Learning Management in Islamic Religious Education: Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum and Its Challenges

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Info Artikel	Abstract
	This research aims to describe the implementation of learning management in Islamic Religious Education at junior high schools in Manado, encompassing planning, implementation, and evaluation stages. This study employed a qualitative descriptive method at SMPN 4 Manado and SMPN 5 Manado. The respondents were four teachers teaching Islamic Religious Education subjects at both schools. Data was collected through survey and interview techniques. The research results show that the teachers understand and can implement Islamic Religious Education learning management well, starting from the planning stage, which includes preparing the Learning Objectives Flow (LOF) and teaching modules before conducting the learning process. At the learning implementation management stage, all respondents used Project Based Learning (PjBL) supported by interactive learning media. Respondents used formative and summative assessments at the learning evaluation management stage to evaluate student learning outcomes. However, the interviews revealed several obstacles faced by the teachers, such as limited media, facilities, and classrooms, as well as the adjustment from the 2013 Curriculum to the Merdeka Curriculum. Solutions include using the hall, the prayer room, studying outside the classroom, and borrowing media and facilities from the school to carry out the teaching and learning process. Additionally, the respondents independently utilized several Merdeka Curriculum platforms to develop their skills in learning management. This research is expected to provide information and the latest references related to learning management, especially in Islamic Religious Education.
	Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan implementasi manajemen pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam di sekolah menengah pertama di Manado, mencakup tahap perencanaan, pelaksanaan, dan evaluasi. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif dengan lokasi penelitian di SMPN 4 Manado dan SMPN 5 Manado. Responden penelitian ini terdiri dari empat guru yang mengajar mata pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam di kedua sekolah tersebut. Data dikumpulkan melalui teknik survei dan wawancara mendalam. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa para guru memahami dan mampu mengimplementasikan manajemen pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam dengan baik, mulai dari tahap perencanaan yang mencakup penyusunan Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran (ATP) dan modul pengajaran sebelum pelaksanaan proses pembelajaran. Pada tahap manajemen pelaksanaan pembelajaran, semua responden menggunakan pendekatan Pembelajaran Berbasis Proyek (PjBl) yang didukung oleh media pembelajaran interaktif. Pada tahap evaluasi pembelajaran,

para responden menggunakan penilaian formatif dan sumatif untuk menilai hasil belajar siswa. Namun, dari hasil wawancara ditemukan beberapa kendala yang dihadapi oleh para guru, antara lain keterbatasan media, fasilitas, dan ruang kelas, serta penyesuaian penerapan Kurikulum 2013 ke Kurikulum Merdeka. Solusi yang diambil untuk mengatasi kendala ini adalah dengan menggunakan aula, ruang doa, belajar di luar kelas, serta meminjam media dan fasilitas dari sekolah untuk melaksanakan proses belajar mengajar. Selain itu, para responden juga secara mandiri memanfaatkan beberapa platform Kurikulum Merdeka untuk mengembangkan kemampuan mereka dalam manajemen pembelajaran.Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat memberikan informasi dan referensi terbaru terkait manajemen pembelajaran, khususnya dalam pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam.

INTRODUCTION

Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesian schools has posed significant challenges, particularly within Islamic Religious Education. The Merdeka Curriculum aims to foster a student-centered learning environment that promotes creativity, critical thinking, and independence. However, transitioning from the previous curriculum to the Merdeka Curriculum has been complex and demanding for educators due to inadequate resources, limited teacher training, and resistance to change. (Zaini & Syafaruddin, 2020; Zarkasyi & Kartiko, 2024). A critical issue is the alignment of Islamic Religious Education with the new curriculum framework, requiring teachers to adapt their lesson plans and teaching methods to meet the demands of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) and interactive media (Tseng et al., 2024). Teachers also face challenges related to limited infrastructure and resources, which hinder effective implementation. Despite these obstacles, they strive to create engaging learning environments through innovative strategies. This study examines the experiences of junior high school teachers to identify key challenges and strategies in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, aiming to enhance the quality of Islamic Religious Education and support teacher professional development.

Learning management attempts to regulate the teaching and learning process to achieve an effective and efficient process (Farida et al., 2021). Effective learning can be a benchmark for learning success (Kuh, 2010), including learning Islamic Education. Learning management has shifted in the 21st century from content-based to competency-based approaches. The changing pedagogical landscape has posed significant challenges to schools, as many still adhere to traditional content-based instruction (Parhan et al., 2024). Several studies have explored various aspects of learning management in different educational contexts. For instance, (E.Mulyasa;, 2020) Examined the implementation of competency-based learning management in primary education, finding that inadequate teacher training and resource constraints were major obstacles. Similarly, Hadi & Supardi (2021) investigated the challenges of integrating technology in learning management within high schools, highlighting infrastructure and digital literacy issues. However, there is limited research specifically focused on the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in Islamic Religious Education, particularly at the junior high school level. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring the practical aspects of learning management in Islamic Religious Education within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum. By examining teachers' experiences and identifying their key challenges, this research seeks to provide insights into effective strategies that can enhance the quality of Islamic Religious Education and support teachers in adapting to the new curriculum.

Merdeka Belajar-based Islamic Education learning is the actualization of the formation of students' character competencies. Implementing this Merdeka Belajar policy will create a dynamic and encouraging educational atmosphere (Darise, 2021). This requires the teacher to contribute to designing and developing various activities for the programmed plans. Teachers must master learning principles, select and use teaching methods, develop skills in assessing students' learning outcomes, and select and use learning strategies or approaches. The learning objectives of Islamic Education are encouraging and developing the spirit of worshiping Allah based on Islamic teachings and values, producing a generation of Muslims with noble morals, and avoiding bad deeds (Solichin, 2018). Teachers must be creative in developing learning media so that students can be interested and enthusiastic in participating in Islamic Education learning, hence the material presented can be well understood (Halim, 2022). The Merdeka Belajar Curriculum enhances character development and develops learners, affective, cognitive, and psychomotor abilities (Suryaman, 2020).

Learning management attempts to regulate the teaching and learning process to achieve an effective and efficient process (Suroyya et al., 2024). Effective learning can be a benchmark for learning success (Jumiati & Kartiko, 2022), including learning Islamic Education. Learning management has shifted in the 21st century from content-based to competency-based approaches. The changing pedagogical landscape has posed significant challenges to schools, as many still adhere to traditional content-based instruction (Derkach et al., 2023). Several studies have explored various aspects of learning management in different educational contexts. For instance, (Rahmanudin et al., 2023) Examined the implementation of competency-based learning management in primary education, finding that inadequate teacher training and resource constraints were major obstacles. Similarly, (Kis et al., 2021) Investigated the challenges of integrating technology in learning management within high schools, highlighting infrastructure and digital literacy issues.

However, limited research specifically focuses on implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in Islamic Religious Education, particularly at the junior high school level. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring the practical aspects of learning management in Islamic Religious Education within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum. By examining teachers' experiences and identifying their key challenges, this research seeks to provide insights into effective strategies that can enhance the quality of Islamic Religious Education and support teachers in adapting to the new curriculum.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is descriptive research with a qualitative approach. (Moeloeng, 2017). This research aims to describe the implementation of Islamic Education learning management in the Junior High Schools in Manado, namely at SMPN 4 Manado and SMPN 5 Manado. The research subjects were four teachers teaching Islamic Education at these schools. Data was collected through survey and interview techniques. The questionnaire containing 15 questions was intended to explore information related to learning management for Islamic Education, consisting of learning planning management, learning implementation management, and learning evaluation management. In contrast, interviews were used to explore information related to obstacles encountered and solutions in implementing learning management for Islamic Education, from the planning process, implementation, to the evaluation process. Preliminary observation results showed that all

respondents have used the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in the Islamic Education learning process. Therefore, all statements in the research survey questionnaire and interview guide are based on learning management for Islamic Education following the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, including learning planning, implementation, and evaluation management.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Result

The Implementation of Learning Planning Management for Islamic Education in The Junior High Schools in Manado

In this result, researchers surveyed the management of learning planning for Islamic Education in the Junior High Schools in Manado. As facilitators and managers, teachers plan learning, including: (1) Analyzing tasks 2) Identifying training or learning needs 3) Writing learning objectives. For the management of learning planning for Islamic Education in the Junior High Schools in Manado, the results obtained based on the survey are presented in the following table:

Table.1 The Questionnaire Regarding the Implementation of Learning Planning Management for Islamic Education in The Junior High Schools in Manado

No.	Statements	Responses		
		Always	Sometimes	Never
1.	I prepare a Learning Objective Flow before teaching	100%	-	-
2.	I create teaching modules before teaching	100%	-	-
3.	I teach according to the Learning Outcomes in each phase	100%	-	-
4.	I make a non-cognitive diagnostic assessment first to find out the student's learning style	100%	-	-
5.	I make a cognitive diagnostic assessment first to find out students' initial knowledge about the learning material	100%	-	-

The survey data above shows that 100% of teachers teaching Islamic Education in The Junior High Schools in Manado have implemented learning planning management based on planning management in the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, by preparing the Learning Objective Flow before teaching, creating teaching modules before teaching, teaching according to Learning Outcomes in each phase, making a non-cognitive diagnostic assessment first to find out students' learning styles, and making a cognitive diagnostic assessment first to find out students' initial knowledge about the material.

The Management of Learning Implementation for Islamic Education in The Junior High Schools in Manado

In this discussion, researchers surveyed the management of implementing Islamic Education learning in the Junior High Schools in Manado. In the context of learning, management of learning implementation for Islamic Education is the operationalization of learning planning for Islamic Education, becoming a learning process both inside and outside the classroom, according to the design contained in the learning plan of Islamic Education (Qomar, 2018).

For the management of the implementation of Islamic Education learning in the Junior High Schools in Manado, the results obtained based on the survey are presented in the following table:

Table. 2 The Questionnaire Regarding the Management of Learning Implementation of Islamic Education in The Junior High Schools in Manado

No.	Statements	Responses		
		Always	**Sometimes**	**Never**
1.	I use the project-based learning model in Islamic Education learning	100%	-	-
2.	I always bring learning tools such as speakers, laptops, etc. to teaching	100%	-	-
3.	I divide students into groups according to their learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic)	100%	-	-
4.	I use supporting applications such as PowerPoint, Canva, Kinemaster, and Capcut to make learning videos	100%	-	-
5.	I use textbooks based on the Merdeka curriculum in the teaching and learning.	100%	-	-

The survey data above shows that 100% of teachers teaching Islamic Education in The Junior High Schools in Manado have implemented learning implementatition based on implementation management in the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, by always use a project-based learning model, bring learning tools such as speakers, laptops, etc., in teaching, divide student into groups according to their learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic), use supporting applications such as PowerPoint, Canva, Kinemaster, Capcut to make learning videos, use textbooks based on the Merdeka curriculum in teaching and learning process.

The Implementation of Learning Evaluation Management for Islamic Education in The Junior High Schools in Manado

In this discussion, researchers surveyed the implementation of learning evaluation management for Islamic Education in the Junior High Schools in Manado. In the context of learning Islamic Education, teachers need to implement a learning evaluation to determine the quality of learning Islamic Education. (Fauzi, 2014). Learning evaluation is the main activity to determine the

extent of student achievement levels. This step is necessary because it can be used as a reference in determining a subsequent learning policy. (Izza et al., 2020).

For the implementation of learning evaluation management for Islamic Education in The Junior High Schools in Manado, the results obtained based on the survey are presented in the following table:

Table 3 The Questionnaire Regarding the Implementation of Learning Evaluation Management for Islamic Education in The Junior High Schools in Manado

No.	Statements	Responses		
		Always	**Sometimes**	**Never**
1.	I use formative assessment to monitor and improve the learning process and evaluate the achievement of learning objectives	100%	-	-
2.	I use summative assessment to assess the achievement of learning objectives	100%	-	-
3.	I do reflection after every material presented	100%	-	-
4.	I do remediation if there are students who do not reach the KKTP	100%	-	-
5.	I know how to fill in the grades on the Merdeka Belajar e-report	100%	-	-

The survey data above shows that 100% of teachers teaching Islamic Education in The Junior High Schools in Manado have implemented learning evaluation management based on planning management in the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, by use formative assessment to monitor and improve the learning process and evaluate the achievement of learning objectives, use summative evaluations to assess the achievement of learning objectives, reflect after each material presented, carry out remediation if there are students who do not reach the KKTP and know filling in grades on the Merdeka Belajar e-report.

Discussion

Based on the survey results, it can be concluded that all respondents demonstrate a solid understanding and effective implementation of learning planning management for Islamic Education within the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. This reflects the teachers' capability to design and organize instructional components that align with the new curriculum's principles. Their proficiency includes the preparation of learning objectives, the use of interactive media, and the application of project-based learning methods. These findings indicate successful adaptation to curriculum changes and a commitment to improving educational quality. Therefore, this research underscores the importance of continuous support for teachers to maintain and enhance their competencies in learning planning management.

The survey data above shows that 100% of teachers teaching Islamic Education in The Junior High Schools in Manado have implemented learning planning management based on planning management in the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, by preparing the Learning Objective Flow before teaching, creating teaching modules before teaching, teaching according to Learning Outcomes in each phase, making a non-cognitive diagnostic assessment first to find out students' learning styles, and making a cognitive diagnostic assessment first to find out students' initial knowledge about the material.

Planning is a critical function of management that must be conducted before the implementation of any activity, whether within organizations, institutions, schools, or learning environments. Effective lesson planning is essential as it lays the foundation for achieving set goals. Without proper planning, the likelihood of reaching optimal outcomes is significantly reduced. (Arifin et al., 2022). This underscores the necessity for meticulous and strategic planning in educational settings to ensure that learning objectives are met efficiently and effectively.

In the context of learning, planning is defined as the process of adjusting subject materials, the use of teaching media, and the use of learning approaches or methods in a time allocation that will be carried out in one semester to achieve the specified objectives. (Sulistyorini & Fathurrohman, 2014). Formulating learning plans in the Merdeka Belajar curriculum as follows:

a) Preparing learning objectives and learning objective flow or syllabus. This is beneficial for schools in terms of planning, implementing, and evaluating the learning process as a whole, as the results and learning outcomes are obtained systematically, consistently, and measurably. The flow of learning objectives is the same as the syllabus in the 2013 curriculum, but in this updated curriculum, there is a greater emphasis on empowering teachers to create sustainable and effective learning experiences (Purnomo, A., A. Wiradimadja, S.S. Pratiwi, N.F. Aristin, 2023) Developing a learning objectives flow as part of a learning tool can be easily carried out through a linear, logical, and collaborative approach. Preparing the flow of learning objectives requires a systematic arrangement of learning outcomes in each stage and organizing them sequentially from the beginning until the end of all stages. (Eppendi, J., 2023).

b) Creating teaching modules or lesson plans. A teaching module is a learning instrument or design based on the applicable curriculum to achieve the set competency standards. Teaching modules have the main role of assisting teachers in designing learning (Nesri & Kristanto, 2020). Therefore, in creating teaching modules, teachers' pedagogical competencies need to be developed, so teaching techniques in the classroom can be more effective, efficient, and in line with achievement indicators. (Salsabilla et al., 2023).

The stage before teachers design learning begins with a diagnostic assessment of the students, which aims to identify the students' abilities, strengths, and weaknesses. Thus, the teacher can design learning that is appropriate to the students' skills and characteristics (Kizi et al., 2022). From the teacher's perspective, this type of assessment helps teachers develop effective and efficient learning models. Its main function is to examine students' basic abilities and initial conditions. (Widodo et al., 2022).

The Merdeka Belajar curriculum aims to achieve several positive objectives, including fostering innovation and encouraging teachers to engage in creative learning. It provides students with

opportunities for independent learning and supports the development of factors that enhance the learning process (Rahayu, Rosita, Rahayuningsih, 2021). For teachers, the curriculum offers significant benefits such as increased flexibility, a reduced workload, and simplified lesson planning, which contribute to creating a more engaging learning environment (M.R & A, 2022).. These advantages collectively promote a more dynamic and effective educational experience for teachers and students.

For the management of the implementation of Islamic Education learning in The Junior High Schools in Manado The survey data above shows that 100% of teachers teaching Islamic Education in The Junior High Schools in Manado have implemented learning planning management based on planning management in the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, by preparing the Learning Objective Flow before teaching, creating teaching modules before teaching, teaching according to Learning Outcomes in each phase, making a non-cognitive diagnostic assessment first to find out students' learning styles, and making a cognitive diagnostic assessment first to find out students' initial knowledge about the material.

Based on the survey results, it can be concluded that all respondents demonstrate a solid understanding and effective execution of the management of Islamic Education learning within the Merdeka Curriculum. This includes using project-based learning models supported by interactive learning media such as speakers, laptops, Canva videos, PowerPoint presentations, and Capcut. Additionally, the respondents effectively utilize student textbooks that align with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum. These findings indicate a successful adaptation to the curriculum's requirements and a commitment to enhancing the quality of Islamic Education through innovative teaching methods and tools.

Project-based Learning is a learning model that encourages students' creativity. This model is long-term learning, which involves students creating projects to overcome problems in everyday life. This learning focuses on improving the ability to solve problems by working on a project that can produce something. (Sari, R. T., & Angreni, 2018). In project-based learning, teachers facilitate students in the learning process. In this learning model, the teacher's task is to raise problems, ask questions, and provide facilities related to investigation and dialogue. (Darise & Darise, 2023).

The project-based learning model allows teachers to fully manage the ongoing learning process by integrating projects into the system, providing a comprehensive and engaging educational experience (Anggraini & Wulandari, 2021). This approach aligns with the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes student-centered learning and encourages the use of projects to enhance understanding and application of knowledge. Project-Based Learning is specifically designed to meet the goals of the Merdeka Curriculum, fostering critical thinking, creativity, and independence among students. (Anggelia et al., 2022). By incorporating project work, teachers can create dynamic and interactive learning environments that support the curriculum's objectives and improve student outcomes.

Project-based learning management process for vocational education consists of 5 steps, i.e. preparation, creation and test, presentation and evaluation (Nilsook et al., 2021a) González-Marcos et al., 2016; Derkach et al., 2023). This complies with experts' concepts, aligning the teacher and student roles in the same direction, which can be used as a learning management process for the vocational curricula. Thus, project-based learning management is an approach of instructional management consistent with students' development. The objective is to provide learners with skills in creating

inventions and innovations in projects. Also, learners are encouraged to have attributes and skills of presentation, talk and communication with others, originality, critical thinking, creative thinking and ability to work well with others; all of these are in accordance with the 21st century skills (Nilsook et al., 2021b).

The Merdeka Belajar curriculum concept emphasizes using technology as a vital learning tool, incorporating resources such as learning videos, e-books, and online learning platforms. This approach ensures that students have access to a wide array of resources, allowing them to gather information beyond traditional textbooks. (Sopiansyah et al., 2022). By integrating technology into the learning process, the curriculum aims to enhance the educational experience, promoting greater flexibility and accessibility for both students and teachers. This technological integration supports the overall objectives of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, fostering a more dynamic and comprehensive learning environment.

The "Merdeka Belajar" version of Islamic Education is designed to cultivate students' critical thinking, creativity, and communication abilities. It encourages collaboration and cooperation among students, enabling them to develop more mature, wiser, and thoughtful approaches to understanding, developing, and applying Islamic values in their daily lives. (Darise, 2021). This educational model aims to foster a holistic development that integrates intellectual growth with ethical and moral understanding, preparing students to navigate the complexities of contemporary life while adhering to Islamic principles.

Moreover, in the current digital era, there are some digital technologies that teachers can utilize to improve the quality of the learning process, both physically in and outside the classroom, such as audio-visual media (Canva, PowerPoint, Capcut). The survey results above show that most Islamic education teachers in the junior high schools in Manado have used digital technology to optimize the learning implementation process to achieve learning objectives more easily.

In this discussion, researchers surveyed the implementation of learning evaluation management for Islamic Education in junior high schools in Manado. Learning evaluation is a crucial stage that teachers must conduct to assess the quality of Islamic Education instruction. (Fauzi, 2014). Effective evaluation practices allow teachers to measure student understanding, identify areas for improvement, and ensure that educational goals are being met. This study explores how teachers manage the evaluation process, including the methods and tools they use, to provide insights into best practices and potential areas for enhancement in the teaching of Islamic Education.

The survey data above shows that 100% of teachers teaching Islamic Education in The Junior High Schools in Manado have implemented learning evaluation management based on planning management in the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, by use formative assessment to monitor and improve the learning process and evaluate the achievement of learning objectives, use summative evaluations to assess the achievement of learning objectives, reflect after each material presented, carry out remediation if there are students who do not reach the KKTP and know filling in grades on the Merdeka Belajar e-report.

Based on the survey results above, it can be concluded that all of the respondent can understand and implement learning evaluation management for Islamic Education in the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum well by using formative assessment, summative assessment in the learning

evaluation process, reflecting after teaching, carrying out remediation if there are students who do not reach the Criteria for Completion of Learning Objectives and understanding how to fill in grades on the Merdeka Belajar e-report.

Assessment is a crucial component of any curriculum, involving a series of systematically and continuously carried out activities. (Schultz et al., 2003; Karam et al., 2021). According to the Decree of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology Number 162 of 2021, the basic curriculum framework includes key elements such as curriculum structure, learning achievements, learning principles, and assessment. (Syafi'i, 2021)These components ensure that educational goals are met and students' progress is effectively monitored and evaluated. Proper assessment practices help identify areas for improvement and make informed decisions about teaching strategies and curriculum adjustments, ultimately enhancing the quality of education.

In implementing learning using the Merdeka curriculum, there are two terms for assessment, namely summative assessment and formative assessment. (Permendikbudriset, 2022). Formative assessment is aimed at guiding the learning process and improving students' learning outcomes which is carried out in 2 ways; 1) Data-Based Decision-making (DBDM) in the form of analysis of the available data sources at schools to formulate the implemented innovations, appropriate curriculum and corrective actions needed for successful learning and 2) Assessment for Learning (AfL) which focuses more on the quality of the ongoing learning process rather than the success of the learning itself. (K. Schildkamp et al., 2020).

In other words, formative assessment is a process used by teachers to collect and use assessment information for students' needs individually as well as other information originating from various sources to be analyzed to produce learning that is appropriate to students for supporting them to learn and improve. (Hamdi et al., 2022). Formative assessment in the Merdeka curriculum can be assessed at the beginning and during the learning process. Assessments at the beginning of the learning process support differentiated learning to help students learn based on their needs. Formative assessments during learning can be used as a basis for thorough reflection on learning and can be used as a reference for learning planning and corrections if necessary. (Mujiburrahman et al., 2023).

A summative assessment in the Merdeka curriculum is carried out to ensure the achievement of all learning objectives. Summative assessment ensures the achievement of whole learning objectives, so this assessment is often at the end of the learning process, the end of the academic year, or the end of the educational level. Summative assessment is to assess students' learning outcomes as a basis for determining grade level and graduation from an academic unit. (Permendikbudriset, 2022). Reflective activities are needed in the teaching and learning process to help teachers evaluate learning designs consisting of learning objectives, strategies, and materials. The learning process is a cycle, in which the learning and assessment processes are one unit to help students. After reflecting on learning, all parties involved are expected to be able to consistently apply the new knowledge gained in daily life. (Ma`arif et al., 2023).

Each learning evaluation activity is designed to provide students with a quality learning experience where mental and physical processes occur through interactions between students, students and teachers, enviroment and other learning resources to achieve complete learning. The learning experience will generally be realized using a varied, student-centered learning evaluation

approach. Also, the learning evaluation experience must accommodate life skills training, which is essential to the students(JH & Baderiah, 2020).

Meanwhile, from the results of interviews with respondents, it was found that the majority of teachers experienced problems with limited media, facilities, and classrooms to support teaching and learning activities in Islamic Education subjects. (Ismail & Ibrahim, 2018). Consequently, they use the hall, prayer room, or study outside the classroom for teaching and learning activities. Because of the limited media and learning facilities, teachers use the media and the school facilities. In addition, adjusting the implementation of Islamic Education learning starting from the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages of learning from the 2013 curriculum to the Merdeka curriculum requires time, energy, and thought. As a result, teachers use the independent learning training platform or the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture's YouTube page for a guide on how to study the material in the Merdeka Belajar's independent training module.

The challenges of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum include stepping out of the comfort zone of traditional learning systems, lack of experience, limited references, teaching skills, and inadequate facilities. (Bungawati, 2022)Various parties' support and comprehensive teacher training are essential to overcoming these obstacles. Addressing these challenges and achieving success requires strong government, schools, and community support. Such collaborative efforts are crucial in ensuring the Merdeka Belajar curriculum's effective implementation and fostering a more dynamic and engaging learning environment.

The existence of learning management essentially aims to build and develop the full potential of learners, and these efforts can only be made if all learning activities are programmed by the needs of the students, parents, and society's expectations. Therefore, at the practical level, learning activities are understood to be able to run effectively and efficiently if all of the above activities start from the managerial process; learning management; management of students; management of quality human resources or professionalism of teachers; development of learning activities and the process of evaluating good learning.(Zamroni, 2019).

Effective implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum requires collaboration across various aspects, including learning management, facilities and infrastructure management, curriculum management, and resource management within schools. This holistic approach is especially critical in the management of Islamic Education learning. Collaborative efforts among teachers, administrators, and stakeholders help ensure that all necessary components are in place, fostering an environment conducive to innovative and effective teaching practices. By working together, these entities can address challenges, optimize resources, and create a robust framework that supports the curriculum's objectives and enhances the overall quality of education.

Comprehensive Analysis Table 4 Islamic Education Learning Management in Merdeka Belajar Curriculum

Aspect	Current Implementation	Innovation and Contribution	Challenges	Recommendations
Learning Planning	1. 100% teacher implementation rate 2. Learning Objective Flow preparation 3. Teaching module creation 4. Diagnostic assessments (cognitive & non-cognitive)	1. Systematic pre-assessment approach 2. Enhanced alignment with curriculum principles 3. Integration of student capability analysis into planning	1. Adjustment from 2013 curriculum 2. Time and effort demands for new planning approach	1. Utilization of independent learning platform 2. Reference to Ministry's training modules
Teaching Methods	1. Project-Based Learning implementation 2. Interactive learning methods 3. Student-centered approach	1. Enhanced student creativity 2. Real-world problem-solving focus 3. Integration of Islamic values with modern pedagogy	1. Limited teaching experience with new methods 2. Traditional teaching comfort zone	1. Continuous professional development 2. Collaborative learning among teachers
Technology Integration	1. Use of digital tools (Canva, PowerPoint, Capcut) 2. Multimedia resource utilization 3. Online learning platform adoption	1. Modern approach to Islamic education 2. Enhanced student engagement 3. Digital transformation of religious education	1. Limited media and facilities 2. Technical competency gaps	1. Resource sharing among teachers 2. Utilization of available online resources
Assessment and Evaluation	1. Formative assessment implementation 2. Summative assessment usage • E-report system adoption 3. Remediation programs	1. Comprehensive evaluation system 2. Digital assessment tools 3. Targeted intervention strategies	1. New assessment system adaptation 2. E-report system familiarization	1. Training on new assessment methods 2. Peer support system
Infrastructure and Resources	1. Alternative space utilization	1. Creative space solutions	1. Limited classrooms	1. Use of alternative

	2. Shared resource management 3. Flexible learning environments	2. Optimized resource utilization 3. Adaptive learning environments	2. Inadequate facilities 3. Resource constraints	spaces (hall, prayer room) 2. Community resource mobilization
Professional Development	1. Independent learning platform usage 2. Ministry YouTube channel utilization 3. Collaborative learning	1. Self-directed growth model 2. Digital professional development • Continuous improvement focus	1. Limited training resources 2. Time constraints 3. Technical challenges	1. Online training utilization 2. Peer learning communities 3. Resource sharing networks

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that Islamic Education teachers at SMP N 4 Manado and SMP N 5 Manado have successfully implemented planning, execution, and evaluation management of learning by the Merdeka Curriculum. Teachers effectively use project-based learning models and interactive learning media such as speakers, laptops, Canva videos, PowerPoint presentations, Capcut, and student textbooks aligned with the Merdeka Curriculum. These findings demonstrate effective adaptation to the new curriculum and a strong commitment to enhancing educational quality. The study emphasizes the importance of continuous support and training for teachers to maintain and improve their learning management competencies, ensuring educational objectives are achieved.

However, this research has some limitations. Firstly, it was conducted only in two schools, SMP N 4 Manado and SMP N 5 Manado, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other schools in Indonesia. Secondly, the study relied on survey methods based on respondents' perceptions and reports, which may be subject to subjective bias. Thirdly, the research focused on planning, execution, and evaluation management aspects without delving deeper into other factors that might influence the successful implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.

Despite these limitations, the study contributes significantly to the literature on learning management, particularly in Islamic Education and the Merdeka Curriculum. The findings can serve as a reference for policymakers and education practitioners in designing and implementing effective learning management strategies. Additionally, the study offers insights for educators on the importance of continuous support and training to enhance their competencies in adapting to the new curriculum. Therefore, this research improves educational quality and supports achieving the Merdeka Curriculum's goals.

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