

**ANALYSIS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MERDEKA CURRICULUM
AND THE TYPICAL AL-FALAH FOUNDATION CURRICULUM: CONSTRAINTS
AND OPPORTUNITIES**

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ABSTRAK

Kurikulum mandiri merupakan kurikulum yang memberikan kebebasan kepada sekolah dan guru untuk menyesuaikan proses pembelajaran dengan potensi kebutuhan siswa. Kurikulum ini menekankan pembelajaran yang fleksibel, berfokus pada pengembangan karakter, kreativitas, dan kompetensi dasar siswa serta mendorong siswa untuk lebih kontekstual dan mandiri terhadap permasalahan yang dihadapinya. Sedangkan Yayasan Al-Falah menerapkan kurikulum unik yang disesuaikan dengan nilai-nilai agama dan karakteristik lokal yayasan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis implementasi kurikulum mandiri dan kurikulum khas yayasan Al-Falah, dengan fokus pada hambatan dan peluang yang muncul dalam implementasinya. Pendekatan penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif. Analisis data pada penelitian ini menggunakan analisis deskriptif, data diperoleh dari wawancara mendalam, observasi dan dokumentasi. Dalam analisis ini, data ditafsirkan secara deskriptif dan diungkapkan secara naratif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan adanya peluang seperti fleksibilitas dalam mengembangkan bahan ajar sehingga memudahkan penyesuaian kurikulum yayasan dengan kurikulum mandiri, memberikan kebebasan kepada yayasan untuk menentukan model pembelajaran dan model kebijakan yang sesuai dengan karakteristik yayasan, serta masih adanya ruang integrasi nilai-nilai lokal dengan standar pendidikan nasional. Beberapa kendala yang dihadapi antara lain kurangnya pemahaman guru mengenai kurikulum mandiri, keterbatasan sarana dan prasarana, terbatasnya waktu integrasi dengan kurikulum yayasan lokal, dan penolakan terhadap perubahan.

Kata Kunci: Kurikulum Mandiri, Kurikulum Khas Yayasan Al-Falah, Kendala, Peluang, Pendidikan

ABSTRACT

An independent curriculum is a curriculum that gives schools and teachers the freedom to adapt the learning process to the potential needs of students. This curriculum emphasizes flexible learning, focuses on developing students' character, creativity and basic competencies and encourages students to be more contextual and independent regarding the issues they face. Meanwhile, the Al-Falah Foundation implements a unique curriculum that is adapted to the religious values and local characteristics of the foundation. This research aims to analyze the implementation of the independent curriculum and the typical Al-Falah foundation curriculum, focusing on the obstacles and opportunities that arise in its implementation. The approach to this research uses a qualitative approach. Data analysis for this research uses descriptive analysis, data obtained from in-depth interviews, observation and documentation. In this analysis, the data is interpreted descriptively and expressed narratively. The results of the research show opportunities such as flexibility in developing teaching materials so that it makes it easier to adapt the foundation's curriculum to the independent curriculum, giving foundations the freedom to determine learning models and policy models that suit the characteristics of the foundation, as well as there is room for integration of local values with national education

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standards. Several obstacles include teachers' lack of understanding regarding the independent curriculum, limited facilities and infrastructure, limited time for integration with the local foundation curriculum, resistance to change.

Keywords: Independent Curriculum, Typical Al-Falah Foundation Curriculum, Constraints, Opportunities, Education

INTRODUCTION

The results of the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) show that 70% of 15 year old students are below minimum competency in understanding simple reading or applying basic mathematical concepts. The study shows that there are large gaps between regions and between socio-economic groups in terms of the quality of learning. This was made worse by the Covid-19 pandemic. To overcome this, the Ministry of Education simplified the curriculum. The urgency of changing the 2013 curriculum to an independent curriculum is because the 2013 curriculum is considered inflexible and unable to adapt to changes occurring in society, especially in the world of education. The independent curriculum seeks to create students who are tough, independent and creative through a more open and inclusive approach. This curriculum aims to restore the basis of education, namely free religion. This curriculum is designed to increase student competence as well as increase teacher creativity and encourage learning that is contextual and relevant to the issues faced by students. To understand the description of the prototype curriculum, you can look at the Minister of Education and Culture's Decree Number 162/M/2021 concerning driving schools. The prototype curriculum is the forerunner curriculum of the independent curriculum. The curriculum has several main characteristics which are expected to support the recovery of learning after the pandemic (Kemedikbudristek, 2021), namely, the first is project-based learning for the development of soft skills and character which includes faith, piety and noble morals, mutual cooperation, global diversity, independence, critical reasoning, and creativity. Both focus on essential materials which are expected to provide sufficient time for in-depth learning of basic competencies such as literacy and enumeration. Thirdly, teachers have the flexibility to carry out learning according to students' abilities and also make adjustments to the local context and content.

The Al-Falah Foundation has unique characteristics that other schools or madrasas do not have. This uniqueness is in order to improve students' morals, increase faith and devotion to Allah SWT, form love for the Prophet Mummad SAW and love for regional culture and create a sense of love for the nation and state. Therefore, the Al-Falah Foundation has its own unique curriculum, namely Islamic Boarding School Curriculum Content, dhikr and tahlil, birthdays, and celebration of holidays. The content of the Islamic Boarding School Curriculum is carried out every Monday to Thursday before teaching and learning begins, the aim is to increase memorization of prayers and letters in juz amma, increase devotion to Allah SWT through the implementation of memorization activities, tahfidz quran and dhuha prayers. The aim of dhikr and tahlil which is held every Friday before teaching and learning begins is to increase faith, devotion and noble morals as well as train students to indirectly memorize the reading considering that dhikr and tahlil readings are very useful in society. It is hoped that students can lead the reading. Maulid Diba is held every Saturday before the KBM begins with the aim of increasing feelings of love for the Prophet Muhammad SAW. Commemoration of national holidays is carried out every time a big day is celebrated. Apart from that, the Al-Falah Foundation also conducts semester assessments by adding Islamic boarding school curriculum content such as memorizing daily prayers, memorizing selected verses and juz amma, thoyibah sentences, prayer practice, writing Arabic letters, practice of ablution, adhan and iqomah, shrouding, corpses, reading. yasin and tahlil as well as Javanese speeches.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is a study that examines the quality of relationships, activities, situations, or various materials. This means that qualitative research places more emphasis on holistic description, which can explain in detail what activities or situations are taking place rather than comparing the effects of certain treatments, or explaining people's attitudes or behavior. Data analysis for this research uses descriptive analysis, data obtained from in-depth interviews, observation and documentation. In this analysis, the data is interpreted descriptively and expressed narratively.

Through qualitative descriptive research, students can see a natural picture of the program or policy that is being implemented so that they can reflect whether the program or activity chosen is appropriate in solving existing problems or not. More than that, through qualitative descriptive research you can see directly what difficulties occur when the program or activity is carried out. The author analyzed the data in this research by systematically compiling and searching for data obtained from interviews, field notes and other materials so that it can be understood easily.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Implementation of the Curriculum

The development of the Independent Curriculum in Indonesia has occurred gradually since it was introduced in 2020. This curriculum is the government's effort to catch up with learning losses after the Covid-19 pandemic. This policy has received significant encouragement from various parties, including academics, educational practitioners and other stakeholders. In the active learning approach, students are invited to be directly involved in the learning process, both individually and in groups, with various activities that encourage understanding of concepts and application in real contexts. The project-based learning approach provides students with the opportunity to learn and apply concepts and skills in the context of projects that are relevant to everyday life. Meanwhile, the student-centered approach prioritizes students' active role in constructing knowledge and building understanding through direct experience, reflection and dialogue.

Freedom to learn is part of the new policy established by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemendikbud RI). According to Nadiem, curriculum policies related to independent learning must first be made available to educators before they are conveyed or implemented to students. Apart from that, Nadiem also said that regarding the competency of teachers at whatever level, without a translation process of existing basic competencies that are closely related to the curriculum, learning will not occur. The independent learning curriculum is related to how an educator is able to convey lesson material by linking it to the formation of students' character.

The concept of Independent Learning is very different from the existing curriculum used by formal education in Indonesia. This new educational concept takes into account the individual cognitive abilities and uniqueness of students. Freedom to Learn means that teachers and students have the freedom to innovate, the freedom to learn independently and creatively. Merdeka Belajar can be a solution because policies are designed based on the wishes and prioritizing students needs.

The MA Al Falah curriculum structure includes a number of subjects whose breadth and depth are in accordance with the Learning Outcomes set by the national government. For the subjects of Islamic Religious Education and Arabic in accordance with the Decree of the Director General of Islamic Education Number 3211 of 2022 concerning Learning Achievements of Islamic Religious Education and Arabic in the Independent Curriculum in Madrasas, while general subjects are in accordance with the Decree of the Head of the



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Educational Standards, Curriculum and Assessment Agency Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia Number 033/HKR/2022 concerning Amendments to the Decision of the Head of the Education Standards, Curriculum and Assessment Agency, Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia Number 008/H/KR/2022 concerning Learning Achievements in the Independent Curriculum.

The MA curriculum structure consists of 2 (two) phases, namely phase E and phase F. Madrasas can organize intracurricular learning content and project-based learning in an integrated or simultaneous manner. In this regard, madrasas can use or choose subject or thematic approaches freely according to the students' programmed learning needs. This form of learning can be carried out collaboratively in several subjects to support one theme which is managed through project-based learning, so that intracurricular achievements can be realized while strengthening the character of Pancasila students.

1. Phase E for class X: Natural Sciences and Social Sciences subjects in class X MA are not separated into more specific subjects. However, the educational unit can determine how lesson content is organized. Organizing learning in Natural Sciences and Social Sciences can be done through several approaches as follows: a) teaching Natural Sciences or Social Sciences content in an integrated manner; b) teach Natural Science or Social Science content alternately in separate time blocks; or c) teaching Natural Science or Social Science content in parallel, with separate JP such as different subjects, followed by an inquiry learning unit that integrates the Natural Science or Social Science lesson content.
2. 2. Phase F for class XI and class XII. Phase F for class XI and class. b) each madrasah's religious subject group is required to provide at least 4 (four) subjects in this group. c) Mathematics and Natural Sciences (MIPA) subject group. Each madrasah is required to provide at least 3 (three) subjects in this group. d) The Social Sciences subject group of each madrasah is required to provide at least 3 (three) subjects in this group. e) Language and Culture subject group This subject group is opened according to the resources available at the madrasah. f) Vocational and Craft subject groups are opened according to the resources available at the Madrasah.

Madrasah Aliyah Al Falah has its own unique curriculum contained in the Islamic boarding school curriculum content. Madrasah Aliyah Al-Falah is a madrasa that has characteristics that other schools or madrasas do not have. These characteristics are aimed at improving students' morals, increasing faith and devotion to Allah SWT, showing love for the Prophet Muhammad SAW and love for regional culture as well as creating a sense of love for the nation and state. The following is the typical Madrasah Aliyah Al-Falah curriculum.

NO	Distinctiveness/advantages	Implementation	Objective
1	Islamic boarding school curriculum content	Every Monday to Thursday before KBM	To increase memorization of prayers and letters in Juz 'Amma, increase devotion to Allah SWT through the implementation of

			memorization activities, tahfidz Quran dhuha prayers
2	Dhikr and Tahlil	Every Friday before KBM	To increase faith, devotion to Allah SWT and noble morals
3	Maulid Diba	Every Saturday Before KBM	To increase love for the Prophet Muhammad SAW
4	Commemoration of national holidays	Every national holiday is celebrated	To increase the feeling of love for the homeland, nation and state

B. Opportunities and Constraints

Education in Indonesia always experiences curriculum changes from time to time. One of the curriculum changes is the independent curriculum. By implementing the independent curriculum and Islamic boarding school curriculum content, foundations have considerable potential and opportunities to develop, provided that the foundation must be able to integrate the two curricula into the institution's strategy. The following are the opportunities and obstacles for implementing the independent curriculum and the typical Islamic boarding school curriculum.

Figure 1. Opportunities and Constraints for Implementing the Independent Curriculum

No	opportunity	constraint
1	Teacher and Student Independence: The independent curriculum gives teachers the freedom to design teaching materials according to students' needs. This allows teachers to be more creative and innovative in creating a classroom atmosphere and teaching materials.	Lack of teacher preparedness: There are still many teachers who need further socialization and training regarding the implementation of the independent curriculum. The uneven training process is a big challenge in its implementation.
2	Strengthening the Pancasila profile: through a project to continuously strengthen the profile of Pancasila students with	Lack of active participation of students: some students have not been able to fully adapt to the independent curriculum considering that

	<p>aspects of the independent curriculum, students are taught noble national values, and concern for the environment and each other. So that it can increase students' opportunities to become individuals who love their homeland.</p>	<p>the independent curriculum has not been fully implemented. So the aim of the independent curriculum to form proactive and independent students is still difficult to implement.</p>
3	<p>Inclusivity and flexibility: An independent curriculum allows educational institutions and students to design educational policies for institutions and learning policies for students that are in accordance with institutional conditions and students' abilities, so that in this case institutions can improve inclusiveness and the learning environment.</p>	<p>Limited access and facilities: In some cases, especially for educational institutions that are just starting out and developing, limited access to technology or other resources becomes an obstacle to implementing learning that is in accordance with the independent curriculum.</p>

Figure 2. Opportunities and Constraints for Implementing Typical Foundation Curriculum

No	Opportunity	Constraint
1	<p>Strengthening religious values: The foundation curriculum integrates very strong and in-depth religious values related to understanding religion, so that it becomes an opportunity to shape the character of students who have noble morals and are obedient in carrying out religious teachings.</p>	<p>Limited time: with the existence of the independent curriculum and the typical foundation curriculum, the result is that the time available for the typical curriculum becomes limited, so that time management in implementing learning will be very complex.</p>
2	<p>Balance of general knowledge and religious values: With a unique curriculum, students are not only trained to think intelligently and critically</p>	<p>Focus imbalance: With the existence of two integrated curricula, many students lose focus and find it difficult to focus on academic aspects compared</p>

	academically but also practice religious teachings and are expected to be able to implement religious teachings in everyday life well and correctly.	to religious aspects and vice versa. Maintaining a balance between the two is quite a big challenge for foundations.
3	Empowerment of religion-based extracurricular activities: The existence of a special curriculum provides opportunities for students to take part in various kinds of religious activities such as morning tadarus, dhikr, dhuha prayers and commemoration of major holidays in Islam, thus giving students direct experience in worship and deepening students' spiritual values.	Adapting the curriculum to the global context: The implementation of a typical curriculum that focuses heavily on traditional values and seems conservative or religious faces big challenges in preparing students who are sensitive to more modern and competitive global challenges.

With the independent curriculum and the typical Al-Falah foundation curriculum, they have very different approaches, but in fact the two complement each other. The independent curriculum focuses on developing cognitive skills and critical thinking abilities, while the typical Al-Falah foundation curriculum strengthens religious discipline, morals and religious values. In the application of both, students are expected to not only be proficient in general knowledge, but also to be of character with noble morals, thereby producing a religious and broad-minded generation.

C. Analysis of the Differences between the Independent Curriculum and the Typical Curriculum

In order to make it easier to analyze the implementation of the curriculum at the Al Falah foundation, we present a table containing an analysis of the differences between the independent curriculum and the typical Al Falah foundation curriculum:

Aspect	Independent Curriculum	Typical Foundation Curriculum
Learning approach	Based on competencies and skills that are relevant to global developments (critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity) and flexible to meet student needs.	Based on religious values, culture or local wisdom, and coaching on morals with an emphasis on the application and understanding of worship.
The main purpose	Creating students who are independent, creative, innovative and	Forming students who are religious, cultured and have noble morals and

	competent in various aspects of life and ready to adapt to global changes	are able to apply religious teachings in everyday life.
Main focus	Development of cognitive abilities, character profiles of Pancasila students and academic competencies and skills to adapt to global conditions.	Religious education that is deeper and focuses on fostering spirituality and noble character.
Teaching methods	Flexible, project-based and learning activities that focus on independent exploration and group work, as well as strengthening the Pancasila student profile.	Learning that inserts religious values in every lesson as well as routine religious activities such as tadarus, dhikr, dhuha prayers, and so on.
Extracurricular activities	Development-based activities develop students' interests and talents in the general domain.	Religious-based extracurriculars such as tadarus, dhikr, maulid diba', and other religious activities aimed at forming Islamic character.
Student assessment	Based on formative and summative assessments, it is more flexible and focuses on comprehensive individual development.	Based on academic performance supported by adherence to religious teachings, including discipline in participating in religious activities.

The independent curriculum and the Al-Falah foundation's typical curriculum have very different approaches, especially in the concept of application in shaping student character, but both complement each other and correlate with each other in developing student characteristics. Their curriculum focuses more on modern and academic development and skills, while the Al-Falah foundation's typical curriculum focuses on religious education and character development. The combination of the two can create students who are academically and spiritually intelligent.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion from the analysis of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum and the Special Curriculum in Al Falah shows that these two curricula have an important role in forming a more flexible and contextual learning process. The Independent Curriculum provides freedom for teachers and students to determine the direction of learning, according to their individual needs and potential, thereby creating wider space for creativity. Meanwhile, the Al Falah Special Curriculum emphasizes aspects of character formation and Islam, which are relevant to the school's vision and mission to give birth to a generation with noble morals.

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The implementation of these two curricula has had a positive impact, but also faces challenges, such as the alignment of teaching methods with curriculum objectives and the readiness of human resources to implement the curriculum optimally. Overall, the combination of the innovative Merdeka Curriculum and the Al Falah Special Curriculum which is based on religious values shows that the curriculum approach in this school is relevant to the needs of the times, while still maintaining the roots of Islamic religious education.

In conclusion, implementing these two curricula simultaneously provides added value to the educational process, by providing a balance between freedom to learn and strengthening Islamic values, although improvements are needed in operational aspects to make it more effective and in line with the expectations of the school and society.

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