

The Influence of School Management on The Implementation of The *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum

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Abstract:

This research aims to analyze the change of the curriculum into the Merdeka curriculum. The research uses quantitative methods. Data was collected by interviewing the principal and distributing questionnaires to teachers, curriculum development teams, and school management who prepared this curriculum to be developed and collaborated. The implications of this study affect various policies managed by schools and the addition of existing values in institutions, such as the character value of the Pancasila student profile. The results for the readiness variable for curriculum changes at SMPIT Nurul Islam are sufficient qualifications. The influence of school management from the results of the Fcount states that 76.4% of the X variable affects the Y variable. The school management has a strong influence on readiness in curriculum changes with results which can be interpreted that the more school management prepares carefully and sustainably, the more curriculum changes will get better and more successful so that it affects the quality of schools and the quality of learning.

Keywords: *Curriculum Change, Merdeka Curriculum, Merdeka Learning*

Abstrak:

Penelitian bertujuan ini untuk menganalisis perubahan kurikulum menjadi kurikulum Merdeka. Penelitian menggunakan metode kuantitatif. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan cara wawancara kepada Kepala Sekolah serta membagikan kuesioner kepada guru, tim pengembang kurikulum dan manajemen sekolah yang mempersiapkan kurikulum ini untuk dikembangkan dan dikolaborasikan. Implikasi dalam penelitian ini berpengaruh pada berbagai kebijakan yang dikelola oleh sekolah serta penambahan nilai-nilai yang ada pada lembaga seperti nilai karakter profil pelajar pancasila. Hasil untuk variabel kesiapan pada perubahan kurikulum pada SMPIT Nurul Islam termasuk dalam kualifikasi cukup. Adapun pengaruh dari manajemen sekolah dari hasil nilai Fhitung menyatakan bahwa 76,4% besarnya variabel X mempengaruhi variabel Y. Manajemen Sekolah memiliki pengaruh kuat dalam kesiapan dalam perubahan kurikulum dengan hasil yang dapat diartikan bahwa semakin manajemen sekolah mempersiapkan secara matang dan berkelanjutan maka perubahan kurikulum akan semakin baik dan berhasil sehingga mempengaruhi mutu sekolah dan mutu pembelajaran.

Kata Kunci: *Perubahan Kurikulum, Kurikulum Merdeka, Merdeka Belajar*

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INTRODUCTION

The curriculum as a design and learning tool that has been prepared and made by the government, as a guide in the implementation of learning regarding the objectives, content, and learning materials, as well as the methods used as guidelines for organizing learning activities in order to achieve national education goals (Lubis, 2020; Ansori, 2020; Nuraeni & Irawan, 2021). The previous curriculum, namely Curriculum 2013, which was implemented at SMPIT Nurul Islam from grades 7 to 9, has faced various problems teachers face in implementing the 2013 curriculum in the classroom. One of the problems faced begins with the teacher's lack of understanding, especially in mastering the material presented and demands to complete the material according to the specified time (Dohlen & Karvonen, 2018; Lähdesmäki & Maunula, 2022).

Many teachers complain that they cannot explore the methods used, so they only use the lecture method to deliver material (Sasmito et al., 2020; Fauzan et al., 2022). The second is that many curriculum programs have not been achieved, including the implementation of ICT-based learning development programs that should be carried out once every two weeks, only one time; the implementation of supervision cannot be carried out because it is online and is considered less than optimal by the teacher, the evaluation of learning outcomes is carried out online so that parents do not get input from the results of the evaluation, the implementation of additional lessons for grade 9 cannot be carried out because students are less motivated so that the number of students who attend is only 20% of the total students in grade 9. The third is inadequate facilities in reaching The 2013 curriculum due to the late arrival of textbooks, thus hampering learning and the internet network that experienced many disruptions during online learning.

This indicates that the quality of education in Indonesia is currently quite concerning (Rahtikawatie et al., 2021; Rosi et al., 2022; Habibi et al., 2022). This is also reinforced by the results of the student ability survey released by the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in December 2019 in Paris, which placed Indonesia in 72nd place out of 77 countries. Being in the sixth lowest rank, still losing to neighboring countries such as Brunei Darussalam and Malaysia. The Education Index from the Human Development Reports in 2017 also stated that Indonesia was in the seventh position in ASEAN with a score of 0.622. Singapore achieved the highest score (0.832), Brunei Darussalam (0.704), Malaysia (0.719), Thailand, and the Philippines both had a score of 0.661. In this case, it is emphasized that low education indicators cause weak competitiveness (Srijamdee & Pholphirul, 2020).

UNESCO data in the 2016 Global Education Monitoring (GEM) Report announced that the quality of education in Indonesia was ranked 10th out of 14 developing countries. Meanwhile, the quality of teachers as an essential part of education is ranked 14th out of 14 developing countries worldwide. This is

because 75% of schools in Indonesia do not meet the minimum education service standards. (Kemendikbud, 2018)

As for the context of global education, Indonesia's education system is the fourth largest in the world, after China, India, and the United States (OECD, 2015). Two ministries are responsible for administering the education system in Indonesia, namely the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) and the Ministry of Religion (Kemenag). Indonesia's two ministries' primary and secondary education system accommodates about 53 million students and about 3.4 million spread across 270 thousand schools. Therefore, the curriculum is a set of arrangements and plans regarding the objectives, content, subject matter, and methods used as guidelines for learning activities to achieve educational goals (Rahtikawatie et al., 2021; Ritonga et al., 2022).

According to Lundeberg and Levin (2003), teachers' perceptions and interpretations of the curriculum are rooted in the knowledge and experiences of the teachers themselves. The curriculum includes at least four main components: 1) The educational goals to be achieved; 2) Knowledge, sciences, data, activities, and experiences from everywhere; 3) Methods and methods of teaching and guidance that students follow to encourage them to the desired and designed goals; 4) The methods and methods of assessment used in measuring and assessing the results of the educational process designed in the curriculum (Langgulang, 2003; Adhimiy, 2018; Baharun, 2017; Hasanah, 2019).

Curriculum changes have both good and bad impacts on the quality of education, where the suitable impact is that students can learn by following the developments of an increasingly advanced era but are supported by principals, teachers, teaching staff, students, and even the institution itself (Hidayah et al., 2022; Johnston & Glancey, 2022; Kılıç & Saygılı, 2022). Where the principal must have good relations with his superiors and foster good relations with his subordinates, the teacher must also be qualified, meaning that the teacher must provide lessons that students can digest. Students must also be of quality, meaning that students can study well, study hard, and become students who are creative in every problem solving and critical in every lesson. The negative impact is that the quality of education decreases and the rapid changes in the curriculum cause new problems such as decreased student achievement; this is because students cannot adapt to the learning system in the new curriculum (Kurniawan, 2011).

Research conducted by Karwoska (2021) regarding curriculum changes. This study revealed that higher education institutions were driven by various factors to be involved in curriculum changes. The curriculum changes result from intensive financial, material, and human resource investments (Yang & Li, 2022). The complexity of planned curriculum changes and subsequent implementation challenges create the need for effective strategies to sustain these planned curriculum changes (Asamoah, 2022).

Research conducted by Arianto (2020), regarding Boarding School Curriculum Management, In this study, curriculum management is described

from planning and implementation to curriculum evaluation at Al-Furqon, which is integrated with schools and Islamic boarding schools (dormitory), where pesantren policies dominate in determining the decision. The sustainability of the curriculum will undoubtedly be influenced by several factors, both driving factors and inhibiting factors. The supporting factors for the curriculum are based on educators with master's degrees. The obstacle is that the national curriculum changes, affecting the policies and quality of school graduates.

Furthermore, the research conducted by Sayuti (2021) describes the results of research which state that the problems of curriculum management are the lack of time allocation, the ever-changing curriculum, too many students in one class, and the lack of educational infrastructure. Reniers et al. (2022) said that when engaging in a large-scale mapping project, many standard curriculum mapping recommendations apply, including the need to gain faculty buy-in and create a shared understanding of the terminology used in the mapping process. However, large-scale curriculum mapping projects also require other considerations in the planning, data collection, analysis, and dissemination phases so that the data can be used to inform curricular change.

In some of these studies, there are the same obstacles, namely the curriculum that often changes, which makes curriculum goals challenging to achieve both in terms of learning and other adjustments found in school stakeholders, namely school management, teachers and students, and even parents of students. The curriculum that has continued to change in the last five years has become a visible obstacle to educational institutions, from the publication of the 2013 curriculum, which calls for thematic learning. Turning into a covid emergency curriculum that adapts learning to the conditions of students in distance or online learning, the latest is the curriculum prototype, known as "*Kurikulum Merdeka*."

According to Elmore and Sykes (1992), when the curriculum is formulated, developed, and implemented in the school system to the classroom, the implementation mechanism affects learning practices, affecting student learning outcomes. Unfortunately, according to Elmore and Sykes (1992), there is no guarantee that teachers will implement curriculum policies according to government expectations. The impact of changing educational curricula does not only hurt students whose achievements are getting lower. This change can also impact schools. Namely, the goals or vision of a school will also be chaotic. For example, if a school has one goal or one vision, of course, the school will try to achieve its goals and fulfill a vision; of course, it takes a long time when they have focused on the vision that has been prepared for the curriculum suddenly is replaced of course the school must change the goal to be achieved. Maybe the government feels that changing the curriculum can bring about a better change in the quality of education, but in reality, this is not the case.

The curriculum set by the Ministry of Education and Culture Nadiem Makarim is "*Merdeka Belajar*," or independent learning, which is the

philosophy that is considered the most appropriate for the current change in learning methods. In the process of independent learning, students must be able to learn independently, be independent of the educational environment, and determine the method they will use for the learning process. Students need free learning, but in this curriculum change, teachers and school management must adapt and study it so that they can be severe in helping students and innovating in learning as expected.

Of course, in this curriculum change, the school management must consider the form of application and the right strategy if they decide to take a "*Kurikulum Merdeka*" or independent curriculum for learning in their schools (Kemendikbud, 2022). School management must be ready for curriculum changes so that the expected educational goals can be achieved and not repeat confusion from stakeholders and parents in implementing this independent curriculum because careful preparation is needed so that complaints that occur in the previous curriculum are the no longer independent curriculum. Based on this background, this research dives into the discussion of the analysis of Merdeka's curriculum change.

RESEARCH METHODS

The quantitative descriptive research method is understood as a method that aims to create a picture or descriptive of a situation objectively using numbers, starting from data collection, interpretation of the data and appearance and results (Arikunto, 2006) through questionnaires to teachers, curriculum development teams and school management who prepared this curriculum for development and collaboration. The location of the research at SMPIT Nurul Islam. In this study, the sources of information were the Principal, Teachers, Curriculum Development Team, and School Management at SMPIT Nurul Islam, totaling 22 people. The method used in this research is the descriptive verification method. Verification descriptive research method is used through proof of hypothesis testing from descriptive research results with statistical calculations to produce evidence that shows that the hypothesis is rejected or accepted (Sugiyono, 2013).

In this study, researchers took samples based on Suharsimi's opinion; if the subject is less than 100, it is better to take all of them so that the research is a population study. However, if the number of subjects is large, it can be taken 10% - 15% or 20% - 25% or more. The more respondents were taken, the better the data obtained. Based on data obtained from SMPIT Nurul Islam, there are 22 educators and education staff, which means the entire population is taken as a sample. This study uses a statistical calculation basis. Therefore each answer given by the respondent is given a score as follows;

Tabel 1: Respondent's Answer Score

Alternative Answer	Score
Strongly agree	5
Agree	4

Doubtful	3
Don't agree	2
Strongly Disagree	1

To determine the answer given by the respondent from the question or statement given by the researcher, first determine the minimum value, maximum value, interval, and distance between the intervals. As for determining these things are as follows:

- Minimum index value = minimum score x number of questions x number of respondents
- Maximum index value = maximum score x number of questions x number of respondents
- Interval = max index value - min index valued.
- Distance Interval = $\frac{\text{Interval}}{\text{Number of Tiers}}$

From the measurement of the formula, the category limits can be described on a continuum as follows:

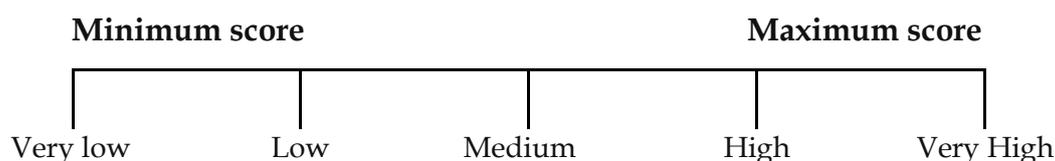


Figure 1: Category Limits Minimum and maximum values

Questionnaires were distributed via google form for teachers who were doing Work From Home (WFH) and paper and pencil for teachers who were doing Work From Office (WFO). The research was conducted in February - March 2022 since the independence curriculum policy began to be informed to the relevant Education Offices and Educational Institutions in the West Java region, especially in Cianjur.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Merdeka Belajar is a new policy program of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemendikbud RI) launched by the Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Anwar Makarim. Nadiem made the policy of independent learning not without reason. The reason is that the 2019 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) research shows that the assessment results of Indonesian students only occupy the sixth position from the bottom; For mathematics and literacy, Indonesia occupies the 74th position out of 79 countries. In response, Nadiem also made a breakthrough in assessing minimum abilities, including literacy, numeracy, and character surveys. Literacy measures not only the ability to read but also the ability to analyze the content of the reading and understand the concepts behind it. For numeracy skills, what is assessed is not mathematics but an assessment of the ability of students to apply numerical concepts in real life. One remaining aspect, namely

the Character Survey, is not a test but a search for the extent to which the values of character, religion, and Pancasila have been practiced by students (Mustaghfiro, 2020).

The essence of freedom of thought, according to Nadiem, must be preceded by teachers before they teach it to students. Nadiem said, in teacher competence at any level, without a translation process from the existing essential competencies and curriculum, there will never be learning that occurs. There are four new policy points of the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud, 2019), namely: 1) The National Examination (UN) will be replaced by the Minimum Competency Assessment and Character Survey. This assessment emphasizes literacy and numerical reasoning based on best practice PISA tests. Unlike the National Examination, which is held at the end of the education level, this assessment will be carried out in grades 4, 8, and 11. The results are expected to be input for educational institutions to improve the following learning process before students complete their education (Kemendikbud, 2019); 2) The National Standard School Examination (USBN) will be submitted to the school. According to the Ministry of Education (2019) and Culture, schools are given independence in determining the form of assessment, such as portfolios, writings, or other forms of assignments 3) Simplification of the Learning Implementation Plan (RPP).

School management can be seen, among others, from how the school's efforts in optimizing the performance of school organizations, teaching and learning processes, human resource management, and resource management and administration (Siyaya, 2022; Sakarina et al., 2022). Meanwhile, Bafadal (2003) explains that three characteristics of school management characterize and must be prioritized from others in the management, namely as follows: a) Authority and responsibility in decision making related to improving the quality of education, which is decentralized to stakeholders in the school.; b) The management domain for improving the quality of education covers the whole, staffing, finance, infrastructure, admissions, and new students; c) Although the overall management domain for improving the quality of education is decentralized to schools, regulations have been expanded to regulate the central control function over the overall implementation of government authorities and responsibilities.

Research on the influence of school management strategies on the independent learning curriculum. This research was conducted from January to March 2022. The population is the entire research subject. The population referred to in this study is the Principal, Curriculum Development Team, who are members of school management at SMPIT Nurul Islam, with as many as 22 people. Furthermore, the results of this study will be generalized. Therefore a representative sample is selected from the population. Sukardi (2004) says, "for social, educational, economic, and political research related to people who have heterogeneous characteristics, sampling, in addition to the requirements for the size of the sample, must meet the requirements of representativeness or represent all components of the population. In this study, the sampling

technique used random samples. A simple formula using an empirical formula is recommended by Issac & Michael in Riduwan (2007) as follows:

$$S = \frac{X^2NP(1 - P)}{d^2(N-1) + X^2P(1 - P)}$$

With a population of 31 people, the sample in this study amounted to 22 respondents. The data needed in this study consisted of two types of data, namely: 1) Primary data through interviews and distributing questionnaires to the Principal and Management Team. 2) Secondary data is obtained from the school documents of SMPIT Nurul Islam and data related to research. Questionnaires were used to collect objective data and qualitative information. This study used questionnaires to collect data after the data was collected and then processed using SPSS software.

Table 2: Correlation and regression test results

Correlation Coefficient	1,000	,468(**)	,175	,277	,428(**)	,656(**)	,375(*)
Sig. (2-tailed)		,002	,257	,071	,005	,000	,013
N	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Correlation Coefficient	,353*	1,000	,221	,421(**)	,468(**)	,475(**)	,544(**)
Sig. (2-tailed)	,002	-	,148	,005	,002	,000	,018

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

A value close to -1 or +1 indicates a strong relationship between the two variables, while an r value close to 0 indicates a weak relationship. The two variables have a unidirectional relationship if the correlation coefficient shows positive results. When variable X is high, the value of variable Y will also be high. Meanwhile, the two variables have an opposite relationship if the correlation coefficient is negative. If the value of variable X is high, then the value of variable Y is low or decreasing. In more detail, the following are the calculation results criteria to see the interpretation of the correlation between the two variables (Sarwono, 2006).

0 : There is no correlation between the two variables

>0 - 0.25 : Very weak correlation

>0.25 - 0.5 : Correlation is sufficient

>0.5 - 0.75 : Strong correlation

>0.75 - 0.99 : Robust correlation

1 : Correlation perfect positive relationship

-1 : The correlation of a perfect relationship is negative

Based on the Table of Correlations, the correlation coefficient calculates the magnitude of the influence between the variables of school management on

the independent learning curriculum. The correlation coefficient for the influence of school management on the independent learning curriculum is 0.468, positive and significant (enough). The correlation coefficient is 0.175, cheerful but not significant (very weak) for the influence of school management on curriculum application and the supporting factors.

Meanwhile, state the size of the contribution (contribution) of the X variable to the Y variable or the determinant coefficient. If r^2 equals 1, the number indicates that the regression line fits the data perfectly. On the other hand, the closer to zero the data is considered unsuitable.

The contribution of variable X to variable Y in management of curriculum changes using the determinant coefficient is $= r^2 \times 100\%$ or $0.764 \times 100\% = 76.4\%$ the remaining 23.6% is determined by other variables.

Tabel 3: Contribution of Variable X to Variable Y

Model.	R	R Square	R Adjusted R Square	Std Error of the Estimate
1	,874(a)	,764	,703	1,059

Management functions include planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating. The management function is then applied in school management. Thus there are 24 independent variables. The process of testing the hypothesis for each proposed research hypothesis is based on efforts to answer the size of the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The research hypothesis is: The management function in school management has a significant effect on teacher performance (Y)

To state the size of the contribution (contribution) of the X variable to the Y variable or the determinant coefficient $= r^2 \times 100\%$ or $0.836 \times 100\% = 83.6\%$, the remaining 16.4% is determined by other variables. The findings in this study reveal that there is an influence on the readiness of school management in the curriculum changes implemented at SMPIT Nurul Islam from the 2013 curriculum to the Merdeka curriculum. A carefully formulated and formulated curriculum will result in good learning and affect student learning outcomes and achievement.

According to Fathurrochman et al. (2022), schools are now facing much more significant challenges than before, especially in the era of communication and information that is rolling in the 21st century. Schools that can adapt to this era are certainly not ordinary schools but truly effective schools that can bring their graduates ready to face the changes that occur in the future, which can produce graduates with specific academic abilities, skills, attitudes, and mentality, as well as other personalities. Therefore, the appropriate school management is needed. Sabariah (2021) adds that school program planning, implementation, and evaluation are needed to realize the targets achieved. Furthermore, according to Annida & Syahrani (2022), in implementing school management, it is necessary to analyze the internal and external environment, especially in improving the quality of education and developing the curriculum.

This strengthens the theory developed by Elmore and Sykes (1992), which states that when the curriculum is formulated, developed, and implemented, the implementation affects the implementation of learning in the classroom, which in turn affects student learning outcomes. Furthermore, according to Setiawati (2022), the curriculum as the heart of education must be formulated and prepared by all those involved, namely all education stakeholders. Changes in the curriculum need to be addressed by making it a whip to obtain better results and compete in the world of education at the national and international levels. According to Farida & Sarif (2022), the curriculum developed must be able to combine the government curriculum and the local curriculum (school local wisdom) so that it is appropriate and can meet the needs of school residents, which is based on the dynamics of the development of science and technology.

CONCLUSION

Based on the description and analysis of the results of this study, it can be concluded that school management has a significant effect on the implementation of independent learning curriculum changes. The results for the readiness variable for curriculum changes at SMPIT Nurul Islam are sufficient qualifications. The influence of school management from the results of the F-count states that 76.4% of the X variable affects the Y variable. The school management has a strong influence on readiness in curriculum changes with results which can be interpreted that the more school management prepares carefully and sustainably, the more curriculum changes will get better and more successful so that it affects the quality of schools and the quality of learning.

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