THE LEVEL OF CURRICULUM IN FREEDOM OF LEARNING PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract
Merdeka Belajar is predicted as a place to bring the Indonesian nation towards Indonesia Jaya. The implementation of Merdeka Belajar has been massively carried out since the initiation of this policy at the end of 2019. This policy gives its own peculiarity to the world of education in Indonesia and is outlined in the Merdeka Curriculum. The Merdeka Curriculum embraces the strengthening of the Pancasila Student Profile at every level of education, from Early Childhood Education to Higher Education. The Merdeka Curriculum has an important position in every aspect at the curriculum level. This paper presents the level of curriculum in the perspective of Merdeka Belajar (freedom of learning) which is presented comprehensively so that it is easy to understand.

Introduction

Indonesia is a big country, an archipelago with islands stretching from Sabang to Marauke. The island that has natural wealth and socio-cultural wealth makes its people proud of this motherland. The unifier of the Indonesian nation is Pancasila with the Constitution as the basis of the Indonesian state. Pancasila as a state philosophy is the pulse for all sectors of IPOLEKSOSBUDHANKAMNAS (Ideology, Politics, Social, Culture, Defense and National Security) of the Indonesian Nation (Andayani, 2020; p. Gandasari, 2023, p. 151). One of the shots in this sector is the field of education in which it cannot be separated from the role of the curriculum.

The curriculum is the body of education (Gandasari, Abdulhak, Djohar & Wahyudin, 2019) and the curriculum is also said to be the heart of education. (Priestley & Philippou, 2019), so without a curriculum, the education carried out has no direction and purpose. The development of the times that are influenced by the development of science and technology has an impact on the appearance globally, namely in eras, generations, and sectors, so that it also has an impact on curriculum development which is closely related to curriculum changes. In Indonesia, curriculum changes have become natural so that there have been dozens of curriculum changes since Indonesia became independent until now, namely in 1947 called the Lesson Plan until the Merdeka Curriculum is now used (Gandasari, 2023, p. 150-151; Hilabi, 2023). Some curriculum naming follows the year in which the curriculum policy was issued such as the curriculum in 2013 named the 2013 Curriculum or Kurtilas or K-13, but there are also some curricula named according to their characteristics such as the Competency-Based Curriculum (KBK) in 2004.

In 2019, the world was shocked by the emergence of Covid which had an impact on many countries in the world that went into lockdown. The education sector is also shaken so that several countries, both ready and unready for IoT, require learning at home using the Internet, including Indonesia (UNICEF, 2020). Indonesia is a country that quickly recovers because of its fighting spirit, so at that time, Indonesia issued a policy on the Emergency Curriculum, the Merdeka Belajar policy episode 1 to episode 4 was launched on December 10, 2020 and the 2013 curriculum was still enforced.

The Merdeka Curriculum actually emerged because of the Merdeka Belajar policy, although at that time the government had not officially used the term Merdeka curriculum as the name of the curriculum. The down-top process of curriculum development has been carried out by the government based on the Merdeka Belajar policy implemented. In 2022, the government officially stated that there are three curricula that will be implemented as the national curriculum, namely the 2013 curriculum, the Emergency curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum, education units are given the freedom to determine the three curricula to be chosen or not forced (Kemendikbud, 2022b).

The Merdeka Curriculum was developed through a down-top process based on the grass-roots model which is one of the curriculum development models, so it can be said that the implementation of Merdeka Belajar gave rise to the existence of the Merdeka Curriculum. The term Merdeka Curriculum was officially used with the launch of Merdeka Belajar episode 15 on February 11, 2022 by the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemendikbud, 2022b). The Merdeka Curriculum is not a curriculum like in general because this curriculum has a distinctiveness that

is not owned by other countries, namely the Pancasila Student Profile. Through Merdeka Belajar which accommodates Merdeka Curriculum makes educational outcomes characterized by the Pancasila Student Profile, namely 1) having faith, fearing God Almighty and having noble morals; 2) global celebrity, 3) working together; 4) independent; 5) critical thinking; and 6) creative (Kemendikbud, 2021).

In the study, the curriculum has a level that places the position of a curriculum at a certain level contained in the Curriculum Level, including the Merdeka Curriculum. This level of curriculum was first introduced by Goodlad and associates in 1979 as forms of curriculum planning, by mentioning the five different forms of curriculum planning, namely the ideological curriculum, the formal curriculum, the perceived curriculum, the operational curriculum, and the experiential curriculum (Sage Publications Inc. 2019, p. 5). Raka Joni as an education practitioner in 2002, then stated that the curriculum is a curriculum level and in accordance with existing curriculum policies in Indonesia, at the curriculum level, there are five curriculum levels, namely the Ideal Curriculum, Formal Curriculum, Instructional Curriculum, Operational Curriculum, and Experiential Curriculum.

The author as a researcher highlights the curriculum level in the perspective of freedom of learning perspective, by digging deeper into the curriculum level, revealing what freedom of learning looks like in a curriculum level point of view. Through this paper, the author as a researcher provides clarity about the level of curriculum and Merdeka Belajar (freedom of learning), as well as the perspective of Merdeka Belajar on the level of curriculum comprehensively.

Method

A comprehensive presentation of how the curriculum level in the perspective of Merdeka Belajar is presented in this paper with the aim that readers can easily understand it. The curriculum level study consists of five studies in accordance with five curriculum levels, namely 1) Ideal Curriculum, 2) Formal Curriculum, 3) Instructional Curriculum, 4) Operational Curriculum, and 5) Experiential Curriculum (Gandasari, Wahyudin, Abdulhak & Djohar, 2022). Literacy studies with a descriptive qualitative approach are used to describe each level of the curriculum in the perspective of Merdeka Belajar. The data obtained in this literacy study is in the form of qualitative data. Data sources are obtained from literacy sources about curriculum studies and Merdeka Belajar studies. Data was collected and analyzed using qualitative techniques for literacy studies, namely Exploration (E), Synchronization – Reduction (S-R), Mapping – Display (M-D) and Conclusion (C).

Picture 1.
Data Collection and Analysis of Qualitative Techniques for Literacy Study
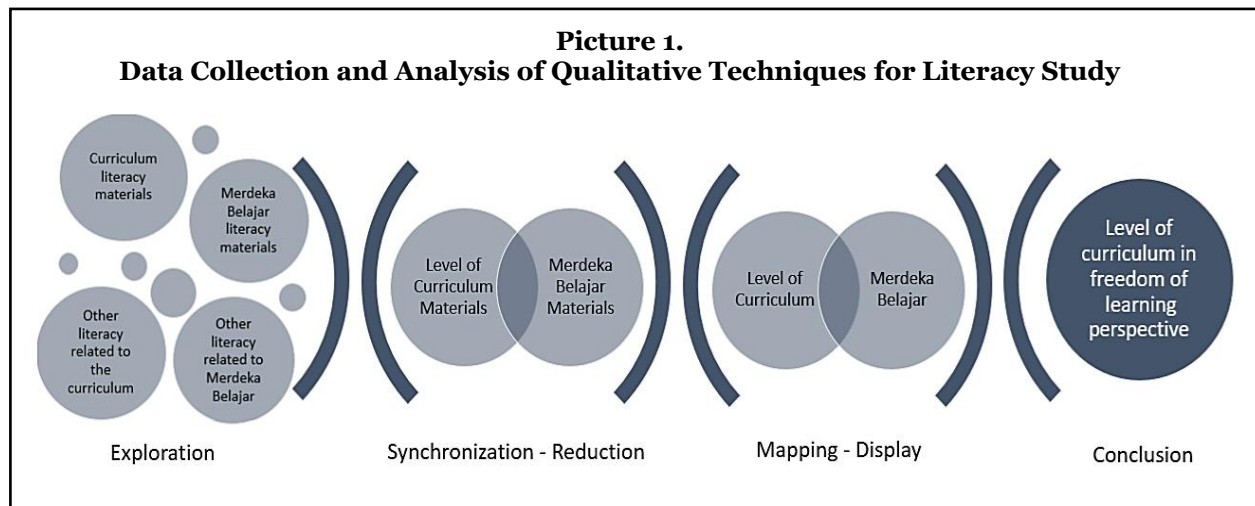
Picture 1 above shows that the author as a researcher uses four stages as a research technique in descriptive qualitative research. The first stage is exploration, tracing literacy related to research variables as study data in research, which in this case is a curriculum study that contains curriculum levels and Merdeka Belajar studies. The second stage is Synchronization – Reduction, synchronizing research study data and reducing study data that is not in accordance with the research focus. The third stage is Mapping – Display, study data that has been in accordance with the research focus is then mapped according to the research objectives and presented scientifically. The fourth stage is Conclusion, drawing conclusions from the results of the discussion of the research focus in the form of research results.

Discussion

The curriculum is the body of education, so the educational process will not be able to run properly without the curriculum. The curriculum becomes the core in the implementation of a learning process (McMillan, Little, Conway & Solman, 2019). Within the framework of theoretical studies of curriculum from various sources, curricula are distinguished in several types, as shown in Picture 2.

**Picture 2.
The Category of Curriculum Type's**
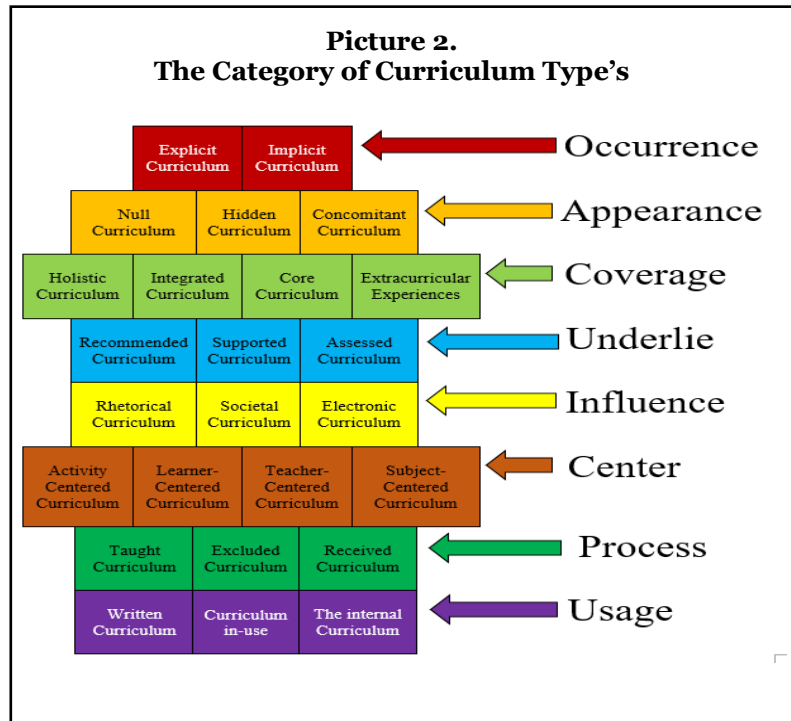
The type of curriculum shown in Picture 2 illustrates that each curriculum has characteristics that arise due to different curriculum design and curriculum implementation as a result of the implementation of curriculum policies (Mabunda, 2023) that bind stakeholders. This curriculum policy can be in the form of Global policies from UNESCO as an organization under the auspices of the United Nations, policies on the National Curriculum of a Country, even curriculum policies in an educational unit. This is what affects the diversity of outcomes that are the result of the educational process (Kite & Clark, 2022; Rashid, 2023). However, it should be underlined that, there is a steady curriculum study, namely anatomy of curriculum consisting of goal/purpose/objective/aim, content/material, method/strategy, and evaluation/assessment. In addition to being said to be the anatomy of the curriculum, these four things are usually known as curriculum components. The description of each of these components follows the applicable curriculum policy.

In Indonesia, curriculum policies on curriculum changes have occurred several times. In the history of the curriculum, there have been 12 curriculum updates carried out starting in 1947 until 2022, namely the Independent Curriculum which was pioneered from late 2020 to early 2021. The name Curriculum Merdeka was inaugurated for the first time in 2022 by the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemendikbud, 2022b). And since 2022, there are three legalized curricula to be selected and implemented by education units, namely the 2013 Curriculum (Kurtilas/K-13), the Merdeka Curriculum and the Emergency Curriculum.

The Merdeka Curriculum was previously called the Prototype Curriculum. This is because based on the theory of the curriculum development model, the process of developing the Merdeka Curriculum follows a curriculum development model called the down-top/bottom-up/grass-roots model. Therefore, it is very natural that the Merdeka Belajar policy that has been pioneered in 2020 uses the name of the prototype curriculum which became the forerunner of the Merdeka Curriculum inaugurated by the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia in 2022.

Merdeka Belajar

The Free Learning Policy emerged to coincide with the Covid-19 outbreak, namely at the end of 2020. At that time, the education process became paralyzed and all education actors (students, teachers and others) conducted online learning and the government was required to issue a policy on the legality of distance learning known as BDR (learning from home) and simplification of the 2013 curriculum (Kurtilas/K-13) called the Emergency Curriculum (Putra, et al, 2020). After the end of the Covid-19, the government continues to implement the 2013 curriculum (Kurtilas/K-13) as the national curriculum and the prototype curriculum related to the implementation of Merdeka Belajar is carried out in several schools called mobilizing schools, teachers who implement independent learning are referred to as mobilizing teachers. In addition to Early Childhood Education, Primary and Secondary Education, universities also implement the Merdeka Belajar policy known as MBKM/Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka (Kemendikbud, 2022a). Universities that implement MBKM are referred to as Kampus Merdeka.

Ideology of Pancasila

Pancasila is the philosophy of the Indonesian state which is the soul of the Free Learning policy issued by the Government of Indonesia. Pancasila is imprinted in the national emblem, namely the Garuda Bird with the motto "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika", has Five Principles which each Principle contains details of the practice of Pancasila applied in the daily life of the people of Indonesia (Lukito, Permana & Prasetyo, 2022). The sounds of the five precepts in Pancasila and each of their symbols are: 1) Belief in the one and only God, symbolized by a star; 2) Justice and civilized humanity, symbolized by a chain; 3) The unity of Indonesia, symbolized by the banyan tree; 4) Democracy guided by the inner wisdom in the unanimity arising out of deliberations amongst representatives, symbolized by a bull's head; 5) Social justice for the whole of the people of Indonesia; symbolized by rice and cotton.

Merdeka Curriculum

The Merdeka Belajar policy gave rise to the existence of the Merdeka Curriculum which previously in late 2020 to early 2022 was said to be a prototype curriculum. The Merdeka Curriculum has the characteristics of developing soft skills and character through the Strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile (P5) Project, focusing on relevant and in-depth essential materials, So that there is enough time to build creativity and innovation of students in achieving basic competencies related to literacy and numeracy, and flexible learning so that teachers have the flexibility to conduct learning according to the stage of achievement and development of each student and make adjustments to local contexts and content.

Learning Module base on outcomes

In the 2013 curriculum (Kurtilas, K-13), one of the learning tools used is the Learning Implementation Plan (RPP). In Merdeka belajar, the learning tool used is the Merdeka Belajar Module called the Teaching Module. Inside the Teaching Module contains an identity that provides general information about the module containing the Teaching Module Title, educational units and levels, phases and classes, subjects, general description of the teaching module, and the identity of the module author. Learning outcomes (UNESCO 2024) are also contained in teaching modules which are translated into several Learning Objectives in one phase. In addition, there are also learning activities in the form of learning implementation plans and assessments used. It should be emphasized that learning outcomes are described into several Learning Objectives in one phase, then Learning Objectives is arranged into Learning Objectives Flow (Gandasari, Sopia & Ege, 2022). With the detailed systematics of teaching modules, this teaching module is often referred to as RPP (Lesson Plan) Plus.

Implementation of Curriculum

In the previous presentation, it has been said that the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (Proyek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila/P5) is a Merdeka Balajar Cocurricular activity in the Merdeka Curriculum. The form of learning carried out in the Merdeka Curriculum can use several methods, including problem-based learning, project-based learning, collaborative learning, technology-enhanced learning, experiential learning, self-directed learning, inquiry learning and other methods that contain aspects of independence, critical thinking and creativity. Learning methods using these three aspects can also be used in curricular activities and local content learning activities. Local content in this case can be in the form of twelve scopes of indigenous knowledge, namely (a) history, (b) language, (c) literature, (d) arts, (e) crafts, (f) customary customs and customary law, (g) technology and tools, (h) natural environment and ecosystem, (i) medicine, (j) cuisine, (k) clothing, and (l) sport (Gandasari, et al, 2024)

Evaluation and Learning Outcomes

The Pancasila Student Profile is the outcome of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum which is accommodated by the Strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile Project (Proyek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila/P5). In its implementation, the Strengthening Pancasila Student Profile Project is a co-curricular activity that provides opportunities for students to explore knowledge, develop skills, and strengthen the development of six dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile, namely 1) having faith, fearing God Almighty

and having noble morals; 2) global celebrity, 3) working together; 4) independent; 5) critical thinking; and 6) creative. In addition, through the Strengthening Student Profile Project, Pancasila provides opportunities for students to learn in depth important themes or issues about sustainable lifestyles, tolerance, mental health, culture, entrepreneurship, technology and democratic life. And not only that, through the Strengthening Student Profile Project, Pancasila also provides opportunities for students to take concrete actions in response to important issues about sustainable lifestyles, tolerance, mental health, culture, entrepreneurship, technology and democratic life according to their development and learning stage. Learning outcomes through the Strengthening Pancasila Student Profile Project use assessment in descriptive form.

Level of Curriculum

The level of curriculum was first introduced by Goodlad and Associates (1979) in a book entitled "Curriculum Inquiry: The Study of Curriculum Practice", namely Ideological, Formal, Perceived, Operational and Experiential. The Ideological Curriculum is also said to be the Ideal Curriculum and the Perceived Curriculum can be said to be the Instructional Curriculum, this is based on adjustments to the applicable curriculum policies in Indonesia.

Ideal Curriculum

The word ideal according to KBBI is defined as very in accordance with what is aspired to or dreamed or desired, thus the ideal curriculum is defined as a curriculum that is very in accordance with what is aspired to or dreamed or desired. But that does not mean that this curriculum will not undergo updates, changes, and revisions, because even though it bears the ideal word, this curriculum is still flexible. This can be seen in its implementation, that everything in accordance with what is considered important and needs to be included in education, will be outlined in this curriculum.

Formal Curriculum

It is very easy to understand the meaning of Formal Curriculum, because a real example of formal curriculum is the national curriculum. Formal Curriculum is defined as the display of a curriculum in the form of an official curriculum document. Of course, the official document of this curriculum needs to be legalized through a policy issued by an official institution and recognized by regulations and legislation.

Instructional Curriculum

The description of the national curriculum can be said to be an Instructional Curriculum, so in other words the instructional curriculum is a translation of the formal curriculum into a set of learning scenarios. The initial activities, core activities and closing activities are part of the learning scenario which is usually in the form of learning planned by the teacher. In this case, educators become the main key in the process of designing a learning process that involves the interaction of teachers, students and teaching materials.

Operational Curriculum

The design of the learning process implemented is an operational curriculum. The actual learning process carried out or the real learning process carried out is the appearance of the operational curriculum. Thus, operational is defined as the objective embodiment of instructional curriculum intentions in the form of learning interactions. Teachers, students and teaching materials become components that interact with each other in a learning process.

Experiential Curriculum

The learning process carried out involves interaction between teachers, students and teaching materials that provide a learning experience, especially for students. This is because the learning process aims to humanize young humans. So, it can be said that, Experiential Curriculum is defined as the meaning of learning experiences that are lived by students. It is students who will use the results of the learning experience to later be able to take part in community life.

The explanation of freedom of learning and curriculum levels as described provides a comprehensive understanding that Merdeka Belajar can be described into each level of the curriculum. Curriculum has different functions from one curriculum to another. This curriculum function will provide a theoretical overview of the scope that is the limitation of the curriculum and provide an understanding that each curriculum has distinctive characteristics. In the perspective of Merdeka Belajar as a national policy issued by the government, it is clear that this policy affects all features at the curriculum level as shown in Table 1.

Tabel 1.
The Level of Curriculum in Freedom of Learning Perspective

No.	Level of Curriculum				Merdeka Belajar/ Freedom of Learn
	The level	Definition	Function	Form	
1	Ideal Curriculum	Everything that is considered important and needs to be incorporated into education	As a reflection of the aspirations of constituents that need to be considered and packaged in the right form by all stakeholders involved.	Curriculum Ideas	Ideology of Pancasila
2	Formal Curriculum	Displayed in the form of official curriculum documents	To shape the vision and mission of education, objectives and guidelines for implementation and development.	National Curriculum	Merdeka Curriculum
3	Instructional Curriculum	Translation of a formal curriculum into a set of learning scenarios	To form a set of learning scenarios described in competencies, indicators, objectives, materials, methods, learning steps, learning materials /tools/resources and evaluation.	Learning Tools	Learning Outcomes, Learning Objectives, Learning Objectives Flow as outlined in the Learning module
4	Operational Curriculum	Objective embodiment of instructional curriculum intentions in the form of learning interactions	Creating a participatory learning process and humanizing humans (appreciating the potential that students already have) in accordance with student characteristics and indicators to be achieved.	Learning activities	Learning Module Implementation
5	Experiential Curriculum	The meaning of the student's lived learning experience	- To evaluate learning activities, program evaluation and curriculum evaluation. - As a basis for developing or improving the curriculum.	Evaluation and learning outcomes	Evaluation and learning outcomes in the form of Pancasila Student Profile

Pancasila ideology is at the level of Ideal Curriculum in the form of Curriculum Ideas with a function as a reflection of the aspirations of constituents that need to be considered and packaged in the right form by all stakeholders involved. Curriculum Merdeka is at the level of Formal Curriculum in the form of National Curriculum with functions to shape the vision and mission of education, objectives and guidelines for implementation and development. Learning Outcomes, Learning Objectives and Learning Objectives Flow as outlined in the Learning module is at the level of Instructional Curriculum in the form of Learning Tools with functions to form a set of learning scenarios described in competencies, indicators, objectives, materials, methods, learning steps, learning materials /tools/resources and evaluation. Learning Module Implementation is in the Operational Curriculum in the form of Learning activities with the function of creating a participatory learning process and humanizing humans (appreciating the potential that students already have) in accordance with student characteristics and indicators to be achieved. Evaluation and learning outcomes in the form of Pancasila Student Profile are at the Experiential Curriculum level in the form of Evaluation and learning outcomes with functions to evaluate learning activities, program evaluation and curriculum evaluation and as a basis for developing or improving the curriculum.

Conclusion

The Merdeka Curriculum was previously known as the prototype curriculum because the curriculum development pattern was based on the curriculum development model, namely the down-top/bottom up/grass-root model. Freedom of Learning is a government policy whose implementation is carried out starting from the Early Childhood Education level to Higher Education. Merdeka Belajar presents the Pancasila Student Profile as the outcomes of the educational process through P5 as co-curricular activities and curricular activities are that contain 6 dimensions. In Freedom of Learning Perspective, the curriculum level is a crucible for Merdeka Belajar to place forms of implementation of Merdeka Belajar in a tiered system called Curriculum Level.

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