



IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM IN PREPARING THE 21ST CENTURY GENERATION TO WELCOME THE ERA OF SOCIETY 5.0

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Abstract

Society 5.0 is a society that can solve various social challenges and problems by utilizing various innovations born in the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, such as the Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence, Big Data (large amounts of data), and robots to improve the quality of human life. This era is a new opportunity and a challenge for students to enhance soft skills in preparation for the future. The curriculum is the "soul" of Education. The curriculum needs to be evaluated dynamically and periodically following the times, especially science and technology. The curriculum is also prepared by considering the competencies the community and graduates need. The Merdeka Curriculum is one of the new policies of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia, which is centred and follows students' needs (student-centred) and aims to realize an innovative learning process. The 21st century generation is expected to have 4C skills: critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity. This study used a descriptive qualitative method. The results of this study were obtained from a review of several literatures. The study results explain how the Independent Curriculum implementation prepares the 21st-century generation to welcome the era of society 5.0.

Keywords: Independent curriculum, era society 5.0, The 21st century

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INTRODUCTION

Through Education, one can develop knowledge, insight, values and character, even though some are inherited from culture. The implementation of Education is required to prepare graduates to become humans with applicable behaviours and values and prepare students to face dynamic life challenges. The educational process must provide excellent opportunities for students to develop and actualize their abilities. With higher-quality Education, we will achieve a brighter future for Indonesia. Schools have a great responsibility to realize these ideals.

The provision of quality education requires the availability of a good curriculum. The curriculum has a very strategic and decisive role in the implementation and success of Education. The curriculum is the life of the course of Education. Education in Indonesia constantly undergoes curriculum changes from time to time. Curriculum development in elementary schools is a necessity. Curriculum changes certainly cannot be avoided and passed, but must always be undertaken and adjusted to needs and principles (Sadewa, 2022). The national education system is required to always carry out updates in a planned, directed and continuous manner to ensure education equity quality improvement as well as the relevance and efficiency of education management to prepare students to face challenges according to the demands of changing lives both locally, nationally, and globally (Faiz et al., 2022).

Freedom of Learning is a policy launched by Education Minister Nadiem Makarim, which aims to return education management authority to schools and local governments (Purwadi Sutanto, 2020: 7). The policy of independent Learning was born with a desire to make Indonesia a smart, just, wise and wise country. A country that creates a better life for all its people. In this case, Education must be prioritized to fulfil the wishes and ideals of the Indonesian people. Educational institutions must be able to balance Education with the times (Asfiati, 2020: 26).

Education units in Indonesia are given three alternative curriculum choices in the context of independent Learning. Schools are free to choose according to their conditions; these options include the 2013 curriculum, the Emergency curriculum (simplified 2013 curriculum) and the prototype curriculum. Ministerial Decree Number 1177/M/2020 states that the purpose of the curriculum is to strengthen skills and personalities with the profile of Pancasila students. Ensuring uniform quality of Education by increasing the capacity of competent school leadership programs, central unit education in the range of quality learning, building an education ecosystem with a stronger emphasis on improving quality and creating a collaborative environment for education stakeholders both across schools, government fields, and the centre (Syafi'i, 2022).

Curriculum development must be carried out in response to the development of Science and Technology (IPTEK), *societal needs*, and the needs of graduate users (*stakeholder*

needs). However, it is undeniable that the understanding of education stakeholders and stakeholders about the curriculum and its development is still very diverse. There are still misconceptions about the curriculum, especially those related to one of the new policies from the Minister of Education and Culture that schools have begun to implement, namely the Independent Curriculum (KM), which has been regulated in Permendikbudristek No. 262/M/2022 Year 2022 concerning Guidelines for Curriculum Implementation in the Framework of Learning Recovery.

Technology has become one of the main reasons for changes in various sectors of life. The development of technology has gone towards digital, where all human activities can be fulfilled by existing technology. Previously, we have known the Industrial Revolution Era 4.0, a comprehensive transformation of all aspects of production in an industry by utilizing digital technology and the Internet. Putriani & Hudaidah (2021) stated that the Industrial Revolution was one of the significant technological changes that resulted in changes in other fields, especially in Education and society. Not long after this era ran, a new concept initiated directly by the Japanese state, namely Society 5.0, emerged. According to Maghfiroh & Sholeh (2022), through *Society 5.0*, humans can develop their skills and abilities by utilizing various developed technologies. With the initiation of this concept, humans must continue to set behind the rapid development of artificial technology. Currently, multiple countries strive to improve the order of life in their countries, each so as not to be left behind with increasingly sophisticated artificial technology.

Indonesia has made efforts to improve the quality of Education. This is evidenced by several efforts to change Education, such as curriculum improvements and learning systems. The aspect of good Education will determine a prosperous and prosperous social life. The presence of the "Independent Curriculum" was initiated directly by the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemendikbud Ristek RI). The Merdeka Curriculum answers to the intense competition for human resources globally in the 21st century. Lukum in Putriani & Hudaidah (2021) states three significant competencies in the 21st century: the competence to think, act and live in the world. Considering competencies include critical thinking, creative thinking, and problem-solving. Acting competencies include communication, collaboration, digital literacy and technological literacy. At the same time, the competence of life in the world consists of initiative, self-direction, global understanding and social responsibility. This competency should be applied in 21st-century Learning because this era will require innovative and creative people to adapt quickly. This is an essential concern for the government of the Republic of Indonesia to provide adequate facilities and infrastructure as soon as possible in facing global developments, especially in the era of *society 5.0*. Curriculum development is one of the proper steps to shape students' character later to meet that era.

This curriculum was developed to produce millennials who can quickly understand

the material or knowledge taught by teachers, not just remember teaching materials. Students are also expected to be able to utilize technology in their learning process. Previously, Education in Indonesia was very dependent on textualized books, but now it has begun to be replaced by digital products such as *e-books* (A. D. Samala et al., 2021). This marks the rapid development of digital technology in the 21st century. According to Effendi & Wahidy (2019), currently, technology has a very vital role in Education, namely the emergence of electronic media as a source of learning other than teachers, the emergence of new learning methods, such as the *Blended Learning* method to facilitate the learning process, and the learning process can be done using the Internet or *online* (A D Samala et al., 2020). The development of this technology allows students to learn not only in the classroom but also from anywhere as long as there is still an internet signal in their area. Rahayu et al. (2022) explained that society continues to develop from primitive to agrarian to industrial and is shifting towards an informative society. This informative society marks the existence of digitalization, and the internet application is one example of digitalization where society has now changed from an *offline* society to an *online* society.

With the increasing use of the Internet, it has become one example that today's people, both in urban and rural areas, have utilized technology to meet their needs, especially in finding learning resources. The era of *Society 5.0* has also emphasized the components of technology and humanity. Such adaptation of technology in Learning has become an obligation in this era. Every student needs a strong will and character to realize a generation that advances the nation. The Merdeka Belajar curriculum has applied the implications of every development of society so far. The Ministry of Education and Culture for Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia has sought to improve the quality of Education, such as what must be done to improve human resources who have high creativity in applying the knowledge they have learned by remembering that Education will never be separated from social dynamics, where this step is also taken to anticipate various kinds of social dynamics that exist in society, especially with the initiation of the era of *society 5.0* in the 21st century.

Puspitarini (2022) stated that in carrying out the teaching process to 21st-century generation students, teachers must be able to adjust teaching strategies, models and methods based on the characteristics of the generation. Teachers can no longer teach with conventional, standard or mediocre learning strategies. Teachers must be able to be innovative by enriching and updating knowledge and skills to be able to present exciting and interactive learning activities by utilizing technology. The 21st-century learning model will rely more on technology, especially the Internet, to support Learning, where students will be required to actively and independently form *4C skills*, namely *critical thinking*, *communication*, *collaboration*, and *creativity* (Indarta et al., 2021). So, this literature study aims to see the relevance between the independent learning curriculum and the 21st-century learning model in

developing the *society 5.0 era*.

Based on the description above, it is necessary to know how implementing the independent learning curriculum in schools prepares the next generation to welcome the era of society 5.0. This study also aims to find out the picture of the implementation of the independent curriculum in schools; for this reason, researchers are interested in raising the title Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Preparing the 21st Century Generation to Welcome the Era of Society 5.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study aims to know and describe how the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Preparing the 21st Century Generation to Welcome the Era of *Society 5.0*. In this context, researchers approach it using descriptive qualitative research.

This study utilizes various strategies and techniques using qualitative data based on interviews with school stakeholders such as principals and classroom teachers in elementary schools. The end of data collection by observation, interview and review of documentation needs data analysis materials. This research data was obtained from primary data sources and secondary data. Preliminary data were obtained through questionnaires, interviews, and observations of the objects studied. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained through documentation studies of the implementation of the independent curriculum.

Qualitative research is one type of research where the source of research comes from data, utilizing existing theories as explanatory material and ending with a theory. The data collection is a review of several literature (literature studies). Researchers are looking for several *e-article references* through the *Google Scholar platform* as support. Researchers also use literature studies or *Library Research* obtained through various sources such as journals, books, or articles with links to the problem to be solved. Research activities are carried out systematically and procedurally by collecting, processing, and concluding data using specific methods or techniques.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.

The Nature of 21st Century Learning

Students with 21st-century competence are superior and productive humans and democratic citizens, so they can participate in sustainable global development and have a resilient spirit in facing all challenges in the times. The nation's challenges in the 21st century are more directed at learning to prepare students to meet the industrial revolution in the 21st century. The concept of 21st-century Education that the Ministry of Education and Culture has

adopted seeks to develop and improve the curriculum from the elementary school (SD), junior high and high school levels. These concepts include 21st-century skills.

The concept of 21st Century Learning is graduates with competencies in thinking, complex communication skills and solving significant problems to the needs of global dynamics (Uminingtyas, Sukarmin, suryana, 2019) in addition to collaboration and creativity skills to face the complex rapid development of the world (Ark, 2019). 21st-century Education integrates knowledge skills, skills and attitudes and mastery of information and communication technology. (Widayat (2018)).

Pancasila must thrive in the soul of the Indonesian nation. The values of Pancasila are not just jargon, slogans, posters, banners or campaigns but must live in real nature (Basic & Education, 2021). Through the implementation of the Pancasila student profile, it is hoped that students, especially in elementary schools, can develop their character values so that good behaviour is formed and attached to students. There are six critical dimensions of competencies: faith, devotion to God Almighty and noble character, cooperation, independence, and critical and creative reasoning. The six interrelated dimensions are also strengthening. (Ministry of Education and Culture of Research and Technology, 2021).

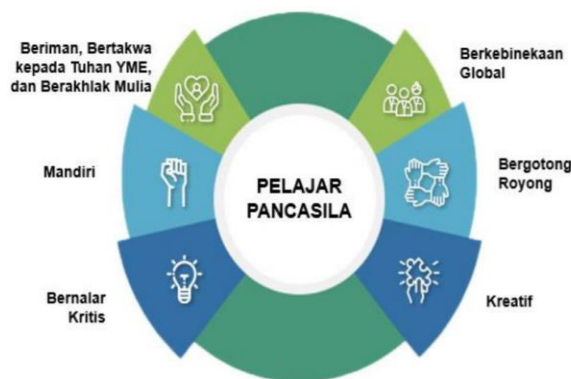


Figure 1. Dimensions of Pancasila Student Profile

The Era of Society 5.0

The era of *Society 5.0*, or super-intelligent society, was initiated directly by the Japanese government on January 21, 2019. This era was reported in the World Economic Forum held in Davos, Switzerland. The era of *society 5.0* requires people to be able to solve various problems or social dynamics by utilizing technology such as *the Internet of Things* (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI), *robot technology*, and *even big data* so that it can meet their needs. (Putri et al.,2021). The era of *Society 5.0* emerged as a development of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, which is considered to replace the role of humans. The ability of humans to create new technology developed from science makes humans who are said to be "modern" think more rationally. With the concept of

Society 5.0, humans will become *human-centred*, which will later be based on *technology-based technology* (Windra, 2021). Humans who have a role in society are present as a social system that moves dynamically following the times. *Society 5.0* is described as dynamic in its mobility movement, and new challenges will arise in that era, so recent efforts or breakthroughs are needed to deal with it (Rahmawati et al., 2021). These challenges occur in various sectors or fields, especially in Education. For example, teachers must be able to create exciting learning content so that students can have 5C skills, namely *critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, and character*. Students need this skill to form competencies that can face these challenges. Especially with digital technology such as computers and *the Internet* that supports all accessibility, every activity can be done quickly and efficiently. Teachers and students, as social communities who participate in the development of the era, must also be able to apply every technology present in the era of *society 5.0*.

Implementation of the Independent Curriculum

The Merdeka Curriculum was developed as a more flexible curriculum framework. The focus of this curriculum is on essential material and the development of character and competence of students. The characteristics of the Independent Curriculum: first, Learning is based on soft skills and character development projects that adjust the profile of Pancasila students. Second *Project-Based Learning for developing soft skills and character by the profile of Pancasila students is the first characteristic of this independent curriculum*. Second, concentrate on the most critical information to allow enough time for in-depth study of basic skills such as literacy and numeracy. Third, teachers should be free to adapt their teaching methods to the needs and abilities of students as well as local contexts and subjects.

The principle of self-directed curriculum learning involves three components: *first*, differentiated intracurricular Learning—*second*, extracurricular Education in the form of a project to improve the Pancasila Student Profile. *Third*, teaching unit resources and student interests are considered when extracurricular Learning is carried out. Diagnostic assessment, planning, and Learning are used to carry out these steps.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology began efforts to improve the quality of Indonesian Education in 2019. Their first step was to introduce the idea of Freedom of Learning. As a result of the policy, the educational curriculum is also modified and adapted. Curriculum Merdeka and an innovation in Education in Indonesia. In its implementation, many things are experienced, for example, related to policies that must adjust to previous conditions. In addition, the era of *Society 5.0* has also changed many things that have become the habits of students.

Implementing the Independent Curriculum is not carried out simultaneously and massively referring to policies that provide school flexibility in implementing the curriculum. The implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka is carried out in stages to minimize disruption,

collect teacher feedback, improve policies, and provide time for educators to learn to improve Learning. Data collection on school readiness in the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum (IKM) is carried out by the Ministry of Culture, Research and Technology (2022). Currently, 142,703 education units have implemented the Independent Curriculum with the following details:

Table 1. Data Supporting the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum

		Number of SP
IKM Line	Mandiri Berbagi	3.331
	Independent Change	90.041
	Independent Learning	49.331
Sum		142.703

Table 2. Data Supporting the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Schools

	2021/2022	2022/2023
Mover School Program	2. 492	9.234
SMK Center of Excellence	901	1.401
Total 3,393		10..635

The results of Houtman's research in 2020 explained that Merdeka Belajar is an innovation in providing policymakers related to policy implementation that learning outcomes cannot always be measured from cognitive aspects in the form of values but affective and psychomotor aspects in the form of attitudes, skills, creativity, innovation, independence, and competence are also needed. Accreditation is also a determining factor for the educational institution whether or not it is good in implementing Education. This aligns with the emergence of *Society 5.0*, the impact of the rapid industrial revolution 4.0, which affects the conventional industrial order to be all-digital. Humans who cannot be separated from technology are certainly one of the exciting things. Because the changing behaviour of society certainly also has an impact on students. Education is also affected, so assessment cannot be measured in just one aspect.

The results of K. Nagy and E. Hajrizi's research in 2022 explain that the development of innovation models in Education is beneficial for transforming social needs. The concept of *Society 5.0* is being examined through planning and implementing innovations. The creation of innovation models continues to be adjusted to the needs of *Society 5.0* for innovation. The

paradigm of creating innovations in adapting to the needs of *Society 5.0* is more accessible and able to help recover from disasters due to the COVID-19 pandemic due to technological advances. Reviewing the facilities and needs of each school in Indonesia is essential to implementing an independent curriculum in training students to be more optimistic in facing challenges in the era of disruption and *Society 5.0*.

Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum is one of the solutions for Indonesian Education in the future. A more flexible curriculum will also make it easier for teachers to provide Learning; plus, in the era of *Society 5.0*, it is undoubtedly a challenge for teachers to adjust to Learning that must be technology-based.

CONCLUSION

The 21st-century learning concept focuses on developing skills and competencies in students to prepare them for the challenges of the modern world. This includes critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, and character development. The values of Pancasila are also emphasized to develop students' character and good behaviour. The Ministry of Education and Culture has introduced the Independent Curriculum, which focuses on essential material, character development, and flexibility in teaching methods.

The era of *Society 5.0* emphasizes the use of technology such as the Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence, and big data to solve social problems and meet the needs of society. This era requires humans to be human-centred and adapt to society's dynamic movement. Teachers and students need to develop 5C skills to face the challenges of *Society 5.0*, and the Merdeka Curriculum is seen as a solution for Indonesian Education in the future.

The Independent Curriculum, known as the Merdeka Curriculum, focuses on soft skills, character development, and essential information. It allows teachers to adapt their teaching methods to the needs and abilities of students and local contexts. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology has begun efforts to improve the quality of Indonesian Education by introducing the idea of Freedom of Learning and implementing the Independent Curriculum in stages.

The Independent Curriculum is implemented in stages to minimize disruption, collect teacher feedback, and provide time for educators to learn to improve Learning. Data collection on school readiness in the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum is carried out by the Ministry of Culture, Research and Technology. The research results have shown that the Merdeka Curriculum is beneficial for transforming social needs and adapting to the challenges of *Society 5.0*. It is seen as a solution for Indonesian Education in the future, especially in the era of *Society 5.0*.

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