

## PENGELOLAAN KURIKULUM MERDEKA BELAJAR UNTUK MENCIPTAKAN PEMBELAJARAN BERKUALITAS

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### Abstract

Manajemen kurikulum adalah upaya bersama untuk memfasilitasi pencapaian tujuan pengajaran, dengan fokus pada optimalisasi interaksi belajar mengajar melalui penerapan prinsip-prinsip manajemen. Oleh karena itu, dalam perencanaan kurikulum merdeka belajar, terdapat serangkaian prosedur, termasuk penyusunan dokumen perencanaan, persiapan sumber daya manusia, kesiapan sarana dan prasarana, serta pengunggahan dokumen perencanaan. Dokumen perencanaan ini mencakup capaian pembelajaran, perumusan tujuan pembelajaran, penyusunan alur pembelajaran, dan pelaksanaan asesmen. Pengalaman pembelajaran yang terarah dan terencana secara terstruktur dan tersusun melalui proses rekonstruksi pengetahuan dan pengalaman secara sistematis yang berada di bawah pengawasan lembaga pendidikan sehingga pelajar memiliki motivasi dan minat belajar. Teknik pengumpulan data menggunakan wawancara, observasi dan dokumentasi. Pengelolaan Kurikulum merdeka belajar yang dilaksanakan di SMKN 1 Takengon di laksanakan mulai dari perencanaan, pengorganisasian, pelaksanaan dan pengevaluasian.

**Keywords:** kurikulum, merdeka, pendidikan

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## INTRODUCTION

Education is the main pillar for the advancement of a nation. It serves as the fundamental element in improving human resources. Human resources grow and develop according to individual reasoning abilities and thinking patterns, shaped by personal experiences. This aligns with the National Education System Law Article 1 of 2003, which states that education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to possess spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the skills needed for themselves, society, the nation, and the state.

The purpose of education is to enhance the potential of learners in a humane manner so that each individual becomes excellent and competitive both nationally and internationally. This is in line with the national education goals stated in Article 3 of Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, which emphasizes the development of students' potential to become individuals who are faithful and devoted to God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, competent, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens (Riowati & Yoenanto, 2022).

The curriculum is a tool used to achieve educational objectives, and therefore can be regarded as a reference for the implementation of education in Indonesia (Angga, Suryana, Nurwahidah, Hernawan, & Prihantini, 2022). It serves as a guideline for educators in teaching in order to achieve learning goals. Education is a lifelong process that continually changes in response to demands and needs, including advancements in science and technology, which require high-level thinking. The curriculum in Indonesia has undergone continuous changes, starting from 1947 to the present.

In 1947, a national curriculum was implemented across all levels of education, mandating compliance. In 2004, it was refined into a competency-based curriculum. In 2006, it evolved into the School-Based Curriculum (KTSP), and in 2013, the K-13 Curriculum was introduced, which included changes to content standards. Further changes occurred between 2018 and 2022, culminating in a complete renewal under the name Merdeka Belajar (Independent Learning Curriculum).

The Merdeka Curriculum grants freedom to students to actively participate in learning, promotes student-centered education, and encourages character development in line with the Pancasila student profile (Rahayu, Rosita, Rahayuningsih, Hernawan, & Prihantini, 2022). It emphasizes that lesson plans created by teachers should be enjoyable to ensure that students do not feel pressured during the learning process. Teachers are expected to guide and direct students so that their interests and talents continue to grow. With the implementation of Merdeka Belajar, it is hoped that the quality of students will improve in various fields, both academic and non-academic (Vhalery, Setyastanto, & Leksono, 2022).

The background of implementing the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum (KMB) as an effort to create quality learning is closely related to the evolution of educational needs in the era of globalization and technological development. Several factors underlying the adoption of KMB include: the globalization era and the Industrial Revolution 4.0 which demand curriculum adjustments to prepare the younger generation to face global challenges and rapid technological changes. KMB aims to ensure that the curriculum is more relevant to the needs of the labor market, producing graduates with skills aligned to market demands.

KMB emphasizes flexibility in learning methods to enhance student creativity, provide room for individual potential development, and support diverse learning styles. It aims to empower both teachers and students in the learning process. Teachers are expected to take a more active role in designing learning, while students are given the opportunity to explore and develop their interests and talents. The adoption of KMB also supports the use of technology as a tool to enhance learning accessibility and effectiveness. Through this approach, KMB is expected to create a more dynamic, relevant, and up-to-date learning environment so that graduates are well-equipped to face the complex challenges of an ever-evolving global society.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This article employs a qualitative method, in which the researcher seeks to discover meaning in order to gain understanding and interpret the significance of a phenomenon or event (Abdussamad, 2022). Data collection techniques include interviews, observations, and documentation. These methods were used to gather data related to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMK N 1 Takengon. Once

the data were collected, they were analyzed through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014).

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

#### **Curriculum Management of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum at SMK Negeri 1 Takengon**

The curriculum is a structured and planned learning experience, systematically organized through the reconstruction of knowledge and experience, conducted under the supervision of educational institutions so that students develop motivation and interest in learning. According to Herujito (2001), management is a distinct process consisting of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling carried out to achieve predetermined goals by utilizing human and other resources. In management, several elements are involved, including:

##### **a. Planning**

Planning is the foundational stage that ensures the next steps proceed according to objectives. It involves needs analysis, formulation of philosophical questions, curriculum design, and the development of a master plan encompassing development, implementation, and assessment (Ya'coub & Afif, 2021).

At SMK Negeri 1 Takengon, the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum is implemented as part of curriculum management. This curriculum was developed by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) as a significant effort to recover from the prolonged educational crisis in Indonesia (Indrayana, Manik, Lisnasari, Br, 2022). The planning stage of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum at SMK Negeri 1 Takengon began in July 2021, at the start of the 2021/2022 academic year, during which a resource person was invited to share insights about implementing the curriculum.

The involvement of all school components, including human resources, is crucial in achieving the goals. Stakeholders involved in the curriculum planning include the principal, teachers, vice principals, and the school committee, working collaboratively to ensure the successful implementation of the curriculum. This aligns with the theory that curriculum management is a process involving participants at various levels to make decisions about learning objectives, methods of achievement, and reviewing the effectiveness and significance of these methods (Hamalik, 1990).

Moreover, the planning process requires guidelines. The Merdeka Belajar Curriculum implementation refers to the official platform provided by the Ministry, which helps users understand each process.

Curriculum management is a collective effort to achieve instructional goals, focusing on enhancing the quality of teaching and learning interactions by applying proper management principles (Basri & Rusdiana, 2015).

Therefore, planning procedures include preparing planning documents, human resources, facilities and infrastructure, and uploading documents—covering learning outcomes, learning objectives, learning flow, and assessment (Rusman & Pd, 2009). The procedures followed at SMK Negeri 1 Takengon are in accordance with the guidelines from the Ministry.

b. Organizing

Curriculum organization refers to how learning materials are structured and delivered by all educational elements. Various types of curriculum organization illustrate how curriculum patterns should be implemented, considering students' interests, talents, and abilities. Proper organization facilitates the learning process and leads to optimal outcomes.

Curriculum organization is a pattern or design of curriculum content aimed at facilitating student learning so that outcomes can be effectively achieved (Rusman, 2018). Learning is a process by which individuals experience behavioral changes through interaction with their environment. Therefore, curriculum organization plays a vital role in determining the content and delivery of learning materials.

Each type of curriculum organization has theoretical and practical strengths and weaknesses. At SMK Negeri 1 Takengon, the organization process occurs from July to August during the new academic year, including the development of annual and semester programs. It is based on students' understanding of factual, conceptual, and procedural knowledge concerning observable phenomena.

This process involves the principal, vice principal for curriculum, teachers, administrative staff, and education department experts. The procedures implemented align with proper curriculum management practices.

With effective management, the learning process becomes well-structured, allowing educators to plan resource utilization efficiently for achieving learning objectives.

c. Implementation

Curriculum and instruction implementation must align with national education standards, serving as a foundation for the educational process.

At SMK Negeri 1 Takengon, the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum follows four stages: initial, developing, ready, and proficient. These stages are guided by the official learning and assessment manual from the Ministry.

An effective learning strategy is essential. It consists of a series of planned activities designed to achieve educational objectives. At SMK Negeri 1 Takengon, strategies involve integrating online and offline learning while aligning teachers' and students' mindsets through discussions. Interactive learning strategies focus on dialogue and knowledge sharing (Indrayana et al., 2022).

Learning models are conceptual frameworks describing systematic procedures for organizing learning experiences to achieve specific objectives, guiding instructional designers (Kadarwati & Malawi, 2017).

The school uses a student-centered learning model and minimizes lecturing, which aligns with the concept of focusing on students' needs and interests.

d. Evaluation

Evaluation is the final stage of management. It is a systematic process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information to determine how well students have achieved learning goals (Haudi et al., 2021).

At SMK Negeri 1 Takengon, formative and summative evaluations are conducted. Formative evaluation emphasizes self-assessment, while summative evaluation includes assignments, midterms, and final exams to assess students'

understanding and curriculum implementation effectiveness.

The main differences between formative and summative assessments lie in purpose, timing, and generalization. Formative assessment is ongoing and used as supporting data for final evaluation. Summative assessment is conducted at the end of the program to measure overall curriculum quality (Mustari, 2014).

Follow-up actions are expected, such as further development of all components to ensure the curriculum can be sustained in subsequent years. The Merdeka Belajar concept shares goals with the educational philosophy of progressivism, which emphasizes educational freedom and exploring student potential by aligning with their interests and talents. This approach aims to advance the quality of education in Indonesia, contributing positively to national progress.

In Merdeka Belajar, both teachers and students are active participants. Teachers are not the sole source of truth but collaborators with students in the pursuit of knowledge. Teachers facilitate students' critical thinking and reasoning. The internet and technological development present a momentum for this educational freedom (Mustaghfiroh, 2020).

## **Discussion**

The Concept of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum and Its Humanistic-Islamic Perspective. The concept of the Merdeka Belajar (Freedom to Learn) curriculum aligns with the principles of humanistic education, which emphasizes student freedom, choice, sensitivity, and responsibility. Humanistic education focuses on the personal development of learners, encouraging them to explore and discover their own potentials and abilities. According to educational experts, the preparation and delivery of learning materials must consider students' feelings and attention (Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin Makassar & Nuryamin, 2011). According to Ki Hajar Dewantara, freedom should be applied to the way students think. Students should not always be led to accept the thoughts of others but should be accustomed to seeking knowledge independently using their own reasoning (Hardiman & Udiani, 2012). This is because learners inherently have the ability to think and discover knowledge for themselves. Merdeka Belajar is an educational process designed to create joyful and pleasant learning environments. It requires teachers, students, and parents to cultivate happiness in their respective educational settings (Ainiyah, 2018).

Education must always strive to shape learners who are capable of innovation and renewal over time. It is not only about achieving a high level of education but also about becoming agents of change on both small and large scales. The changes and innovations produced should contribute significantly to national progress through the development of quality human resources (Saefullah & Abdullah, 2012).

The Merdeka Belajar curriculum encompasses values derived from Islamic teachings, categorized into three main aspects: *aqidah* (creed), *ibadah* (worship), and *akhlak* (morality). *Aqidah* values instill faith in Allah SWT, cultivate a spirit of surrender, and encourage adherence to divine commandments with the awareness that Allah

observes and accounts for all actions. Ibadah values teach students to ground every action in sincerity with the goal of attaining Allah's pleasure.

The Merdeka Belajar curriculum is implemented by granting students the freedom to learn. Learners are encouraged to recognize and enjoy their learning rights both inside and outside the classroom, supported by a system and environment that foster and enhance their learning patterns. Its implementation requires a unified attitude, perspective, and orientation among stakeholders.

The curriculum draws inspiration from future life challenges that demand mastery beyond disciplinary knowledge and technical skills. Merdeka Belajar is also aligned with transformative learning, emancipatory education, experiential learning, and contextual teaching and learning (Ainiyah, 2018).

The application of Merdeka Belajar calls for optimal utilization of human resources and offers them new learning experiences, along with a learning environment that allows active involvement in the production and construction of knowledge and skills. Through its implementation, Islamic educational institutions (madrasahs) are encouraged to be more productive in forming collaborations and partnerships with other Islamic education institutions.

If implemented holistically, the Merdeka Belajar curriculum offers students the opportunity to gain rich and comprehensive experiences in science, skills, and humanity. Since Merdeka Belajar is optional rather than mandatory, the initiation of its learning model depends largely on the decisions made by educational institution leaders. Rational considerations and future prospects will guide wise and strategic decisions that recognize Merdeka Belajar as a viable alternative educational system capable of achieving effective and progressive learning goals (Saefullah & Abdullah, 2012).

In this regard, Islam calls upon its followers to engage in continuous positive internal transformation—mental, intellectual, and moral—toward becoming the *khaira ummah* (the best community), through effective, constructive, and productive education and learning processes.

## **CONCLUSION**

The curriculum is a structured and planned learning experience that is arranged through a systematic process of reconstructing knowledge and experiences under the supervision of an educational institution, so that students have motivation and interest in learning. The planning of the Merdeka Learning Curriculum implemented at SMK Negeri 1 Takengon was carried out at the beginning of the 2021/2022 academic year, in July 2021. At this stage, SMK Negeri 1 Takengon invited resource persons to provide information about the implementation of the Merdeka Learning Curriculum.

The organization of the curriculum at SMK Negeri 1 Takengon involves the school principal, curriculum vice principal, teachers, educational staff/administration, and also experts brought in directly from the education office. The implementation of curriculum organization at SMK Negeri 1 Takengon follows the proper curriculum management procedures. The implementation of the Merdeka Learning Curriculum at SMK Negeri 1 Takengon consists of four stages: initial, developing, ready, and proficient. This aligns with the guidelines for the Merdeka Learning Curriculum as determined in the teaching and assessment guide issued by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia.

The evaluation of the Merdeka Learning Curriculum at SMK Negeri 1 Takengon is carried out through formative and summative evaluations. Formative evaluation focuses more on self-assessment. Meanwhile, summative evaluation is conducted through assignments, mid-semester exams, and end-of-semester exams to assess how well students understand the learning process and how the Merdeka Learning Curriculum is implemented to improve the quality of learning.

The challenges in implementing the Merdeka Learning Curriculum at SMK Negeri 1 Takengon include obstacles in the planning stage, such as teachers' limited knowledge and minimal experience. In terms of organization, some human resources are not familiar with technology, which is essential in this era of the Merdeka Learning Curriculum, where many things need to be accessed through the internet or technology. Additionally, there is a lack of references for teaching the Merdeka Learning Curriculum.

## SUGGESTIONS

A suggestion to the Head of the Education Office is to organize a seminar to enhance the understanding of teachers in Central Aceh. For school principals, it is recommended to facilitate teachers in the implementation of the Merdeka Learning Curriculum in their schools.

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