
**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CURRICULUM MERDEKA IN REALIZING
QUALITY EDUCATION AT MADRASAH IBTIDAIYAH AL-QOMAR
CLASS IV KUALA SECAPAH MEMPAWAH HILIR**

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Abstract

This article explores the implementation of the curriculum merdeka (Kurikulum Merdeka) in realizing quality education at Madrasah Ibtidaiyyah (MI) Al-Qomar, Grade IV, Kuala Secapah, Mempawah Hilir. The study employs a qualitative descriptive method, gathering data through classroom observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Results reveal that while teachers and students demonstrate strong motivation and commitment, the implementation is still at an early stage. Teachers face challenges in preparing teaching modules, adapting differentiated instruction, and applying authentic assessments, while students struggle with reflective and independent tasks. Moreover, technology integration remains minimal despite the availability of infrastructure. Supporting factors include high teacher dedication, alignment with the school's religious-educational vision, and active participation in social and spiritual programs. The study emphasizes the importance of continuous professional development, mentoring, and digital literacy to optimize the curriculum merdeka. Hese findings offer valuable insights for Islamic elementary schools and broader educational reform in Indonesia.

Keywords: Curriculum Merdeka, Quality Education, and Madrasah Ibtidaiyyah.

A. Introduction

The curriculum is a comprehensive framework that encompasses various aspects required for a school's learning process, from the curriculum's structure and assessment system to logical and realistic assessment techniques that are understandable to students and parents. The Decree of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia Number 56/M/2022 concerning Guidelines for curriculum merdeka within the Framework of Restorative Learning and Learning Development in 2022 is a form of full support for curriculum improvement in Indonesia. Achieving a Sovereign, Independent, Advanced, and

Personalized Indonesia by Embodying Pancasila. Rahman, Faisal & Babo (2023:17) said that. Students are critical thinkers, creative, independent, faithful, devoted to God Almighty, have noble character, cooperate, and achieve global diversity.

The curriculum merdeka is a flexible educational framework that aims to improve the quality of learning by providing autonomy and meaning for students and enabling them to be independent, namely the ability to take full responsibility for their learning and be able to take initiative in addressing problems and challenges encountered during the learning process. This approach aims to improve the quality of education by aligning learning with student interests and their real-world applications. The curriculum merdeka is designed to give students and teachers greater freedom in the learning process, encouraging creativity and initiative Ananda & Hudaidah (2021: 45) stated that, the approach allows for a more personalized and project-based learning experience and develops skills relevant to their interests and future careers.

The results of the researcher's initial observations conducted on January 10, 2025 at MI Al-Qomar Kuala Secapah Mempawah Hilir, the school has implemented a new curriculum, namely the curriculum merdeka although this curriculum is still relatively new, at MI Al-Qomar Kuala Secapah Mempawah it has been implemented in grades I and IV. During learning (1. Teachers must adapt to the independent curriculum, (2. Teachers must learn curriculum merdeka because subject teachers still carry out learning with lecture and P5 methods (3. Teachers are also still confused in filling in the value format in a new way, students in grades I and VI feel confused with the curriculum merdeka students are still unable to understand learning in the independent curriculum, projects in the curriculum merdeka are also still confusing students. Based on the background explanation, the researcher wants to conduct research on "Implementation of the curriculum merdeka in realizing quality education in MI Al-Qomar class IV Kuala Secapah Mempawah Hilir".

At Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Al-Qomar, the curriculum merdeka has been piloted in Grades I and IV. Early findings suggest that teachers remain in the adaptation phase, struggling with lesson planning, reflective assessment, and project-based activities. Students, while enthusiastic about interactive and creative experiences, still face

challenges in independent and critical thinking tasks. These issues highlight the need for further exploration of how the curriculum merdeka is practiced in local schools, especially Islamic institutions that integrate general and religious education. This study, therefore, aims to investigate the implementation of the curriculum merdeka in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Al-Qomar, identifying its strengths, weaknesses, and implications for quality education.

B. Research Method

This research applied a qualitative descriptive. Qualitative research also discusses accurately selecting people or settings that best help researchers understand the problem and research topic Creswell (2011:12) stated that, qualitative research requires an understanding of text or images to form answers to this research. Meanwhile, according to this study, qualitative research methods are used. Bogdan and Taylor define qualitative methods as procedures that produce descriptive data in the form of written words from people and observable behavior. Kriek and Miller define that qualitative research is a special tradition in the social sciences that fundamentally relies on human observation, both in its field and in its terminology.

The researcher focus was not only on numerical measurement but on understanding the complexities of teaching and learning under the Independent Curriculum. Research Location and Subjects: The study was conducted at Madrasah Ibtidaiyyah Al-Qomar, located in Kuala Secapah, Mempawah Hilir, West Kalimantan. Participants included the school principal, three teachers, and 20 students of Grade IV. This selection was based on the school's active participation in the Independent Curriculum pilot program.

Data collection techniques observation classroom practices were observed to evaluate teaching strategies, student participation, and the integration of curriculum principles. Interviews Semi structured interviews were conducted with the principal, teachers, and selected students to capture their perspectives and experiences. Documentation Analysis of teaching modules, lesson plans, assessment tools, and student work provided additional data.

C. Discussion

The author will present data on the implementation of the curriculum merdeka in Realizing Quality Education at the Al-Qomar Elementary School, Class IV, Kuala Secapah, Mempawah Hilir. Case studies on the implementation or application of the independent curriculum to students in class IV of the Al-Qomar Elementary School have been collected from research results through observations and interviews taken from respondents, principals, teachers and two students of class IV of the elementary schools well as documentation.

The current curriculum merdeka has new requirements or methods that educators must convey to students and there are also changes in curriculum tools and assessment methods such as teaching tools that were initially changed to learning outcomes or abbreviated as CP, which previously used RPP now has become a module for teaching methods/systems from the K13 curriculum to curriculum merdeka. As for the learning implementation process has also changed, which used to be the teacher who determined now the students and the methods are divided into three, namely, starting from the child's readiness based on readiness, profile, and interest.

To find out how the independent curriculum is implemented at the Al-Qomar Elementary School in Kuala Secapah Mempawah Hilir, researchers conducted interviews with respondents, including one principal, three teachers and twenty students at the Al-Qomar Elementary School.

Madrasah Ibtidaiyyah (MI) Al-Qomar is a private Islamic elementary school located in Jl. Daeng Menambon, Mempawah Hilir, West Kalimantan. Established in 1970, the school has started implementing the curriculum merdeka in grades I and IV. It has a total of 146 students, with 20 students in grade IV as the main research subjects. The school has limited facilities and infrastructure but is equipped with internet access. There are 19 teaching staff members from various educational backgrounds.

During the observation period, it was found that the teaching and learning process was still dominated by traditional methods, especially lecture-based instruction. Although the curriculum merdeka emphasizes a student-centered and

active learning approach, many classroom practices remained teacher-centered. Teachers appeared to be in the process of adjusting their instructional strategies, and there was limited evidence of differentiated instruction based on students' interests, learning styles, or readiness levels.

The projects were irregular and lacked integration with the broader curriculum. Teachers showed willingness to implement these projects but were limited by their unfamiliarity with the design and execution process. From the students' perspective, there was a general sense of enthusiasm during engaging or hands-on activities. Nevertheless, when it came to individual tasks, reflective discussions, or open-ended projects, many students demonstrated uncertainty and a lack of confidence. This indicates that the shift towards independent and critical learning has not been fully internalized by the students.

The school environment was generally conducive to learning, with a sufficient number of classrooms and basic facilities. The school had access to the internet, which is a positive asset; however, it was not yet utilized effectively for digital learning purposes. Most learning media used during the observation were still traditional, and the integration of technology into the classroom remained minimal.

In conclusion, the observation highlights that the implementation of the curriculum merdeka at madrasah ibtidaiyyah al-qomar grade iv is still in its early stage. While the school and teaching staff show openness and motivation to adopt the new system, there is a clear need for continuous professional development, mentoring, and resource support to ensure that the curriculum is implemented in accordance with its intended goals.

| Aspect | Indicators | Findings |
|---|--|---|
| Lesson Planning | Use of teaching modules based on <i>learning achievements</i> | Teachers have started using modules but are still in the adaptation stage. The structure of CP is not yet fully understood. |
| Teaching Methods | Implementation of active and student- centered learning methods | The lecture method still dominates. Interactive strategies are rarely used. |
| P5 (Project to Strengthen Pancasila Student Profile) | Design and execution of P5 projects based on themes | P5 projects have been introduced but are not routinely or fully implemented. |
| Student Engagement | Active participation in discussions, asking questions, and expressing opinions | Students are enthusiastic during fun activities but hesitant in open discussions or individual tasks. |
| Assessment | Use of formative and reflective assessment techniques | Not yet optimal. Teachers are confused about how to apply reflective assessments or portfolios. |
| Use of Media and Technology | Utilization of visual aids, digital tools, and internet | Internet is available but underutilized. Learning media remain mostly conventional. |
| Challenges | Obstacles faced by teachers or students | Teachers lack full understanding of the curriculum; students are confused with project activities; time management is still weak. |
| Supporting Factors | Positive factors that aid implementation | School vision and mission are aligned; teacher motivation is high; religious and social activities support holistic learning. |

The result of student interview

| No | Student Name | Q1: What learning activity do you enjoy most since the implementation of the independent curriculum? | Q2: How do you understand the lesson given by the teacher in new ways such as projects or discussions ? | Q3: Helps you most when you have learning difficulties-teachers or friends? | Q4: Why do you find it enjoyable or easy to understand ? | Q5: When do you feel most enthusiastic about learning at school? |
|----|--------------|---|--|--|---|---|
| 1 | HH | Drawing in group projects | Fun and I like pictures | Teacher | Project time | Doing the project |
| 2 | NN | Making posters | Can work with friends | Friend then teacher | Play games | Different ideas in discussion |
| 3 | WF | Group reading | Understand faster | Friend | Videos or pictures | Clear teacher explanation |
| 4 | ZI | Science experiments | More exciting | Teacher gives examples | Group competition | Group sharing |
| 5 | LK | Acting out stories | Not boring | Teacher helps | Outside class | Visual examples |
| 6 | AA | English word games | Hands-on activities | Friends in group | Art and craft | Teacher helps |
| 7 | CC | Making handicrafts | Learn by doing | Usually teacher | Colorful materials | Discussion helps memory |
| 8 | SYD | Coloring in | Easier in | Teacher explains | English with | Project |

| | | | | | | |
|----|-----|------------------------|---------------|------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| | | projects | groups | slowly | flashcards | helps focus |
| 9 | SRA | Teamwork assignments | Like to move | Friends explain simply | Group work | Step by step learning |
| 10 | AA | Learning through songs | Draw and talk | Teacher repeats lesson | Sharing ideas | Understand after confusion |

This chapter presents a comprehensive analysis of the findings related to the implementation of the curriculum merdeka at madrasah ibtdaiyyah (MI) l-qomar, particularly in grade IV. The analysis is conducted by comparing the empirical data gathered through observation, interviews, and documentation with relevant theoretical foundations. The purpose of this analysis is to interpret the research findings to determine the extent to which the Independent Curriculum has been implemented in supporting quality education in the context of a private Islamic elementary school.

The research analysis concludes that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at Madrasah Ibtidaiyyah Al-Qomar, especially in grade IV, is on going but not yet fully aligned with its intended framework. There is clear potential for growth, particularly due to the openness and enthusiasm of educators and the school's holistic educational vision. However, significant efforts are required to improve teacher capacity, instructional practices, and the use of technology in order to achieve the goal of quality education as envisioned by the Independent Curriculum.

D. Conclusion

Based on the research conducted at Madrasah Ibtidaiyyah (MI) Al-Qomar, Grade IV, Kuala Secapah, Mempawah Hilir, it can be concluded that the implementation of the curriculum merdeka is still at an early stage and undergoing gradual adaptation. This is reflected in various aspects of the curriculum application, which have not yet been fully aligned with the core principles and philosophy of the Independent Curriculum. From the observation, it was found that the teaching and learning process continues to be dominated by traditional lecture-based methods, whereas the

Independent Curriculum encourages student-centered learning and project-based approaches. Teachers are in the process of adjusting their strategies but have not yet fully implemented differentiated instruction that considers students' interests, learning styles, and readiness levels.

In terms of lesson planning, teachers have started using instructional modules based on learning outcomes (*learning achievements*), replacing the traditional lesson plan (RPP). However, the structure and content of these modules have not been applied consistently, and many teachers still experience confusion in designing or using them effectively. Assessment practices are still conventional and rely heavily on written tests, while reflective and performance-based assessments have not yet been fully utilized.

The results of interviews with the school principal and teachers revealed that educators gradually began to feel comfortable with the new system after participating in workshops and hands-on implementation. The school leadership has played an active role in providing support, encouraging collaboration among teachers, and improving school facilities. Teachers are beginning to apply differentiated strategies, such as offering students task choices based on their interests, including poster-making, storytelling, or oral presentations. The student interviews indicated that most students enjoy creative and interactive learning activities such as drawing, vocabulary games, crafting, storytelling, and singing. However, they still express hesitation in participating in independent tasks or open discussions. This suggests that independent learning and critical thinking skills have not yet been fully developed and internalized among the students.

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