The Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in Shaping the Character of Grade Five Students at GMIM 140 Pineleng Elementary School

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ABSTRAK

This research aims to describe the results and find out the analysis regarding the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in forming the character of students in grade V of GMIM 140 Pineleng Elementary School. It also examines the inhibiting and supporting factors for implementing the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in character formation. The type of research used is qualitative. Time and place of research at GMIM 140 Pineleng Elementary School in November-January 2024. The data sources for this research are primary sources and secondary sources. This research data collection technique uses observation, interviews and documentation. Data analysis techniques are data collection, data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions. To test the validity of the data using the credibility test. Based on the findings of the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in character formation for grade V of GMIM 140 Pineleng Elementary School has a positive impact and can be implemented well. Through careful preparation, with good cooperation between the school principal and teachers, the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in character building has succeeded in supporting the development of students. Teachers use the freedom provided by this curriculum to create learning experiences that are interactive and pay attention to the needs, interests and potential of each student. Students show positive changes in being brave, creative, cooperative and independent.

Keywords: Curriculum, Freedom to Learn, Character

PENDAHULUAN

The development of the times requires all aspects of human life to adapt to the existing progress. Education is one of the aspects in human life that always undergoes changes and developments and improvements in accordance with the times that continue to move forward. As time goes by, many difficulties and changes occur in the life of the country. One of them is in an effort to know the quality of life, the way people view education is a topic of change that results in transformation (Gemnafle & Batlolona, 2021). This is in line with the objectives of national education as referred to in Law number 23 of 2003, article 3 concerning the national education system. Ultimately, education should make learners have a better understanding of knowledge, behavior, and character. Education goals will not be achieved if there are still many mistakes (Mualif, 2022). The development of Indonesian education has undergone several stages, one of which is curriculum development (Bisri, 2020).

The dynamics of curriculum development as a demand for change that contains coercion that curriculum changes are needed so that the applicable curriculum remains relevant to the needs of society. (Katuk, 2014). The curriculum is one of the tools to achieve educational goals and is a guide in carrying out learning at all types and levels of education. The curriculum is seen as a goal, context, and strategy in learning through a program of developing instruments or learning materials, social interactions, and learning techniques systematically in an educational institution environment (Nurdin, 2017). Therefore, the role of the curriculum is very important to enable students to achieve educational goals in a systematic and sustainable manner. Based on this understanding, the curriculum is an important component in education because the curriculum and education are interconnected. Students will get good results and learning will run smoothly with a good curriculum that is supported by various quality elements.

Indonesia is temporarily implementing the Merdeka Belajar curriculum. Nadiem Makarim is the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, 2018) stated that prioritizing character education in Merdeka Belajar. In accordance with the opinion of education experts, the Merdeka Belajar curriculum is a learning approach that gives learners the freedom to determine the course of the teaching and learning process, both in the selection of learning resources and in the assessment mechanism (Yamin & Syahrir, 2020). In the learning design, the Merdeka Curriculum has changes in implementation following the needs and needs adapted to current conditions (Pangkey & Merentek, 2023). Learners are given the opportunity to learn in a relaxed, calm, and cheerful atmosphere while paying attention to their natural talents. The freedom
to think creatively and independently is the essence of merdeka belajar. The Merdeka Belajar curriculum aims to improve the quality of learning by giving learners the freedom to organize their learning according to their interests and needs. It also aims to enhance creativity, innovation and modern life skills.

Strengthening character education, such as moral values, ethics, responsibility, and good habits in daily life, is the goal of national education to realize a generation with noble character by shaping character, developing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor abilities. The most important character to distinguish humans from animals is personality. The government has long made efforts to improve character education through the National Movement for National Character Education in 2010, which was then continued with the Strengthening Character Education (PPK) program in 2016 (Ismail et al., 2020). An individual's character comes from his attitude, thinking, and the value of politeness, all of which come from his interactions with other people and the environment. In addition, character can influence the way each individual sees, thinks, and acts. In this case, of course, it is not only teachers who participate in the process of developing student character, parents and the social environment also participate (Kementerian Pendidikan Kebudayaan Riset dan Teknologi, 2021). As Mokorowu et al. (2023), character education continues to be debated in the world of education because it has an impact on the development of the potential of individuals and institutions and society as a whole. Therefore, skills and character are needed to implement positive changes in the education system in schools. Character education in elementary schools is the government's effort to instill moral values to students so that they have morality, ethics, and the ability to achieve their best potential through various activities. (Siswati et al., 2018).

The Pancasila learner profile is intended to improve the quality of education that emphasizes character development. The Pancasila Student Profile is utilized in educational institutions ranging from kindergarten, elementary, junior high, and high school (Rusnaini et al., 2021). We need from an early age to start teaching character education systematically and comprehensively from the methods of understanding, loving, and doing good. The method of understanding is to know the good. Love of goodness is a person's feeling and love for the virtues taught. Thus a person with good character will be more aware of doing good deeds because he likes morality behavior. Furthermore, doing good will become a spontaneous habit of virtue. If everything is possible, people will emerge who can do something spontaneously according to the values that have been instilled (Susilawati et al., 2021). The Merdeka Curriculum has 6 (six) aspects of character building on the Pancasila student profile, namely: (1) faith and fear of God Almighty and noble character, (2) Global Diversity (3) Gotong Royong. (4) Independent, (5) Critical Reasoning (6) Creative. This should make it easier for teachers or educators to shape the character of students as the 6 characteristics of the Pancasila learner profile To achieve this, expertise and personality are needed to implement beneficial changes in the education system in educational institutions. (Supit et al., 2023). Based on the observations made, problems were found in the implementation of the erdeka curriculum in the character building of grade V students of GMIM 140 Pineleng Elementary School, namely that there are still many students who do not help their classmates who are in trouble, students still play a lot when they are praying, there are also students who are too dependent on their friends and there is no effort in solving a problem in learning, there are still fights in the classroom, students litter, students are also found who fight their teachers when being reprimanded or while being coached. The existence of curriculum changes and the six characteristics of the Pancasila learner profile so that several problems are found, namely the lack of understanding and readiness of teachers in implementing the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, the obstacles to the independence of students and the awareness of teachers and schools with these 6 aspects of character. Learners, teachers and schools are more oriented towards academic values and do not understand the importance of character values. Therefore, the researcher is interested in describing the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in shaping the character of students, what factors hinder the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in shaping the character of class students and what factors support the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in shaping the character of class students. This research is important to carry out in order to build the character of Learners in accordance with character education that has been implemented in schools in accordance with existing developments in order to progress the nation and state. Making Learners who have a personality that is in accordance with the six character profiles of Pancasila students. To instill and improve quality, especially in character building and creative learning. 

In this research, it discusses the implementation of the merdeka curriculum in the character building of students. In contrast to previous research conducted by Susilowati (2022), which discussed the Implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in the Formation of Student Character in Islamic Religious Education Subjects. Previous research focused on Islamic Religious Education subjects, while this research covers the overall character of students.

**METODE**

This research approach uses a qualitative descriptive approach. Sugiyono (2022) states that qualitative research is a method based on the philosophy of postpositivism or interpretive and is used for research on natural object conditions, where the researcher is the main tool. Data collection techniques are used in triangulation, which includes observation, interviews, and documentation. The data collected tends to be qualitative and analyzed inductively or qualitatively.

This research was conducted at GMIM 140 Pineleng Elementary School in grade V, with 21 students. Data collection techniques used in this research, using observation, interview and documentation instruments. The data analysis techniques used include data collection through learning outcomes tests, observations, and interviews. Then, to reduce the selection of which data is research data that meets the concept of triangulation, the data is presented in reflection notes and ends with a conclusion conclusion. Data validity is guaranteed by triangulation of sources and data collection techniques, as well as triangulation of data collection techniques. (Alfansyur & Mariyani, 2020).
HASIL DAN PEMBAHASAN

Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted by researchers, the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in Indonesia is increasingly massive. This is indicated by the Decree of the Head of the Education Standards, Curriculum and Assessment Agency of the Ministry of Education and Culture Number 022 / H / KR / 2023 concerning Education Units Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum Implementation in the 2023/2024 Academic Year, which states that more than 105 thousand schools or education units have implemented it. According to the Principal "The Merdeka Curriculum focuses on developing student character, including national values, leadership, responsibility, and ethics. This can include learning about Pancasila Education how to love the country, Religion appreciates every difference”. The homeroom teacher also argues "The Merdeka curriculum is a learning guideline that liberates students and teachers. Where with this curriculum it makes it easier for teachers to teach students according to their abilities and also students can learn according to their needs”. In accordance with what the principal said "My motivation for implementing this merdeka curriculum is of course to keep up with existing developments. Where we must continue to go hand in hand with progress, this merdeka curriculum is often associated with a more creative learning approach and provides opportunities for students to develop independence in learning. I want to improve students' merdeka learning and problem-solving skills". As for the principal's opinion on the purpose of character development "the aim is to develop students' leadership and ethics. This can include building positive leadership skills, as well as understanding and internalizing ethical principles in everyday life. Moreover, with the 6 characteristics of the Pancasila learner profile, this becomes a focal point of character development goals". The homeroom teacher also argues "character building is an important component in education. Character development not only includes cognitive aspects, but also affective and psychomotor aspects to create balanced individuals. The character values to be instilled in students include values such as integrity, discipline, responsibility, cooperation, role modeling, and other positive values".

Inhibiting Factors for the Implementation of the Merdeka Learning Curriculum in shaping the Character of Learners according to the principal's opinion "Lack of teacher training, Teachers may need special training to implement teaching methods that support character development" and "Every student must have different needs and learning styles, so adjusting character development to individual needs can be a challenge" The homeroom teacher also said "I as a homeroom teacher try to give my best to shape the character of students but there are still things that happen outside of our supervision such as the characteristics of the Pancasila student profile, there are still students who play or disturb friends during worship and for the obstacles faced when there is only one teacher during worship".

There are also supporting factors for the implementation of the Merdeka learning curriculum in shaping the character of students. The homeroom teacher said "The principal certainly continues to support whatever we teachers do to develop each lesson. Regarding the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, facilities such as books are provided and directed to participate in webinars related to the merdeka curriculum". In connection with the support said by the Principal "Conducting scheduled classroom supervision to provide direct feedback regarding the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. Provide teachers with book resources and teaching materials that support the Merdeka curriculum. Assist teachers in adjusting the curriculum and designing activities Provide emotional support to teachers by recognizing and appreciating their efforts in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. Encourage and motivate teachers to continue to develop in understanding and implementing character values in learning, which supports student character development ". The Principal said to prepare himself "Of course with the existence of infrastructure, such as books or other learning tools". While the Homeroom Teacher said "Prepare all supporting aspects such as learning facilities and infrastructure and skills to master every situation in the classroom considering that each student has different educational needs" coupled with another opinion "Colleagues certainly help me in increasing effectiveness to shape the character of students. We often exchange opinions, share experiences and also often develop learning strategies” these two opinions are still related, that the need for facilities and infrastructure as support and cooperation between teachers. After preparation, a special approach is taken by the homeroom teacher as a strategy, said the homeroom teacher "The special approach taken is just adjusting to the character of the existing students. How do we communicate existing character values. Providing an understanding of how important character education is.”

The implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in shaping the character of grade V students of GMIM 140 Pineleng Elementary School can be said to be successful because it has reached a very good category in its application. The understanding of Merdeka Belajar Curriculum is well understood starting from the school principal, homeroom teacher IV and students. Learners also feel more able to express themselves with this Merdeka Belajar. Implementing the Merdeka Belajar curriculum is not just to be implemented because of the rules, it also requires basic and strong motivation so that the objectives of Merdeka Belajar can be achieved. The cooperation to implement the Merdeka Belajar curriculum is well established because of motivation and encouragement. The Merdeka curriculum aims to give students the freedom to think for themselves. This allows students to develop their potential according to their interests and talents, (Khoirurrrijal et al., 2022). The purpose of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum explains the formation of character values, focusing on the six Characteristics of the Pancasila Student Profile. The conclusion from the results of interviews by the Principal and Homeroom Teacher of grade V is that the interviewees can understand well the objectives of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum. Achievement or success will occur if you have careful preparation, in implementing an merdeka curriculum and instilling character values, of course, you have initial preparation.

This is the achievement of the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum for grade V in character building which can be said to be very good within 7 months of implementing Merdeka learning at school. The implementation of the Merdeka curriculum in the character building of students at GMIM 140 Pineleng Elementary School produces an impact that has a positive influence as seen from the results of interviews conducted with students. Learners have a change in attitude for the better with an attitude of mutual cooperation which brings unity to all grade V students. Learners also admit that they experience changes in attitude to become more independent and creative. The character of learners will be further developed if the implementation of this merdeka curriculum is carried out continuously by paying attention to any existing evaluations.
Inhibiting Factors for the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in the Formation of Student Character, there is little training for GMIM 140 Pineleng Elementary School teachers who focus on developing student character, other obstacles in implementing the merdeka curriculum for character building are differences in the needs, attitudes, situations of students in responding to a given learning, such as the opinion of Gampu et al. (2022) to address efforts to instill morals in their students. Starting from applying small habits such as discipline, respect, respect, and responsibility. To implement the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in character building, teachers must create strategies that suit the needs of students. For grade V students totaling 21 people, teachers must make 21 strategies that suit the needs of students. This is an obstacle for teachers to implement an independent climate in character building.

Supporting Factors for the Implementation of the Merdeka curriculum in shaping students' character. The Merdeka curriculum emphasizes character learning with the aim of creating a generation that has a character capable and worthy of becoming a more advanced human resource. In addition, the curriculum adjusts students' abilities in knowledge, literacy, and the use of technology and skills. In addition, the curriculum gives students the independence to think and learn from various sources so that they can find and learn what they need to solve problems. When conducting interviews at GMIM 140 Pineleng Elementary School, several supporting factors for the implementation of the Merdeka learning curriculum were found, among others: 1) Teachers actively participate in curriculum development. Principals and teachers have collaborated in designing curriculum implementation as needed. 2) One of the other digital tools provided directly to teachers by the Ministry of Education and Culture for use in the Merdeka Curriculum is the Merdeka Belajar Platform. This platform is a technology feature that allows teachers and principals to teach, learn, and work. This platform allows teachers to improve their abilities and support their learning activities. (Ministry of Education and Culture PMM 2022). 3) create lesson materials according to students' needs and abilities. There is always evaluation and improvement. The curriculum should be evaluated and improved simultaneously to ensure that it meets local needs and potential and provides the best learning outcomes for students.

From the analysis above, it can answer several questions on the problem formulation, including the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, which has an influence on the character building of students at GMIM 140 Pineleng Elementary School, although before the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, GMIM 140 Pineleng Elementary School had already implemented habituation of student characters related to the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, such as mutual cooperation, religion, cooperation, diversity, global insight and others. The strategy in applying the Merdeka curriculum at GMIM 140 Pineleng Elementary School has also reached the level of daily habituation so that students are accustomed to the characters listed in the Merdeka curriculum. For obstacles in implementation until now, GMIM 140 Pineleng Elementary School has found inhibiting factors in the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum, learning some students who have not been able to adjust to curriculum changes. Supporting factors include teachers, students and student guardians. Because all teachers play an active role in providing examples and role models in student character building. Meanwhile, previous research shows that the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum at school has been running, but there are several obstacles faced by teachers in implementing it. Obstacles related to understanding revolve around not understanding the essence of Merdeka learning, it is difficult to get rid of old habits, namely the dominance of the lecture method. Other constraints related to technicalities revolve around the difficulty of making teaching modules and the incompatibility of learning platforms with what is in them. Finally, at the evaluation stage, teachers have difficulty in conducting assessments (Susilowati, 2022).

**KESIMPULAN**

The implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in character building in grade V of GMIM 140 Pineleng Elementary School has a positive impact on daily life both at school and at home. Its implementation is through preparation, strategies and encouragement carried out by the school, namely the Principal, Homeroom Teacher and teachers who support each other to achieve the goals of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum. This Merdeka Belajar curriculum has six characteristics of the Pancasila learner profile which are the focus of character value development.

The inhibiting factors experienced by grade V teachers of GMIM 140 Pineleng Elementary School are the lack of training that focuses too much on the character building strategies of students and the adjustment of the application of the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum in the character building of students with each need being a challenge in itself.

Supporting factors for the implementation of the Merdeka learning curriculum include: 1) Teachers actively participate in curriculum development. 2) One of the other digital tools provided directly to teachers by the Ministry of Education and Culture for use in the Merdeka Curriculum is the Merdeka Belajar Platform, which allows teachers and principals to teach, learn, and work. As well as allowing teachers to improve their abilities and support learning activities. (3) create lesson materials according to the needs and abilities of students.

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