

Optimizing Independent Curriculum Management to Shape Excellent Student Character

Hasan Baharun¹⁾, Abdul Hamid Wahid²⁾, Naufal Zakki'Aziz Firdaus Udayana³⁾, Achmad Anwar Abidin⁴⁾

^{1,2,3)} Universitas Nurul Jadid, Probolinggo, Indonesia

⁴⁾ Universitas Terbuka Tangerang Selatan

e-mail Correspondent: ha54nbaharun@gmail.com

Received: 30-03-2024

Revised: 06-06-2024

Accepted: 06-08-2024

Info Articles

Abstract

Keywords:

Curriculum Management,
Independent Learning,
Character, Teacher
Performance

This research analyzes the optimization of independent curriculum management in forming superior student character in madrasahs. This research uses a qualitative case study type approach. The data collection technique uses observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The data analysis technique uses the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana Interactive Model with data condensation activities, data presentation, and concluding. The triangulation of sources and techniques obtains the validity of the data. The research results show that implementing Independent Curriculum Management to build student character is structured and reasonable. The implementation of Independent Curriculum Management includes five steps, namely increasing the efficiency of using curriculum resources, increasing fairness and opportunities for students, increasing the relevance and effectiveness of learning, increasing the effectiveness of teacher performance and student activities, and increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. These five steps are a process of organizational and functional strengthening of the madrasah for student character. Student character can be influenced by a conducive and collaborative learning culture and learning activities that are proactive and productive in their implementation.

Kata Kunci:

Manajemen Kurikulum,
Merdeka Belajar, Karakter,
Kinerja Guru

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis tentang optimalisasi manajemen kurikulum merdeka dalam membentuk karakter siswa yang unggul di madrasah. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif jenis studi kasus. Teknik pengumpulan datanya menggunakan observasi, wawancara mendalam (in depth interview) dan dokumentasi. Teknik analisis data menggunakan Model Interaktif Miles, Huberman, and Saldana dengan kegiatan kondensasi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Keabsahan data diperoleh dengan proses triangulasi sumber dan teknik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan Manajemen Kurikulum Merdeka sebagai upaya pembentukan karakter siswa terbilang cukup terstruktur dan baik. Penerapan Manajemen Kurikulum Merdeka tersebut meliputi lima langkah yakni meningkatkan efisiensi pemanfaatan sumber daya kurikulum, meningkatkan keadilan dan kesempatan kepada siswa, meningkatkan relevansi dan efektivitas pembelajaran, meningkatkan efektivitas kinerja guru maupun aktivitas siswa, dan meningkatkan efisiensi serta efektivitas proses belajar mengajar. Lima langkah tersebut menjadi proses penguatan secara organisasional dan fungsional madrasah bagi karakter siswa. Karakter siswa bisa dipengaruhi oleh budaya belajar yang kondusif dan kolaboratif, serta aktivitas belajar yang proaktif dan produktif dalam pelaksanaannya.

INTRODUCTION

Learning activities can be obtained through two-way interaction, namely, interaction between teachers and students. Through this interaction, students' responses and character in receiving learning will be seen (Omiyefa, 2021). Of course, the hope for every educational institution and teacher is that students can show positive learning responses and behavior. This character is considered important as an attitude that emerges from students to respond to every teaching and learning activity, showing whether their attitude is enthusiastic and responsible for the learning opportunities (S. Pratama, Siraj, & Yusuf T., 2019). As Razak et al. (2019) argue, the character comes from a person (student) called an endocentric source. This endocentric source becomes the desire to change oneself or improve one's self-image. The desire to change oneself is a way to increase a positive self-image that focuses on self-moral aspects.

The student's character also becomes a biological manifestation or manifestation of individual life, namely all the characteristics that state that the human individual is alive. This student's character not only includes things that can be observed (overt) but also things that are hidden (covert). So, the student's character must display all the actions or actions carried out by students in the school environment (Van Tran, Pham, Tran, Nguyen, & Nguyen, 2022). Character formation does not just happen but rather through a particular process, namely through social contact that takes place between individuals and individuals, individuals and groups, individuals and the community environment, and others around them (Çavuşoğlu & Tepebaşılı, 2017). Not all students with religious knowledge or insight become intelligent, have a noble character, or can consistently practice it daily because every child has different desires and abilities. So, the methods and learning tools used to convey and instill it must also be different (Halawati & Good Time, 2020).

Only some individuals can show the same positive response. In learning activities, attention must be paid to factors encouraging students to show positive learning characteristics (Ifyu & Susanto, 2018). This is undoubtedly a challenge for teachers to shape students' character to become superior after the recent pandemic outbreak. The beginning of 2022 will be a year of recovery from the pandemic, which requires national education to catch up with material and raise learning effectiveness again. Determining the Independent Curriculum as an alternative recovery from the Emergency Curriculum during the pandemic. MI Miftahul Islam is also one of the Islamic educational institutions that implements this curriculum. However, several student problems must be solved using the independent curriculum in its implementation. One of the broad outlines is the weakness of the character of MI Miftahul Islam students, caused by their educational practices, which only pay attention to cognitive aspects and ignore affective aspects. Several phenomena can be seen from researchers' observations regarding students' learning characteristics. First, competitive anti-collaborative learning, namely, students can hone their abilities and learning skills independently and creatively but do not or are reluctant to collaborate in study groups with other friends whose cognitive level is not good. Second, egocentrism between students, namely that students show their own will rather than shared interests (not wanting to give in to their friends). Third is apathy, namely lack of enthusiasm, interest in learning activities, and apathy towards the problems faced. As a result, there is a gap between students' knowledge and practice in everyday life, so they cannot form moral character, even though the core of education today is character education.

Starting from the description of the problems, this is why efforts are needed to optimize the Independent Curriculum used by MI Miftahul Islam. One solution to the problem of managing the Independent Curriculum is implementing management for the Independent Learning Curriculum, which is used as an optimization measure. Qolbiyah (2022) states that Independent Learning Curriculum Management is a systematic concept that aims to manage the provision of freedom to students so that they can organize and develop their way of learning independently. Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum upholds the ideal formation of a person with Pancasila character and profile. Strengthened by Ainia (2020) that this curriculum

characterizes students' learning concepts by 1) Learning being changes that occur consciously, 2) Changes in learning being functional, 3) Changes in learning being positive and active, and 4) Changes in learning not temporary.

Independent Curriculum Management has successfully demonstrated the concept of optional and independent learning activities, which have provided space or opportunities for educational institutions to develop learning characteristics such as social awareness, creativity, mutual respect between different cultures, independence, critical thinking and so on (Bookr, 2020). Of course, in its application, educators must respond wisely and make their students have these characteristics so that they become superior students, have good personalities, and are happy and intelligent (In 2020, 2020). According to Rooria (2021), the concepts of "freedom to learn", which means freedom to think, and "free campus", which means an effort to release shackles so that you can move more efficiently, can be realized. If not, then it will be contradictory if, in its development, students feel burdened and pressured in determining the direction of their interests and talents and even their potential. Mercy & AMP; Hartoyo (2022) explain the objectives of Merdeka Belajar education, which are expected to develop hard skills and soft skills, prepare students to be more prepared and relevant to the needs of current developments, prepare graduates as future leaders of the nation who are superior and whose personalities can be achieved optimally.

Several previous studies confirm that the success of Merdeka Belajar includes a curriculum that develops students' inner and outer self-images. According to Mike et al. (2021), in their research, 85.6% of respondents (77 education students) stated that they had prepared themselves to take part in the Independent Learning program. The response was shown by the interest of students who felt independent (free) in choosing areas of study outside of campus that they were interested in. This shows that independent campuses provide an autonomous and flexible form of learning that students can do outside the classroom, even outside their university, thereby creating innovative learning habits, and by students' needs and making many connections or friends outside their class.

Furthermore, Susilawati (2021) explained in her research, "Free Campus means an effort to release the shackles to be able to move more easily and have the autonomy to regulate yourself. Merdeka Belajar combines the capabilities and potential of students and universities to choose and organize learning activities independently." Meanwhile, research from Darmawan et al. (2022) explained that the Merdeka Belajar learning method, which focuses on experience learning, equips students to enter society so that authentic, contextual, and project-based learning can be carried out.

This research occupies a space and is different from the studies above. This research illustrates the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum Management, which is very suitable for optimizing student character amidst the current learning model, which focuses on competency. This research also presents an interesting novelty: the structuralization of "Merdeka Belajar" Curriculum Management applies humanistic learning theory. The implications of this research are interesting, as they will show that curriculum management plays more of a facilitator role for students as the leading actor (student-centred) who interprets the process of their own experiences so that learning becomes meaningful for the students.

These issues and phenomena are discussed because several previous studies discussed curriculum implementation, especially about learning. As mentioned above, this research occupies a different side, emphasizing the optimization of independent learning curriculum management in shaping student character. So, this research aims to determine efforts to optimize the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum Management in forming superior student character at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) Miftahul Islam.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a type of case study research. The type used reveals phenomena and alternatives to phenomena occurring in the research object. This

research is located in MI Miftahul Islam, Krucil, Probolinggo, East Java, Indonesia. Data collection techniques for this study are observation and structured in-depth interviews that ask directly to several informants in purposive sampling who know and understand the research object. The head of the madrasah, Deputy Principal for curriculum, Deputy Principal for student affairs, homeroom teacher class IV, class V, and class VI, as well as five teachers, as well as documentation related to the object of research. The instruments used in this study are researchers as the main instrument and 2 auxiliary instruments, namely observation guidelines to examine the systemization of independent curriculum management regarding resources, the continuity of using the curriculum in learning, and interview guidelines. Data analysis techniques using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana Interactive Model with activities (1) data condensation data that simplifies data findings from several data collection techniques. (2) display data, which presents data from the results of simplifying findings, and (3) conclusion drawing/verification, which concludes the presentation of the data described. The triangulation of sources and techniques obtains the validity of the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The character of students in learning is also an aspect that educators always consider. The movement for learning success should be centered on students as learning subjects. Judging from the previously mentioned phenomenon, Deputy Principal for student affairs illustrates that the use of Curriculum management Merdeka is an alternative curriculum based on three things, namely competency-based, flexible learning, and Pancasila character.

The independent learning curriculum emphasizes students' freedom to develop according to their interests. However, the independent learning curriculum is not designed to be anti-social. Therefore, learning is designed by combining the achievement of the knowledge dimension through the delivery of learning materials in class and by social activities that will develop the attitude dimension. Implementing the independent curriculum is less effective in building the character of superior students.

If traced earlier, MI Miftahul Islam uses the Merdeka Curriculum, which is only used with any previous implementation design. Implementing the Independent Curriculum previously initiated four main elements: objectives, subjects, methods and organizations, and evaluation. As stated by Homeroom Class V, these elements include two elements of curriculum planning, one element of curriculum implementation, and one element of curriculum evaluation ((1) objectives, (2) content or material used in the learning process, (3) learning activities or experiences to achieve goals, and (4) assessment or evaluation of learning outcomes to determine the achievement of goals).

Table 1. Data on the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum MI Miftahul Islam

Phase	Fill	Information
Planning	Purpose	1. General Purpose (<i>aims</i>) 2. Institutional Goals 3. Curricular Objectives (objective) 4. Instructional Purpose
	Content or Materials	5. Field of Study Subjects 6. Integrated Subjects
Implementation	Learning Activities or Experiences	7. Based: 8. Project-based learning 9. Experiential Learning
Evaluation	Activities to Determine the Achievement of Curriculum Objectives	10. Achievement of curriculum objectives in student learning activities (processes), 11. Student behavior and character changes after participating in learning activities (results).

First, the objectives that formulate the curriculum implementation design are arranged in stages from the broadest to the narrowest. The general Purpose of education (*aims*) is to create a profile of Pancasila students, institutional goals (*goals*) are to create graduates who have charisma and character, and curricular goals are to realize students who practice knowledge in the experience of social activities, and instructional goals (*objectives*) are goals to be achieved in learning activities in class (in a subject).

Second, Curriculum content or material is all knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes organized in subjects or fields of study that support the achievement of Curriculum Objectives. The Homeroom of Class VI stated that there are subjects correlated with the Independent Curriculum, such as the Strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile (P5) Program in the formation of the Pancasila Student profile. There are supporting subjects (integrated) student character development according to the learning concept in the Independent and Free Independent Curriculum, such as Aqidah Akhlaq, Civic Education (Civics), Mathematics, Physical Education, Sports, and Health (PJOK), Natural Sciences (IPA), and Social Sciences (IPS).

Third, the student learning process or the process of using the Independent Curriculum in teaching and learning activities carries the learning style of *Project-based Learning* (project-based learning) and experiential learning. Students must be able to explore their potential in doing a theoretical and practical job. Fourth, the evaluation of student learning processes and outcomes is influenced by implementing monotonous and less creative learning, inviting students' attention and interest in learning. The subjects' objectives and content have been formulated as an implementation design, but the presence of teachers as facilitators needs to be more character in its implementation.

The results of these observations show that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum could be more optimal, and optimization is needed in its implementation. Head of Madrasah MI Miftahul Islam explained that implementing the grade-level curriculum is still an obstacle. Teacher knowledge skills and material maturation must be administratively regulated to ensure the smooth implementation of the Independent Curriculum in the classroom environment. Objectives, content, learning activities, and evaluation are interconnected components of an integrated curriculum. One component determines the other. Therefore, Merdeka's curriculum management skills are needed. The following is the optimization design of the Independent Curriculum Management used by MI Miftahul Islam Bermi Krucil Probolinggo to build superior student character.

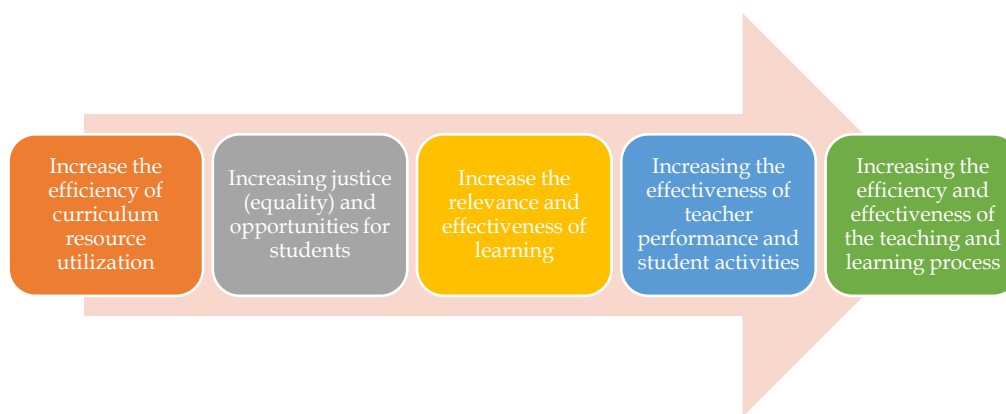


Figure 1. Management Design of Independent Curriculum at MI Miftahul Islam

MI Miftahul Islam Principal Bermi Krucil Probolinggo explained that curriculum implementation is inseparable from an organized managerial process. The management function can systematize the movement of the activities of an organization. In the educational process, curriculum management must be carried out so that curriculum planning, implementation, and evaluation run effectively, efficiently, and optimally to empower various learning resources, learning experiences, and curriculum components. The following is explained in detail to see further about efforts to optimize independent curriculum management as a step to build superior student character.

Increase the Efficiency of Utilization of Curriculum Supporting Resources

The successful implementation of the curriculum in madrasah cannot be separated from several supporting resources, such as school management, utilization of learning resources, and use of learning media. Improving the efficiency of utilizing curriculum-supporting resources, empowering resources, and curriculum components can be improved through the following planned and effective management. (1) Head of Madrasah MI Miftahul Islam Bermi Krucil Probolinggo said this madrasah holistically adheres to a madrasah-based management structure. This managerial process prioritizes power, knowledge, skills, and information systems over an independent curriculum. Knowledge of the Independent Curriculum has been known by all internal components of the school, from the head of the madrasah and all levels of structural staff to the entire functional council of the madrasah (teachers). (2) Maturation of delivery of student learning resources. Students are led to be universally active and subjective in their learning process. Automatically, teachers (madrasah functional parties) who best master and understand the concept of an independent curriculum, especially the Pancasila Student Formation program, must be able to deliver students who are able to have a character in accordance with Pancasila values. The program consists of the main subject (P5). Students must take four 4 hours of lessons each week to create the ability to manage character and emotions in the learning process. Some of the themes carried out in P5 learning (Project for Strengthening the Profile of Pancasila Students) are as follows:

Table 2. P5 Lesson Theme

NO	Theme	Concept
1	Sustainable lifestyle	Students worship according to the dictates of their respective religions, say and do good according to religious teachings, be friendly, polite, respect fellow humans, love and preserve the surrounding environment, behave pretty and uphold equality.
2	Local wisdom	
3	Bhinneka Tunggal Ika	
4	Awaken his body and soul	
5	Voice of democracy	

6	Engineering and technology to build the Republic of Indonesia
7	Entrepreneurship

These themes provide opportunities for students to strengthen their character and learning opportunities from the surrounding environment so that ethics and civilized behavior are imprinted in them from an early age. (3) Deputy Principal for Curriculum MI Miftahul Islam Bermi Krucil Probolinggo explained that the themes chosen for all teachers should plan learning programs in the form of material or assisted by learning media (teaching skills) that will be given each meeting. The planning will be the teacher's control and handle when teaching. Long before learning, teacher planning starts from the beginning of the new school year, namely by compiling programs contained in annual programs and semester programs, syllabi, to RPP (Learning Implementation Plan). Head of MI Miftahul Islam Bermi Krucil Probolinggo emphasized that the learning preparation process for each teacher for each mapel/class that is taught must be provided and made by teachers in the new school year. Usually, after managing the report card at the end of the even semester, the madrasah immediately asks the teacher to prepare learning tools for the new school year. This is why it is intended for the head of the madrasah to supervise the teachers' readiness and planning form.

Increasing Fairness and Opportunity in Students

MI Miftahul Islam implements this improvement through intracurricular activities and extra and co-curricular activities that are managed with integrity to achieve curriculum objectives. P5 MI Miftahul Islam teacher Bermi Krucil Probolinggo explained that the intended learning opportunity is to train students toward the desired behavior changes and assess the extent to which changes occur in students. This stage is also a formative evaluation of student behavior at the end of each month to be followed up. The parties involved in this evaluation are each class's homeroom teacher and all subject teachers.

Some forms of fairness and learning opportunities for students provided by teachers are (1) allowing students to be able to choose extracurricular activities that they are interested in. (2) Helping students interact socially and think objectively (*solving*) by presenting project-based learning. (3) Herding behaviors and attitudes respect differences, equality, and heterogeneity in terms of both sex and cognitive abilities. (4) Emphasize the attitude of responsibility for the task given or the problem at hand. (5) Direct students to enjoy opinions and actively listen to other opinions. (6) Allow students to show their creativity in solving problems or making (good) decisions.

Improving Learning Relevance and Effectiveness

MI Miftahul Islam increases the relevance and effectiveness of learning according to the needs of students and the environment. The statement from the deputy principal for Curriculum is to be an uninterrupted process always to carry out learning by providing quality, interactive, and contextual learning experiences. The statement of the Homeroom Class IV also emphasized that at this stage, educators are expected to be able to organize learning that is (1) interactive, (2) inspirational, (3) fun, (4) challenging, (5) motivates learners to participate actively; and (6) provide sufficient space for initiative, creativity, independence according to the talents, interests and physical and psychological development of students. The position of Head of the Madrasah in this stage becomes a supervisor and evaluator of the learning performance created by each teacher. This is why coordination between institutional organizational structures must be maintained to balance goals, content, educational activities, and results.

The relevance referred to here is the condition of educational goals that are well realized, not only in aspects of students' cognitive development but also still paying attention to students' affective and psychomotor aspects. The subjects received by students today are the same as the learning content taught in the 2013 curriculum (K13). However, P5 was added as a subject for

developing students' character and attitudes as a profile of Pancasila students after experiencing post-pandemic moral degradation. So, applying the Independent Curriculum becomes a process of rearranging or managing healing learning so students can learn critically and subjectively as qualified and civilized human beings.

Improve the Effectiveness of Teacher Performance

The effectiveness of teacher performance is always considered by the Head of Madrasah in order to optimize learning activities and maintain the achievement of educational goals. The homeroom teacher said that the process of supervising teacher performance is carried out once a month, and the Purpose is to maintain the integrity of the achievement of learning targets. This supervision is accommodated in the form of regular meetings attended by the head of the madrasah, deputy principal for curriculum, deputy principal for student affairs, and the entire teacher council. The Independent Curriculum's performance, teaching patterns, and achievement are the reasons for holding this teacher supervision and evaluation meeting. This evaluation meeting includes several things that need to be discussed together, and each teacher must be able to show their performance criteria according to teacher assessment indicators.

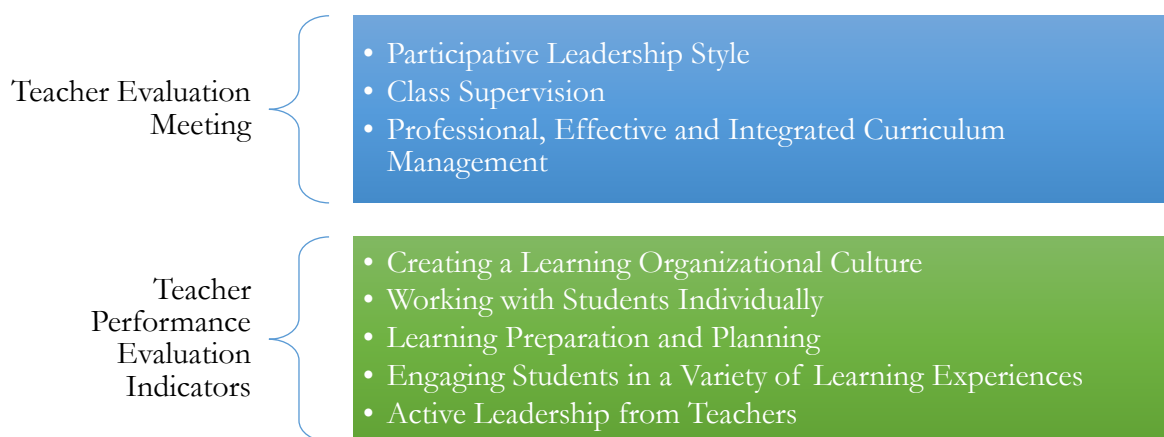


Figure 2. Focus Supervision of Teacher Performance Effectiveness

Deputy principal for curriculum said that the routine evaluation meeting has been going on since the beginning of the new teaching 2023/2024 (counting three months). Each meeting discussed the leadership style of the head of the madrasah, which is needed to support the effectiveness of the teacher's teaching process, the results of class supervision, and the implementation of the curriculum carried out by the teacher, as the messages conveyed by the head of the madrasah, that the process of teaching effective teachers as Shiva must be fully understood by the indicators by the entire teacher council. Just as teachers must create a structured learning organizational culture, teachers must build adaptive and objective interpersonal communication with students, apply learning tools as well as possible, make students collaborators in the learning process, and be proactive classroom managers. This assessment of teacher performance, which occupies a position of urgency, is discussed because it determines the success of student learning. At the same time, students are subjects that need to be influenced by their character and attitude to the profile of virtuous and civilized Pancasila students.

Picket teachers usually carry out class supervision at MI Miftahul Islam Bermi Krucil Probolinggo on duty or by the head of the madrasah directly every day. According to Zubair (2018), for teachers, teacher performance appraisal should not be a feared thing but a guideline to find out the elements of performance assessed and as a means of assessing the strengths and weaknesses of individuals (students) to improve the quality of their performance. - Uswaun (2020) Also explained that the existence of this teacher performance assessment for schools is to provide

a certain level or criteria for a teacher's performance so that it can be material for evaluation and feedback to be improved and overcome together to achieve educational goals.

Increase the Efficiency and Effectiveness of the Teaching and Learning Process

The learning process is constantly monitored directly by the Head of the Madrasah in order to see the consistency between the planned design and the implementation of learning made by each teacher. Thus, discrepancies between design and implementation can be avoided monthly at the abovementioned evaluation meeting. In addition, teachers and students are always motivated to carry out effective and efficient learning because of the favorable conditions created in curriculum management activities. The learning assessment (evaluation) process is also a tool for structured assessment of the KBM process (teaching and learning activities). Learning assessment measures aspects that should be measured and are holistic. The learning assessment used by MI Miftahul Islam Bermi Krucil Probolinggo is formative (daily/periodic) and summative (semester). Formative assessment in the form of assessment at the beginning of learning and assessment at the time of learning. Assessment at the beginning of learning supports differentiated learning so that students learn according to what they need.

Meanwhile, formative assessment during learning can be used as a basis for reflecting on the entire learning process, which can be used as a reference for learning planning and revising if needed. If students feel they have achieved the learning objectives, the teacher will continue to the next learning goal (material). The learning process is instructed so that students can recognize their learning conditions and situations and stimulate their characteristic abilities as social beings. However, if the learning objectives still need to be achieved, the teacher must strengthen them first.

Furthermore, teachers need to conduct summative assessments to ensure the achievement of the overall learning objectives. Recognizing students' character during the learning experience is obtained by qualitative assessment from each maple teacher or homeroom teacher. This assessment is an accumulation of student character assessments for one semester (6 months) that have been passed. This summative assessment will be displayed directly on the student assessment report card, which will be given directly to the student's parents. According to King et al. (2020), Evaluation is the process of measuring and comparing the results achieved in real-time with the results that should be achieved by what has been determined. O'Keefe et al. (2021) Explaining evaluation is closely related to assessment, which gives a qualitative value or number to the thing being evaluated so that the level of comparison between the results achieved and the benchmark has been set.

Implementing the Optimization of Independent Curriculum Management used by MI Miftahul Islam Bermi Krucil Probolinggo to shape student character through 5 (five) steps of managerial strengthening has been organized and reasonably good. These five steps become a process of organizational and functional strengthening of the madrasah for superior student character. Student character can be influenced by a conducive and collaborative learning culture and proactive and productive learning activities in its implementation. A positive atmosphere in a safe and comfortable school environment will give students the opportunity and freedom to process, learn, and make decisions to accept and absorb a learning experience. The contribution offered by this research in Islamic Education Management is to stimulate educational institutions to pay more attention to optimizing the application of the Independent Curriculum that is real and to the needs of students with current character. As described above, it also describes the concept of curriculum, which prioritizes the effectiveness of implementing the Independent Curriculum.

Discussion

According to research findings in the field as mentioned above, the implementation of independent curriculum management in madrasas includes five key steps, namely increasing the efficiency of using curriculum resources, increasing fairness and opportunities for students, increasing the relevance and effectiveness of learning, increasing the effectiveness of teacher performance and student activities, as well as increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. Implementing these steps can provide convenience and result in efforts to improve education quality through independent curriculum management.

This research is in line with the research results of Napitupulu et al. (2023) who said that the implementation of Independent Learning Curriculum Management in improving the quality of education is carried out through planning, implementation and evaluation of the Independent Learning Curriculum, which involves a comprehensive evaluation of student needs, educational developments, and demands of the world of work, as well as collaboration between the deputy principal, team teachers and education experts. Sa'diyah et al. (2022); Wanti & Chastanti (2023) also argue that improving the quality of education is achieved through the implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum by prioritizing student independence in the teaching and learning process, thus enabling them to be active in their role and involved in designing and managing their learning independently. Furthermore, Pratikno et al, (2022) stated that the implementation of independent learning must go through a planning process to achieve national education goals. Thus, improving education quality cannot be separated from the management process in general and acculturation to the independent curriculum in particular.

Increasing the efficiency of utilizing curriculum resources in madrasas refers to efforts to optimize the use of all aspects related to the curriculum, such as time, teaching staff, learning materials and supporting facilities, in order to achieve maximum results by using available resources efficiently (Fadillah et al., 2021; Haddade et al., 2024; Martani, 2023). By increasing the efficiency of utilizing curriculum resources in madrasas, it is hoped that madrasas can provide quality and equitable educational services for all students, and achieve optimal learning outcomes by the desired educational goals.

Meanwhile, increasing justice and opportunities for students examines the importance of equal access to quality education for all individuals regardless of economic, social background or special needs (education for all) (Sigstad et al., 2022). With an inclusive approach, every student has the same opportunity to reach his full potential (Alam & Mohanty, 2023). Increasing justice and opportunity for students in madrasas includes ensuring that every student has the same opportunity to receive quality education without discrimination based on economic, social, religious or other factors. This activity has quite deep meaning related to educational accessibility, concern for special needs, fairness in assessment and evaluation, inclusion and diversity, and student empowerment.

According to Pratama (2020), justice created by an institution to uphold a fair attitude towards students is a condition that gives every student equal access to the same quality of education without differentiating them based on certain characteristics. Sulistyowati (2020) also believes that justice in any circumstance protects other people's rights and is a measure of the validity of a society's life and social order. Meanwhile, Mansyur (2021), demonstrates that fair behaviour can reduce social jealousy among students so they can easily understand their rights and obligations as humans.

Increasing justice and opportunities for students in madrasas aims to create an educational environment that is inclusive and fair and stimulates the growth and development of all students, regardless of their background or conditions (Nasir, 2020; Sya'bani, 2021). This basic education system principle is oriented towards empowerment and equality.

Another thing that is no less important is increasing the effectiveness of teacher performance and student activities in independent curriculum management activities in madrasas so that teachers become professional. Professional managerial abilities require processing or utilising various resources available in the madrasah.

Rifa'i et al. (2022) states that the role of the teacher as an agent of behaviour science, educational activities must be directed into behavioural activities in which various social interactions occur between teachers and students, students and students, and teachers, with students and their environment. Baharun & Adhimiy (2018) in their research, revealed that the independent curriculum more simply focuses students on learning essential material and developing students' competencies (cognitive, affective and psychomotor) simultaneously in each phase. Providing adequate training and support to teachers and implementing interactive and experience-based learning methods can make the learning process more dynamic and participatory, thereby maximizing student learning potential.

The final step, increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the teaching and learning process, emphasizes the importance of continuous evaluation and adjustment to the learning strategies and methods used. By regularly monitoring and evaluating learning outcomes (Chan, 2023), educational institutions can identify areas that need improvement and implement the necessary changes to improve the overall quality of education.

Evaluation is very important, as there may be good and bad obstacles in implementation, according to the program created and agreed upon by school principals, supervisors, and teachers. This evaluation can cover the entire curriculum or each component, including objectives, content, and learning methods (Mundiri & Hasanah, 2018). The evaluation aims to collect, analyze, and present data to decide whether the curriculum will be revised or replaced. Curriculum evaluation is also important to adapt to scientific developments, technological advances and changing market needs (Napitupulu et al., 2023).

The results of this research provide a practical understanding of how to increase efficiency in managing curriculum resources so that madrasas can provide quality educational services by using available resources efficiently. They also provide rationale and practical guidance for madrasas to create an inclusive and fair educational environment for all students.

CONCLUSION

MI Miftahul Islam Bermi Krucil Probolinggo implements independent curriculum management to build a superior student character that is structured and reasonable. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum Management includes five steps, namely increasing the efficiency of curriculum resource utilization, increasing equity and opportunity for students, increasing the relevance and effectiveness of learning, increasing the effectiveness of teacher performance and student activities, and increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. These five steps become the madrasah's organizational and functional strengthening for student character. Student character can be influenced by a conducive and collaborative learning culture and proactive and productive learning activities in its implementation. The preparation of this research can be the initial foundation for researchers to

develop further studies on the effectiveness of a quantitative application of Curriculum Management. This research is only limited to efforts to optimize the Management process for the Independent Curriculum used.

REFERENCES

- Ainia, D. K. (2020). Merdeka Belajar dalam Pandangan Ki Hadjar Dewantara dan Relevansinya bagi Pengembangan Pendidikan Karakter. *Jurnal Pendidikan: Teori, Penelitian, Dan Pengembangan*, 3(3), 95–101.
- Alam, A., & Mohanty, A. (2023). Cultural beliefs and equity in educational institutions: exploring the social and philosophical notions of ability groupings in teaching and learning of mathematics. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 28(1), 2270662. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02673843.2023.2270662>
- Baharun, H., & Adhimiy, S. (2018). Curriculum Development Through Creative Lesson Plan. *Cendekia*, 16(1), 41–62.
- Çavuşoğlu, A. A., & Tepebaşı, F. (2018). Developing Attitudes Scale towards German Reading. *International Journal of Languages ' Education and Teaching*, 5(4), 85–99.
- Chan, C. K. Y. (2023). A comprehensive AI policy education framework for university teaching and learning. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 20(1), 38. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-023-00408-3>
- Darmawan, I. P. A., Wenas, M. L., Kurniawan, A. H., & Purwanto, H. (2022). Optimalisasi Manajemen Berbasis Sekolah di Era Merdeka Belajar. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Kristen*, 7(September), 181–193.
- Fadillah, H., Trisnamansyah, S., Insan, H. S., & Sauri, S. (2021). Strategy of Integrated Salaf Curriculum in Madrasah Aliyah to Improve the Graduates' Quality. *Journal of Education Research and Evaluation*, 5(4), 656. <https://doi.org/10.23887/jere.v5i4.33007>
- Haddade, H., Nur, A., Achruh, A., Rasyid, M. N. A., & Ibrahim, A. (2024). Madrasah management strategies through Madrasah Reform program: an evidence from Indonesia. *International Journal of Educational Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-05-2023-0236>
- Halawati, F., & Firdaus, D. F. (2020). Pengaruh Pendidikan Karakter Terhadap Perilaku Siswa. *Education and Human Development Journal*, 5(2), 51–60. <https://doi.org/10.33086/ehdj.v5i2.1561>
- Halitopo, M. (2020). Implementasi Merdeka Belajar Dalam Buku Teks Bahasa Inggris Untuk SMK. *Jurnal Pendidikan Universitas Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa*, 5(1), 54–61.
- King, F. ., Goodson, & Rohani, F. (2020). Higher Order Thinking Skills. Assessment dan Evaluation Educational Service Program. *International Education Studies*, 2(5), 345–371.
- Mansyur, A. R. (2021). Wawasan Kepemimpinan Guru (Teacher Leadership) dan Konsep Guru Penggerak. *Education and Learning Journal*, 2(2), 101–109.
- Martani, E. (2023). Improving the Quality of Madrasah Education through Madrasah Resource Management. *Danuh Guru: Jurnal Pendidikan MI/SD*, 3(1), 25–38. <https://doi.org/10.35878/guru.v3i1.481>
- Meke, K. D. P., Astro, R. B., & Daud, M. H. (2021). Dampak Kebijakan Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) pada Perguruan Tinggi Swasta di Indonesia. *Edukatif: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*, 4(1), 675–685. <https://doi.org/10.31004/edukatif.v4i1.1940>
- Mundiri, A., & Hasanah, R. U. (2018). Inovasi Pengembangan Kurikulum PAI di SMP Nurul Jadid. *Tadrib: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 4(1), 40–68.
- Napitupulu, G., Silalahi, M., & Gultom, S. (2023). Implementasi Manajemen Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar dalam Peningkatan Mutu Pendidikan di SMA Negeri 1 Bandar. *Journal on Education*, 6(1), 5397–5406.
- Nasir, M. (2020). Curriculum Development and Accreditation Standards in the Traditional Islamic Schools in Indonesia. *Journal of Curriculum Studies Research*.

- <https://doi.org/10.46303/jcsr.2020.3>
- O'Keefe, B., Rotherham, A., & Schiess, J. O. (2021). Reshaping Assessment and Accountability in 2021 and Beyond. *State Education Standard*, 21(2), 7–12.
- Omiyefa, M. O. (2021). Action Learning Strategy and Students' Knowledge of Character Education Concepts in Social Studies. *Anatolian Journal of Education*, 6(1), 67–78. <https://doi.org/10.29333/aje.2021.615a>
- Pratama, D. (2020). Pengembangan Skala Thurstone Metode Equal Appearing Interval untuk Mengukur Sikap Moderasi Beragama Siswa Sekolah Menengah Atas Developing. *Jurnal Psikologi Teori Dan Terapan*, 11(1), 71–82. <https://doi.org/10.26740/jptt.v11n1.p71-82>
- Pratama, S., Siraj, A., & Yusuf T., M. (2019). Pengaruh Budaya Religius Dan Self Regulated Terhadap Perilaku Keagamaan Siswa. *Edukasi Islami, Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 8(2), 331–246.
- Pratikno, Y., Hermawan, E., & Arifin, A. L. (2022). Human Resource “Kurikulum Merdeka” from Design to Implementation in the School: What Worked and What not in Indonesian Education. *Jurnal Iqra': Kajian Ilmu Pendidikan*, 7(1), 326–343. <https://doi.org/10.25217/ji.v7i1.1708>
- Qolbiyah, A. (2022). Implementasi kurikulum merdeka dalam pembelajaran pendidikan agama islam. *Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu Pendidikan Indonesia*, 1(1), 44–48.
- Rahayu, R., & Susanto, R. (2018). Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Guru Dan Keterampilan Manajemen Kelas Terhadap Perilaku Belajar Siswa Kelas Iv. *JURNAL PENDIDIKAN DASAR PERKHLASA: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Dasar*, 4(2), 220–229. <https://doi.org/10.31932/jpdp.v4i2.178>
- Rahmadayanti, D., & Hartoyo, A. (2022). Potret Kurikulum Merdeka, Wujud Merdeka Belajar di Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Basicedu*, 6(4), 7174–7187.
- Razak, A. A., Jannah, F., & Saleh, K. (2019). Pengaruh Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam Terhadap Perilaku Siswa di SMK Kesehatan Samarinda. *El-Bubuth*, 1(2), 95–102.
- Rifa'i, A., Asih, N. E. K., & Fatmawati, D. (2022). Penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka Pada Pembelajaran PAI di Sekolah. *Jurnal Syntax Admiration*, 3(8), 1006–1013.
- Rodiyah, R. (2021). Implementasi program merdeka belajar kampus merdeka di era digital dalam menciptakan karakter mahasiswa hukum yang berkarakter dan profesional. *Seminar Nasional Hukum Universitas Negeri Semarang*, 7(2), 425–434.
- Sa'diyah, M., Nurhayati, I., Endri, E., Supriadi, D., & Afrianto, Y. (2022, February). *The Implementation of Independent Learning Independent Campus: The New Paradigm of Education in Indonesia*. <https://doi.org/10.20944/preprints202202.0302.v1>
- Sigstad, H. M. H., Buli-Holmberg, J., & Morken, I. (2022). Succeeding in inclusive practices in school in Norway – A qualitative study from a teacher perspective. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 37(6), 1009–1022. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08856257.2021.1997481>
- Sulistyowati, Y. (2020). Kesetaraan Gender dalam Lingkup Pendidikan dan Tata Sosial. *Ijongs: Indonesian Journal of Gender Studies*, 1(2), 1–14.
- Susilawati, N. (2021). Merdeka Belajar dan Kampus Merdeka Dalam Pandangan Filsafat Pendidikan Humanisme. *Jurnal Sikola: Jurnal Kajian Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran*, 2(3), 203–219. <https://doi.org/10.24036/sikola.v2i3.108>
- Sya'bani, M. A. Y. (2021). *Culture of Religious Moderation Through the Actualization of Islamic Education Wasatiyyah to Improve Religious Reconnection and Tolerance in Indonesia*. Gresik, Indonesia. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.211020.075>
- Tohir, M. (2020). Eksistensi Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka untuk Mahasantri. *Juridikdas: Jurnal Riset Pendidikan Dasar*, 6(3), 319–330.
- Uswatun, H. I. (2020). Upaya Meningkatkan Kinerja Guru PAI dalam Menyusun RPP Berbasis Kecakapan Abad 21, Literasi dan HOTS melalui Workshop di SMP se-Depok Kabupaten Sleman. *Jurnal Pendidikan Madrasah*, 5(1), 69–80. <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpm.2020.51-08>
- Van Tran, K., Pham, C. H., Tran, N. T., Nguyen, L. T. T., & Nguyen, N. T. K. (2022). Knowledge and attitudes about research ethics among social researchers in Vietnam: A cross-sectional

- study. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 11(3), 1190–1197. <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v11i3.22484>
- Wanti, L., & Chastanti, I. (2023). Analysis of preparation in the independent curriculum implementation: Case study on IPAS learning. *BIO-INOVED: Jurnal Biologi-Inovasi Pendidikan*, 5(2), 250. <https://doi.org/10.20527/bino.v5i2.15493>
- Zubair, A. (2018). Manajemen Peningkatan Kinerja Guru. *Jurnal Manager Pendidikan*, 11(4), 305.