



Implementation of Independent Learning in Junior High Schools

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Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui penerapan kurikulum merdeka belajar di Sekolah Menengah Pertama, yang menjelaskan mengenai Penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar Di Satuan Pendidikan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan penelitian kualitatif. Lokasi penelitian yang akan peneliti lakukan yaitu di SMP IT Fitrah Insani Garut. Instrumen yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah pedoman wawancara, pedoman observasi, dan studi dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian ini mengungkap bahwa SMP IT Fitrah Insani Garut telah menerapkan merdeka belajar melalui kegiatan intrakurikuler, proyek penguatan profil pelajar Pancasila, dan ekstrakurikuler. Pada tahap perencanaan seluruh stakeholder sekolah diprakarsai oleh Wakasek Bidang Kurikulum menyusun hal-hal yang dibutuhkan dalam pembelajaran, mulai dari perangkat pembelajaran, media dan kesiapan guru dalam melaksanakan pembelajaran selama satu tahun ajaran yang akan berlangsung dengan konsep Kurikulum Merdeka. Pada tahap pelaksanaan, penerapan kurikulum merdeka ini juga menimbulkan dampak yang dirasakan oleh peserta didik, pendidik, dan juga tenaga kependidikan lainnya. Simpulannya SMP IT Fitrah Insani telah menerapkan Merdeka Belajar dengan baik dan terencana.

Kata Kunci: Implementasi, Merdeka Belajar, Pendidikan Menengah

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to find out the application of the independent learning curriculum in junior high schools, which explains the implementation of the independent learning curriculum in education units. This research using a qualitative research approach. The location of the research that the researcher will do is at SMP IT Fitrah Insani Garut. The instruments used in this study were interview guides, observation guidelines, and documentation studies. The results of this research reveal that SMP IT Fitrah Insani Garut has implemented independent learning through intra-curricular activities, projects to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students, and extracurriculars. At the planning stage all school stakeholders initiated by the Deputy Head of Curriculum Field compiled the things needed in learning, starting from learning tools, media and teacher readiness in carrying out learning for one academic year which will take place with the concept of the Independent Curriculum. At the implementation stage, implementing the curriculum This independence also has an impact felt by students, educators, and also other education personnel. In conclusion, SMP IT Fitrah Insani has prepared Merdeka Learning well and well planned

Keywords: Implementation, Free Learning, Secondary Education

Introduction

Education is said to be a life process to develop all individual potentials to be able to live and be able to carry out life as a whole in order to become an educated human being both cognitively, affectively, and psychomotor. Education is a series of educating with the hope that the output will be human beings who are useful and competitive according to their interests and talents. The process of educating is not an easy matter and the results can be felt in a moment, because education is a long-term investment. The success of this educational process will be acceptable when educated humans can carry out their roles in the future (Miladiah et al., 2023).

The soul of education itself lies in the curriculum. (Kamiludin & Suryaman, 2017) states that the curriculum is a set of educational programs that have been compiled and implemented to achieve educational goals in which there are components that interrelated and support one another. Taking into account the needs and developmental stages of students, the need for national education development stems from Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. To continue to improve the quality of education in Indonesia, the applied curriculum must continue to develop according to the potential of the educational unit and it is necessary to evaluate the extent of its effectiveness. implementation of the applicable curriculum. (Indarta et al., 2022) explained that the development of curriculum improvements will be said to be effective if the results of these developments are in accordance with the demands and needs, relevance, flexibility, continuity, practice, and effectiveness. Therefore curriculum development should have a strong and principled foundation to support the achievement of educational goals.

The Merdeka curriculum carries the concept of "Freedom to Learn" which is different from the 2013 curriculum, according to (Sherly et al., 2021) means giving freedom to schools, teachers and

students to be free to innovate, learn independently and creatively, where this freedom starts with the teacher as the mover. A fun learning atmosphere, considering the many complaints from parents and students regarding learning that requires achieving a minimum completeness score, especially during a pandemic. In the Merdeka Curriculum there is no longer any demand for achieving a minimum completeness score, but emphasizes quality learning for the realization of quality students, characterized by the profile of Pancasila students, who have competence as Indonesian human resources ready to face global challenges.

In relation to the Freedom of Learning proclaimed by the Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Makarim that there are two most important points in education, namely the Freedom of Learning and the Driving Teacher. Independent learning means that teachers and students have the freedom to innovate, the freedom to study independently or in groups. In 2019, Nadiem Makarim changed and established the Merdeka Curriculum as an improvement to the 2013 curriculum.

In the description of the implementation of the independent curriculum, the structure of the Merdeka curriculum consists of intra-curricular activities, projects to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students, and extracurriculars. Where, the allocation of study hours in the curriculum structure is written in total in one year and is supplemented with suggestions for the allocation of study hours if delivered on a regular or weekly basis. In general, as quoted on the Kemendikbudristek website, there is no change in the total study hours. Learning activities, namely intra-curricular learning and projects to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students (Anggara et al., 2023).

The project to strengthen the Pancasila student profile is carried out by training students to explore real issues in their surroundings and collaborate to solve these problems. Therefore, a separate allocation of

time is needed to ensure that the Project for Strengthening Pancasila Student Profiles can run well. On the other hand, for local content, education units or local governments can add additional content according to their needs and characteristics.

Education units or regions can manage the local content curriculum flexibly. Local content can be carried out through three methods, namely by integrating local content into other subjects, integrating local content into project themes strengthening the Pancasila profile, or developing special local content subjects that stand alone as part of the intra curricular program. Specifically the application of independence in the IT Middle School education unit, Informatics is a compulsory subject, while the Craft subject is one of the choices along with Art subjects (Music, Dance, Fine Arts, Theater Arts). The Informatics subject contains various competencies to support critical and systematic thinking skills in order to solve various common problems. In contrast to the previous curriculum which could select at least 2 types of skills, the selection of 1 type of skill is intended so that students focus more on exploring 1 skill as a whole so that they become graduates who are ready to work. Meanwhile, in class VII, students can still choose at least 2 types of skills out of 20 types of skills (Anggara et al., 2023).

Based on the background above, this research is entitled "Implementation of Independent Learning at SMP IT Fitrah Insani Garut". The purpose of this study is to describe the planning, implementation, and constraints faced in implementing independent learning.

Methods

This study uses a qualitative research approach that aims to clearly reveal the facts in the field regarding the phenomena that occur which are then used to examine in depth the findings obtained. Qualitative research intends to understand phenomena about what is experienced by research subjects, such as perceptions, motivations, self-actions, holistically and by means of

descriptions in the form of words and language, in a special natural context and by utilizing various scientific methods (Moleong, 2012). The location of the research that the researcher will do is at SMP IT Fitrah Insani Garut. The instruments used in this study were interview guides, observation guidelines, and documentation studies. The steps for carrying out the research were collecting interview data from sources which were then processed, the results of observations in the field, collection of available documents. Then carry out the overall data collection by making data descriptions and the next step is to analyze the data that has been collected (Sugiyono, 2017).

Results and Discussion

Definition of Free Learning

The industrial revolution 4.0 has had a significant influence on the current education system. Changes that are moving faster coupled with increasingly complex human needs, education should be harmonized so that it can answer all the challenges of the times. This is in accordance with the nation's projections in facing Indonesia's Golden Generation 2045. To achieve and realize these projections, education must be made the main instrument of Indonesian human development. The Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) as the leading national education sector which plays an important role in realizing the quality of Indonesian human resources, followed up by issuing various important policies including the "Freedom to Learn" program policy.

Merdeka Learning is one of the programs to create a learning atmosphere in schools. happy, happy atmosphere, happy for students and for teachers. The learning background for launching the Merdeka Learning program is the many complaints from parents about the national education system that has been in effect so far, including the minimum completeness score

that must be achieved by students, which varies in each subject (Sherly et al., 2021).

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemendikbud Ristek RI) directly initiated the "Freedom to Learn" curriculum with the aim of providing opportunities for students to develop their talents. Apart from requiring students to have skills in utilizing technology, learning that is monotonous or one-way is one of the reasons why this independent learning curriculum is also present. Because learning that is monotonous will be a barrier for students to demonstrate their abilities and competencies. This is also triggered by the existence of limitations on the concept of the curriculum that is applied by both teachers and students. Students are required to continue to compete in obtaining the highest scores, so that they justify various ways without finding out what their abilities are. Even though students certainly have expertise in their respective fields. The emergence of an independent learning curriculum also undermines the spread of optimal education in Indonesia (Indarta et al., 2022).

According to (Baro'ah, 2020) Merdeka Learning is one of the initiatives of the Minister of Education and Culture Nadiem Anwar Makarim who wants to create a happy learning atmosphere. The goal of independent learning is for educators, students, and parents can get a happy atmosphere. The concept of Freedom to Learn is an educational process that must create happy atmospheres.

Freedom of learning according to the Minister of Education and Culture departs from the desire for educational output to produce better quality and no longer produce students who are only good at memorizing, but also have sharp analytical skills, reasoning and

comprehensive understanding in learning to develop oneself (Birawa Daily, 2020). Merdeka Belajar version of the Minister of Education and Culture can be interpreted as the application of the

curriculum in a fun learning process, coupled with the development of innovative thinking by educators. This can foster a positive attitude of students in responding to learning (Fathan, 2020)(Shihab, 2017)

The independent learning curriculum will change the learning methods that were previously carried out in the classroom to learning outside the classroom. The concept of learning outside the classroom can provide an opportunity for students to be able to discuss flexibly with the teacher. With this, students can form their character by being brave in expressing opinions, social skills, and become competent students. Students will be given the freedom to elaborate on the skills they have. Thus, teachers and students can collaborate to create super active and productive learning (J B Manalu et al., 2022; Juliati Boang Manalu et al., 2022)The following is presented in the form of a concept table from independent learning:

Table 1 The Concept of Independent Learning

No	Plan
1	The authority to carry out the National Standard School Examination (USBN) can be regulated through the school concerned.
2	Removing the National Examination (UN) system and replacing it with a new system, Minimum Competency Assessment and Character Survey
3	Producing smart, competent students for the nation's human resources and virtuous
4	Simplification of the Implementation Plan Learning (RPP) that is sufficient is made in one page
5	New Student Acceptance Policy (PPDB) will emphasize the implementation of the zoning system except for the 3T area (<i>lagging, foremost and outermost</i>).

The Free Learning Curriculum comes with the motto "Freedom to learn, driving teachers"

Marisa in (Nasution, 2022), Nadiem Makarim as the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemendikbud RI) has an innovation which creates an ideal and happy learning atmosphere without causing trouble for teachers or students which must show high achievement in the form of grades, scores or minimum completeness criteria. Learning is expected to be more comfortable and efficient, because students can discuss directly with the teacher, learn with concepts outside the classroom, form self-characteristics that are independent, courageous, intelligent and sociable, civilized, polite and competent. With such a character, students will be able to become human resources who can advance the nation. Not only that, students will later be integrated with literacy skills, knowledge skills, skills and attitudes as well as mastery in the use of technology. Students are also given the freedom to think and are able to seek and acquire knowledge from anywhere.

Because the focus of the presence of this curriculum is not only caused by problems that occur during the learning process but also caused by technological developments or the era of digitalization which requires human resources to be more competent.

The independent learning curriculum frees teachers to create educational and fun learning. Current pedagogical competence also requires teachers to be able to model and carry out the learning process. Teachers are also given a mandate as a driving force to plan, implement, evaluate and follow up on these evaluations (Sutrisno et al., 2022). The concept of active, innovative and comfortable learning must be able to realize students according to the needs of the times, especially in the current era. The teacher must also be a facilitator to shape the character of students who think critically, creatively and innovate, are skilled in communicating and collaborating and have character. Not only relying on the independence of students who are able to

find learning resources such as through e-books, teachers need to prepare several appropriate learning methods, especially in the Free Learning curriculum. The learning model that can be applied by teachers is the Blended Learning model (M Aditya Firdaus, 2022; Muhammad Aditya Firdaus et al., 2023).

Implementation of Independent Learning at SMP IT Fitrah Insani

The results of the Implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum in the IT Fitrah Insani Middle School Education unit consist of various aspects and components that can be applied in the Education Unit, namely:

1. Forms of Learning Activities. The form of learning activities that apply in the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP IT level consists of 3 (three) main activities, namely intra-curricular activities, projects to strengthen Pancasila student profiles, and extra-curricular activities. In each learning activity carried out in the Independent Curriculum, students are encouraged to be able to actively contribute to the course of learning. The contribution of students who are required is in terms of critical thinking, initiative, and being able to solve problems in learning by using effective and applicable solutions.
2. Allocation of Lesson Hours (JP). The next point is related to the allocation of study hours. In the structure of the Independent Curriculum, study hours are arranged in total in one year. Apart from that, it is also necessary to provide suggestions for the allocation of study hours if you want to make them regular or weekly. In general, there has been no total change in terms of study hours. It's just that the time allocation for each subject (mapel) in the Merdeka Curriculum is divided into two learning activities, namely intra-curricular learning and learning in the form of Pancasila student projects (25%).
3. Presenting the Project to Strengthen Pancasila Student Profile As has been

mentioned several times in the previous points, in the Merdeka Curriculum there is a new form of learning, namely project-based learning. What teachers need to pay attention to is that this project to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students must be carried out by exploring actual and real issues in the surrounding environment. So that students are invited to think critically and skeptically about how to solve problems and find solutions. Furthermore, the implementation of the project to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students must pay attention to the following conditions: (1) The selected project must be developed based on selected themes that have been determined nationally by the government through the Ministry of Education and Culture; (2) CP targets are not too tied to the content of certain subjects and the assessment is more qualitative by assessing the character and learning motivation of students; (3) Learning projects are carried out more flexibly. This means that it can be adjusted in terms of the schedule and method applied. It is also recommended to involve the community and the surrounding environment more than regular learning; (4) Students are the main executors of the project, while the teacher acts as a facilitator who provides direction, supervision and evaluation at the end of the project.

4. Learning Outcome Completeness Criteria (Assessment). The next thing that makes the Independent Curriculum different from the previous curriculum is the determination of the completeness criteria for learning outcomes. If in the previous curriculum, students were declared complete in certain subjects with a quantitative KKM (Minimum Completeness Criteria), then the current assessment is more formative in nature. Analysis of student learning outcomes identified with indicators of learning objectives. In this case, the Independent Curriculum provides more flexibility for

teachers to be able to determine their own criteria for achieving learning objectives.

There are several things that must be considered in implementing the Independent Curriculum carried out at SMP IT Fitrah Insani, among others

1. Preparation for the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum

Before implementing the independent curriculum, schools need to understand the regulations and prepare supporting documents for implementing the independent curriculum. In the process of preparing for the implementation of this independent curriculum, all school stakeholders were initiated by the Deputy Head of Curriculum to compile the things needed in learning. Starting from learning tools, media and teacher readiness in carrying out learning for one academic year which will take place with the concept of the Independent Curriculum. This is important to note because in learning, the application of this curriculum has experienced several significant changes. The preparations made include an analysis of the initial objectives regarding what content or material the teacher should teach to students in the teaching and learning process. After compiling the Learning Outcomes (CP) along with the Learning Objectives Flow (ATP) and the material chapters, educators develop teaching tools. Finally, understand the principles of assessment or learning assessment of the Independent Curriculum so that learning objectives are achieved and measurable.

2. Implementation of Independent Curriculum Learning

The independent learning curriculum has been implemented in many educational units. In implementing a new mechanism, it will certainly have an impact felt by the parties involved in it. The implementation of this independent curriculum also has an impact felt by students, educators, and also other education personnel. The perceived impact is also divided into two,

the positive impact and the negative impact. The positive impacts felt by students include changes in the learning process of students. In the independent curriculum students are given the opportunity to explore and express their learning interests, this aims to form students with a spirit of competence and good character. In addition, this independent curriculum also has an effect on the activeness of students in learning. Students will find it difficult to achieve certain educational goals which are only notes and are determined by the curriculum. This is because this kind of curriculum is only based on target numbers and students often feel burdened with these target numbers. However, in this independent curriculum, students do not only focus on target numbers, but each student has the opportunity to explore other segments, such as character, thinking patterns, to the decision-making process needed to become a better person in life. From an educator's point of view, this independent curriculum has a positive relationship with the development of the potential of educators as well as an independent teaching platform. Meanwhile, from the negative side, educators feel burdened because they are not given examples of learning tools such as patented teaching modules and project modules. An independent curriculum does have many benefits, but besides that there are also a number of things that might become obstacles. For students who really have a high enthusiasm and interest in learning as well as sufficient understanding, this curriculum is a great opportunity to gain knowledge in other fields, so that they have broad knowledge and experience. However, students who lack motivation or have difficulty understanding lessons will feel burdened by this curriculum. Students will feel uncomfortable and may not even want to carry out cross-subject assignments. It is indeed very difficult to awaken students' interest and enthusiasm

for learning, but this remains homework for educators and even education administrators. Another inhibiting factor in the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) is the school's ability to procure supporting tools and materials, so that P5 financing is borne by students, moreover SMP IT Fitrah Insani is a private IT SMP whose school operations are borne by parents/guardians learners.

3. Obstacles to Implementing the Independent Curriculum

The application of independent learning is a new thing in the world of education that will help educators and students in innovating in the world of education. However, in its application, SMP IT Fitrah Insani experiences several obstacles such as a lack of understanding of the concept of the Independent Curriculum by educators, students, education staff, and even parents, which hinders the implementation process. With a lack of understanding of educators, students, educational staff, and even parents, it will result in an independent learning process that is not fully achieved according to the concept.

Discussion of Implementation of Independent Learning

Implementation of Freedom of Learning To implement the "Freedom of Learning" program, steps that can be taken by provinces & districts/cities as explained by Prof. Dr. Hj. Sylviana Murni, SH, M.Sc in the National Seminar "Freedom to Learn: In Achieving Advanced Indonesia 2045" which was held at Jakarta State University, on March 10 2020, namely as follows (Hattarina et al., 2022);

1. Establish synergy between local governments, districts/cities with policy makers (Mendikbud) and educational institutions.
2. Optimizing the role of district/city regional governments to include education and teaching staff.
3. Provide supervision and assistance from the district/city regional

government to educational institutions.

4. Revitalizing deliberations between district/city regional governments and educational institutions.
5. Prepare facilities and infrastructure to support a quality education process

Conclusion

After conducting research at IT Fitrah Insani Middle School, it can be concluded that Fitrah Insani IT Middle School applies the curriculum properly and is planned in the form of activities intra curricular, projects to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students, and extracurriculars. As for suggestions for school principals and teachers who will implement independent learning, in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum there needs to be integration between all school stakeholders and students as environmental input. Meanwhile, the integration of schools with students' parents can influence as environmental input for the continuity of teaching and learning activities with the implementation of the Independent Curriculum.

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