Educational Curriculum Policy in the Era of President Joko Widodo and Its Implications for Islamic Education

Aulia Azhari Tajurrahman[1], Iman Rohiman[2], Ita Rosita[3]

[1,2,3]Program Pascasarjana, Universitas Islam Darussalam, Ciamis Jawa Barat
Email: auliaazharitajurrahman@gmail.com[1], imanrohimanciamis@gmail.com[2],
rositarachmat@gmail.com[3]

Abstract

This study investigates the education curriculum policies in Indonesia during the presidency of Joko Widodo and their impact on Islamic education. The primary objective of this research is to examine the ramifications of alterations in educational curriculum policies during President Joko Widodo's tenure, specifically focusing on the 2013 Curriculum and Merdeka Curriculum for Islamic education. This study employs a qualitative methodology, utilizing library research methods and document analysis. Information is gathered from diverse sources including books, journals, government reports, and other authoritative texts. The research findings indicate that the 2013 Curriculum in Indonesia has a significant impact on Islamic education by incorporating a scientific methodology, integrating Islamic principles, and providing flexibility in the traditional curriculum. Meanwhile, Merdeka Curriculum fosters adaptable and pertinent education, granting schools and instructors autonomy, as well as enabling innovative evaluation methods. Implementation obstacles encompass issues related to infrastructure, teacher training, and comprehension of the curriculum, all aimed at enhancing the standard of education, particularly Islamic education.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji kebijakan kurikulum pendidikan di Indonesia pada era Presiden Joko Widodo dan implikasinya terhadap Pendidikan Islam. Tujuan utama penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis implikasi atau akibat dari adanya perubahan kebijakan kurikulum pendidikan pada masa Presiden Joko Widodo, baik itu Kurikulum 2013 dan Kurikulum Merdeka terhadap pendidikan Islam. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kepustakaan dan analisis dokumen. Data dikumpulkan dari berbagai sumber seperti buku, jurnal, laporan pemerintah, dan dokumen resmi lainnya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan Kurikulum 2013 di Indonesia mempengaruhi pendidikan Islam dengan pendekatan saintifik, integrasi nilai Islam, dan fleksibilitas kurikulum

khas. Adapun Kurikulum Merdeka menciptakan pendidikan fleksibel dan relevan dengan keleluasaan bagi sekolah dan guru serta penilaian kreatif. Tantangan implementasi termasuk infrastruktur, pelatihan guru, dan pemahaman kurikulum, dengan harapan meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan, termasuk pendidikan Islam.

Keywords

Educational curriculum, Merdeka Curriculum, Islamic education, Joko Widodo educational curriculum policy

INTRODUCTION

The National Education System, as defined in Law Number 20 of 2003, is a deliberate and organized endeavor to establish an environment and process for learning. Its objective is to enable students to actively cultivate their potential in terms of religious spirituality, self-discipline, personality, intelligence, moral character, and the necessary skills for their own benefit, as well as for the betterment of society, the nation, and the state. The education system in Indonesia is intrinsically intertwined with a multitude of rules that govern it. The national education policies are formulated based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. In addition, the National Education System Law Number 20 of 2003 incorporates religious values, Indonesian national culture, and adaptability to the evolving needs of society as fundamental principles for national education programs.

In the context of educational policy in a country, the curriculum plays a crucial role as a guiding framework for executing learning activities in order to attain specific educational objectives. Throughout its history, education in Indonesia has undergone multiple stages of curricular policy transformation, spanning from the Old Order era to the reform period. Ritonga (2018) states that the curriculum has undergone nine changes from 1945 to 2006. These changes occurred in 1947 (with detailed lesson plans), 1964 (Primary School Education Plan), 1968 (Primary School Curriculum), 1973 (Pioneer School Development Project Curriculum), 1975 (Primary School Curriculum), 1984 (1984 Curriculum), 1997 (Revision of the 1984 Curriculum), 2004 (Competency Based Curriculum), and 2006 (Education Unit Level Curriculum).

Following the conclusion of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's presidency, there were ongoing modifications to the curriculum. At the conclusion of his tenure, the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, Muhammad Nuh, initiated the development of the 2013 Curriculum, also known as "Kurtilas". The implementation of the 2013 Curriculum was initiated during President Joko Widodo's leadership, and it was immediately enforced through Minister of Education and Culture Regulation (Permendikbud) Number 160 of 2014, which was

issued by Anies Rasyid Baswedan, who was the Minister of Education and Culture at that time.

The 2013 Curriculum is currently being implemented gradually. This implementation will commence with pupils enrolled in the first and fourth grades of elementary school (SD)/equivalent, the seventh grade of junior high school (SMP)/equivalent, and the tenth grade of senior high school (SMA)/equivalent. Hence, Anies Baswedan, the 1st Minister of Education and Culture of the Working Cabinet, is currently enforcing both the 2006 Curriculum (KTSP Curriculum) and the 2013 Curriculum. However, the full implementation of the 2013 Curriculum across all primary and secondary school levels is still pending.

In addition, during the second phase of President Joko Widodo's tenure, there were more modifications to the curriculum policy. Nadiem Anwar Makarim, the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Mendikbudristek) of the Republic of Indonesia, has formulated the 2022 Curriculum, which will be officially known as the Merdeka Curriculum. According to the official website of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, the Merdeka Curriculum is being changed due to the findings of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). The results of the assessment revealed that 70% of 15-year-old students have skills that fall below the minimum level in basic reading and applying mathematical concepts. The PISA scores have shown no substantial improvement over the past decade to fifteen years. Studies indicate significant disparities in learning outcomes among different locations and socio-economic categories. This has been worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The curriculum policy changes under President Joko Widodo's administration have significant ramifications for Islamic education in Indonesia. The 2013 Curriculum emphasizes the learning process and incorporates a thorough assessment and evaluation framework across three domains. Typically, the three domains are Affective (related to attitude), Cognitive (related to knowledge), and Psychomotor (related to skills). The 2022 curriculum, known as the Merdeka Curriculum, prioritizes a student-centered learning approach and emphasizes the study of fundamental and comprehensive learning structures. Islamic educational institutions, including those that are on par with formal educational institutions overseen by the Ministry of Education and Culture, are also involved in the implementation of this curriculum strategy. Elementary schools, known as MI (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah), and secondary schools, known as MTs (Madrasah Tsanawiyah) and MA (Madrasah Aliyah), which are overseen by the Ministry of Religion, are involved in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.

In this study, the author will elucidate the educational curriculum policy in Indonesia during President Joko Widodo's tenure and its ramifications for Islamic education. In addition, the author will elucidate the degree to which this educational curriculum strategy impacts non-

formal educational institutions, such as Islamic boarding schools and other comparable Islamic educational institutions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to get insight into the education curriculum policy in Indonesia under President Joko Widodo's tenure and its impact on Islamic education, we conducted a thorough examination of pertinent literature sources. This literature review aims to provide a complete understanding of the development of educational curriculum policy in Indonesia under President Joko Widodo's term, along with its consequences for Islamic education. This scientific effort is primarily grounded on the fundamental basis, specifically Law Number 20 of 2003 about the National Education System.

An essential literature source that we will utilize is a book named "Implementation of the 2013 Curriculum" authored by Muhammad Nuh, the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia. This book was published on January 14, 2014. The Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia discusses two significant aspects in the book presentation: 1) the policy direction and accomplishments in educational progress; and 2) the execution of the 2013 Curriculum.

Another significant resource for this research is the book "Concept and Implementation of the 2013 Curriculum" authored by the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia. The work was authored by Muhammad Nuh and was publicly presented on January 14, 2014. The primary subjects covered in this book include: 1) the philosophical underpinnings of the 2013 Curriculum; 2) the fundamental principles and ideas behind the curriculum; 3) the various steps and procedures involved in executing the 2013 Curriculum; and 4) the outcomes and effects resulting from the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum.

In addition to consulting academic literature, specifically books, which serve as the primary source for this research on the 2013 Curriculum, the author also drew upon a range of supplementary references from journals and other scientific studies. In this instance, the author examines research named "2013 Curriculum Policy Analysis" authored by Desti Nurhalis, et al (2022). This research focuses on five main topics: 1) the 2013 Curriculum policy; 2) the characteristics of the 2013 Curriculum; 3) the foundation of the 2013 Curriculum; 4) the basic policy for constructing the 2013 Curriculum; and 5) the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum.

In addition to analyzing the 2013 Curriculum, researchers also conducted a study on the 2022 curriculum, which is known as the Merdeka Curriculum. The primary scholarly resource for scholars is "Academic Study of the Merdeka Curriculum" authored by the Educational Standards, Curriculum and Assessment Agency of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia. This book primarily covers four main topics: 1) assessment of the 2013 Curriculum and the

emergency curriculum implemented during the Covid-19 pandemic; 2) fundamental framework of the Merdeka Curriculum; 3) structure of the curriculum; and 4) execution of the Merdeka Curriculum.

The researchers next looked at another study by Yasni and Dudun, titled "Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in Madrasas" (2023). The discussion in this research includes: (1) implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, (2) the nature of curriculum implementation, (3) curriculum implementation stage, (4) institutional and sustainability, (5) understanding the Independent Learning Curriculum, 6) basis for implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, 7) Merdeka Curriculum objectives, 8) "Merdeka Belajar" curriculum advantages and disadvantages, and 9) Merdeka Curriculum in madrasas are the topics covered in this study.

Additionally, Neliwati, et al.'s scholarly paper "Free Learning Curriculum Policy in Schools" (2023) is a significant body of literature that scholars have consulted in order to further the Merdeka Curriculum policy. The Independent Learning Curriculum, according to Neliwati et al. (2023), is an improved version of the 2013 Curriculum that promotes teacher creativity and learning outside of the classroom. Students are encouraged to interact and have conversations in order to develop their moral fiber and bravery.

This study considers official government papers, such as laws, rules, and policies pertaining to the curriculum under President Joko Widodo, in addition to the literature that has been included. This aims to gather precise information about the policies of the government at that time about the curriculum and how they affected Islamic education in Indonesia.

METHOD

This research falls under the category of qualitative research. Qualitative research places emphasis on comprehending things via the perspective of the subject, with a particular attention on processes and significance. Information was gathered by the methods of observation, interviews, and documentation studies. Researchers have a crucial role in interpreting data while maintaining objectivity. Qualitative research offers the advantage of comprehensively grasping things from the subject's viewpoint, resulting in a profound comprehension of intricate details and delicate subtleties (Sugiyono, 2018). The data collection for this research endeavor involves utilizing several sources such as books, articles, journals, and other relevant references. The literature reviewed encompassed books, papers, journals, and other relevant sources that examined educational curriculum policies under President Joko Widodo's tenure and their impact on Islamic education. This research focuses exclusively on the period of debate from President Joko Widodo's inauguration on October 20, 2014, to April 30, 2024.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The 2013 Curriculum Policy and its Implications for Islamic Education in Indonesia

Desti, et al (2022) define policy as a translation of the English word "policy". Policy is a term that refers to a set of goals or objectives that are suggested or endorsed by a government or political party. Endorsements can be described as written assertions or representations made specifically about a security agreement. Policies refer to strategic goals, objectives, contractual agreements, and written declarations that are published by a government, political party, or similar entities.

Nurholis et al. (2022), citing Winarno (2002) in the book "What is Public Policy?: Public Policy Theory and Process," provides a comprehensive definition of the term policy. It refers to the acts or inactions of the government toward a certain subject, which can extend beyond individual actions or decisions. This definition pertains to a decision made by the government over how to address a community issue, either through taking action or choosing not to. Policy can be more accurately seen as a network of interrelated actions and their subsequent outcomes for the parties concerned, rather than as individual choices. Policy is a course of action or behavior that is followed, rather than just a single choice to take action. The second interpretation refers to governmental and public action aimed at resolving communal issues. This involves engaging in conversations with parties who both support and oppose government initiatives.

Curriculum development professionals have multiple interpretations of the term "curriculum". The interpretations differ based on the emphasis and perspective of these specialists. The term curriculum is derived from the Latin word "curriculum," which refers to the path or course that a runner must follow. Curriculum, in the context of education, refers to the prescribed course of study that students are required to finish in order to earn a degree. Students can obtain a diploma by successfully fulfilling the requirements of the curriculum. A diploma serves as conclusive evidence that a student has successfully fulfilled the requirements of a prescribed educational program, analogous to a runner traversing a distance from a starting point to a destination and ultimately crossing the finish line. The definition of curriculum evolves in line with advancements in educational theory and practice, which differ depending on educational institutions or philosophies. Nurholis et al. (2022), citing Sukmadinata (2008) in the book "Curriculum Development Theory and Practice," define the curriculum as a systematic plan that offers instructions and directions for the process of teaching and learning. Law Number 20 of 2003 provides a clear definition of the curriculum as a comprehensive plan that encompasses objectives, content, teaching materials, and methods utilized in educational activities. It serves as a guide to achieve specific educational goals. Hence, the curriculum encompasses a collection of strategies, structures, aims, subject matter, and instructional resources, together with

the approaches employed to facilitate learning, serving as a roadmap to attain a specific educational purpose.

The 2013 Curriculum is a curriculum that combines competency and character development, and it is an improvement of the Education Unit Level Curriculum (KTSP Curriculum). Hidayati (2013) states that there are notable distinctions between the 2013 Curriculum and the 2006 Curriculum. These distinctions are evident in terms of attributes, scientific methodology, and genuine evaluation of learning. The implementation of the 2013 Curriculum comprises three primary activities: program development, execution, and learning assessment.

The primary tenet of the 2013 Curriculum is to emphasize the capacity of instructors to implement genuine and significant learning methods for students, hence fostering the development of their potential. The 2013 Curriculum defines Graduate Competency Standards (SKL) as criteria that pertain to the levels of competence that graduates should possess, encompassing knowledge, attitudes, and abilities. The 2013 Curriculum preparation guidelines make reference to article 36 of Law Number 20 of 2003. This article states that the curriculum should be designed to promote the development of faith and piety, as well as the cultivation of positive moral values in various fields such as work, technology, art, religion, global development, and national unity.

The implementation of the 2013 Curriculum is anticipated to mitigate the deficiencies of the previous curriculum. The 2013 Curriculum is intended to enhance attitudes, knowledge, and skills. The primary focus of the 2013 Curriculum is to acquire knowledge and skills that are intended to cultivate spiritual and social attitudes in line with the principles of Islamic Religious Education and Character. Additionally, it aims to promote a culture of sound religious practices within the school setting.

The Importance of the 2013 Curriculum Change Policy

Imam (2014) identified various issues in the execution of the 2006 Education Unit Level Curriculum (KTSP Curriculum). The genesis of the 2013 Curriculum was driven by the need for improvement and refinement of the previous curriculum. The key focal points of the 2013 Curriculum are enhancing mindset, enhancing curriculum management, broadening and deepening the content, strengthening the learning process, and aligning teaching workload with desired outcomes.

The 2013 Curriculum strategy is considered a strategic measure to equip the nation's generation with the necessary skills and knowledge to confront future challenges. The 2013 Curriculum incorporates an adaptive function, enabling it to guide pupils who possess the ability to adjust to their surroundings. The 2013 Curriculum incorporates three categories of competency: attitudes, knowledge, and skills. These domains are further divided into Core Competencies, which include spiritual attitudes (KI.1), social attitudes (KI.2), knowledge (KI.3), and skills (KI.4).

Elements of Change in the 2013 Curriculum

The 2013 Curriculum Changes consist of four significant components, specifically: 1) Graduate Competency Standards (SKL); 2) Content Standards (SI); 3) Process Standards; and 4) Assessment Standards. The 2013 curricular graduate competence standard (SKL) features encompass the enhancement of both soft skills and hard skills through the development of three key aspects: attitudes, knowledge, and skills. In the 2013 Curriculum content standards, the focus is on reducing subjects to competencies, whereas in the 2006 Curriculum, the emphasis was on reducing competencies to subjects. In the 2013 Curriculum process standards, the learning process extends outside the classroom to include outdoor settings such as nature and other social environments. The learning process in the 2013 Curriculum employs a scientific methodology, which includes the steps of observing, questioning, investigating, making connections, and communicating.

In the 2013 Curriculum assessment, a shift was made from measuring only knowledge in the 2006 Curriculum to assessing competencies in all areas, including attitudes, knowledge, and skills based on processes and results. This change resulted in a more authentic assessment approach. The 2013 Curriculum promotes the utilization of student-created portfolios as the primary evaluation tool.

Implications of the 2013 Curriculum Policy for Islamic Education in Indonesia

Islamic education in Indonesia encompasses several forms of education, as evidenced by the presence of diverse Islamic educational institutions. Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia can be broadly categorized into two types: formal institutions, such as Madrasas, and non-formal institutions, such as Early Education and Islamic Boarding Schools. These schools are all supervised by the Ministry of Religion. The 2013 Curriculum policy at madrasahs, scheduled to be enforced from the 2014/2015 academic year, necessitates a fundamental change of perspective for every madrasah head. Thomas S. Kuhn's perspective posits that individuals with various paradigms might yield disparate outcomes while examining the same issue entity. To clarify, if there is a modification in the curriculum format, it falls under the jurisdiction of the madrasa head. Specifically, transitioning from the 2006 Curriculum to the 2013 Curriculum. However, it is worth noting that the approach employed has remained unchanged, failing to align with the distinctive features of the updated curriculum, and thus yielding similar outcomes. Different. The objective of transitioning from the KTSP Curriculum to the 2013 Curriculum is to enhance the quality of education in schools and madrasas, while also rectifying and addressing any shortcomings in the prior curriculum. Hence, if the primary framework of madrasahs fails to adjust to the evolving requirements and attributes of the new curriculum, the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum will have little impact on the quality of education in madrasahs.

The urgent need for a new paradigm of a madrasah principal is crucial for the successful implementation of the 2013 Curriculum in Madrasahs. The primary determinant of success in implementing the 2013 Curriculum lies in the leadership of the madrasah principle. Management in this context primarily involves the organization, mobilization, and direction of all existing educational resources. According to Mulyasa (2013), the leadership of the madrasa head plays a crucial role in effectively utilizing all school resources to achieve the school's vision, mission, goals, and objectives through a well-structured and progressive program. Hence, the effective execution of the 2013 Curriculum necessitates a school principal who possesses autonomy, professionalism, and robust leadership and managerial aptitude to make informed decisions and undertake proactive measures for enhancing the quality of the school. The primary role of principal leadership is to effectively coordinate and allocate school resources for the purposes of planning and evaluating school programs, managing human resources, facilitating learning opportunities and resources, overseeing financial matters, providing student services, and fostering positive school community connections. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the 2013 Curriculum hinges on the competence of democratic school administrators, who are responsible for fostering a democratic environment in schools that promotes the delivery of high-quality education and the establishment of a favorable learning climate. Every available chance for students.

The significance of the new paradigm in implementing the 2013 Curriculum in the madrasa curriculum is also derived from the fact that the madrasa head establishes the vision of the madrasa. According to Riant Nugroho, having a vision is a defining trait of an organizational leader. It is imperative for every leader to possess a clear vision of the direction in which they intend to take the organization throughout their tenure. Consequently, the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum for madrasa heads has significant challenges in terms of achieving effectiveness and efficiency, as it deviates from the prescribed qualities and needs of the curriculum. While it is recognized that the successful implementation of the 2013 Curriculum depends on various factors, such as teacher creativity, student engagement, social skills, learning opportunities and resources, a supportive academic environment, and the involvement of madrasah residents. Nevertheless, the majority of these parameters are often selected by the madrasa administrator. The reason for this is that the madrasa head possesses the power to dictate madrasa politics. Indeed, the execution of the curriculum necessitates the endorsement of the madrasa head's policies. If madrasa policies are not formulated using a new framework that aligns with the features and demands of the 2013 Curriculum, then the ensuing madrasa policies will likewise fail to meet the needs and attributes of the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum.

There is an urgent need for a fresh approach to implementing the policies of the 2013 Curriculum for school principals. Etymologically, the

term "paradigm" is derived from the English word "paradigm," which refers to a specific type, pattern, or model of anything. In terminology, the term "paradigm" refers to the comprehensive understanding of a situation, encompassing a holistic perspective rather than focusing on individual elements. It is characterized as a framework for perceiving and conceptualizing. The framework for implementing changes to the 2013 Curriculum is the thinking or blueprint of the overarching goal that serves as the foundation for implementing changes to the 2013 Curriculum. During President Joko Widodo's tenure, which began in 2013, the curriculum underwent significant changes and implemented many initiatives. The majority of leaders maintained the policies established during the previous administration, led by President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, while a few introduced new policies. These policies have specific implications for Islamic education in Indonesia, including: 1) the National Examination no longer determines graduation; 2) transitioning from National Examinations to Competency Based National Examinations (UNBK); 3) full implementation of the 2013 Curriculum; 4) establishment of National Santri Day; 5) prioritizing teachers in Frontier, Outermost, and Disadvantaged areas; 6) Implementation of the Smart Indonesia Card; 7) Zoning System in Admission of New Students (PPDB); 8) incorporating the HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skill) concept in learning and exam questions; 9) strengthening Character Education; 10) introduction of the Professional Teacher Education (PPG) program; and 11) various Legal Products serving as the foundation for implementing the 2013 Curriculum. The diverse policies of the 2013 Curriculum have significant ramifications and exert a substantial influence on Islamic education in Indonesia. Islamic education in Indonesia is progressively adjusting to the many policies of the 2013 Curriculum at madrasas, Islamic boarding schools, and Islamic boarding schools. Madrasahs, as formal educational institutions equal to schools under the ministry of education and culture, are significantly influenced by the modifications made to the 2013 Curriculum.

"Merdeka Curriculum" Policy and Its Implications for Islamic Education in Indonesia

The government implemented the Merdeka Curriculum in response to the Covid-19 outbreak in Indonesia. The Covid-19 pandemic has fundamentally altered the school system, particularly the curriculum. The teaching and learning process now emphasizes in-depth competency factors that align with the students' needs. Indonesia has been grappling with a persistent learning problem, as stated by the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Mendikbudristek) of the Republic of Indonesia, Nadiem Makarim. Unfortunately, there has been little improvement in this crisis over the years. The problem was exacerbated by the onset of the Covid-19 epidemic few years ago. The learning crisis in Indonesia, as documented by T.S. Nugraha in 2022, has resulted in significant reforms in the education system. Hence, it is imperative for

Indonesian education to evolve in alignment with the objectives of national education (Nafrin and Hudaidah, 2021).

A learning crisis refers to a scenario in which students suffer a decline in their overall or specific knowledge and skills, or encounter academic setbacks as a result of certain conditions, such as extended periods of time without learning or disruptions in their education (Cerelia et al., 2021). In order to address the existing curriculum problem and enhance the quality of education in Indonesia, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology has implemented a policy to reform the curriculum. The reason for this is that decision makers in the education sector are obligated to consistently enhance education in a methodical, synchronized, and deliberate fashion (Ichsan and Hadiyanto, 2021). The phrase now used to characterize this change in curriculum is "Kurikulum Merdeka" (Independent Curriculum) or "Merdeka Belajar" (Freedom Learning) (Fitriyah and Wardani, 2022; Manalu et al., 2022; Santika et al., 2022).

As stated by Ki Hajar Dewantara, the pioneer of national education, the Merdeka Curriculum prioritizes the freedom to learn autonomously and creatively in order to foster an independent mindset (Marisyah, Firman, 2019; Kusumawati and Astuti, 2022; Wahdani et al., 2020). The "Freedom" Curriculum (Ansari et al., 2022) is a curriculum concept that emphasizes the need of granting students autonomy and self-reliance in acquiring knowledge from both formal and informal educational sources. The "Independent" Curriculum concept fosters student and teacher independence in critical thinking and creativity by integrating reading skills, information skills, attitudes, and technological competence (Ainia, 2020; Manalu et al., 2022).

The objective of the Merdeka Curriculum is to address the learning setbacks caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, with the purpose of bringing Indonesia on par with developed nations. This involves granting pupils the autonomy to select their areas of interest for study (J. Nugraha, 2022). In addition, the purpose of introducing the Merdeka Curriculum is to address the educational challenges posed by the Industrial Revolution 4.0. Its implementation should enhance students' abilities in communication, collaboration, critical thinking, and problem-solving. Furthermore, it aims to foster the development of democratic, progressive, and productive individuals and society (Ansari et al., 2022). Hence, it is imperative for school culture to not solely prioritize administrative methods, but also strive towards cultivating the Pancasila student profile. In line with this objective, the Ministry of Education and Culture has introduced the Merdeka Curriculum as a means of educational reform that specifically targets cultural transformations (Camellia et al., 2022). The Merdeka Curriculum is designed to enhance the attainment of the Pancasila student profile and promote pleasurable education for both students and instructors. This is achieved by fostering the development of skills and character in alignment with the cultural values of the nation.

The "Pancasila Student Profile" characterises Indonesian students as individuals who possess lifelong learning skills and global competence, and who exhibit behaviour aligned with the values of Pancasila, including faith, devotion to God and noble morals, appreciation for global diversity, mutual cooperation, independence, and critical and creative thinking (Mery et al., 2022; Putri Ayu Shalikha, 2022). As per Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 22 of 2022 (Eneng Martini and Dede Darkam, 2019), one of the features of the Merdeka Curriculum is the inclusion of group learning activities that focus on significant subjects in the students' surroundings, providing a genuine context. This initiative aims to enhance their "Profil Pelajar Pancasila" (Profile Pancasila Students)).

Not all educational institutions, including schools and madrasas, have completely adopted the "Independence" curriculum. The reason behind this is the current policy of the Ministry of Education and Culture, which allows educational institutions to adopt the curriculum (Kemendikbud, 2022). The execution of the proposed Merdeka Curriculum is tailored to the preparedness of instructors and speakers. The Merdeka Curriculum is implemented autonomously, offering three different options. There are three options available: Independent Learning, Independent Change, and Independent Sharing (Andari, 2022).

To enhance education through the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, three key elements need to be synchronised: the decision maker, which is the relevant educational institution or unit; the lecturers; and the programme implementer, which is the school (Manula, 2022). The Merdeka Curriculum serves as a framework for madrasas to select and cultivate the character traits and morals that will be instilled in their students. The implementation of the "Independence" Curriculum in the madrasah infuses the Islamic religious beliefs, giving it a distinct character. The "Independence" curriculum should foster a mentality that motivates madrasas to enhance their quality, engage in critical thinking, demonstrate creativity, and exhibit innovation, enabling them to compete at both national and international levels.

It is important to emphasise that the incorporation of IKM in madrasas should be harmonised with Islamic religious principles. Integrating IKM can influence the religious character or moral development of students. Islamic principles. The outcomes of education and learning, including character development and moral values, can be observed in the way individuals think, act, behave, innovate, demonstrate creativity, and exhibit 21st century competencies and life skills within madrasas. The Ministry of Education and Culture will gradually introduce IKM commencing in the 2022/2023 academic year. The Ministry of Religion automatically oversees the regulation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Arabic in the field of IKM. Madrasas' IKM for general topics adheres to the regulations set by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Merdeka Belajar Policy Concept

The "Merdeka Belajar" (Freedom of Learning) strategy is a strategic initiative undertaken by the Ministry of Education and Culture with the aim of enhancing the standard of education in Indonesia. This approach is anticipated to enhance the competitiveness of the institution's graduates on both national and global scales. Initially, the implementation of the "Merdeka Belajar" (Freedom to Learn) programme faced scrutiny from multiple parties. Several fundamental enquiries occur, including (1) what is the method for adopting these radical ideas in educational institutions? Furthermore, will the significant modifications made to many elements of the 2013 Curriculum not impede or undermine the enhancement of educational excellence? This notion arises from the fact that Nadiem Makarim, as Minister of Education and Culture, lacks any background in education faculties or study programmes. According to the author's research, Nadiem Makarim possesses a background in international relations and business.

Initially, modifications to the methodology of the National Standard School Examination (USBN) will be implemented. An inherent drawback of incorporating USBN into the curriculum (2013) is that educational institutions are deprived of the autonomy to evaluate and appraise the proficiency accomplishments of their students using a centralised USBN system. Contrary to the 2003 National System Law, educational institutions are granted the ability to independently, comprehensively, and systematically assess the fulfilment of qualification requirements. One additional critique of the 2013 Curriculum is that it poses challenges for teachers when evaluating student proficiency through intricate assessment approaches. In response to these issues, the Ministry of Education and Culture implemented modifications to the USBN process. The implementation of centralised USBN has been replaced with school USBN, which involves assessing students using written tests or other evaluation methods that provide comprehensive evaluation.

Furthermore, the National Examination (UN) takes the shape of a second method of assessment. One of the experts' criticisms of the implementation of the National Examination (UN) is that (1) the content of PBM prioritises material management over problem analysis (rationales), which contradicts the PBM model's emphasis on recall, reduction, and critical thinking; (2) The state examinations place an excessive burden on students, educational staff, and educational institutions; and (3) the national exam assessment solely focuses on cognitive aspects. The Ministry of Education and Culture has implemented radical and forward-thinking modifications to the independent learning policy, which can be characterised as visionary and extreme. These changes include: The Ministry of Education and Culture eliminated the utilisation of national examinations and substituted them with national evaluations and character surveys. This examination is conducted at the midpoint of each educational level, evaluating several areas such as literacy, numeracy,

character, etc. It also includes evaluation based on international standard assessment models. Furthermore, educators have the freedom to prepare learning implementation plans (RPP). The extensive and inflexible approach to the formulation of the 2013 Curriculum Learning Implementation Plan (RPP) imposes a significant workload on instructors. As per the teachers, conducting a thorough examination of every component of the 2013 Curriculum RPP requires a significant amount of energy and time, leading to a shortage of time for educators to adequately prepare lessons and assess activities. Subsequently, the Ministry of Education and Culture endeavoured to rectify this issue by granting instructors the autonomy to devise RPPs autonomously, so reducing the requirement to a single page solely encompassing the obligatory components of objectives, activities, and assessment.

Furthermore, modifications have been made to the process of Admission of New Students (PPDB). The zoning scheme for new student admissions, which was adopted by the former Minister of Education, received criticism from many factions in the DPR RI. Many schools in reality experience either an abundance or a deficiency of students. This policy does not take into account the variations in the geographical locations of different schools. As a result, the implementation of this policy will not be successful in some schools situated in the most impoverished, distant, and outermost areas, also known as the 3T Regions. The "Merdeka Belajar" (Freedom of Learning) policy grants schools and regions the autonomy to administer the qualification system based on the specific circumstances of each educational institution and geographic area. One of the modifications involves the alteration in the proportion of pupils admitted into the zoning pathway, affirmation pathway, and achievement pathway.

Implications of "Merdeka Curriculum" Policy for Islamic Education in Indonesia

The Merdeka Curriculum is expected to mitigate the educational setbacks caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Learning loss refers to the decline in a student's academic knowledge and skills that occurs as a consequence of extended periods of learning from home. In addition to the decrease in academic knowledge and skills, there is also a reduction in students' character or morals (*adab*), as well as their critical, creative, and inventive thinking abilities. The content of madrasa curriculum subjects is separated into two categories: general courses and PAI and Arabic language studies.

An essential objective of Information and Knowledge Management (IKM) in educational institutions, such as schools or madrasas, is to reinstate the educational process that was interrupted as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic (Anas et al., 2023). The Ministry of Education and Culture, along with the Ministry of Religion, as government officials, are endeavouring to cultivate the character of students as perpetual learners

with the aid of IKM. The madrasa IKM guidebook specifies that the implementation of IKM will commence at madrasas from the academic year 2022/2023, as mentioned by Anas et al. in 2023. Madrasas at IKM have the option to select among two curricula, which are based on the concepts of the "Kurikulum Merdeka" (Independent Curriculum) Furthermore, the implementation of IKM is carried out by curriculum organisers who extensively utilise the "Kurikulum Merdeka" (Independent Curriculum)

Initially, the Merdeka Curriculum was introduced in the first year of primary and secondary education. Encompasses the levels of RA, MI, MTs, MA, and MAK, but is restricted to assisted madrasas. IKM is a collective of kids who are between the ages of 4 and 5 years old at the RA level, in grades 1 and 4 at the MI level, in grade 7 at the MTs level, and in grade 10 at the MA and MAK levels. (Langke, 2021). Meanwhile, students in MI 2, 3, 5, and 6, MTs 8 and 9, as well as MA and MAK 11 and 12 classes, are still following the 2013 Curriculum.

The Merdeka Curriculum is implemented in the second year for pupils aged 4-6 years at the RA level, grades 1, 2, 4, and 5 at the MI level, grades 7 and 8 at the MTs level, and grades 10 and 11 at the MA and MAK levels. The 2013 Curriculum is still being utilised in grades 3, 6, 9, and 12. The Merdeka Curriculum is introduced in all madrasah learning units, as well as in elementary and middle schools, starting from the third year. The implementation of Individual Knowledge Mastery (IKM) occurs at the MI level for students in grades 1 to 6, at the MTs level for grades 7 to 9, and at the MA/MAK level for grades 10 to 12. Starting from the 2024/2025 academic year, all madrasa education units (RA, MI, MTs and MA/MAK) will exclusively implement the "Independent" Curriculum, discontinuing the use of two curricula (Langke, 2021).

Moreover, the policy implications of the "Independent" Curriculum are intricately linked to the assessment of learning. In this text, the researcher will elucidate the involvement of Islamic Religious Education subjects in the reform of curriculum policy. The subject of Islamic religious education (PAI) possesses distinct traits that set it apart from other subjects. The distinguishing feature of PAI subjects is the incorporation of sacred principles as the fundamental values of the teaching and learning process (PBM). The concept of divinity is further elucidated within the domains of cognition, affectivity, and psychomotor skills.

The idea of *'aqliya* holds distinct values when seen from a cognitive standpoint, while the concepts of *qalbiya* and *'amaliya* hold significance from an emotive and psychomotor perspective. In studies of PAI (Philosophy, Anthropology, and Islam), these three disciplines are consistently interconnected with the objective of establishing humans on earth as devout servants of Allah or as representatives of the Islamic caliphate. Implementing these three educational principles might be a powerful method for assessing different educational programmes inside an educational institution. Evaluating student learning outcomes involves

gathering, manipulating, and scrutinising data to measure academic progress. The objective of PAI learning evaluation is crucial for evaluating students' proficiency in *al-aqliyah*, *'amalia*, and *qalbiya* competency requirements. Consequently, educators must ensure that exams encompass all three domains. The tasks of PAI learning assessment include evaluating the attainment of competency requirements and facilitating the creation of learning plans.

The evaluation results demonstrate the outcomes of PAI learning conducted in accordance with the predetermined learning objectives. Continuous learning assessment can support the creation of planning, execution, and learning outcomes frameworks for educators and educational institutions. This technique can optimise the PAI curriculum. The PAI learning assessment paradigm comprises design evaluation, development evaluation, follow-up evaluation, performance evaluation, and complete programme evaluation. Meanwhile, the methods employed encompass both testing techniques and non-testing procedures. Evaluative methodologies can be employed to assess the extent of pupils' comprehension. Alternatively, non-test methods can be employed to examine the three domains of student proficiency, particularly in the domains of "*amaliya* and *qalbiya*", as these two domains pose challenges for assessment using written tests.

According to Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 66 of 2016, the 2013 Curriculum evaluation, known as authentic evaluation, is a model of evaluation that is used for assessing the input process, learning process, and output or results. Authentic assessment, alternatively referred to as performance-based assessment, is a recognised term. This assessment is intended to thoroughly evaluate the student performance process from the start to the finish of the learning process. The complete evaluation process can offer a full depiction of student skill advancement. Authentic assessment is an educational evaluation method that is grounded in the resolution of genuine, practical issues. Students are instructed to resolve challenges encountered during the learning process. This evaluation methodology prioritises real-life situations and is grounded in the practice of problem-solving. Its primary goal is to cultivate reasoning abilities for resolving everyday challenges.

Given the features of the "Merdeka Belajar" (Freedom of Learning) policy, which include teacher creativity, contextualization of material with relevant societal and environmental competencies, freedom in learning design, flexibility in assessment design, and a focus on problem-solving, authentic assessment is the most suitable option. Accurate evaluation method. The key features of authentic evaluation include: (1) a learning design that is rooted in genuine experiences; (2) evaluation taking place throughout all stages of learning; (3) a comprehensive assessment that measures students' overall competencies; and (4) assessment conducted to gauge the depth of students' understanding, rather than mere memorisation (quantity). Authentic assessment is designed based on the

following principles: a) integration, where it serves as a comprehensive assessment system that is consistently applied throughout the learning process; b) validity, allowing for a thorough evaluation of students' overall competence; c) reliability, ensuring that assessment results are trustworthy and can be considered by the school, students, and parents; d) fairness, where assessment standards are consistent for all students; e) flexibility, enabling assessment to be conducted using various methods throughout the learning process; f) meaningfulness, as authentic assessments are designed to assess students' reasoning abilities in solving the learning challenges they encounter.

Teachers who observe the attributes of genuine evaluation must possess the ability to devise assessment methodologies and tools in order to successfully and efficiently evaluate student learning outcomes. Teachers can utilise many authentic assessment strategies and instruments to evaluate attitudinal competence. These include observation, self-evaluation, peer assessment, and journals. Various assessment tools, such as checklists, rating scales, and teacher notes, have been created to evaluate this. Additionally, different testing methods, including written, essay, descriptive, multiple choice, oral, and portfolio tests, are employed to assess knowledge. Competency assessment, on the other hand, is conducted through practical tests, portfolios, and project assessments. The primary objective of implementing authentic assessment in PAI learning is to deliver thorough evaluation outcomes on the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor elements that are conducted during the teaching and learning procedure. Simultaneously, the author contends that the execution of assessment conducted by PAI teachers remains distant from the tenets of authentic assessment. In contemporary schools, teachers primarily assess students using written examinations administered at the midpoint and conclusion of the semester. This practice, however, diminishes the credibility and dependability of the evaluation outcomes. The UN and USBN paradigms, which solely prioritise cognitive factors as discussed before, have significantly influenced the flawed thinking of educators up until now. This issue appears to be a top concern for the Ministry of Education and Culture as they work on making adjustments.

The "Merdeka Belajar" (Freedom to Learn) policy is anticipated to offer valuable understanding on the implementation of efficient assessments. There are four essential steps involved in evaluating the effectiveness of PAI learning, which are as follows: Initially, when creating an assessment model, the educator analyses the curriculum (competency standards), material features, and student skills to establish the appropriate assessment model. The assessment model is intricately linked to the entirety of the learning process (PBM). Learning activities, assessment models, and assessment results are interdependent factors. Secondly, the process of constructing assessment questions involves the creation of test questions (in written, oral, portfolio, or project format) by defining them according to Bloom's taxonomy or other taxonomies, and

establishing their level of difficulty. Furthermore, the data is summarised and processed, and subsequently, the outcomes of the conducted tests are prepared to facilitate instructors in assessing and scrutinising the results. Next, the analysis and feedback of the assessment findings are examined to assess student proficiency, and participants are provided with feedback on any issues encountered during PBM. Teachers should implement authentic evaluation methods based on the "Merdeka Belajar" (Freedom of Learning) policy, the features of authentic evaluation, and the aims of Islamic religious education.

Moreover, the discussion around the Merdeka Curriculum and its integration into educational institutions, particularly Islamic boarding schools, exemplifies the intricacies of education in Indonesia. Wafi et al. (2023) and Putri et al. (2023) present a favourable perspective on teacher development as a crucial element in an autonomous curriculum. They emphasise the good impact it has on teachers' comprehension of students' needs and underscore the components of fostering students' abilities and qualities. Oktavia and Qudsiyah (2023) highlighted the significance of the teacher's involvement in designing learning activities based on students' fundamental skills and individual traits. They integrate the "Independence" curriculum with the notion of intellectual liberty. Ariga (2023) underscores the influence of digitalisation on education, specifically noting the transformations in the roles and tasks of teachers and students as they become more closely intertwined with digital instruments.

In response to the research findings reported by Zakirurahman (2022) and Andari (2022), it is evident that educational opportunities and intercultural values play a crucial role in facilitating the successful implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. This assertion is substantiated by Masruroh (2023), who underscores the significance of quality control in attaining desirable and standardised student outcomes. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that not all research corroborates a favourable perspective on independent investigations. For instance, Wahyudi et al. (2022) highlights the significance of teachers as facilitators and underscores the necessity of adjusting to students' needs. Additionally, they highlight the importance of tailoring the learning experience to accommodate the varying capacities of students. Qomariyah and Maghfiroh (2022) highlight the paramount importance of students' autonomy in their own educational process.

According to Wafi et al. (2023) and Putri et al. (2023), the introduction of the Merdeka Curriculum appears to promote greater teacher engagement in the learning process. Positive aspects encompass enhanced comprehension of student needs, emphasis on skill cultivation, and fostering of character development. Furthermore, the implementation of programmes such as the Smart Indonesia Card (KIP), the digitalisation of schools, and character building efforts, as exemplified by Muzakki et al. (2023), offer a complete examination of many components of a self-

sufficient curriculum that can contribute to enhancing the standard of education.

Moreover, Oktavia and Qudsiyah (2023) highlight the significance of instructors in the educational process, as they possess the ability to design instruction that prioritises the enhancement of students' skills and moral qualities. They stressed the significance of shifting the educational framework to be more inclusive and focused on holistic student growth. Nevertheless, as stated by Ariga (2023), the significance of digitalisation in education should not be disregarded. The incorporation of technology into education is highly significant in the present period. Meanwhile, Zakirurahman (2022) and Andari (2022) highlighted the need of having sufficient educational facilities, such as libraries equipped with required teaching equipment and educational technology, to enhance student's access to information. When establishing an inclusive atmosphere at Islamic boarding schools, it is imperative to take into account the essential components of multicultural values. Masruroh (2023) highlighted the importance of implementing quality control measures to guarantee that student outcomes fulfil pre-established criteria of quality. Wahyudi et al. (2022) and Qomariyah and Maghfiroh (2022) present a more critical perspective and highlight the importance of modifying the teachers' position in relation to pupils. Their educational approach places great importance on student autonomy as the core of their learning philosophy, and highlights the adaptability of the learning process to cater to each student's unique talents.

At the higher education level, the "Independence" curriculum was applied. In addition to its implementation at public universities under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, the "Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka" (MBKM) programme is also extended to state and private Islamic campuses or universities that express interest and register to participate. Enforce and execute the MBKM policy.

CONCLUSION

This study has thoroughly investigated the extent of the impact of the educational curriculum implemented during President Joko Widodo's tenure, particularly on Islamic education in Indonesia. The 2013 Curriculum in Indonesia exerts a significant impact on Islamic education through the use of a scientific methodology, the incorporation of Islamic principles into all topics, and the provision of leeway for Islamic institutions to design unique curricula. The objective is to enhance the academic standards and foster the moral development of pupils in Islamic education. The Merdeka Curriculum policy is an educational effort implemented by the Indonesian government with the aim of establishing a more adaptable and pertinent education system. This curriculum grants schools and educators the autonomy to engage in imaginative and pioneering learning practices that align with the specific circumstances of the community. Teachers possess the freedom to utilise effective teaching

techniques, promoting a student-centered approach. Assessment encompasses not only written examinations, but also the demonstration of creativity and collaboration. Implementation obstacles encompass issues related to the establishment of necessary infrastructure, provision of adequate teacher training, and comprehension of the curriculum. Collaboration is anticipated to enhance the calibre of education, specifically Islamic education, in Indonesia.

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