

Learning Analysis in the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum at Public Junior High Schools in Lareh Sago Halaban District

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ABSTRACT

The Merdeka Curriculum is one of the latest education policies in Indonesia aimed at improving the quality of learning through differentiation approaches, project-based learning, and authentic assessment. This study aims to analyze learning in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in public junior high schools across the Lareh Sago Halaban District, particularly in terms of planning, implementation, and evaluation. The study uses a quantitative approach with descriptive methods. The research population consisted of 121 teachers, with a sample of 95 selected through proportional random sampling techniques. Data were collected using a Likert scale questionnaire that had been tested for validity and reliability, then analyzed using the mean technique. Research results show that learning in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum falls into the good category with an average score of 4.21 (TCR 84.3%). The planning aspect scored 82.7%, implementation 86.5%, and evaluation 83%, with the highest achievement in implementation. These findings indicate that teachers have implemented the Merdeka Curriculum learning well, although there are still challenges in preparing teaching modules, applying differentiated learning, and varying assessments. This study concludes that the success of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum learning greatly depends on ongoing training support and adequate facilities. The implications of this research emphasize the need for practical mentoring strategies for teachers as well as consistent school policies in supporting learning innovation.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian government launched the Independent Curriculum in 2020. The main goal of the Independent Curriculum is to encourage student participation, creativity, and independence in the classroom. This curriculum aims to shift the teaching paradigm from being teacher-centered to more student-centered by providing students with greater freedom to choose learning resources, delivery methods, and learning styles that best suit their needs and interests. It emphasizes core materials, character development, and student talents. Students are free to use critical thinking and learn from various sources, which can help them discover new information, gain experiences, and solve real-world problems. (Rahmadhani et al., 2022).

The Indonesian government aims to address the challenges of the 21st century. This curriculum emphasizes student-centered learning, competency-based development, and the integration of Pancasila Student Profile values. The implemented learning is flexible, contextual, project-based, and encourages teachers to act as facilitators (Mulyasa, 2022). However, in practice, various schools still face challenges, such as limited teacher capacity in developing independent teaching modules, low experience in implementing differentiated learning, and inadequate facilities and infrastructure (Hosnan, 2021).

Several previous studies have examined the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at various educational levels. Fitriani (2022) found that teachers still experience difficulties in independently preparing teaching modules due to limited experience and adequate references. This study emphasizes that support in the form of examples of good practices and technical guidelines is highly needed to make lesson planning more applicable. Furthermore, research by Nurhayati and Ramdani (2023) shows that teacher training in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum needs to be designed continuously, systematically, and based on real practice, so that teachers are truly able to apply the principles of differentiation and project-based learning in the classroom.

In terms of implementation, Wulandari (2022) revealed that teachers tend to be more prepared in managing the classroom compared to applying innovative methods, particularly project-based learning which requires creativity and support from facilities and infrastructure. This is reinforced by Siregar (2023), who highlighted that limited facilities and practical experience are major obstacles for teachers in implementing innovative learning. From the evaluation perspective, Hidayat (2022) found that teachers mostly use traditional summative assessments, while formative and authentic assessments have not been fully applied. Similar research by Lestari and Kurniawan (2023) also identified that teachers still face difficulties in designing holistic assessment instruments capable of assessing knowledge, skills, and attitudes comprehensively.

In line with these conditions, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in public junior high schools across Lareh Sago Halaban sub-district is interesting to study because teachers have varying levels of preparedness. The problems that arise can be seen from three main dimensions, namely planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning. Therefore, this study is formulated to answer the questions: (1) How well is the planning of the Merdeka Curriculum learning implementation in public junior high schools in Lareh Sago Halaban sub-district? (2) How well is its execution? (3) How well is the evaluation conducted?

The purpose of this study is to analyze the quality level of planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning in the Merdeka Curriculum implementation in public junior high schools across Lareh Sago Halaban sub-district. The research results are expected to provide an empirical overview of teachers' readiness to implement the curriculum, as well as serve as a basis for improvements for schools and the education office in providing policy support and training.

2. METHOD, DATA, ANALYSIS

This research uses a quantitative approach with a descriptive method. Its purpose is to systematically and factually describe teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at Lareh Sago Halaban Subdistrict Public Middle School. The descriptive method involves collecting facts and interpreting them accurately. This study examines social issues, procedures in society and specific situations, as well as the relationships between activities, attitudes, views, and ongoing processes, along with the influence of a phenomenon. (Samsu, 2021).

The research was conducted in five educational units, namely SMP Negeri 1 of Lareh Sago Halaban Subdistrict, SMP Negeri 2 of Lareh Sago Halaban Subdistrict, SMP Negeri 3 of Lareh Sago Halaban Subdistrict, SMP Negeri 4 of Lareh Sago Halaban Subdistrict, and SMP Negeri 5 of Lareh Sago Halaban Subdistrict during the period of July-August 2025. The research population consisted of all public junior high school teachers in Lareh Sago Halaban Subdistrict, totaling 121 people, while the research sample consisted of 95 teachers selected using proportional random sampling. This technique was chosen so that each school would obtain a representative proportion according to the number of teachers, allowing the research results to more accurately reflect the real conditions in the field (Sugiyono, 2017). The determination of the sample size used the Slovin formula, commonly used to determine sample size in research.

The research instrument consisted of a Likert scale questionnaire containing indicators from three main aspects: planning, implementation, and evaluation. The instrument had been tested for validity using the Pearson product-moment correlation and for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha, which indicated that

the instrument was suitable for measuring the research variables. Data collection was conducted by distributing the questionnaire directly to the respondents. Each teacher was asked to provide answers based on their perception of learning in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in their respective schools. The collected data were then analyzed using the mean technique to calculate the score for each indicator and converted into the Respondent Achievement Level (TCR) to determine the assessment categories (very good, good, fairly good, less good, not good).

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The research results show that learning in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in public junior high schools across Lareh Sago Halaban District is generally in the good category, with an average score of 4.21 or a TCR of 84.3%. The indicator with the highest score is the implementation indicator, with an average score of 4.33 and a TCR of 86.5%, categorized as good. Meanwhile, the lowest average score is found in the planning indicator, with an average score of 4.14 and a TCR of 82.7%, also categorized as good.

The planning indicator received an average score of 4.14, TCR 82.7%, in the good category. The highest score was on the statement regarding teachers' understanding of their role as facilitators, with an average of 4.47, TCR 89.5%, while the lowest scores were on teachers' involvement in training, with an average of 3.85, TCR 77.1%, as well as in developing differentiated learning, with an average of 3.99, TCR 79.8%.

The implementation indicator achieved an average score of 4.33 TCR (86.5%) with a good category, also becoming the highest indicator. The highest score was found in the statement about starting lessons by greeting students and creating a pleasant atmosphere, with an average of 4.60 TCR (92%), while the lowest score was in the statement regarding the use of varied media and learning resources, with an average of 4.01 TCR (80.2%).

The evaluation indicator obtained an average score of 4.15 TCR (83%) with a good category. The highest score was in the statement about providing constructive direct feedback, with an average of 4.25 TCR (85.1%), whereas the lowest score was in the statement about ensuring that evaluation supports the strengthening of the Pancasila Student Profile, with an average of 4.08 TCR (81.7%).

Table 1. Recap of Average Scores on Lthe Learning Analysis of Independent Curriculum Implementation in Public Junior High Schools throughout Lareh Sago Halaban District

No	Indicator	Average	TCR	Category
1	Planning	4,14	82,7%	Good
2	Implementation	4,33	86,5%	Good
3	Evaluation	4,15	83,0%	Good
Average		4,21	84,3%	Good

The data in Table 1 shows that the overall learning in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum is in the good category with an average score of 4.21 (TCR 84.3%). The highest achievement is found in the implementation indicator (86.5%), followed by evaluation (83.0%), and planning (82.7%).

Discussion

Research findings indicate that learning in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at Lareh Sago Halaban District Public Middle School has been running well, although there are some obstacles in certain aspects. In the planning indicator, teachers have understood the curriculum principles conceptually, especially their role as facilitators. However, limited involvement in training and difficulties in developing differentiated teaching modules indicate that planning is not yet fully applicable. These findings are in line with Fitriani's (2022) research, which highlights teachers' difficulties in developing teaching modules due to limited experience, as well as Nurhayati and Ramdani (2023), who emphasize the importance of ongoing, practice-based training.

In terms of performance indicators, teachers demonstrate the best achievements, especially in creating a conducive and enjoyable classroom atmosphere. However, challenges are still encountered in the implementation of innovative methods such as project-based learning and differentiated instruction.

This aligns with Wulandari's (2022) research, which found that teachers are relatively more prepared in classroom management aspects compared to the application of innovative methods that require creativity, collaboration, and the use of technology. Similarly, Siregar's (2023) study indicates that limitations in facilities and infrastructure, particularly in supporting project-based activities, as well as teachers' limited practical experience, are the main obstacles to optimally implementing project-based learning.

Meanwhile, in the evaluation indicators, teachers have provided direct and constructive feedback, in accordance with formative assessment principles. However, the evaluation does not fully reflect holistic assessment that supports the strengthening of the Pancasila Student Profile. This indicates the need to improve teachers' capacity in designing varied assessment instruments as well as utilizing digital platforms to support ongoing assessment. These findings support the research results of Hidayat (2022), which showed the dominance of summative tests in teachers' practices, as well as Lestari and Kurniawan (2023), who identified limitations in teachers' abilities to design holistic assessment instruments.

4. CONCLUSION

This research concludes that learning in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in public junior high schools across Lareh Sago Halaban District is generally categorized as good, with an average score of 4.21 (84.3%). The aspect of implementation achieved the highest score, indicating that teachers have been able to create a conducive and interactive learning environment. However, in the planning aspect, there are still challenges in preparing differentiated teaching modules and participation in training, while in the evaluation aspect, authentic assessment that supports the strengthening of the Pancasila Student Profile has not been fully optimal. Based on these findings, this study recommends the need to enhance teacher capacity through continuous practice-based training, adequate infrastructure support to facilitate project-based learning, and strengthening the understanding of authentic assessment to make evaluation more comprehensive. In addition, schools and education offices need to consistently strengthen teacher mentoring policies to ensure the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is effective and impacts the strengthening of student competencies.

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