

A New Paradigm of Madrasah Learning in the Implementation of Merdeka Curriculum

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Abstract

The condition of Indonesian education is still weak as shown by several surveys regarding the quality of education. This is made worse by pandemic conditions which require the learning system to adapt to the conditions that occur. Indonesia is experiencing learning loss so it needs to be overcome optimally to improve the quality of Indonesian education. This research aims to analyze the new paradigm of Indonesian education, especially in madrasah, which occurred after the policy of using the Merdeka curriculum. Madrasah as one of the educational institutions that are characterized by Islamic content must be able to adapt to the current curriculum and the increasingly developing times. This research was conducted using library research with a descriptive-qualitative research approach. To support the method used, researchers collected data through documentation obtained from searching for written data regarding the themes raised. The results of the research conducted show that the Merdeka curriculum is designed to overcome the backwardness of Indonesian education and align with technological developments. Madrasah is one of the Indonesian educational units that participates in efforts to educate the Indonesian nation through the Merdeka curriculum. The new paradigm for madrasah in implementing the Merdeka curriculum lies in the use of constructivism theory, making madrasah a means of strengthening students' character and developing skills, flexible and using a differentiated learning approach, and integrated with technology.

Abstrak

Kondisi pendidikan Indonesia yang masih lemah dengan ditunjukkan oleh beberapa survei mengenai kualitas pendidikan. Hal ini diperparah dengan kondisi pandemic yang mengharuskan sistem pembelajaran menyesuaikan akan kondisi yang terjadi. Indonesia mengalami loss learning sehingga perlu diatasi dengan maksimal untuk meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan Indonesia. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis paradigma baru pendidikan Indonesia terutama pada madrasah yang terjadi setelah kebijakan penggunaan kurikulum Merdeka. Madrasah sebagai salah satu lembaga

pendidikan yang memiliki ciri khas akan muatan keIslaman harus mampu menyesuaikan dengan kurikulum yang berlaku dan zaman yang semakin berkembang. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan library research dengan pendekatan penelitian deskriptif-kualitatif. Untuk menunjang metode yang digunakan, peneliti melakukan pengumpulan data secara dokumentasi yang didapat dari hasil mencari data-data tertulis mengenai tema yang diangkat. Adapun hasil penelitian yang dilakukan menunjukkan bahwa kurikulum Merdeka didesain untuk mengatasi keteringgalan pendidikan Indonesia serta menyelaraskan dengan perkembangan teknologi. Madrasah adalah salah satu satuan pendidikan Indonesia yang turut serta dalam usaha mencerdaskan bangsa Indonesia melalui kurikulum Merdeka. Paradigma baru madrasah dalam mengimplementasikan kurikulum Merdeka terletak pada penggunaan teori konstruktivisme, menjadikan madrasah sebagai sarana penguatan karakter dan pengembangan keterampilan peserta didik, fleksibel dan menggunakan pendekatan pembelajaran berdiferensiasi, serta diintegrasikan dengan teknologi.

Keywords

Madrasah, Merdeka Curriculum, new paradigm

Introduction

Education in Indonesia is still relatively low, as a survey conducted by Wisevoter which released a list of countries with average Intelligence Quotient (IQ) in several countries in 2023 shows that Indonesia is ranked 126th out of 193 countries and in South East Asia, Indonesia in the lowest ranking. This difference in IQ levels is likely due to genetics, education and socio-economic factors in each country. (Puspapertiwi & Firdaus, 2023) This is reinforced by the results of the 2019 PISA (The Program for International Student Assessment) test, the quality of literacy, science and Indonesian mathematics shows that it is still low with sixth position from the bottom (Firdaus et al., 2022) and far below China, Singapore and Macau. (Priyanto, 2020) Indonesia's position in this ranking becomes material for evaluating Indonesian education to improve the quality of education so that participants students can compete on the international stage.

This educational condition is being taken seriously the Ministry concerned by changing the curriculum to the Merdeka curriculum. The changes made are intended as a guarantee that the learning process in Indonesian schools will be better. (Barlian et al., 2022) Through this curriculum, learning is designed to be simple but in-depth and oriented towards developing students' talents and interests. This curriculum is designed to accelerate the achievement of National education goals, that is improving the quality of superior human resources so that they can compete on the international stage. This curriculum policy provides flexibility not only for students but also for teachers, where teachers have the freedom to

teach their students according to the students' abilities. (Anggraena et al., 2021) This curriculum still accommodates previous curriculum components that are still relevant and replacing some components that are no longer relevant.

A striking change in the Merdeka curriculum is the simplification of learning, this is expected to improve students' understanding of the material they study. In addition, the Merdeka curriculum focuses on project-based learning to develop students' soft skills and character in accordance with the Pancasila student profile and focuses on essential material so that there is sufficient time for in-depth learning for basic competencies such as literacy and numeracy. (Ningrum et al., 2023)

The Merdeka Curriculum also offers learning that is adapted to 21st century learning so that students have skills appropriate to the times. Various parties strive to improve the quality of education to produce human resources who have maximum competence so that they can be useful in the future. (Mulyasa, 2008) Education development itself is indeed a national development project in the field of education and is an integral part of efforts to improve the quality of human resources. Education is a means of a person's maturation process which includes knowledge and character values that can shape a person's personality.

Curriculum renewal in Indonesia is not only motivated by the low quality of education but also by changes in the digital era. The digital era is increasingly massive in the era of industrial revolution 4.0 which needs to be faced positively, change will definitely bring positive impacts that are not free from negative impacts. The needs of students in the digital era are different from before, so learning needs to be planned by looking at the condition of students who are already familiar with digital tools. The flexibility offered by the Merdeka curriculum influences the planning and implementation of learning in the digital era. With this flexibility, a teacher can choose strategies, methods and learning media independently while still adhering to educational goals.

Madrasah are a means of realizing the ideals of Muslims which aims to give birth to a generation of people with faith and technology. Learning is designed based on Islamic sciences which are able to integrate various scientific disciplines which can result in the progress of civilization. (Isnaini, 2013) The madrasah curriculum is the same as the curriculum used in public institutions, but with the addition of Islamic teachings as well as the integration of general science and religious knowledge. As one of the educational institutions that is in direct conflict with current developments, madrasah must also be able to welcome the new paradigm with the Merdeka curriculum policy. Madrasah as an optimization of the expansion of Islamic teachings require changes in conveying knowledge to students in the digital

era. The orientation of modern education to produce a generation that has the 6 C abilities (critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, character, and citizenship) requires maximum learning so that these abilities can be obtained by each student.

Method

This research uses a type of library research, that is a type of research that focuses on collecting library data, reading and recording it so that the need for research is met. By using a type of library research, this research requires writings that can support the needs according to the title raised, that is the new madrasah paradigm in implementing an Merdeka curriculum to support student competence. Meanwhile, the approach used is a qualitative approach, a research approach that emphasizes in-depth analysis of the research conducted. In the research process using a qualitative approach, you will need as much data as possible so that the title raised can be resolved optimally. This research process is supported by several stages of data analysis introduced by Miles and Huberman, starting from data reduction, data presentation to drawing conclusions. The data reduction stage is carried out by collecting maximum data so that it can support the research being carried out. After that, the data obtained is presented in narrative form which explains the things that are the focus of the research. If the presentation of the data that has been carried out is sufficient to answer the title raised, then after that a conclusion will be drawn regarding the results of the research that has been carried out. (Miles & Huberman, 1984)

Results and Discussion

Definition of Merdeka Curriculum

The curriculum in Indonesia has continuously undergone changes since independence until now. This happened as the government's response to improving the quality of Indonesian education. There have been at least 14 changes to the curriculum in Indonesia, starting from the 1947 lesson plan curriculum, the 1964 primary school education plan curriculum, the 1968 primary school curriculum, the 1973 Development School Pioneer Project (PPSP) curriculum, the 1975 elementary school curriculum, the 1975 curriculum, the 1984 curriculum, the curriculum. 1994, the 1994 curriculum revision in 1997, the 2004 competency-based curriculum, the 2006 lesson unit level curriculum, the 2013 curriculum, the 2013 curriculum revision in 2016, and the Merdeka curriculum.

The Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum designed to overcome learning losses and align with the needs of the 21st century. The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is aimed at training students' independence to think critically, foster creativity and discover concepts. (Zaeni et al., 2023) Merdeka Learning is a new breakthrough in Indonesian education which aims to make learning in every school more effective and

efficient. (Khoirurrijal et al., 2022) Learning is carried out based on a Merdeka curriculum that adapts to the needs of each region and is based on the talents and interests of students. This curriculum is a diverse intracurricular learning curriculum with more optimal content so that students have sufficient time to understand concepts and strengthen competencies. The Merdeka Curriculum offers freedom for both teachers and students to explore knowledge as deeply as possible and develop potential while still adhering to educational goals. (Baruta, 2023)

The sophistication of the digital era is changing people's lifestyles so that it demands the implementation of learning that is interesting, innovative, effective and efficient in various situations. The Merdeka Curriculum creates flexible learning to give teachers freedom in choosing teaching tools. This curriculum provides a simpler and more ideal educational concept that encourages collaboration between teachers and students in learning so that it can create fun and meaningful learning. (Cholifah, 2023) The learning model carried out in the Merdeka curriculum is differentiated learning, namely learning that is carried out by adapting characteristics of each student because their needs are different and cannot be generalized. There are three aspects that are material for differentiation, content, process and product. (Zaeni et al., 2023)

The presence of the Merdeka curriculum supports the spread of education in Indonesia evenly with affirmative policies made by the government for students in disadvantaged, frontier and outermost areas (3T). The Merdeka learning curriculum also does not determine students' abilities and knowledge only from grades but also looks at students' politeness and skills in certain fields of science. Students are given the freedom to develop the talents they have. This supports student creativity and will manifest itself through teacher guidance. The demand for teachers to be able to develop innovative learning concepts for students will also be realized. In the Merdeka curriculum concept, teacher and student learning together will create a more active and productive learning concept for teachers and students. (Manalu et al., 2022)

The Merdeka Curriculum, which is a new breakthrough in the world of Indonesian education, has several objectives, namely:

1. Create fun education. This is an implementation of meaningful learning that can provide students with a good learning experience. Through fun learning, students can be interested in learning and encouraged to develop their potential. As is the orientation of the Merdeka curriculum which aims to develop aspects of students' skills and character so that they understand the noble values of the Indonesian nation in line with the concept of enjoyable learning. The lifelong nature of education can be supported by enjoyable learning so that students do not view learning as a burden that they want to complete.

2. Catch up on lagging behind in learning. There are several national and international studies that show that Indonesian education is still low and has experienced a learning crisis for quite a long time. This is supported by educational disparities that occur due to differences in regions or social groups. Such educational conditions have been made worse by the Covid-19 pandemic which requires teachers, students and parents to carry out distance learning online. Of course, things that have not been taken into account require quick adaptation but are still difficult to implement.
3. Developing students' potential. This curriculum focuses on essential material and developing student competencies that are tailored to their phase. In general, the structure of the intracurricular learning curriculum is divided into phase A for classes I and II, phase B for classes III and IV, phase C for classes V and VI, phase D for classes VII and VIII, phase E for classes IX and for classes XI and XII.

Learning using the Merdeka curriculum can lead to meaningful education, because it is designed to create a pleasant learning atmosphere both in the classroom and outside the classroom. Learning outside the classroom will provide greater opportunities for students to discuss with the teacher. Learning outside the classroom will shape the character of students, both in terms of the courage to express opinions during discussions, the ability to socialize well, and become competent students so that the students' character will automatically become more formed. Such learning can improve students' abilities as a provision for future competence. (Khoirurrijal et al., 2022) The Merdeka curriculum does not directly use a competency approach like the 2013 curriculum, the curriculum uses a character and skills approach which is expected to produce a generation that is superior and has good character. As Malik Fadjar in Hendra Suwardana explains that the essence of educational institutions is not just to maintain and preserve the traditions of society but also to be able to present educational patterns that can answer the challenges of the times, because development is a dynamic reality. (Suwardana, 2018)

Concept of Merdeka Learning of Merdeka Curriculum

The concept offered by the Merdeka curriculum is to achieve National education goals and adapt to the times by establishing independence in thinking. This concept was actually initiated by Ki Hajar Dewantara, through the principle of independence in education physically and mentally. The principle of independence in education means that every individual is given freedom by God to regulate his or her life while remaining in line with existing rules in society. (Dewantara, 2009) The aim of the principle of independence initiated by Dewantara is to strengthen the individual of the Indonesian nation so that it is not easily dictated by the colonialists as was the time when the idea was born. (Ainia, 2020) To give birth to a generation that has freedom of thought, it must start with teachers

who have freedom of thought too. Teachers have an important role in guiding and directing students so that independence can be maximized.

The concept of independence in thinking can be utilized in the digital era, where technological developments have a big influence on education. The activities of teachers and students cannot be separated from the use of digital-based devices. The concept of Merdeka learning integrates literacy abilities, knowledge skills, skills and attitudes as well as mastery of technology. Students are given freedom to think so they are able to utilize advanced technology to maximize their knowledge. The concept of the 21st century curriculum requires students to be independent in acquiring knowledge in both formal and non-formal education. The freedom implemented in the 21st century concept will provide opportunities for students to explore as much knowledge as possible. One thing that can be done is through literacy activities, developing talents through skills and positive things that support the development of each student. (Manalu et al., 2022)

Learning in the Merdeka curriculum includes three types of learning activities that can support character strengthening and develop students' creativity, namely (Merdeka, 2023):

1. Intracurricular learning is carried out in a differentiated manner so that students have enough time to deepen concepts and strengthen competencies. This also provides flexibility for teachers to choose teaching tools that suit the needs and characteristics of their students.
2. Co-curricular learning in the form of a project to strengthen the Pancasila Student Profile, with the principle of interdisciplinary learning oriented towards developing the character and competence of students.
3. Extracurricular learning is carried out by adjusting students' interests and educational unit resources.

The learning strategies carried out in the Merdeka curriculum are project or case study based. The project is called the Project for Strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile (P5). The actualization of the project is through cross-subject integration by giving problems to students who then look for solutions to these problems. The Pancasila Student Profile has six dimensions, there are: 1. Faithful, devoted to God and having noble character, 2. Global diversity, 3. Working together, 4. Independent, 5. Critical reasoning, 6. Creative. (Inayati, 2022) Through learning project-based can encourage students to have six skills that can support their personal development, namely critical thinking, communication skills, collaboration, creativity, character and citizenship.

In line with the four pillars of education initiated by UNESCO, namely learning to know, learning to do, learning to be, and learning to live together, (Sobe, 2023) the Merdeka curriculum wants students to experience these four pillars. Learning that encourages students to understand the material deeply so that they not only gain knowledge but can apply it. Learning to live together can be seen from character education which can prepare students to live together in society or collaborate with colleagues in the future. The Merdeka curriculum concept establishes these four pillars so that the learning carried out can be meaningful and produce students with character.

New Madrasah Paradigm in the Merdeka Curriculum

Changes in learning paradigms in the 21st century and dynamic developments in the times have encouraged the birth of new patterns in the management of education and learning in madrasah. Madrasah must always evaluate and make improvements to improve the quality of education. This is a real demonstration that Islamic education is always changing dynamically and is not stagnant. Innovations are needed that are able to adapt to the needs of students by being implemented based on technology in the same way as the world of students. Madrasah as an educational facility must be able to provide education with the principles of providing an example, building motivation, and developing students' creativity in learning and lasting throughout life.

Thomas S. Kuhn provides the view that the different paradigms of two people in seeing the same reality can produce different results. (Kuhn, 2008) This is similar to changes in the curriculum in Indonesia which are essentially aimed at improving the quality of education. Currently, the current curriculum displays a new face with project-based characteristics, a focus on essential material and prioritizing flexibility, bringing a new paradigm to education in Indonesia. The learning carried out focuses on students so that it encourages students to explore the material being studied and be able to conceptualize their knowledge independently.

Education that is in contact with technology makes it easier for students to seek more varied sources of knowledge. Apart from that, it is also easier for teachers to choose learning media so that learning is more fun and can attract students' attention. (Ambarita & Simanullang, 2023) The Merdeka Curriculum with its principle of flexibility gives students space to develop their abilities according to their interests and talents by utilizing technological advances that very sophisticated. Modern learning is designed so that students prepare themselves for the future, not only oriented towards having knowledge but more about how to utilize the knowledge they have. UNESCO's four pillars of education actually encourage education to be able

to educate students to have complex knowledge so that knowledge does not stop in wishful thinking but can be actualized in the real world.

Madrasah in actualizing the Merdeka curriculum have their own characteristics, namely by incorporating the values of Islamic teachings so that the way they think, behave and act reflects the values of Islamic teachings. The Project for Strengthening the Profile of Pancasila Students is added with the value of *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin*, which are the principles of attitude and perspective in practicing religion so that patterns of diversity in the context of the nation and state run properly so that the general benefit is maintained along with protecting humanity in religion. Through the Project for Strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile (P5) and the *Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* Student Profile (PPRA) can form lifelong students who have competence, character, behave in accordance with Pancasila values, are devout, have noble character and are moderately religious. (Keputusan Menteri Agama Republik Indonesia No. 347 Tahun 2022 Tentang Pedoman Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Pada Madrasah, 2022)

The new paradigm created by the Merdeka curriculum as a replacement for the 2013 curriculum lies in several aspects. The changes made are of course an improvement and refinement of the previous curriculum which could not be actualized, regarding the 2013 curriculum program which is still relevant and still in use. The most significant difference between the 2013 curriculum and the Merdeka curriculum lies in that the Merdeka curriculum is simpler but quite in-depth and the Merdeka curriculum focuses more on essential material while the 2013 curriculum is complicated and seems rushed in completing the material that students must master. In detail, the new paradigm for madrasahs in implementing the Merdeka curriculum lies in:

1. Using Constructivist Theory

The Merdeka Curriculum is designed using constructivist theory with the aim of learning to be to build students' abilities and understanding. Constructivist theory is in line with 21st century learning which encourages students to think critically and learn meaningfully. This learning theory gives students the freedom to build their own knowledge based on the learning model design created by the teacher. Active involvement of students in learning is the focus of constructivist theory as an effort to encourage students to seek their own knowledge so that their learning is meaningful. (Masgumelar & Mustafa, 2021) Constructivist theory leads to the implementation of learner-centered learning so that students are given more opportunities to build their knowledge. Through learner-centered learning, learning becomes fun and meaningful. The teacher as a facilitator

in the classroom has full responsibility in regulating classroom conditions and directing each student so that they can process learning optimally.

2. Madrasah as a means of strengthening students' character and developing their skills

The Merdeka Curriculum encourages character strengthening through the implementation of project-based learning to strengthen the Pancasila Student Profile and Rahmatan lil 'Alamin Student Profile (P5-PPRA). Through P5-PPRA, it is hoped that it can shape and strengthen the character of students so that they are able to become human beings with good personalities. This student profile is an effort to overcome the moral degradation that has occurred at the student level.

The development of students' skills includes learning skills, literacy skills, as well as life and career skills which can be detailed as the ability to think critically, creatively, be able to work together, be able to communicate, have information literacy skills, media literacy, technology literacy, have freedom, leadership, initiative, productive, and have social skills. These skills are the result of students' learning processes which can become their competencies in the future. Madrasah must provide facilities for students to maximize character strengthening and skill development. Students who have good competencies can save for the future to become good individuals who are able to contribute to the nation.

3. Flexible and using a differentiated learning approach

The independent curriculum has a flexible principle that gives each educational unit the freedom to simplify or reduce content by separating the curriculum framework from the operational curriculum. It cannot be denied that Indonesia has a diversity of educational units that are not the same in each region. Apart from that, flexibility gives teachers the freedom to carry out learning according to students' abilities (differentiated learning). (Fitriyah & Wardani, 2022)

4. Integrated with Technology

Acceptance of contemporary technological sophistication cannot be ignored, all lines of life are affected as well as education. The use of technological sophistication is increasingly massively used in the world of education because it offers many conveniences, ranging from online platforms that can be used for learning media to learning resources that can be accessed flexibly. The 21st century encourages curriculum modernization and strengthening of religious identity to support the quality of education in the madrasah environment. The main objective of this effort is to produce graduates who not only have religious knowledge, but also have an understanding and actively contribute to the complexity of an ever-changing global society. (Pahrudin et al., 2023)

Technology integration in education is a necessity, because through technology integration students can be introduced to the sophistication and benefits of technology. Not only as a learning resource but students are expected to be able to develop it. In the Merdeka curriculum, ICT subjects, which had been removed, are brought back as a solution so that students can utilize and develop them well. Technology which continues to change dynamically is an actualization of the existence of human civilization so that its presence will continue to influence the order of life. Teachers as an important subject in education are encouraged to be proficient in using technology so they can guide students optimally. The existence of technology itself has really helped the learning carried out in madrasahs, such as learning resources, learning media, educational administration and other things which are certainly made easier by today's sophisticated technology.

Conclusion

Indonesian education continues to experience improvement and refinement in an effort to improve the quality of education and adapt to current developments. The Merdeka curriculum policy as a new breakthrough in Indonesian education brings a new spirit for improvement. Madrasah is one of the Indonesian educational institutions that incorporates Islamic teaching values in a complex manner. As an educational institution, madrasah also use the Merdeka curriculum while still having the characteristics of Islamic teachings. Madrasah are treading a new paradigm with a focus on giving birth to a generation of people who are faithful, devout, knowledgeable in knowledge and technology. This paradigm includes the use of constructivism theory, making madrasah a means of strengthening students' character and developing skills, being flexible and using a differentiated learning approach, as well as being integrated with technology so that students are proficient in its use.

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Conflict of Interests

There are no disclosed conflicts of interest for the writer. I attest that the submission is unique and is not already being considered by another publisher.

Ethical Considerations

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