

MERDEKA CURRICULUM: STRENGTHENING CHARACTER THROUGH ASSESSMENT AT SMP NEGERI 17 PONTIANAK

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Abstract

This research aims to determine the implementation of character strengthening through independent curriculum assessments in junior high school level education units. Curriculum changes require adjustments to the competencies of teachers and students. Especially junior high school students who have just experienced the transition from primary to junior secondary education. In order to find answers to research questions, researchers conducted research at SMP Negeri 17 Pontianak. The research method is descriptive qualitative. The research procedure was carried out starting with preparing the design, implementation and research report. Data collection techniques using observation, interviews and documentation studies. The research results were analyzed according to Milles and Huberman's analysis. Research population of teachers and students of SMP Negeri 2 Pontianak. Meanwhile, the research samples were from social studies teachers and several students. The results of the research show that SMPN 17 Pontianak is still in the adjustment or adaptation stage. Formative assessment is able to provide encouragement to teachers to be more systematic and consistent in assessing students in areas mastered. The assessment at SMPN 17 Pontianak is an evaluation for teachers to review students' abilities, for example what learning needs students need and the obstacles or challenges faced by students. Apart from still not mastering the adaptation process for teachers in the independent curriculum assessment, another obstacle is the limited number of textbooks from the central government which until now has not provided these textbooks to the SMP Negeri 17 Pontianak school. So students are forced to buy textbooks individually and not all students can buy textbooks. The next research recommendation is to explore the findings of the implementation of P5 Independent Curriculum on aspects of changes in students after instilling educational character by educational units.

Keywords: *Strengthening character; independent curriculum; assessment*

A. Introduction

Modifications to the independent curriculum were carried out to face the challenges of the times. Apart from challenges, curriculum changes are to improve the quality of students in educational units so that they can always innovate and receive quality teaching. Curriculum is a design in learning. With every curriculum modification, character education is always considered and prioritized. Moreover, character education for students to practice their religion or high religiosity is very important in facing the challenges of the times. The learning process is the design of the curriculum (Purwaningsih, E., Ulfah, M., Kuswanti, H., & Ramadhan, 2022). Education units should be able to adapt to current developments with the current education system (Yamin & Syahrir, 2020). In order to achieve this, educational institutions must update the curriculum in accordance with advances in Science and Technology (IPTEK). If reforms are not carried out, the education system in Indonesia will be left behind (Priatmoko, 2018). Therefore, curriculum renewal is needed so that learning in Indonesia is not left behind. With advances in science and technology, if educational units still refuse to adapt and use the previous curriculum, it may not be relevant to current developments. This is because the curriculum is a reference in the learning process to produce effective and efficient learning

in order to achieve learning goals (Cholilah et al., 2023). It is important to pay attention to education because education is part of the process of how humans live their lives. So education is a right that every person needs to obtain and is part of human rights (Ramadhan, I., Prancisca, S., & Imran, 2022). The definition of curriculum has the meaning of a plan for the core of a structured learning process supported by schools and educational institutions that does not focus on the learning process but on character formation and improving the standard of living of students in society. Meanwhile, according to Sukmadinata (2003), the curriculum is all activities carried out by students, which are designed, directed, supervised and accounted for by the school. The curriculum is not limited to certain subjects and academic activities but also covers all aspects that influence personal development and student training in accordance with the existing goals of educational institutions, namely to improve the quality of education. Updating the curriculum in the education system is a requirement that must be implemented to improve a country's human resources (HR). The curriculum is an important part of a formal education system, also called the school system. It contains a learning plan which serves as a guide for teachers in achieving their students' learning goals so that they are personally prepared and have the right abilities. Updating the curriculum is also an important thing that the government must do to improve the quality of Indonesian education in order to create people who have quality human resources (HR), able to compete with other countries based on developments and changes over time. According to Budiman (2017) education is believed to be one of the tools or ways for humans to adapt to technological developments (Mardiyanti, L. R., Imran, I., Ramadhan, I., Asriati, N., Al Hidayah, R., & Suriyanisa, 2023). Curriculum renewal has a big impact on the learning process in schools because with this reform, learning models, processes or methods will become more

effective and efficient, and there will be progress in improving the quality curriculum in Indonesia in order to make education in Indonesia better. The curriculum must be updated so that it can adapt to current developments, especially at a time when science and information technology are developing rapidly and are difficult to control. Education always runs with culture simultaneously to create progress (Ramadhan, 2023a).

According to (Ramadhan, 2023d) the curriculum is not only a guideline for forming students with good-hearted personalities, good morals, as well as for increasing the generation of a nation that is competitive in facing world interactions. The change that is really needed and is currently pending is a change in the curriculum. The independent learning curriculum is currently an option in the world of education, because the Ministry of Education and Culture, Research and Technology first carried out outreach so that this independent curriculum becomes a national program. Therefore, this independent learning curriculum is not necessarily implemented in existing schools (Rahmadhani et al., 2022). The independent learning curriculum is the right and ideal step that has been adapted to current conditions in order to prepare a generation that is tough, intelligent, creative and has character in accordance with Indonesian national values. This idea of freedom to learn is also in line with Ki Hadjar Dewantara's opinion regarding education which considers various aspects of creativity, interest and initiative. Apart from that, the independent curriculum is also an effort to overcome the learning crisis that our country is facing after the Covid-19 pandemic (Ramadhan, 2023b).

So far, education has emphasized only the intellectual aspect, therefore the Merdeka Belajar curriculum provides freedom for students and teachers to develop their talents and skills because. Then freedom to learn is one strategy for developing character education. (Pratama et al., 2023) said that the concept of an independent curriculum does not differentiate between assessing attitudes, knowledge and skills. The dominant difference between the 2013 curriculum and the independent curriculum is that there are P5 activities or projects to strengthen the profile of Pancasila. The activities carried out by students produce works. Students in the independent curriculum are expected to be actively involved in applying the values of Indonesian national identity in daily life and the environment (Salam, 2023). Realizing ideal education that is in accordance with the basics of Indonesian nationality is the shared responsibility and awareness of all humans (Ainia, 2020).

In the Merdeka Belajar program, learning is greatly influenced by the teacher, so teachers must change traditional learning models to more creative learning, for the ultimate goal of learning. The method and media approaches used by teachers cannot be separated from the learning process at school. These things influence the effectiveness and success of education (Ramadhan et al., 2023). With the development of educational policies, teachers must of course be able to adapt to current policies, especially changes to the school curriculum. Although in reality of course there are still many obstacles because the free learning program is still relatively new and not all classes in schools have implemented the free learning program. Learning activities shape students' personalities according to the Pancasila student profile (Kahfi, 2022). Therefore, teachers must

understand the meaning and aspects contained in the Pancasila student profile so as not to misunderstand each student's performance. Apart from that, differences in curriculum also definitely have differences in the assessment process. Assessment is an integral part of the learning process, which helps facilitate learning and provides comprehensive information as feedback for students, educators and parents, so that it can serve as a guide in planning next learning steps (Ramadhan, 2023c). The independent learning curriculum assessment is different from the assessment in the previous curriculum. So it is not surprising if there are teachers who are still in the adaptation process in carrying out independent curriculum assessments. Assessments are carried out to obtain learning outcomes from each student, both assessing the aspects of students' knowledge, attitudes and skills (Ramadhan, Iwan., 2022). This research was carried out to find out the assessment process and the problems faced by teachers at SMP Negeri 17 Pontianak. The research problem is to find out and understand the obstacles to the implementation of independent curriculum assessments. The problem faced by teachers is not understanding the assessment implementation system in the aspect of determining assessments for several students in order to create differentiated assessments as well. Apart from that, teachers are not yet able to overcome the differences in interests and talents of each student.

This is because there are some teachers who don't understand implementation of the independent curriculum. However, in an effort to produce student outcomes with Pancasila character, teachers may or may not have to go through a process of adaptation and learning. This is until the teacher carries out assessments, both formative and summative.

B. Method

This research method uses descriptive qualitative research. Qualitative research is research to analyze research results in the form of narratives or descriptions. The researcher wants to describe thoroughly and in depth the problems of the learning assessment process in the independent curriculum, both in terms of the general description, the implementation process, examples of the results of the learning assessment and down to teachers' obstacles in dealing with learning assessment in the independent curriculum. In this research, the aim of descriptive research is to describe, show and present truthfully according to data, facts and reality. The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 17 Pontianak. The school is located at Jl. Husein Hamzah, Pal Lima, District. West Pontianak, Pontianak City, West Kalimantan 78244. The research population is of course teachers and students. The samples or research informants were social studies teachers and several students who were determined randomly. Research analysis was carried out according to Milles and Huberman's analysis. After the data was obtained, the research categorized the data obtained in the field through observation techniques, interviews and documentation studies on the implementation and obstacles in assessing the independent curriculum at SMP Negeri 17 Pontianak.

C. Finding and Discussion

In the independent curriculum, assessments or assessments consist of formative and summative assessments. Assessment uses a more holistic and contextual approach. Decree of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology Number 56 of 2022 states that the independent curriculum is divided into two main components, namely intracurricular and co-curricular through the activities of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5). (Hildebrandt et al., 2016) said that learning should create interest and a thirst for more knowledge felt by students. The main focus of intracurricular activities is to determine competencies as learning targets and assessment is focused on achieving these competencies (Learning Objectives). In the independent curriculum, formative assessments provide evaluation throughout the learning process or are simply carried out to improve the learning process. Meanwhile, summative assessment is an assessment that acts as a final assessment carried out to ensure the achievement of the overall learning objectives or is called an assessment carried out at the end of learning. The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 17 Pontianak to find out how it was implemented and the obstacles experienced by teachers and students. At SMP Negeri 17 Pontianak, the independent curriculum assessment uses the term Learning Goal Achievement Criteria (KKTP) as criteria or indicators to show students' achievement of Learning Goals (TP). Student report cards do not only contain grades, but also contain a form of description from the teacher regarding the student's abilities during the learning process and will later differentiate one student from another, even if there are the same grades between the students, they are differentiated in the form of description given by teacher in the report. According to (Gläser et al., 2021) acases related to religion are often produced by teenagers, this does not rule out the possibility in the school environment. It is important and preferable to change the curriculum, character education is still in the spotlight in schools and society. Good character will create good relationships between fellow humans. The independent curriculum embodies the instilling of religious character values in students and can be done through co-curricular activities (P5) and assessments. The following will explain the assessment implementation system and obstacles at SMP Negeri 17 Pontianak.

Strengthening Character Through Assessment at SMP Negeri 17 Pontianak

Implementation of the independent curriculum assessment focuses teachers' main attention on an inclusive approach that focuses on developing student potential. The attention that is focused is not only on students' cognitive abilities. Assessment not only assesses students' academic achievements, but also pays special attention to aspects of individual development, aspects of creativity and individual skills. At SMP Negeri 17, assessments are carried out by written and unwritten exams. Such as project assignments, reports, presentations and group discussions. Based on the results of the interview, the informant explained that in carrying out assessments, teachers can carry out assessments in the form of written or unwritten exams such as assignments in the form of reports, projects, presentations and so on. The informant also explained that the way to make an

assessment is that the teacher makes a description, rubric and scale or interval of grades. This is because in the current independent curriculum there is no longer a KKM system. Instead it was replaced by the KKTP system (Criteria for Achievement of Learning Objectives). Thus, determining student grades from the KKTP system can be done in 3 ways. For example, in the form of assessment using descriptions, in the description assessment there are criteria. Based on these criteria, the teacher chooses whether the student is in the "inadequate" or "adequate" category. Then, after the teacher has assessed all of these criteria, the teacher is then required to make a final assessment conclusion. For example: "students are considered to have achieved learning objectives if at least 2 criteria are adequate". So if the student has achieved the 2 criteria that have been created, the student has automatically achieved completeness in that subject. Informants from students said that the independent curriculum assessment process was satisfactory. This is because students can find out their abilities and weaknesses. This becomes an evaluation for students for next semester to improve. There is a description in the student's report card, so it is not just writing numbers, but there is a description from the teacher which describes the student's abilities during the learning process and up to the final assessment stage, namely the UAS. Assessment in learning activities is the key to knowing this, before starting learning, at least the teacher already has an initial picture of the students he will teach, so that the teacher makes learning plans, selecting media, methods and processes that will be implemented according to the characteristics of the students who will be taught (Mujiburrahman et al., 2023).

Based on the results of research on the implementation of assessments at SMP Negeri 17 Pontianak, teachers follow the learning model mastered by students. Teachers prioritize learning models that are mastered by each student and create innovative and creative learning styles. In terms of material, each chapter includes subject matter in Geography, Sociology, Economics and History. From the assignment aspect, namely the existence of activities after the learning process is implemented, Homework (PR) is no longer used and students still use Worksheet books (LKS) and package books that have been provided by the school. The following explains the implementation of formative and summative assessments at SMP Negeri 17 Pontianak:

a. Formative Assessment

Formative assessment is an assessment that is reviewed from the beginning of learning, the learning process to evaluating the success of learning objectives (TP). State Middle School 17 teachers consider formative assessment to be a very comprehensive assessment. This is because formative assessments help teachers observe the development of students' understanding of the learning material that has been presented. Of course, the observations made by the teacher at SMP Negeri 17 during the learning process took place through group discussions and interactions between students. One teacher informant said that he was still in the adjustment or adaptation stage to the Merdeka curriculum. Teacher informants consider that formative assessment is able to provide encouragement to teachers to be more systematic and consistent in assessing students in the areas they

master. Apart from providing benefits to teachers, formative assessments also provide benefits to students, namely formative assessments are considered to be able to arouse students' enthusiasm for learning who are responsive to the fields they master. In formative assessments, informants said that these assessments serve as evaluation material for teachers to review participants' abilities. students, for example what learning needs students need and the obstacles or challenges faced by students.

b. Summative Assessment

Summative assessment aims to ensure the achievement of all students' learning objectives, this assessment is carried out at the end of learning. The teacher at SMP Negeri 17 explained that the summative assessment was more focused on the final grade. Such as the assessment of the Final Semester Examination (UAS), where the results of these grades will be included in the report card grades. However, in the Merdeka curriculum, report card grades are not absolute values. If the K13 curriculum assumes that report card grades are absolute values, this is different from the Merdeka curriculum which assumes that report card grades do not have absolute numbers or values. The informant gave an example in terms of Learning Goal Achievement Criteria (KKTP) or what is often called KKM in the K13 curriculum. In the Merdeka KKTP curriculum, it does not only include reference grades but also includes a series of criteria or indicators that will measure the extent of student achievement by providing concrete and comprehensive information in report cards such as student A and student B getting a score of 90, but not necessarily both participants. If the student has mastered or is an expert in the same material, a description of which materials the student has mastered will be presented. The results of the summative assessment are the basis for filling out student study results reports. Assessment in the new paradigm, education can focus on implementing formative assessments compared to summative assessments (Budiono & Hatip, 2023).

Implementation and Barriers to Assessment at SMP Negeri 17 Pontianak

Implementing the Merdeka curriculum assessment is certainly a challenge for teachers at SMP Negeri 17 Pontianak. This is because the Merdeka curriculum is still a new curriculum implemented at the school. So there are several obstacles faced by teachers during the assessment process. Obstacles faced by teachers at SMP Negeri 17 Pontianak. First, limited experience with the independent curriculum. These limitations are felt by the teachers because some teachers still lack experience and are not really able to overcome the differences in interests and talents of each student. Therefore, the school intervened to overcome obstacles by providing training to teachers regarding the implementation of the independent curriculum and assessment. Second, there are some teachers who have not yet mastered technology. Informants said that some teachers were still not fluent in mastering developing technology. This is because the learning process in the Merdeka curriculum must make more use of rapidly developing technological developments to carry out the learning process. Therefore, some teachers are still making adjustments to the learning and assessment implementation process which focuses heavily on learning by

using highly developed technological developments, such as through applications or learning platforms that can create fun learning for students. Third, the limited teaching materials available. The informant said that until now students still use Student Worksheets (LKS) in carrying out the learning process. This is due to limited textbooks from the central government which until now has not provided these textbooks to the SMP Negeri 17 Pontianak school. So students are forced to buy textbooks individually and not all students can buy textbooks. This is due to the economic limitations of the students' parents and guardians. When facing challenges, according to (Ramadhan, 2023f) strategies are needed in the learning process. The role of internet technology is one way to create effective and optimal education when there are obstacles (Ramadhan, 2023e).

E. Conclusion

Exposure to the problems of learning assessment in the independent curriculum certainly brings new challenges and tasks for an educator or student, this is certainly felt by SMP Negeri 17 Pontianak, which this year has just implemented the independent curriculum. As times progress, of course the curriculum must also change to adapt to the current era and schools in Indonesia are flocking to start implementing the new curriculum that has been determined by the government in order to improve the quality of education in Indonesia. research samples from social studies teachers and several students. The results of the research show that SMPN 17 Pontianak is still in the adjustment or adaptation stage. Formative assessment is able to provide encouragement to teachers to be more systematic and consistent in assessing students in areas mastered. The assessment at SMPN 17 Pontianak is an evaluation for teachers to review students' abilities, for example what learning needs students need and the obstacles or challenges faced by students. Apart from still not mastering the adaptation process for teachers in the independent curriculum assessment, another obstacle is the limited number of textbooks from the central government which until now has not provided these textbooks to the SMP Negeri 17 Pontianak school. So students are forced to buy textbooks individually and not all students can buy textbooks.

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