



Superior Characteristics and Future of the Independent Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka) Management System in Indonesia Elementary Schools in the Era of Digital Technology

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Abstract. This study aims to determine the relationship between superior characteristics and the future of an independent curriculum (kurikulum merdeka) management system in Indonesian elementary schools in the era of digital technology. The research approach used in this study is a qualitative approach with data collection techniques in the form of case studies from research journals, books, and articles that discuss the topics raised by the author commonly called literature studies. This is carried out in order to obtain concrete information and data regarding independent curriculum management in elementary schools. Study with literature study is a method carried out by reading and understanding various reference books through reliable information technology sources in the form of journals, articles, and various other media related to working on scientific paper data, in general, to support, strengthen, and reinforce existing theories and to provide a variety of accurate and adequate information in the process of completing and working on this scientific work. The results of this study show the characteristics of the independent curriculum and the future of independent curriculum management in elementary schools in the era of digital technology.

Keywords: Superior Characteristics, Independent Curriculum Management System, Indonesian Elementary Schools, Digital Technology Era.

1 Introduction

Merdeka Belajar is a new policy program of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemendikbud RI) launched by the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, Nadiem Anwar Makarim. According to him, teachers must understand the nature of freedom of thought before teaching it to students. He explained that teacher qualifications at any level would be meaningless without the process of translating core competencies and existing curricula. The concept of curriculum application continues to develop and change from

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year to year in accordance with technological developments and community needs (1). The Merdeka Curriculum (Independent Curriculum) begins with uncertainty in its implementation (2), which is final and binding for each educational unit. The Merdeka curriculum seems to be reserved to continue to grow. One side of this can encourage educational units to be stronger, motivational, creative, and innovative because it is a choice based on school readiness. The implication is that there will be a tug-of-war in implementation between the government and education units. As a manifestation of the success of development programs, the government encourages implementation. However, there are still educational units that do not understand and are ready to implement this curriculum.

Previously, according to (3) the 2013 curriculum was carried out massively, especially socialization with many instructors involving teachers, principals, supervisors, and college lecturers who were equipped with training. Various trainings, technical guidance, mentoring, and curriculum workshops are carried out at the national, provincial, district/city, education offices, sub-districts, clusters, and various teacher work groups/deliberations. Such massive socialization alone, by how many research results are said to be uneven. At that time there were obstacles faced by the government, education units, teachers, parents, and students. According to (4) the constraints from the government include book distribution, assessment, teacher administration, time allocation, socialization, implementation of thematic learning, curriculum implementation guidelines, and learning activities in student books. There are also obstacles from educational units including facilities, infrastructure, and teacher rotation both vertically and horizontally. Obstacles from teachers include making learning media, teacher understanding, integrating between lesson content in thematic learning, and mastering information technology. Constraints from parents and students include report cards and adaptation to thematic learning.

The end of the reign is not long, two years away. It seems that the government is good at doing political calculations. The Governments do not want to be considered a failure in implementation, such as the massive implementation of the 2013 Curriculum. The Prototype curriculum has the potential to wither before it develops. The fate of the Independent Curriculum seems to be the same as the 1950 Curriculum and was changed in 1952, because it does not contain clear educational objectives. Or the 2004 Curriculum which is still centralistic, changed to the 2006 Curriculum which is decentralized in style. Both were preceded by a change of minister. Prototype Curriculum Implementers in educational units are threatened with being held hostage by curriculum supplements.

Of course, curriculum development is absolutely necessary. But not only the principles, structures, methods, and strategies for achieving curriculum and learning objectives that continue to change, tend to be less effective. Development is more important, the greater impact should be on the scope, depth, and breadth of the curriculum material/content.

2 Method

This research uses qualitative approach research methods with data collection techniques in the form of case studies from research journals, books, and articles that discuss topics raised by the author commonly called literature studies. This is carried out in order to obtain concrete information and data regarding independent curriculum management in elementary schools. Study with literature study is a method carried out by reading and understanding various reference books through reliable information technology sources in the form of journals, articles, and various other media related to working on scientific paper data in general to support, strengthen, and reinforce existing theories and to provide a variety of accurate and adequate information in the process of completing and working on this scientific work (5). Data collection techniques are carried out by reading and collecting various kinds of literacy related to the research topic.

By conducting research with the literature study method, it will know various previous studies and scientific works relevant to the research topic so that researchers are able to understand well the research topics that have been formulated then researchers are able to examine and examine the implementation obstacles, superior characteristics, and the future of the independent curriculum management system in elementary schools.

3 Results

3.1 Superior Characteristics of the Independent Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka)

Independent Curriculum or Kurikulum Merdeka according to Jojor & Sihotang (2022) become a new program that can be expected to make a recovery in learning from the previous curriculum, by offering 3 characteristics which are superior to the previous curriculum including project-based learning soft skills and character development in accordance with the Pancasila student profile, learning on essential materials and a more flexible curriculum structure. In addition, the independent curriculum wants to make breakthroughs that bridge the gap between other scientific fields. Another characteristic of the implementation of the independent curriculum is the existence of project-based learning that encourages students to be able to collaborate together with peers so as to encourage the level of critical thinking. Ayu et al (2013) also explained that there are differences in critical thinking between students who follow the project-based learning model and the usual learning model. So it is necessary to continue the sustainability of project-based learning models in teaching and learning process activities for students. Therefore, a curriculum overview is needed to assist educators in its application, the independent curriculum provides an overview of the implementation of project-based learning with interesting themes that the education office has given to help education units find out more broadly according to the needs and developments that occur. According to Aditya in Sulistyani & Mulyono (2022) also explained that there are three superior characteristics contained in this independent curriculum, namely:

1. Project-based learning with the aim of developing soft skills and character according to the profile of pancasila students needed in education in Indonesia.
2. Learning programs focuses on essential material or material that must be understood and mastered by students so that there is time to conduct in-depth learning for basic competencies, including: literacy and numeracy.
3. Educators have the flexibility to conduct different learning material focuses according to the abilities and interests of students

The independent curriculum (*kurikulum merdeka*) has advantages in learning in elementary schools (Daga, 2020), because there are conveniences related to curriculum simplification, the role of educators, the implementation of planning and the learning process. Freedom of learning helps educators and elementary school students not to be shackled and continue to focus on the learning process only, but to achieve human happiness because they encounter the meaning of life in learning.

3.2 The Future of Independent Curriculum (*Kurikulum Merdeka*) in the Age of Digital Technology

Independent learning curriculum according to (1) is a curriculum that encourages independence and creative thinking by providing opportunities for students to learn in a calm, relaxed, fun, stress-free, and pressure-free way, as well as to showcase students' talents. Especially in today's era of digital technology, if students need material or educators looking for material can search the internet or others easily. However, several hurdles must be resolved, especially instilling interest from school members to move forward toward change when implementing an independent curriculum in mobilizing schools. The independent curriculum has only been implemented, so the implementation still has shortcomings, but in general it illustrates the situation better. In addition, research on the implementation of the independent learning curriculum is still rarely found because this curriculum is relatively new in use, especially research in schools. According to opinion from (2) The Free Learning Policy must continue to be controlled so that it can be implemented as aspired to. During the implementation process, it takes sincerity, hard work, and creativity so that the policy can be realized as ideally as possible. There are several ways that an educational institution, especially a school or madrasah, can do according to (3) such as:

1. Schools can learn and understand the regulations regarding the independent learning curriculum by participating in socialization, training/webinars technical guidance preparation for the implementation of independent learning curriculum management.
2. The principal can carry out coordination with the aim of making decisions in choosing the type of curriculum to be implemented in the school..
3. After the school decides to choose the independent curriculum applied, the school must fill out a registration questionnaire for the implementation of the independent curriculum
4. Create an independent curriculum implementation preparation team or a coordinating curriculum development team to:
 - a. Conduct educator training
 - b. Appoint project-based learning coordinator

- c. Develop the operational curriculum of the school/madrasah by creating and innovating according to the vision, mission, goals, and characteristics of the school
 - d. Prepare examples of independent curriculum tools (Operational Curriculum of Education Units, Learning Outcomes, Learning Objectives Flow, Teaching Modules, Teaching Materials, Assessments, Project-Based Learning Implementation Strategies).
5. Educators then create independent curriculum learning tools (independent, collaborative, flexible).
 6. The school conducts socialization to school stakeholders
 7. Schools can also seek references with other schools regarding the implementation of the independent learning curriculum.

According to [9] one of the most demonstrated features of curriculum management in the digital age is a more interconnected world of science, which allows for faster synergy between them with the help of the Internet/technology. Where to find teaching materials or references becomes very easy because of the help of the internet/technology. The application of an independent learning curriculum that emphasizes more on learning freedom for educators or students, it is hoped that educators as educators are able to create a comfortable learning atmosphere and are able to arouse the spirit of learning so that students do not feel burdened by the material.

This learning model is also expected to be able to create students who have the ability to think critically, creatively, innovatively and are able to solve problems in their lives. With all the advantages and advantages contained in the independent curriculum, it can be expected to create students who have the character of Pancasila students, have noble morals, are globally celebrated, independent, work together, reason critically, and creatively so that they can achieve the golden generation of 2045 with 4 pillars of Indonesia's vision 2045, namely human development and mastery of science and technology, sustainable economic development, equitable strengthening, national resilience, and governance. So as to be able to solve the problems that exist in the Indonesian nation that occur behind this, namely corruption, terrorism, drugs, intolerance, poverty, unemployment, and others.

4. Conclusion

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that freedom of learning is a new policy program of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia launched by the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Nadiem Anwar Makarim. At that time there were obstacles faced by the government, education units, teachers, parents, and students. The independent curriculum is a new program that can be expected to restore learning from the previous curriculum, by offering 3 characteristics which are superior to the previous curriculum including project-based learning soft skills and character development in accordance with the Pancasila student profile, learning on essential materials and a more flexible curriculum structure. Another characteristic of the implementation of the independent curriculum is the existence of project-based learning that encourages students to be able to collaborate together with peers so as to encourage the level of critical thinking.

Therefore, a curriculum description is needed to assist educators in its application, the independent curriculum has advantages in learning in elementary schools, because there are conveniences related to curriculum simplification, the role of educators, the implementation of planning and the learning process. In addition, research on the implementation of the independent learning curriculum is still rarely found because this curriculum is relatively new in use, especially research in schools. The independent curriculum can be expected to create students who have the character of Pancasila students, have noble morals, are globally celebrated, independent, work together, reason critically, and creatively so that they can achieve the golden generation of 2045 with the 4 pillars of Indonesia's vision 2045.

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