ANALYSIS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MERDEKA CURRICULUM IN THE SUBJECT OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASS X AT THE NUSANTARA ISLAMIC HIGH SCHOOL

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum to Islamic religious education subjects at the Nusantara Islamic High School. The research uses a qualitative descriptive method with a phenomenological approach. The research results show that Islamic Religious Education teachers apply Problem-Based Learning strategies and use Audio-Visual learning media. As for learning evaluation, the teacher gives assignments, tests, and remedial. The obstacles to implementing the Merdeka curriculum are that teachers find it difficult to create lesson plans in determining the learning media to be used, there is no update on the use of learning strategies and media and it is difficult to access the internet. Efforts to implement an independent teacher curriculum use aspects of assessing attendance, skills, and activeness. Teachers are also given training in implementing the Merdeka curriculum. The impact of implementing the Merdeka curriculum on Islamic religious learning at Nusantara Islamic High School is that it is easier for students to understand PAI material and students become more active in learning.

Keywords: Education, Merdeka Curriculum, and Islamic Religious Education

INTRODUCTION | مقدمة

The increasing indicators of the progress of a nation and state, of course, can be determined from how the condition of education, if the better and more developed the education of a nation, the ability of its human resources will also increase, because basically, education is a process of transferring values and culture from one generation to another to give birth to a prosperous country (Peter et al., 2024).

Therefore, to improve human resources, the quality of a quality learning system in education can develop every potential in humans, so the need for curriculum renewal and appropriate methods at every level of education organized by the government, as is being managed by Indonesian educational institutions through its independent learning program, it is hoped that through this more strategic curriculum management, the government can improve every aspect of education in Indonesia to be more improved (Arifin, 2022).

Kepmendikbudristek Number 56 of 2022 concerning Guidelines for Curriculum Implementation in the context of Learning Recovery as a perfecting curriculum after the pandemic issued a policy of using the 2013 curriculum, emergency curriculum, and Merdeka curriculum. The government gives freedom in terms of the curriculum used by each school, it is

only how the school responds to the policy by implementing it in their respective schools according to the goals to be achieved by the school (Sapitri, 2022). This shows that Islamic Religious Education teachers face several challenges in implementing the Independent Curriculum. First, the challenge of combining Islamic religious values with the approach of freedom of learning. Second, the challenge of maintaining the relevance between Islamic teachings and the development of modernization. Teachers need to show a clear connection between Islamic teachings and the contemporary needs of students. Third, the challenge of utilizing technology and digital learning tools in accordance with Islamic religious values (Setiawan, 2024). Teachers have understood the theory of the independent curriculum, but its implementation has not been carried out ideally (Nur'aini & Al Farisi, 2023).

One of the schools implementing the Merdeka curriculum in Malang City is SMA Islam Nusantara. This Merdeka curriculum is applied to class X. One of the subjects that implement this Merdeka curriculum is the subject of Islamic Religious Education (PAI). From the results of observations and interviews with grade X Islamic education teachers, it was found that Islamic education teachers did not properly understand how to implement the Merdeka curriculum in Islamic education learning.

Islamic Religious Education which is a process of forming attitudes, personalities, and lifestyles. With religious learning, it is hoped that students will be able to practice their religious teachings well. In addition, religious education also aims to shape the character and personality of the nation's children because the Qur'an is a source of knowledge, it contains all aspects related to the joints of life, both science, social, and so on (Anzika & Alfurqan, 2022).

To carry out the learning process in PAI subjects which aims to shape the character of students to be able to practice their religion in all aspects of life by applying a Merdeka curriculum to students requires better interaction between teachers and students during the learning process (Suntoro & Widoro, 2020).

Learning should reflect a process of interaction that occurs between a teacher or educator and a group of students. The interaction process is deliberately created or designed by the teacher to convey all information related to subjects and other information that must be conveyed to all students by the implementation of a Merdeka curriculum (Sucipto et al., 2024).

This study aims to describe the implementation, constraints, and efforts in implementing a Merdeka curriculum in Islamic religious education subjects in class X at SMA Islam Nusantara Malang. Thus, this research is more directed at analyzing the implementation of a Merdeka curriculum in class X Islamic education subjects at SMA Islam Nusantara Malang seen from several aspects, namely: implementation, constraints, and efforts of the Merdeka curriculum policy implemented by the school.

METHOD | منهج

This research is a qualitative descriptive research using a phenomenological approach. The purpose of this research is to describe how the application, obstacles, and efforts in implementing the curriculum in Islamic Religious Education subjects at SMA Islam Nusantara Malang.

In this study, researchers used informants who could provide appropriate information, among others: principals, vice principals, Islamic education teachers, and students. The data collection techniques used were observation, interviews, and documentation studies Nusantara Islamic High School Malang. The data analysis technique used the Miles and Huberman model,

namely: data condensation, data presentation, and data verification and conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 1992).

RESULT | نتائج

Table 1. Analysis of The Implementation of The Merdeka Curriculum in The Subject Of Islamic Religious Education Class X At The Nusantara Islamic High School

No	Aspects	Description
1	Implementation of Merdeka Curriculum (PAI Class X)	Teachers use interesting learning media such as audio-visual (pictures and videos), although they often use the same media.
2	Implementation of Merdeka Belajar Policy Program	- Planning for grade 11. - Replace the USBN with an assessment test. - Replace the UN with general competency assessments, character surveys, and environmental surveys. - Adopt Merdeka Belajar Platform for lesson plan access.
3	Obstacles	- Teachers rarely open independent learning platforms. - Difficult internet access. - Lack of learning support facilities, such as the use of the same learning media.
4	Efforts to overcome obstacles	- Problem-based learning strategy. - Use of more attractive learning media such as audio-visual. - Student assessment is based on attendance, craftsmanship, proficiency, and liveliness.

Table 2. Application of Learning Media

No	Informant	Interview Excerpt
1	Religion Teacher	*I apply learning media by linking it with problem-based learning strategies. I customize the media I use with the material I teach. I often use learning media, namely Audio-Visual. And later students can discuss and see images such as videos related to learning material.*
2	Students	*The media that is often used when learning Islamic religious education is audio-visual media by using Infocus tools by displaying images and videos according to the material.*

Table 3. Application of Learning Evaluation

No	Informant	Interview Excerpt
1	Religion Teacher	*As for the practical and written assessments that are carried out when giving assessments to students the aspects that I give the first are attendance, crafts skills, and liveliness in answering questions or assignments and all kinds.*
2	Students	*The most that Islamic religious education teachers value is the practice of prayer.*

Table 4. Implementation of Merdeka Belajar Policy Program

No	Policy Program Free to Learn	Informant	Interview Excerpt
1	USBN replaced by an assessment test	*Vice Principal for curriculum*	*USBN has not been implemented yet. Now because it is still class X it has not been implemented. The clear planning that we are now working on is related to the questions we are working on.*
2	UN replaced by general competency assessment, character survey, and environmental survey	*Vice Principal for curriculum*	*There is no more UN. And now there is a school exam. School exams are web-based so planning is certainly through teachers who are active in the subject area in MGMP, it is hoped that these teachers can compile questions in each class.* *So, if the school has anticipated from the beginning, there is socialization related to the Merdeka curriculum policy which is given not only when in grade 11 but from grade 10 it has started.* *They have been given information related to the exam but also about the curriculum itself. What they have to learn, what they have to understand so that later in grade 11 we hope that they are not surprised anymore because they already know that from the beginning of information about such a thing*

| 3 | Learning Implementation Plan (RPP) | *Vice Principal for curriculum* | *Now our school is category 2, which is an independent change school. Independent change means that all tools related to lesson plans or teaching modules are now called. It was told to be taken from the independent learning platform so teachers were told to take and adopt (exchange) with our school. We are asked to take it all, but the school adopts it, such as changing the name of the school and changing the name of the teacher in the our school.* |
| 4 | Students | *Vice Principal for curriculum* | *The matter of student admissions with the zoning system is based on the Branch of Service (CABDIN) activity meeting. Each school principal determines where the zoning of each school is. After discussing later, in the implementation, if there are any obstacles, they will be discussed again. The zoning itself is based on the nearest residence and here it is related to the Merdeka curriculum such as zoning. The closest school to the Merdeka curriculum, Yes, the students are from the nearest one.* |

DISCUSSION | مناقشة

Implementation of the Merdeka curriculum in Islamic Religious Education class X at Nusantara Islamic High School

Curriculum implementation is an important process in the curriculum implementation process. Curriculum implementation is realized in the form of learning experiences with principles that make it easier and more effective to communicate with various parties. (Sapitri, 2022). Several curriculum implementations are generally referred to as curriculum components, namely: learning objectives, learning materials, learning strategies, learning media, and learning evaluation (Puspitarini, 2022).

The application or implementation of the independent learning program policy is carried out in the form of 1) national standardized school exams (USBN) which are replaced by assessment exams; 2) national exams (UN) which are replaced by general competency assessments, character surveys, and environmental surveys; 3) learning implementation plans (RPP), and 4) zoning-based new student admission regulations (PPDB) (Lembong et al., 2023).

Learning objectives in the curriculum are the goals to be achieved in every learning and education. Education aims to develop learners' abilities consisting of knowledge, skills, behavior, results of actions, attitudes, and experiences of exploration. Curriculum objectives themselves are a description of educational goals and institutional goals that are formulated in stages (Hamalik, 2013). In the 1975/1976 primary and secondary education curriculum, goals consist of educational goals, institutional goals, and curricular goals.

In implementing the learning objectives of the independent learning curriculum at Nusantara Islamic High School, Islamic education teachers analyze learning objectives that are by national education goals, institutional goals, and curricular goals. Islamic religious education teachers analyze by looking at what the learning objectives are in the Merdeka curriculum and apply them in the learning process. In addition, Islamic education teachers also see and consider aspects of students' abilities and dispositions and relate them to learning objectives that are by national education goals and curricular goals.

a. Learning Materials

Learning materials are subjects in the teaching and learning process. The selection of

learning materials emphasizes the lesson approach (knowledge) or process approach (skills). The description of the subject matter is what is used as the basis for taking in every teaching and learning in the classroom by the teacher, determining the subject matter and sub-topic based on instructional objectives. The content of the material in the curriculum is all activities and experiences that are developed and structured to achieve educational goals (Ramdani et al., 2023).

In the application of learning materials for the independent learning curriculum at Nusantara Islamic High School, Islamic Religious Education teachers compile learning materials by the syllabus by adjusting them to the Basic Competencies, learning materials, and adjusting to indicators. Islamic religious education teachers also compile Islamic religious education learning materials by basic competencies. In this case, the teacher identifies competency standards, and types of learning materials, and knows how to formulate learning materials. Meanwhile, to compile Islamic Religious Education learning materials, teachers adjust to learning indicators, and then Islamic education teachers formulate basic competencies and use operational verbs or KKO.

b. Learning Strategy

In the process of implementing the curriculum, it must show the existence of learning activities, namely teachers teaching students either in school face-to-face or outside school. In the learning process, teachers are required to use various learning strategies, teaching methods, learning media, and learning resources (Rosni, 2021).

In implementing the learning strategy of the independent learning curriculum at Nusantara Islamic High School, Islamic education teachers make adjustments to students' abilities and use various learning strategies, such as *Discovery Learning strategy*, *Inquiry Learning strategy*, *Problem-Based learning strategy,* and student interests.

c. Learning Media

Learning media is an intermediary tool in teaching. Facilities and infrastructure or media are tools to make it easier for educators to apply curriculum content so that it is more easily understood by students in the teaching and learning process (Syamili & Zulfitria, 2024). In the application of learning materials for the independent learning curriculum at SMA Islam Nusantara, Islamic education teachers also often use Audio-visual learning media.

Table 5. Application of Learning Media

No	Informant	Interview Excerpt
1	Religion Teacher	*I apply learning media by linking it with problem-based learning strategies. I customize the media I use with the material I teach. I often use learning media, namely Audio-Visual. And later students can discuss and see images such as videos related to learning material.*
2	Students	*The media that is often used when learning Islamic religious education is audio-visual media by using Infocus tools by displaying images and videos according to the material.*

The statements of Islamic education teachers and students show that teachers use Audio-Visual learning media when learning is assisted by DLP (Digital Light Processing) projectors to display images and videos related to the material to be conveyed.

d. Learning Evaluation

Evaluation is a selection process for students who are eligible for graduation and who are not eligible for graduation. Students who reach the target can be graduated, while students who

do not reach the target cannot be graduated (Hamalik, 2013). Evaluation is aimed at assessing the achievement of predetermined goals as well as assessing the overall teaching implementation process (Idrus, 2019).

In carrying out the implementation of the learning evaluation of the learning independence curriculum at Nusantara Islamic High School, Islamic education teachers look at the material provided first and pay attention to the extent to which students understand. At the next stage, the teacher gives assignments, tests or remedies, and others. Meanwhile, the forms of assessment used are practical and written assessments. The aspects used in the assessment are attendance, craftsmanship and proficiency, and activeness in answering questions or assignments.

Table 6. Application of Learning Evaluation

No	Informant	Interview Excerpt
1	Religion Teacher	*As for the practical and written assessments that are carried out when giving assessments to students the aspects that I give the first are attendance, crafts skills, and liveliness in answering questions or assignments and all kinds.*
2	Students	*The most that Islamic religious education teachers value is the practice of prayer.*

The statements of Islamic religious education teachers and students show that in addition to written assessments, there are practical assessments such as the practice (implementation) of prayer, memorization, and recitation of the Qur'an. The implementation of the Merdeka curriculum at SMA Islam Nusantara is indeed relatively new in the application of the independent learning policy program, which is still in the process of planning and implementation. This was found in interviews with the vice principal for student affairs and the vice principal for curriculum.

In the implementation of the independent learning policy related to USBN which is replaced by an assessment test and UN which is replaced by a general competency assessment, character surveys, and environmental surveys in its implementation in the planning process and which is still being pursued related to questions to be prepared that will be tested on the exam later in grade 11. Meanwhile, related other independent learning policy programs such as lesson plans and new student admissions (PPDB) have been implemented.

In implementing one-sheet lesson plans by the Merdeka curriculum, teachers still adopt the independent learning platform provided by the government. However, some teachers make their own. Meanwhile, in implementing the zoning-based new student admission policy (PPDB), the school follows the admission system as in the Merdeka curriculum. Before implementing it, the school held a meeting to determine the student admission area. This shows support for changes in the admission of new students.

Table 7. Implementation of Merdeka Belajar Policy Program

No	Policy Program Free to Learn	Informant	Interview Excerpt
1	USBN replaced by an assessment test	*Vice Principal for curriculum*	*USBN has not been implemented yet. Now because it is still class X it has not been implemented. The clear planning that we are now working on is related to the questions we are working on.*
2	UN replaced by general competency assessment, character survey, and environmental survey	*Vice Principal for curriculum*	*There is no more UN. And now there is a school exam. School exams are web-based so planning is certainly through teachers who are active in the subject area in MGMP, it is hoped that these teachers can compile questions in each class.* *So, if the school has anticipated from the beginning, there is socialization related to the Merdeka curriculum policy which is given not only when in grade 11 but from grade 10 it has started.*

No			
			They have been given information related to the exam but also about the curriculum itself. What they have to learn, what they have to understand so that later in grade 11 we hope that they are not surprised anymore because they already know that from the beginning of information about such a thing
3	Learning Implementation Plan (RPP)	*Vice Principal for curriculum*	*Now our school is category 2, which is an independent change school. Independent change means that all tools related to lesson plans or teaching modules are now called. It was told to be taken from the independent learning platform so teachers were told to take and adopt (exchange) with our school. We are asked to take it all, but the school adopts it, such as changing the name of the school and changing the name of the teacher in the our school.*
4	Students	*Vice Principal for curriculum*	*The matter of student admissions with the zoning system is based on the Branch of Service (CABDIN) activity meeting. Each school principal determines where the zoning of each school is. After discussing later, in the implementation, if there are any obstacles, they will be discussed again. The zoning itself is based on the nearest residence and here it is related to the Merdeka curriculum such as zoning. The closest school to the Merdeka curriculum, Yes, the students are from the nearest one.*

Obstacles in Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in Grade X Islamic Religious Education Subjects at Nusantara Islamic High School

In the process of implementing a Merdeka curriculum, there are certainly obstacles in its implementation. This was found in interviews with Islamic religious education teachers, the deputy principal for student affairs, and the deputy principal for curriculum. Islamic religious education teachers also feel obstacles such as the difficulty of making lesson plans in determining learning media and teachers have difficulty accessing the internet to open the independent learning platform. Although Islamic religious education teachers still adopt lesson plans from the independent learning platform, teachers are also required to be independent in making lesson plans or teaching modules.

The learning process of Islamic education teachers in implementing the Merdeka curriculum in Islamic Religious Education subjects found obstacles in determining learning strategies and media. Thus, PAI teachers use certain strategies and media repeatedly in every lesson. Meanwhile, in evaluating learning, the obstacle felt by Islamic education teachers is that students do not understand the material presented. Students who have done remedies still have not reached the desired value threshold.

Table 8. Obstacles in Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in Grade X Islamic Religious Education Subjects

No	Curriculum Components	Obstacles
1	Learning Materials	• *Difficulty in making lesson plans or teaching modules* • *The difficulty of using the Internet for access an independent learning platform*
2	Learning Strategy	• *Lack of updates on the use of learning strategies*
3	Learning Media	• *Lack of updates in the use of learning media* • *the difficulty of accessing the internet when Search for information related to the material.*
4	Learning Evaluation	• *students do not understand the material presented. Students still have low grades when they have performed remedial..*

From the results of interviews related to the independent learning program policy regarding obstacles in implementing the Merdeka curriculum at SMA Islam Nusantara as a follow-up to the implementation of the National Standard School Examination (USBN) and the National Examination (UN), it was concluded that the Learning Outcomes (CP) had not been achieved. Meanwhile, the obstacle in implementing the Learning Implementation Plan (RPP) is that the

teacher has difficulty determining the learning media to be used.

Another obstacle felt by teachers is the difficulty in accessing the Merdeka Belajar platform due to the limited internet network which causes a weak willingness of teachers to access the Merdeka Belajar platform. Meanwhile, in the implementation of the new student admission regulations (PPDB), no obstacles were found. According to the vice principal for student affairs, "The policy is very good and helps equalize students in determining schools".

Efforts Made in Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in Grade X Islamic Religious Education Subjects at Nusantara Islamic High School

In overcoming obstacles, of course, efforts need to be made so that the application of the Merdeka curriculum in Islamic Religious Education class X at SMA Islam Nusantara runs as expected, namely: 1) teachers are required to use various learning strategies, teaching methods, learning media, and learning resources, 2) in implementing a Merdeka curriculum in grade X Islamic Religious Education subjects at SMA Islam Nusantara Islamic education teachers, teachers use *Problem-Based Learning learning* strategies and use attractive learning media, namely *Audio-Visual learning media*.

Another effort made to implement the Merdeka curriculum is to assess students not only on the cognitive aspect, but also on the aspects of attendance, craftsmanship, skills, and activeness. Meanwhile, the efforts made by Islamic religious education teachers to improve Islamic religious education learning are by providing relevant material and by learning needs. In improving Islamic religious education learning, teachers also provide motivation, tell Islamic history, and re-explain the material presented.

SMA Islam Nusantara's support for the implementation of a Merdeka curriculum is to provide supporting facilities. One of the activities of the Merdeka curriculum structure is the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project. There are several projects carried out at SMA Islam Nusantara in class X, including entrepreneurship, democratic voice, and local wisdom.

Two activity projects have been implemented, namely democratic voice and entrepreneurship. In the democratic voice activity, the school provides tools for the election of the student council chairman and provides the needs of tools and materials related to the project that has been carried out, namely making fertilizer from eggshell waste. On the other hand, SMA Islam Nusantara also conducts In-House training and socialization of its implementation by holding meetings with other schools that have implemented the Merdeka curriculum. Another effort made by SMA Islam Nusantara in achieving the successful implementation of the Merdeka curriculum is to facilitate books and resources related to the lessons contained in the Merdeka curriculum.

CONCLUSSION | خاتمة

The implementation of the Merdeka curriculum in Islamic Religious Education subjects in class X at Nusantara Islamic High School, Islamic religious education teachers apply it according to the needs of students by using attractive learning media such as Audio-Visual media by displaying images and videos even though its implementation, Islamic religious education teachers always use the same media in learning.

In implementing the independent learning policy programs at SMA Islam Nusantara, a

planning process is carried out in the application in the middle class, namely grade 11 (mid-class). This is related to the implementation of USBN which is replaced with an assessment test and UN which is replaced with a general competency assessment, character survey, and environmental survey. Meanwhile, regarding lesson plans and student admissions (PPDB), SMA Islam Nusantara runs it by what the government wants, namely adopting the independent learning platform provided by the government so that teachers can access lesson plans that are by the Merdeka curriculum on the platform.

The obstacles felt by teachers at Nusantara Islamic High School in implementing the Merdeka curriculum include: Islamic religious educatio teachers rarely open the independent learning platform, teachers have difficulty accessing the internet, and the lack of provision of facilities that support students in learning such as the use of the same learning media for each lesson.

The efforts made in overcoming the obstacles to the application of the Merdeka curriculum in the subject of Islamic Religious Education and Ethics class X at SMA Islam Nusantara are PAI teachers using Problem-Based Learning learning strategies, using attractive learning media, namely Audio-Visual learning media and providing assessments to students in the aspects of attendance, craftsmanship, proficiency, and activeness.

SMA Islam Nusantara by supporting the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum provides facilities such as supporting one of the activities of the Merdeka curriculum structure, namely the Project for Strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile by providing the needs of tools and materials in the implementation process, conducting *In-Housetraining* and inviting schools that have implemented the Merdeka curriculum and finally facilitating books related to lessons contained in the Merdeka curriculum.

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