

# Implementation of Merdeka Curriculum in Civics Learning Through Literacy Project Strengthening the Profile of Pancasila Students at SMPK Mardi Wiyata Malang

Imanuela Ades Fidelcia Bauk Hale<sup>1\*</sup>, Yulius Rustan Effendi<sup>2</sup>, Didik Iswahyudi<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1-3</sup>Faculty of Education, Pancasila and Citizenship Education Study Program, Universitas PGRI Kanjuruhan Malang, Indonesia

Email: <sup>1)</sup> [Imanuallahale@gmail.com](mailto:Imanuallahale@gmail.com), <sup>2)</sup> [efenrust@unikama.ac.id](mailto:efenrust@unikama.ac.id), <sup>3)</sup> [didik@unikama.ac.id](mailto:didik@unikama.ac.id)

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## Abstract

The Merdeka curriculum is one of the educational innovations introduced by the Ministry of Education, and provides freedom for schools to determine the learning methods used according to the needs and characteristics of the school. This research focuses on the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in Civics Learning through Literacy, the Project for Strengthening Pancasila Student Profiles at SMPK Mardi Wiyata Malang. This research aims to understand the implementation of the independent curriculum in Civics learning through the literacy project to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students, describe the obstacles in implementing the independent curriculum in Civics learning through the literacy project to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students and the benefits of implementing the Merdeka curriculum in Civics learning through the literacy project to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students. The research method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. The data collection techniques used were observation, interviews and documentation. The data analysis technique uses triangulation to obtain the validity of the data, while the data analysis used in the research is reduction, display and verification. Research findings show that the first is the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum through literacy, the project to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students at SMPK Mardi Wiyata Malang has gone well. The school also supports teachers to take part in activities that support teacher competency such as MGMP, PMM, PKG, workshops and other activities.

**Keywords:** Merdeka Curriculum, Civics Education, Literacy Projects, Pancasila Student Profile, Educational Innovation, Character Formation, Student Autonomy, Values-Based Learning

## 1. Introduction

Education is a fundamental pillar in nation building that continues to undergo transformation, especially in the context of digitalization which now dominates various aspects of life. In today's digital era, digital technology is not only a supporting tool, but has become the core of the learning process, including administration, curriculum, learning methods, and learning media (Ma'rufah, 2022). This transformation is a strategic step to realize one of the ideals of the independence of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), namely the intellectual life of the nation (Hidayat, 2012).

Education in the 21st century demands constant adjustment to the ever-changing developments in science and technology. Curriculum renewal is a must to answer the demands of the global labor market and keep up with the dynamics of the modern era (Firdaus et al., 2023). The curriculum, defined as a set of plans and arrangements regarding learning objectives, content and methods, plays a central role as a guide in achieving educational goals.



Curriculum renewal is recognized as a response to the need to continuously evaluate and adjust the education system to keep it relevant and innovative. The curriculum is considered the backbone of the education system that requires periodic evaluation to maintain alignment with the development of science and technology, as well as meet the needs of a dynamic society (Barlian & Solekah, 2022). The Merdeka Curriculum, as one of the latest initiatives, reflects the transformation in the curriculum structure, which emerged in response to the educational challenges brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic (Khairiyah & Putri, 2024).

The Indonesian Ministry of Education has attempted to restore the learning process through the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum policy (Wijayanti et al., 2024). The learning crisis that emerged due to the pandemic, such as academic setbacks and uncertainty in the teaching and learning process, prompted the government to conduct curriculum revisions in a systematic, coordinated and planned manner (Santoso et al., 2024). Various educational strategies, such as project-based learning and competency-based courses, have been implemented to address these challenges (Halimah, 2023).

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is based on the Pancasila Learner Profile Strengthening Project (P5), which is supported by various regulations, including Regulation of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology No. 5 of 2022, No. 7 of 2022, No. 56 of 2022, as well as other decisions from DG BSKAP (Susanti et al., 2023). To ensure the integration of P5 in the curriculum, teachers are needed who not only have extensive knowledge, but also creativity and innovation in developing projects that can increase learners' literacy and interest in various fields.

The Pancasila Learner Profile Strengthening Project (P5) aims to strengthen six key dimensions in learners, namely: faith and piety in God Almighty and noble character, global diversity, independence, mutual cooperation, critical thinking, and creativity. By focusing on this character development, P5 is expected to contribute significantly to the formation of a generation with integrity and competence in the future.

However, the implementation of P5 is also faced with various challenges, including issues that arise among students, such as bullying, cyberbullying, and low awareness of moral and religious values. This situation demands a more comprehensive approach to curriculum implementation, which not only focuses on academic aspects, but also strengthens the character of learners through relevant and contextual projects.

Observations conducted at SMPK Mardi Wiyata Malang show that this school has been implementing Merdeka Curriculum for the past two years, with a focus on literacy and projects to strengthen the learner profile of Pancasila. This school also fulfills the requirements as a driving school, with the presence of driving teachers, facilitators, and others. The implementation of Merdeka Curriculum is carried out in stages, where only grades VII and VIII use this curriculum, while grade IX still uses the 2013 Curriculum. However, activities related to literacy and P5 are followed by all students.

During the observation, the researcher witnessed the implementation of "Language Month" activities related to literacy and P5. This activity is held once a year with a different theme each year. This year, the theme was "Local Wisdom", which involved learners in various creative activities, such as creating a personal synopsis, speeches in Indonesian and Javanese, storytelling in English, poster making, and various art and cultural performances. These activities not only encourage learners' active participation, but also integrate various aspects of literacy and Pancasila values.

This research aims to further explore the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum in Civics learning through literacy and the Pancasila learner profile strengthening project at SMPK Mardi Wiyata Malang. This research also aims to identify the obstacles faced in implementing this curriculum, as well as the benefits obtained for students and schools. The results of the study are expected to provide

deeper insights into how the Merdeka Curriculum can be implemented effectively and sustainably in the context of education in Indonesia.

## 2. Methods

This research was conducted using a qualitative descriptive approach. Qualitative research is research conducted in natural conditions where researchers do not conduct research that affects the scientific nature of the object under study (Barlian & Solekah, 2022). In this type of research, the data obtained is in the form of text or images, then analyze and describe it into simple information that is easy to understand. The process of collecting and analyzing data in qualitative research is divided into three stages: description, classification and connection stages (Sugiyono, 2020). This study aims to determine the implementation of the independent curriculum in Civics learning through literacy projects to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students at SMPK Mardi Wiyata Malang. The research subjects were the Principal, Deputy Head of Curriculum, Civics Teacher, P5 Organizing Team and students.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 3.1. Implementation of Merdeka Curriculum at SMPK Mardi Wiyata Malang: Observation and Analysis

Based on the results of observations, interviews, and documentation conducted at SMPK Mardi Wiyata Malang, the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum through the literacy project Strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile (P5) has been scheduled and implemented regularly. This program involves all students and teachers, showing the institution's commitment to integrating Pancasila values in every aspect of learning. One proof of the success of this program is the implementation of the literacy movement for 15 minutes before learning begins, as well as P5 activities scheduled at the end of each month.

Observations show that the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum at SMPK Mardi Wiyata Malang is running well and in accordance with the policies set by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (MoEC). The principal plays a key role in supporting teacher competency development through various activities such as MGMP (Subject Teacher Consultation), PMM (Platform Merdeka Mengajar), PKG (Teacher Performance Assessment), as well as various workshops and webinars. The active participation of teachers in the Guru Penggerak program also signifies an open community that encourages the exchange of experiences and best practices between schools.

The availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure is an important supporting factor in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. However, the observation results also show the need to improve the maintenance of facilities so that the learning process can run optimally and sustainably. The school has taken proactive steps by scheduling literacy and P5 time regularly, such as implementing literacy 15 minutes before learning and P5 which is held for one week at the end of the month. The active participation of parents in this program is expected to create a positive synergy between school and family, leading to a stronger inculcation of Pancasila values in learners.

### 3.2. Challenges and Constraints in Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum: Case Study of SMPK Mardi Wiyata Malang

While the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum has shown many successes, this study also identified some obstacles that need to be overcome. One of the main challenges faced by teachers is the lack of comprehensive planning in the implementation of the P5 theme. The success of P5 largely

depends on optimizing the flow applied in practice, but the lack of common material between teachers is an obstacle.

At the conceptual stage, teachers need to understand that this project is not just an additional task, but an integral part of learning that must be adapted in daily activities. For this reason, SMPK Mardi Wiyata Malang needs to continue to adapt and provide more intensive habituation to teachers and students in implementing this new curriculum. This adaptation is necessary considering that Merdeka Curriculum is a new curriculum that requires in-depth understanding from all parties involved.

One way to increase this understanding is to continue to participate in seminars and training organized by the Ministry of Education and Culture. This is not only to enrich teachers' knowledge, but also to ensure that the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum is in accordance with its main objective, which is to provide freedom and independence to students in determining the direction of their education according to their respective interests and talents.

The low interest in reading among students is also a significant obstacle in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, especially in the context of literacy projects to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students. Data shows that students' reading skills are still low, which indicates that the education system has not fully succeeded in fostering interest in reading and adequate literacy skills. This condition is a serious concern that needs to be immediately followed up by the government to prevent a decline in literacy culture among the younger generation.

### **3.3. Benefits of Merdeka Curriculum Implementation: Strengthening Literacy and Pancasila Student Profile at SMPK Mardi Wiyata Malang**

The implementation of Merdeka Curriculum through literacy and P5 at SMPK Mardi Wiyata Malang provides significant benefits, both for schools, teachers, and students. Schools have the responsibility to create a strong literacy culture as part of the learning process. Facilities such as libraries are crucial elements that need to be optimized to increase students' interest in reading. Through literacy, students not only improve their reading and writing skills, but also develop their insights and creativity.

For teachers, the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum provides an opportunity to improve their insights and teaching skills. Involvement in activities such as MGMP, PMM and various webinars helps teachers develop more innovative learning methods that meet the demands of the new curriculum. Teachers also have the opportunity to share and learn from the experiences of their peers, both within the school and from other schools, which enriches their pedagogical approach.

Meanwhile, learners benefit more broadly from the implementation of literacy and P5. Not only do they understand the subject matter more deeply, but they also form characters and attitudes that are in line with Pancasila values. The P5 project provides space for learners to explore their interests and talents, which in turn builds self-confidence and social responsibility.

The study also highlights the importance of implementing the Pancasila learner profile strengthening project in improving learners' interest in reading and writing. P5 serves as a bridge to connect theory with practice, where learners are invited to apply their knowledge in a real context. This not only helps strengthen academic understanding, but also instills values that will become their moral foundation in the future.

### **3.4. Strategies for Developing and Improving the Implementation of Merdeka Curriculum at SMPK Mardi Wiyata Malang**

To increase the effectiveness of the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum at SMPK Mardi Wiyata Malang, several development strategies need to be implemented. First, increased collaboration

between teachers, principals, and parents is essential to create a supportive learning environment. This collaboration can be realized through programs that involve all parties, such as joint workshops, focus group discussions, and parenting programs related to character education.

Second, teachers' professional development must be continuously improved through training and seminars focused on an in-depth understanding of Merdeka Curriculum and P5. Teachers need to be equipped with adequate knowledge and skills to implement this curriculum effectively. In addition, the development of learning communities among teachers, both within schools and between schools, can be an important platform for sharing experiences and solutions to challenges faced.

Third, schools should strengthen infrastructure support, especially with regard to literacy facilities such as libraries, language laboratories and digital learning media. Easy and adequate access to these resources will help students develop the literacy skills needed in the digital era.

Fourth, systematic monitoring and evaluation needs to be carried out to measure the success of the Merdeka Curriculum implementation. The data obtained from this evaluation can be used to identify areas that need improvement and develop more effective strategies to support the learning process.

### **3.5. Discussion: Implications and Relevance of Findings**

The results of this study indicate that the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum at SMPK Mardi Wiyata Malang has broad implications for the development of the education system in Indonesia. One important finding is that the success of implementation depends heavily on the support and involvement of all parties, including teachers, learners, principals, and parents. This finding is consistent with existing literature that emphasizes the importance of collaboration in achieving holistic education goals (Halimah, 2023).

In addition, the challenges faced in implementing Merdeka Curriculum, especially related to students' low interest in reading, indicate the need for more focused interventions in developing a culture of literacy. This finding is relevant to previous research which shows that literacy skills are key in developing 21st century competencies (Firdaus et al., 2023). Therefore, future education policies should consider literacy as a top priority.

The implementation of P5 also shows great potential in shaping students' character in accordance with the values of Pancasila. This is in line with the goal of national education, which is not only to pursue academic aspects but also to shape the personality of learners who have strong character, integrity and are able to play an active role in social life. By integrating Pancasila values in every aspect of learning, P5 can be a tool to foster a sense of nationalism, tolerance, and a sense of social responsibility among the younger generation, so that they can face global challenges while adhering to the nation's identity.

## **4. Conclusion**

Implementing Merdeka Curriculum through literacy and P5 shows that this approach provides significant benefits for learners, teachers and the school as a whole. Through literacy, learners can improve their reading, writing, and critical thinking skills, while the project to strengthen the Pancasila learner profile (P5) helps internalize Pancasila values and shape better character. However, there are several obstacles in its implementation, such as teachers' lack of understanding of Merdeka Curriculum, limited resources, and challenges in adjusting learning methods to the characteristics of each learner. Nevertheless, the benefits obtained, including increased responsibility, discipline, cooperation, and communication skills of students, show that the independent curriculum through literacy and P5 has

great potential to improve the quality of education and form a generation with broad insight and strong character.

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