

Implementation of Independent Learning Curriculum Management in Improving the Character of Learners at PKBM Mekar Asri Margorejo Surabaya

Amalia Kartika *, Lilik Huriyah

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya

Jl. Ahmad Yani No.117, Jemur Wonosari, Kec. Wonocolo, Surabaya, Jawa Timur 60237, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This research was based the management of the independent learning curriculum at PKBM Mekar Asri which has the potential to improve the character of students. The aim of this research is to find out more broadly about the implementation of Merdeka Belajar curriculum management, in this case related to improving the character of students in PKBM. The research method used is qualitative research with data collection techniques through observation, interviews and documentation. Technical data analysis is carried out through data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions. The results of this research show that the implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum improves the character of students at PPKBM Mekar Asri, namely through two activities, first, problem solving activities or the ability to solve problems by making the right decisions. Second, through P5 activities (Strengthening Pancasila Student Profile Project). Meanwhile, evaluation of the implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum is carried out once a year, namely at the end of every even semester.

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Corresponding Author:

Amalia Kartika
Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya
Email: amaliakartika217@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Management is one of the things that supports the quality level of education units, both formal and non-formal education. In the education unit, there are many management activities, one of which is curriculum management activities. Curriculum management activities include: (1) Curriculum planning is a design of learning opportunities to foster students towards the desired behavioral changes, (2) curriculum organization is a strategy that aims to facilitate students in learning lessons in order to achieve learning objectives, (3) curriculum implementation is a trial stage of curriculum implementation and management in accordance with planning and readjusted to field conditions and characteristics of students, (4) curriculum evaluation is a process of collecting, analyzing information and data to determine the extent to which students have achieved educational goals. (Ikram, 2023)

Improving the quality of education, especially in Indonesia, can be seen through the implementation of the curriculum because the curriculum is the core of education implementation. Based on Law Number 20 of 2003, the curriculum is a guideline for organizing learning activities to

achieve educational goals. Curriculum development at all levels and types of education is adjusted to the characteristics of each education unit, regional potential, and students. Merdeka Belajar Curriculum is a curriculum with diverse intracurricular learning, where the content presented to students will be more optimal with the aim that students can have enough time to explore concepts and strengthen competencies.(Azalea, 2023)

The Merdeka Belajar curriculum marks a major change in the history of the curriculum in Indonesia. With this curriculum, it gives a lot of authority to each institution to design learning according to the local context and according to needs. A number of educational institutions have implemented this Merdeka Curriculum, teachers and principals have even drawn pictures regarding the implementation of this Merdeka Curriculum. The implementation steps reflect a commitment to an improved student learning experience that is easy to understand and more effective. Learning in this Merdeka Curriculum focuses more on projects and differentiated approaches.(Ragil Nazar, Nasir, Bagea, & Abubakar, 2024)

The Merdeka Belajar curriculum has a different concept from the previous curriculum, which lies in the curriculum structure. The structure of the Merdeka Curriculum is divided into two activities, namely: 1) Intracurricular learning includes routine and scheduled activities in accordance with the learning content according to the subject and refers to learning outcomes and 2) The project of strengthening the profile of Pancasila students which aims to strengthen the achievement of the Pancasila student profile and refers to the Graduate Competency Standards.(Ikram, 2023) With this independent curriculum, it is hoped that it will be able to improve the character of students to be better and in accordance with the Pancasila precepts.

The project to strengthen the Pancasila student profile (P5) is one of the implementations of the Independent Learning Curriculum. Through this P5 project, it is used as an effort to build the character of students, with the hope that every student will grow and develop with education and character in order to create an advanced and prosperous nation. Learner character refers to the qualities or traits possessed by students, which influence their behavior and how they interact with the environment, friends, and teachers.(Yuniardi, 2023)

The purpose of this study is to find out more broadly about the implementation of Merdeka Belajar curriculum management, in this case related to improving the character of students at PKBM. This research also aims to find out curriculum management activities starting from planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating activities.

PKBM or Community Learning Activity Center is one proof of the existence of non-formal education in Indonesia. PKBM in Indonesia has rapid development and growth, this can be seen through the number of licenses submitted to the Education Office. Each PKBM in Indonesia has different characteristics tailored to the needs of the community for non-formal education services. Like other educational institutions, PKBM also follows the Merdeka Belajar curriculum. Minister of Education and Culture Nadiem Anwar Makarim (2019) explained that Merdeka Belajar is essentially to explore the greatest ability of educators and students to continue to innovate in developing the quality of learning independently.(Meiske, KA Rahman, & Rd. M. Ali, 2024)

PKBM Mekar Asri is one of the non-formal education institutions that has been running the Merdeka Curriculum since 2022. PKBM Mekar Asri is located at Jl. Margorejo Gg. III D No.73, Margorejo, Wonocolo sub-district, Surabaya, East Java 60238. The implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum has been applied to the study groups for package A, package B, and package C. With this independent learning curriculum, it is hoped that the character of its students can improve through the programs and activities in it. Based on the observations of researchers, at PKBM Mekar Asri there is a distinct advantage in improving the character of students, namely through the implementation of the independent learning curriculum. Therefore, the author is interested in digging deeper by conducting research at PKBM Mekar Asri with the research title "Implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum in Improving the Character of Learners at PKBM Mekar Asri Margorejo Surabaya".

METHOD

The research method used in this research is qualitative research. According to Sugiyono, qualitative research is research used on natural research objects, where researchers become key instruments and the results of this research are emphasized on meaning rather than generalization. Qualitative research methods are often referred to as naturalistic research methods because the research is used in natural conditions. This research is used on natural objects. Natural objects are objects that develop as they are and are not manipulated. (Sugiyono, 2019) This research was chosen because it makes it easier for researchers to dig up information in accordance with the research objectives.

Data collection techniques in this study are through (1) Observation, the observation carried out is frank observation where the researcher is frank with the data source that is doing research, (2) Interviews or interviews, Interviews in this study used semi-structured interviews in order to find more open problems so that informants could convey their opinions and ideas. The informant of this research is Waka Curriculum PKBM Mekar Asri, and (3) Research documentation in the form of photos, writings, and images. Primary data collection methods with semi-structured interviews and secondary data collection methods through data published through journal articles and books.

This research was conducted at PKBM (Community Learning Activity Center) Mekar Asri which is located in Margorejo IIID/73 Subdistrict Wonocolo Surabaya City. Data analysis is used through 3 stages, namely (1) Data reduction, at the data reduction stage the researcher prepares research questions, then the researcher makes observations or field observations and interviews with sources, (2) Presentation of data, at this stage the researcher presents the data that has been obtained through observations and interviews and then analyzed in descriptive form, (3) Drawing conclusions and verification, at this stage the researcher draws conclusions from the findings in the field so that it can answer the formulation of problems in the study.

RESULTS

Management

Management comes from the word to manage which means to organize or manage. Management can be defined as the activity of managing an institution or organization by leading or exercising leadership in an organization. Management is the science or art of managing, controlling, communicating, and utilizing resources in organizations by carrying out management functions (Planning, Organizing, Actuating, Controlling) in order to achieve effective and efficient organizational goals. Management functions as a coordination of all tasks and functions in educational institutions so that the implementation of activities does not overlap and does not waste time and money. (Angelya et al., 2022)

Management is a strategy to utilize the energy and thoughts of others to carry out activities that lead to the achievement of predetermined goals. Leadership techniques in management include directing, influencing, supervising, and organizing all components to achieve goals. Management in management is useful for utilizing the resources owned in an integrated and coordinated manner so as to achieve organizational or school goals. In this case, management is carried out by the principal who has the authority as a school manager by providing decisions that are determined by utilizing resources to achieve goals. (Sutisna & Effane, 2022) In management there are elements of management which are expressed by the term 6M, namely a) Men, human labor to achieve goals, b) Money, money used to achieve goals, c) Methods, methods to achieve goals, d) Materials, materials to achieve goals, e) Machines, tools to achieve goals, f) Market, the market used to sell the output produced. (Kediri, 2019)

In educational institutions, both formal and non-formal education, there are many management activities, including curriculum management. Curriculum management is a system of cooperative, comprehensive, systematic curriculum management in order to realize the achievement of curriculum goals. Curriculum management is developed in accordance with school-based management (MBS) where the head of the educational institution is given the power to manage the curriculum independently but still prioritizes achieving the goals, vision, mission of the institution and does not violate predetermined national policies. The scope of curriculum management is divided into 6

namely: activities related to teacher duties, activities related to student duties, activities related to teaching and learning, activities related to extracurricular activities, activities related to national exams, and activities related to guidance and counseling.(Ismiatun, Neliwati, & Ginting, 2022).

Independent Learning Curriculum

The Independent Learning Curriculum or what is often called the Independent Curriculum is a curriculum whose learning is intracurricular in nature which varies so that students are more optimal and have concepts and competency strengthening. In the independent curriculum, teachers have the flexibility to choose suitable and appropriate teaching materials for their students so that they can be adjusted to the interests of each student and can be adjusted to the learning needs of students. The independent curriculum also has a strengthening of the achievements of the Pancasila student profile, the content of which is developed according to the theme of the government.(Jannah, Irtifa, & Zahra, 2022)

Educational success can be achieved and achieved through the learning implementation process. Educational services are said to be successful if the implementation of the curriculum is in accordance with applicable regulations (Alfani et al., 2024). The implementation of the independent learning curriculum aims to improve graduate competencies, both soft skills and hard skills where these competencies are expected to be more prepared and relevant to the needs of the times. The independent learning curriculum also prepares graduates of the nation's future leaders who excel and have personality. The independent learning curriculum program is designed as a program by the Minister of Education and Culture which aims to encourage students to master various scientific fields to enter the world of work.(Yunita, Ahmad Zainuri, Ibrahim, Achmad Zulfi, 2023)

There are three important components in the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, namely (1) Committed to achieving goals. Learners with Merdeka Belajar curriculum must have high dedication and obligation to achieve their goals. (2) Be independent of the method. Learners with Merdeka Belajar curriculum must be able to choose ways based on available resources to achieve goals and to face every challenge. (3) Reflect. Learners with Merdeka Belajar curriculum must be able to reflect on personal life experiences and journeys, must be a mirror for themselves. Conduct self-assessment and ask for feedback from others to find out their learning needs.(Susilowati, 2022) Merdeka Belajar Curriculum has its own advantages, namely: a more flexible curriculum structure, using a variety of learning tools, utilizing digital technology. In addition, Merdeka Belajar Curriculum has other advantages such as being more focused and simple, more independent, and more interactive.(Darlis, Sinaga, Perkasyah, Sersanawawi, & Rahmah, 2022)

Learner Character

Character is often referred to as personality or morals. Character is a form of a person's personality that is seen through attitudes, behavior, words, actions, and ways of living in society. Student character is the behavior or habits of students that are developed and taught through learning activities with the right learning model at school. Character education learning is the same as moral education. There are three components of good character, namely: (1) Moral Knowledge, is a cognitive domain that must be understood by students as a guide and basis for careful thinking so that the actions taken are correct. (2) Moral Feeling, is the development of learners' character through feelings and conscience in accordance with character values such as responsibility, discipline, honesty, empathy and love of kindness. (3) Moral Action, is a person's behavior, attitude or action that exists because it is driven by his moral knowledge and feelings.(Koko Adya Winata, 2021)

Character education is needed to build learners' character. Character education is an activity to create a school environment that helps students develop ethics, responsibility through character learning models. In Indonesia, there are nine basic character pillars, namely: (1) Love for God and the universe and its contents, (2) Responsibility, discipline and independence, (3) Honesty, (4) Respect and courtesy, (5) Compassion, care and cooperation, (6) Confidence, creativity, hard work, and perseverance, (7) Justice and leadership, (8) Kindness and humility, (9) Tolerance, peace love, and unity (Kiska, Putri, Joydiana, & Oktarizka, 2023). Educators' strategies in improving the character of students can be through the following 3 things: using exemplary, using the principle of

habituation, and using the principle of awareness in acting in accordance with the character values that have been taught. (Sembiring, Yanti, Batubara, Maysarah, & Afany, 2022)

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PKBM Mekar Asri has implemented the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum since 2022 in accordance with government regulation PerMendikbud Number 12 of 2024. Apart from following the government, PKBM Mekar Asri uses the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum because by implementing the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, students are given freedom in learning according to their individual needs, the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum also makes tutors or educators more flexible in making Learning Implementation Plans (RPP). Actually, non-formal educational institutions such as PKBM Mekar Asri have been running independent learning long before the existence of this curriculum, because every student, whether pursuing package A, pursuing package B, or pursuing package C, is required to be able to study alone at home besides in the classroom. Students do not only depend on one book but can learn from other learning media without having to stick to the knowledge given by the teacher. Because in this Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, the teacher is only a facilitator.

At PKBM Mekar Asri, the implementation of Merdeka Belajar Curriculum is to develop and improve the character of students. Every lesson students are also taught about problem solving or the ability to solve problems by making the right decisions. Learners are taught to identify every problem that exists then look for alternative solutions and choose the best solution. This kind of teaching is usually taught to students before starting learning, aiming to equip students in solving any existing problems.

The application of Merdeka Belajar Curriculum in improving the character of students at PKBM Mekar Asri is designed through the P5 (Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project) in accordance with the Ministry of Education and Culture guidelines Number 56 of 2022. Learner character development is taken from the values when working on each project in P5. The P5 stage itself consists of four streams, namely introduction, contextualization, action and reflection. P5 at PKBM Mekar Asri is adapted to the local conditions of the institution where each lesson is able to develop the life skills of students according to their interests and talents. P5 consists of six dimensions, namely: 1) faith in God Almighty and noble character, 2) global diversity, 3) mutual cooperation, 4) independence, 5) critical reasoning, 6) creativity.

PKBM Mekar Asri implements P5 activities with the theme of Entrepreneurship and Skills. This activity is carried out in the odd semester. Entrepreneurship activities include: graphic design, barista, and computer. While the skill activities include: hand craft, and cooking class. Students at PKBM Mekar Asri who choose entrepreneurship usually sell their business products at the Sunday Bazaar or CFD. The assessment aspect of P5 Entrepreneurship and Skills learning is increasing the character of learners such as independence, mutual cooperation, and creativity.

One of the P5 activities at PKBM Mekar Asri is Hand Craft, this project consists of 4 stages, namely: First, the introduction stage to learners about this hand craft skill ranging from materials to how to make. Second, the contextual stage by linking the material explained by the real situation (problem). Third, the action stage or the implementation stage of the hand craft project. Fourth, the follow-up stage is by thinking about the follow-up related to the product that has been produced, whether this product is marketable or not. Every P5 learning in the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum cannot be separated from the role of AI technology or supporting applications such as Canva, Chat GPT and Capcut.

The implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum at PKBM Mekar Asri to improve the character of students has not been fully effective, but tutors continue to strive for the effectiveness of this curriculum. The effort is through learning community activities carried out by tutors every three months and usually bringing in outside sources. The challenge faced in implementing the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum is the mindset of children who go to school only to get a diploma not to seek knowledge. Therefore, PKBM Mekar Asri always evaluates every curriculum development activity carried out. This evaluation is carried out once a year at the end of even semester. This curriculum evaluation activity involves all tutors (teachers), the Head of Curriculum, the Head of Facilities and Infrastructure, and the Head of Student Affairs. This evaluation activity aims to

determine the extent of the success of the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum in improving students' character.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of Merdeka Belajar Curriculum in improving the character of students at PKBM Mekar Asri is through two activities, First, problem solving activities or the ability to solve problems by making the right decisions. Through this activity, it is hoped that it can shape the character of students who are tough and can solve problems appropriately. Second, through P5 activities (Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project). PKBM Mekar Asri implements P5 activities with the theme of Entrepreneurship and Skills. Entrepreneurship activities include: graphic design, barista, and computer. While the skill activities include: hand craft, and cooking class. Students at PKBM Mekar Asri who choose entrepreneurship usually sell their business products at the Sunday Bazaar or CFD (Car Free Day). The assessment aspect of P5 Entrepreneurship and Skills learning is the improvement of learners' character such as independence, mutual cooperation, and creativity. Through this P5 activity, students are expected to have independent, cooperative and creative characters. Evaluation of the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum is carried out once a year, namely at the end of even semester.

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