



THE INFLUENCE OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM ON THE ACHIEVEMENT AND LEARNING SPIRIT OF STUDENTS OF AL AZHAR MEDAN'S LEADING HIGH SCHOOL IN 2022/2023

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Abstract

The purpose of this essay is to provide a theoretical policy analysis of SMA Unggulan Al-Azhar Medan's "Kurikulum Merdeka" (Independent Curriculum). This paper looks at how the Merdeka Curriculum was developed and implemented in an attempt to raise the standard of instruction at SMA Unggulan Al-Azhar Medan using policy analysis and pertinent theoretical frameworks. In order to understand the goals of the policy, the tactics used, and its effects on the caliber of education, we gather and examine pertinent policy documents, literature evaluations, and pertinent research findings. Our research pinpoints important elements that affect the Merdeka Curriculum's success, including the function of educators and a well-organized curriculum. Furthermore, we identify implementation issues encountered while putting the Merdeka Curriculum into practice and offer suggestions for its advancement and enhancement. In addition to providing insights for education to improve the quality of learning at SMA Unggulan Al-Azhar Medan, this research advances our qualitative understanding of the Merdeka Curriculum as an educational strategy.

Keywords: *Quality of Learning, Policy Analysis, Independent Curriculum, and Theoretical Study Methods.*

INTRODUCTION

According to Ujang Cepi Barlian, et al. referring to Hasbulloh's opinion, the curriculum includes programs and policies in an educational institution or extension institution in order to achieve the goals, aspirations, and identity of the institution. Therefore, the implementation of the curriculum needs to be followed by elements that support the success of educational institutions. In addition, there are adequate facilities. Third, supporting infrastructure is available as a support. The existence of support for education through administrative staff, tutors, and library experts in the laboratory is the fourth. The existence of sufficient funds is the fifth factor, while good management is the sixth factor.

The seventh factor, the emergence of additional cultures such as religion, morals, citizenship, and others are the results of imaginary leadership that is transparent and responsible. The Independent Curriculum is a curriculum that offers a variety of learning in a diverse curriculum, which aims to ensure that students have enough time to...explore concepts in depth and optimize their abilities. Teachers have the authority to determine various teaching materials so that learning can be studied with the needs and attention of students. The Independent Curriculum gives teachers the authority to produce better learning according to the needs and learning situations of students. Several education experts have expressed their opinions on the Independent Curriculum and how important it is to examine this policy from a theoretical perspective. Darmawan and Winataputra (2020) stated that the Independent Curriculum aims to increase student sovereignty and provide student-centered learning by prioritizing empowerment and developing 21st century skills.

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Currently, the Ministry of Education and Culture is publishing the curriculum to all educational units throughout Indonesia. Not all schools have the same level of readiness, so this curriculum does not have to be implemented simultaneously. However, it is hoped that the independent curriculum can be implemented comprehensively at all levels of education, from elementary and junior high schools, to secondary and tertiary education. Decree of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology Number 162/M/2021 stipulates how the free curriculum can be implemented in driving schools. The Independent Curriculum is not implemented simultaneously or widely, in accordance with the policies set by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology gives educational units the freedom to implement the curriculum.

The Sekolah Penggerak (SP) Program supported by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology is one of the programs that supports the Independent Curriculum (IKM). Both programs have positive experiences in the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum (IKM) carried out to make KM a good application and the satisfaction of IKM learning is well identified and can be used as lessons in other educational units. Literacy in education is the main focus on improving reading and writing skills to increase knowledge. However, there is also a concept of physical literacy that includes motivation, self-confidence, physical skills, understanding, and appreciation for participation in physical activities throughout life. In the view of the Ministry of Education and Culture Tohir (2020), the concept of Merdeka Belajar is to provide freedom and sovereignty to educational institutions and be free from administrative influence.

The essence of Merdeka Belajar is to provide sovereignty to schools, teachers, and students to innovate, learn freely, and be creative (GTK, 2019). According to the third edition of the Great Indonesian Dictionary (2007: 910), achievement is the result of efforts and struggles that result in mastery of knowledge or skills that are usually assessed through tests or numbers by teachers. So it is important for teachers to plan carefully in order to expand students' learning opportunities and improve the quality of teaching. This requires adaptation in classroom settings, the application of teaching methods, learning strategies, and the attitudes and characteristics of teachers in managing learning.

Teachers play an important role as administrators of the learning process, serving as providers of facilities that strive to create effective learning situations, thereby facilitating the learning and teaching process, developing learning materials well, and improving students' abilities in understanding lessons and achieving goals. These are the 5 challenges that teachers will face in the independent learning program, such as: a) Leaving the comfort zone in the education system; b) Not having knowledge of the independent learning program; c) Limited available instructions; d) Teaching skills that must be improved; e) Lack of facilities and teacher quality. (Astini, 2022), What are the educational goals they expect. Therefore, there is a great need for tutors to inspire students to learn through teaching. Since learners are the main focus of learning, such processes must be carried out to attract their interest. Group learning activities help encourage active learning. Structured lesson plans in the classroom provide encouragement for active learning. However, opportunities to improve oral communication through small cooperative learning units remain.

Discussions between students and peers and the learning that students give to peers help them understand the subdivisions taught effectively. The availability of facilities and equipment is one of the supporters of the success of the educational unit program in carrying out instructions. It is a tool used to assess the quality of education in schools, which must be continuously improved. Bahri and Aswan Zain (2010:28) stated that the implementation of learning is an important process in forming a correlation between teachers and students that has training value. Effective communication occurs because the delivery of information is carried out clearly and precisely in accordance with the objectives that have been previously set. From observations made at Al-Azhar Medan's Leading High School. Although still new, Al-Azhar Medan's Leading High School has implemented a new curriculum, namely independent learning since being in grade XI. The correlation that has training



value is caused by the implementation of learning that is carried out and directed to achieve certain goals that have been implemented before implementation.

When teaching, teachers still feel tense because of the independent learning curriculum. They lack special training and still use the lecture method. When giving assessments, teachers have difficulty loading new grades. Grade XI students also admitted to being confused by the independent curriculum, and also still having difficulty in knowing the learning design. The independent learning curriculum allows students to freely determine the subject matter they like and then create designs that can produce works and selling points, so that students can become entrepreneurs. Not all students in high school have implemented the independent learning curriculum starting from grade XI.

Considering the previous information, the purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of the Independent Curriculum on student learning performance and motivation at Al-Azhar Medan's Leading High School. No matter what type and name of curriculum is applied in education, the ultimate goal remains the same, namely to achieve maximum educational outcomes and improve student learning achievement. However, education practitioners often face various obstacles because government curriculum policies often change when there is a change in officials. Teachers often face difficulties in implementing the curriculum when teaching as education personnel. This happens because the previous curriculum was not fully understood and implemented properly, now there is a new policy regarding curriculum changes.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research location was conducted at Al-Azhar Medan's Leading High School, which is estimated to be on August 16-24, 2024 through a questionnaire containing several questions and will be shared with students of Al-Azhar Medan's Leading High School. Tarjo (2019: 45) explains that population refers to all individuals who are used as samples, where they have the qualities and behaviors determined by the reviewer for research and analysis. The population in this study includes students of Al-Azhar Medan's Leading High School who have participated in filling out the questionnaire.

According to Margono (2014: 162), if the observation is carried out without interfering in the life of the observed subject and acting as a separate observer, it is called non-participant observation. The observation in this study was used to understand the impact of the independent curriculum on the achievement and learning motivation of students at Al-Azhar Medan's Leading High School. According to Margono (2014: 181), the collection of files beyond written backup is called a documentary study, which includes archives and books related to the research problem. In this study, researchers utilize various types of relevant documents. with our title, namely the influence of the independent curriculum on the achievements and enthusiasm for learning of students at Al-Azhar Medan's Leading High School.

The sources of this reviewer's files come from informants selected by purposive sampling. The object of this review is someone who understands and has knowledge about the problem being studied. This informant is known as a key reporter. This reviewer includes several students of the driving school in Medan who face problems related to the driving school on a daily basis. Several methods, namely observation, interviews, and documentation studies, were used to collect files. To ensure the validity of the files, several efforts were made: extending the file collection period, conducting continuous and serious observations, conducting triangulation, and involving colleagues to talk. This reviewer collects files to find out how the independent curriculum impacts students' achievement and desire to study at SMA Unggulan Al-Azhar Medan.

The method of collecting files used in this review is a questionnaire, which we will discuss further. In a reviewer, collecting files is very important. Difficulty in analyzing files can occur due to errors during the file collection process. The following are the methods that must be followed in collecting files: 1. The reviewer determines the location of the file collection. 2. The reviewer submits a request for permission to the school. 3. The reviewer creates an observation questionnaire that is

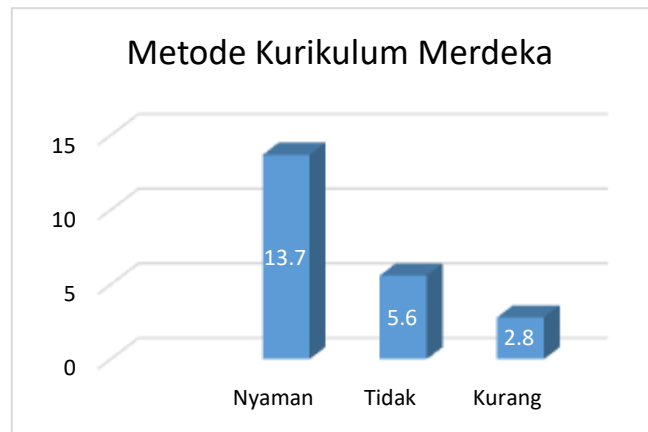
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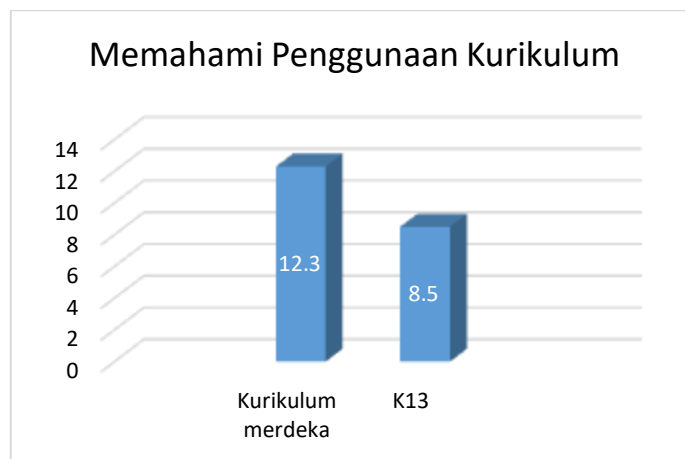
appropriate to the school environment. 4. The reviewer fills out the observation questionnaire on the person to be observed. 5. The reviewer collects the results of the observation questionnaire.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As we have studied, for Al-Azhar Medan's Leading High School, the index of student participation in equitable education in the independent curriculum, which is given to students from grade X to grade XII, is described as follows:

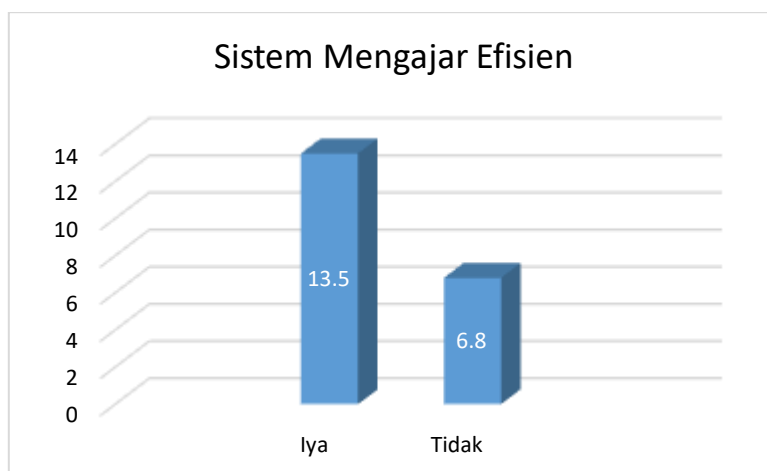


Based on the results of the study in the form of a questionnaire with the question whether the informants felt comfortable with the independent curriculum method, the assessment was carried out on the student participation index in the independent curriculum method in the "comfortable" category with a percentage of 13.7%, in the "no" category with a percentage of 5.6%, and in the "less" category with a percentage of 2.8%. So, from the diagram above on the student participation index in the independent curriculum method, it shows that students at Al-Azhar Medan's Leading High School feel comfortable in applying the independent learning curriculum in learning. Furthermore, the diagram on the index of how students respond to the use of the curriculum implemented at Al-Azhar Medan's Leading High School includes the following:



Students in the "comfortable" category received a percentage of 13.7%, students in the "no" category received a percentage of 5.6%, and students in the "less" category received a percentage of 2.8%. The results of the questions given to all sources from grades X to XII showed that students in

the "no" category had a high level of participation in the independent curriculum method. The diagram above shows the results



For the category "yes", which resulted in a percentage of 13.5%, and for the category "no", which resulted in a percentage of 6.8%, respectively, the student participation index in the efficient independent curriculum system got a percentage of 13.5% of the results collected from all students from grades X to XII.

CONCLUSION

The independent curriculum is in line with the policy method that emphasizes the importance of responsiveness and inclusion in curriculum change, and is an education policy that gives schools and masters the freedom to create a curriculum that suits the needs of students. pursuing a decent and perfect education. Not only does the independent curriculum of education increase students' intelligence, but the profile of strengthening Pancasila students also produces Indonesian students as students who are globally educated and behave in accordance with Pancasila values.

The results of the review above show that the independent learning curriculum at Al-Azhar Medan's Leading High School has a very good influence. This can be proven from the survey that has been distributed to all students. Thus, the independent learning curriculum at Al-Azhar Medan's Leading High School is implemented well. This curriculum provides critical, expressive, applicable, and progressive learning, which allows students to develop according to their potential and abilities.

SUGGESTION

The results of the research aboveshow that people involved in the research can provide some recommendations. One of them is the possibility that teachers will be more innovative and creative when implementing classroom learning in the independent learning curriculum. Schools, the Education Office, and the Central Ministry always provide training to teachers. It is hoped that teachers can help students do projects better.

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