

Education Innovation: Collaboration between the Merdeka Curriculum and the Madrasah Diniyah-based Curriculum to Form Holistic Students

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Abstract

The current learning process tends to focus more on cognitive aspects, such as mastery of theory, while the development of practical skills (psychomotor) and attitudes (affective) remains less optimal. Therefore, solutions are needed to address this issue. The purpose of this study is to describe educational innovation through the collaboration of the "Merdeka" curriculum and a distinctive curriculum based on madrasah diniyah to shape holistic students. This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation involving school principals, vice principals for curriculum, and teachers. The focus of this study is on the planning, implementation, and challenges of the collaboration between the "Merdeka" curriculum and the distinctive curriculum based on madrasah diniyah to shape holistic students. The results show that the collaboration between the "Merdeka" curriculum and the distinctive curriculum based on madrasah diniyah is highly relevant for implementation as it successfully addresses students' competency gaps in psychomotor, affective, and cognitive aspects while supporting the goals of holistic education.

Keywords: Curriculum Collaboration, Competency, Educational Innovation.

INTRODUCTION

Education is the fundamental foundation for building the quality of human resources and advancing a nation. An effective educational process can produce a generation that is creative, innovative, and capable of addressing the challenges of the times. The curriculum, as the core of education, plays a central role in achieving this. To realize educational goals, the curriculum must continuously improve its quality, adapting to the circumstances of each school while considering the needs and developmental stages of students. (Hartoyo and Rahmadayanti 2022).

Previous literature reviews show that the Merdeka Curriculum focuses on developing students' core competencies. Meanwhile, specialized curricula in certain educational institutions, such as those based on religion or culture, place greater emphasis on deep moral, spiritual, and local wisdom values. Several prior studies have explored the effectiveness of implementing the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. (Qurniawati 2023) as well as Local Wisdom-Based Learning as a Medium to Shape the Character of Elementary School Students (Purwani and Mustikasari 2024) , However, few studies have explored how these two curricula can be effectively integrated to create holistic education.

The scientific novelty offered in this article is the innovative collaboration between the Merdeka Curriculum and specialized curricula in an effort to shape holistic students—individuals who are not only excelling academically but also possess strong moral character, spirituality, and social skills. This approach has not been widely discussed in previous literature, and therefore, this article is expected to make a new contribution to the field of education.

However, recently, the failure of students' competencies in the psychomotor, affective, and cognitive aspects has become an increasingly apparent issue in the world of education. This is evidenced by international education data from World 20, where Indonesia ranks 67th out of 203 countries. Students may be able to demonstrate high academic achievements on paper but fail to apply knowledge practically, interact empathetically, or manage emotions effectively. This gap indicates that the current learning process tends to focus more on cognitive aspects, such as theoretical mastery, while the development of practical skills (psychomotor) and attitudes (affective) remains insufficient. (Media et al. 2023).

The aim of this study is to analyze and identify innovative strategies in the collaboration of the Merdeka Curriculum and specialized curricula, as well as to evaluate their impact on the formation of holistic students in educational institutions based on local wisdom. This article is expected to serve as a reference for educators and policymakers in designing an adaptive and contextual education system.

METHOD

The research method used is descriptive qualitative. This study aims to explore and describe how these two curricula are implemented simultaneously.

The research was conducted at the Ulul Albab Islamic Elementary School in Kaliwates, Jember. The presence of the researcher is non-participatory, where the researcher is involved in the learning process to observe the interaction between the curricula. The research subjects consist of teachers and parents who are involved and experience the impact of the collaboration of these two curricula.

Data collection techniques include in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews are conducted to obtain teachers' views on the curriculum collaboration, while observations allow the researcher to directly observe the learning process. Data analysis is carried out by identifying key themes from the collected data, using a thematic analysis approach.

The validity of the data is ensured through source triangulation, which involves comparing information from interviews, observations, and relevant documents. The stages of the research include: preparation (permission submission and instrument development), implementation (data collection), and reporting (analysis of results and report writing). This approach is expected to provide deep insights into the planning, implementation, and challenges of collaborating the two curricula in improving students' competencies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Collaboration Planning

Etymologically, the term "collaborative" comes from the combination

of the words "co" and "labor," which means cooperation or strengthening abilities used to achieve a shared goal that has been agreed upon. (Agus 2020). In the collaboration between two curricula, initial planning is essential. Formally, planning is a process that involves setting organizational goals, developing strategies to achieve those goals, and creating a comprehensive plan to integrate and coordinate various activities. (Nizamuddin, Kurniawan, and SUBhan 2024). Curriculum planning at Ulul Albab Islamic Elementary School in Jember begins with formulating the objectives.

Based on its concept, curriculum planning involves setting goals and estimating the ways to achieve those goals. The formulation of curriculum objectives at Ulul Albab Islamic Elementary School in Jember is designed in alignment with the school's vision and mission, which is Trias Cendekia (Religious Intelligence, Scientific Intelligence, and Linguistic Intelligence). At Ulul Albab Islamic Elementary School in Jember, two curricula are used: the Merdeka Curriculum and the specialized curriculum based on Madrasah Diniyah (Madin). Therefore, religious education from the specialized curriculum and general education from the Merdeka Curriculum can be implemented together.

To align the Merdeka Curriculum and the specialized curriculum, Ulul Albab Elementary School holds meetings to formulate an optimal class schedule. The goal is to ensure that both general and religious education are balanced in the learning process.



Figure 1. Vision and Mission

2. Implementation of Collaboration

The next stage is implementation. According to the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (Indonesian Dictionary), implementation is the process, method, or action of carrying out a plan, decision, and so on. Implementation is an action or execution of a plan that has been carefully and thoroughly prepared. Implementation is usually carried out once the planning is considered ready, and in simple terms, implementation can be understood as the application of the plan. (Rahayu and Sri Murtinah 2022).

SD Islam Ulul Albab has 2 male teachers, 20 female teachers, 1 male educational staff, and 3 female educational staff. The school's goal is to create holistic students, which is reflected in its vision of Trias Cendekia (Religious Intelligence, Scientific Intelligence, and Linguistic Intelligence). Religious Intelligence is cultivated through subjects like Islamic Education and Morality, Tahfidz Tilawati, Fiqih Practice, and Nahwu Shorof; Linguistic Intelligence through Indonesian and English language subjects; and Scientific Intelligence through Science and Social Studies (IPAS) and Mathematics.

In the context of student competencies, Benjamin S. Bloom suggested that students should master three competencies: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. (Hidayat, Ag, and Pd 2019)

a) Cognitive Aspect

This aspect relates to mental activities or the ability of students to memorize, understand, apply, analyze, and evaluate information. The cognitive aspect can be measured through tests provided by the school, which are a continuation of the material that has been learned. (Magdalena, Hidayah, and Safitri 2021:48–62).

SD Islam Ulul Albab continues to refer to the Merdeka Curriculum in the learning process, with the primary focus on the cognitive aspect or students' thinking abilities, such as understanding, knowledge, and critical thinking skills. This curriculum is also aligned with the principles of Trias Cendekia, particularly

in the development of Scientific Intelligence. For students with more potential in subjects like mathematics and English, the school provides special facilities in the form of olympiad classes, designed to hone and develop their competencies.

b) Affective Aspect

The affective aspect includes behaviors related to students' feelings and emotions, such as attitudes, interests, appreciation, and adaptation to their surrounding environment. (Magdalena et al. 2021:78–89). At SD Islam Ulul Albab, to shape good affective attitudes, religious education is used to develop students into better individuals. Examples of its application include promoting attitudes of helping one another, mutual respect, and demonstrating politeness and discipline.

c) Psychomotor Aspect

This aspect focuses on physical skills in performing specific activities that involve body movements. (Prayitno 2019) In the context of education, the psychomotor aspect includes the processes, actions, and methods used by teachers to teach skills to students. (Siti Nurhasanah, Agus Jayadi, Rika Sa'diyah 2019). SD Islam Ulul Albab provides both intracurricular and extracurricular activities to support students' psychomotor aspects. Intracurricular activities, such as practical Fiqh and daily learning sessions, often involve demonstrations, while extracurricular activities include pencak silat and scouting.

3. Challenges

The existence of Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah faces various challenges, both internal and external. One of the main challenges comes from government policies, particularly the Ministry of Education and Culture, which implements the full day school (FDS) system. This policy has raised concerns among various parties, especially those involved with Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah, about the sustainability of these institutions as centers for Islamic religious education. They

are worried that the implementation of FDS may erode the role and existence of Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah in providing in-depth religious education to students. (Istiyani 2017).

In addition, various other factors also influence the success of education, such as the preparedness of teachers as agents of change in the classroom, the school's support in providing adequate facilities, both material and non-material, and the diversity of student characteristics within a single class. (Warsihna et al. 2023).

Interview results at SD Islam Ulul Albab show that the implementation of the collaboration between the two curricula presents specific challenges for this new school. These challenges include the lack of active involvement from parents regarding the initial commitments that were agreed upon, which may cause the number of students to fall below the standard. To address this, teachers are given special guidance with the hope that students' academic achievements will improve. Another challenge in the religious field arose from suggestions by parents to revise the memorization book, which was considered to contain errors in certain verses. This issue was promptly addressed by the vice principal of religious affairs by revising the book. Additionally, the lack of enthusiasm among students in performing worship became a concern. To solve this, the school worked closely with parents to motivate children to engage more diligently in worship, which proved effective in resolving this issue.

CONCLUSION

To create holistic students, schools need to innovate in teaching methods, one of which is by integrating the Merdeka Curriculum with the characteristic curriculum, as applied at SD Islam Ulul Albab Jember. The process begins with careful planning to integrate the Merdeka Curriculum with the characteristic curriculum based on Madrasah Diniyah. The planning starts with setting objectives aligned with the vision of Trias Cendekia, as well as formulating strategies and schedules to ensure that both religious and

general education proceed in balance. In its implementation, SD Islam Ulul Albab prioritizes cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects to develop students holistically. However, this process also faces challenges, such as parental involvement and religious issues, which are addressed with various solutions, including increasing student motivation and revising learning materials. Despite facing challenges, the collaboration of these two curricula successfully supports the goal of holistic education.

SUGGESTIONS

Future researchers are encouraged to explore the use of technology to support curriculum implementation, which could enhance access and enrich students' learning experiences. Collaboration between schools and external institutions, such as religious educational organizations or universities, should also be analyzed to enrich the curriculum and improve students' competencies. Continuous evaluation and feedback on the implementation of these two curricula will be very helpful in identifying challenges faced and areas that need improvement. Lastly, case studies at different educational levels can provide deeper insights into the application of this curriculum collaboration and its impact on student competencies. With these suggestions, it is hoped that future research can contribute more significantly to the development of curricula that effectively integrate both religious and general education, thus enhancing students' competencies.

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