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## **Analyzing the Impact of the Merdeka Curriculum on Classroom Learning Quality: A Literature Review**

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### **Abstract**

The curriculum is the heart of education. Through the curriculum, the government tries to carry out the tasks mandated by the 1945 Constitution. The quality of education must be improved from time to time, adjusting to the needs and development of the people. However, in the process of curriculum transition, there are always problems that occur, there is a phase where teachers and students must adapt to the new curriculum. This is a challenge in itself for teachers in packaging classroom learning to adapt to these changes. The purpose of writing this article is to find out the extent to which curriculum changes affect the quality of classroom learning. The method used in this study is an exploratory approach by reviewing the content or identifying several articles from both national and international journals. The results of the study show that both simultaneous and partial changes in the curriculum have an effect on the quality of learning in the classroom. Teachers who are faced with new things are faced with so many challenges in implementing the new curriculum. So sometimes teachers find it difficult to adapt to the demands of the curriculum.

**Keywords:** curriculum; learning; elementary school

## **INTRODUCTION**

Education is the main pillar in the development of quality human resources. In an effort to improve the quality of education, one of the strategies consistently carried out by governments in various countries, including Indonesia, is to make changes and updates to the curriculum. Curriculum changes reflect a response to the dynamic needs of the times, the development of science and technology, and the growing challenges of globalization.

The curriculum has a central role in directing the learning process at school. It not only regulates the material that students must learn, but also determines the pedagogical approach, assessment methods, and holistic development of student character and competence. Therefore, any curriculum changes will directly or indirectly affect the quality of learning that takes place in the classroom. These changes can have an impact on how teachers develop lesson plans, how students learn, and how learning outcomes are evaluated and followed up. The problem factors in learning are as follows: 1) Internal factors consisting of intelligence, talent, motivation, attitude, state of physical tone, and state of physical function. 2) External factors are teachers, facilities and infrastructure, curriculum changes, social environment at school, family environment, and community factors (Sari et al., 2023).

In the Indonesian context, recent changes in the national education system were marked by the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. This curriculum was introduced in response to the urgent need to create more relevant, flexible and learner-centered learning. The Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes project-based learning, differentiated learning, as well as strengthening the Pancasila learner profile as the main direction of character building and 21st century

competencies.

One of the important innovations in the Merdeka Curriculum is the flexibility for education units and teachers in determining teaching materials and learning methods according to the context and needs of students. This approach is intended to provide room for teacher creativity and the diversity of student characteristics. However, this freedom also presents challenges, especially when curriculum changes are not matched by the readiness of the education system as a whole. Curriculum in the macro context includes all activities carried out in schools that provide learning experiences to students, such as the culture and climate of learning in schools, interpersonal relationships, and the learning materials that students learn to develop aspects of knowledge, knowledge inserts, knowledge inserts, and knowledge inserts" (Gemnafle & Batlolona, 2021).

Factors causing curriculum changes include: 1) The existence of dynamic development and change between one nation with a nation that is others, 2) Development of industry and production or technology, 3) Political orientation and state practice, 4) Changing intellectual views (Setiawati, 2022). The problems that arise due to curriculum changes, including the Merdeka Curriculum, include several important aspects. First, the level of teacher understanding of the philosophy and implementation of the new curriculum still varies. Many teachers experience confusion in designing teaching modules, integrating project-based learning, and implementing contextualized formative assessments. Second, the unequal availability of resources, both in terms of infrastructure, access to technology, and professional training, leads to imbalances in implementation between regions. Third, the evaluation of student learning outcomes is often unable to describe the success of the curriculum as a whole, because it is still dominated by

cognitive assessment and does not fully accommodate affective and psychomotor aspects. In addition, schools are unprepared to manage curriculum autonomy. Schools are required to develop an operational curriculum independently, but in practice, many schools do not have a competent curriculum development team. As a result, the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum in various educational units is not uniform, and sometimes deviates from the original spirit of the curriculum.

These problems raise fundamental questions about the effectiveness of curriculum changes in improving the quality of learning. Are curriculum changes really able to create a meaningful, enjoyable learning process and have an impact on improving student learning outcomes. Or on the contrary, curriculum changes that are not accompanied by systemic support can cause confusion and a decrease in the quality of learning. Moreover, the independent curriculum focuses on character achievement in the form of the Pancasila student profile. This independent curriculum also increases the achievement of the Pancasila student profile which is designed according to the theme set by the government (Aprillia et al., 2023).

Therefore, this study is important to examine more deeply the impact of curriculum changes, especially the Merdeka Curriculum, on learning quality. This study will capture the extent to which curriculum changes make a real contribution to improving the quality of learning, as well as identify the inhibiting and supporting factors in the implementation process at the education unit level. This literature study aims to describe how the curriculum influences the learning process in schools.

## **METHODS**

This article uses the literature review method. The literature review research method is an approach used to compile, evaluate, and interpret literature or written

sources relevant to a research topic (Maryanto et al., 2023). The reporting framework for systematic reviews employs the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines to ensure methodological rigor in identifying, filtering, and evaluating records. This framework delineates a clear process, including identifying research questions, selecting relevant studies, and summarizing results systematically, enhancing the quality education (Phelan et al., 2025). This literature review is used to identify and analyze the obstacles faced by teachers in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. The literature review process begins with formulating specific research questions related to the main challenges in implementing this curriculum. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were then established to ensure the relevance and quality of the selected studies, journal articles published within the last 3 years and in Indonesian or English were included, while non-scientific publications and reviews without empirical databases were excluded. A literature search was conducted on databases such as Google Scholar using keywords such as "curriculum effects", "implementation of Merdeka Curriculum", and "21st century learning challenges". The articles found were screened based on their abstracts and conformity to the set criteria. Studies that passed the selection were analyzed to extract data regarding the identification of barriers, research methods used, and key findings. There are 414 articles obtained using the Google Scholar search engine. Furthermore, the articles obtained are sorted to obtain articles that are in accordance with what will be studied. After sorting, there are 8 articles that have the expected criteria, namely in accordance with the discussion, year of publication and reputable sinta.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Table 1. Presented Review Results of 8 Verified Articles Up to Inclusion Stage**

<b>Author and Year of Publication</b>	<b>Title Article</b>	<b>Methods</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Summary</b>
Abdurrahman & Mubarok, (2025)	The Impact of Curriculum Changes on Students' Learning Power in Islamic Religious Education Subjects at Madrasah Aliyah	literature review	The Merdeka Curriculum provides flexibility for teachers to implement on textual and project based learning, thereby increasing active participation and strengthening student character, especially in Islamic Religious Education. However, its implementation still faces challenges such as teacher readiness, technological gaps, and	Curriculum changes, especially Curriculum 2013 and Merdeka curriculum, have a positive impact on learning Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Madrasah Aliyah through a flexible approach, integration of character education, and utilization of technology. However, its implementation depends on the readiness of teachers,

<b>Author and Year of Publication</b>	<b>Title Article</b>	<b>Methods</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Summary</b>
			student adaptation to a more independent and exploratory learning approach.	the availability of resources, and collaboration between the government, educators, and madrasahs.
(Hadi et al., 2025)	The Influence of the Independent Curriculum on Teaching	literature review	results shows that the importance of learning media and the application of modern models in the Merdeka Curriculum in the era of globalization and	Based on the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that the importance of the role of learning media and the application of modern models in the Merdeka Curriculum in the era of

<b>Author and Year of Publication</b>	<b>Title Article</b>	<b>Methods</b>	<b>Results</b>	<b>Summary</b>
				globalization
			<p>Industry Technology that growing influence in the world of education, making media learning as an effective means of delivering material. Independent Curriculum gives schools, teachers and students the freedom to customize the model. learning in</p>	<p>Industry 4.0. The ever-evolving technology great influence in the world of education, making learning media as a means that effective in delivering the material.</p>

			accordance with the needs and characteristics with the times.	
(Jannah & Isna, 2023)	The Impact of Curriculum Change on Students' Learning Motivation The Impact of Curriculum Change on Students' Learning Motivation	qualitative methods	The results of the study stated that implementing the Independent Curriculum.	the results of the research that has been done, it can be concluded that the analysis of curriculum changes on the learning The motivation of students at SMPN 1 Jeumpa and SMPN 1 Blangpidie is still in the adjustment stage because

				the independent curriculum is new, so students are still trying to adapt in learning the student learning curriculum and many students who like this Emancipated learning curriculum.
(Mukhibin & Nafidhoh, 2023)	Mathematic teacher obstacles in implementation in the independent curriculum	literature review	The findings of this study indicate that (1) the obstacles faced by mathematics teachers in 2023 increased from the previous year, (2) 88.8% of articles use qualitative research to reveal the obstacles of	qualitative research to reveal the obstacles of mathematics teachers, (3) 6 articles prefer using interview instruments, (4) the obstacles in implementing the Merdeka curriculum are felt by several mathematics teachers in

			<p>mathematics teachers, (3) 6 articles prefer to use interview instruments, (4) obstacles implementin g the Merdeka curriculum are felt by several mathematics teachers in various regions, and (5) the obstacles of</p>	<p>various regions, and (5) the obstacles of mathematics teachers in implementing the Merdeka curriculum lie in the planning, implementation, and assessment stages of learning. The findings of this study are expected to</p>
			<p>mathematics teachers in implementin g the Merdeka curriculum lie in the planning, implementat ion, and assessment stages of learning.</p>	<p>Be able to contribute and provide input to relevant government agencies in order to prepare teacher competence in implementing the Merdeka curriculum.</p>

(Schoolet al., 2024)	The Impact of the Independent Curriculum Changes on Learning in Schools	literature review	The analysis reveals that the the curriculum merdeka changes can pose challenges in curriculum development and organization. Additionally, the readiness and adequate support for teachers are crucial factors in the success of the independent curriculum.	In analyzing the impact of the independent curriculum changes on learning in schools, several issues arise. First, the implementation of the independent curriculum may present challenges in developmenta and organization by teachers and schools. Second, the
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<p>(Siahaan et al., 2023)</p>	<p>The impact and Benefits of the Independent Curriculum Learning Independent Campus During Online Learning in the COVID-19 Period</p>	<p>Descriptive qualitative</p>	<p>The results of the study show that the implementation still varies because there are programs that have implemented it and some that have not, because there are still obstacles, both internal and external. Universities</p>	<p>From the findings and data analysis, it was concluded that the implementation of the Key Performance Indicators curriculum could not be implemented in almost all study programs that had implemented Key Performance Indicators due to the timing of the implementation of the curriculum, where almost all study programs were still implementing the next 3 years. That</p>
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<p>(Sulfadli &amp; Supartinah, 2023)</p>	<p>The Effect of Implementation of Independent Curriculum on Learning Interest and Character of Elementary School Students</p>	<p>survey method</p>	<p>The research results showed a significant influence between the implementation of the independent curriculum on students' interest in learning and character values with a sig value of 0.000 where <math>&lt;0.05</math>, this shows that the implementation of the independent curriculum</p>	<p>The independent curriculum has now been implemented in almost all schools in Indonesia, so teachers must also look at the impact or influence of implementing the curriculum on students' interests and character.</p>
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			has brought many changes and influences on elementary school students, including the interests and character of students. Therefore,	
(Wildan et al., 2025)	Model Analysis Effective Learning in Implementing Merdeka Curriculum in Schools	literature study	The research findings concluded that (1) the implementation of the independent curriculum emphasizes active-collaborative involvement (2) the selection of an effective model plays in the implementation	Teachers are expected to have extensive knowledge of various learning models that are effective in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum and in accordance with the Characteristics of students in each school, so

			tion of independen t curriculum learning in schools, namely the Problem Learning Active Learning, Cooperative Learning, Discovery Learning, and Think Pair Share.	that the learning process will be more lively and able to improve students in various aspects, both cognitive, affective, and psychomotor .
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Curriculum change is inevitable in the world of education. Indonesia as a country that continues to develop in its national education system has gone through several important phases in curriculum change. One of the major transformations was the birth of the Merdeka Curriculum which replaced the 2013 Curriculum. The Merdeka Curriculum comes with a spirit of renewal, gives more flexibility to teachers, and encourages learning based on student needs and potential.

This curriculum emphasizes the importance of contextual and project-based learning, which allows students to actively participate in the learning process and strengthen character values. This is particularly evident in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at Madrasah Aliyah, where religious material is now not only taught as memorization, but as the practice of spiritual values in daily life.

However, in its implementation, Merdeka Curriculum still faces various challenges. One of the most basic is teacher readiness. Many educators have not received sufficient training or adequate understanding of the new approaches promoted in this curriculum. On the other hand, the gap in access to technology, especially in the 3T (Disadvantaged, Frontier, and Outermost) areas, is a serious obstacle in implementing digital-based learning and modern learning media. Media which means intermediary. So literally the media is interpreted as a messenger intermediary. Media as a form used to convey information (Putri et al., 2022).

From various research results that have been conducted, it can be concluded that modern learning media and learning models have an important role in the successful implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, especially in the context of globalization and the Industrial 4.0 era. Technology is an effective means of delivering material, both in the form of videos, simulations, e-modules, and other interactive media that can increase student learning motivation. Students will feel more engaged and motivated to learn if they use innovative approaches, relevant technology, or interactive learning methods. Effective learning can help students understand teacher instructions (Wahyuni et al., 2023). The spread of messages through learning media can increase students' thoughts, feelings, attention, and enthusiasm for learning (Ruswan et al., 2024).

Furthermore, Merdeka Curriculum provides space for schools and teachers to design learning models that suit student characteristics. This freedom is a great opportunity to innovate, but at the same time demands the capacity of teachers in designing creative and relevant learning strategies.

The results of a study of the implementation of

Merdeka Curriculum in several schools show that this curriculum has been implemented quite well. However, some schools are still in the stage of formulating the right strategy. Especially at the primary and junior high school levels, students are still adapting to a more independent approach to learning. Many students admit that they like the new curriculum because it gives them room to explore their interests and talents, but others still experience confusion because the learning pattern has changed drastically from before.

Other research also shows that mathematics teachers, especially in 2023, are experiencing increased challenges compared to previous years. The main obstacles lie in the planning, implementation, and assessment stages. The interview instrument revealed that teachers need intensive training to adapt teaching tools to the philosophy of Merdeka Curriculum. The lack of continuous assistance and the lack of supporting facilities are also obstacles in the implementation process.

At the macro level, there are gaps between schools, both in terms of facilities, teacher competence, and school management readiness in organizing learning based on the Merdeka Curriculum. This is an important issue that must be addressed by the government through policies that favor strengthening teacher capacity and equitable distribution of educational resources. 21st century learning needs to develop several aspects that are considered necessary such as instructional should be student centered, educational should be collaborative, learning should have contest, and school should be integrated with society (Indarta et al., 2022).

In the context of higher education, the implementation of the curriculum based on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) also still encounters obstacles. Many study programs have not been able to

implement it because they are still running the old curriculum for the next few years. Even so, the effect of the Merdeka Curriculum on student character and interest in learning is starting to be seen positively, as reflected in the results of research with a significance value, which shows a real influence on improving student character and interest in learning.

Meanwhile, the five effective learning models widely applied in the Merdeka Curriculum, namely Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Active Learning, Cooperative Learning, Discovery Learning, and Think Pair Share, are key in creating active and collaborative learning. Teachers are encouraged to deeply understand each of these models and apply them according to the context and needs of the learners. These models have been proven to encourage critical thinking skills, cooperation, creativity, and build independent and responsible student characters. Students' ability to think critically and analytically is expected to be enhanced through "independent learning" (Sarnoto, 2024). The Merdeka Curriculum also encourages strengthening collaboration between teachers and students. In this approach, students are not only objects of learning, but subjects who actively participate in the learning process. The teacher becomes a facilitator who guides, not just a material deliverer. This certainly requires a paradigm transformation in the role and function of educators in the classroom.

To support the successful implementation of Merdeka Curriculum as a whole, synergy between various education stakeholders is needed. The central and local governments must provide continuous training, contextualized teaching modules, and technical assistance for teachers. The madrasah or school must strengthen learning management and a school culture that is adaptive to

change. Teachers must continue to improve their pedagogical and technological competencies. And last but not least, students must also be assisted to be able to adapt and take an active role in independent learning.

In terms of evaluation, it is important to develop an assessment system that is in line with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum. Assessment is not only focused on cognitive aspects, but also on strengthening character and 21st century skills such as collaboration, communication, creativity, and critical thinking. The assessment rubric must be able to capture the process, not just the final result, so that student learning progress can be monitored comprehensively.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

The implementation of Merdeka Curriculum has a real direct impact on the dynamics of learning in the classroom. With a more flexible and student-centered approach, the teacher is no longer the only source of knowledge, but acts as a facilitator who assists students in exploring knowledge independently and collaboratively. This creates a classroom atmosphere that is more dynamic, active and oriented towards real- life problem solving.

The use of learning models makes students more emotionally and intellectually involved in the learning process. They are invited to discuss, research and present their ideas, resulting in improvements in critical thinking, communication and collaboration skills. This, of course, has a positive influence on students' learning motivation and confidence in the classroom. However, on the other hand, the effects of implementing the new curriculum also pose challenges, especially at the planning and implementation stages in the classroom. Many teachers are not fully prepared to change their approach, so some

classes still apply the old pattern that is less contextual and teacher-centered. In some schools, inequality in learning facilities, such as lack of technology devices or internet access, also limits the implementation of digital-based learning in the classroom. In addition, students also need time to adjust to a learning style that demands more independence and active engagement. For students who are used to conventional approaches, this transition can be an initial obstacle in understanding the material and following a more open and exploratory learning flow.

Thus, the success of the Merdeka Curriculum at the classroom level is strongly influenced by the teacher's readiness to design adaptive learning, the existence of adequate supporting facilities, and continuous coaching strategies for teachers and students. If these things can be managed properly, the Merdeka Curriculum has the potential to create a classroom that is not only a place to transfer knowledge, but also an environment that supports the development of character, creativity, and 21st century competencies for all students. Further proof, more data is needed using more articles and especially field data. And it is also hoped that further research will be more comprehensive, discussing more specific things discussing what are the dominant factors affected.

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