



The Influence of the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum on Students' Social Awareness in Social Studies

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Abstrac

This study investigates the effect of implementing Merdeka Curriculum on students' social sensitivity in social studies (IPS) at SMP Negeri 1 Pamekasan. Merdeka Curriculum aims to enhance students' critical thinking, communication, and teamwork skills while fostering social awareness. A quantitative method with an ex-post facto approach was used in this research. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to a representative sample. The data were analyzed using simple linear regression, as the study involved two variables: the implementation of the Independent Curriculum (X) and students' social sensitivity (Y). The study is based on the Independent Curriculum theory from the Ministry of Education and the social sensitivity theory from David and Drost. The results indicate that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at SMP Negeri 1 Pamekasan scored an average of 92.54, categorized as high. Students' social sensitivity in social studies also scored high, with an average of 92.56. Hypothesis testing confirmed a significant effect of the Independent Curriculum on social sensitivity, with an F-value of 48.012 and a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$. These findings suggest that the Independent Curriculum effectively improves students' social sensitivity and can guide future curriculum development

Keywords: Independent Curriculum, Social Sensitivity, social sciences

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka terhadap kepekaan sosial siswa pada mata pelajaran IPS di SMP Negeri 1 Pamekasan. Kurikulum Merdeka dirancang untuk mengembangkan kompetensi berpikir kritis, komunikasi, dan kerja sama siswa, sekaligus membentuk karakter yang peduli sosial. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuantitatif dengan pendekatan ex-post facto. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui kuesioner kepada responden yang mewakili populasi tertentu. Data dianalisis menggunakan regresi linear sederhana karena hanya melibatkan dua variabel, yaitu implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka (X) dan kepekaan sosial siswa (Y). Teori yang mendasari penelitian ini adalah teori Kurikulum Merdeka dari Kemendikbud dan teori kepekaan sosial dari David dan Drost. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka di SMP Negeri 1 Pamekasan memiliki rata-rata sebesar 92,54, yang tergolong tinggi. Kepekaan sosial siswa pada mata pelajaran IPS juga tinggi dengan rata-rata sebesar 92,56. Uji hipotesis menunjukkan pengaruh signifikan antara Kurikulum Merdeka dan kepekaan sosial dengan nilai Fhitung 48,012 dan signifikansi $0,000 < 0,05$. Temuan ini dapat dijadikan referensi dalam pengembangan kurikulum untuk meningkatkan kepekaan sosial siswa.

Kata Kunci: Kurikulum merdeka, kepekaan sosial, ilmu pengetahuan sosial

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Introduction

Nadiem Makarim developed an innovation as a solution to improve the quality of education and learning. The Independent Learning Curriculum (*Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar*) aims to reduce the administrative burden on teachers in other tasks, such as catching up on other subjects. Through Independent Learning, teachers are encouraged to be more creative in innovating and to have a plan for developing a curriculum that is more suitable for the surrounding environment. One of the breakthroughs in this curriculum is that it offers freedom and independence to students and educational institutions, from early childhood education (PAUD) to higher education. The Independent Learning Curriculum aims to reduce the administrative burden on teachers beyond their primary teaching duties. Furthermore, through Independent Learning, teachers are expected to be more creative in innovation and to have strategies for formulating teaching programs that are more relevant to the surrounding environment.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused learning gaps and a decline in character quality, resulting in the loss of learning opportunities. Therefore, curriculum changes have been made to restore the learning process (Mustaghfiroh, 2020). The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) shows that Indonesia holds a relatively low position in international rankings, ranking 74th out of 79 countries in mathematics and literacy (Khoirurrijal, 2022). The goal of this transformation is to raise educational standards and prepare future generations to face global challenges. As a response, the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia introduced a breakthrough by replacing the previous 2013 curriculum with the Independent Learning Curriculum to restore the learning process.

To restore an effective learning process, the government has given educational institutions the flexibility to choose the most suitable curriculum, such as the 2013 curriculum, the transitional curriculum, and the Independent Learning Curriculum. For educational institutions that choose the Independent Learning Curriculum, implementation can be carried out gradually according to each institution's capacity (Kurniasih, 2022).

The Independent Learning Curriculum is one of the curricula currently being developed and widely introduced by the Ministry of Education and Culture to all educational institutions in Indonesia. Although its implementation is not mandatory, the Independent Learning Curriculum is expected to be implemented evenly and gradually at all educational levels, from primary to higher education (Samsudduha, 2023).

Social Studies (*Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial* – IPS) is a collection of disciplines that include sociology, geography, economics, and history, presented in an organized and cohesive manner (Indraswati, 2020). Nevertheless, Social Studies education is often considered less relevant to the advancement of technology and information in the 21st century. Additionally, many students lack social skills, making them uncomfortable in their immediate environment and less able to engage in positive social interactions. Essentially, social knowledge serves as a foundation for developing essential social skills for modern society, including communication, collaboration, and relationship-building. Therefore, developing social skills has become a challenge for Social Studies students in the 21st century (Widodo, 2020).

The Independent Curriculum is closely related to students' social awareness. This curriculum is designed to develop students' competencies holistically, not only in academic aspects but also in social and character aspects. Through an emphasis on character education, relevant contextual learning, as well as social projects and activities, the Independent Curriculum encourages students to be more sensitive to social issues around them. Additionally, civic education and environmental awareness integrated into this curriculum strengthen students' social awareness. Social skills such as effective communication and empathy are also developed through various collaborative activities, which help students build positive relationships with others and contribute to society. Overall, the Independent Curriculum creates a learning environment that supports the development of students' social awareness by integrating social values into the daily learning process.

Based on prior observations conducted by the researcher, it was found that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at SMP Negeri 1 Pamekasan has already begun and has positively influenced the improvement of students' social awareness. The results of the observations at SMP Negeri 1 Pamekasan show that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum has been running well and is relevant to the educational goals focused on character development and 21st-century skills.

This curriculum provides students with the opportunity to learn more independently, think critically, and develop their potential according to their interests and talents. The Strengthening of Pancasila Student Profile Project (*Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila* – P5), conducted every two weeks, provides a comprehensive learning experience. In this program, students are involved in collaborative projects that not only

focus on academic aspects but also on the development of non-academic skills such as teamwork, communication, and social awareness.

These projects vary from environmental activities, entrepreneurial skills development, to social projects that emphasize Pancasila values such as mutual cooperation and care for others.

The social awareness of students at SMP Negeri 1 Pamekasan is relatively strong. Students actively demonstrate empathy and social responsibility in their daily interactions. This attitude is evident in activities such as mutual cooperation, teamwork, and caring for friends in need. Furthermore, they are also involved in various social activities at school, such as environmental cleanliness programs and solidarity programs to help others. Overall, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at SMP Negeri 1 Pamekasan has been effective, with the P5 program significantly contributing to the development of students' social awareness and Pancasila values.

Method

This research is a quantitative study. Quantitative research is a type of research that is closely related to numbers. From the process of data collection, data interpretation, to presentation, everything is related to numbers. The main objective of quantitative research is to solve problems along with their generalization. (Sodik, 2015)

The approach used in this research is an ex-post facto approach, which means that the research is conducted after an event has occurred. (Sodik, 2015) In a more specific sense, ex-post facto research is conducted to investigate the differences between two or more groups by analyzing an existing phenomenon and then tracing relevant data to explain the phenomenon. (Sodik, 2015). The research measures the variable of Independent Curriculum implementation and then examines its relationship with the variable of social awareness among students at SMP Negeri 1 Pamekasan.

Result and Discussion

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum is a learning process that aims to restore education to achieve educational transformation in Indonesia toward a better direction. Furthermore, in the Independent Curriculum, teachers can better identify students' potential to create more relevant learning experiences. There are five indicators used to implement the Independent Curriculum, namely: (1) differentiated learning, (2) educational planning, (3) group learning, (4) character development, and (5) participation

in learning. A total of 27 statements were presented in the questionnaire. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. In this section, parameters such as mean, median, mode, and standard deviation, processed using SPSS 22 for Windows, will be presented in the following table:

Table 1. Statistics of the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum's Variable (X)

Statistics	
IKM	
N	Valid
	Missing
Mean	
Std. Error of Mean	
Median	
Mode	
Std. Deviation	
Variance	
Skewness	
Std. Error of Skewness	
Kurtosis	
Std. Error of Kurtosis	
Range	
Minimum	
Maximum	
Sum	
a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown	

Based on the statistical table above, the data shows relatively symmetrical characteristics and tends to have high values. The average (mean) of 92.54 indicates a relatively high central value. Meanwhile, the median is 93.00, and the mode value of 85 indicates that this value appears most frequently in the data. Furthermore, the standard deviation of 6.363 shows moderate data variation. With a maximum value of 106, the data has a clear upper limit.

Based on the above calculations, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at SMP Negeri 1 Pamekasan is relatively good. This is indicated by the average score of 92.54.

Social awareness is an individual's ability to sense, understand, and respond appropriately to the feelings and needs of others in social interactions. Social awareness has three indicators: (1) perspective-taking, which refers to seeing things from another person's point of view, (2) fantasy, which refers to imagination about unreal scenarios, and (3) empathic concern, which refers to care or sympathy toward others. The data for this variable was collected using a questionnaire consisting of 27 statements, which were then

analyzed using SPSS 22 for Windows. The results of the descriptive statistical analysis are presented in the following table:

Table 2. Statistics of the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum's Variable (Y)

Statistics		
KEPEKAAN.S		
N	Valid	96
	Missing	0
Mean		92.56
Std. Error of Mean		.861
Median		94.50
Mode		97
Std. Deviation		8.433
Variance		71.112
Skewness		-.810
Std. Error of Skewness		.246
Kurtosis		.487
Std. Error of Kurtosis		.488
Range		39
Minimum		69
Maximum		108
Sum		8886

Based on the descriptive statistical table above, the results show that the mean value is 92.56. The median value is 94.50, and the mode is 97. The standard deviation is 8.433. The mean, median, and mode values are considered high because they are close to the maximum value of 108. From the above calculation, it can be concluded that students' social awareness in social studies subjects at SMP Negeri 1 Pamekasan is relatively good. This is indicated by the average score of 92.56.

From the two previous variables, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum and students' social awareness in social studies subjects, after conducting descriptive data analysis, it was concluded that the data falls into the high category and is normally distributed. Therefore, the next step is to conduct a classical assumption test with the following results.

Table 3. Result of Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality Test

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
		Unstandardized Residual
N		96
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	.0000000
	Std. Deviation	6.86075261
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.083
	Positive	.046
	Negative	-.083

Test Statistic	.083
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.096 ^c
a. Test distribution is Normal.	
b. Calculated from data.	
c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.	

Based on the results of the data normality test table with an Asymp. Sig. value of 0.096, which is greater than 0.05, it can be concluded that the data of both variables follow a normal distribution according to the decision-making guidelines of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test.

Table 4. Result of Linearity Test

ANOVA Table							
			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
KEPEKA AN.S * IKM	Between Groups	(Combined)	3516.199	24	146.508	3.211	.000
		Linearity	2283.982	1	2283.982	50.059	.000
		Deviation from Linearity	1232.217	23	53.575	1.174	.296
	Within Groups		3239.426	71	45.626		
	Total		6755.625	95			

Based on the results of the linearity test above, it is known that the deviation from linearity coefficient is 0.296 or > 0.05 . Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a linear relationship between the independent variable (X) and the dependent variable (Y).

After conducting the classical assumption test, the next step is the hypothesis test. The hypothesis test in this study uses simple linear regression. The results are presented in the following table.

Table 5. Result Of ANOVA Simple Linear Regression

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2283.982	1	2283.982	48.012	.000 ^b
	Residual	4471.643	94	47.571		
	Total	6755.625	95			
a. Dependent Variable: KEPEKAAN.S						
b. Predictors: (Constant), IKM						

Based on the results of the ANOVA test above, the significance value obtained is $0.000 < 0.05$. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is an effect between variable X (Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum) and variable Y (Social Sensitivity).

Table 6. Model Summary of Simple Linear Regression

Model Summary ^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.581 ^a	.338	.331	6.897
a. Predictors: (Constant), IKM				
b. Dependent Variable: KEPEKAAN.S				

From the model summary table above, it is explained that the correlation value (R) is 0.338. This means that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum (X) has an influence of 0.338 (33.8%) on students' social sensitivity (Y).

Table 7. The coefficient of simple linear regression

Coefficients ^a					
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	
1	(Constant)	21.246	10.316		.042
	IKM	.771	.111	.581	.000
a. Dependent Variable: KEPEKAAN.S					

From the ANOVA table above, the calculated F value (Fhitung) is 48.012 with a significance level of $0.000 < 0.05$. Furthermore, from the coefficients table, the constant value (a) is 21.246, while the b value is 0.771. Therefore, the hypothesis testing formula can be derived as follows.

Formula: $Y = a + bX$

$Y = 21,246 + 0,771X$

With the discovery of this formula, it can be concluded that there is a significant influence between the implementation of the Independent Curriculum and students' social sensitivity. Therefore, H_1 is accepted and H_0 is rejected.

The influence of the implementation of the independent curriculum on students' social sensitivity in social studies subjects at SMP Negeri 1 Pamekasan

In the era of modern education, learning is not only focused on the transfer of knowledge but also on shaping students' character and social sensitivity. The Independent Curriculum emerges as a breakthrough that provides greater freedom for teachers and students in the learning process, with the hope of creating a more inclusive, reflective, and contextual learning environment. In Social Studies (IPS) subjects, social sensitivity is a crucial aspect that must be developed so that students can understand and respond to the social dynamics around them. At SMP Negeri 1 Pamekasan, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum presents both challenges and opportunities in shaping students'

social character. Therefore, this study aims to explore how this curriculum contributes to enhancing students' social sensitivity. The goal of the study is to examine or investigate in what ways the curriculum helps students become more socially sensitive. That is, the researchers want to understand how the content, structure, or activities within the curriculum lead students to be more aware of, empathetic toward, and responsive to the feelings, needs, and issues of others in society.

Curriculum is one of the key instruments in the educational process and constantly undergoes renewal in line with the developments occurring in society, where the main targets are students, the community, and the subjects to be taught. Therefore, curriculum renewal or development should be viewed as a necessary response to change so that the existing curriculum remains relevant to the needs of society. (Yunita, 2023).

Social sensitivity refers to an individual's ability to respond appropriately and promptly to certain social objects or conditions. Therefore, it is crucial to enhance students' social sensitivity both in and outside the learning process, as social sensitivity improves an individual's ability to make moral judgments, make decisions, and take appropriate actions based on sound reasoning. (Sodiq, 2021)

The factors influencing students' social sensitivity include family background, social experiences, student personality, economic conditions, health conditions, cultural influences, and environmental influences. Therefore, efforts to improve students' social sensitivity should consider these factors.

The influence of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum on students' social sensitivity is a highly important topic in the field of education. The Independent Curriculum is one of the educational innovations aimed at improving the quality of education in Indonesia. However, even though the Independent Curriculum has been implemented, further investigation is needed to assess its impact on students' social sensitivity.

After distributing questionnaires to 96 respondents with 54 statements, the researcher found that the questionnaire was developed based on indicators from variable X and variable Y. The data in this study were measured using a Likert scale questionnaire consisting of four options: strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD).

Based on the results of the simple linear regression test to examine the influence between the Independent Curriculum (X) and students' social sensitivity (Y), the findings

showed that the $t\text{-value} > t\text{-table}$ ($7.467 > 1.984$) with a significance value of 0.000, where $0.000 < 0.05$. Thus, there is a significant influence between the implementation of the Independent Curriculum and students' social sensitivity.

The Independent Curriculum teaches human values such as mutual cooperation and care for others. These values are rooted in Pancasila, which serves as the foundation for its formulation. By instilling these values through the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, students are expected to develop a high level of social sensitivity, as reflected in the second principle of Pancasila. This conclusion is supported by the findings of this study, which show a significant influence of the Independent Curriculum implementation on students' social sensitivity in the social studies subject at SMP Negeri 1 Pamekasan. Therefore, H_1 is accepted and H_0 is rejected.

Thus, the Independent Curriculum plays a crucial role in shaping the positive character and social abilities of students at SMP Negeri 1 Pamekasan. Enhancing students' social sensitivity through the Independent Curriculum will positively impact the formation of a more caring, tolerant, and empathetic generation.

A contemporary social issue resulting from the rapid development of science and technology is the lack of social sensitivity. Most people in this era tend to be more self-centered or individualistic. However, in principle, humans are social beings who cannot live without the help of others.

Social sensitivity includes behaviors such as sharing with others, helping, cooperating, being honest, being generous, and respecting the rights and well-being of others. These behaviors can strengthen relationships between individuals and foster mutual respect, trust, and understanding. According to Scott, social sensitivity enhances an individual's ability to engage in moral judgment, moral decision-making, and moral action, which can then be applied in everyday life.

Therefore, social sensitivity is essential to instill from an early age, as it can develop a sense of social care and shape individuals with a high level of social awareness. Social sensitivity begins with personal maturity, which enables individuals to align their behavior with the moral values present in society. A mature individual is more likely to improve their quality of life, both as an individual and as a social being. Consequently, individuals who understand and internalize the moral values in society are more likely to exhibit high social sensitivity toward the suffering of others and to demonstrate a high degree of social awareness. (Sodiq, 2021)

To enhance students' social sensitivity, collaboration between teachers, students, and the surrounding environment is essential. Practically, the findings of this study can serve as input for teachers and prospective teachers in improving the learning process, ensuring that it not only focuses on cognitive aspects but also emphasizes social attitudes and skills. This approach aims to shape students into individuals who are not only intellectually smart but also possess strong character and social awareness.

In its implementation, the Independent Curriculum fosters students' social sensitivity through various methods, such as project-based learning, problem-based learning, and community-based learning. These approaches enable students to engage directly with real-life social issues, develop empathy, and cultivate a sense of social responsibility. Therefore, the Independent Curriculum can help students develop a high level of social sensitivity and become more caring and responsible citizens

conclusion

The research findings show that the average score for the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at SMP Negeri 1 Pamekasan is 92.54, which falls into the high category as it approaches the maximum value of 106. Meanwhile, the average score for social sensitivity is 92.56, which also falls into the high category as it approaches the maximum value of 108.

The results of the hypothesis testing analysis indicate that there is a significant influence of the implementation of the Independent Curriculum on students' social sensitivity in the Social Studies subject at SMP Negeri 1 Pamekasan. This is evident from the results of the simple regression analysis, where the t-value of 6.929 is greater than the t-table value of 1.985. Therefore, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum has a significant influence on students' social sensitivity. This conclusion is reinforced by the significance level of 0.000, which is smaller than the significance threshold of 0.05. Thus, H1 is accepted, and H0 is rejected.

This study proves that the implementation of the Independent Curriculum in the Social Studies subject at SMP Negeri 1 Pamekasan has a significant influence on students' social sensitivity. The Independent Curriculum has been proven effective in increasing students' awareness of social and cultural diversity, fostering empathy and tolerance, and shaping students' character to be more responsive and caring toward their environment.

Suggestion

Based on the conclusions presented above, the researcher provides the following suggestions to gain benefits for future research. The suggestions from the researcher are as follows:

1. The researcher suggests that IAIN Madura, in general, and the library, in particular, add more literature on both the Merdeka Curriculum and social sensitivity. Furthermore, the researcher recommends that future researchers expand the scope of their research.
2. The results of this study can serve as a reference for students, teachers, and lecturers to develop research within the same context.

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