

The Influence of Independent Learning Curriculum on The Establishment of Religious Character of MTS Students

Mumun Munawaroh^{1*}, Yayat Suryatna², Tamsik Udin³

^{1,2,3}IAIN Syekh Nurjati Cirebon

*correspondence: mumun@syekhnurjati.ac.id

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of the role of the independent learning curriculum on the formation of the religious character of MTs students. This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. The data source in this study is words and actions obtained from informants involved in the investigation. Furthermore, documents or other written sources are additional data. As for data collection using observation, interviews, and documentation. To analyze data obtained using continuous observation techniques, data triangulation, data checking, peer discussion and reference adequacy. The results of research findings, data analysis, and discussions that have been carried out can be concluded. The independent learning curriculum can shape students' character in a better direction. This can be seen in the religious feeling of students at MTS, namely the nature of the discipline, respect for teachers, confidence, seriousness, and Islam during the learning process. However, the independent learning curriculum has various obstacles, such as less creative teachers who do not master the independent learning curriculum.

Keywords: *Independent Learning Curriculum, Establishment, Religious Character*

A. INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the most critical factors in determining the quality of human resources and the progress of a nation (Sudarwati, 2021). The educational process can birth to creative, innovative ideas in the dynamics of the times (Nabung et al., 2022). Curriculum development is an instrument to improve the quality of education (Andrian, 2019). The right education policy will be seen through implementing the curriculum because "the curriculum is the heart of education", which determines the continuity of education (Munandar, 2017). According to Law No.20 of 2003, "curriculum is a set of learning plans related to the objectives, content, teaching materials and methods used and used as guidelines in implementing learning activities to achieve a national education goal".

Education requires proper management in terms of implementation, planning and evaluation (Anwar, 2018). Without appropriate direction, education will not run as expected (Prabowo, 2019). The government's step to improve the quality of education is to continue to update and enhance the curriculum (Gouédard et al., 2020). One of the curricula being pursued is the independent learning curriculum. Freedom of Learning is defined as a learning design that provides opportunities for students to learn relaxed and calmly, not feel depressed, be happy without stress and pay attention to the natural talents possessed by students (Susilowati, 2022). Nadiem said that Merdeka Belajar is a concept created so students can explore their interests and skills (Chaterine, 2021).

Seeing the various challenges, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Kemendikbud Ristek) tries restoring Learning. One of the efforts made by the Ministry of Education and Culture for Research and Technology to overcome existing problems is to launch the Independent Curriculum.

The curriculum is a set of rules that are used as guidelines for all activities in learning in the classroom and academic units (Alawiyah, 2013). The curriculum is often called a lesson plan, consisting of content, materials and learning objectives (Sari, 2019). All those involved in the curriculum must be able to understand the function of the curriculum (Alsubaie, Ayesh, 2016). The process of the curriculum for students is a means of measuring their abilities and educational consumption (Hidayati et al., 2022). And part of the curriculum for teachers is as a guideline in carrying out educational activities (Dhomiri, 2023). Without a curriculum, education cannot be implemented (Prabowo, 2019). The curriculum develops according to the times and what the general community needs (Halil, 2021). Changes in the curriculum occur because they are not by current conditions or the increasingly advanced technology from time to time (Muhammedi, 2016).

At this time, there is a new curriculum, namely the independent curriculum. The independent curriculum is interpreted as a learning design that provides opportunities for students to learn calmly, relaxed, fun, stress-free and pressure-free, to show their natural talents. Merdeka Belajar focuses on freedom and creative thinking (Pasaribu et al., 2022). One of the programs presented by the Ministry of Education and Culture in launching independent Learning is the start of the mobilizer school program. This program is designed to support each school in creating a generation of lifelong learners with personalities like Pancasila students. For the success of all, that requires the role of a teacher. In line with the opinion (Ainia, 2020), "Teachers as the main subject who play a role are expected to be able to be a driving force to take actions that provide positive things to students".

An independent curriculum is when teachers and students can have freedom in thinking and are also accessible to the burden of the mind to develop educational potential (Izza et al., 2020). The independent learning curriculum can be interpreted as developing competencies through methods that refer to talents and interests with a diversity of intracurricular Learning. The independent learning curriculum is also a refinement of the 2013 curriculum. One of the advantages of a separate curriculum is that teachers can teach according to student achievements, and students can develop them. In addition to advantages, there are also disadvantages, namely the many educational inequalities in socializing, which makes implementing this independent learning curriculum uneven.

The existence of an independent curriculum is a rearrangement in the national education system in Indonesia, which (Yamin & Syahrir, 2020) "suggests that the statement is to welcome the changes and progress of the nation to adapt to changing times". Likewise, it was conveyed by Education Minister Nadiem Makarim that "education reform cannot be done solely using an administrative approach, but must carry out culture transformation" (Satriawan et al., 2021). In line with the opinion that "the concept of independent learning is then acceptable considering the vision and mission of Indonesian Education in the future for the creation of qualified humans who can compete in various fields of life" (Sibagariang et al., 2021). With the independent curriculum, it is hoped that students can develop according to their potential and abilities because they get critical, quality, expressive, applicative, varied and progressive Learning with the independent curriculum. "As well as the changes to this new curriculum, cooperation is needed, strong commitment, sincerity and real implementation from all parties, so that the profile of Pancasila students can be embedded in students" (Fetra Bonita Sari, Risdha Amini, 2020).

The 21st century, which is associated with the era of the industrial revolution 4.0, has a broad influence on education to develop character-forming abilities and moral habituation (Andari et al., 2020; Huda et al., 2019, 2020; Mujib et al., 2019; Yasin et al., 2020). Through habituation and moral example (Cahyaningsih & Ghufron, 2016; Hendriana & Jacobus, 2017; Muthoharoh, 2015), then achievements can be improved for the better (Nadifah, 2019; Raharjo, 2010; Zuhri, 2017) so that it will have a better influence on someone in education (Anggoro et al., 2019; Hartinah et al., 2019; Hasanah et al., 2019; Ramdhani, 2017; Suherman et al., 2020). Improving education quality will significantly influence one's morals and abilities (Han & Jeong, 2014; Sudarsana, 2016; Wansheng* & Wujie, 2004). The formation of student morals in schools must be accompanied by example to educate the nation's life (Teguh Yuniyanto et al., 2020).

A teacher will achieve his learning goals if he provides examples and examples in building student character in the school environment so that the expected Learning will be effective and efficient (Baharun, 2016; Rany et al., 2020; Zubaidah, 2016). So that students' skills can be formed. The essential skills of students evidence this.

Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System in Article 3 states that national education functions to develop abilities and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation to educate the nation's life. So it should be hoped that there will be a change in attitude or nature as a whole in students so that the purpose of national education is to develop students' potential to become human beings who believe and fear God Almighty, have a noble character, healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens can be realized as expected.

Applying the independent learning curriculum further educates students to make observations, ask questions and reason on the knowledge taught. Students are given lessons based on integrated themes to know the environment, life, and a solid personal foundation in social life and better creativity. Character education regulates human behaviour on special rules, laws, norms, and customs in the field of human social life, which strongly influences humans' mental attitudes in their life activities.

Researchers are interested in researching the independent learning curriculum because teachers will develop and form students who fear God Almighty, have a noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens. After all, it may be that the application of this character-based curriculum has not positively impacted the formation of student character. It is said that making humans intelligent and innovative may be easy, but becoming good people and characters may be much

more difficult or even very difficult (Alfiyanto et al., 2022). Based on this, researchers want to examine the effect of implementing an independent learning curriculum.

The Merdeka Curriculum perfects the cultivation of student character education with the Pancasila student profile, which consists of 6 dimensions described in detail in each element of 1). Believing in devotion to God Almighty, Indonesian students who believe, fear God Almighty, and have noble morals are students who are moral about God Almighty. He understands the teachings of his religion and beliefs and applies these understandings in his daily life. There are five key elements of faith, fear of the True Source, and noble character: religious morality; personal morals; morals to man; morals to nature; State morals. 2). Global diversity, Indonesian students maintain their noble culture, locality and identity, and keep an open mind in interacting with other cultures, thus fostering mutual respect and the possibility of forming a positive new culture that does not conflict with the nation's noble culture. Critical elements of global diversity include recognizing and appreciating cultures, intercultural communication skills in interacting with others, and Reflection and responsibility. The experience of diversity consists of Recognizing and appreciating culture, Communication and interaction between cultures, Reflection and responsibility for the understanding of diversity, and Social Justice. 3). In Mutual cooperation, Indonesian students can work together, namely the ability to carry out activities voluntarily so that the activities carried out can run smoothly, easily and lightly. The elements of working together are Collaboration, caring, and sharing consisting of Collaboration, caring, sharing. 4). Independent Indonesian students are independent learners, namely students who are responsible for the learning process and outcomes. The critical elements of self-reliance consist of awareness of self and the situation at hand and self-regulation. Self-understanding and the situation at hand, Self-regulation. 5). Critical reasoning, Students who reason critically can objectively process information both qualitatively and quantitatively, build linkages between various information, analyze information, evaluate and conclude it. The elements of critical reasoning were obtaining and processing information and ideas, analyzing and evaluating reasoning, and reflecting on thoughts and thought processes in decision-making. Acquire and process information and ideas, Analyze and evaluate reasoning, and Reflect and evaluate one's beliefs. 6). Creative. Creative learners can modify and produce something original, meaningful, practical, and impactful. The key elements of creativity consist of generating original ideas, creating original works and actions, and having flexibility in thinking to find alternative solutions to problems. Produce original ideas, Produce original works and activities, and Have the flexibility of thinking in finding alternative solutions to problems (Mayfile, 2022)

Principles of Free Learning 1). Student Conditions, the first independent curriculum learning principle is learning according to the conditions of students. The editor is that Learning is designed by considering the current stage of development and level of achievement of students, according to learning needs, and reflects diverse characteristics and actions so that Learning becomes meaningful and enjoyable.

So it can be concluded that character is a person's innate nature in responding to situations morally, manifested in concrete actions through good, honest, and responsible behaviour, respect for others, and other noble character values. In Law No. 2/1989, Article 4 explains that: "National education aims to educate the nation's life and develop Indonesian people as a whole, people who believe and fear God Almighty and have noble ethics, have knowledge and skills, physical and spiritual health, a steady and independent personality and a sense of community and national responsibility." Based on the explanation above, the purpose of this study is to affect the independent learning curriculum on the formation of student character.

B. METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach to collect the data in words or photographs rather than numbers (Emzir, 2010). The data source in this study is words and actions obtained from informants involved in the research. Furthermore, documents or other written sources are additional data. As for data collection using observation, interviews, and documentation. To analyze data obtained using continuous observation techniques, data triangulation, data checking, peer discussion and reference adequacy.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As for the result obtained by researchers at MTs, there are still many students and students who do not insult the teacher. When the teacher starts to enter the class, the student still busy chatting with their deskmates. Further researchers also get some results in the field, namely (1) some teachers are still not fully understanding what freedom of Learning is, resulting in the application of Learning still using old learning techniques. Some teachers still cenderung using the lecture method students only listen, (2) In the learning process, researchers found that the government consistently found the teacher's self-esteem after explaining. The students were busy chatting with their friends. Some even ate in class and came out to enter while the teacher explained, (3) Self-learning platforms limit some teachers. The teacher must have the opportunity to stand as a learning partner when creating modules. Still, it turns out that there is no class on the independent platform, so it only depends on what the teacher asks,

(4) when the teacher starts explaining the material, students are still busy with their mobile phones, even still me. Chat with his classmates.

In character education in schools, all components must be involved, including the members of education itself, namely curriculum content, Learning and assessment processes, handling or managing subjects, school management, implementation of co-curricular activities or activities, empowerment of infrastructure, financing, and ethos the work of all school/ward residents. In addition, character education is interpreted as the behaviour of school residents who, in organizing education, must have character. Character education is also defined as everything teachers do, which can affect the nature of students. The teacher helps shape the surface of the learners. This includes examples of how teachers behave, speak or deliver material, tolerate, and other related things.

Character education teaches habitual ways of thinking and behaviour that help individuals to live and work together as families, communities, and states and help them to make accountable decisions. In other words, character education teaches students to think intelligently, activating the midbrain naturally.

Character building is an effort to realize the mandate of Pancasila and the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution is motivated by the reality of national problems that are developing today, such as disorientation and unfulfilled values of Pancasila; limitations of integrated policy tools in realizing the importance of Pancasila; shifting ethical values in the life of the nation and state; waning awareness of the nation's cultural values; the threat of disintegration of the country; and the weakening of the nation's independence.

The analysis stage after implementing the independent learning curriculum can affect the formation of the character of Mts students. The analysis results are supported by facts that researchers observe during the learning process. All students reflect good character attitudes, namely, discipline, respect for teachers, confidence, seriousness, and religion. One thing that is very interesting from these observations is that when students study religious subjects when the teacher recites Qur'anic verses, students together mention the meaning without looking at the book. This fact can support what was said by the Ministry of National Education (2010) that character education is interpreted as education that develops the nation's character in students so that they have values and personality as their character, apply these values in their lives, as members of society, and citizens who are religious, nationalist, productive and creative.

In implementing the independent learning curriculum, a teacher must be able to think creatively and innovatively so that students learn conductively. Thus a teacher must be

equipped with media that can make learning better. Applying the independent learning curriculum can shape students' character in a better direction. This can be seen in the feeling that appears in students, namely the nature of the discipline, respect for teachers, confidence, seriousness, and religion.

According to the Ministry of National Education (2010), character education is interpreted as education that develops national character in students so that they have values and personality as their character, apply these values in their lives as members of society, and citizens who are religious, nationalist, productive and creative. Meanwhile, according to Koesoema (2007), character education is a fundamental value that must be lived if a community is willing to live and cooperate peacefully. Values such as wisdom, respect for others, personal responsibility, feelings of fate, suffering, and peaceful conflict resolution should be prioritized in character education.

Character building is an effort to realize the mandate of Pancasila and the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution against the background of the reality of national problems that are developing today, such as disorientation and unfulfilled values of Pancasila; limitations of integrated policy tools in realizing the importance of Pancasila; shifting ethical values in the life of the nation and state; waning awareness of the nation's cultural values; the threat of disintegration of the country; and the weakening of the nation's independence.

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of research and data analysis as well as discussions that have been carried out, it can be concluded that. The independent learning curriculum can shape students' character in a better direction. This can be seen in the religious character found in students at MTS, namely the nature of the discipline, respect for teachers, confidence, seriousness, and Islam during the learning process. However, the independent learning curriculum has various obstacles, such as teachers who are less creative and teachers who lack mastery of the independent learning curriculum.

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