improve the quality of learning in accordance with the demands of the independent curriculum, for future researchers to examine more deeply the abilities of PAI teachers in implementing the curriculum independent.

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