



Impact of Curriculum Implementation and Learning Outcome: Case Study on Senior High School in Jakarta Province

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of the Independent Curriculum implementation on student learning outcomes at the senior high school level in DKI Jakarta Province. Using a mixed-method approach, the research combines quantitative analysis of Minimum Competency Assessment (AKM) scores from 391 schools with qualitative data obtained through interviews with school principals and teachers. The comparative analysis between the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum reveals that, descriptively, schools implementing the Merdeka Curriculum show higher percentages of improvement in literacy and numeracy scores. However, statistical tests, including the Mann-Whitney U test, indicate no significant difference in learning outcomes between the two curriculum models. The p-values for both literacy and numeracy exceed 0.05, and the rank-biserial correlation values are close to zero, suggesting a weak relationship between curriculum type and student performance. Further qualitative findings highlight three critical factors influencing learning outcomes: teacher competence, availability of educational infrastructure, and leadership support from school principals. These factors are found to have a more substantial impact on student achievement than curriculum type alone. The study concludes that curriculum reform must be accompanied by systemic improvements in teaching quality, resource allocation, and school leadership to effectively enhance educational outcomes. These findings offer valuable insights for policymakers and educators in designing holistic strategies for curriculum implementation.

Keywords: *AKM; Assessment; Curriculum; Student-Learning-Outcome*

INTRODUCTION

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the education sector underwent a major transformation due to the shift from face-to-face learning to digital-based distance learning. This shift led to a new way of thinking about the importance of technology in the 21st century, compelling teachers to understand and apply technology in their teaching practices. However, this change also resulted in ineffective learning processes (Mastura & Santaria, 2020; Nurafida et al., 2022). One of the most significant impacts of the pandemic on education was the phenomenon of learning loss among students (Donnelly & Patrinos, 2022).

Curriculum and learning outcomes have an intrinsic relationship within the context of education. A curriculum is an educational plan that outlines the content, teaching methods, and learning objectives. On the other hand, learning outcomes encompass the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and understanding that students are expected to achieve. According to Tyler (1949),

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a curriculum should reflect educational goals, and learning outcomes serve as benchmarks for the success of curriculum implementation.

Curriculum design plays a crucial role in achieving learning objectives. A well-designed curriculum should clearly articulate learning goals and provide a structure that supports their attainment. Posner (2004) emphasizes that curriculum design must accommodate the needs of students and society, and respond to changes in the educational landscape. Therefore, synchronization between curriculum elements and desired learning outcomes is essential.

The Merdeka Curriculum is a reform of the 2013 curriculum. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemdikbud), the Independent Curriculum offers optimized intrakurikuler learning, allowing students more time to explore concepts and strengthen competencies (Lie, 2022). As stated in the "Q&A Pocket Book on the Independent Curriculum," it provides diverse intrakurikuler learning experiences to maximize student engagement and understanding (Heppy S & Bagja, 2022).

Curriculum implementation involves the role of teachers as facilitators of learning. Teachers are responsible for delivering content, assessing student progress, and adapting teaching methods to meet student needs. Fullan (2001) argues that effective implementation requires a deep understanding of the curriculum and high-quality teaching skills.

The Independent Curriculum is based on four key policies (Kemendikbud, 2019):

1. School-based national standard assessments (USBN),
2. Replacement of national exams with minimum competency assessments and character surveys,
3. Simplified lesson plans (RPP),
4. Flexible zoning regulations for student admissions (PPDP).

These policies give schools full authority to assess student development through portfolios, minimum competency assessments, and character surveys. The national-level standardized tests are replaced with school-based assessments focusing on literacy, numeracy, and character. The simplified RPP allows more time for evaluation and teaching, making the learning process more efficient. The Independent Curriculum also promotes the use of technology in the digital era.

In response to the challenges of distance learning during the pandemic, the government developed simplified learning modules for educational units from elementary to senior high school levels. These modules evolved into what is now known as the Merdeka Curriculum or Prototype Curriculum, which began implementation through various digital platforms and the "Sekolah Penggerak" program in the 2021/2022 academic year. This program involved approximately 2,500 educational units across 34 provinces and 110 districts/cities. In the 2022/2023 academic year, it was projected that around 10,000 educational units in 34 provinces and 250 districts/cities would participate in the Driving School program (Sutrisno, 2021).

Since the curriculum was only introduced in 2022, its widespread impact is still unknown. One of the parameters to assess the success of curriculum implementation is student learning outcomes. Starting in 2021, the national examination is no longer used as a measure of student achievement. The government replaced it with the National Assessment (AN) as student learning outcomes paramater. Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate the effectiveness

of curriculum in relation to student learning outcomes. This evaluation will help identify strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum's implementation, guiding future educational reforms and enhancing the overall quality of learning experiences.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is carried out gradually and does not require schools to adopt it immediately. Instead, schools are given the freedom to implement it based on their existing potential (Rahmadayanti & Hartoyo, 2022). The readiness of schools to adopt the curriculum is assessed based on factors such as teacher competence, educational staff, facilities, and infrastructure. The teaching and learning process under the Merdeka Curriculum involves the use of digital tools, enabling rapid and equitable access nationwide. Students can easily access learning materials through prepared digital links, allowing them to develop and experience meaningful learning processes. The learning process is no longer rushed to complete the syllabus but instead gives students the opportunity to explore the material more deeply.

The Merdeka Curriculum not only provides freedom for students to develop their potential but also grants autonomy to educational units to manage the curriculum based on regional needs. It also allows teachers to design their own learning plans, addressing previous complaints about rigid and detailed lesson plans that required teachers to follow strict teaching sequences. These administrative burdens often consumed a significant amount of teachers' time. With the Independent Curriculum, lesson plans are simplified to include only essential components, giving teachers more time to focus on evaluating student learning. This flexibility fosters a more personalized learning environment, ultimately enhancing student engagement and achievement in line with the goals of the Merdeka Curriculum .

Learning outcomes refer to the abilities students acquire through mental engagement and effort. In the Independent Curriculum, learning outcomes emphasize character development, particularly the traits of *Pelajar Pancasila*, as highlighted by Nadiem Makarim (Kemendikbud, 2021).

Evaluation of learning outcomes serves as an indicator of curriculum effectiveness. If students do not achieve the expected outcomes, corrective measures must be taken. Stufflebeam (2003) stresses the importance of continuous evaluation and improvement in curriculum development. Evaluation provides valuable feedback to enhance curriculum quality and ensure learning objectives are met.

The relationship between curriculum, learning, evaluation, and assessment is illustrated in the following diagram (Brown, 2004):

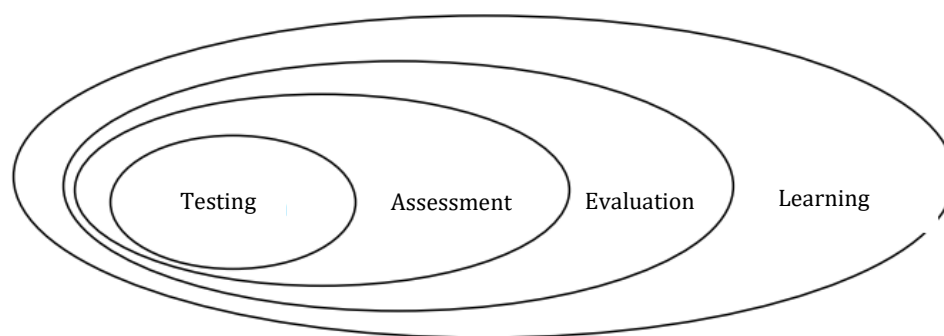


Figure 1. Relationship between Learning, Evaluation, Assessment, and Testing

Learning is a step-by-step activity resulting from conscious efforts to acquire knowledge and prepare oneself as both a listener and participant in learning activities. Mathematics learning outcomes, for example, reflect logical reasoning skills and are based on fixed principles. Mathematics is not just about numbers but also about applying human logic to problem-solving.

The National Assessment (AN) is a program that evaluates the quality of educational units—schools, madrasahs, and equivalency programs—at the primary and secondary levels. The quality is assessed based on students' fundamental learning outcomes (literacy, numeracy, and character), the quality of teaching and learning processes, and the learning environment. These are measured using three main instruments:

1. Minimum Competency Assessment (AKM),
2. Character Survey,
3. Learning Environment Survey.

The 2021 National Assessment served as a baseline for evaluating the actual quality of education in schools, without consequences for students or schools. The results provide insights into the conditions, processes, and outcomes of learning in each school, aiming to improve educational quality at both school and regional levels (Novita, Mellyzar, & Herizal, 2021).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a policy evaluation research design using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The quantitative use the data of evaluation national assessment compares educational achievement data from 2021 and 2022, alongside questionnaire responses from selected respondents. The research was conducted through literature studies and secondary data collection from the Ministry of Education. Additionally, field research was carried out in several senior high schools (SMA) located in DKI Jakarta Province.

The focus of this study is on student learning outcomes, specifically the AKM scores at the senior high school level in DKI Jakarta Province. The researcher collected secondary data from relevant ministries and agencies. Learning achievement data were obtained from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. In addition, interviews were conducted with several educational institutions implementing either the Merdeka Curriculum or the 2013 Curriculum.

Data analysis involves systematically organizing and interpreting both secondary data and interview results. The collected data were filtered to focus only on essential information. Secondary data were adjusted to meet the research needs. The reduced data were then presented to facilitate understanding and interpretation. This step helps the researcher analyze the data more effectively and draw conclusions.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Comparison Between the 2013 Curriculum and the Independent Curriculum in Implementing Schools

Based on information from sources at the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek), the new curriculum is being implemented gradually, so that currently there are two curricula being applied in educational units, namely the 2013 curriculum and the merdeka curriculum. Educational institutions are free to implement the 2013 curriculum and the Merdeka curriculum according to their capabilities. In their implementation, there are several fundamental differences between the 2013 curriculum and

the Merdeka curriculum. These differences can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1 Comparison Between the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum

No	Component	The 2013 Curriculum	The Merdeka Curriculum
1	Basic Framework	Based on the National Education System	Based on the National Education System and the Pancasila Student Profile
2	Competency	Basic Competencies (KD) grouped into four Core Competencies (KI): Spiritual Attitude, Social Attitude, Knowledge, and Skills	Competencies are structured through learning outcomes, organized by learning phases (PAUD: Foundation Phase; SD: Phases A–C; SMP: Phase D; SMA: Phases E–F)
3	Learning Structure	Weekly lesson hours; schools allocate time per semester; subject-based learning approach	Annual lesson hours; flexible time allocation; learning can be subject-based, thematic, or integrated
4	Learning Materials	Textbooks and non-textbooks	Textbooks, non-textbooks, and relevant supplementary materials
5	Curriculum Tools	Implementation guides, assessment guides, and learning guides for each level	Guides for learning and assessment, operational curriculum development, and Pancasila student projects

In accordance with the policy of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, the implementation of the independent curriculum policy has been returned to each region. The implementation policy for the high school curriculum in DKI Jakarta Province is that high school education units still implement two types of curriculum, namely the 2013 curriculum and the independent curriculum. Based on data from the Jakarta Provincial Education Office, 391 senior high schools in Jakarta are using the curriculum as outlined in the following Table 2.

Table 2. Recap of Curriculum Implementation in Senior High Schools in DKI Jakarta (2023)

No	School Type	The 2013 Curriculum	The Merdeka Curriculum
1	Public's School	27	90
2	Private School	129	145
Total		156	235

From this condition, it can be seen that 60.1% of high school education units in DKI Jakarta Province have used the independent curriculum in their learning. Meanwhile, only around 39.9% of education units have not implemented the independent curriculum or are still using the 2013 curriculum.

Comparison of Minimum Competency Assessment (AKM) Results Between the Two Curricula

The learning outcome achievement indicator used is AKM data, which indicates the quality of education, namely literacy and numeracy scores. The national assessment score used is the difference between AKM 2021 and AKM 2022 obtained from the Education Office. The

recapitulation of changes in AKM 2021 and AKM 2022 can be seen in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Recap of AKM Score Changes by Curriculum Type					
No	AKM Parameter	Numbers of School			
		The 2013 Curriculum		The Merdeka Curriculum	
A	Literacy				
1	Increased	68	42,8%	118	50,2%
2	Unchanged	9	5,7%	21	8,9%
3	Decreased	82	51,6%	96	40,9%
	Total	159		235	
B	Numeracy				
1	Increased	109	68,6%	205	87,2%
2	Unchanged	6	3,8%	5	2,1%
3	Decreased	44	27,7%	25	10,6%
	Total	159		235	

Descriptively, it can be seen that the percentage of educational units that experienced an increase in literacy scores under the Merdeka curriculum was higher, at 50.2%, compared to the 2013 curriculum, at 42.8%. Meanwhile, the percentage of educational institutions experiencing a decline in literacy scores is higher among those implementing the 2013 curriculum (51.6%) compared to those adopting the Merdeka curriculum (40.9%). The school literacy movement is one of the government's efforts to enhance students' reading interest and literacy. This movement began with the implementation of the 2013 curriculum. The school literacy movement has been quite effective in increasing students' reading interest (Widyawati et al., 2023). However, this finding shows the opposite in the implementation of the 2013 curriculum. Other factors influence students' literacy skills.

Unlike literacy results, numeracy scores are relatively better. This is evident in the significant improvement in educational institutions that saw an increase in numeracy scores. In educational institutions implementing the 2013 curriculum, 68.6% saw an increase, while 87.2% did so under the Merdeka curriculum. Meanwhile, educational institutions experiencing a decrease in numeracy scores accounted for 27.7% under the 2013 curriculum and 10.6% under the Merdeka curriculum.

The findings indicate that the Merdeka Curriculum has contributed positively to students' numeracy skills, reflecting its potential effectiveness in enhancing overall academic performance overall (Marzoan, 2024; Wahyuni et al., 2024). These findings suggest that the Merdeka Curriculum has a more favorable impact on numeracy skills compared to its predecessor, indicating a potential shift in effective teaching strategies and learning engagement. Furthermore, the emphasis on flexible learning and student autonomy within the Merdeka Curriculum may enhance overall engagement and motivation, aligning with the need for learner-centered approaches in education (Sharma & Chachra, 2020).

Effectiveness of Curriculum Implementation on AKM Results

Based on the AKM data, descriptive statistical tests were then conducted to determine the normality of the data. After obtaining the results of the descriptive statistical tests, further statistical tests were conducted to determine the impact and correlation between the

effectiveness of the 2013 curriculum and the Merdeka curriculum. The results of the descriptive statistical tests are shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistical Test Results

	Literacy	Numeracy
Valid	391	391
Missing	4	4
Mean	0.750	24.701
Std. Deviation	15.995	34.596
Shapiro-Wilk	0.809	0.919
P-value of Shapiro-Wilk	< .001	< .001

Based on the data above, it is known that the Shapiro-Wilk p-value (normality test) has a value below 0.001. This indicates that the data obtained is non-normal or non-homogeneous. Therefore, further statistical testing was conducted using non-parametric tests, as presented in the following table.

Table 5. Non-Parametric Mann-Whitney Test Results

	W	df	p	Rank-Biserial Correlation
Literasi	16340.0		0.069	-0.109
Numerasi	16204.0		0.052	-0.116

Note. For the Mann-Whitney test, effect size is given by the rank biserial correlation.

Statistical test results show that the p-values for both literacy and numeracy are above 0.05, indicating that the implementation of the curriculum does not have a significant impact on literacy or numeracy outcomes. The rank biserial correlation shows a value close to 0, suggesting that literacy and numeracy scores have a low correlation with the curriculum. This indicates that the curriculum does not have a direct influence on learning outcomes. In light of this, interviews were conducted with educational institutions to identify the causes or factors influencing the learning process. Educational institutions were selected based on criteria of institutions with rising and falling learning achievement scores under both the 2013 curriculum and the Merdeka curriculum. The insights gained from these interviews will provide a deeper understanding of the challenges and successes experienced by schools during the transition to the Merdeka Curriculum.

Based on the interview results with four informants, it can be concluded that there are at least three factors supporting the learning process: the quality and competence of teachers in teaching, support for facilities and infrastructure, and support from educational institution leaders. Teacher quality and competence play a role in learning outcomes. This is confirmed by research by Sumarno et al. (2022) and Yusup (2021), which found that teacher quality and competence in teaching have a positive influence on student learning outcomes. Furthermore, the findings highlight the need for ongoing professional development for teachers to enhance their pedagogical skills and adapt to the demands of the Merdeka Curriculum (Zaenab et al., 2024). This continuous improvement is essential for maximizing student engagement and learning outcomes.

Support for infrastructure is essential in supporting learning. The condition and availability of adequate infrastructure in educational units can help the learning process, thereby supporting improvements in learning outcomes (Azhari & Saputri, 2021). In line with Jumari's (2021) research, which shows that good infrastructure management can improve the quality of learning. Moreover, effective management of educational facilities and infrastructure is crucial to enhance the overall quality of learning and support the successful implementation of the curriculum (Murniyanto et al., 2024).

The final factor influencing learning outcomes is the support of educational institution leadership in the implementation of learning. Based on information from sources at educational institutions that have seen improvements in literacy and numeracy scores, the role of educational institution leadership is crucial in the learning process. Research by Paulina and Patimah (2023) indicates that school leadership plays a very important role in developing strategies and policies that support improvements in educational quality. This study highlights the interconnectedness of teacher competence, infrastructure, and effective leadership in fostering improved educational outcomes, emphasizing the need for strategic investment in these areas (Hartanto et al., 2023). Addressing these elements can significantly enhance the quality of learning experiences for students.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum does not have a statistically significant impact on student learning outcomes as measured by the Minimum Competency Assessment (AKM), specifically in literacy and numeracy scores. This is supported by the results of non-parametric statistical tests, which show p-values greater than 0.05 and low rank-biserial correlation values. Although descriptive data indicate that schools implementing the Independent Curriculum tend to show better performance in literacy and numeracy compared to those using the 2013 Curriculum, the difference is not statistically significant. Therefore, curriculum type alone cannot be considered a determining factor in improving student learning outcomes. Three key factors were identified as having a more substantial influence on student learning outcome are teacher quality and competence, which directly affect the effectiveness of the learning process; availability and management of educational facilities and infrastructure, which support the delivery of quality education; and leadership support from school principals, which plays a strategic role in fostering a conducive learning environment and implementing educational policies effectively. These findings suggest that curriculum reform must be accompanied by improvements in teacher capacity, infrastructure, and school leadership to achieve meaningful enhancements in student learning outcomes.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have no competing interests to declare relevant to this article's content.

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