



THE EFFECTIVENESS OF IMPLEMENTING THE INDONESIAN CURRICULUM AT SEKOLAH INDONESIA KUALA LUMPUR (SIKL) AND THE MERDEKA CURRICULUM IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the effectiveness of implementing the Indonesian Curriculum at Sekolah Indonesia Kuala Lumpur (SIKL) and to compare it with the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia. The background of this research stems from the need to understand how the national curriculum is applied in the context of Indonesian schools abroad, as well as its alignment with the latest curriculum approach currently implemented in Indonesia. This study employs a descriptive qualitative method, with data collected through interviews, observations, and document studies.

The results indicate that the implementation of the Indonesian Curriculum at SIKL is fairly effective, characterized by the adaptation of learning to international contexts and the needs of multicultural





students. Meanwhile, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia shows a high level of flexibility in project-based learning development and the strengthening of the Pancasila Student Profile. The comparison of the two curriculum reveals that the school context is a determining factor in implementation effectiveness. This study emphasizes the importance of policy support, teacher readiness, and learning facilities in enhancing successful curriculum implementation.

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the important aspects in shaping the quality of competent and well-characterized human resources. The curriculum, as the main guideline in the learning process, has a strategic role in determining the direction and quality of education. In Indonesia, the curriculum has undergone various changes and developments, ranging from the School-Based Curriculum (KTSP), the 2013 Curriculum, to the most recent curriculum, namely the Merdeka Curriculum. This curriculum emphasizes flexible learning, project-based activities, and the strengthening of students' Pancasila profiles.

The Indonesian School of Kuala Lumpur (SIKL) is one of the Indonesian schools abroad that implements the Indonesian Curriculum to ensure the continuity of education for Indonesian students living in Malaysia. However, implementing the curriculum abroad presents its own challenges, including adjustments to the social, cultural, and multicultural needs of students. On the other hand, the Merdeka Curriculum implemented in Indonesia offers a more flexible and innovative approach to learning, raising questions regarding the effectiveness of curriculum implementation in both contexts.





This study aims to describe the effectiveness of the implementation of the Indonesian Curriculum at SIKL and compare it with the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia. By using a descriptive qualitative approach, this research is expected to provide a clear overview of the successes, challenges, and strategies used in implementing both curricula. The findings of this study are expected to serve as input for curriculum development and learning practices, both for Indonesian schools abroad and within the country.

Although various studies have examined the implementation of the Indonesian Curriculum abroad and the Merdeka Curriculum domestically, most of these studies remain partial and have not comparatively analyzed the two curricula in different contexts. In addition, previous studies have tended to focus on describing implementation without providing an in-depth analysis of the factors determining curriculum effectiveness. Therefore, there is a need for a more systematic comparative study to identify the differences, strengths, and challenges of each curriculum based on their implementation contexts.

This study seeks to fill that gap by comprehensively analyzing the effectiveness of the implementation of both curricula using more structured indicators, thereby contributing academically to the development of educational policies and practices.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a comparative descriptive research design. The qualitative approach was chosen to explore in depth the process of curriculum implementation, learning strategies, and actual conditions in the field through descriptive data in the form of words, experiences, and observations. Meanwhile, the comparative nature of the study is used to compare the effectiveness of the implementation of the Indonesian Curriculum at the Indonesian School of





Kuala Lumpur (SIKL) with the Merdeka Curriculum implemented in schools in Indonesia.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of learning at the Indonesian School of Kuala Lumpur (SIKL) is carried out in a structured and systematic manner, reflecting the characteristics of Indonesian schools abroad. Based on interviews and observations conducted with several teaching staff members at SIKL, this study identified several findings discussed in this journal research. One of the findings is that the Lesson Plan (RPP) used in the Indonesian curriculum at SIKL has been designed in a very simple form, with greater emphasis placed on achieving students' basic competencies, integrating national values into students' character, and adapting schedules to regulations established by the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia (KBRI).

In the learning implementation process, teachers employ interactive lecture methods that are not only centered on explaining the material but also encourage student participation through question-and-answer sessions and direct feedback to ensure equal understanding. Learning activities are also enriched through group discussions, enabling students to collaborate, exchange ideas, and develop social as well as communication skills. However, the Lesson Plan (RPP) implemented at SIKL is in the form of a journal-based RPP that uses textbooks as the main reference source in classroom learning.

The use of digital media at SIKL is quite adequate, including projectors, computer devices, and online learning platforms, allowing learning materials to be presented more attractively and accessed more easily. In addition, learning at SIKL integrates elements of Indonesian and Malaysian culture, both in teaching materials and classroom activities, as an effort to strengthen students' understanding of their identity while also appreciating the social environment in which they live. SIKL teachers place special emphasis on





maintaining and instilling students' national identity, in line with the diplomatic mission of Indonesian schools abroad to preserve Indonesian culture, language, and national character even though students reside in another country.

Nevertheless, there are several challenges faced by both teachers and students. First, the Indonesian curriculum implemented must be adjusted to educational regulations in Malaysia. This curriculum adjustment refers to the harmonization process between the Indonesian national curriculum used at SIKL and the educational policies established by the Malaysian Ministry of Education.

Although SIKL fully implements the Indonesian Curriculum, the school is still required to comply with operational standards, operational permits, security regulations, and administrative requirements mandated by the Malaysian government, such as the local academic calendar structure, standards for student welfare and safety, and legal requirements related to foreign educational institutions. These adjustments do not alter the essence of the Indonesian curriculum but ensure that the implementation of learning, school administration, and supporting activities operate in accordance with the laws and policies of the host country. Through these adjustments, Indonesian schools can be officially recognized and continue providing quality education for Indonesian citizens living in Malaysia.

Second, another challenge is the highly diverse abilities of students. Considering their varied backgrounds, some students come from fully Indonesian families, some are descendants of Indonesians who have long resided in Malaysia, and others come from mixed-nationality families. Differences in language environment, culture, and academic ability create variations in learning styles and levels of understanding that teachers must carefully consider during the learning process.





Third, there are limitations in teacher training related to the latest curriculum updates from Indonesia, as not all teachers have equal access to intensive training or workshops regularly conducted in Indonesia. Even so, in general, SIKL teachers believe that the implemented curriculum remains stable, effective, and adaptive to students' needs within an international educational environment.

Meanwhile, the Merdeka Curriculum implemented in Indonesia also has its own methods, challenges, planning, and implementation processes. In implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, active student participation is emphasized through various flexible and student-centered approaches. Differentiated learning is one of its main characteristics, where teachers adapt teaching strategies according to students' needs, interests, and individual ability levels so that every student can learn optimally. In addition, project-based activities or the *Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (P5) provide opportunities for students to solve real-life problems, work collaboratively in groups, and produce works relevant to everyday life.

The use of digital media is also increasingly integrated, enabling students to access modern and interactive learning resources such as educational videos, online learning platforms, and learning applications. Collaborative learning is also implemented to encourage cooperation among students, group discussions, and exchanges of ideas in completing assignments. Through these various approaches, students are actively involved and given broad opportunities to explore their abilities, creativity, and individual learning styles, making the learning process more meaningful and enjoyable.

However, despite the Merdeka Curriculum offering flexibility and learning approaches that are more relevant to current developments, its implementation still faces several challenges. One major obstacle is the uneven understanding among teachers regarding the concept of differentiated learning, causing some teachers to experience





difficulties in adapting teaching methods to students' individual needs. In addition, limited facilities, particularly in schools located in remote areas, become barriers to implementing digital media and technology-based projects. Adaptation to formative assessment, which is a characteristic evaluation method in the Merdeka Curriculum, is also still relatively new for some teachers, resulting in assessment processes that are not yet fully optimal.

Another challenge is the difficulty teachers face in preparing comprehensive, contextual, and complete teaching modules suited to students' needs. Nevertheless, both teachers and students generally acknowledge that the Merdeka Curriculum is more flexible, relevant, and capable of supporting the development of 21st-century competencies. Therefore, its implementation is still viewed positively and considered to provide a new direction for improving learning quality.

Thus, the research findings indicate that the effectiveness of curriculum implementation is strongly influenced by the school context, teacher readiness, and the availability of facilities and infrastructure. A curriculum cannot be considered effective merely based on its design or theoretical framework; rather, it must be assessed based on how it is implemented in practice, teachers' ability to execute it, and the supporting facilities available to facilitate the teaching and learning process. These factors become the primary determinants of how effectively a curriculum can achieve learning objectives and develop students' competencies.

Regarding the Indonesian Curriculum implemented at the Indonesian School of Kuala Lumpur (SIKL), the study found that this curriculum provides stability and ease of implementation. Teachers are able to organize planning and learning more systematically because the curriculum documents are standardized and clearly structured. Furthermore, this curriculum is effective in maintaining students' national identity, which is the primary mission of Indonesian schools abroad. Nevertheless, this curriculum has limitations in





terms of flexibility, as opportunities for teacher innovation and creative learning are more restricted compared to the Merdeka Curriculum.

Meanwhile, the Merdeka Curriculum implemented in schools in Indonesia has brought significant changes to teachers' roles and learning patterns. Teachers are no longer merely instructors but also facilitators who personalize learning according to students' needs and abilities. Learning becomes more contextual, collaborative, and project-based, thereby increasing student engagement and enabling students to develop creativity and critical thinking skills more optimally. However, the implementation of this curriculum also faces technical obstacles, such as disparities in facilities among schools, uneven teacher readiness, and the need for further training to enable teachers to effectively prepare teaching modules and formative assessments.

Although there are differences in implementation and characteristics, both curricula are equally effective when applied according to their respective contexts. The Indonesian Curriculum is more suitable for environments requiring stability, formality, and reinforcement of national identity, such as SIKL. In contrast, the Merdeka Curriculum is more appropriate for schools aiming to emphasize innovation, creativity, flexible learning, and active development of the Pancasila Student Profile. The findings of this study confirm that no curriculum is absolutely superior, because effectiveness largely depends on the alignment between curriculum design, school conditions, teacher readiness, and human resource support. This is consistent with curriculum effectiveness theory, which states that successful curriculum implementation is determined by the interaction between inputs, processes, outputs, and the learning environment context.

D. CONCLUSION





Based on the results of the study regarding the Effectiveness of the Implementation of the Indonesian Curriculum at the Indonesian School of Kuala Lumpur (SIKL) and the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia, it can be concluded that curriculum effectiveness is strongly influenced by the school context, teacher readiness, and the availability of facilities and infrastructure. The implementation of the Indonesian Curriculum at SIKL demonstrates stable and structured effectiveness and is able to preserve students' national identity. This curriculum is suitable for overseas educational environments that require standardized regulations, regulatory certainty, and alignment with diplomatic missions.

In contrast, the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia provides greater flexibility through project-based learning, differentiated instruction, and the strengthening of the Pancasila Student Profile. This curriculum has proven effective in encouraging creativity, collaboration, and active student participation. However, its success still depends on teacher readiness, the availability of digital facilities, and adequate understanding of the preparation of teaching modules and formative assessment.

Therefore, both curricula possess their own strengths according to their respective implementation contexts. There is no curriculum that is absolutely superior; rather, effectiveness is determined by the compatibility between curriculum design, the characteristics of the learning environment, and the competence of implementers in the field. This study emphasizes the importance of policy support, teacher capacity building, and the provision of learning facilities as key factors in improving the quality of curriculum implementation across educational institutions.

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