

Concept and Implementation *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

The government has implemented numerous policies to improve educational quality, such as the independent learning policy. Educational institutions are no less lagging behind in terms of improving educational quality. The descriptive qualitative method was used in this research. The sources used are from scientific books, academic article, journal that has been published in line with the main issue. The results of this study show that the implementation and the concept of the independent learning policy in higher educational level aims to improve the quality of education through the learning process, commitment from teachers, as well as creativity and support from school principals.

The fourth goal was to reconstruct lessons affected mostly by pandemic, and the government, through the Minister of Education, provided a program to enhance the Independent Curriculum. This type of educational program offered to mentoring units as an additional option for re-establishing carry up in 2022 until 2024. The ministry intends to evaluate the educational program for public school in 2024, with valuation given throughout the time teaching recovery era (Adhi et al., 2022). *Merdeka Curriculum* is the new face for the model teaching and learning plan, which was approved by the Government of Education and Technology. *Merdeka Belajar* is a new institution established by the Government of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia which brings enlightenment to students and educators in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was reported that 195 countries had imposed school closures in April 2020, affecting nearly 91.3 percent of the world's student population (Samat et al., 2020; UNESCO, 2020). School closures have took place in several provinces in Indonesia since March 2020, including DKI Jakarta, Banten, and West Java, beginning on March 16, 2020 (CNN, 2020; Kumparan, 2020). The unusual situation forces the authorities to implement drastic and unplanned changes towards the educational system. The Independent Learning is the outcome and discharge of a setback educational program dispatched towards respond to the side effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Awareness of Independent Learning is a methodology used to allow students to choose the subjects they are focused in (Supriyono, 2022; Budiyanto, et al., 2021).

Numerous changes will occur following the implementation and concept of the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum policy, particularly in the educational system. The current learning system, which is only used in the classroom, will be modified and made as comfortable as possible in order to facilitate interaction between learners and educators. Learning with outing classes includes one of them, and this outing class is one of the learning programs that aims to stimulate creativity so that students have specific knowledge and skills. Learning in outdoor setting class is also a bring much leisure teaching method that teach scholar to be more in tune with nature and their scenery. Educator and scholar will eligible to strengthen intimacy, more relaxed, and, of course, have so much fun while learning using this kind of method. Studying in class every day for years has certainly become routine, if not monotonous, so none of this matter with educators bringing something unique to the classroom activities. Education strategy Advancement occurs as a result of the educational plan's unique concept, which is constantly switching and directing the needs of those that are still learning. Furthermore, the environs and the citizens who have opportunities for expansion transformation (Tedjokoesoemo et al., 2021). The National Education Standards Agency (BSNP) defines independent learning as a new curriculum that drives to an approach to abilities and passions. Scholar can pick whatever any subject to learn based on their skills and their passion (Saputra, 2020). The curriculum's target is to synchronize education across the nation. They mentor and enlighten scholar in order for them to become intellectual, knowledgeable, inventive, focus on innovation, takes responsibility, and socially

competent. Attempting to implement the "Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar" in institution necessitates the assistance of competent, certified, and knowledgeable human resources from educator, principals, other school staff.

Based on the interpretation of an independent curriculum in terms of implementation and concept in the higher education level, the author believes in expanding the understanding of teachers' qualities in cognition and applying at the higher education level. In order that the author would attempt to collect deep exhilaration from many scientific optics that have been appeared in order to add more perception into the new perspectives and skills of educators, particularly educational resources in determining what curriculum might be obtained and which obstacles exist. The purpose of this article is to gain a thorough understanding of the implementation and concept of the "Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar" setup to classroom implementation potential, specifically what has been and has not been implemented in the course of Indonesian education.

METHOD

The method section illustrates the methodology for carrying out this journal article, which is intended to create better understanding of concept and implementation of independent curriculum in higher education level. According to the author, the ministry has frequently made curriculum adjust for tolerable reasoning, but somewhat multiple have been properly carried out in schools. As a matter of fact, the author completed a series of data search steps to finalize the discussion of concept and implementation the independent curriculum in higher education. The authors use a descriptive qualitative research design in this study to collect data and then look for something to answer the issues.

The author searches a database of data or curriculum sources for publications paper such as books, academic works, and journal articles that are associated with this research (Tabuena & Hilario, 2021). This study is entirely based using secondary information such as published site scientific data, which eliminates the need for researchers to run to the field. The author reporting the final data by latest literature reviews study, particularly in the field of curriculum literature review and relevant to be explained. This paper is entirely also supported by data published in various sources in order to interpret the answers to the following research problems, namely the concept and implementation of the independent learning curriculum at the upper level of education.

After collecting the data, the author attempted to reassess it through phases including coding the data and searching for statistical facts for simple interpretation and come up with conclusions that addressed the problem. The author also conduct a detailed analysis and synthesize the information and collect before making a decision. Finally, the author report this literature review in a descriptive qualitative research design to collect data and then look for something that can answer the problem.

RESULTS

Because education is a deliberate and planned endeavor, sensitive humans who seem to be adaptable to changing demands are needed in this confusing situation of development. Coaching practitioners should always be able to plan understudies to face life as well as possible given their time constraints (Nouraey et al., 2020). However, it should not be a failure of progress, but rather of the content of the educational planning and its ability to comprehend the issues of understudies in their time. The design is crucial because it determines the various sides, a particular substance, components, and mechanism of display. Authors would also know to where the understudies would be taken based on the goal plan.

Merdeka Belajar Curriculum Policy

Policy is defined as a statement of ideals, goals, expectations, or principles to achieve goals (Baro'ah, 2020). In this case, the policy is related to the concept of organizational regulation and is a formal pattern that is accepted by the government or institution in order for them to work together to meet their targets (Roqib & Sabiq, 2022). Thus, it can be concluded that the legal concept that underpins the establishment of a rule in the field of education in order to maintain a balance between needs, situations, and conditions in the educational process is the foundation of educational policy.

Merdeka Belajar Curriculum Implementation

The Republic of Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud RI) confirmed several months ago that there was a new policy in the educational world, labelled "Merdeka Belajar Curriculum." The many problems that exist in education, particularly those that focus on actors or human empowerment, introduced the world to independent learning.

Many changes will occur following the implementation of the independent learning policy, particularly in the learning system. The current learning system, which is only used in the classroom, will be modified and made as comfortable as possible in terms of facilitating interaction between children and educators. Learning with outing classes is one of them, and this outing class is one of the learning programs that encourages creativity so that students have specialized knowledge. Outdoor classroom is also a leisure teaching method that teaches scholar to feel connected to nature and their scenery. Educator and scholar be able to establish interaction, much more casual, and, of course, have more leisure while learning using this kind of method. Applying what the government has designed is, undoubtedly, the quest of educators, as in carrying it out, it should represent what would be recorded in the curriculum, the method of implementation, and, of course, a pattern or validation to ascertain either success or failure (Aithal & Aithal, 2020). To utilize curriculum documents at the school level, educational performers educators and their figureheads, for instance, first should comprehend the essence of curriculum implementation. (Billett, 2020).

The goal in implementing the curriculum, in addition to other aspects that must be taken from it, to empower scholar so that scholar are not robots. From this problem, it will be seen how teacher can contemplate the curriculum's implementation into their daily classrooms activities; scholar understand aspects of their learning and design necessary requirements that are truly effective, efficient, and significant—dynamics of interaction between the educational community (Pratikno, Hermawan, & Arifin, 2022). Higher education level with the appropriate qualifications must portray how curriculum implementation meets performance specifications.

Merdeka Belajar Concept

Nadiem Makarim's concept of independent learning is motivated by his desire to create a happy and enjoyable learning environment that is not burdened with certain values and achievement key performance indicators. A following are the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia's key points regarding the concept of independent learning:

1. National Standardized School Examination (USBN)

The Government of Education and Culture which Nadiem Makarim has mandated the abolition of USBN, as stated in Government of Education and Culture Regulation Number 43 of 2019 concerning Examinations Organized by Education Units and National Examinations (Kamil, 2020). This means that the school will be solely responsible for the preparation of questions and the implementation of USBN. Because exams are administered by schools, it is the responsibility of the regional government through Education and Culture to monitor, evaluate, and ensure that the exams conducted by the school are of high quality. This is critical because it is directly related to educational quality. Education and Culture must facilitate, particularly in terms of funding, so that the exam's implementation works properly; additionally, it must conduct training on creating questions in line with the standards or criteria that must be met.

2. National Examination (UN)

Nadiem Makarim, Minister of Education, has decided to disband the National Examination. With the elimination of the National Examination, it is hoped that students will be relieved of mental stress because their graduation from a particular level of education will not be determined by grades obtained in a matter of days. However, this does not mean that no measures of student learning outcomes are used. The National Examination will be replaced by a new system that includes a minimum competency assessment as well as a character survey. This concept simplifies the UN system; unlike the UN, which is completed at the end of the learning level, this assessment will be completed when the child is in grades 4, 8, and 11. And the results of the study of this assessment will be used to support schools improve the learning process even further. Character surveys are also used in schools as indicators or performance metrics to provide feedback on learning activities, particularly when it comes to instilling character values in students. As a result, these character values will eventually be internalized by students, which will have an impact on their achievement and quality.

3. Learning Implementation Plan (RPP)

A teacher is required to prepare a lesson plan before entering the classroom so that learning is more directed and in compliance with the indicators developed. However, unlike past RPP, which had more than ten constituents, the new RPP has been simplified, with only three core components that are in accordance with the Minister of Education Circular No 14 of 2019, namely learning objectives, learning activity phases, and assessment. With this policy in place, teachers will find it easier and more liberated to create and develop teaching strategies that are as effective and efficient as possible while remaining oriented toward child development.

4. Expanding the zoning system in student admissions

The zoning system is a method of managing the process of admitting new students based on their residence area. Zoning is one of the policies implemented by the Ministry of Education and Culture to ensure equal access to education services and the equitable distribution of national education quality. Of course, prior to implementation, this system was reviewed, as well as guidelines from education systems whose credibility is unquestionable. Initially, the zoning system had a minimum quota of 80% of the total quota of 100%, with the remainder allocated for achievement and transfer routes. The current zoning system has been modified to include 50% zoning, 15% affirmation, 5% displacement, and 30% achievement path. The variation through the achievement path was increased from 15% to 30% because there were cases throughout many regions that experienced difficulties with the implementation of the old zoning system. It is hoped that by changing these percentages, the mechanism for admitting new students will be able to accommodate differences in situations and circumstances in each region.

DISCUSSION

Even though the government issued the Independence Curriculum Program, there has been a lot of anticipation for how these issues in educational plan will progress. As a free educational program for students, educators, and instructional units, there is no incentive or need for all instructional units to implement the Independent Curriculum program directly (Standish, 2019). Furthermore, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has been felt by the Indonesian public since March 2, 2020, and has caused Affects in existence management. The public authority prioritizes people's well-being. It also has an impact on educational strategy. In a pandemic situation, the public authority is aware of the need for changes to the education mechanism that include

adaptability and advancement in education to changing times. To avoid unforeseen changes, the government conducted a pilot study to offer optional education programmes in selected schools. Initially, the government trains school authorities, educators, and training faculty. The Driving School's educational program is known as the Merdeka Curriculum, and it was essentially started by Ki Hadjar many years ago. Belief in an Independent Curriculum (Green, 2018).

The findings of this study demonstrate the tenacity with which the government has designed the curriculum in regards to documentation and guidance. The author is conscious of the drawbacks of this finding when viewed through the lens of the method author use, in which researchers obtain data from minimal publications. As a result, far too little research evidence on the independent curriculum has been published. What the researcher reviews is supported by extensive and a study of prior publications, stressing the regime's experience of revising the curriculum once every 10 years and observing many things that cannot be accomplished as planned. Though, given the limitations of these findings, researcher hoping for feedback and other individual's perspectives so that future study might be undertaken with more statistical analysis or subsequent studies on the modification of the existing technique, known as a qualitative design, so that additional studies can be undertaken using a combination quantitative and qualitative approach with more precise analysis and extensive coverage (Chaudhary, 2016).

CONCLUSION

In the world of education, quality is what distinguishes between good and bad. As a result, it is clear that quality is the primary issue that will ensure an educational institution's success in the face of competition in the world of education. Education is a process of empowerment that is expected to enable students to become clever, and knowledgeable human beings, as well as educated human beings. As a result, all educational institutions must prioritize quality education. The government also plays an important role in improving educational quality because it is not only the party authorized to distribute funds, but it is also the party authorized to determine policies related to quality improvement. Furthermore, the new breakthrough in independent learning is expected to contribute more to the human capital, because quality human resources are assets and the nation's potential, both of which are critical for filling development gaps in various fields. Furthermore, the author discovered that the implementation of the autonomous learning programme was described as relatively simple to design, particularly for higher educational levels. According to a series of data that author obtained, The actions produced by curriculum design are obviously important and outstanding but are impeded when used in the domain where the field, of course, takes an awareness of the study of the issues encountered given that Indonesian education is vast from the varied pattern, structures: region, and challenges. Hard work from the ministry and educational actors has resulted in success.

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