



Implementing curriculum at Sekolah Rimba Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses implementing policies at Sekolah Rimba Indonesia, founded by Hanan Attaki. Sekolah Rimba adopts a nature-based educational approach and Islamic values, focusing on character development, life skills, and a deep understanding of religion. This article was written with the aim of providing a better understanding of the curriculum provided at Sekolah Rimba so that other schools can later implement this interesting and creative curriculum. The curriculum discussion at Sekolah Rimba was carried out because Sekolah Rimba has a combined curriculum between nature-based and religious education aligned with the current curriculum. Through observation and analysis, this article explores how the Sekolah Rimba curriculum is designed to create a holistic and contextual learning environment. The findings show that the educational methods used at Sekolah Rimba improve students' academic understanding and shape their morals and ethics, resulting in individuals with noble character who make positive contributions to society. This article also provides challenges and successes in implementing these criteria and recommendations for further improvement.

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ABSTRAK

Artikel ini membahas penerapan kebijakan di Sekolah Rimba Indonesia yang didirikan oleh Hanan Attaki. Sekolah Rimba mengadopsi pendekatan pendidikan berbasis alam dan nilai-nilai keislaman, dengan fokus pada pengembangan karakter, keterampilan hidup, dan pemahaman agama yang mendalam. Artikel ini dibuat dengan tujuan agar memberikan pemahaman lebih mengenai kurikulum yang disediakan di Sekolah Rimba agar nantinya sekolah lain dapat menerapkan kurikulum yang menarik dan kreatif tersebut. Pembahasan kurikulum di Sekolah Rimba dilakukan karena Sekolah Rimba memiliki kurikulum gabungan antara pendidikan berbasis alam dan agama yang diselaraskan dengan kurikulum saat ini. Melalui observasi dan analisis, artikel ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana kurikulum Sekolah Rimba dirancang untuk menciptakan lingkungan belajar yang holistik dan kontekstual. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa metode pendidikan yang digunakan di Sekolah Rimba tidak hanya meningkatkan pemahaman akademis peserta didik, tetapi juga membentuk moral dan etika mereka, sehingga menghasilkan individu yang berakhlak mulia dan memberikan kontribusi positif bagi masyarakat. Artikel ini juga memberikan tantangan dan keberhasilan dalam penerapan kriteria tersebut, serta memberikan rekomendasi untuk perbaikan lebih lanjut.

Kata Kunci: kurikulum sekolah; pendidikan; sekolah Rimba.

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INTRODUCTION

The curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements concerning the objectives, content, and learning materials, as well as the methods used as guidelines for organizing learning activities to achieve specific educational goals. It encompasses various aspects, ranging from the determination of basic competencies that students must master to the learning methods implemented and the evaluation of learning outcomes. As a framework, the curriculum ensures that the educational process proceeds systematically and in a structured manner. The 2013 Curriculum (K-13) emphasizes the balanced development of attitudes, knowledge, and skills through a competency-based approach and the integration of character education. The curriculum currently implemented in Indonesia is the "Merdeka Belajar" (Independent Learning) curriculum, which is an evolution of the 2013 Curriculum, enhancing more autonomous learning. This independent curriculum was developed to bridge learning gaps during the pandemic (Fadil *et al.*, 2024). This curriculum has brought about several changes in Indonesia, particularly in teaching and learning activities, and aligns with new policy adjustments.

In Indonesia, the implementation of the curriculum continues to encounter a range of challenges. Education serves as a cornerstone for national development, shaping a generation of individuals with strong integrity and a commitment to advancing knowledge and learning. However, the Indonesian education system continues to grapple with issues of equity and the need to improve quality across regions (Suncaka, 2023). A persistent decline in educational standards often results in discrepancies between intended objectives and the realities of classroom practice. Revisions to the curriculum can influence not only the teaching and learning process but also the broader educational landscape. Such changes may even affect university admission and student selection procedures (Setioyuliani & Andaryani, 2023).

The problem of equal distribution of human resources in Indonesia poses a significant barrier to the delivery of lessons under the latest curriculum. Many schools, particularly those in remote areas, continue to face shortages in resources, including facilities, qualified teachers, and instructional materials (Supriatna, 2019). Frequent curriculum changes within short periods have also caused confusion and made adaptation challenging for both educators and students (Gelmez-Burakgazi, 2020; Sudirman, 2018). These changes necessitate that teachers adapt their instructional approaches according to the realities of their respective contexts. The Merdeka Belajar (Independent Learning) curriculum must therefore be developed in ways that enhance student competencies in each region (Fauzan *et al.*, 2024; Hamid & Lukman, 2023).

The curriculum plays a vital role in education. Serving as a guide for both educators and students in the teaching and learning process, it ensures that educational objectives are achieved effectively. The curriculum is a central element of the learning process, shaping the characteristics and personal development of individuals (Iksal *et al.*, 2024). For this reason, it must be adapted to the cultural context of the society it serves. Furthermore, scholars should conduct curriculum research or analysis to identify weaknesses in the one being implemented (Nurhasanah *et al.*, 2021). A curriculum that is both dynamic and relevant

ensures that the education provided aligns with the advancement of knowledge and the demands of the times (Kamalov *et al.*, 2023; Khaira *et al.*, 2023; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018).

This study aims to explore how the implementation of the curriculum supports the development of students' character, life skills, and a profound understanding of religion. Additionally, it identifies the challenges and successes encountered during its implementation and offers recommendations for further development. These recommendations can serve as a reference for other educational institutions in designing innovative curricula that are relevant to the needs of society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Curriculum in Indonesia

As one of the largest countries in the world, Indonesia has a vast population in need of education to improve the overall quality of life. The learning process in Indonesia is inseparable from the curriculum that has been implemented over the years (Pratikno *et al.*, 2022). As knowledge continues to advance, the curriculum in Indonesia has also evolved accordingly. The current Merdeka Belajar (Independent Learning) curriculum represents an innovation from its predecessor, as has been the case with every curriculum change in the nation's history. Since Indonesia's independence, the curriculum has undergone multiple revisions, occurring in 1947, 1952, 1964, 1975, 1984, 1994, 2004, 2006, 2013, and, most recently, the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in 2020, which has now been implemented (Ervia *et al.*, 2024).

From the perspective of national education policy, as stated in the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, the curriculum is defined as "a set of plans and arrangements concerning the objectives, content, and learning materials, as well as the methods used as guidelines for organizing learning to achieve specific educational goals." The curriculum comprises five main components: (1) objectives; (2) content/materials; (3) methods or strategies for achieving learning objectives; (4) curriculum organization; and (5) evaluation.

Political, economic, social, and cultural conditions, along with globalization, have influenced the nature of Indonesia's education curriculum from the early periods, namely the era of independence, the Old Order, the New Order, and the Reform era, to the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum. Among these various factors, the government's political will and prevailing political paradigms have had the most significant impact on curriculum changes, development, and refinement over time. Curriculum changes may occur at any time and fall under the authority of the government. However, the central issue lies in whether such changes are indeed necessary, whether their purposes and justifications are valid in the present, and whether they are genuinely needed as a means of anticipating future challenges (Alhamuddin, 2014).

Curriculum in an Institutional Perspective

Curriculum development is a comprehensive process closely linked to national education policy, in line with the vision, mission, and strategies for national education development (De Wit & Altbach, 2021). In developing a curriculum, institutions, particularly educational institutions, must give careful consideration to their planning and management. This is because the curriculum serves as the primary source and foundation of the learning process, requiring institutions to ensure that its planning and management are carried out appropriately (Komalasari *et al.*, 2020). Learning management refers to collaborative efforts or approaches aimed at achieving educational objectives, particularly in improving the quality of teaching and learning interactions. Curriculum management, in turn, involves the organization of learning experiences, which requires specific strategies to achieve optimal learning outcomes (Nur'aini & Wulandari, 2023).

The principles of curriculum development are as follows: (a) the principle of relevance, which states that the curriculum and instruction must be designed in accordance with the needs and life circumstances of students; (b) the principle of integrity, whereby the curriculum should be developed as a coherent and structured whole; (c) the principle of flexibility, which allows for adjustments in its implementation based on regional conditions, time, as well as the abilities and backgrounds of students; (d) the principle of continuity, meaning that the curriculum is developed sustainably, ensuring coherence across subjects, grade levels, and stages of education; and (e) the principle of efficiency and effectiveness, which assesses the extent to which the planned learning program is achieved or implemented. This principle involves two key aspects: the effectiveness of teaching by educators and the effectiveness of learning by students (Rahmi, 2021).

Curriculum Development in Indonesia

The curriculum holds a crucial place in the field of education. Without an appropriate curriculum, students will not be able to achieve the intended learning objectives (Rosyiddin *et al.*, 2023). Curriculum development takes place not only in Indonesia but also across the globe, with changes often reflecting the specific conditions of a country and the ways in which technology influences the curriculum. In Indonesia, numerous revisions have been made over time, making it unsurprising that the curriculum will continue to evolve in line with the demands of the era.

METHODS

Descriptive research, employing a literature review approach, is a method designed to describe phenomena or concepts through the analysis of relevant literature. Such research does not seek to test specific hypotheses but rather to present an objective account of variables, phenomena, or conditions as they exist at the time of the study. A descriptive study based on literature can provide rich and in-depth insights into a particular phenomenon or topic and serve as a strong foundation for further research. Descriptive or narrative data may be drawn from written, oral, or observed behaviors of research subjects, stemming from

the researcher's exploration and understanding of the studied social environment (Waruwu, 2024).

There are four stages in conducting a literature review in research: preparing the necessary tools and materials, compiling a working bibliography, organizing time effectively, and reading or taking notes from research materials. A systematic and structured approach to descriptive research, as outlined in a literature review, ensures that the research process is carried out carefully and methodically. This type of research involves steps such as identifying relevant literature sources, systematically collecting data, conducting thorough analysis, and providing in-depth interpretation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the data were obtained through a literature review conducted by the author. The information was sourced from the official website of Sekolah Rimba Indonesia, the school's official Instagram account, and various scholarly works discussing Sekolah Rimba Indonesia. This institution was selected as the research object because its teaching practices differ from those of conventional schools. With a strong orientation toward nature as the core of its learning materials, it presents an intriguing subject for investigation. Consequently, several discussions on Sekolah Rimba Indonesia, gathered from various sources, are presented in the following sections.

Sekolah Rimba Indonesia

Sekolah Rimba Indonesia or known as Indonesian Jungle School, commonly referred to as SRI, was founded in 2021 by Ustadz Hanan Attaki and Ustadzah Haneen Akira, who are also the founders of the Pemuda Hijrah Foundation. Now in its third year of operation, SRI employs a team of educators specializing in religious studies, mathematics, arts, and languages. The school places a strong emphasis on environmental and nature-based learning, guided by its motto: "nature as the foundation for learning and teaching in life." Through nature, students are expected to cultivate gratitude toward Allah, while their engagement with the environment fosters adaptability in any setting. According to founder Ustadz Hanan Attaki, the school is envisioned as "the backyard of every child's home," a place where students can freely explore nature as a learning medium, satisfy their curiosity, formulate questions from their experiences, and engage in discussions about the answers with class facilitators and peers.

The slogan of Sekolah Rimba Indonesia is "Learn Today, Lead Tomorrow." This reflects the school's hope that, after studying at Sekolah Rimba Indonesia, students will develop leadership qualities and eventually become leaders in the future. As a non-formal educational institution, the school does not solely focus on students' academic achievements but also emphasizes the development of their interests, talents, and innate potential. By nurturing their talents and interests, students are encouraged to enjoy both activities and learning, thereby fostering a genuine thirst for knowledge. Sekolah Rimba Indonesia also aims for its students to possess strong knowledge of the Qur'an, both in terms of understanding and spiritual connection. In doing so, the school seeks to cultivate visionary leadership qualities alongside practical skills that can be applied in everyday life.

In its environmentally and nature-oriented learning process, Sekolah Rimba Indonesia implements engaging and challenging activities for its students. These include Islamic sports such as horseback riding, swimming, and archery activities that are considered sunnah in Islam. Through these experiences, students gain an understanding of the types of sports encouraged in Islamic teachings. Other activities include gardening, exploring the surrounding forest, hiking, camping, and observing local flora and fauna. These activities are complemented by Qur'an reading and writing sessions. All of these are integrated into the school's subjects, which include: Islamic sports, sensory and motor skills, nature-based activities, plant and animal observation, Qur'an literacy programs, gardening, animal husbandry, games, music, and entrepreneurship.

Sekolah Rimba Indonesia's vision is "To nurture a generation of Rabbani individuals with Qur'anic character, broad knowledge, a harmonious relationship with nature, and the ability to actualize themselves as leaders capable of addressing the challenges of the ummah in accordance with their potential." Its mission is as follows:

1. To establish Sekolah Rimba Indonesia as an institution that upholds and brings to life the value contained in the Qur'an and the Sunnah.
2. To prepare future leaders who can serve as a guiding light for the ummah.
3. To explore and develop each child's potential to according to their interests and talent.
4. To value and respect each child's unique characteristics.
5. To foster collaboration between parents and the school community in nurturing pious leaders.
6. To restore and optimize nature's potential as a safe, comfortable, and enjoyable medium for learning.

As a non-formal educational institution, Sekolah Rimba Indonesia offers seven flagship programs that students are required to participate in, including:

1. Leadership

A leadership development program for students. This program aims to cultivate leadership qualities, defined as an individual's ability to lead, motivate, and influence others in order to achieve shared goals.

2. Entrepreneurship

A training program designed to develop students into entrepreneurs. This activity combines creativity, innovation, and the courage to take risks, all of which are implemented through hard work to establish and sustain new business ventures.

3. Nature

An activity designed for students to explore and contemplate nature (tadabbur) as an expression of gratitude to Allah. Nature serves as both a place and a medium of learning, enabling students to internalize positive behavior through experiences gained from their surrounding environment.

4. Social Emotional

Students are guided to develop emotional intelligence, with the expectation that they will gain experience in maintaining cooperative relationships, making responsible decisions, managing emotions, solving problems, and fostering empathy toward others.

5. *Al-Qur'an* Knowledge

Students are encouraged to engage deeply with the Qur'an through activities such as tahfiz (memorization), tadabbur (reflection), and Qur'anic recitation arts. Each student is expected to memorize at least one juz per year, accompanied by an exploration of verses related to faith, morals, and leadership.

6. *Art and Creativity*

Activities aimed at fostering creativity through art, gardening, sports, games, and other activities. These are creative learning experiences designed to stimulate the right brain through adventures in the natural surroundings of the school environment.

7. *Fatherhood*

An activity aimed at fostering affection between children and their parents through project-based assignments. Each child will have the opportunity to work on a project with their father outside the home and present the results at school.

Sekolah Rimba Indonesia Curriculum

Sekolah Rimba Indonesia is a school that implements the national curriculum while adding its own elective curriculum. The elective curriculum adopted is the Social Reconstruction curriculum. Social reconstruction is a concept that proposes utilizing schools as institutions capable of transforming and providing education that positively shapes society (Mubaroq, 2018). The Social Reconstruction curriculum is an educational approach designed to improve and strengthen society through a comprehensive and ongoing learning process (Mpuangan & Ntombela, 2024; Valladares, 2024). This approach aims to foster positive changes in a community's social structure, norms, and underlying values.

The following are several key points related to the Social Reconstruction curriculum:

1. **Holistic Approach:** The social reconstruction curriculum adopt a holistic approach involves various disciplines and aspect of life, including economics, politics, culture, and the environment.
2. **Community Participation:** This curriculum emphasizes the importance of active community participation in the learning process and decision making. Community involvement is considered crucial in ensuring that the desired changes align with the community's needs and aspirations.
3. **Empowerment:** This curriculum aims to empower individuals and groups within society by providing the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to address social and economic challenges.
4. **Capacity Development:** The social reconstruction curriculum also aims to build the capacity of individuals and groups in society, including locals leaders, decision maker, and change agent, so they can effectively contribute to the process of social change.
5. **Teaching Universal Value:** The social reconstruction curriculum often teaches universal values such as justice, equality, diversity, and peace as a foundation for building a better society.
6. **Partnership:** The implementation of this curriculum frequently involve collaborations among the government, educational institutions, civil society organizations, the private sector, and international agencies to achieve social development objectives.

By adopting this approach, the social reconstruction curriculum aims to create a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society through education that is centered on the needs and aspirations of the community itself.

The conceptual model of the social reconstruction curriculum is an approach that emphasizes addressing social issues present within society. In the social reconstruction curriculum, students are challenged to identify these problems and determine the most effective solutions (Bailey & Lee, 2020). The primary objective of this curriculum is to equip students with the ability to confront real-world problems within their communities (Rodrigues, 2020). Standard instructional methods include cooperative learning, in which students work collaboratively in groups, or problem based learning (PBL), in which instruction is grounded in problem solving. The success criteria in this curriculum focus not only on students' academic abilities but also on their roles within the social environment. Evaluation is conducted collaboratively between educators and students to assess the proposed solutions and their impacts on the community (Sania et al., 2021).

The core concept of the Sekolah Rimba Indonesia curriculum is to empower each individual to become a changemaker through enjoyable outdoor learning, as well as practical and action-oriented education. The Sekolah Rimba Indonesia curriculum is designed to provide rich learning experiences for students in basic education through sensory exploration, an understanding of the natural environment, and identification of social problems in their surroundings, enabling them to act as agents of change. Through learning experiences at Sekolah Rimba Indonesia, it is expected that students will develop greater sensitivity to problems around them and attempt to formulate solution ideas appropriate to their developmental stage. The fundamental concept of this curriculum is not only socialized to facilitators and students but also parents and the broader community through a monthly Saturday Study Session held at Sekolah Rimba Indonesia. In this session, speakers from various backgrounds, including permaculture experts and Ustadz Hanan himself, share their experiences on how to become agents of change through diverse positive and impactful approaches in society. Thus, Sekolah Rimba Indonesia strives to strengthen and promote the concept of social reconstruction, emphasizing that the improvement of social problems in society can be carried out by anyone in various ways (Yustikarini, 2023).

The Indonesian School aims to bring about change in Indonesia through its alumni, who are expected to become leading figures in the country, making their best contributions, serving as agents of change, and leading Indonesia with creative ideas that can position the nation as a world leader (Yustikarini, 2023). A key characteristic of the Sekolah Rimba Indonesia is its unlimited classroom setting. Agricultural programs and public speaking activities illustrate learning that extends beyond the limitations of paper and pencil, offering hands-on experiences and activities that focus on improving language and communication skills in ways that are integrated with daily life, such as storytelling. Learning alongside visually impaired peers helps students become aware of unique yet existing phenomena in the world. Discovering how they can support their visually impaired friends becomes a goal for students to achieve during the learning process (Yustikarini, 2023). This embodies the nature of learning in the implementation of the social reconstruction curriculum at the Sekolah Rimba Indonesia.

The implementation of teaching activities within the social reconstruction curriculum at the Sekolah Rimba Indonesia is evident in its programs and activities. After performing the Dhuha prayer, the morning activities at the Sekolah Rimba Indonesia include discussions about students' experiences at home, at school, or during their journey to school. In these discussions, three students are given the opportunity to share their personal experiences. The class facilitator plays an active and responsive role in these sessions by listening attentively to the students' stories, asking questions about their feelings, and encouraging other students to share their opinions about the experiences presented by their peers (Yustikarini, 2023). In terms of evaluation, the Sekolah Rimba Indonesia adopts an approach that goes beyond written tests. Facilitators or educators often design worksheets that present illustrated scenarios, such as someone throwing garbage into a river or a friend getting injured while riding a bicycle. Students are then asked to express their opinions regarding these situations. Additionally, evaluation is also conducted through assignments such as drawing the stages of water spinach growth from seed to harvest based on the plants cultivated by the students in the school garden (Yustikarini, 2023).

Discussion

The curriculum implemented in Indonesia is the Merdeka Belajar (Independent Learning) curriculum. The Merdeka curriculum encompasses various types of in-class learning activities designed to help students comprehend concepts and strengthen their competencies (Jannah *et al.*, 2022). In other words, the Merdeka curriculum is applied to enable students to become more self-reliant by enhancing their skills and facilitating their understanding of the concepts within the subjects being studied (Akib *et al.*, 2020). The curriculum implemented at Sekolah Rimba includes direct practices such as community engagement, partnerships, and the development of students' abilities to carry out learning activities or self-directed tasks. This aligns with the Merdeka curriculum's emphasis on fostering students' conceptual understanding and skills (Fauzan *et al.*, 2023; Yunaini *et al.*, 2022). The present study suggests that curriculum implementation in schools should not be limited solely to the government-prescribed curriculum. Schools can innovate by designing their curriculum to be tailored to the abilities and characteristics of their students. It is anticipated that students will develop into individuals capable of making significant contributions to the nation through the competencies they acquire. Furthermore, students can cultivate their creativity, interests, and talents without being constrained by rigid rules or limitations of the school curriculum.

CONCLUSION

The curriculum implemented at Sekolah Rimba Indonesia adopts the national curriculum (currently the Merdeka Curriculum) while incorporating its own selected curriculum, particularly the social reconstruction curriculum. This approach enables students to address real social issues within their communities and to seek appropriate solutions. The implementation of this curriculum is demonstrated through various student activities, such as morning discussions following the Dhuha prayer, learning through nature-based activities, and a range of other skill-building programs. Evaluation is conducted using multiple methods,

not limited to written tests, but also through practical assignments such as drawing and situational discussions.

Overall, Sekolah Rimba Indonesia envisions fostering a generation characterised by leadership qualities, innovative courage, and a high level of social awareness, individuals capable of becoming leaders who actively contribute to positive social change. Through a holistic, environmentally oriented learning approach and an innovative curriculum, Sekolah Rimba Indonesia strives to create an engaging learning environment that motivates students to maximise their potential development.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The author affirms that the data and content of the article are free from plagiarism.

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