

Parents' perceptions of the implementation of the independent curriculum at State Senior High School 13 Makassar

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Abstract

The Merdeka Curriculum, one of the policy programs under the umbrella of the Merdeka Belajar movement, was designed as a learning recovery effort developed by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) within a more flexible framework, focusing on providing essential materials, as well as developing student character and competency. Through this framework, students are expected to receive more meaningful and in-depth learning. This study aims to elaborate on the opinions of parents of students at SMA Negeri 13. This research is qualitative, where data is collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results show that parents highly appreciate the Merdeka Curriculum because it stimulates students' creativity, innovation, and thinking skills that are in line with the noble values of the nation's culture stated in Pancasila.

Abstrak

Kurikulum Merdeka, salah satu program kebijakan di bawah payung gerakan Merdeka Belajar, dirancang sebagai upaya pemulihan pembelajaran dikembangkan oleh Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi (Kemendikbudristek) dalam kerangka yang lebih fleksibel, fokus pada pemberian materi esensial, serta pengembangan karakter dan kompetensi murid. Melalui kerangka tersebut murid diharapkan dapat menerima pembelajaran yang lebih bermakna dan mendalam. penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengelaborasi pendapat Orangtua siswa di SMA Negeri 13. Penelitian ini bersifat kualitatif, di mana data dikumpulkan dengan cara observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Orangtua siswa sangat mengapresiasi Kurikulum Merdeka karena memacu kreatifitas, inovasi, dan daya pikir siswa yang sejalan dengan nilai-nilai luhur budaya bangsa yang tercantum dalam Pancasila.

Keywords

Independent Curriculum, Parents of Students, SMAN 13

1. Pendahuluan

In Indonesia, the term "curriculum" is no longer unfamiliar. It serves as the foundation for implementing an education system, from early childhood education (PAUD), elementary school (SD), junior high school (SMP), high school (SMA), and university levels, encompassing both formal and non-formal education. However, we often only understand the application of the curriculum without understanding its important function within the education system itself. It's no surprise that many of us only briefly understand the function of the curriculum, without realizing that its functions can be divided into several groups, not specifically for educators (teachers) and students (Sumilih 2024b).

Curriculum is a crucial term for the success of education. Without an appropriate and precise curriculum, it will be difficult to achieve the desired educational goals and objectives. Throughout the history of education in Indonesia, there have been several changes and improvements to the curriculum, the goal of which is to adapt to developments and progress, in order to achieve optimal results. The term "curriculum" is defined as "the distance a runner must cover from the start to the finish line to earn a medal or award." This definition was then adapted in the world of education and interpreted as "A number of subjects that must be taken by a student from the beginning to the end of the program in order to obtain a diploma (Sumilih 2023).

A curriculum is a set or system of plans and arrangements regarding learning materials that can be used as a guide in teaching and learning activities. Essentially, a curriculum is a learning plan. Therefore, all parties involved and directly related to the curriculum's function must understand it. These include students or learners implementing the curriculum, parents, teachers or educators, and the government through schools and education offices (Sumilih 2024a).

By understanding the definition of a curriculum, which is a learning plan, you should realize how crucial its function is for the advancement of education, both in Indonesia and globally. With a curriculum, you can understand the goals of education. In short, in schools, you will know the direction of the learning you will receive at that school. Therefore, a curriculum is mandatory in every educational institution (Hasan and Sintasari 2025). In Indonesia, there have been several curriculum changes. Naturally, these changes have both positive and negative aspects. The Indonesian curriculum is developed and agreed upon by the Ministry of Education and Culture and teachers or teaching staff. Of course, each country has a different curriculum, depending on the educational goals of each country (Ma'rifatunnisa 2025).

The Independent Curriculum (Curriculum Merdeka) is a curriculum focused on developing students' character and competencies. According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, the core of this curriculum is the Independent Learning Curriculum, where students flexibly explore their interests and talents. This differs from the 2013 Curriculum, which required students to study all subjects from kindergarten through junior high school and then focus on science or social studies in high school. Furthermore, the long-term outcome of the National Curriculum is the Pancasila Student Profile, which describes the ideal qualities of Indonesian education graduates who possess six key characteristics: Faith, devotion to God Almighty, noble character, global diversity, mutual cooperation, independence, critical thinking, and creativity (Syafei 2025).

The Independent Curriculum was actually developed in 2020 and has been implemented in stages since 2021. Currently, more than 300,000 educational institutions have voluntarily implemented the curriculum, including more than 6,000 schools in underdeveloped areas. Interestingly, each school has the flexibility to implement the Independent Curriculum according to their level of readiness (Mulyasa 2023). On March 27, 2024, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research,

and Technology announced the issuance of Regulation No. 12 of 2024 concerning the Curriculum for Early Childhood Education (PAUD), elementary education, and secondary education. With this regulation, the Independent Curriculum is officially established as the basic curriculum framework for educational institutions in Indonesia, known as the 2024 National Curriculum.

The provisions of the Independent Curriculum are stipulated in Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology Number 12 of 2024 concerning the establishment of the Independent Curriculum as the curriculum for Early Childhood Education (PAUD), elementary education, and secondary education. Educational units registered with the Independent Curriculum can implement the Independent Curriculum independently in the 2024/2025 academic year (independent learning, independent change, and independent sharing), by starting to apply the Independent Curriculum learning principles. What about schools that have not yet implemented the Independent Curriculum? These schools can still use the 2013 Curriculum (K-13) until the 2025/2026 academic year for non-3T areas or until 2026/2027 for 3T areas (Bahja, Hakim, and Afidah 2025).

2. Research Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach. Etymologically, the term "qualitative" comes from the Latin *qualitas*, meaning "nature" or "characteristic" of something. In a research context, a qualitative approach refers to a method that emphasizes understanding phenomena by examining their inherent nature, character, or quality (Ahmadin 2013). Meanwhile, terminologically, qualitative research is defined as a scientific approach that aims to understand social meaning from the perspective of participants using data collection techniques such as in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Emphasizes that the choice of research method must be tailored to the study's objectives, the type of data required, and the research context being examined (Sumilih et al. 2025). The ethnographic method, which focuses on what actually occurs in the study area, is known as the ethnographic method. This method was initially more frequently used in studies in cultural anthropology. It is referred to as a qualitative method because the data collected and analyzed are qualitative in nature (Rahman and Dkk 2022). The choice of a qualitative research approach focuses not only on data collection and analysis, but also on how researchers deeply understand and interpret social reality. With its exploratory and interpretive nature, qualitative research is used in various disciplines to uncover the hidden meanings behind individual and group experiences.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Functions of Curriculum for Parents

The curriculum is a set of subjects taught in educational institutions. According to Prof. Dr. H. Nasution in his book entitled *Curriculum and Teaching*, the curriculum is a series of plans to facilitate the teaching and learning process (Nasution 1989). The plans are under the responsibility of the educational institution and the teachers there. From the two definitions above, it can be concluded that the curriculum plays an important role in the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes in the learning process in an educational institution (Nasution 2022). In the implementation of education, all countries compete to formulate an education system that includes a curriculum with an ideal design, none other than to improve and advance education in the country so that it becomes a developed country with a strong educational foundation, and when tested and evaluated with other countries, a country can get the title of the top 10 countries in the world of education (Nasution et al. 2023).

In Indonesia, over the past decade, there have been four curriculum changes: the Competency-Based Curriculum (KBK) in 2004, the School Unit Level Curriculum (KTSP) in 2006, the 13th Curriculum in 2013, and the Independent Curriculum in 2022, initiated by Minister of Education Nadiem Anwar Makarim. Nadiem Anwar Makarim launched the Independent Curriculum online on February 11, 2022. He stated that the Independent Curriculum is a much more concise, simpler, and more flexible curriculum to support learning loss recovery due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the Independent Curriculum also aims to catch up with the lag in Indonesian education compared to other countries.

In the past decade, Indonesia has experienced a decline in Numeracy, Literacy, and Science skills as measured by the results of PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) in 2012, 2015, and 2018. Click the following link to see the PISA results <https://www.zenius.net/blog/pisa-2018-2019-standar-internasional>. The previous curriculum was deemed unable to explore students' talents, interests, and abilities more optimally. "There needs to be periodic evaluation and improvement of the curriculum to improve the quality of education," said Nadiem Makarim when launching the Merdeka Curriculum. From the results of this evaluation, the Merdeka Curriculum is present as an update and improvement of the previous curriculum to support learning loss recovery and improve the quality of Indonesian education.

To realize the transformation of independent learning, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum requires support from various stakeholders, including schools as education providers, students, and parents. These three stakeholders are inseparable and interconnected aspects of the educational process. The Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes the role of students in learning, which must also be supported and actively participated by parents. This is also supported by one of the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, namely a greater focus and centering on student development. This means that the content and scope of learning materials are tailored to student development through the use of learning methods tailored to student achievement, better known as differentiated learning. Therefore, collaboration between teachers and parents is essential in supporting and monitoring student growth and development throughout school.

Parental involvement, in particular, is a crucial factor in the transformation of independent learning (Rahman, Niko, and Rosramadhana 2024). Parents are expected to shift their paradigm, viewing schools as more than just places for children to be cared for, then to receive the learning process, and finally to receive a report or diploma. Parents are expected to be actively involved and support all of their children's activities to achieve the government's goal of producing a generation of Indonesians who practice the Pancasila student program. Further involvement can be provided to parents in mentoring students' talents and interests, as the independent curriculum provides students with greater freedom to choose majors that align with their interests and talents. Consequently, consistent communication and coordination between schools, parents, and students is essential to avoid future misunderstandings due to concerns about differing expectations from the school, students, or parents. This is especially important for high school students, who must have a plan for their further education. Another way parents can be involved is by accompanying and continuously monitoring their children's learning outcomes, regularly reviewing their children's progress reports, and asking about their responses and actions during the learning process at school. This is very useful for continuously monitoring student grades and assessing whether there is an increase or decrease in student learning outcomes over a specific period.

Therefore, parental involvement in supporting educational transformation and curriculum implementation in schools is crucial. Parents are partners with schools in educating the next generation with character aligned with the Pancasila-based student profile. With parental support, involvement, and active participation, schools will be stimulated to improve their performance in providing a sound education to students and guiding them toward learning readiness and maturity.

As a series of plans to achieve educational goals, the curriculum naturally has several functions. The following are the general functions of the curriculum:

- a. Adjustment Function: The curriculum is adaptable to changes occurring in a dynamic environment.
- b. Integration Function: The curriculum can serve as an educational tool that can shape holistic individuals with integrity in society.
- c. Differentiation Function: The curriculum is an educational tool that prioritizes serving each student, each with their own unique differences that deserve to be respected.
- d. Preparatory Function: As an educational tool, the curriculum serves to help prepare students for the next level of education and prepare them for life in society if they discontinue their education.
- e. Selective Function: The curriculum facilitates students by giving them the opportunity to choose a study program that aligns with their interests and talents.
- f. Diagnostic Function: The curriculum serves to understand and guide a student's potential so they can continue to explore their potential and improve their weaknesses.

Are undoubtedly a crucial factor in their children's education. Therefore, the curriculum plays a significant role for parents. Parents must collaborate with the school to develop character and enhance student learning. Therefore, parents are required to understand the curriculum used by their child's school. They must guide and teach their children according to the curriculum. Furthermore, the curriculum also serves as a guide for parents as it provides a visual representation of how their children learn and what they learn at school. This allows parents to evaluate both their children and the school in implementing the curriculum. Most importantly, parents play a significant role in supporting curriculum implementation, both for their children as students and for educators in facilitating the teaching and learning process. For parents, the curriculum serves as a visualization of how their children learn and what they learn at school. Therefore, parents can evaluate both their children and the school in implementing the curriculum. Parents are required to know the curriculum their children are using at school, as they will be responsible for guiding and teaching their children according to the curriculum. Therefore, the curriculum plays a significant role for parents, as they play a crucial role in their children's education.

3.2. Parental Support for the Independent Curriculum

As learning supporters, parents' role encompasses various aspects of their involvement in their children's educational process. This includes understanding the concepts and objectives of the independent curriculum, as well as the forms of support provided for their children's learning process. Active communication with the school and participation in various school activities are important indicators of parental involvement. Home learning support and the provision of learning facilities and resources are also the focus of measurement. Monitoring children's academic and non-academic development, providing motivation and emotional support, and involvement in school decision-making indicate the level of parental participation in their children's education. According to Ms. Regita, a parent, the independent curriculum makes students more active, creative, and innovative, and open to interacting with one another.

Another parent expressed similar concerns, though her statement implicitly contained a note of concern regarding financial capacity. The Merdeka Curriculum is synonymous with crafts that require tools and materials, requiring dipping into household funds to finance them. The following statement came from Mrs. St. Rahmawati (43), a parent of a student:

"Yes, dear. Since the Merdeka Curriculum has been in place, I always seem to be spending money because there are usually assignments to be completed, either individually or in groups. So sometimes before I finish one assignment, there's another one. But I understand the curriculum, because that's how it is, so I have to follow it."

Based on the research results, parents' views on the independent curriculum suggest that initially, they were unfamiliar with it because their children were too busy with subjects that required students to complete various assignments. However, due to the demands of the subjects their children were exposed to, parents began to understand this situation. Some parents also stated that the independent curriculum helped their children develop their creativity, requiring parents to play an active role in supporting the effective implementation of the independent curriculum.

According to Dodit, as cited in Nina Siti Salmaniah Siregar (2013), a view is an interpretation of experience based on the information received. In the context of education, a parent's view refers to their understanding and response to the education system at their child's school. Each parent may have different views on their child's education, influenced by their individual experiences and understandings as parents.

These results align with research (Nafira Rozanata, 2024). In general, parents have a very positive view of character education in the independent curriculum. They understand the importance of character education in shaping students' positive personalities and hope that its implementation will involve more active family involvement. The independent curriculum is designed to include a variety of extracurricular activities that provide space for students to explore ideas and develop their competencies. This curriculum aims to create a fun learning environment, as a cheerful atmosphere makes it easier for children to absorb new information. Freedom in learning is the foundation in transforming education towards the creation of superior Human Resources (HR).

The concept of "independent learning" implies freedom from external pressure and coercion in the learning process. Students are also reminded not to be quickly satisfied or proud of their academic achievements. In addition to understanding concepts, facts, and processes, independent learning also emphasizes the importance of developing higher-order thinking skills, or metacognitive skills. Therefore, learning must be carried out in a balanced manner both at school and at home.

The role of parents in educating children is an inseparable responsibility, although this role continues to change with the times. In today's digital era, parents' approaches to educating and guiding children tend to differ from the parenting styles of the 1980s. This change is influenced by advances in technology, information, and increasingly complex social demands. Therefore, it is important to understand how parents adapt to these changes in order to optimally support their children's growth and development (Mujiburrahman, 2013). Although in practice, learning experiences often seem more focused on behavior, according to Vygotsky's constructivist theory, the learning process is actually a mental activity, not just an outward act. In a student-centered learning approach, young people are guided in their development by experts in their fields. They utilize support from adults and peers to accelerate their development.

However, this does not mean that parents take over their children's schoolwork, leaving them passive or unable to understand the material, as this can actually reduce the quality of learning (Rahmat, 2019). The bond between parents and children plays a crucial role in completing schoolwork. This interaction provides opportunities for children to gradually develop their understanding. Therefore, completing assignments can take longer, for both children and parents, because they need to research information, read, and understand the material before they can complete them.

From the research results above, the author sees that in relation to the research on the views of teachers, students, and parents regarding the implementation of the independent curriculum in class XI of SMA Negeri 13 Makassar, the constructivism theory is very relevant because the independent curriculum itself is based on the principles of constructivism which emphasize independent learning and the active role of students.

4. Conclusion

For parents, the Independent Curriculum provides more time for competency and character development through P5, a co-curricular activity that provides students with the opportunity to study important themes or issues such as climate change, anti-radicalism, mental health, culture, entrepreneurship, technology, and democratic life so that students can take real action in responding to these issues. With the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at her child's school, she began to clearly see the path her child would take. This path was seen as a pathway for her child to develop talents based on their characteristics. Through the Independent Curriculum, she also began to understand the goals of the Pancasila Student Profile, the character and competencies expected to develop through the child's learning process. Through the principles of faith and devotion to God Almighty, children are taught to worship and learn good manners. Independence is also a focus of the Pancasila Student Profile.

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