

IMPLEMENTATION THE "MERDEKA CURRICULUM" IN HISTORY EDUCATION

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Abstract

The curriculum is a learning design in an educational program in one period of education level. The implementation of independent curriculum learning gives teachers the flexibility to make learning action plans to increase innovation and implement learning plans to achieve learning outcomes in accordance with the Pancasila profile. Senior High School (SMA) is an educational unit level that is part of the implementation of the independent learning curriculum, namely the driving school. The history subject is one of the learning innovations in the independent curriculum to improve the character of students. The research method used in this research is a field research method with a descriptive qualitative approach. Data was collected through interviews, observation, and documentation. The subjects in this study were the vice principal of the curriculum, history teachers and students. The results showed that the implementation of the independent learning curriculum in improving the character of students through history subjects in high school had been running for one year (two semesters) in accordance with the design and equipment of the driving school. In history learning, teachers have innovated using the concept of independent learning in achieving learning goals that are characterized by the profile of Pancasila.

Keywords: Implementation; Independent curriculum; History learning

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to changes in school curricula, directing the learning process within schools. This fulfills the needs of students and teachers in carrying out teaching and educational activities. Whenever there is a curriculum change, teachers must be able to adapt to the situation, starting from developing learning principles to the evaluation process and fostering good collaboration among students, teachers, and parents to ensure the optimal implementation of the curriculum (Megandarisari, 2021). This is reinforced by the statement that the curriculum essentially lies within the teacher. If the teacher is unable to delve into the existing curriculum, the desired educational objectives will not be achieved. Therefore, the ability of teachers to manage the situation becomes crucial, even though it requires a process of time (Yanti & Fernandes, 2021).

Indonesia has been facing a long-standing issue of learning crisis that impacts the education system in the country. As a result, there is a disparity in the quality of education. Additionally, the equal distribution of education is lacking, leading to regional disparities, and many social groups still pose challenges in Indonesia. This situation has been further disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has drastically changed the teaching and learning process. To address these conflicts, systemic changes are needed to improve the quality of teachers, especially in schools or madrasahs, as they play a key role in transforming the learning process. Through the "Merdeka Belajar" (Freedom to Learn) approach, two important components have been formulated by the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education, namely the "Merdeka Curriculum" and the "Merdeka Teaching Platform." These initiatives aim to restore and support the teaching and learning process (Arisanti, 2022).

History is the study of human beings in the dimensions of time and space. Understanding the concepts of space and time is a fundamental subject taught in the first year of secondary school.

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However, up until now, this material is often considered merely an introduction and taught through rote memorization. Although I have an important concept to equip students with a basic understanding to comprehend each historical event concerning human development, it cannot be separated from the time/period they lived in and their environment/place. Explanation of these concepts should be accompanied by the use of interdisciplinary theory as a tool for analyzing events, enabling them to construct historical knowledge within a comprehensive mental framework. This ability will develop a wise attitude in evaluating an event, allowing the seeds of activism in the context of the past, present, and future extremism to be minimized (Ayundasari, 2022).

Curriculum development should not solely focus on teachers as trainers, but also involve all stakeholders with vested interests. A plan implemented in this manner provides clear direction for its implementation and ultimately yields the desired achievements and outcomes for students. The curriculum cannot be achieved if left unattended after development. An optimally designed program should be implemented and have measurable learning outcomes. Planned and developed curricula often go unimplemented due to a lack of planned changes throughout the entire school system. Failures in curriculum may be attributed to reasons that do not prioritize curriculum development considerations. Generally, students believe that the purpose of the curriculum is to supplement newly developed plans or purchase new materials, showing more concern for management and organization issues rather than evolving events. Many individuals responsible for the curriculum fail to consider a macroscopic view of change and fail to realize that innovation requires careful planning and monitoring. These individuals often contemplate whether implementation utilizes new programs or not (Rouf, Said, & HS, 2020).

Teachers should refer to the learning outcomes of the "Merdeka Curriculum" in history to foster students' historical thinking skills. The challenge is that there are no standardized instructions in the self-paced course on how to teach students to master historical thinking. However, this challenge also presents an opportunity for teachers to think independently and develop various alternative teaching strategies that can be used to instill historical thinking skills (Widiadi, Aji Saputra, & Handoyo, 2022).

The "Merdeka Curriculum" is introduced to every educational unit in Indonesia by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Considering the varying readiness for implementation, it is true that the course is not mandatory to be immediately implemented by all schools. However, the self-paced curriculum is expected to be gradually implemented evenly across all educational units, starting from elementary and junior high school levels, then progressing to high school/vocational school and university levels. The implementation of the self-paced course is regulated by the Minister of Education and Culture's Decree No. 162/M/2021 on Driving Schools. Referring to Minister of Education and Culture Nadim Makarim, in the self-paced curriculum, teachers can choose their own learning pace, adapting to the conditions of their students. This way, it provides every student with a broader opportunity to understand the learning materials and ask questions about what is unknown to them (Masyarakat, Biro Kerja Sama dan Hubungan Sekretariat Jenderal Kementerian Pendidikan Kebudayaan, Riset, 2022).

The use of a multidimensional approach in history education in Indonesia is not yet widely known. This is due to various barriers in its implementation, including the lack of a structured curriculum, textbooks that still predominantly focus on political history, and difficulties in developing supporting materials that require a support system. However, these conditions found a clear direction when the government introduced the "Merdeka Curriculum," which explicitly requests educators to present historical materials in a comprehensive and multidimensional approach (Ayundasari, 2022). In welcoming this policy, the author would like to discuss the discourse on the position of history education in the Merdeka Curriculum, the implementation, and the reference provisions for achieving learning outcomes in the implementation of history education, specifically for Phase E/Grade X in high schools (SMA).

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used in this study is a field research method with a descriptive qualitative approach. The study was conducted at SMA Negeri 3 Banda Aceh, Aceh, Indonesia. Data collection was done through interviews, observations, documentation, and literature review. The subjects of this study were the vice principal in charge of the curriculum, history teachers, and students. For the literature review, the author utilized the documents related to the Merdeka Curriculum, which provided an overview of the formal rules and regulations in the implementation of the curriculum, particularly in history education. This included learning outcome criteria, learning objectives, and teaching modules/lesson plans. Additionally, literature was collected from various international and national journal articles and relevant references related to the research topic. Various findings from the literature review were obtained as the final part of the data processing process, which involved selecting relevant sources, reflecting on the findings, analyzing them, and drawing conclusions (Fikri et al., 2021).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

History education in the Merdeka Curriculum provides more room for multifaceted history education. This is clarified in the provisions of the subject and the learning objectives of history. The curriculum also includes criticism of the previously dominant political and military content in history education. Your history learning should be presented holistically and comprehensively, like a weaver. Events should be narrated in a diachronic, synchronic, multidimensional/multiperspective manner, using social sciences or other supporting disciplines. Additionally, it is necessary to incorporate cross-disciplinary content such as local, social, feminist, maritime, agrarian, technological, environmental, disaster mitigation, health, fashion, culinary, and other aspects (Ayundasari, 2022).

Minister of Education Nadiem explained several advantages of the Merdeka Curriculum. Firstly, it is simpler and more in-depth because the curriculum will focus on essential content and the development of student competencies in each phase. Secondly, educators and students will have more freedom. For students, there are no specific programs or streams in high school, allowing them to choose subjects based on their interests, talents, and aspirations. As for teachers, they will teach according to the stages of achievement and the development of students. Schools also have the authority to distribute and manage the curriculum and learning according to the characteristics of each educational unit and its students. Another advantage of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum is its relevance and interactivity. Project-based learning provides students with a wider opportunity to actively explore current information, such as environmental issues, health, and more. This approach supports the development of character and the competencies outlined in the Pancasila Student Profile (Masyarakat, Biro Kerja Sama dan Hubungan Sekretariat Jenderal Kementerian Pendidikan Kebudayaan, Riset, 2022).

The existence of the Merdeka curriculum as a new curriculum certainly brings challenges for teachers who are already accustomed to using the 2013 curriculum. At the same time, this new curriculum also provides positive challenges for the development of students' historical thinking abilities. In addition, independent courses not only emphasize the material aspect but also focus on the cultivation of skills, including historical thinking skills. The historical thinking concepts present in the standalone curriculum have some similarities with those already existing in various literature, while some are new and unique concepts for the discipline of Indonesian history, such as the concepts of synchronization and creative thinking.

Regarding learning strategies that can be used to cultivate historical thinking skills, teachers can utilize project-based learning that asks students to reconstruct historical events through their own constructive interpretations. The format of the report can be in written form or other formats preferred by the students. Most importantly, teachers should be able to provide historical sources, both primary and secondary, that have the potential to stimulate historical thinking in students (Widiadi et al., 2022).

The learning process of the Merdeka curriculum in a driving school is related to the profile of students based on Pancasila principles, aiming to produce graduates who are resilient and have character. In a driving school, the implementation of the independent curriculum is not as easy as

a slap; various obstacles and challenges are overcome, especially in arousing the interest of students in their desire to move towards transformation. As the school leader, the principal must be able to mobilize, guide, and motivate teachers to embrace better education. Furthermore, good collaboration is needed among teachers, principals, institutions, parents, and other relevant parties, so that the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum in schools can be carried out to its maximum potential (Rahayu, Rosita, Rahayuningsih, Hernawan, & Prihantini, 2022).

Learning outcomes in the Merdeka curriculum are formulated by emphasizing skill aspects without neglecting the content aspect. One of the skills in the history subject is the skill of historical thinking processes. The concept of historical thinking in the Merdeka curriculum is also more comprehensive compared to the 2013 curriculum. It includes creativity, critical thinking skills, reflection, context, multiple perspectives, development, continuity, repetition, and change in human life. Additionally, the learning objectives of history are formulated as "training skills in searching for data (heuristics), critiquing and selecting data (validation), analyzing and synthesizing data (interpretation), and writing history (historiography)" (Oemar, 2003).

The availability of facilities and infrastructure supports the successful implementation of the Merdeka curriculum in driving schools, especially in terms of access to IT devices. Mobilization schools receive grants to enhance the availability of infrastructure to support learning by participating in mobilization school programs. The Merdeka curriculum is developed by the Ministry of Education and Culture, and it is up to the teachers to further develop it. In its implementation, it is undeniable that many incorporate learning platforms as learning environments, as mobilization schools signify a shift towards school digitalization (Patilima, 2021).

The implementation of the multidimensional approach in the Merdeka curriculum begins with the use of Learning Outcomes. Learning Outcomes are a comprehensive set of processes that consist of knowledge, skills, and behaviors to form subject competencies. The history Learning Outcomes consist of two phases, namely Phase E and Phase F. The implementation of the multidimensional approach in Phase E can be done by planning collaborative project-based research to analyze and evaluate historical incidents using primary or secondary sources, which are then communicated in oral, written, or other media forms. The themes studied in this phase range from ancestors to Islamic kingdoms. Whenever possible, these projects should be based on local history to create a sense of belonging to the events, resulting in a more enjoyable learning process. On the other hand, the implementation of the multidimensional approach in Phase F can be carried out using a similar process to Phase E, but with a focus on interpreting the values embedded in historical incidents (Grade XI) and actualizing historical interests and talents through historical activities outside of school (Grade XII) (Ayundasari, 2022).

Self-directed learning is based on students who are not only good at memorizing what they learn but also have sharp analysis and reasoning skills when solving problems. Students are also expected to have character. In self-directed learning, teachers need to have the ability to manage learning materials and develop them into highly interesting and enjoyable topics by utilizing technology as a learning tool, so that students have high motivation to develop their existing skills. The creativity and creativity of students increase when teachers know how to plan learning that encourages them to actively create (Sibagariang, Sihotang, & Murniarti, 2021).

The idea of the Merdeka Belajar policy is for teachers to become educators who can create a comfortable learning environment and inspire a passion for learning, so that students do not feel burdened by the materials provided by the teacher (Yusuf & Arfiansyah, 2021). The concept of freedom in learning goes back to the core of the national education system law, which allows schools to interpret the core competencies of the curriculum for self-assessment. Teachers should have the skills to prepare learning materials in an enjoyable atmosphere and utilize technology as a learning resource. Mobilization schools are overseen by stakeholders and fellow teachers to continually improve the quality of teaching. Even retired teachers are eager to learn how to enhance their performance to ensure that the trained school guards make effective use of technology. The challenge for teachers in implementing the Merdeka curriculum in teacher-led schools is to spend

time together preparing creative, innovative, and challenging learning experiences (Sherly, Dharma, & Sihombing, 2021).

The results of the research observations and interviews conducted at SMAN 3 Banda Aceh indicate that for the self-directed curriculum, the school principal can direct, guide, and inspire all elements of the school to move towards the development of better education in order to produce high-quality graduates. In the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum, it is expected that all teachers can collaborate and be creative in creating effective and engaging learning experiences, along with the concept of differentiated learning. Teachers should be prepared with projects that revolve around the profile of Pancasila. History teachers also mentioned that in history education, several learning process movements have been introduced in line with the learning outcomes of history, such as the understanding of historical concepts and process skills in Class/Phase F.

In Phase E, which focuses on understanding historical concepts, students learn about the basic theories of individuals, space, time, diachrony (chronology), synchronicity, the purposes of history, historical and social theories, historical research methods, and household history. Through reading, discussions, visits to exclusive historical sites, and collaborative project-based research, students will be able to analyze and evaluate various historical events in Indonesia, including understanding the origins of ancestors and the spice trade routes in Indonesia, the Hindu-Buddhist and Islamic kingdoms in Indonesia. At the end of this phase, students will be able to use primary or secondary sources to research local history that is directly or indirectly related, diachronic and/or synchronic with Indonesia, and then communicate their findings through expressions, writings, and/or other media. Additionally, students will utilize various historical skills to discover historical events and interpret the values they embody (Mulyasa, 2010).

The concepts that arise in learning are understood through the meaning of history as cultural knowledge to evoke awareness, as it contains values of cultural similarity, heroism, sacrifice, national unity, humanism, and more. On the other hand, when someone understands history as the empirical experience of complex human life, it should be understood that historical knowledge is part of the social sciences. Therefore, empirical guidelines are used when selecting the focus of news. Historical concepts allow different information to be grouped, and concepts also connect specific news items to each other as descriptive explanations that facilitate our understanding of the sequence of past events (Sulaiman, 2012).

The Big Six in advanced historical thinking, as a refinement of historical concepts (Peter S, and Tom M. 2012; (Zed, 2018). Consists of the following six components:

The Six Historical Concepts	Descriptions
Historical Significance	History is considered important and prominent, and it has brought significant changes in its time and in the long term. The historical approach has both significant and insignificant dimensions.
Evidence	History is the study of facts. Facts rely on data (evidence), especially primary sources or documents.
Continuity and Change	History deals with change, but on the other hand, there are elements that remain unchanged (or permanent). Science is interested in the elements that remain (generalizations).
Cause and Consequence	Historical events never stand alone but are interconnected through cause and effect or simultaneous series of events (coexistence).
Historical Perspectives	Historical perspective refers to understanding history based on historical thinking (diachronic). A more

	complex perspective involves non-historical theories or methods (sociology, anthropology, environment, etc.).
The Ethical Dimension	History has other scientific principles, such as ethical responsibility. Historical truth (scientific truth) has both positive and negative effects. If a truth is more harmful than beneficial, there are moral considerations.

At the end of these elements, students will be able to understand the basic theories of history that can be used to explain historical events; comprehend the basic concepts of history as a basis for analyzing historical events; understand the basic concepts of historical science as an evaluative tool for studying historical events; analyze and evaluate humans as subjects and objects of history; analyze and evaluate historical events on a local, national, and global scale; analyze and evaluate history in terms of past, present, and future dimensions; analyze and evaluate history in terms of development, change, continuity, repetition, etc.; chronologically or simultaneously examine historical events.

Students will also gain an understanding of the basic concepts of ancestral origins and spice routes; analyze and evaluate humans in relation to ancestral origins and spice routes; analyze and evaluate ancestral origins and spice routes at the local, national, and global levels; analyze and evaluate ancestral origins and spice routes from past, present, and future dimensions; analyze patterns of development, change, continuity, and repetition in ancestral origins and spice routes; analyze and evaluate ancestral origins and spice routes chronologically and/or simultaneously.

Students will understand the basic concepts of the Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms; analyze and evaluate humans in the Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms; analyze and evaluate the Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms on a local, national, and global scale; analyze and evaluate the Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms in terms of past, present, and future dimensions; analyze and evaluate the Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms in terms of patterns of development, change, succession, and repetition; analyze and evaluate the Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms chronologically and/or synchronously.

Students will understand the basic concepts of the Islamic caliphate; analyze and evaluate humans in the Islamic caliphate; analyze and evaluate the Islamic caliphate on a local, national, and global scale; analyze and evaluate the Islamic caliphate in terms of past, present, and future dimensions; analyze and evaluate the Islamic caliphate in terms of sequential and repetitive patterns; analyze and evaluate the Islamic caliphate chronologically and/or simultaneously (Masyarakat, Biro Kerja Sama dan Hubungan Sekretariat Jenderal Kementerian Pendidikan Kebudayaan, Riset, 2022).

In the element of historical process skills, students are able to observe, ask questions, gather information, organize information, draw conclusions, communicate, reflect, and collaborate to plan follow-up projects that include the socialization of basic history, the Spice Route, and the origins of Indonesian ethnic groups, Hindu-Buddhist kingdoms, and Islamic kingdoms. This includes: 1) Conducting local historical research on the immediate environment (family history, school history, history of the spice route region, history of regional kingdoms, etc.); collecting primary and secondary sources through the surrounding environment, library, and the Internet; selecting and critiquing primary and secondary sources; interpreting and describing the meaning of primary and/or secondary sources; and writing research findings in historiographical form. 2) Interpreting historical events diachronically (chronologically) with a focus on processes and/or synchronously with a focus on structure; explaining historical incidents based on causality; connecting historical events to everyday life; situating historical events in their contemporary context. 3) Expressing historical incidents from the perspectives of the past, present, and future; identifying the developmental rules, changes, continuities, and repetitions of historical events. 4) Interpreting historical events on a local, national, and global scale; connecting correlations between local, national, and global historical events. 5) Interpreting the values of historical incidents and

contextualizing them in present-day life. And, 6) Processing historical information in non-digital and digital forms using various historical software, recordings, documentaries, photos, models, vlogs, timelines, storyboards, infographics, motion graphics, comics, posters, etc (Masyarakat, Biro Kerja Sama dan Hubungan Sekretariat Jenderal Kementerian Pendidikan Kebudayaan, Riset, 2022).

In the skill of historical research, students engage in the implementation of critical thinking in history learning. This is because the learning approach involves encouraging students to ask relevant questions and conduct historical research or gather the latest information as extensively as possible. The questions they ask form the basis of their research. The ability of students to identify issues in historical research through these questions demonstrates their self-actualization in critical thinking. Students are asked to critically examine their existing knowledge or experiences. Examples of key questions in this model include how the city where the students reside was formed, how the city transitioned from a stagnant area to a bustling one, how the city developed as a densely populated area, and so on (Mulyana, 2019).

Thinking historically is a skill that can be developed so that students can distinguish the concept of time in history, evaluate evidence, compare and analyze historical narratives, illustrations, and records from the past, interpret historical records, and create historical narratives. History provides an opportunity for students to analyze and develop an appreciation for human activities and their relationships with others. To create such an environment, students need to develop active questioning and learning habits (active learning), rather than simply conveying information in the form of facts/data, names, and years as truths (Kamarga, 2000).

According to there are 5 (five) forms of historical thinking skills that can develop the ability of historical thinking process skills, namely:

Historical thinking Skills	Description
Chronological thinking	Chronological thinking involves developing an understanding of historical time (past, present, future) in order to determine the chronological sequence of events. It includes measuring calendar time, interpreting and creating schedules, explaining patterns of continuity and change in history.
Historical comprehension	Historical understanding encompasses the ability to listen and read historical narratives with full comprehension, identify the structural elements of a historical story (characters, situations, sequence of events, cause and effect), and occasionally interpret past events based on their knowledge.
Historical analysis and interpretation	The ability to compare various experiences, beliefs, motifs, traditions, and expectations of people from different backgrounds and eras, and then analyze how these differences manifest is called comparative analysis. It involves comparing what happens in historiography and then analyzing the accuracy of the starting points used.
Historical research capabilities	The ability to formulate historical questions arising from the study of historical documents, artifacts, photographs, visiting historical objects, and receiving information about when and where the creation of objects, documents, or writings occurred; shaping a historical narrative related to the acquisition of knowledge..

Historical issues-analysis and decision-making	The ability to identify issues related to historical literature, analyze inconsistencies in positions, and assess the potential for repurposing problems for other uses.
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The ability of students to identify their own problems is both a learning process and an outcome. As a process, conflicts can arise during the learning process. For example, in a history class, the teacher discusses controversial historical topics. When the teacher poses such questions, students can understand what problems they might ask. Meanwhile, the outcome shows that students can identify a problem when learning has taken place, and the teacher guides students to identify problems based on their acquired experiences and knowledge (Mulyana, 2019).

At the end of these elements, students can analyze and evaluate historical events diachronically (chronologically), prioritizing the process and synchronicity of structure; analyze and evaluate historical events based on causality; connect historical events with everyday life; and contextualize historical events within their time period. They can analyze and evaluate past, present, and future historical events; analyze and evaluate historical events in terms of development models, changes, resilience, and repetition; interpret the values or lessons learned from historical events. Students can also analyze and evaluate historical events at local, national, and global levels; explore the relationships between local, national, and even global historical events (Nurdin & Adriantoni, 2016).

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in pilot schools refers to the students' Pancasila profile to shape graduates who are competent and have character. The Merdeka Curriculum in pilot schools faces various constraints and challenges, especially in developing the interest of school members to innovate. The Merdeka Curriculum prioritizes skill development without neglecting the content aspect. One of the skills in the history subject is the understanding of historical concepts and the skills of historical thinking processes, and there are several specified learning outcomes. At the end of these learning elements/achievements, students are expected to analyze historical concepts and values at the local, national, and global levels. The role of stakeholders in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in pilot schools becomes crucial in mobilizing, directing, and inspiring teachers to collaborate towards better education, especially for history teachers in designing character-based and diverse history learning processes.

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