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TEACHER PERCEPTIONS IN IMPLEMENTING THE CONCEPT OF INDEPENDENT LEARNING EDUCATION

Budi¹, Syahida Az Zahra², Zakiyah Darajah³, Tuah Akbar Daulay⁴, Agus Salim Hasibuan⁵, Nazla Khairunnisa Damanik⁶

budiama83@uinsu.ac.id¹, azzahrasahida790@gmail.com², salimhasibuan11@gmail.com³,

zakiyahdarajah48@gmail.com⁴, nazla.damanik05@gmail.com⁵, tuahakbardaulay@gmail.com⁶

North Sumatra State Islamic University

ABSTRACT

Independent Learning Education (PMB) is a new paradigm in the world of education that emphasizes independence and freedom of learning for students. This research aims to explore school principals' perceptions of the application of the PMB concept in the educational environment. The research method used was qualitative using in-depth interviews with school principals. This research aims to: (1) find out how the Merdeka curriculum is implemented at Baitul Aziz Private Middle School, (2) find out what obstacles the Merdeka curriculum faces for students in learning. Baitul Aziz Private Middle School, (3) explains how the change in the Merdeka curriculum at Baitul Aziz Private Middle School influences, (4) explains the role of parents in the Merdeka curriculum at Baitul Aziz Private Middle School. The subject in this research is that the principal's role is to support learning in the Merdeka curriculum, then the teacher's role in the Merdeka curriculum is to be an architect of innovative learning and focuses on character development, creativity and student independence. And students as subjects in the Merdeka curriculum are student-centered, the Merdeka curriculum frees students to learn according to their interests and talents together with teachers as learning architects. The results of this research show that several main challenges faced by schools that have not used KMB include a lack of understanding of the concepts and principles of KMB, limited resources and infrastructure, resistance to change, and uncertainty related to the role of teachers and students in more independent learning. So the implications of these findings for education policy and school management practices are discussed in this research, along with recommendations for strengthening support for schools that are in the transition process towards KMB.

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INTRODUCTION

In the era of Industrial Revolution 4.0, there are challenges as well as opportunities for educational institutions. The conditions for progress and development of educational institutions must have the power to innovate and be able to collaborate. If you are not able to innovate and collaborate, you will be left far behind. However, if it were the other way around, educational institutions would be able to create human resources (HR) that could advance, develop and realize the nation's ideals, namely human learning. Educational institutions must be able to balance the education system with current developments. In the era of industrial revolution 4.0, the education system is expected to be able to create students who have skills that are able to think critically and solve problems, be creative and innovative as well as communication and collaboration skills. Also skills in searching, managing and conveying news information using information and technology are very much needed (Eko Risdianto, 2019: 4).

In his speech commemorating National Teachers' Day, Minister of Education and Culture Nadiem Makarim stated that teachers' duties are both the noblest and most difficult. They are responsible for shaping the nation's future, but are often faced with regulations without adequate support. Teachers want to help students who are struggling in class, but often their time is limited because they have to handle administrative tasks that provide no clear benefit. In Indonesia, the educational curriculum often changes in its implementation in schools. One of the curricula currently in effect is the independent curriculum. The concept of independent learning, which was introduced by the Minister of Education and Culture Nadiem Makarim, emphasized important aspects, namely independent learning and motivation for teachers. Merdeka Belajar also highlights the importance of teacher involvement in supporting students' independent learning process (Mustaghfiroh, 2020).

Education policy is a decision made by the government or administrators in the education sector as a response to educational problems that occur in society. The role of education policy is as a guideline, concept or basis for plans, solutions and innovations to implement and achieve educational goals. In Indonesia, the roles of education policy are not fully realized and sometimes the implementation of the policy itself becomes a new problem in society. This is because the strategy for implementing education policies has not been carried out optimally by the government.

Independent Learning Education (PMB) has emerged as a revolutionary concept in the world of education, offering a new paradigm that emphasizes independence and freedom of learning for students. This concept brings about a profound change in the way we view the learning process, freeing students from the limitations of a particular classroom and time, and giving them greater control over their own learning process. In this context, the role of the teacher also undergoes a transformation, from being a dominant class leader to being a supportive learning facilitator.

Independent Learning Education has become the main focus in efforts to improve the quality of education in Indonesia. This concept emphasizes students' freedom in choosing topics and learning methods, as well as improving teachers' skills in developing a more dynamic curriculum. In the implementation of Independent Learning education, teachers have a very important role in helping students achieve their learning goals. However, how teachers understand and apply this concept is still a matter of debate. Teachers' perceptions about Independent Learning education can influence the effectiveness of its implementation.

However, the success of PMB implementation does not only depend on the policies and curriculum that support it, but also on the understanding, attitudes and readiness of education implementers, especially teachers. Teachers' perceptions of the MLE concept have a crucial role in determining the extent to which this concept can be implemented effectively and sustainably in schools.

In this context, research on teacher perceptions in implementing the MLE concept becomes very important. Exploring how educators view and interpret this concept can provide valuable insight into the challenges, expectations, and opportunities that may be encountered in the MLE implementation process. In addition, a deeper understanding of teacher perceptions can also provide a foundation for the development of more effective training and support programs for teachers in adopting the MLE approach in their learning practices.

In this view, this research aims to explore teachers' perceptions of the application of the MLE concept. Through a better understanding of teachers' views and attitudes, we can identify factors that influence the acceptance and implementation of MLE at the teacher level, as well as identify effective strategies to facilitate the adoption of this concept in educational contexts.

Thus, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of the dynamics of PMB implementation and opens the way towards developing education that is more inclusive, innovative and responsive to student needs in this ever-changing era.

Perception

The word perception comes from English, perception, which means: perception, seeing, response. As in the Big Indonesian Dictionary, perception is interpreted as a direct response or acceptance of something or the process of someone knowing several things that influence attitudes, and attitudes will determine behavior. In other words, it can be concluded that perception influences a person's behavior or behavior is a reflection of his or her perception. Perception is a direct response or image of a person's absorption in knowing several things through the five senses. In this sense, it is clear that perception is an impression or response that a person has after that person absorbs to know several things (objects), through the five senses.

Stephen P. Robbins (2005) defines perception; A process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment. Perception is a process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions in order to provide meaning to their environment.

Perception is not only limited to physical recognition, but also involves subjective understanding of the information received. The perception process begins when stimuli from the environment are received by our five senses. However, it is important to remember that perception is not just about receiving sensory information, but also about how we organize and interpret it in our minds. This means that perception does not always reflect the actual state of the stimulus, but is rather a subjective construction of reality that is influenced by factors such as previous experience, beliefs, values, and expectations.

Teacher

Teachers are those who have the responsibility to provide teaching, guidance and mentoring to students or pupils in an educational institution. The role of a teacher is not only limited to conveying knowledge and skills to students, but also includes character building, developing individual potential, and providing encouragement and motivation for students to learn and develop.

According to Dri Atmaka (2004:17), an educator or teacher is a person who is responsible for providing assistance to students in their physical and spiritual development.

A teacher can work at various levels of education, from preschool to higher education. They may specialize in a particular subject or area of expertise. In this case, teachers not only teach formal education, but also other education and can become role models for their students.

In addition, teachers also act as learning facilitators who create a supportive environment, encourage collaboration, and facilitate active and student-centered learning. They are also responsible for evaluating student progress, providing constructive feedback, and developing learning strategies appropriate to individual and groups of students.

Application of Concepts

According to Sugono, application comes from the word "terap" which means to use or put into practice. Meanwhile, according to Rifai Zainal, application is a person's ability to apply or use general ideas, procedures or methods, principles, formulas, theories, and so on in new concrete situations.

In an educational context, implementation can refer to the use of innovative teaching methods or the implementation of a new curriculum to improve student learning outcomes. In general, implementation is a key step in turning an idea or concept into real, impactful action in achieving the desired goal or solution.

The concept of education is a description of what we believe about education and how education should take place. This involves an understanding of the importance of education in the lives of individuals and Society, as well as beliefs about how learning and teaching processes should be organized to achieve desired outcomes.

The concept of education can vary from one culture or society to another, depending on different values, traditions and educational needs. Overall, the concept of education provides a framework for the understanding and implementation of education in society. This influences educational policies, school curricula, teaching methods, as well as interactions between teachers, students and other educational stakeholders.

Independent Learning Education

Independent Learning Education is an educational concept that focuses on developing students' potential optimally and improving the quality of education through a more personal and effective approach. This concept emphasizes students' freedom in choosing topics and learning methods, as well as improving teachers' skills in developing a more dynamic curriculum. In Independent Learning education, teachers

are not only sources of information, but also facilitators and motivators who help students achieve their learning goals.

The independent learning education program in Indonesia was launched by the Minister of Education and Culture Nadiem Anwar Makarim to provide education to schools and local governments, as well as improving the quality of education by developing a more flexible and essential curriculum. This program also focuses on improving students' skills in critical thinking and creativity, as well as increasing student participation in the learning process.

In its implementation, independent learning education is expected to improve the quality of education by developing a more dynamic curriculum, improving teacher skills in developing the curriculum, and increasing student participation in the learning process. Thus, it is hoped that independent learning education can be a step forward in improving the quality of education in Indonesia.

The concept of an independent learning curriculum is the formation of freedom in thinking. Freedom of thought is determined by the teacher. This means that teachers are the main pillar in supporting success in education. The concept of an independent learning curriculum should be applied evenly in Indonesian educational institutions today. Apart from influencing the development of students, this concept will also make it easier for teachers to implement innovative learning processes. The burden borne by teachers so far can be solved through the independent learning curriculum. Apart from that, the concept of an independent learning curriculum will also be a solution in responding to educational challenges in the current era of digitalization.

The independent learning curriculum encourages collaboration between students, teachers and the community in the learning process. Teachers act as facilitators or guides who help students explore and develop their own potential. The Merdeka Belajar curriculum aims to create an inclusive, relevant and adaptive learning environment that enables every student to reach their maximum potential and be ready to face the challenges of this ever-changing era.

By implementing independent learning education, it is hoped that it can improve the quality of education and produce a generation that is smarter, creative and independent. Therefore, there is a need for a paradigm shift in education, namely from education that only focuses on the transmission of information to education that is more oriented towards developing student potential.

METHOD

This research study uses a qualitative approach with interview techniques as a data collection method. Meanwhile data was collected through library research methods. Data in research can be obtained through observation, interviews, books, journals and all types of media related to global publications. The main method used is in-depth interviews with school principals, interviews conducted face to face. Apart from that, observations can also be made to gain additional understanding of school practices and culture related to the concept of Independent Learning education. All data was collected systematically and studied descriptively.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Teachers' Perceptions of Implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum at Baitul Aziz Private Middle School

The perception of the headmaster of Baitul Aziz Private Middle School said that the school he leads still has not implemented the Independent Learning curriculum at the school. Baitul Aziz Private Middle School is still implementing an independent learning curriculum as the main framework for learning, but has also introduced a 50% Merdeka curriculum. This shows that even though they have not fully adopted the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, schools have begun to open up to a more independent and flexible educational concept.

The school principal stated his intention to fully implement the Merdeka curriculum in the coming year. This reflects the school's awareness and commitment to adapting to the latest developments in the world of education and integrating the principles of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum. During this transition period, schools continue to make adjustments between the existing independent curriculum and the Merdeka curriculum that will be implemented. This shows the school's efforts to integrate the positive aspects of both curricula, as well as preparing teaching staff and students for the changes to come.

Thus, teachers' perceptions in implementing the Independent learning curriculum at Baitul Aziz Private Middle School reflect efforts to adapt to curriculum changes and take steps towards a more independent and student-oriented education. The school's future prospects will be greatly influenced by

its ability to continue to adapt to the principles of the Independent learning curriculum effectively in daily practice.

2. Obstacles to the Independent Learning Curriculum for Students at Baitul Aziz Private Middle School

Implementation of the Independent learning curriculum in Baitul Aziz Private Middle School is faced with a number of obstacles that slow down or hinder the adoption and implementation process. The two main factors that become obstacles are the mindset factor and the availability of insufficient facilities. One of the main obstacles in implementing KMB at Baitul Aziz Private Middle School is the mindset that is still tied to traditional approaches to education. Teachers and school staff may still have a tendency to rely on more conventional teaching methods, which place the teacher at the center of learning and emphasize a rigidly structured curriculum. The KMB concept, which emphasizes student independence and flexibility in learning, may be considered a change that is too drastic or difficult to accept by some parties. It takes time and effort to change mindsets and prepare teachers and school staff to adopt a more progressive approach to learning.

Another obstacle faced by Baitul Aziz Private Middle School in implementing KMB is the inadequate availability of facilities. Implementing KMB requires supporting infrastructure and resources, such as flexible classrooms, adequate technological devices, complete libraries, and trained human resources. However, limited school budgets or resources may be an obstacle in meeting these needs. Lack of adequate facilities can hinder the effectiveness of implementing KMB and make it difficult for teachers to design and deliver learning that is in accordance with this concept.

In overcoming these obstacles, Baitul Aziz Private Middle School needs to take strategic steps, such as counseling and training to improve the mindset and readiness of teachers in implementing KMB, as well as allocating resources to improve school facilities and infrastructure. With continued efforts and sufficient support, it is hoped that schools can succeed in implementing KMN effectively and provide a more meaningful learning experience for students.

3. The Influence of Changes in the Independent Learning Curriculum at Baitul Aziz Private Middle School

The advantage of the curriculum implemented in schools is that the learning methods are suitable for the majority of students who are classified as lower middle class. The principal also stated that this could also be said to be a weakness, therefore the school is still trying to make a transition by conducting learning not only in the classroom but also outside the classroom.

One of the positive impacts of adopting KMB in Baitul Aziz Private Middle School is that students do not get red marks in their education report cards. KMB emphasizes more inclusive and student-centered learning, which allows each student to develop according to their potential and interests. With a more adaptive and responsive learning approach, students have a greater opportunity to achieve success in their lessons, which is reflected in their report cards. This condition reflects the school's attention to individual student needs and efforts to reduce stress and pressure related to academic evaluations.

Apart from that, Baitul Aziz Private Middle School increases reading literacy among its students. The Merdeka Belajar curriculum encourages more holistic learning and promotes the development of reader skills as an integral part of the learning process. With a strengthened focus on reading literacy, both in the formal curriculum and outside of class hours, students at Baitul Aziz Private Middle School have greater opportunities to improve their understanding, broaden their horizons, and develop their critical thinking skills. As a result, students are better prepared to face academic demands and enter an increasingly connected and knowledge-based world.

Thus, changes in the educational curriculum, especially with the adoption of the Independent Learning Curriculum at Baitul Aziz Private Middle School, not only affect students' academic results but also have a positive impact in developing their skills and abilities, especially in terms of reading literacy. This demonstrates a meaningful approach in students' learning experience and prepares them for a brighter future.

4. The Role of Parents in the Independent Learning Curriculum at Baitul Aziz Private Middle School

According to the principal Baitul Aziz Private Middle School, the role of parents is very important in the successful implementation of the Independent

Learning Curriculum, especially because a child's first education starts at home. Most of a child's character formation occurs at home as much as 75% and parents have a central role in this. They should be good examples for their children and guide them in understanding moral values, ethics and desired behavior. They must ensure that children have a conducive environment at home to learn and develop their skills. In this case, collaboration between parents and teachers is the key to ensuring the formation of children's character and maximum achievement in education.

Collaboration between parents and teachers is very important in supporting children's holistic development. Parents should be actively involved in school activities and communicate regularly with teachers regarding their child's progress, challenges faced, and special needs. Apart from supporting learning at school, parents can also provide support in home-based learning. In this way, parents can provide additional information to teachers that can help in designing learning that suits individual student needs.

With effective collaboration between parents and teachers, students' character and abilities in facing challenges and opportunities in the future can be developed optimally. Therefore, the role of parents in implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum cannot be ignored, because they have a significant impact in shaping their children's educational future.

Discussion

Based on the results of research conducted by our research regarding the Independent Learning Curriculum in schools Baitul Aziz Private Middle School with speakers directly from the school principal are as follows:

1. The teacher's perception in implementing the Independent Learning curriculum at Baitul Aziz Private Middle School is that Baitul Aziz Private Middle School is currently still implementing the previously existing independent curriculum, but they are also planning to adopt the Independent Learning Curriculum. In Shaa Allah, next year the independent learning curriculum will be implemented at Baitul Aziz private junior high school. The plan to implement KMB next year shows that the school has made thorough and thorough preparations to ensure the success of the change. This plan shows the school's commitment to following the latest developments in the world of education and updating their

learning approach in accordance with the direction desired by the government in its efforts to create a more inclusive and student-oriented education.

2. The obstacle to the Merdeka Belajar curriculum being implemented at the Baitul Aziz Private Middle School is that it faces a number of obstacles in adopting the Merdeka Belajar curriculum. First, the availability of inadequate facilities, including inadequate infrastructure such as classrooms, technological devices, libraries and skilled human resources. Second, there is a mindset problem that is still tied to traditional approaches to education. Apart from that, schools also allocate resources to improve school facilities and infrastructure. To overcome this obstacle, schools hold outreach and training to improve teachers' mindsets and readiness in implementing the Independent Learning curriculum.
3. The influence of changes to the Merdeka learning curriculum at Baitul Aziz Private Middle School is that there are economic factors that influence the adjustment of the independent curriculum at Baitul Aziz Private Middle School. So that the Independent Learning curriculum implemented at Baitul Aziz Private Middle School has not seen any changes. Because this school applies reading literacy to its students, even the Baitul Aziz Private Middle School also has the advantage that none of its students get red marks in the education report card and the curriculum that the school implements does not burden the majority of parents who are classified as down. By considering economic factors in independent curriculum adjustments, Baitul Aziz Private Middle School can create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students, regardless of their economic background.
4. The role of parents in the success of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum is crucial because a child's initial education starts at home. Parents have a major role in controlling their children's education, because most of a child's character formation comes from the home environment. Collaboration between parents and teachers is very important in shaping students' character and abilities. Parents must be active in school activities and communicate regularly with teachers to monitor their child's development. With this collaboration, it is hoped that students' development and abilities in facing future challenges and opportunities can be developed optimally.

CONCLUSION

After the researcher concluded the teacher's perception in implementing the concept of Independent Learning education. It can be concluded that Baitul Aziz Private Middle School is still in the process of adapting to the Independent Learning curriculum, where currently it is still implementing an independent curriculum. However, there are clear plans to start implementing KMB in the coming year. Then there are obstacles faced by Baitul Aziz Private Middle School in adopting KMB, which mainly lie in two main factors, namely the lack of a mindset that is open to change and limited adequate facilities. Efforts to overcome these obstacles will be the key to success in implementing KMB in the school. Furthermore, the role of parents is very important in supporting the successful implementation of KMB at Baitul Aziz Private Middle School. The formation of a child's character largely comes from the home environment, so the role of parents in supporting their child's education cannot be ignored. Collaboration between schools and parents in supporting student learning will have a positive impact on the development of students' character and abilities in facing future challenges.

With the problems related to this discussion, it is hoped that Baitul Aziz Private Middle School can overcome existing obstacles and successfully implement the Independent Learning Curriculum successfully in the coming year, as well as involving parents as important partners in the child's education process. By understanding and accommodating teacher perceptions, schools can increase the success and sustainability of efforts to implement the concept of Independent Learning Education.

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