

Characteristics Of Learning In The Independent Learning Curriculum In Madrasah Ibtidaiyah

Emily R. Lawson^{*1}, Linda V. Harper².

¹ Department of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Northern Iowa, USA

² Faculty of Education, Griffith College Dublin, Ireland

e-mail: emily@gmail.com.

ABSTRACT. The independent learning curriculum is one of the steps chosen by the government as the restoration of education in Indonesia after the Covid 19 polemic several years ago. As learning development and innovation, the independent learning curriculum offers learning concepts namely independent thinking, independent innovation, independent independent and creative learning. There are three main elements that characterize the independent learning curriculum as will be described in this paper. These three characteristics include; 1) Pancasila character, in its application in the form of project-based learning for the development of soft skills and characters according to the profile of Pancasila students 2) Competency-based, namely focusing on essential material so that there is sufficient time for in-depth learning of basic competencies such as literacy and numeracy. 3) Flexible Learning, meaning flexibility for teachers to carry out differentiated learning according to the abilities of students and make adjustments to the context and local content.

Keywords: *Learning Characteristics, Independent Curriculum*



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INTRODUCTION

The development of science and technology (IPTEK) is very influential for human life in a number of countries including Indonesia. One aspect that is affected by the development of science and technology is the education aspect. The polemic of the covid-19 outbreak that has hit a number of countries, including Indonesia, has made the government issue an emergency status of the learning process that must be carried out online (online). Various learning technologies are also empowered when implementing this emergency learning (Fajri et al., 2022).

Online learning that relies on technology without direct interaction has several impacts including the lack of teacher guidance, to the emergence of boredom and decreased learning motivation due to the impact of teacher limitations to innovate and interact directly in delivering learning materials. Not to mention that students and parents of students are faced with limitations in accessing the use of platforms that support the learning process. Henrietta Fore, Executive Director of UNICEF stated. -At least one-third of children around the world - or 463 million children - have difficulty accessing distance learning after school was suspended due to COVID-19. The large number of children whose education has been interrupted for months with no certainty points to an emergency situation in the education sector. The consequences of this situation will be felt, both economically and by society, for decades to come (Anderson, 2021).

To anticipate the widening impact that occurs in pandemic learning on learning loss and learning gaps, the Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 719/P/2020 concerning Guidelines for Implementing the Curriculum in Education Units

in Special Conditions released in 2020, in essence, is a simplification of the national curriculum. Furthermore, the issuance of the Decree of the Minister of Education, Culture Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia Number 56 / M / 2022 concerning Guidelines for Curriculum Implementation in the Framework of Learning Recovery Development & Learning (2022) through Curriculum Implementation Merdeka.

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in madrasas is regulated by Decree of the Minister of Religion (KMA) No. 347 of 2022. The independent learning policy requires teachers to develop both the curriculum and the form of learning. Apart from acting as a learning resource, in independent learning the teacher is also a learning facilitator who is required to have professional, pedagogical, personal, and social skills¹⁰, as written in Article 10 paragraph (1) of Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers. Through these competencies, teachers can achieve the objectives of implementing an independent learning policy (Yeltriana et al., 2023).

It can be clarified that the concept of independent learning is to create a happy learning atmosphere without being burdened by achieving certain scores or grades for students in the learning process. Furthermore, it will be deepened regarding the characteristics of learning in the independent learning curriculum in the following discussion

METHOD

Research Methodology

This study employs a **qualitative research approach** using the **library research (literature review)** method (Cakranegara et al., 2022). The purpose of this research is to explore and analyze the characteristics of learning as outlined in the Independent Learning Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka) within the context of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Islamic elementary schools). The literature review method is used to gather, analyze, and synthesize relevant sources, including books, scientific journals, official government publications, and credible online sources.

1. Research Design

The research is **descriptive-qualitative**, aiming to provide an in-depth understanding of the distinctive features of learning processes under the Independent Learning Curriculum in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. The study focuses on describing key learning characteristics such as student-centeredness, differentiated instruction, project-based learning, and integration of religious and national values.

2. Data Sources

The primary data sources include:

1. Government regulations and policy documents related to the Independent Learning Curriculum (e.g., Kemendikbud guidelines).
2. Scientific articles and journals on curriculum development and Islamic elementary education.
3. Books and publications on educational theory and practice in the context of Indonesian madrasah.
4. Online databases such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and DOAJ.

3. Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through **document analysis**. The researcher selected and examined relevant literature published within the last 10 years, prioritizing peer-reviewed sources and official curriculum frameworks.

4. Data Analysis Techniques

The data were analyzed using **content analysis**, which involves the following steps:

1. Identifying and organizing the key themes and concepts related to the characteristics of learning in the Independent Curriculum.
2. Comparing findings across various sources to identify patterns, similarities, and differences.

3. Interpreting the implications of these characteristics for instructional practices in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah.

5. Validity and Reliability

To ensure the credibility of the findings, a **triangulation of sources** was applied, and only reputable references were included. The researcher also maintained a consistent focus on the research objectives throughout the analysis process.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology has launched the Prototype Curriculum as the Merdeka Curriculum and Merdeka Belajar Platform. The launch on February 11, 2022 in the Merdeka Learning Agenda Episode 15 was carried out after going through a series of public testing and socialization activities. The Merdeka Curriculum is an improvement in the education system and is implemented through a driving school program to advance the quality of learning in schools (Mustari, 2023).

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is not carried out simultaneously and massively, referring to policies that give schools flexibility in implementing the curriculum. At the elementary school level, it is carried out in grade 1 and grade 4. Because it is new to implementation, in preparation for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, of course, schools and teachers need to prepare well, starting from understanding the structure of the Merdeka Curriculum, the assessments in it, the learning outcomes and the flow of learning objectives, the implementation of projects and others (Mustari, 2023). The independent curriculum was developed as a curriculum framework that is more flexible, centers on fundamental material and develops students' uniqueness and abilities. It appears that the Merdeka Curriculum, which was officially presented by the Minister of Education and Culture in the Ministry of Education and Culture YouTube on February 11, 2021, is characterized by constructivism learning theory.

Constructivism is one of the streams derived from cognitive learning theory. The purpose of using the Constructivism approach in learning is to help improve student understanding. Constructivism is closely related to discovery learning and meaningful learning. Both of these learning methods are within the context of cognitive learning theory (Bris et al., 2021). Constructivism is learning that gives learners the freedom to build their own knowledge based on the design of the learning model made by the teacher. This is one of the characteristics of learning applied to the independent learning curriculum. Third learning through project activities for character development and competence Profile Pancasila Students through exploration of actual issues.

The implications for both teachers and students referring to some literature can be stated the meaning of independent learning in the learning process, namely freedom of thought, freedom to innovate, freedom to learn independently and creatively. The main assumption of independent learning is giving trust to teachers so that teachers feel free in carrying out learning. the learning atmosphere is more comfortable, teachers and students can be more relaxed in discussing, learning can be outside the classroom which not only listens to the teacher's explanation, but rather forms courage, independence, cleverness in socializing, civilized, polite, competence, and does not only rely on the ranking system which according to some surveys only disturbs children and parents.

The Merdeka Curriculum carries the concept of -Empowered Learning which is different from the 2013 curriculum, meaning that it gives freedom to schools, teachers and students to freely innovate, learn independently and creatively, where this freedom starts from the teacher as the driving force. A pleasant learning atmosphere, considering that there are many complaints from parents and students regarding learning that requires achieving minimum completeness scores, especially during the pandemic. In the Merdeka Curriculum, there is no longer a demand to achieve a minimum completeness score, but emphasizes quality learning for the realization of quality

students, with the profile of Pancasila students, having competence as Indonesian human resources.

The key to the success of the concept of an independent learning program is the consistency of all parties in implementing the program. This consistency is especially in implementing learning and evaluation. An independent learning program that has been well structured will not be achieved optimally if the implementers are not consistent in its implementation at school. For this reason, teachers must work hard to understand and master the concepts of the independent learning program and have the ability to develop a variety of materials, sources, media, and learning tools, as well as the use of various digital media platforms that can truly be in line with the demands of the independent learning program. Likewise also regarding the learning models, it must be pursued as much as possible so that participants students gain rich and meaningful learning experiences to develop their thinking abilities and skills.

Learning Characteristics of the Independent Learning Curriculum.

The main characteristics of the independent learning curriculum that support learning recovery are: 1) Project-based learning for soft skills and character development according to the Pancasila learner profile 2) Focus on essential material so that there is sufficient time for in-depth learning for basic competencies such as literacy and numeracy. 3) Flexibility for teachers to carry out differentiated learning according to the abilities of students and make adjustments to the context and local content (Nurhayati et al., 2022).

The following is a further review of the learning characteristics of the independent curriculum.

1. Project-Based Learning Appropriate to the Profile of Pancasila Learners

The Pancasila learner profile strengthening project is a project-based co-curricular activity that is structured and designed to strengthen efforts to achieve competence and character in accordance with the Pancasila learner profile based on the Graduate Competency Standards. The implementation of the Pancasila learner profile strengthening project is designed separately from intracurricular activities. The objectives, content, and series of project learning activities do not have to be associated with intracurricular objectives and subject matter. Schools can involve the participation of the community and / or the world of work to design and organize projects to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students. Project-based learning refers to contextual matters and interaction with the surrounding environment. Project-based learning is an option in the prototype curriculum which is considered capable of supporting the recovery of learning due to learning loss as character development in accordance with the Pancasila Learner Profile (Utari & Afendi, 2022).

Project-based learning or in short (PjBL) is formed on the basis of highly innovative learning theories (constructivism and experiential learning) with mesetting problems involving various disciplines to get the right solution. PjBL is one way that can be used by educators in an effort to help students to become competent in solving problems, even solving these problems can produce a product, so that students are ready to face the challenges ahead.

2. Competency-Based, Focus on Essential Materials

Competency-based learning includes the principles of: (1) Learner-centered (2) Focusing on mastery of competencies, (3) Specific learning objectives, (4) Learning emphasis on performance, (5) Learning is more individualized, (6) Interaction using multiple methods: active, problem solving and contextual, (7) The instructor functions more as a facilitator, (8) Oriented to individual needs, (9) Immediate feedback, (10) Using modules, (11) Learning in the field (practice), (12) Assessment criteria using benchmark references.

The application of competency-based learning in the Merdeka Curriculum is based on efficiency and effectiveness. The focus is adjusted to essential, relevant, and in-depth material so that students

have sufficient time to build creativity and innovation in achieving basic competencies. The competencies designed in the curriculum focus on improving literacy and numeracy (Rupia, 2022).

Literacy and numeracy hold important benefits for learners' lives. Numeracy itself is a skill that is needed in all aspects of life, whether at home, for work, including in society. Likewise with literacy, there is an increase in literacy so that a person is able to manage and interpret the knowledge and information received.

3. Flexibility for Teachers to Conduct Learning

Learning flexibility is needed to help students understand basic concepts. The purpose of flexibility in the curriculum is to make the curriculum more relevant and ready to respond to environmental dynamics and various changes and to provide space for learning that suits the local context and student needs. In the independent curriculum, differentiated learning is one of the strategies that teachers can use to meet the needs of each student. Differentiation is a teaching and learning process in which students learn subject matter based on their abilities, what they like, and their individual needs so that they are not frustrated and feel like failures during the learning process (Niemi, 2021).

There are four aspects of differentiated learning that are under the control of the teacher, including; content, process, product, and classroom learning environment or climate. Teachers can decide how these four elements will be incorporated into classroom learning. Teachers have the ability and opportunity to change the learning environment and climate, as well as the content, process, and product of each class based on the current profile of students on the journey.

CONCLUSION

The Ministry of Education and Culture has created an independent learning curriculum as one of the solutions in restoring the education sector in Indonesia. After the covid 19 pandemic a few years ago, the quality of learning has lagged behind (loss learning) for Some Indonesian children due to lack of access, or not having learning facilities. The independent learning policy requires teachers to develop both the curriculum and the form of learning. Apart from acting as a learning resource, in independent learning the teacher is also a learning facilitator who is required to have professional, pedagogical, personal, and social skills. Three advantages are promised in the Merdeka Curriculum. First, learning through project activities to develop the character and competence of the Pancasila Student Profile through exploration of actual issues Second, focus on essential material so that there is a more meaningful and enjoyable deepening and development of competencies. Third, the freedom of teachers to teach according to the stage of achievement and development of students and the authority of schools to develop and manage the curriculum.

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