

## **Analysis of Habituation in Implementing the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum in Art Education in Schools**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in art education presents its own challenges. Therefore, good habituation from teachers, schools, and students is needed, as well as preparedness and awareness in understanding and interpreting the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum in a student-focused learning process. The aim of this research is to raise teachers' awareness of the importance of understanding and implementing the Merdeka Curriculum with differentiated learning to support the development of students' character. A qualitative method was used with interviews, observations, and literature study documentation to collect data from leading schools, leading teachers, and learning committee supervisors. Data analysis was conducted to extract themes relevant to the habituation of implementing the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum in art education to improve active, independent, and creative learning, as well as improving the quality of human resources (HR) with facility infrastructure in schools. The research results are expected to contribute to optimizing the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum in schools for the development of innovative and creative art education teachers who liberate students, as well as improving students' abilities in the field of art to support the profile of Pancasila students.

**Keywords:** Habituation; Curriculum implementation; Merdeka Belajar; Art Education

### **INTRODUCTION**

Merdeka Belajar is a program initiated by the Indonesian government through the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology under the leadership of Nadiem Makarim, aimed at improving the management of education in schools. The program provides more flexible opportunities for schools and local governments to plan, implement, and evaluate educational programs while adhering to the principles of the Merdeka Belajar policy set by the central government as an effort to achieve national education goals. The main goal of the Merdeka Belajar policy is to improve the quality of human resources in Indonesia, making them more competitive globally. This can be achieved through school leaders, teachers, and students who have noble characters and high-level literacy and numeracy skills.

According to the Minister of Education and Culture, the strength of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum lies in its essential focus on sustained material for the gradual development of students' competencies or capacities according to their levels. This makes the learning process deeper, meaningful, not rushed, and enjoyable. The role of the teacher is to teach according to the level of learning achievement and the development of students. Meanwhile, the role of the school is to develop and manage the curriculum and the teaching-learning process based on the characteristics of the educational unit and the students.

Moreover, the Merdeka Belajar curriculum is more relevant and interactive, with learning through projects that provide more opportunities for students to actively explore current issues such as environmental and health issues, among others, as a way to develop character and the capabilities of the Pancasila student profile.

Pancasila is the philosophical foundation of the Indonesian nation. It is also the name of the five principles formulated by Sukarno during the founding of Indonesia. Essentially, Pancasila means "five elements" in Sanskrit. The five principles of Pancasila are humanity, unity, justice, democracy, and solidarity. Schools are one of the places where the goals of Pancasila can be disseminated. Students who participate in the Pancasila Student Profile program will understand the core of Pancasila and be able to apply it in their daily lives. There are six elements in the Pancasila Student Profile, namely: noble character, global diversity, independence, mutual cooperation, critical and creative thinking. These six elements are seen as a unity that supports and sustains one another (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2021). As a way of strengthening the vision and mission of the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Pancasila Student Profile is a manifestation of Indonesian students as lifelong learners with global competence and behavior that aligns with Pancasila values (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2021).

The subject of Art and Culture is developed to support the learning process of students and the achievement of the Pancasila Student Profile. This is in line with the characteristics of art science as determined in learning achievement based on the 2022 Head of BSKAP Decision, which states that art is a response, expression, and appreciation of various life phenomena, both internal (self) and external (culture, history, nature, environment), through performing arts media (dance, music, and drama/theater), as well as visual arts (form). Art is universal, thus able to transcend differences and express things that cannot be expressed by language. Art invites humans to experience, feel, and express beauty. Through art education, humans are invited to think and create artistically in advancing humans, creativity, aesthetic appreciation, global diversity, and psychological well-being, thus having an impact on sustainable life and learning (Pratama, 2020). Therefore, art learning can be carried out through learning with art, learning about art, and learning through art (Widaningsih, 2016).

Takalar Regency is one of the regions in South Sulawesi that is currently implementing the Merdeka Belajar curriculum. The local government believes that the Merdeka Belajar curriculum has been implemented since the 2022/2023 academic year. The Takalar Regency government places great importance on the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum as part of student potential development and providing students with a more dominant learning model. The Takalar Regent stated that the current era requires us to be ready to compete and must have the competence to equip ourselves. Furthermore, it was stated that for success, the success returns to each individual, and it is essential to have life skills and characters that are in line with the goals of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum. The Head of the Education and Culture Office reminded educators to become education warriors who are ready to work and make history.

Merdeka Belajar is an innovation in the field of education that gives schools, educators, and students the freedom to manage their learning activities. According to the Minister of Education and Culture of Indonesia, Nadiem Makarim, "merdeka belajar" is the freedom to think, and educators must understand and realize the meaning of the Merdeka

Belajar curriculum in the learning process at school. The implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum does not only involve educators but also all components that support the success of the Merdeka Belajar program, such as the habituation of educators in managing the learning process that is in line with the needs and interests of students. The Merdeka Belajar curriculum will be used at all levels of education starting from primary school, junior high school, and senior high school/vocational school.

In conclusion, the Merdeka Belajar curriculum is intended to provide freedom for schools, educators, and students in managing the learning process. However, to achieve the desired goals of this program, all parties must be able to habituate to their respective roles and always innovate. Educators play a crucial role in managing the learning process that can make them happy and make students happy. Therefore, there are no longer conventional terms, interventions, limitations, and restrictions in the implementation process of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum.

## **METHOD**

This research aims to evaluate the understanding of Junior High School (SMP) teachers in Kabupaten Takalar about habituation in the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum. The method used in this research is qualitative, using observation, direct interviews, and the collection of literature and documents. The researcher collected data from six driving schools, driving teachers, and cultural arts teachers in the field of dance that the researcher interviewed, as well as key informants from SMP supervisors and expert team facilitators of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum implementation committee. The researcher also conducted a literature review of several journal articles and policies to complement the research results on habituation in the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum. Therefore, this research aims to determine how habituation of SMP teachers in Kabupaten Takalar is in the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum and how the role of teachers in managing the learning process can make them and students happy in school. The results of this research are expected to provide useful input for relevant parties in the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, so that it can ensure the success of this curriculum program and provide quality education for students.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

Education should always be prioritized and become the main means in developing human resources in Indonesia. The Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) plays an important role in improving the quality of human resources with the Merdeka Belajar program. The concept of Merdeka Belajar creates a pleasant learning atmosphere for students and teachers. The key to Merdeka Belajar is human, if humans are prioritized then the feeling of independence will always be attached to students and teachers. Independence itself is defined as a state of mind, as stated by an American novelist named Walter Moesly who stated that the body cannot know independence absolutely, but the mind can (Saleh, 2020).

The Merdeka Belajar curriculum is expected to create a free education system for all

parties, including students, teachers, schools, and parents. National education assessment must reflect the essence of the law of a free education system and measure essential competencies. However, there are still many complaints from parents about an assessment system that is not free. Therefore, the implementation of Merdeka Belajar must be able to demonstrate how each class can give birth to the concept of self-directed learning (SDL) which is free, where students are actively responsible for their own learning. According to Setyawati (Ashari & Salwah, 2018), self-directed learning (SDL) is the ability of students to take active responsibility for their own learning, either with or without the help of others. This includes aspects such as awareness, learning strategies, learning activities, evaluation, and interpersonal skill relationships. National education assessment must reflect the essence of an education system based on the law, which creates school independence and interprets the Merdeka Belajar curriculum as an assessment of essential competency interpretation.

The Secretariat of Kemendikbud (2020) Freedom of Learning provides freedom for educational institutions to be independent, without bureaucracy, where students are free to choose their fields of interest and educators are freed from complicated bureaucracy. The program by the Ministry of Education and Culture aims to restore the essence of the law in the national education system by providing freedom to innovate independently and creatively to improve the creative thinking skills of all students. If all Indonesian children can think creatively, their graduates will be more competitive in the industrial world. The Merdeka Belajar curriculum places students as the main focus, providing freedom to choose subjects that suit their interests, talents, and aspirations. Teachers teach according to the developmental phases of each student from early childhood education to high school. Schools also have the authority to develop and manage learning processes that are appropriate to the characteristics and needs of students. This makes the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in Takalar District a challenge for teachers, schools, and committee learning supervisors who fully support this curriculum.

As a challenge that must be faced, Kemendikbud must continue to provide appropriate regulations and training to educators to be able to implement the Merdeka Belajar curriculum properly. The freedom given to teachers and schools does not mean they are exempt from the responsibility to improve the quality of education. Success in the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum depends on the readiness of teachers, students, principals, and all parties involved. All must understand their respective roles and work together to create positive changes in improving the quality of education.

### **1. Leading Teacher (Indonesia: *Guru Penggerak*)**

Teachers still feel that the Merdeka Belajar curriculum is just a modification of the previous learning program. However, some teachers support the Merdeka Belajar curriculum because they believe that the government has studied and reflected on the state of education in Indonesia. Over time, the community and teachers begin to understand the reasons behind the implementation of the teacher empowerment program. After studying various literature and references on the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, the author concludes that teacher empowerment is the highest level among all types of teachers and plays an important role in implementing the Merdeka Belajar curriculum effectively.

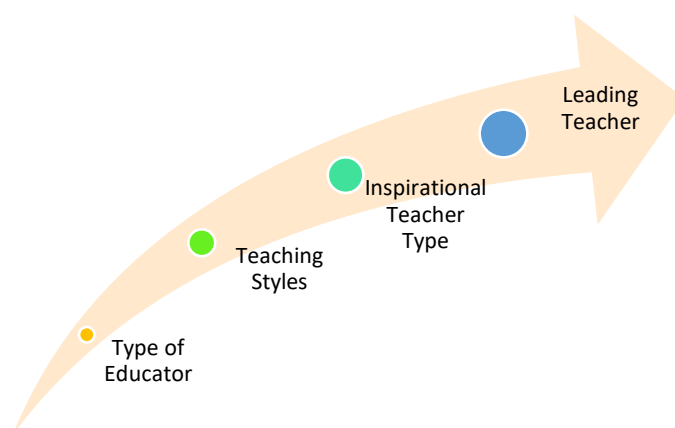


Figure 1. Improvement of Merdeka Belajar Curriculum Teacher Types

Generally, types of teachers can be categorized as instructional, educational, inspirational, and driving. In the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, driving teachers are expected to become learning leaders who can encourage students' holistic and active development and develop other educators to apply student-centered learning. Therefore, the Ministry of Education and Culture always strives to provide regulation and training for educators to implement the Merdeka Curriculum well and develop programs to improve teachers' competencies to become driving teachers. This program is carried out through training and counseling for 9 months, so that teachers can acquire the knowledge and skills needed to improve the quality of education in their respective schools. The driving teacher mobilization program aims to develop competent teachers who are expected to improve students' learning outcomes. Thus, the role of driving teachers in their respective schools is at the forefront of facing curriculum changes and supporting the improvement of the quality of education. Therefore, the role of driving teachers is very strategic in advancing national education.

The role of teachers as drivers is essential in improving the quality of education. In addition to being an instructor, a teacher must also be an agent of change in the teaching process. A driving teacher must be able to be a driving force in educational organizations such as KKG and MGMP, which can assist in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. Furthermore, teachers must also be a source of questions for other teachers who need help in the teaching process. Teachers must be able to work together with others to collaborate in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and create harmonious relationships between teachers and students. As agents of change, teachers must be pioneers in developing the potential and knowledge of education in their schools. With the knowledge gained through driving teacher training, teachers must be able to share their knowledge with other teachers who do not yet understand the meaning of implementing student-centered learning. Teachers must be able to facilitate the learning process, guiding students towards more independent and enjoyable learning.

Based on the results of interviews with driving teachers in Takalar Regency, they said, "The difference between the Merdeka Curriculum and the previous

curriculum is the focus on independence in the implementation of learning, independence of the teacher in teaching, and also the independence of students. Independence in teaching means that we are given flexibility to create learning achievements, and the lesson plan format is more free because there are only simple standards. Meanwhile, in student-centered learning, each driving teacher has been directed to apply certain approaches, especially in the formation of Pancasila student character profiles." Furthermore, it was emphasized by Ms. Suwati that "Character formation is emphasized in the Merdeka Curriculum. In the previous curriculum, character formation was also there, but the assessment was not too focused on character, but more on knowledge and skills aspects. In the Merdeka Curriculum, the main focus is on the formation of student character that is in accordance with the Pancasila Student Profile, which is based on 6 noble personality elements, global diversity, independence, mutual cooperation, critical, and creative. This will be applied in differentiated learning."

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes that driving teachers must understand what the Merdeka Curriculum means and how to apply it. Teachers must be able to habituate themselves with the Merdeka Curriculum. Therefore, teachers who are still comfortable with conventional methods in the teaching and learning process can immediately update their competencies to follow the times. One of the new methods applied in student-centered learning is differentiated learning. According to Veni Widi Astuti in the LMS Driving Teacher Module 2.1, "Differentiated learning is a learning method that adjusts to the learning needs of each student. Teachers will facilitate students according to their needs because each student has different characteristics and cannot be given the same treatment." Based on the results of interviews with driving teachers. Furthermore, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes the role of teacher as an agent of change in the teaching process. Teacher as a mover is expected to become a leader of learning who can encourage the holistic and active development of students as well as develop other educators to implement student-centered learning (Susanto, 2021). Therefore, the Ministry of Education and Culture always strives to provide regulations and training for educators to be able to implement the Merdeka Curriculum well and create programs to improve the competence of teachers to become teacher movers. This program is carried out through training and counseling for 9 months so that teachers can acquire the knowledge and skills needed to improve the quality of education in their respective schools. The teacher mobilization program aims to develop competent teachers who are expected to improve student learning outcomes (Wijayanti, 2020). Therefore, the role of teacher movers in each school is at the forefront in facing curriculum changes and supporting the improvement of education quality. Thus, the role of teacher movers is very strategic in advancing national education.

The role of teachers as movers is essential in improving the quality of education. In addition to being a teacher, a teacher must be able to act as an agent of change in the teaching process. A teacher mover must be able to become a mover in educational organizations such as KKG and MGMP which can assist in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum (Susanto, 2021). Furthermore, teachers must also be able to become sources of questions for other teachers who need assistance in the teaching

process. Teachers must be able to collaborate with others to collaborate in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum and creating harmonious relationships between teachers and students. As an agent of change, teachers must be pioneers in developing the potential and knowledge of education in the schools where they serve. With the knowledge gained through teacher mover training, teachers must be able to play a role in sharing knowledge with other teachers who still do not understand the meaning of implementing student-centered learning. Teachers must be able to act as facilitators in the learning process, directing students towards more independent and enjoyable learning (Wijayanti, 2020).

Based on the results of interviews with teacher movers in Takalar Regency, they stated that "The difference between the Merdeka Curriculum and the previous curriculum is the focus on independence in learning, independent teaching by teachers, and students' independence. Independence in teaching here means that we are given the freedom to create learning achievements and maybe the lesson plan format is more inclined to be free in the sense that there are very simple standards because so far the understanding of teachers is that every lesson plan has a uniform format. Meanwhile, independent learning means that each teacher mover has been directed to apply certain approaches, especially the formation of the character profile of Pancasila students." Furthermore, Mrs. Suwati emphasizes the meaning of the Merdeka Curriculum, which is "The formation of character emphasized in the Merdeka Curriculum actually existed in the previous curriculum but the assessment was not too focused on character but more on knowledge and skills aspects. In the Merdeka Curriculum, the main focus is on the formation of student character that is in accordance with the Pancasila student profile based on 6 noble personality elements, global diversity, independence, mutual cooperation, critical thinking, and creativity. This will be applied in differentiated learning."

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes that teacher movers must understand the meaning of the Merdeka Curriculum and how to implement it; teachers must be able to habituate to the Merdeka Curriculum. Thus, teachers who are still comfortable with conventional methods in the learning-teaching process can immediately update their competencies to follow the development of the times. One of the new methods applied in student-centered learning is differentiated learning. According to Veni Furthermore, differentiated learning emphasizes that teachers should understand the initial abilities of each student through a diagnostic assessment. Based on the results, teachers can group students according to their competencies and implement different teaching materials and methods accordingly. This means that teachers should not treat every student the same way, but instead provide more support and guidance to those who are struggling while challenging and developing those who have already mastered the material (as mentioned in the interview with Ibu Suwati).

In addition, different learning styles should also be taken into account when implementing differentiated learning. According to Ibu Suwati, some students may be visual learners, some auditory learners, and some kinesthetic learners. Therefore, teachers should be able to recognize these differences and adjust their teaching methods to accommodate the various learning styles of their students. By doing so, teachers can better meet the needs of their students and create a more effective and engaging learning environment.

Overall, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes the role of teacher as a leader of learning who can promote the holistic and active development of students, as well as the development of other educators to apply student-centered learning. Through the mobilization of teacher leaders, the curriculum aims to develop competent teachers who can improve student learning outcomes and contribute to the advancement of national education. Teachers who are able to adapt to new teaching methods and differentiate instruction to meet the diverse needs of their students will be crucial in realizing the goals of the Merdeka Curriculum.

## 2. School of Movement

The Merdeka Curriculum Driving School Program is a program developed by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) aimed at improving the quality of education in schools by integrating the Merdeka curriculum through empowering schools and teachers to develop a curriculum that is suitable for the needs and potential of each school. This program will focus on developing students' competencies in literacy, numeracy, and character, supported by excellent human resources. The program will also accelerate the development of public/private schools throughout Indonesia by enabling schools to advance 1-2 stages (Supriyatno, 2019). The program is carried out gradually and integrated with the ecosystem until all schools in Indonesia effectively become Merdeka Curriculum Driving School Programs and improve student learning outcomes.

The project aimed at improving students' mastery of Pancasila values in schools that run the Driving School Program is the Strengthening Student Pancasila Profile Project. This program focuses on the overall development of student learning outcomes, including competencies (literacy and numeracy) and character, with the support of excellent human resources (school principals and teachers). Education in Indonesia emphasizes the formation of attitudes, character, and the transformation of the basic values of Pancasila. The aim is to enhance nationalism and the ability to compete internationally (Sujana, 2019). This project can be implemented through various activities such as training, seminars, or excursions that focus on introducing, understanding, and applying Pancasila values in students' daily lives. By implementing the Driving School Program and this project, it is hoped to improve the quality of students' character education and increase students' awareness of Pancasila values as the foundation of the state.

The implementation of the Merdeka Learning Curriculum in the Driving School Program includes several aspects, one of which is implementing the Strengthening Student Pancasila Profile Project. This program is based on initial assessments of student needs based on assets such as facilities and infrastructure available in schools, as well as the quality of available human resources. Based on the assessment results, teachers and students hold a consultation to determine the project theme and collaboration between subjects. In this program, there are 7 theme options for junior high school level (SMP) that can be carried out by educational units in one academic year based on relevant issues in students' environment (Admin SMP Kemendikbud, 2021), namely: Sustainable Lifestyle, Local Wisdom, Unity in Diversity, Develop Mind and Body, Voice of Democracy, Engineering and Technology for Building NKRI, and Entrepreneurship.



Although 7 themes are available, each school can only choose 3 themes to be implemented during one academic year. The implementation of the Merdeka curriculum, which is based on the Strengthening Student Pancasila Profile Project, is well received because it has a significant impact on developing human resources in schools, including school principals, teachers, and students. This is because the project implementation provides experience for Driving Schools to demonstrate the competencies and assets possessed by the school (based on interviews with the Curriculum Deputy Head who is one of the driving teachers). This positive response means that the project habituation in driving schools will continue for the success of the Merdeka Curriculum implementation.

The Voice of Democracy and Entrepreneurship themes have been implemented. The "Voice of Democracy" theme was chosen in the Strengthening Student Pancasila Profile Project to increase awareness of the importance of democracy in community and state life. This theme also aims to foster a democratic spirit in students, so that they can learn to respect the opinions of others and make decisions through consultation. Activities carried out to increase democratic spirit in students include electing student council presidents, group discussions, simulation of elections, and so on. This will help students learn to respect differences of opinion and make good decisions.

In the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in the School Driving Program, there are several aspects to consider, including the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project. The program is based on initial assessments of student needs based on assets such as school facilities and infrastructure, as well as the quality of available human resources. Based on the assessment results, teachers and students hold consultations to determine project themes and collaborations between subjects. Teachers and students hold consultations before carrying out the project to determine the theme that will be applied as evidence of the implementation of strengthening the Pancasila student profile (based on an interview with the Curriculum Vice Principal who is one of the driving teachers). In this program, there are 7 theme choices for Junior High School SMP level that can be implemented by educational units in one academic year based on relevant issues in the student's environment (SMP Kemendikbud Admin, 2021), namely: Sustainable Lifestyle, Local Wisdom, Unity in Diversity, Build Soul and Body, Democracy Voice, Engineering and Technology for Building the Republic of Indonesia and Entrepreneurship.

The 7 themes were chosen by the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project as options for implementation by educational units. However, each school can choose 3 themes to be implemented during one year. The implementation of the Merdeka curriculum based on the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project by the driving schools has been positively received because it has a significant impact on the development of human resources in schools, including principals, teachers, and students. This is because the implementation of the project provides experience for driving schools to demonstrate the competencies and assets possessed by the school (based on an interview with the Principal of SMPN 1 Mangarabombang Takalar Regency). This positive response means that the habituation of projects in driving schools will continue for the success of implementing the Merdeka curriculum program.

The Democracy Voice and Entrepreneurship themes have been implemented. The theme "Democracy Voice" was raised in the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project to increase awareness of the importance of democracy in social and national life. This theme also aims to foster a spirit of democracy in students so that they can learn to respect the

opinions of others and make decisions through consultation. Activities carried out to foster a spirit of democracy in students include electing OSIS leaders, group discussions, election simulations, and others. This will help students learn to respect differences of opinion and make good decisions through the democratic process.

Meanwhile, the entrepreneurship theme applied is expected to help students develop entrepreneurial spirit. Through the activities created, students will learn to recognize economic potential and business opportunities in their environment, as well as solve problems that may arise in the process of developing potential and business. One example is creating a high-value product based on local culture, such as making Shiborita batik in Takalar Regency. The evaluation of the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project activities has been published on YouTube and received positive responses from various parties and the community in Takalar Regency.

### **3. Learning Committee Supervisor**

The role of the Learning Committee Supervisor in the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum is crucial in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project in educational units. They are responsible for ensuring that all activities carried out are in accordance with the selected theme, and that students can develop the spirit of democracy, entrepreneurship, and necessary technology skills to build the nation. The Learning Committee Supervisor also ensures that the driving schools continue to coordinate with other educational units in efforts to achieve the success of the Merdeka Belajar program implementation.

According to the results of an interview with Mrs. Hj. Nurmin, S.Pd., M.Pd., "The Learning Committee Supervisor is one of the important roles in the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum. They are responsible for ensuring that the entire learning process is carried out in accordance with the established curriculum, and ensuring that the learning objectives are achieved well. The Learning Committee Supervisor is also responsible for evaluating the learning outcomes and providing useful feedback for improving the learning process in the future. They also coordinate with schools and teachers to ensure that the implementation of the curriculum runs smoothly."

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikburistek) issued a policy that provides additional options in the development of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum for educational units in efforts to recover learning from 2022 to 2024. Kemendikburistek will re-evaluate the national curriculum policy in 2024 based on the evaluation results during the learning recovery period. This is due to the COVID-19 pandemic that caused many obstacles in the learning process in educational units which had a significant impact. Then, during the pandemic period from 2021 to 2022, Kemendikburistek issued policies on the use of the 2013 Curriculum, Emergency Curriculum, and Merdeka Belajar Curriculum in Driving Schools and Vocational Centers of Excellence (based on the results of an interview with the Learning Committee Supervisor).

Overall, the government through the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikburistek) has issued several policies related to the curriculum during pre-pandemic and pandemic periods. First, during the pre-pandemic period,

Kemendikburistek had issued a policy on the use of the 2013 Curriculum. However, with the development of the pandemic situation, the 2013 Curriculum was then simplified into an emergency curriculum that provided convenience for educational units to manage learning with essential material substance. Furthermore, in 2021, the Merdeka Curriculum was launched, which is expected to be a fresh wind in the efforts of improvement and learning recovery. Kemendikburistek also issued a policy that schools that are not ready to use the Merdeka Curriculum can still use the 2013 Curriculum or the Emergency Curriculum as the basis for managing learning. However, the Merdeka Curriculum is expected to be an option for all educational units that are ready to implement it. In 2024, the national curriculum policy will be determined based on the evaluation results of the curriculum during the learning recovery period, as a reference for Kemendikburistek in making further policies post-learning recovery (Nugroho, 2022).

In addition to the supervisory role in monitoring the implementation process of the Merdeka Curriculum, the learning committee supervisor plays an important role in facilitating the improvement of learning quality in schools. The supervisor must understand the goals and competencies to be achieved in the Merdeka Curriculum and be able to assist schools in developing learning plans that are in line with the curriculum. Additionally, the supervisor should be able to evaluate the process and learning outcomes and provide support and guidance to teachers in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum by often coaching to the schools. The supervisor also plays a role in evaluating the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in schools and providing useful feedback for the improvement and development of the curriculum.

Pengawas also needs to understand and implement the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum so that schools can achieve optimal results from its implementation (based on the interview with the Learning Committee Supervisor). The driving schools play a vital role in realizing and implementing the Merdeka Curriculum well. The supervisor also plays a role in providing technical support and mentoring to schools in managing and evaluating the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. In addition, the supervisor is responsible for coordinating and supervising the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in schools and providing evaluation reports to the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The role of the supervisor in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum is to understand and explain to schools the meaning and role of the curriculum. Providing support to schools in implementing this curriculum is done through evaluation and monitoring processes carried out by the supervisor, such as Project Management Office (PMO). The Merdeka Curriculum PMO is carried out by involving supervisors and facilitators (expert trainers) from the Ministry of Education and Culture, who are responsible for evaluating the readiness of educational units in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. The Merdeka Curriculum PMO also includes mentoring and technical support for educational units in managing and implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. The goal of the Merdeka Curriculum PMO is to ensure that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is carried out effectively and efficiently in accordance with the readiness and needs of the educational units. Additionally, evaluating the results of the Merdeka Curriculum Implementation Readiness Survey.

The supervisor can also provide support to teachers and educational personnel by providing necessary training and facilitating workshops. In this process, educational units can determine their choices based on the results of the Merdeka Curriculum Implementation Readiness Survey, which is used to measure the readiness of teachers and educational

personnel in implementing the curriculum. However, there is no single correct choice in this matter, only the option that is most suitable for the readiness of the educational unit (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2022). The more suitable the choice is for the educational unit's readiness, the more effective the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum will be. In Material 1 on the Merdeka Curriculum policy (2022), there are three options for implementing the Merdeka Curriculum independently:

- Option 1: Independent Learning - Applying some parts and principles of the Merdeka Curriculum without replacing the curriculum currently implemented by the educational unit.
- Option 2: Independent Change - Applying the Merdeka Curriculum using teaching materials provided in the educational unit for early childhood education, grade 1, 4, 7, and 10.
- Option 3: Independent Sharing - Applying the Merdeka Curriculum by developing various teaching materials independently in educational units for early childhood education, grade 1, 4, 7, and 10.

#### **4. Challenges of Art Education**

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in art education poses challenges in developing the creativity and innovation of teachers as educators. One of the challenges is in terms of human resource development, namely art and culture teachers and school principals. Principals must have the competence to manage and develop existing human resources, so as to provide optimal support in the art education learning process. Additionally, art and culture teachers must have sufficient competence in managing and developing art education materials (especially dance) in schools. Teachers should be able to develop materials that are appropriate for the basic competencies that students must master and are suitable for the school conditions. The developed materials should be able to enhance students' creativity and innovation in the art education learning process (Paramita, 2020).

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in art education also presents challenges in providing freedom of space for teachers and students to explore their abilities and creativity in art education. Furthermore, other challenges faced in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in art education are the limited human resources, particularly teachers who lack the competency and skills to manage independent learning. This can make it difficult to develop sustainable learning creativity and innovation. Additionally, the lack of understanding and awareness of school principals, teachers, and students about the concept of Merdeka Belajar is also one of the challenges faced in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in art education. Therefore, to overcome these challenges, careful planning and optimal support from school principals and art and culture teachers are needed in providing sufficient space for teachers and students to enhance their abilities and creativity in art education. To overcome these challenges, human resource development (HRD) is needed that includes art and culture teachers and school principals who can support the implementation of the curriculum effectively.

Moreover, other challenges faced in habituating the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in art education are the lack of competent human resources in the field of art,

particularly art and culture teachers and school principals. This can make it difficult to develop art education materials that can enhance students' creativity and innovation. Similarly, the lack of adequate facilities and equipment required for art education, such as musical instruments, art supplies, or adequate dance equipment, is also a challenge. Therefore, support from the government and schools is needed in improving the necessary human resources and facilities in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum for art education habituation. On the students' side, the challenge is adapting to new concepts in the learning process, such as increasing creativity and innovation in art education. This can be done by providing students with the freedom of space to explore their abilities and creativity in art education (Paramita, 2020).

Furthermore, another challenge in habituating art education is the lack of suitable facilities and resources to support the art education learning process. For example, in dance education, the necessary facilities include adequate dance studio space and quality musical instruments. Additionally, the lack of experts or art trainers who can manage art education programs well is also a challenge that must be faced. However, with proper human resource development and support from the government and society, these challenges can be overcome, and the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in art education can run smoothly.

## **Discussion**

The implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum presents its own challenges in the field of art education. Therefore, good habituation from teachers, schools, and students is needed to optimize the implementation of the curriculum. This research aimed to raise teachers' awareness of the importance of understanding and implementing the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum with differentiated learning to support the development of students' character.

The study utilized a qualitative research method, which included interviews, observations, and literature study documentation to collect data from leading schools, leading teachers, and learning committee supervisors. The collected data were analyzed to extract themes relevant to the habituation of implementing the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum in art education.

The findings suggest that habituation of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum in art education can improve active, independent, and creative learning, as well as improving the quality of human resources (HR) with facility infrastructure in schools. The implementation of the curriculum can also contribute to the development of innovative and creative art education teachers who can liberate students and improve students' abilities in the field of art. These outcomes are essential to support the profile of Pancasila students, who possess character traits such as creativity, entrepreneurship, and technological skills.

In conclusion, the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum in art education can contribute to the development of students' character and abilities, as well as improving the quality of human resources in schools. However, to optimize the implementation of the curriculum, habituation from teachers, schools, and students is needed. Therefore, teacher training and preparation are essential to successfully implement the curriculum.

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## CONCLUSION

The habituation process of implementing the Merdeka curriculum in the art and culture subject in schools by leading teachers and leading schools is expected to improve active, independent, and creative learning in art and culture. Teachers and schools play a role in providing an understanding of the Merdeka curriculum and how to apply it in art and culture learning. Teachers develop learning methods that reinforce the principles of independent learning in students, such as facilitating the development of student interests and talents, providing tasks that demand creativity and collaboration, and providing constructive feedback based on essential assessments in differentiated learning. This is done through close collaboration between leading teachers and leading schools, as well as by providing the necessary facilities and resources to support independent learning in art and culture.

In the context of art and culture learning in schools, it is hoped that students will become more active and independent in their learning. This can be achieved by improving students' ability to seek information and complete tasks independently, as well as developing creativity and imagination that are in line with the character profile of Pancasila students. To achieve this, close collaboration between leading teachers and leading schools is necessary through the implementation of Merdeka curriculum programs, in order to provide full support for creating a conducive learning environment. In addition, appropriate facilities and resources are also needed to support independent learning. This can be done by providing broad access to various resources such as books, libraries, and other media that can help in learning art and culture, as well as providing opportunities for students to explore and pursue their interests in art and culture through differentiated learning.

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