

Curriculum Merdeka Analysis to Minimize Learning Loss in the Perspective of Education Practitioners

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ABSTRACT

Learning loss is a concept that is interpreted as not maximizing the results of the learning process that takes place in schools. The Kurikulum Merdeka (Independent Curriculum) is a program that is expected to restore learning. This research uses qualitative methods with a descriptive approach. This study used research instruments like interviews, literature reviews, and documentation to gather data from the field. Furthermore, triangulation is used to test the data's validity. As a result of this investigation, the infrastructure and facilities that are currently available are inadequate. The Kurikulum Merdeka is hindered by a variety of factors, including the first being the poor quality of human resources, the second being the lack of adequate infrastructure and learning resources, the third being the three teachers' comfort with the current curriculum, and the fourth being the lack of experience with independent learning.

Keywords: Education Practitioner Perspective, Learning Loss, Kurikulum Merdeka

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A. INTRODUCTION

During the Covid-19 pandemic, there have been many changes, including in the world of education in Indonesia and other countries. All elements of education are required to adapt to new situations, from the learning system, learning models and methods, the technology used, and others. The pattern of teaching and learning changing from face-to-face instruction in the classroom to Long Distance learning (PJJ) has a significant influence. Because no one is fully prepared to conduct distance learning, especially in developing nations, where it requires more effort from various aspects Hartaka, Ardiyani, & Suciani (2020) is hampered by inadequate infrastructures like inadequate electricity, Internet networks, difficult accessibility, and comparatively limited digital capabilities, it indirectly affects the intensity of learning (Febrianti et al., 2021). Additionally, it is consistent with the study of Adi et al. (2021) on the effects of distant learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, which claims that the lack of direct connection and the accessibility of learning resources are barriers to its implementation.

Afrilia, Arifina, Rahman, & Widyawati (2022) added that there is a digital divide between developed and developing nations since the Global South lacks a suitable digital infrastructure. If PJJ is backed by a strong internet connection, teachers and students are familiar with utilizing the various PJJ applications, and cell phones and internet quotas are accessible, it will be effective (Yaya, 2021). In contrast, children with poorly educated parents who live in rural areas tend to spend time playing and have unclear learning time (Musiroh, 2022). The diverse abilities of parents and socioeconomic conditions also affect children's learning at home (Cahyani et al., 2020). Thus, parents and families

affect children's daily activities, especially learning. Children who live in urban areas and have highly educated parents generally have a more balanced time division between learning and play activities, especially during PJJ (Kuyvenhoven & Boterman, 2021). The role of parents is significant in ensuring that students use their smartphones for PJJ (Dwi Puspita, 2021). Not to mention the unstable emotional psychology of students because they have not seen friends and teachers in school for a long time (isolation), psychological disruption can affect academic quality. Online learning, which differs from classroom learning, has an impact on students' enthusiasm for learning, according to Fadlilah (2020) as well as on how emotionally intelligent children become since their sources of inspiration and role models for controlling their attitudes alter. Students also experience motivational subtraction because they have to study at home instead of with their peers as they do in school. Students are not mature enough to respond to this pandemic condition, especially to learn independently (Wulandari et al., 2021). Likewise, overwhelmed parents guide their children to continue to be disciplined in learning PJJ. Because of the pandemic and PJJ, parents of students realize the role of a teacher in educating the nation's generations (Seemiller & Grace, 2017).

The issuance of the Surat Edaran Mendikbud Number 4 of 2020 concerning the Implementation of Education Policies in the Emergency Period of the Spread of Covid-19; since March 2020, the teaching and learning process by PJJ began carried out by schools (Agustina & Nandiyanto, 2021). However, in general, the 2020/2021 school year in semester 1 is only massively implemented in Indonesia. As explained in circular Letter Number 4, the Learning From Home Process is carried out by considering

the psychology of students in providing meaningful learning and adjusting to the access/facilities of each student (Haumahu, 2020). It is in line with the enactment of PP Number 21 of 2020 concerning Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) and the Determination of the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency. Distance learning is considered to be in line with the vision and mission of future learning in the era of the industrial revolution 4.0 and the era of society 5.0 (Traxler, 2018). Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Mendikbud Ristek) Nadiem Makarim explained that there are problems such as unreliable connectivity and devices. It is a fundamental problem, so implementing PJJ in various regions is very difficult (Pratiwi, 2021).

Policies related to distance learning are a swift and appropriate first step (Azhari & Fajri, 2022). For two years, students carry out online learning (*Daring*) so that the education unit provides a considerable role in deciding the spread of the corona virus (Utomo et al., 2020). However, educators, students and parents/guardians experience several obstacles in implementing learning. Learning from Home does not provide adequate, meaningful learning for students (Aristeidou & Cross, 2021). It is due to several perceived obstacles. First, the decreased motivation to learn is due to low motivation and focused guidance from teachers and parents (Alea et al., 2020). When teachers usually pay attention to them directly in class, their desire to learn is relatively more maintained. However, this learning awareness typically declines when there is no teacher present. Parents cannot concentrate on their children because they are already preoccupied with other tasks at home. Secondly, gaps develop due to striking contrast between kids with strong

educational backgrounds and complete parental support and others who are less ready to learn, lack of instructor and parental motivation, and a lack of drill questions. Students without gadgets and signal connectivity issues are additional issues (Barotun Mabaroh & Sugianti, 2021). In fact, this kind of thing is fundamental for the implementation of PJJ. Thus, the implementation of PJJ in various regions is complicated to do. Third, the role of teachers has changed significantly as a result of the epidemic, particularly in the areas of the economy and education. Learning loss is a consequence of the pandemic's impact on school closures in education. Based on RISE research, grade 3 elementary school students who missed six months of study could be 1.5 years behind. Grade 1 elementary school students who do not study within six months will experience lagging for up to 2.2 years. Indonesian students, until April 2021, have been undergoing PJJ for more than 13 months. We can imagine what kind of impact it will have on students in Indonesia. Of course, this impact is different for each child depending on how effective PJJ is and access to education during the pandemic for each child and school (Nugroho, 2020).

Due to the challenges that instructors encounter and the pressure to complete the curriculum, kids may not receive the learning materials in the most effective way (Widyanto. 2022). So many students felt unable to participate in learning during the pandemic, which eventually resulted in not continuing their education and waiting until the situation was normal (Nurulfa et al., 2021). Students experience daily stress as a result of losing their enthusiasm for learning. Stress in adolescence is brought on by one's self, family, school, and social surroundings (Jiang et al., 2021). According to one study,

poorly planned modifications to a student's learning environment resulted in increased levels of stress, including stress related to learning, alcoholism, depression, and academic failure. The same results were also shown (Sugiyanto & Mulyono, 2021) that online learning during the pandemic led to students feeling stressed and that this habit of online learning led to students feeling bored and lazy, as well as a decrease in interest due to distractions that may occur in the routine of online learning.

Learning loss is a concept that is interpreted as not maximizing the results of the learning process that takes place at school (Saputra, 2022). Learning loss affects poor student outcomes due to the lack of quality and facilities to conduct online learning (Donnelly & Patrinos, 2022). It occurs due to prolonged gaps or the unsustainability of the educational process (Noviantari & Faridhoh, 2021). It is brought on by interference with formal schooling or the learning process. The study's findings indicated three primary issues that could lead to learning loss, including a decline in learning motivation, the potential for dropping out of school, and rising inequality (Rizaldi et al., 2022). Learning loss is also defined as a phenomenon in children from the lower middle class who cannot access gadgets and the internet to learn. Nadim Makarim, Minister of Education and Culture, also defines learning loss as a generation that loses the opportunity to add knowledge due to delays in teaching and learning.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, face-to-face educational activities in schools have shifted to being carried out online or online (Anam, 2021). UKFIET also stated that this condition is one of the triggers for learning loss in some students. It happens due to the absence of the role and

supervision of teachers face-to-face who can guide and instruct students during learning activities. As for the Characteristics of Learning Loss: Decreased Learning Spirit (Donnelly & Patrinos, 2022): it may be an early symptom of learning loss if students lose interest in learning. A child who typically participates in learning activities at school and interacts with peers and teachers in person will grow weary of online learning over time. Assignment-Related Laziness and Neglect: It is usually inevitable for students to experience periods of assignment-related ignorance or neglect. The occurrence is typical. However, if the student continues to engage in this misconduct despite receiving a warning, it may be a sign of learning loss. Grade Graph: The decline in student grades is a domino effect of the learning loss characteristics mentioned above. However, the grade graph of students experiencing learning loss sometimes decreases. The student's grades may increase even though the results of student work are not optimal. The assessment mechanism during the pandemic is generally slightly different from during in-person schooling. Nowadays, children tend to be able to get high scores easily (Latifah & Supena, 2021).

Considering this, the government continues to review and produce policies that can form an adjustment curriculum during the pandemic that makes us aware of the uniqueness of each student. Therefore, Nadiem Makarim, Minister of Education and Culture, issued a policy relating to the Independent Curriculum as a development rather than curriculum-13 after realizing that learning loss has not yet been effectively solved by choosing the 3 curricula offered. The Kurikulum Merdeka Program puts forward the concept of "Merdeka Belajar" for students, designed to help recover from the learning crisis due to the COVID-19

pandemic (Hattarina et al., 2022). The use of technology and the need for competence in today's era is one of the foundations for developing the Kurikulum Merdeka. The increasingly massive use of technology and other programs planned by the government, such as Mobilizing Schools, Mobilizing Teachers, SMK Centers of Excellence (SMK-PK), and so on, are one of the efforts made by the government in implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka for the recovery of the learning crisis.

The Kurikulum Merdeka according to Kholik (2022) program is expected to restore learning, which offers 3 characteristics, including project-based learning for developing soft skills and characteristics following the profile of "Pelajar Pancasila", learning on essential materials and a more flexible curriculum structure. In addition, the Kurikulum Merdeka wants to make breakthroughs that become a barrier between scientific fields. (Sopiansyah et al., 2022) further explained that the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka in several schools was carried out in the first year quite well, then developed in many schools this year so that in its implementation, the Kurikulum Merdeka, after being analyzed, was better and following Indonesian culture than the 2013 curriculum. Given that today's increasingly complex life emphasizes more comprehensive aspects of knowledge than ever, the refinements are diverse in interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary sciences. As explained (Zhao, 2022), the research showed that the quality of student learning outcomes is maintained and avoids learning loss in online learning by preparing an independent learning model and assessing and evaluating student learning outcomes.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Learning Loss

According to the Education and Development Forum (2020), learning loss is students' loss of knowledge and skills due to extended gaps in teaching or the inadequacy of the educational system. Learning Lost is the loss of information and skills experienced by a student due to numerous events, either explicitly or generally. The phrase is frequently used to refer to an academic setback caused by ongoing inequity or an unfair educational system. Children from the lower middle class who are unable to use and access technology and the internet for learning are said to have a phenomenon known as "Learning Lost."

2. Curriculum Merdeka

Merdeka Belajar is part of the new policy set by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemendikbud RI) (Hidayatullah, 2021). Nadiem contends that before being explained to or applied to students, the curricular policy relating to independent learning needs to be implemented among educators beforehand. Additionally, Nadiem added that learning would only take place through the process of translating already-existing fundamental competencies directly tied to the curriculum. In the future, the learning system will also have a different nuance, namely that previous learning always used the classroom. A different atmosphere, such as learning outside the classroom, will be tried to be realized in this independent learning curriculum. In addition, the emphasis of the learning process is more emphasis on building student character. It is used in teaching and learning activities with discussion techniques that do not make students feel psychologically threatened so that educators and students can communicate effectively.

However, even in this application of learning, the proper way to acquire competencies is still remembered. Therefore, this autonomous learning curriculum relates to how a teacher can present the material by referring to the development of the student's character.

Curriculum development is expected to be a more flexible design that focuses on essential project-based materials and can develop students' skills. The Kurikulum Merdeka is prepared based on national education goals and standards and supports the growth and development of the "Pelajar Pancasila" profile. The flexibility and focus of essential project-based materials are expected to be independent for each academic unit. There are three significant characteristics of the Kurikulum Merdeka framework, namely:

- a. The learning that will be designed is project-based learning with the main focus on developing soft skills and "Pelajar Pancasila" profiles.
- b. Learning focuses on essential materials so that it is expected that there will be sufficient time to develop basic competencies such as literacy and numeracy.
- c. Teachers have high flexibility in presenting differing learning according to student needs and conducting contextual and value-charged learning.

The description of the Kurikulum Merdeka, which is also known as a new paradigm curriculum according to Fajar Pendidikan (2021) in (Manalu, 2022) includes:

- a. The Kurikulum Merdeka Structure is developed based on the value of the "Pelajar Pancasila" profile and the development of content standards, processes, and assessments as learning outcomes, learning principles and

learning achievement.

- b. The curriculum provides flexibility in developing work projects as a support for the competencies following the vision and mission of the school.
- c. The curriculum does not separate from three domains: knowledge, skills and attitudes. However, it becomes a series of units called learning outcomes so that there is a continuous process of developing student competencies.
- d. Thematic or project-based learning process.
- e. To allow the education unit to make adjustments and advancements in accordance with demands and available facilities, the quantity of lesson load is determined over the course of a year rather than a single week.
- f. Schools are free to develop learning models focusing on collaboration between lessons and project-based.
- g. Implementing projects based on a national character that aims to strengthen the "Pelajar Pancasila" profile.
- h. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) learning must be carried out from the junior high school level.
- i. Learning at the high school level and specialization will again be carried out in classes XI and XII.

Each academic unit must adapt to and implement a new paradigm for viewing learning in students' favor. There are several freedoms for academic units to create the operational curriculum of each school, taking into consideration each peculiarity. So that the learning outcomes created can always be in the student's best interests, this must first be prepared by diagnosing and mapping their needs. The principal must prepare the school's operational curriculum,

which is the reference for learning outcomes, with a good understanding of the paradigm that is the primary goal of the Independent Curriculum. The principal, as the leader of school management, must be a person who fully understands the meaning and meaning of Merdeka Belajar, which is the basis and foundation of the Kurikulum Merdeka.

3. Perspective

Perspective is a person's skill in organizing an observation. These skills include the ability to distinguish, group, and focus. Therefore, people may have different perceptions even though the subjects are the same. It may be due to differences in the values and differences in the characteristics of each individual.

C. RESEARCH METHODES

This research uses qualitative methods with a descriptive approach. Qualitative research methods are used to examine the condition of natural objects, where researchers are the key instrument, data collection techniques are carried out through triangulation, data analysis is inductive, and qualitative research results emphasize meaning rather than generalization (Gerring, 2017). This research will produce a description of the problems identified.

Analyze the information collected using four methods: data collection, condensation, data presentation and drawing conclusions. 1) Collecting data from the field using research instruments such as interviews, literature studies and documentation. Data collection is carried out by going directly to the field and conducting interviews with informants related to independent curriculum analysis to minimize learning loss from educational practitioners' perspectives. 2) Data condensation is carried out by filtering the

data collection results from interviews and documentation. Researchers discard interview results from informants considered off-topic and inconsistent with the theme's structure, especially concerning the analysis of independent curricula in minimizing learning loss from the perspective of educational practitioners. 3) Data presentation is an activity to collect information that discusses relationships and activities during research. The presentation of data has the purpose of making the reader understand what is happening and analyze the data that has been collected and discuss according to his understanding. 4) drawing conclusions the first research data is carried out by collecting data, conducting quality analysis by exploring different meanings, recording in regulating cause and effect and making conclusions following the results of the study.

Furthermore, a test of the validity of the data through triangulation is carried out. The use of triangulation is essential in a study. Triangulation is a data credibility tester that accurately checks data obtained from various sources at different times (Natow, 2020). The triangulation technique used is time triangulation. So researchers have to collect data at different times with the same informant until the results are the same

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Education Practitioner's Perspective on the Independent Curriculum

Perception is a key to seeing how good and bad the quality of a product is because perception is a clear genuine expression of the executor or user of a product so that it becomes a reference for producers in developing their products in the future and becomes a reference to potential users of the product. The results of research conducted by researchers on Kurikulum

Merdeka analysis to minimize learning loss from the perspective of education practitioners are as follows:

Speaking of comprehension, it's possible that some instructors are already aware of and understand the autonomous learning curriculum that was introduced by Minister of Education and Culture Nadiem Makarim in a speech on National Teacher's Day, November 25, 2019. Early on in his career, he had already introduced a new strategy on Indonesia's educational system, which of course led to reactions from academic institutions and others. According to the principal's explanation, the researcher's interview with him produced the following results.

"In my opinion, the perception of an independent learning curriculum comes from the fact that it was a government concept, and the government had to have considered both the advantages and disadvantages. It implies that if anything has been ordered, it must have been carried out because it has been decided, and we must be considerate. A large number of professionals have undoubtedly considered it. It must be embraced." Principal S was interviewed.

In the interview results, Lecturer E additionally expressed the following additional viewpoints:

"In my opinion, the concept of an independent learning curriculum, if you look at the situation of student learning conditions in urban and rural areas, not everything will go well because of many factors such as student facilities in cities with villages that are still limited to various other things." (Interview with Lecturer E)

Furthermore, the following is the explanation presented by Teacher S in the interview:

"As a social studies teacher in implementing the independent learning

curriculum, I follow the concept that will be initiated by the Minister of Education first, and as much as possible, I must understand the curriculum." (Interview with Teacher S)

Based on the interview results above, the concept in the independent learning curriculum is that there are educational practitioners who want to participate in socialization first, and there are also those who have implemented the concept independently. The existence of an independent learning curriculum initiated by the minister of education and culture Nadiem Makarim shows a reduction in the curriculum implementation, especially in the learning process. The concept of independent learning between teachers and students is the subject of the learning system. It denotes that teachers and students work together to seek the truth rather than using the teacher as a source of information. The explanation provided by Teacher S in the findings of the researchers' interviews is as follows.

"This means that what is planned by the government now is that the first is that the absence of national examinations is replaced with one form called assessment, then the second one in the admission of new students takes precedence over that zoning one, then the simplification of the RPP one sheet." (Interview with Teacher S)

Lecturer E also conveyed the same thing in the interview results.

"The concept of independent learning means that the student is no longer burdened with various problems ranging from the learning process to the cost and so on." (Interview with Lecturer E)

Furthermore, Principal S also conveyed the same thing in the interview results.

"Based on the explanation from the Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem

Makarim, the first thing I caught was that the national examination in 2020 was abolished and then the RPP concept was shortened to one sheet, and then the plan that the concept of independent learning was applied in the educational environment was not focused on teachers alone as learners, but students as learning objects was able to develop their creativity in creating new results in the world of education." (Interview with Principal S)

Based on the results of the interview above, it is explained that the understanding of the application of independent learning is based on an explanation from the Minister of Education and Culture Nadia Makarim that the application of independent learning changes some structures of the learning process where UN or national examinations are eliminated. The concept of RPP is shortened, and the learning concept not only focuses on teachers but also focuses on students as learning objects in order to be able to develop creativity in working in the field of education.

Learning activities are carried out constructively to achieve a learning achievement in an independent curriculum (Sailer et al., 2021). Constructivism learning is a learning activity that prioritizes the development of logic and conceptual learners. Through this learning theory, children can create or create work and build something that has been learned. The following is the explanation submitted by Lecturer E in the results of interviews that the researcher has conducted.

"There are indeed some educational practitioners who, in the learning process, use the theory of constructivism learning. This follows the curriculum newly issued by the Minister of Education and Culture. In addition, I also think that it will help students understand learning materials more deeply, hone students' abilities in asking questions

and finding solutions, students can understand concepts comprehensively and become active thinkers." (Interview with Lecturer E)

Furthermore, the interview results with Principal S are explained as follows.

"In my opinion, as the principal here, some teachers already understand the independent learning curriculum, but there are still some teachers who have not applied the theory." (Interview with Principal S)

The following is the explanation Teacher S gave in the results of interviews that researchers conducted.

"In delivering the material in the independent learning curriculum, I will use it via the internet, and the way of learning will be more relaxed with nuances outside and in the classroom." (Interview with Teacher S)

Based on the interview results, the perception of education practitioners in implementing the independent learning curriculum will be better to use the theory of constructivism in learning. However, most teachers do not fully understand the independent learning curriculum because they still use the old one.

2. Obstacles in the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum

A new policy and rule must have obstacles and constraints when implemented. Education practitioners also face the same problem in implementing the independent learning curriculum. There are obstacles and challenges. The problems that arise, of course, come from external and internal or from the educational community itself. The following is an explanation the Principal of S delivered regarding the obstacles to implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka.

"Obstacles definitely exist. We must respond well, find a solution to each

obstacle, and use the supporting factors to the maximum. The main inhibiting factor is financial problems. Other obstacles may not be all going well." (Interview with Principal S)

The same thing was expressed by Teacher S in the interview results as follows.

"The issue with students is what keeps us, teachers, from moving forward. To improve students' morals and develop a charitable character, we give character education a high priority following the goals of the autonomous learning curriculum. Since the student attendance list is now electronically maintained using a card, each student must complete the attendance list before entering class and after leaving school by linking the card to the device provided." (Interview with Teacher S)

Furthermore, it is explained by Lecturer E in the results of interviews that researchers have conducted as follows.

"The inhibiting factor in policy definitely exist. Talking about the bottleneck is from a financial point of view because human resources are all supportive without anything making it difficult." (Interview with Lecturer E)

Based on the results of interviews in the field, the inhibiting factor in implementing the independent learning curriculum lies in human resources so that it anchors every preparation and policy that has been carried out. One of the triumphs of education, particularly in learning, is the infrastructure and facilities. Unfortunately, lacking suitable facilities is a barrier to employing digitally based media and educational resources. In response to the findings of the researchers' interviews, Teacher S provided the following explanation.

"The obstacles teachers face in using digital-based media and teaching materials

are that the facilities and infrastructure provided by the school are inadequate, such as the availability of computers, LCDs, projectors and unstable internet networks, especially during the learning process." (Interview with Teacher S)

Lecturer E also conveyed the same thing in the interviews that researchers conducted as follows.

"In terms of facilities and infrastructure, this is still lacking, so to support the learning process in this digital world. Some practitioners still use ordinary methods." (Interview with Lecturer E)

Furthermore, it was also conveyed by Principal S in the interview results as follows.

"In my opinion, although the facilities and infrastructure in the middle school where I teach are limited, some teachers should use it properly. Therefore, limited facilities and infrastructure are obstacles in learning, especially in using digital-based media and teaching materials." (Interview with Principal S)

Based on the interview above, the author concludes that the existing facilities and infrastructure are indeed limited, so the learning process always uses the learning method of lectures and discussions. Even so, education practitioners still try to use facilities and infrastructure to implement the independent learning curriculum

E. CONCLUSION

Education professionals positively view the Merdeka Belajar curriculum and give it high marks. The outcomes of the conducted interviews show it. The study's findings further clarified the significance of extensive socializing for all parties at the academic unit level so that expectations can be correctly followed during curriculum implementation. The lack of adequate

infrastructure, inadequate learning facilities and resources, the three teachers' comfort with outdated references, and their lack of expertise in independent learning are only a few of the issues that limit the autonomous curriculum.

F. AUTHOR'S NOTE

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The author confirms that the data and content of the article are free from plagiarism.

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