

EDUCATION TRANSFORMATION: THE IMPACT OF TEACHER TRAINING IN IMPLEMENTING THE MERDEKA CURRICULUM IN MADRASAH IBTIDAIYAH

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Abstract

The Merdeka Curriculum is an important milestone in the transformation of education in madrasah ibtidaiyah, encouraging the need to improve the quality of teachers through directed training. The background of the adoption of the Merdeka Curriculum lies in changing the learning paradigm towards an inclusive approach, integrating national values without setting aside the substance of religious education. The purpose of this study is to describe the impact of teacher training on the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum in madrasah ibtidaiyah. This research method uses a literature study approach and analyzes various sources relevant to the context of teacher training and the adoption of Merdeka Curriculum in madrasah. In this study, it is presented that teacher training has a significant impact. Teachers who receive directed training are able to better apply Merdeka Curriculum concepts, improve teaching quality, and create a more dynamic learning environment. The results show that teacher training directly contributes to improving their understanding of the Merdeka Curriculum concept, improving skills in designing lessons that are in line with the demands of the new curriculum, and having a positive impact on student achievement. Improved learning quality, collaboration between teachers, and readiness to deal with change are the visible results of investing in teacher training in the context of Merdeka Curriculum in madrasah ibtidaiyah. This confirms that teacher training is not only a necessity, but also a necessity in realizing adaptive and inclusive education.

Keywords: Teacher Training, Independent Curriculum, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah

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Introduction

Education is the main pillar in the development of a nation. In Indonesia, in accordance with the mandate in the law listed in the preamble of the 1945 Constitution which states that the state is obliged to educate the nation's life. To realize this, curriculum change is one of the important efforts in advancing the education system. The curriculum has an important position because the curriculum organizes and directs education so that it can be in accordance with its original purpose. [1]. The latest adoption in the world of education, namely the independent curriculum, marks a significant paradigm shift in the learning process, one of which is the flexibility in its implementation. [2]. However, in the context of madrasah, the adoption of an independent curriculum brings its own challenges that require special attention,

especially in strengthening through training for teachers so that there is an increase in the professionalism of a teacher [3]

Madrasahs as educational institutions that integrate Islamic religious education with the national curriculum have become an integral part of the Indonesian education system. This statement is corroborated by the decision of the Minister of Religious Affairs which states that madrasah is an Islamic educational institution which in its curriculum contains religious and general lessons. [4]. However, the introduction of the independent curriculum to madrasahs as a renewal effort requires deep adjustments in teaching methods, evaluation, and the curriculum as a whole because the independent curriculum emphasizes holistic learning [5]. Along with the adoption of this new curriculum, the need for teacher training in madrasahs has become more urgent.

Regarding the implementation of the independent curriculum in madrasahs, there is a significant gap in the availability of resources and teachers' readiness to implement this change. The lack of targeted and structured training for teachers in madrasah is one of the main obstacles that hinder the effective implementation of the independent curriculum. [6].

This article discusses first the concept of an independent curriculum, second the challenges of implementing an independent curriculum in madrasah, third the importance of teacher training in the context of an independent curriculum and finally the impact of teacher training. Based on the formulation of the problem, the purpose of this article is to identify the importance of training for teachers in madrasah in the context of adopting an independent curriculum. The main focus is on the role of training in helping teachers cope with the changing learning paradigm and its impact on the quality of education in madrasah. By framing the background, objectives and gaps, this article seeks to provide an in-depth insight into the critical role of training for teachers in madrasahs in supporting the implementation of the new independent curriculum.

Methods

This research uses library research methods, library research is a research approach that collects and analyzes information in various forms of written works such as scientific articles, books, and other sources. [7] Based on this understanding, this article will analyze various scientific articles, books and other resources that focus on the importance of madrasah teacher training in its implementation with the independent curriculum. The data collection is by means of documentation, namely looking for data in the form of notes, books, papers, articles and so on related to teacher training and development. [8]. The data analysis used is qualitative analysis which is carried out by describing, interpreting, and explaining the data in depth related to the importance of teacher training when the independent curriculum is present which has several differences with the previous curriculum [9]

Results and Discussion

A. The Concept of an Independent Curriculum and its Implications

Merdeka Curriculum is an educational approach that aims to provide freedom to schools in determining a curriculum that is relevant to local needs,

character development, and strengthening students' competencies. This is emphasized in Permendikbud No. 20 of 2021 [10]. This concept emphasizes a more contextual learning approach, the development of 21st century skills, and the cultivation of national values. This curriculum also integrates literacy skills, knowledge, skills, and attitudes in the use of technology. [11].

The concept of the Merdeka Curriculum cannot be separated from several main points that are the concentration of this new curriculum. These main points include flexibility in the curriculum, meaning that the Merdeka Curriculum is to provide flexibility to schools, including madrasah, to adapt the curriculum to local needs and student characteristics. This allows for better tailoring of the curriculum to the realities of the madrasah environment. The curriculum does not need to focus too much on material, thus neglecting student development. [12] thus Madrasahs can develop Madrasah Operational Curriculum (KOM) to serve as a local curriculum that is integrated with the independent curriculum.

Integration of Nationalism values is another element contained in the Independent Curriculum. Although madrasahs focus on religious education, the concept of the Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes the importance of integrating the values of nationalism, patriotism, and love for the homeland. [13]. This can be reflected in the cultivation of national values in the madrasah curriculum without sacrificing the substance of religious education. The integration of these nationalism values is reflected in the Rahmatan lil 'Alamin Student Profile set by the Ministry of Religious Affairs as a place for Madrasahs. Rahmatan lil Alamin values are the principles of attitudes and perspectives in practicing religion so that the pattern of religion in the state runs well [14].

The next element of the independent curriculum is the development of 21st century skills. The rapid flow of change in the 21st century requires a person to have mandatory skills. The Independent Curriculum emphasizes the development of 21st century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, communication, and problem solving. [15]. Madrasahs are expected to align religious education with the teaching of these skills so that learners are ready to face the demands of the modern world. These skills are aligned with an emphasis on experiential and contextualized learning, the Merdeka Curriculum encourages a more contextualized and experiential learning approach, allowing students to relate learning to their daily lives so that the value of Humanist-Religious Education will emerge in them [16].

B. Implementation Challenges of Merdeka Curriculum in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah

Madrasah ibtidaiyah have a strong focus on religious education. Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum requires a paradigm shift from a more traditional approach to a more inclusive approach, emphasizing the development of 21st century skills and national values without compromising the substance of religious education. The main challenge is the readiness and skills of teachers in compiling a curriculum that is relevant to the Merdeka Curriculum, designing experiential learning activities, and adjusting assessments with a more holistic approach. Another challenge in the learning process is the existence of differentiated

learning, problems that arise such as teachers not being able to analyze the characteristics of each learner, the time allocation in each lesson has an impact on the teacher's difficulty in conducting diagnostic assessments, teachers are required to provide different materials to each student at the same time. [17].

The implementation of the independent curriculum in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah also has challenges in terms of limited resources. The resource limitation experienced by madrasahs is the absence of Islamic religious education textbooks covering Akidah Akhlak, Al-Qur'an Hadith, Jurisprudence, and Islamic Cultural History which use the Independent Curriculum paradigm in its preparation. Madrasahs still use the K-13 Curriculum textbooks which are then adjusted by themselves to the Merdeka Curriculum. Another challenge faced by madrasah teachers is the difference in conducting evaluations and assessments. Assessment in the independent curriculum which refers to holistic assessment makes teachers need to adjust to the assessment carried out in the previous curriculum, most of which are still oriented to written tests. [18].

C. The Importance of Teacher Training in the Context of the Merdeka Curriculum

The urgency of teacher training in dealing with the independent curriculum is a very important thing to discuss. Development and training are very important in educational institutions to improve teacher professionalism and competence. [3]. The new paradigm in the independent curriculum which emphasizes the development of 21st century skills and character education cannot be implemented if the previous curriculum learning paradigm is applied without any adjustments. Teacher training becomes very important so that teachers can recognize new strategies, more dynamic teaching methods and more contextual learning approaches.

Teacher training is also included in the development of teacher skills. The development of teacher skills begins with an in-depth understanding of the concept of the Merdeka Curriculum itself. Teachers need to receive adequate training to understand the essence of this new curriculum, understand the change in learning paradigm, and integrate national values into the curriculum without overriding the religious values that are the foundation of madrasah. This training will equip teachers with the right knowledge and skills and can help them to contribute effectively. [19].

Teacher skill development is not only limited to teaching, but also to more holistic assessment. Training is needed so that teachers can design assessment instruments that take into account aspects of character, 21st century skills, and student academic achievement in a balanced manner. Teachers need to be prepared to conduct broader assessments, which reflect students' comprehensive development in accordance with the values instilled in Merdeka Curriculum. With adequate development of teachers' skills, they will be better prepared to deal with curriculum changes, implement relevant teaching strategies, and conduct assessments in accordance with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum.

D. Impact of Teacher Training

Teacher training in dealing with the independent curriculum has a significant impact, provided that the training is consistent and well-planned. Teacher training consistently provides a major impetus to improving the quality of teaching in madrasas, as well as the emergence of conditions conducive to teacher performance. [20]. Trained teachers have a deeper understanding of the applied curriculum and are able to apply more innovative and contextualized teaching strategies. In the context of Merdeka Curriculum, training can help teachers integrate national values, 21st century skills development, and character education into daily learning.

The long-term impact of teacher training is their readiness to deal with subsequent changes. Trained teachers have better adaptation skills and are better prepared to face challenges in the ever-evolving world of education. Reflecting on the significant changes in education during the Covid-19 pandemic, many teachers have difficulty adapting to learning that was previously done face-to-face and replaced with online learning. The existence of continuous training will further increase teacher awareness in *upgrading* themselves so that significant difficulties no longer occur when a new change is present.

Through adequate training, madrasahs can maximize the potential of teachers in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. The potential of each teacher will increase and develop more when the teacher gets new inputs during training. The emergence of potentials that have not been previously identified will make madrasah have a greater opportunity to excel with other schools because the potential of teachers makes differentiation between madrasah or schools.

Conclusion

The adoption of Merdeka Curriculum in madrasah ibtidaiyah brings important transformations in education. Teacher training is the main key to strengthening the implementation of this Merdeka Curriculum. Training provides a solid foundation for teachers in understanding concepts, developing skills, and facing challenges that arise in the changing learning paradigm.

First of all, teacher training provides an opportunity for them to better understand the essence of the Merdeka Curriculum. This concept encourages a more dynamic, integrative approach to learning and emphasizes the development of 21st century skills and national values. The training helped teachers to adapt their teaching strategies to a more inclusive curriculum, integrating national values without compromising the substance of religious education. In addition to a deep understanding of the new curriculum, the training also prepares teachers to develop the necessary skills. Teachers need to master teaching methods relevant to Merdeka Curriculum, design contextualized learning, and have the ability to assess students holistically. The training helps teachers to design learning experiences that suit students' needs, incorporate religious and national values, and emphasize the development of crucial 21st century skills.

The impact of teacher training in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum is significant. Improved teaching quality is one of the main impacts. Trained teachers have the ability to implement more innovative teaching strategies that are relevant to the demands of the new curriculum. In addition, the improved quality of learning has a direct impact on student achievement. Targeted training creates a more dynamic learning environment that supports holistic student development. Not only that, teacher training also strengthens collaboration among teachers and promotes a culture of continuous learning. Teachers can exchange ideas, share experiences and develop best practices, which in turn enriches the learning environment in the madrasah. Through training, teachers also become better prepared for future changes, having strong adaptation skills to respond to dynamic educational developments.

In the face of the complex challenges and expectations associated with Merdeka Curriculum in madrasah ibtidaiyah, teacher training is an invaluable investment. It not only improves the quality of teaching and learning, but also prepares teachers and students to be a progressive part in realizing education that is in line with the demands of the times. Thus, teacher training is not just a necessity, but a necessity in carrying out the vision of Merdeka Curriculum in madrasah ibtidaiyah. This investment in training is the main capital in building a solid foundation for inclusive, innovative and adaptive education according to the future needs of students.

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