

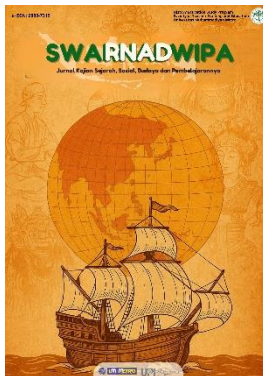
Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in History Education at State Senior High School 1 Purbolinggo

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to analyze the implementation of the Independent Curriculum (*Merdeka*) in history learning at SMA Negeri 1 Purbolinggo. The type of research conducted in this study is field research. Field research is research carried out in real-life settings. The field research in this study specifically refers to research conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Purbolinggo, focusing on the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in history learning. The results of the research on the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in history learning at SMA Negeri 1 Purbolinggo include planning, execution, evaluation, and challenges in the learning process. The planning phase involves training, guidance, in-house training workshops (IHT), and the preparation of learning tools. The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in history learning includes introductory activities, main activities, and closing, with teachers conducting lessons based on the prepared learning tools. The evaluation covers both summative and formative assessments, and evaluations are conducted comprehensively for every school program. The challenges in history learning at SMA Negeri 1 Purbolinggo include low student motivation and a lack of adequate technological facilities, such as LCDs and projectors.

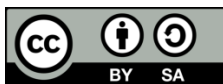
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INTRODUCTION

In the field of education, several elements must work synergistically to achieve educational goals. Each element plays a crucial role, including the curriculum, which can be considered the cornerstone of the teaching and learning process. The quality of education, whether good or poor, largely depends on the curriculum's ability to foster critical understanding in students (Fajri et al., 2023).

The Merdeka Curriculum introduced by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology is an innovative curriculum (Sopacua & Fadli, 2022). It is designed to provide students with opportunities to learn in a relaxed, enjoyable, and pressure-free environment, enabling them to express their natural talents. Merdeka Belajar emphasizes freedom and creative thinking. One of the programs presented by the Ministry

during the launch of Merdeka Belajar was the initiation of the Driving Schools Program (Barlian et al., 2022).

The teaching of history in schools aims to build students' character and mental attitude, awaken an awareness of a fundamental dimension in human existence (the continuous movement and transition from the past toward the future), foster honesty and wisdom in students, and instill a love for the nation and a sense of humanity (Ayundasari, L. 2022).

History learning should be conducted in three stages. First, fostering awareness of the social environment and a sense of intimacy. Second, introducing students to the meaning of the dimension of time in life (sense of actuality). Third, developing a sense of history. History lessons should not be dominated by political history but should also include social history to nurture local creativity, which is beneficial for the natural environment and in facing future challenges (Ayundasari, L. 2022).

Before starting the learning process, teachers first prepare a learning plan that includes several elements, such as general information, core competencies, and supplementary materials. The process of creating a teaching module involves several steps, such as understanding the learning outcomes (LO), formulating learning objectives, organizing the sequence of learning objectives based on the LO, and designing the learning materials. A Teaching Module is a set of learning plans developed in accordance with the standards of the Merdeka Curriculum. It contains learning outcomes, assessment plans, detailed activities (learning steps), methods, teaching tools and media, as well as evaluations (formative and summative). The Teaching Module is supplemented with various supporting materials, such as additional texts, images, illustrations, diagrams, videos, and audio (Salsabilla et al., 2023).

Before initiating the learning process, teachers first prepare a lesson plan that includes several elements, such as general information, core competencies, and supplementary materials (Triyoga et al., 2024). The development of a teaching module involves several steps, such as understanding learning outcomes (LO), formulating learning objectives, arranging the sequence of learning objectives based on the LO, and designing the learning materials. A Teaching Module is a set of lesson plans designed in accordance with the standards of the Merdeka Curriculum. It includes learning outcomes, assessment plans, detailed activities (learning steps), methods, teaching tools and media, as well as evaluations (formative and summative). The Teaching Module is also enriched with various supporting materials, such as additional texts, images, illustrations, diagrams, videos, and audio (Salsabilla et al., 2023).

In reality, teachers often face challenges in designing and developing lesson plans, even though lesson planning is one of the most crucial aspects of achieving learning objectives. Currently, many teachers appear to approach teaching as merely fulfilling an obligation. They often overlook the importance of strategies and methods in teaching, focusing only on ensuring that the learning process takes place. This is a misguided perspective and should not be followed.

RESEARCH METHODS

The type of research conducted in this study is field research (Fadli, 2021). Field research refers to research carried out in real-life settings. In this context, the field research was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Purbolinggo, specifically focusing on the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in history learning.

Primary data sources are data collected directly by the researcher from the original source. Primary sources provide data directly to the data collector. The primary data sources used in this study include the vice principal for curriculum and two history

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teachers. This approach allows the researcher to obtain information more effectively regarding the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in history learning.

Based on the presurvey conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Purbolinggo, the school has implemented the Merdeka Curriculum by applying independent learning for students in grades X and XI. The decision to implement the Merdeka Curriculum at this school is based on support for the vision, mission, and strategies established by the school. The use of the Merdeka Curriculum is expected to facilitate students according to their abilities in absorbing the materials designed to achieve the vision and mission of SMA Negeri 1 Purbolinggo.

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Secondary data sources are supporting sources related to the research, which can include books on the subject matter written by others, documents that are needed, research results, and reports. Secondary data can be obtained from documents available at SMA Negeri 1 Purbolinggo. This data is crucial for the researcher as it helps to review the research and strengthen the object being studied.

In collecting the necessary data for this study, the researcher used the following methods: interviews, observations, and documentation. After the data collection process is complete, the next step is to test the validity of the data. The researcher also uses data credibility or data triangulation. Triangulation is the process of testing the truth of the data, and it is the most common method used to ensure the validity of data in qualitative research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

History Learning Planning in the *Merdeka* Curriculum at State Senior High School 1 Purbolinggo

The curriculum is a program designed to achieve a set of educational goals. It is an essential tool for the success of education; without a good and appropriate curriculum, it would be difficult to achieve the desired educational objectives and targets. Of course, in the history learning process at any school in Indonesia, the curriculum is generally the same, though the methods and delivery may vary. History education is one of the mandatory subjects that students must follow, particularly in grade 11 at SMA Negeri 1 Purbolinggo.

This aligns with the statement of the vice principal for curriculum and two history teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Purbolinggo, who explained the following: Understanding of the Merdeka Curriculum was acquired through socialization and workshops held at the school. The Merdeka Curriculum at the high school level emphasizes the specialization of each student. This curriculum was implemented at SMA Negeri 1 Purbolinggo in 2021, replacing the 2013 Curriculum. The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is carried out gradually, starting with grade 10, then moving to grade 11, and currently, in its third year, grade 12 is also using the Merdeka Curriculum.

Moreover, the Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes a change in the role of the teacher, from being a mere instructor to becoming a facilitator and mentor. This means that the teacher's function is not only to teach the material but also to guide students throughout the learning process. Teachers provide constructive feedback and assist students in

discovering and developing their interests and talents. This change aims to create a deeper learning experience and support the individual growth of students.

In planning history lessons, teachers align the learning objectives with the set learning targets, where the selection of materials, methods, and strategies are adjusted to the students' conditions and characteristics. Additionally, in this school, there is an Operational Curriculum of the Educational Unit (KOSP) that includes the overall learning process plan and serves as a guide for all teaching activities (Hafida, 2024).

For learning purposes, teachers need to prepare teaching materials such as textbooks from the Ministry of Education, as well as create teaching modules, syllabi, annual programs (Prota), and semester programs (Prosem). These materials are compiled into a single booklet and printed for the convenience of the teachers. The teaching module functions as a replacement for the Lesson Plan (RPP).

Based on the learning planning process and teaching modules created by the history teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Purbolinggo, the modules align with the standards set by the government. The modules are developed based on the Merdeka Curriculum and adhere to national education standards. The modules are systematically designed, offering clear guidance and instructions for teachers to implement the learning activities.

Regarding the learning material taught to students, as explained by the two history teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Purbolinggo: After attending guidance and training, the teachers adjust the history learning materials to the topics to be discussed in each session. The teachers collaborate and gain a lot of learning, especially in determining the history learning materials. When selecting history learning materials, teachers need to first prepare the material that will be taught to the students. All of these materials are listed in the Merdeka Curriculum printed book, and additional materials can be obtained via the internet. Furthermore, the learning material is reinforced with local history, both as part of the learning material and through local field trips.

Regarding the teachers' ability to operate digital devices for teaching, some senior teachers who have been teaching for many years face difficulties. This is because these teachers are approaching retirement age and are less familiar with using digital devices. Senior teachers tend to collaborate more often with younger teachers, who are more proficient with digital tools, when dealing with tasks involving technology.

This is in line with a previous study by Ujang Cepi Barlian, Siti Solekah, and Puji Rahayu (2022), which found that the planning of the Merdeka Curriculum learning materials includes analyzing the learning outcomes (CP), formulating learning objectives, and sequencing the objectives. It also involves selecting methods, media, and learning materials, planning diagnostic assessments, and developing teaching modules that align the learning process with students' developmental stages and characteristics.

Implementation of History Learning in the *Merdeka* Curriculum at State Senior High School 1 Purbolinggo

The introductory activities are the initial steps taken by the teacher when starting the lesson. The session begins with greetings, which serve as an initial step in creating a positive relationship between the teacher and students. The teacher leads a prayer to start the learning process, asking for blessings, smoothness, and safety during the lesson. The prayer is conducted according to each individual's belief. Attendance is then taken, with the teacher calling out the names of the students to confirm their presence. The teacher then presents the learning objectives, informing the students about the goals or competencies they are expected to achieve and what they should understand by the end of the lesson.

According to the field observations conducted by the researcher, the teacher carried out the core learning activities based on the teaching module that had been prepared. For the topic of colonialism and the resistance of the Indonesian people, the teacher utilized

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question-and-answer methods and also applied Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and Project-Based Learning (PjBL) models.

During the closing activity, students were asked to summarize or conclude what they had learned during the session. The teacher actively assisted students in this process by providing guidance, revisiting key points, and answering any remaining questions. Once the summary was complete, the teacher informed students about the topics that would be covered in the next lesson, allowing them to prepare in advance. The session concluded with a prayer, inviting students to join in.

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in history learning at SMA Negeri 1 Purbolingo successfully integrated differentiated learning, tailoring the material to the individual abilities, interests, and needs of the students. This differentiated approach covered content, process, product, and learning environment, fostering creativity in both students and teachers. Through Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and Project-Based Learning (PjBL) approaches on the topics of colonialism and Indonesian resistance, students were able to develop critical thinking skills, teamwork, and a strong historical consciousness. Furthermore, the integration of local wisdom themes within P5 encouraged the spirit of mutual cooperation, critical thinking, and noble values, which align with the Pancasila Student Profile.

Although there were challenges, such as the limited resources for differentiated learning models, the implementation of this curriculum has positively impacted students' interest, talents, and critical thinking abilities. This is in line with the research by Lutfiah Ayundasari (2021), which emphasizes that the curriculum explicitly stresses the importance of implementing history learning in a comprehensive and holistic manner through introductory, core, and closing activities with a multidimensional approach, supporting the development of free individuals with strong historical awareness.

Evaluation of History Learning in the *Merdeka* Curriculum at State Senior High School 1 Purbolingo

The evaluation of learning is conducted through assessments by the teacher, focusing on the creativity of students during the learning process. These assessments are made for each student profile, based on their individual engagement in the learning activities. As a facilitator, the teacher provides assessment tools created independently to evaluate students' creativity. This evaluation is not limited to teachers and students but also involves all components of the school and stakeholders within the school environment.

This was also explained by the two history teachers at SMA Negeri 1 Purbolingo as follows: "The evaluation at SMA Negeri 1 Purbolingo involves various types of assessments, including formative and summative assessments. Formative assessments, in the form of daily tests, are conducted at the end of each material chapter, while summative assessments, in the form of written tests, are conducted at mid-semester and at the end of the semester to assess the overall learning achievement."

The evaluation is carried out comprehensively, with the goal of improving future projects. Evaluation is not only for students, but also for monitoring the teacher's learning process and the readiness of the educational unit. Evaluation is an action or process to determine the value of something, with the benchmark being the growth and development of students, teachers, and the educational unit.

Learning evaluations are conducted through formative assessments and summative assessments. The formative assessments are equivalent to the daily tests conducted at the end of each chapter, while summative assessments are carried out at mid-semester and the

end of the semester. Both of these evaluations align with the evaluation standards outlined in the Merdeka Curriculum, as established by the government. In addition, evaluation activities are also carried out within school programs, such as project activities, teacher performance, student progress, and the readiness of the educational unit. Therefore, the evaluation process is conducted thoroughly, beginning from the planning phase, through the implementation, and culminating in follow-up actions and improvements related to teaching, school components, and future school programs.

This is in line with research conducted by Nofri Hendri (2020), which states that evaluation is an action or process to determine the value of something. The Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Handbook emphasizes that evaluation is comprehensive, not only focused on student development but also on the teacher's learning process in preparing project activities, the readiness of the school, and the environment of the educational unit.

Challenges in History Learning in the Merdeka Curriculum at State Senior High School 1 Purbolinggo

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMA Negeri 1 Purbolinggo has faced several challenges, including limited technology and learning facilities in the learning process. According to the curriculum coordinator at SMA Negeri 1 Purbolinggo, the following challenges were highlighted: "The main challenge faced is understanding how to translate or break down the Learning Achievements (Capaian Pembelajaran) into Learning Objectives (Tujuan Pembelajaran). The heterogeneity of students in the classroom, in terms of their understanding levels, thinking abilities, skills, learning styles, self-confidence, and concentration levels, also poses a challenge. Additionally, there are still shortcomings in learning facilities, including a lack of LCD projectors and other supporting tools for teaching activities."

The Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes the use of technology in teaching, but the available facilities are inadequate, such as the shortage of LCD projectors and other essential tools for supporting technology-based learning. This limitation hampers the learning process, making it less optimal. The lack of adequate learning facilities also affects students' interest in learning. When technological facilities are insufficient, teachers often have to find alternative methods that may not be as effective as using technology.

The diverse abilities of students present another challenge. Some students are fast learners, while others take longer to absorb and understand the material. This difference in focus and understanding becomes a barrier for teachers in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. This issue can be addressed by allowing teachers to use various types of learning materials (videos, texts, images) that enable students to choose the learning method most suitable for them. Using varied materials helps bridge the gap in learning styles and the speed at which students grasp the content.

Another challenge faced by teachers is their readiness to implement the Merdeka Curriculum. Teachers still struggle with the transition from the 2013 Curriculum to the Merdeka Curriculum, particularly when translating Learning Achievements (CP) into Learning Objectives (TP) for the creation of teaching modules. Teachers' readiness to manage learning and projects is still influenced by habits and methods from the previous curriculum. Moreover, some teachers struggle to connect the material with other relevant knowledge and information. There is also a lack of understanding regarding the psychology of students, which makes it difficult for teachers to encourage students to ask questions.

These challenges highlight the ongoing adaptation process of teachers and students in fully implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. Solutions such as additional training, improvements in technology infrastructure, and a deeper understanding of student needs

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are essential for overcoming these obstacles and ensuring the success of the Merdeka Curriculum.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this study, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in history education at SMA Negeri 1 Purbolinggo plays an important role in supporting the achievement of standardized educational goals, despite variations in teaching methods. The Merdeka Curriculum at SMA Negeri 1 Purbolinggo has been implemented since 2021 and is now used across all grade levels. Its implementation emphasizes the role of the teacher as a facilitator, allowing for learning that supports individual interests and provides space for the development of critical thinking skills and local wisdom. Furthermore, in practice, history education focuses on the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and Project-Based Learning (PjBL) approaches, enabling students to be active, critical, and historically aware, especially in the topics of colonialism and Indonesia's resistance. Teachers utilize formative and summative assessments to measure creativity and the overall achievement of learning. However, there are challenges such as limited technology, the heterogeneity of students, and the readiness of teachers to align curriculum goals with new methods. These challenges impact the optimization of learning and require solutions in the form of technological adjustments, teacher competency development, and variation in learning materials..

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