

Relevance of Kurikulum Merdeka in Islamic Religious Education to Build Independence and Creative in The Muslim Generation

Dewinta Nisa Nadiva

Universitas Islam Negeri Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang

dewintanisa13@gmail.com

Abstract: The purpose of this study is to examine more deeply the independent learning curriculum in PAI subjects, the relationship between the kurikulum merdeka and character education and its implementation in educational institutions. The writing of this scientific article uses the method of literature study by using various types of sources both from books and scientific articles from various journals, theses, dissertations to find theories and supporting data. The results of this study are that the kurikulum merdeka is very relevant in PAI. This curriculum offers a larger and more holistic approach to teaching Islam and gives young people the opportunity to create their own unique identity based on Islamic principles. The younger generation is also taught critical, independent and creative thinking skills through this curriculum. The future generation of Muslims must be able to think for themselves if they are to better understand their religion and face difficulties in this dynamic and complex world. In the Technical Guidance of Strengthening PAI Learning for SMA/SMALB/SMK Based on Blended, it states that in kurmer the number of two JP in one week is multiplied by 36 weeks, then 1 JP is added for Islamic religious projects, resulting in a total of 108 JP each year from the Curriculum and Books Center. As a result, he argues that the time allotted for the initial and final assessments is meant to gradually improve students' soft skills and character. Because GPAI learning outcomes must conform to standards, schools must learn how to communicate with parents. He also asked teachers to apply various learning approaches. He believes that an kurikulum merdeka can be created using learning objectives achievement standards (KKTP), which can include activities that are difficult to interpret.

Keywords: kurikulum Merdeka; independent; creative

Abstrak: Tujuan penelitian ini adalah mengkaji lebih mendalam mengenai kurikulum merdeka belajar dalam mata pelajaran PAI, hubungan kurikulum merdeka dengan pendidikan karakter dan implementasinya di lembaga pendidikan. Penulisan artikel ilmiah ini menggunakan metode studi literatur dengan menggunakan berbagai jenis sumber baik dari buku maupun artikel ilmiah dari berbagai jurnal, thesis, disertasi untuk mencari teori dan data-data yang mendukung. Hasil penelitian ini adalah kurikulum merdeka sangat relevan dalam PAI. Kurikulum ini menawarkan pendekatan yang lebih besar dan menyeluruh untuk mengajarkan Islam dan memberikan kesempatan kepada kaum muda untuk menciptakan identitas unik mereka sendiri berdasarkan prinsip-prinsip Islam. Generasi muda juga diajarkan keterampilan berpikir kritis, mandiri, dan kreatif melalui kurikulum ini. Generasi Muslim masa depan harus mampu berpikir sendiri jika ingin lebih memahami agama mereka dan menghadapi kesulitan di dunia yang dinamis dan rumit ini. Dalam Bimbingan Teknis Penguatan Pembelajaran PAI SMA/SMALB/SMK Berbasis Blended menyebutkan dalam kurmer jumlah dua JP dalam satu minggu dikalikan 36 minggu, kemudian ditambahkan 1 JP untuk proyek keagamaan Islam, menghasilkan total 108 JP setiap tahun dari Pusat Kurikulum dan Perbukuan. Akibatnya, dia berpendapat bahwa waktu yang dialokasikan untuk penilaian awal dan akhir dimaksudkan untuk secara bertahap meningkatkan *soft skill* dan karakter siswa. Karena hasil belajar GPAI harus sesuai dengan standar, sekolah harus mempelajari cara berkomunikasi dengan orang tua. Ia juga meminta guru untuk menerapkan berbagai pendekatan pembelajaran. Ia percaya bahwa kurikulum merdeka dapat dibuat dengan menggunakan standar pencapaian tujuan pembelajaran (KKTP), yang dapat mencakup kegiatan yang sulit untuk ditafsirkan.

Kata kunci: kurikulum merdeka; kemandirian; kreatif

INTRODUCTION

The kurikulum merdeka focuses on empowering schools in developing relevant curricula and maximizing students' potential by giving schools the freedom to adapt the curriculum to the needs and characteristics of their students. The kurikulum merdeka and the PAI curriculum are closely related. Schools have the freedom to design their curriculum so that they can adapt and customize the Islamic Religious Education curriculum according to their local needs and conditions. This allows schools to be more flexible in adapting the PAI curriculum to the cultural, local values, and needs of their students.

Quoted from balitbangdiklat.kemenag.go.id (10/07/23) The results of the survey on the character of students at the Research and Development Center for Religious and Religious Education in 2021 were on average lower than the previous year's index. This year, the character index for secondary education students fell by two points from the previous year's indicative figure (71.41). Because the character survey was carried out when the world of education was facing the co-19 pandemic, there is a high possibility that the pandemic caused a decrease in this index number. This condition is expected to have an impact on the level of the student character index this year from the start. Of the five dimensions surveyed, namely religiosity, nationalism, independence, mutual cooperation, and integrity, only the nationalism dimension resulted in a higher participation rate (74.26) compared to the previous year's level of participation. While the aspect of student independence is reduced, which is the most severe. The distance learning system (PJJ), an educational solution in the midst of a pandemic, is suspected to be the main cause of the decline in the student character index.

According to Article 3 of Law no. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, the purpose of national education is to educate students to become people who believe in and fear God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, creative, intelligent, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens (Suwartini, 2017). In order to achieve the goals of national education, cultural and character education must be given systematically and programmed at every level of education. It must incorporate cultural values and national character to produce intelligent and competitive students.

Thomas Lickona claims that character is defined terminologically as "A reliable inner disposition to respond to situations in a morally good way." Furthermore Lickona added, "Character so conceived has three interrelated parts, moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral behavior". This shows that developing good character requires learning about goodness, gaining commitment (intention) to goodness, and finally practicing goodness (Lickona, 1991). In order for students' behavior and life attitudes to be in harmony, good character education must include moral information (moral knowledge), moral feelings (moral feeling), and moral behavior (moral behavior). In addition, research shows that there are four basic pillars of moral values of character education: if you think (intellectual development), exercise your heart (spiritual and emotional development), exercise and kinesthetic (physical and kinesthetic development), and exercise feeling and intention (emotional development). and creative) (Sartono, 2011). Thus, character education is more than just teaching morality. Character education also means instilling good habits (habituation) in students so that they can behave and act in accordance with the values that have become their personality. These values must be instilled in all students until they become a school culture.

Numerous studies have discussed the kurikulum merdeka (Ainia, 2020; Aprilia, 2021; Asrifan et al., 2023; Hattarina, Shofia, 2022; Indarta, Yose, 2022; Kahfi, 2022; Qolbiyah, 2022; Rizki & Fahkrunisa, 2022; Ruaya et al., 2022; Susilowati, 2022). In particular, understanding implementation, implications, relevance, and discussing character education in Islamic Education or in the 5.0 era. However, this research examines the relevance of the kurikulum merdeka in Islamic religious education subjects in order to build the character of independence and creativity in today's Muslim generation. The purpose of writing this article is to provide readers with an overview of the relevance of the Kurikulum Merdeka in Islamic Religious Education to Build

Independent and Creative Character in the Muslim Generation. Apart from that, it also provides benefits for the current generation of Muslims.

METHOD

According to the description of the previous title, this research was carried out using a qualitative approach. It should be noted that the qualitative method is a research method that shows certain social situations by displaying the reality formed by words based on data collection methods, as well as by analyzing relevant data obtained from natural situations. According to Moleong, qualitative methods are research procedures to understand phenomena about things experienced by research subjects related to behavior, motivation, perceptions and actions holistically by descriptive means in the form of words or verbally in a special natural context (Moeleong, 2016).

Furthermore, the type of research used in this research is library research which focuses on the process of reviewing various types of literature and information that are relevant to the topic being studied. According to Mestika Zed, library research is an activity of collecting library data, reading, taking notes and processing research materials (Zed, 2009). Meanwhile, according to Rahman Sholeh, library research is research that uses methods to obtain information data by utilizing the facilities available in the library including magazines, books, documents and historical stories (Sholeh, 2005). Based on the previous explanation, it can be concluded that library research is a scientific procedure for obtaining data using documentation techniques by examining various kinds of literature such as books, scientific journals, papers, proceedings, theses, laws and so on which have relevance to the topic in question. studied.

The term data is the plural form of the word datum which means information about something which includes numbers, codes, symbols, and so on. Basically, data comes from a fact that has been determined to be evidence when testing a hypothesis (Mahmud, 2011). Apart from that, data can be in the form of documents in the form of notes, statistical calculations, or information from respondents which are then used for research study purposes. Furthermore, when discussing data, we must not forget about the existence of data sources. In research, data sources have an urgent role, where if errors occur when understanding and using the data source, it will have an impact on obtaining data that is not in line with the research context.

The data sources in qualitative research are divided into primary and secondary sources (Moeleong, 2016). The primary data source comes from the journal entitled *Relevansi Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar dengan Model Pembelajaran Abad 21 dalam Perkembangan Era Society 5.0* (Indarta, Yose, 2022) and *Konsep Merdeka Belajar dalam Perspektif Pendidikan Islam (Sebuah Kajian Historis)* (Aprilia, 2021). Meanwhile, the secondary data sources in question include several books and scientific journals that are relevant to the study of the research topic.

Data collection techniques are a central step in a research study in order to obtain the various types of data needed (Sugiyono, 2005). The data collection technique used in this research is documentation. Basically, documentation is a written record in the form of writing, drawings or someone's monumental works. Apart from that, documentation is also understood as a recording of past events written in the form of letters, notes, diaries or certain documents. Furthermore, at this data collection stage the researcher attempted to explore and make observations of primary sources in order to obtain data related to the kurikulum merdeka in PAI, then to obtain discourse related to indicators of religious moderation, it was based on secondary data sources that support this research topic. The following is an explanation of the data collection steps, namely: 1. The researcher reads critically and comprehensively, then continues by observing journals related to the relevance of the kurikulum merdeka in Islamic Religious Education to build independence and creativity in the Muslim generation. 2. Researchers explore and then classify literature sources that are related to the relevance of the kurikulum merdeka in Islamic Religious Education to build

independence and creativity in the Muslim generation. 3. Researchers identify and analyze journals according to the problem formulation presented. 4. Compare it with several other literatures that are relevant to the research topic.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Kurikulum Merdeka in Islamic Religious Education

Islamic Religious Education does not only provide knowledge; it also fosters students' attitudes and personalities and teaches them to practice religious teachings. Therefore, PAI learning activities must try to build students who are free and independent in obtaining and applying PAI material. Given the importance of PAI in the "Freedom to Learn" program, the following things must be considered: a. It is the obligation of each education unit to provide teachers with the same religion as the students' beliefs even though they are a minority. It will be the responsibility of the religious teacher to increase the faith of his students; b. Educational institutions prepare students for roles that require knowledge of religious teachings and become experts in religious studies and teach their religion; c. Religious institutions prepare teachers with knowledge of religion and the ability to translate it into the curriculum; and D. The government must cooperate with religious institutions and schools to create a curriculum that meets religious standards (Darise, 2021).

Decision of the head of BSKAP no. 33 of 2022 stipulates learning objectives, which must also be assessed by PAI teachers. This learning objective must be achieved according to the level and phase of the student. There is no limit to the academic year's academic achievement. Instead, it has a phased structure that allows for greater implementation flexibility. It's just that a PAI teacher will find it difficult to identify learning objectives that will be covered in class if at first they don't test students' abilities. PAI teachers are required to carry out evaluations to determine the extent to which learning objectives have been achieved (Rifa'i, 2022).

Then, based on the most crucial content, PAI teachers can use these learning objectives to develop indicators of learning outcomes. So far, PAI teachers have not taught according to the order of the most important and crucial material to be taught first, but according to the order of the material in the manual or teaching materials. As a result, the materials become disharmonious and overlap. The first lesson to be taught to students is *aqidah*, or faith. This is because the fundamental principle of every Muslim is their faith. In a hadith narrated by Jundub Bin Abdillah by Ibn Majah, it is stated that the Companions taught the Prophet the first creed. They said, "We are teenagers approaching puberty, we studied faith before learning the Qur'an, and when we studied the Qur'an, our faith increased (Ginanjari, 2017)."

Calling for monotheism and spreading faith are the two responsibilities of the Apostles in this world. They returned again to invite people to worship only Allah, using various *shari'a* to show that *aqidah*, or monotheism, is the cornerstone of Islamic doctrine (Darmana, 2012). Once students have a firm understanding of the creed, teachers should start teaching the Qur'an. This shows that in order for the Qur'an to truly be applied in students' lives, they must learn to read, understand, and practice it (Rifa'i, 2020).

In addition, because each student has a different level of proficiency with the Qur'an, proper identification is required. There are students who can read the Qur'an very well, but there are also many who are completely unable to do so. All students in the autonomous curriculum must receive equal and comprehensive service from the PAI teacher. This service will not be effective unless student skills are accurately identified. Teaching *fiqh* material related to *mahdhoh* worship using the *fardu'ain* method is an option for students. Students in the *kurikulum merdeka* have choices in how they learn, but PAI teachers can support them by engaging in discussions, helping them with problems, and giving them examples. After showing students the appropriate *fiqh* learning films (Rifa'i, 2022).

Practice-based fiqh learning will be easier for students to assimilate because they will actively participate in the religious practices they learn (Mubarok, 2021). In PAI material, the moral aspect must also be studied. Knowledge is the result of morals. Rasulullah said, "Indeed I was sent only to perfect good morals." This is the main reason for Islamic education. Imam Bukhari Moral learning must begin immediately and focus on habituation (Rifa'i, 2022).

Moral education need not only focus on theory, but also need real life practice and teacher example. Actually, moral teaching can be internalized in all PAI materials, even in every subject. This is because morals can be taken from how students see the way the teacher behaves and speaks. Therefore, the teacher's personality and spirituality must be very concerned to instill good morals in students. The next subject matter that students must learn is history. So that they can learn from the struggles of the Prophet, companions and other Islamic heroes in the past and emulate their ideals in their daily lives, this is done. Videos and even stories can be used to teach history.

Students can practice telling the challenges of the Prophet and his companions in their own words. In addition, students can perform theater using their own settings that they have created and managed. As a result, the lessons students learn about history will be ingrained in them and enable them to preach Islam as a role model. As suggested by Rasulullah SAW in the hadith of Jibril, learning PAI must be carried out in stages, starting with faith, namely aqidah, Islam, namely fiqh, and ihsan, namely morals. These three key components must be taught initially so that students can best fulfill their religious commitments.

The success of PAI learning depends heavily on the competency of the Islamic Religious Education teacher to select relevant material and develop a structured flow of learning objectives based on students' needs and obligations. As a result, PAI teachers must be able to understand the kurikulum merdeka methodical approach to learning as well as the important concepts that each of their students must acquire and understand (Cikaa, 2020).

The Relationship Between the Kurikulum Merdeka and The Development Of Independent And Creative Characteristics

Education aims to guide allnatural forces in students to obtain the best level of security and happiness for ourselves as individuals and as members of society. Education can be described as a necessity for the development and quality of life of students (Marwah, 2018). Ki Hadjar Dewantara's views on education that encourage student development, namely education that teaches students how to make changes and provide benefits to society, can help understand his thinking about free learning. Education also helps a person feel more confident and increase their potential. Education only provides knowledge, but does not build character attitudes or skills. Students have a basic soul that is not influenced by their environment. Children are like white paper without ink on them. As a result, educators have the freedom to modify this white document as they see fit (Wiryanto, 2021).

The Minister of Education and Culture's idea of "freedom to learn" is in line with Ki Hadjar Dewantara's idea of how education needs to be organized in Indonesia. The core value of freedom of thought in independent learning encourages the development of an independent spirit because teachers and students can gather information from their environment, in contrast to previous learning which was based on material from books or modules. Because Indonesian students are used to learning and expanding their knowledge depending on what is around them, if this freedom of learning is implemented into the country's education system, it can help students become people who are beneficial to the environment wherever and whenever (Ainia, 2020).

Four new policies for independent education have been launched by the Minister of Education and Culture. First, school exams administered by schools will replace standardized national exams. Second, a minimum competitive exam covering literacy, numeracy and character will replace the national exam. Third, reducing the lesson plan system which allows teachers to focus more on students. Fourth, expansion of the zoning system and acceptance of new students

(PPDB) which makes education more accessible (Ainia, 2020). This policy is in line with Ki Hadjar Dewantara's philosophy, namely education must balance creativity, taste, and intention. Before the national exams, parents, teachers and students are always worried because they are threatened with dropping out of school if they can not complete them. As a result, many answer keys are sold with different question codes and prices.

The latest policy allows schools to conduct student assessments according to regulations; however, student and teacher education is not tied to the national exam. First, this assessment involves a survey about student character. This includes their knowledge of diversity, mutual cooperation, and how to motivate students to pay attention to their surroundings. In addition, it is hoped that students will apply Pancasila principles in their daily lives. Second, literacy surveys emphasize the use of language and reasoning. It encourages students to think critically when solving problems and speaking properly. Third, the numeracy survey focuses on students' understanding of mathematics. This point of view is relevant to Ki Hadjar Dewantara's theory that students receive a tricerter of education in three environments, namely the family environment, the college environment, and the community environment. These three environments have an educational impact on the formation of student personality (Afifah 2022).

The teacher's role is very important before the development of assessments based on character, literacy, and numeracy surveys. Character education in schools and classrooms is very important, especially through lessons that foster a sense of responsibility and respect (Lickona, 1991). *Ing ngarsa sang tuladha* (become a role model in front), *ing madya mangun karsa* (create ideals in the middle), and *tut wuri handayani* (follow and support them) are three principles that must be upheld by a teacher Ki Hadjar Dewantara (Musyafa, 2015). In order to build the among system, educators must instill in their students the ideals of Ki Hadjar Dewantara, especially education that has a family spirit rooted in independence and nature. The Ministry of Education and Culture has implemented a self-learning policy to streamline the lesson plan system and free up teachers to focus more on their students. This is in line with Ki Hadjar Dewantara's statement that ineffective teaching is caused by the burden of teachers who are burdened with difficult administrative requirements. A teacher must be able, adaptable, and friendly with the parents of the students he educates (Ainia, 2020).

The independent learning policy promoted by the Ministry of Education and Culture is related to the development of character education. Education is now more focused on knowledge, so that character and skills are given less attention. According to Ki Hadjar Dewantara, the strategies needed are ways to develop character education: First, education is a civilizing process that encourages a spirit of independence among students. Second, shaping children's personalities so that they remain nationalist but also open to global progress. Third, encourage students to become pioneers and pioneers. Fourth, educating means cultivating the talent or potential that already exists in each student (Ainia, 2020). To create a generation that is intelligent, patriotic and has noble character, this perspective must be instilled in the education system. The current generation will determine the future of Indonesia, so collaboration between students, teachers and parents is needed to create a superior generation (Suwartini, 2017).

One of the most crucial things in improving human resources is the development of student creativity. Students' ability to think clearly and find solutions to problems is an indicator of creative thinking. Flexible thinking is the second indicator, which shows that students can find answers. Third, original thinking; on this indicator, children are able to respond with clear and concise answers in their own words. Fourth, students' ability to elaborate is shown by their ability in this indicator (Qomariyah, 2021). Considering that learning PAI studies both worldly information and knowledge of the afterlife, it is predicted that learning PAI will be able to keep up with the times in the present. It is anticipated that more opportunities for students to express their creativity will be offered through PAI learning (Choli, 2020). Learning the cognitive abilities that enable one to generate new ideas, thoughts and perceptions leads to creativity (Ahmad, 2021).

Ministry of Education and Culture web administrator (10/07/2023) Jakarta, Ministry of Education and Culture --- Actually, education seeks to liberate the body, mind and soul of

students. Therefore, to encourage the growth and development of the creativity of educators, students, and education staff, the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) has implemented the Freedom to Learn policy. According to Totok Suprayitno, Head of Research and Development and Bookkeeping (Kabalitbangbuk), instructors are required to always come up with new ideas so that their students can benefit from good practices. Creative ideas that come from the teacher, not from students or outside sources show that learning is fun. Maybe we can learn something from this lesson. This was conveyed by Totok in an online discussion "Partnership for Learning" on Tuesday, December 5, 2018 in Jakarta, which was held in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Culture and Indonesian School Children Innovation (INOVASI). He claims that learning can be made to be of higher quality. In order to improve the learning outcomes of early grade students throughout Indonesia, particularly in terms of literacy and numeracy as well as inclusive education, the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of Religion and the INOVASI program initiated with the Australian Government since 2016 have continued to seek solutions.

Totok Suprayitno said that every time he saw and visited the schools involved in the INOVASI program, he was always optimistic that this collaboration could improve the quality of education in Indonesia. We always believe that it is impossible to change a learning culture from being rigid and limited to guidelines into a learning process filled with teacher creativity. Totok said, "Mathematics that is scary and fun, literacy that is difficult to achieve from various tests, in fact can be improved in ways that can be made by the teachers concerned." "Creativity cannot be taught, but it can be grown and transmitted because the creativity of teachers is different," said the Head of Balitbangbuk. According to Totok, the aim of the INOVASI program is to have schools implementing good practices that can be used by other schools. "If all this time many schools have been waiting for instructions from the Ministry to carry out their education process, then this INOVASI is reversed." He emphasized, "Don't wait for clues but go. Don't be afraid to be creative and don't be afraid to be wrong because creativity knows no mistakes."

Since 2018, INOVASI has been working with local governments and various stakeholders to improve education and student learning outcomes in Indonesia. He has 21 partnerships with NGOs, LPTKs, NGOs and other institutions. especially in the four provinces that are Innovation partners: NTB, NTT, North Kalimantan, and East Java. Michelle Lowe, Human Development Counselor for the Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, praised the INOVASI program. He described the important collaboration between the Indonesian and Australian governments. According to Michael Lowe, teamwork is important to improve the quality of education. Inovasi works directly with schools, teachers and local government officials to improve teaching and learning in Indonesia. According to Mark Heyward, Innovation Program Director, they are very proud to see positive and encouraging results. "These results are inspiring for me, and I think for all of us," said Mark. According to INOVASI data, the literacy skills of students in NTT increased from 22% to 53%, and the distance between students with special needs and other students increased from 17% to 4%.

Implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka in Islamic Religious Education Subjects

Quoted from pendis.kemenag.go.id (10/07/23) Makassar (Directorate of PAI) -The kurikulum merdeka has started in schools and PTs under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The kurikulum merdeka guaranteed by the Ministry of Education and Culture will provide educators with the opportunity to provide high-quality learning that suits the needs and learning environment of students.

PAI teachers are required to understand and apply the PAI learning curriculum in their schools. However, they face the challenge of applying it in contexts that include flexible learning, focusing on important content, and developing soft skills and character. Permendikbudristek No.16 of 2022, Permendikbudristek No. 21 of 2022, Permendikbudristek No. 37 of 2022, Permendikbudristek No. 262 of 2022, Decree of the Head of BSKAP No. 033/H/KR/Tahun 2022,

and Decree of the Head of BSKAP No. 009/H/KR/Tahun 2022 is the legal basis for an kurikulum merdeka that teachers must pay attention to. Overall, the basic concepts of the kurikulum merdeka, lesson plans, and learning objectives are discussed.

Feisal Ghozali from the Center for Curriculum and Books of the Ministry of Education and Culture conveyed this in Technical Guidance for Strengthening PAI Learning for SMA/SMALB/SMK Based on Blended Learning Batch 1 in Makassar (6/4). "In one week, 2 JP is multiplied by 36 weeks, then 1 JP is added for Islamic religious projects, so the total is 108 JP per year," said Feisal Ghozali, a source from the Center for Curriculum and Books. As a result, he believes that the time allocated is intended to improve the soft skills and character of students through a gradual initial and final assessment process. In order to ensure that GPAI learning outcomes meet the requirements, Feisal stated that "the school needs to find out intensively by communicating with parents." In addition, he encourages educators to use a variety of learning approaches. As a result, he argues that learning objective achievement standards (KKTP) can be used to create independent curricula, and that activities that are difficult to interpret can be included in this category.

Feisal also provides an overview of the steps needed to achieve the learning objectives. Starting with understanding and analyzing learning outcomes, formulating learning objectives, compiling learning objectives flow, and designing learning, these steps are the first steps. The theory of Tighe and Wiggins (2005) and Bloom Anderson and Krathwoh's (2001) taxonomy are in agreement. Basically, the Free Curriculum policy established by the government aims to provide educational actors with the opportunity to supervise, design and implement learning evaluations. Students should be given the opportunity to talk on their own terms, not with their teacher.

This kurikulum merdeka covers all subjects, including PAI. Based on the Decree of the Head of caAP No. 8 of 2022, the learning outcomes of PAI in the kurikulum merdeka are determined. In this curriculum, the aim of PAI is to form students who are spiritually strong, have noble character, and understand the basics of Islam and how it can be applied in everyday life within the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (Agustin, 2023).

In general, PAI must direct students to four things: a tendency to goodness (*al-hanifiyyah*), an attitude of acceptance (*al-samhah*), noble character (*makarim al-akhlaq*), and compassion for the universe (*rahmatan lil al alamin*). Learning PAI, there are many methods other than lectures, such as interactive discussions, curiosity and discovery based learning (inquiry and discovery learning), focusing on children, problem solving, and real-life project-based learning (Agustin, 2023).

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The kurikulum merdeka has an important relevance in Islamic religious education. This curriculum offers a broader and more comprehensive approach to teaching the Islamic religion, providing opportunities for generations of Muslims to develop independent and creative characters based on Islamic values. Islamic religious education needs to reflect the values of independence and teach the Muslim generation to think critically, independently and creatively. In this ever-evolving and complex world, it is important for generations of Muslims to have independent thinking in order to be able to face challenges and understand their religion more deeply.

Teachers play an important role in developing assessments based on character, literacy, and numeracy surveys. They must teach character through teaching that builds respect and responsibility. Teachers must have professionalism, adaptability, and good relationships with students' parents. The Ministry of Education and Culture promotes independent learning that encourages students to develop character and skills. The strategies include encouraging independence, nationalist character, and cultivating talent potential. Collaboration between

students, teachers and parents is very important to produce a superior generation. Development of creativity is very important to improve human resources. Key indicators of creative thinking include subtle thinking, flexible thinking, original thinking, and exercise. PAI learning is expected to be able to keep up with the times, providing more opportunities for students to be creative. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) implements a free learning policy to facilitate the growth and development of the creativity of students, teachers and education staff.

This was conveyed by Feisal Ghazali from the Center for Curriculum and Books of the Ministry of Education and Culture Makassar on (6/4) in the Technical Guidance of Strengthening PAI Learning for SMA/SMALB/SMK Based on Blended Learning Batch 1. In one week, 2 JP multiplied by 36 weeks, then added 1 JP for the project -Islamic religious projects, bringing a total of 108 JP per year, sourced from the Center for Curriculum and Books. As a consequence, according to him, the time allotted is intended to improve students' soft skills and character through a gradual initial and final assessment process. In addition, schools need to find out intensively by communicating with parents, this is because if the GPAI learning outcomes are in accordance with the standards. In addition, he urges teachers to use various learning strategies.

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