



## **Comparison of the Merdeka PAUD Indonesia Curriculum with the Malaysian National Preschool Standard Curriculum (KSPK)**

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### **Abstract**

**Keywords:**  
Comparison;  
KSPK;  
Independent  
Curriculum;

Artikel ini membahas tentang perbandingan Kurikulum Merdeka PAUD di Indonesia dengan Kurikulum Standar Nasional PAUD (KSPK) di Malaysia. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan tujuan untuk mengidentifikasi persamaan dan perbedaan kedua kurikulum dalam konteks perkembangan anak usia dini. Analisis dokumen dan studi literatur menunjukkan bahwa Kurikulum KSPK dan PAUD Merdeka memiliki kesamaan dalam fokusnya pada perkembangan anak secara holistik dan penggunaan pendekatan pembelajaran yang menyenangkan. Namun, terdapat perbedaan dalam fokus konten dan pendekatan pembelajaran. KSPK lebih menekankan pada pembelajaran berbasis bermain, sedangkan Kurikulum PAUD Merdeka fokus pada pengembangan nilai dan karakter keagamaan serta literasi dasar dan STEAM. Artikel ini memberikan implikasi bagi para praktisi pendidikan di Indonesia dan Malaysia dalam memahami dan menerapkan kedua kurikulum tersebut secara efektif, serta memberikan rekomendasi untuk pengembangan kurikulum yang lebih optimal di masa mendatang.

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### **Abstrak**

**Kata Kunci:**  
Perbandingan;  
KSPK;

*This article discusses the comparison between the Merdeka PAUD Curriculum in Indonesia and the National Preschool Standard Curriculum (KSPK) in Malaysia. This research uses descriptive qualitative methods with the aim of identifying*

*Kurikulum  
Merdeka;*

*similarities and differences between the two curricula in the context of early childhood development. Document analysis and literature studies show that the KSPK and Merdeka PAUD Curriculum have similarities in their focus on children's holistic development and the use of a fun learning approach. However, there are differences in content focus and learning approaches. KSPK places more emphasis on play-based learning, while the Merdeka PAUD Curriculum focuses on developing religious values and character as well as basic literacy and STEAM. This article provides implications for educational practitioners in Indonesia and Malaysia in understanding and implementing both curricula effectively, as well as providing recommendations for more optimal curriculum development in the future.*

Received : 13 Oktober 2024 ; Revised: 26 Desember 2024 Accepted: 4 Januari 2025

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<http://doi.org/10.19105/17214>



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## 1. Introduction

The Merdeka PAUD curriculum is based on the philosophy of humanism and constructivism. Humanism in the Merdeka PAUD Curriculum emphasizes the importance of holistic child development, including physical, cognitive, social, emotional and spiritual aspects. Constructivism in the Merdeka PAUD Curriculum emphasizes that children actively construct their own knowledge through experience. This curriculum encourages child-centered learning, where children are involved in the learning process and find meaning through interactions with the environment and people around them. The Merdeka PAUD curriculum is designed to provide teachers with freedom in selecting and developing learning materials that suit children's needs and interests (Agustina & Zaim, 2023).

The National Education System Law of 2003 states that the curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements regarding objectives, content and learning materials as well as methods used as guidelines for implementing learning activities to achieve certain educational goals. The curriculum is the main idea or soul of the educational process. Of course, whether we like it or not, whether we like it or not, every educational institution, including Early Childhood Education, must follow this change (Retnaningsih & Khairiya, 2022).

The Independent PAUD Curriculum was first launched in 2021, as part of the Independent Learning program initiated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Kemendikbudristek). This curriculum is designed to provide flexibility for PAUD education units in developing learning programs that suit the needs and characteristics of children in their respective regions. The Merdeka PAUD curriculum aims to improve the quality of early childhood education, encourage children to learn and develop optimally, and create a fun and independent learning environment (Irchamni, 2022).

The Independent PAUD Curriculum is the government's effort to improve the quality of early childhood education and prepare them to face a future full of challenges. With government support and commitment from all parties, it is hoped that the Merdeka Curriculum can help Indonesian children grow and develop into a generation that is intelligent, creative and has noble character. For this reason, the Ministry of Education and Culture has developed an independent curriculum as an important part of efforts to restore learning from the crisis that has long been experienced (Daulay & Fauziddin, 2023).

Based on the explanation above, related to the independent curriculum in Early Childhood Education, teachers have the freedom to choose learning tools in the learning process so that learning can be adjusted to the learning needs and interests of students. Independent learning is a form of learning process that is managed by students independently. Freedom to learn means involving students in determining goals, methods, and reflecting on the learning process and results (Salsabilla et al., 2023).

Another opinion also emphasized that it is hoped that this independent curriculum can support children's interests and abilities so that their development is optimal and enjoyable. This new approach, the government gives teachers, students and schools the freedom to learn independently and creatively, as well as the freedom to innovate (Rizka & Pamungkas, 2023).

This research was conducted in two different schools, the first at the Al-Azhar Pagendingan Kindergarten, Pamekasan, East Java, Indonesia and the second at the Kebangsaan Tanjong Sepat Preschool, Banting, Kuala Langat, Selangor, Malaysia. This curriculum comparison is quite interesting to study. The difference between the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia and the National Preschool Standard Curriculum in Malaysia. In Indonesia, this curriculum was officially launched by the Minister of Education and Culture, Nadim Makarim, in February 2022. At that time, the Merdeka Curriculum was launched to catch up with education during the Covid-19 pandemic. And according to the explanation from the Al-Azhar Kindergarten principal, the school has been using the Independent Curriculum since the second semester of 2022 until now.

The KSPK was revised in 2016 and implemented in 2017 to meet new policies based on the Malaysian Education Development Plan (PPPM) 2013-2025 and current requirements. Changes to the Curriculum Document to include Assessment Standards, in addition to Learning Standards (DSKP KSPK). The curriculum document combines six pillars, namely communication pillars, spirituality, attitudes and values, humanity, physical and aesthetic development, science and technology, and personal skills. Prioritize knowledge, skills and values, and explicitly incorporate 21st century skills including higher order thinking skills (Osma Syafie; Fauziah; Sarimah, 2019).

These six pillars were formed to realize the National Education Philosophy, namely comprehensive education which includes aspects of JERIS (physical, emotional, spiritual, intellectual and social). Preschool education emphasizes overall intellectual and emotional or social

development. Even though literacy and numeracy education is not clearly stated, competitiveness implemented through playing activities in groups or pairs is believed to be the basis for children's emotional stability in preschool. All children's learning centers, whether managed by the Ministry of Education or those managed by private parties, must follow the syllabus that has been determined and provided by the Ministry of Education Malaysia (Abdullah, 2018).

The effectiveness of implementing the educational curriculum depends on the understanding and competence of the teachers who implement it in schools. In Malaysia, along with the changes occurring in the global education system, the Preschool National Standard Curriculum is also undergoing change after change (Nazri & Baizura, 2018).

In 2010 there was a significant change in the duration of English language teaching in the Preschool National Standard Curriculum (KSPK), namely the implementation of English language teaching for 600 minutes per week. The Malaysian Ministry of Education has implemented the Malaysian Language Improvement and English Language Strengthening program to replace Science and Mathematics Learning in English (PPSMI). Strengthening English is carried out with full awareness that English is a communication language that needs to be mastered by the younger generation in order to prepare themselves to compete at national and global levels (Aziz, 2018).

Curriculum comparison is very important because it can help us to understand the differences and similarities from various sources which can enable us to see how learning approaches, material content, and educational objectives are different or similar, can identify weaknesses and strengths, context and needs, curriculum development, evaluation and improvements in the curriculum. Overall, curriculum comparison is an important tool for improving the quality of education (Yesami & Maju, 2023).

Comparing the Merdeka Indonesia Curriculum with the Malaysian National Preschool Standard Curriculum (KSPK) offers opportunities for innovative research, as both are designed for the early stages of education but with potentially different approaches. Research news can emerge from several points of view:

- a. Comparison of Holistic Development Focus. Wisdom: Both curricula emphasize the holistic development of the child, but may have different emphases on certain aspects (cognitive, affective, psychomotor, social-emotional). Kabaruan: Research can use a comprehensive child development framework to quantitatively and qualitatively compare how the two curricula target and measure holistic development. This could involve case studies in schools that implement both curricula, observing learning activities, and analyzing the results of child development assessments. The news lies in the use of valid and reliable measurement instruments to compare holistic development, not just focusing on cognitive aspects. Analisis Perbedaan Pendekatan Pembelajaran. Kearifan:

Kurikulum Merdeka menekankan pembelajaran yang berpusat pada anak dan fleksibel. KSPK mungkin memiliki pendekatan yang lebih terstruktur. Kabaruan: Penelitian dapat membandingkan pendekatan pembelajaran yang digunakan dalam praktik di kelas, menganalisis bagaimana kedua kurikulum mendukung pembelajaran aktif, bermain, dan eksplorasi. Penggunaan metode etnografi untuk mengamati kelas dan wawancara mendalam dengan guru dan orang tua dapat memberikan wawasan yang mendalam dan menghasilkan temuan yang baru.

- b. Comparative Studies of Children's Readiness for Further Education. Wisdom: The main goal of preschool education is to prepare children for further education. Kabaruan: Research can track the development of children who have followed both curricula for several years, assessing their readiness for basic education (Primary/Low School). This can involve collecting data from a variety of sources, including academic grades, school readiness test results, and teacher reports. The news lies in the longitudinal analysis which shows the long-term impact of both curricula on children's readiness for further education.
- c. Comparison of the Roles of Teachers and Parents. Wisdom: The two curricula may have different roles for teachers and parents in supporting children's development. News: Research can compare teachers' and parents' perceptions of their role in children's learning, their level of involvement, and the support they receive from schools and government. The use of questionnaires and interviews can provide comprehensive data and produce new findings about the role of teachers and parents in the context of both curricula.
- d. Analysis of Implementation and Challenges in the Field. Wisdom: Curriculum implementation always faces challenges. Kabaruan: Research can compare the challenges of implementing the two curricula, including teacher readiness, resource availability, and policy support. Comparative case studies in schools implementing both curricula can reveal contextual factors that influence successful implementation and produce new and specific findings.

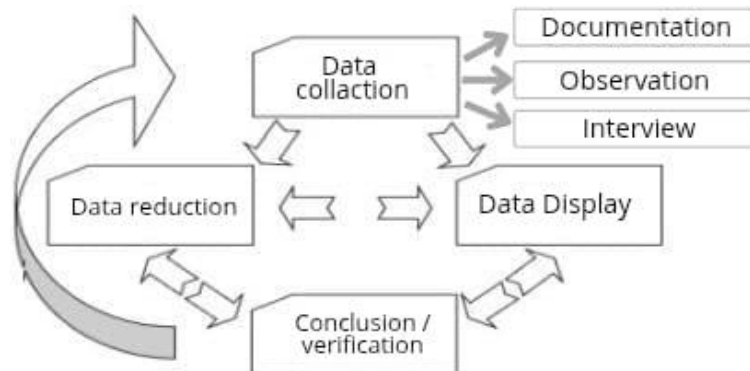
To ensure novelty, research must have a specific and measurable focus, using robust and appropriate methodology. May involve quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods. Conduct in-depth data analysis, demonstrating a deep understanding of existing research. (Pasien & Studi, 2024)

By choosing one of the focuses above and developing it with an appropriate methodology, this research can make a significant contribution to the understanding of preschool education and provide useful recommendations for curriculum development in Indonesia and Malaysia. It is important to clearly define success criteria and success indicators for each curriculum in research.

Based on the background explanation above, the author feels interested in conducting research regarding the comparison of the Indonesian independent curriculum with the Malaysian KSPK. The novelty of the research comparing the Indonesian independent curriculum with the Malaysian KSPK at Al-Azhar Kindergarten and SK Tanjung Sepat Preschool is the focus on the comparison of each CP. Curriculum differences are an inevitability that teachers must face. Apart from that, the curriculum also has the most important position in the world of education because the curriculum really determines the process of implementing education, especially the results that must be achieved in the learning process.

## 2. Methods

In this research, researchers used qualitative descriptive methods. This research was carried out at Al-Azhar Kindergarten in Indonesia and at SK Tanjung Sepat Preschool in Malaysia. This research was carried out in 2023-2024 with school principals and homeroom teachers as informants. Qualitative research is a research process to understand human or social phenomena by creating a comprehensive and complex picture that can be presented in words, reporting detailed views obtained from informant sources, and carried out in a natural setting. (Fadli, 2021).



Picture. 1 Research Flow (2023)

This stage involves collecting information from various sources, such as 1.) Documentation: Collecting data in the form of written documents, such as reports, notes, books, articles, and so on. 2.) Observation: Direct observation of phenomena or events that are the object of research. 3.) Interview: Collecting data through direct conversations with informants or respondents. (Ardiansyah et al., 2023). Then the next step is data reduction. The raw data that has been collected is then reduced or simplified. This process includes selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and transforming raw data into data that is more structured and easy to understand. The third step displays data or displays data. The reduced data is then presented in a form that is easy to understand, such as tables, graphs or narratives. The presentation of this data aims to facilitate interpretation and analysis. Then after the data is presented, the researcher draws conclusions

based on the findings and data that have been analyzed. These conclusions are then validated to ensure their accuracy and validity. The research flow is iterative, meaning that the process of data reduction and data display can be carried out repeatedly until the researcher reaches valid and reliable conclusions. The connected arrows indicate the interactions and feedback between the stages.

### **3. Result and Discussion**

Research on the use of the Merdeka PAUD Curriculum which includes Learning Achievements (CP) in Indonesia chose Al-Azhar Kindergarten which is located in Pagendingan, Pamekasan district because this school is a driving school and has the potential to make a significant contribution to the development of early childhood education in Indonesia. This research can reveal effective strategies in integrating the Independent Curriculum with Islamic values, as well as its impact on student development. The Merdeka PAUD curriculum is based on constructivism theory, namely that children build their own knowledge through interaction with the environment. And child development theory which emphasizes the active role of children in learning and adapting learning based on the child's stage of development (Susanti & Mulyaniapi, 2023).

This research was also conducted at SK Tanjung Sepat Malaysia located at SK Tanjung Sepat Preschool, Kuala Langat, Selangor Malaysia. Research on the use of Malaysian KSPK was conducted at the Tanjung Sepat preschool because this school implemented KSPK in an innovative way and had a population of students with diverse backgrounds.

Because the Merdeka Curriculum is the latest educational reform in Indonesia as well as the Malaysian KSPK. A comparison of these two curricula is very relevant because it provides insight into educational trends in both countries and how they approach early childhood development.

#### **Merdeka PAUD Curriculum at Al-Azhar Kindergarten Pagendingan Pamekasan East Java Indonesia**

The Merdeka PAUD curriculum has 3 main components, namely intra-activities, extra-activities and P5 (Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project). Intra activities are learning activities carried out within the PAUD unit, such as in the classroom or school environment. Meanwhile, extra activities are learning carried out outside the PAUD unit which is carried out according to the theme in the teaching module, such as tourist visits, social service activities, or arts training. P5 is designed to help children develop the character and competencies needed in the future.

Achieving learning outcomes that are in accordance with the objectives of the Merdeka PAUD Curriculum, there are Learning Outcomes (CP) that are integrated in intra-activity. CP in the Merdeka PAUD Curriculum is a learning target that children want to achieve at each stage of their development. This CP is comprehensive, covering all aspects of child development, from physical, motoric, cognitive, language, social-emotional, to artistic. Intra-activity at PAUD is designed

so that children can achieve the abilities stated in the Learning Outcomes (Daulay & Fauziddin, 2023).

This research was conducted at Al-Azhar Kindergarten in Pagendingan, Pamekasan district. Al-Azhar Kindergarten, as an Islamic educational institution, integrates religious values and character in its curriculum. This teaching aims to shape the character of children who have noble character, faith and knowledge. The following is an explanation of the religious values and morals applied at Al-Azhar Kindergarten.

**Elements of Religious Values and Character:** Cultivate a sense of gratitude, instill a sense of love and respect, build an attitude of tolerance and cooperation, develop an honest and responsible attitude, instill a sense of caring and empathy.

**Religious Values:** Islamic teachings at Al-Azhar Kindergarten teach the basics of Islamic teachings in accordance with the school of thought adhered to. This includes an understanding of Allah SWT, Prophet Muhammad SAW, the pillars of faith, the pillars of Islam, and moral values in the Al-Quran and Hadith. **Worship:** Children are taught to recognize and carry out worship according to their abilities, such as praying, reading the Koran, and praying. Students are also taught about the importance of worship as a form of devotion to Allah SWT. **Islamic Stories:** Al-Azhar Kindergarten uses Islamic stories to teach moral and spiritual values to children. These stories contain messages about honesty, compassion, courage and responsibility.

**Characteristics:** 1) **Ethics and Manners:** Children are taught about ethics and manners in interacting with other people, such as how to greet, respecting elders, and being kind to friends. 2) **Noble Values:** Al-Azhar Kindergarten instills noble values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, hard work and mutual cooperation. These values are integrated in various activities, such as playing, learning and worship. 3) **Commendable Behavior:** Children are taught to demonstrate commendable behavior such as helping others, being friendly, and maintaining cleanliness. They are also taught to avoid bad behavior such as lying, cheating, and hurting others (Safitri & Darsinah, 2023).

**CP sub-elements of religious values and character:** 1) Demonstrate an attitude of respect and obedience towards Almighty God. 2) Show respect and obedience to parents, teachers and elders. 3) Demonstrate tolerance and respect for differences. 4) Demonstrate an honest and responsible attitude. 5) Show a caring and empathetic attitude.

**Learning Methods:** 1) **Play:** Al-Azhar Kindergarten uses the play method as the main learning medium. Educational and Islamic games help children learn in a fun way and easily understand religious values and character. 2) **Stories and Fairy Tales:** Islamic stories and tales are used to teach moral and spiritual values to children. These stories contain messages about kindness, honesty and compassion. 3) **Songs and Chants:** Islamic songs and chants are used to help children memorize prayers, short surahs, and moral values. Songs and singing can also increase children's intelligence and creativity.



Al-Azhar Kindergarten is an educational institution that is committed to forming a young generation with noble character, faith and knowledge. It is hoped that the application of religious values and character in the Al-Azhar Kindergarten curriculum can help children grow into individuals with noble character and benefits to society.



**Picture. 2 Students are reciting the Koran (2024)**

Next are the Achievements of Self-Identity Learning in the Merdeka PAUD Curriculum. The Merdeka PAUD curriculum emphasizes holistic development of children, including aspects of identity. Learning Outcomes (CP) in the aspect of identity aims to help children understand themselves, develop independence and strengthen self-confidence.

Elements of Identity: 1) Knowing Your Identity 2) Developing Physical Independence 3) Building Emotional and Social Independence 4) Developing Movement Function. Sub Elements of Self-Identity: 1) Able to state their own name, age, gender and physical characteristics 2) Able to recognize family members and the environment where they live 3) Able to carry out daily activities independently 4) Able to manage emotions well 5) Able to interact with other people positively 6) Able to adapt to new environments 7) Able to use gross and fine motor movements (Budiman et al., 2023).

Identity in the Merdeka PAUD Curriculum is not only about knowing yourself, but also about developing children's potential and abilities to become confident, independent and responsible individuals.

Basic Stage learning outcomes help teachers encourage young children to develop physical motor skills (Erifkha & Zulfahmi, 2024). The development of identity at Al-Azhar Kindergarten is carried out through various activities which also include aspects of social emotional and physical motor development, such as: Role playing: Children learn to understand roles and responsibilities in everyday life. Singing and dancing: Children express themselves and build self-confidence. Storytelling: Children develop communication and imagination skills. Painting and drawing: Children express their creativity and ideas. Interacting with friends: Children learn to collaborate, share and appreciate differences.

The main aim of developing identity in the Merdeka PAUD Curriculum is to help children grow into individuals with noble morals, noble character and positive character. Explained Ustadzah Fadilatul Karimah, class A1 teacher.



**Figure. 3 Munaqosyah Tartil activities (2024)**

Literacy and STEAM (*Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics*) for Early Childhood Development plays a very important role in early childhood development, especially in the areas of cognition, language, art and creativity. Literacy and STEAM are holistic approaches that help young children develop optimally in various aspects. Implementing this through fun and challenging activities can help children reach their full potential.

Literacy: 1) Cognitive: Literacy helps children develop critical thinking skills, solve problems, and understand information. 2) Language: Through literacy, children learn spoken and written language, build vocabulary, and develop communication skills. 3) Arts: Literacy can inspire children's creativity through stories, poetry and various media. 4) Creativity: Literacy encourages children to think creatively, develop imagination, and express ideas.

STEAM: 1) Cognitive: STEAM helps children develop the ability to think logically, solve problems and think systematically. 2) Language: STEAM encourages children to communicate ideas and exploration results, improving verbal and nonverbal abilities. 3) Arts: STEAM integrates arts into the learning process, encouraging children's creativity and imagination in exploring STEM concepts. 4) Creativity: STEAM encourages children to innovate, find creative solutions, and develop new ideas (Motimona & Maryatun, 2023).

Application of Literacy and STEAM in Al-Azhar Kindergarten: 1) Reading stories: Reading stories can develop children's cognitive, language and imagination. 2) Painting: Painting can improve creativity, self-expression and fine motor skills. 3) Simple experiments: Simple experiments like mixing colors or planting seeds help children understand science concepts and develop logical thinking skills. 4) Building a tower: Building a tower using blocks helps children develop gross motor skills, spatial abilities, and problem-solving abilities. 5) Role play as a scientist: Children can role play as a scientist and carry out simple experiments, such as mixing water and soap. 6) Make handicrafts: Children can make handicrafts from natural materials and then write stories about these handicrafts. 7) Watching educational videos: Children can watch educational videos about nature and then write down what they learn.



**Picture. 4 students are watching together (2024)**

This research can make a significant contribution to the development of the Independent PAUD Curriculum in Indonesia. This research examines the effectiveness of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum on developing student competencies, with a focus on cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects. It is hoped that the results of this research can provide useful recommendations for the development of the Independent PAUD Curriculum, the development of teacher professionalism, and the development of education policy in Indonesia.

#### **National Preschool Standard Curriculum at SK Tanjung Sepat Preschool Selangor Malaysia**

The National Preschool Standard Curriculum (KSPK) in Malaysia includes several types of activities and programs that aim to provide preschool children with a comprehensive learning experience contained in 3 program aspects, namely intra-activities, extra-activities, and transition programs.

The following is an explanation of intra activities, extra activities and transition programs/transition programs in the context of the KSPK: 1) Intra Activities. Intra activities refer to learning activities carried out in the classroom and based on the established curriculum. Intra activities are the main activities in the teaching and learning process at school which have been determined in the teaching materials. 2) Extra Activities. Based on the general understanding of education and curriculum, "extra activities" in the context of KSPK refer to activities outside the classroom that support students' learning and character development. Extra activities refer to activities carried out outside class time and aim to develop children's potential, talents, interests and skills outside the formal curriculum. 3) Transition Program or Transition Program. Transition programs refer to programs designed to help preschool children adapt to the elementary school environment. This usually occurs before or at the beginning of the first year of elementary school.

KSPK Malaysia contains the Standard Curriculum and Assessment Document (DSKP), which is an important document in the Malaysian education system that integrates curriculum and assessment. DSKP functions as a guide for teachers in designing, implementing and assessing the learning process. DSKP is a document that integrates curriculum and assessment, which means that this document not only

discusses subject matter, but also how the material is taught and how student achievement is measured.

Learning Outcomes in Malaysia are referred to as Curriculum Assessment. Curriculum assessment in KSPK Malaysia includes the cognitive domain, affective domain and psychomotor domain, which contain developmental aspects in each of these domains (Mohd Azahar Madar & Mohd Syaubari Othman, 2022).

The cognitive domain in KSPK Malaysia focuses on developing the ability to think, understand and process information. This context, the cognitive domain includes three main aspects: language, mathematics, and science. 1) Language: Children are taught to understand and use Malay both verbally and in writing. Children are also introduced to English through fun games and activities. Preschools that offer it will also introduce Mandarin and Tamil. Through language learning, children develop the ability to communicate, understand meaning, and express themselves. 2) Mathematics: Children are taught to recognize numbers, count, and solve simple mathematical problems. Children also learn to understand basic mathematical concepts such as shapes, sizes, and patterns. Learning mathematics helps children develop the ability to think logically, solve problems and think systematically. 3) Science: Children are taught to observe and explore the surrounding environment. They learn to understand basic scientific concepts such as life cycles, weather, and changes in objects. Science learning encourages children to think critically, find out, and develop curiosity about the world around them (Norhaizian Seman et al., 2022).

The cognitive domain in KSPK Malaysia is designed to help young children develop the ability to think, understand and process information in various fields such as language, mathematics and science. Fun and interactive learning helps children reach their full potential and be ready to enter formal education. Clearly brief according to Cikgu Azmi as a class teacher at PraNilam.



**Picture. 5 Students are singing (2023)**

The affective domain in KSPK Malaysia focuses on developing emotional, social and moral aspects of early childhood. This domain includes three main aspects: self-development, social emotional, and religious and moral education.

Personal Development: Children are taught to build self-confidence, independence, and social skills. Children are also

encouraged to show a positive and responsible attitude. This learning helps children understand themselves, appreciate children's potential, and develop positive attitudes towards themselves and the environment around them.

**Social Emotional:** Children learn to interact with others positively, control emotions, and resolve conflicts peacefully. They are also taught to understand other people's feelings and develop empathy. Social emotional learning helps children build healthy relationships, adapt to social environments, and become responsible members of society.

**Religious and Moral Education:** Children are introduced to religious and moral values appropriate to their background. They are taught to understand and practice these values in everyday life. This learning helps children develop good character, build strong morals, and become individuals with noble character (Mardziah bt Abdullah, 2019).

Fun and interactive learning helps children build self-confidence, social skills and good character, so they are ready to become positive and responsible members of society.



**Picture. 6 Disciples are praying together before eating (2023)**

The psychomotor domain in KSPK Malaysia focuses on developing physical abilities and motor skills in early childhood. This domain includes two main aspects: physical development and art.

**Physical Development:** Children are taught to develop gross and fine motor skills. They are encouraged to participate in physical activities such as running, jumping, climbing, and playing ball. This learning helps children improve coordination, balance and muscle strength, as well as develop the ability to control the child's body movements.

**Arts:** Children are taught to express themselves through various forms of art such as painting, singing, dancing and drama. Children are also introduced to various types of art and culture. Art learning helps children develop creativity, imagination, and the ability to communicate through various media (Abd Mutalib & Kanreng, 2017).

The psychomotor domain helps young children develop physical abilities and motor skills. Fun and interactive learning helps children improve coordination, balance, muscle strength and creativity, so that children are ready to face the physical and creative challenges of the future.





Picture. 7 Display of student work (2023)

### Comparison of the Independent PAUD Curriculum at RA Ummul Mikminin Pamekasan Indonesia with KSPK at SK Tanjung Sepat Preschool Selangor Malaysia

The Independent PAUD Curriculum is an educational innovation introduced by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia. There are five main parts of the Merdeka PAUD Curriculum, namely:

**Table 1. Comparison of key points in Merdeka Curriculum with Malaysia's KSPK**

CP Scope	Independent Curriculum	Nationality Preschool Standard Curriculum
Intra-activity	<p>Internal activities in the Merdeka ECD Curriculum are learning activities carried out in the classroom or school environment, with a focus on developing children's competencies holistically.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Creating a Fun Learning Environment</li> <li>- Facilitating Social Interaction</li> <li>- Encouraging Independence</li> </ul> <p>Intra-activities are an important part of the Merdeka ECD Curriculum that helps children develop basic abilities, improve skills, and foster self-confidence (Jayawardana et al., 2022).</p>	<p>Internal activities in implementing Malaysia's KSPK are an ongoing process to improve the quality of early childhood education. Via :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Curriculum development</li> <li>- Educator training</li> <li>- Monitoring and evaluation</li> <li>- Collaboration with parents</li> <li>- Research</li> </ul> <p>KSPK is expected to help children in Malaysia grow and develop optimally.</p>
External Activities	<p>Activities carried out outside the school environment in accordance with the theme of the teaching module, such as :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Visits:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Visits to tourist attractions and agency visits.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Cooperation:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cooperation with communities and</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Field trips:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- visits to zoos, museums and visits to traditional markets.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Community activities:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Participate in community activities, join clubs or organisations.</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Nature activities:</li> </ul>

	cooperation with institutions. - Programmes: - Meaningful experience programme and out-of-class programme.	- Camping, nature walks and playing in the park.
Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) And Transition Programme or Transitional Programme	Project on Strengthening the Profile of Pancasila Students (P5): Building the Pancasila Student Profile: Believing and Fearing God Almighty - Honourable - Global Diversity - Independent - Gotong royong - Creative - Facilitate child development Enhancing 21st Century skills (Afipah & Imamah, 2023).	Transition Programme: - Preparing children to enter formal education - Builds character and positive values Enhances physical, cognitive and social emotional development (Education Planning and Research Division, 2017).

#### 4. Conclusion

Merdeka curriculum learning outcomes focus on child development, meaningful and enjoyable learning, the role of ECD as a foundation. Malaysia's KSPK learning outcomes focus on holistic development, play-based learning, skills development. The similarities are that KSPK and Merdeka Curriculum have similarities in focusing on children's holistic development and using a fun learning approach. The difference is that KSPK emphasises more on play-based learning, while the Merdeka Curriculum focuses on the development of religious values and character as well as basic literacy and STEAM. Improving the quality of teachers is essential in running an effective curriculum. Continuous training and mentoring are needed to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to implement the curriculum well.

This research explains how the curriculum can be implemented effectively in various contexts and conditions. Ongoing training and mentoring are needed to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to implement the curriculum well. Evaluation can be done through data collection and feedback from teachers, parents and children. It is hoped that these recommendations will help in improving the quality of Merdeka Curriculum for ECD and KSPK Malaysia, so as to produce quality young people who are ready to face future challenges.

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