



## IMPLEMENTATION OF MERDEKA CURRICULUM AT SMP NEGERI 1 KEDUNGWUNI PEKALONGAN

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**Abstract.** This study aims to describe the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni, Pekalongan Regency, covering aspects of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling. This research employs a qualitative approach with a naturalistic type of research. Data collection techniques include observation, in-depth interviews, and document studies, while data analysis involves data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing with source triangulation to ensure validity. The results show that the planning of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni was carried out systematically through the preparation of curriculum administration, academic supervision programs, budgeting, and curriculum planning evaluation. Organizing was implemented by proportionally distributing tasks and delegating authority. The actuating phase involved motivating and directing all school members, while controlling was conducted through continuous evaluation and follow-up on curriculum implementation. The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni was effective, as indicated by the significant improvement in national education report indicators, including literacy, numeracy, character, learning quality, and school climate. This study recommends the need for continuous teacher training and strengthening collaboration with various stakeholders to further optimize the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.

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## INTRODUCTION

Education is the fundamental foundation for building an outstanding generation capable of adapting to the times. Schools, as formal educational institutions, play a strategic role in implementing the educational process, one of the components of which is the curriculum. The curriculum functions as a tool to translate the vision, mission, and educational goals into structured and systematic learning practices (Nisa & Hamami, 2023; Aman, 2020). In its development, curriculum renewal has become a necessity in order for the education system to remain relevant to the ongoing dynamics of society, culture, science, and technology. One manifestation of this renewal is the emergence of the Merdeka Curriculum, initiated by the government in response to various challenges in the education sector, particularly due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, which caused a learning crisis or learning loss (Harahap, 2024).

The Merdeka Curriculum offers flexibility in the learning process by prioritizing the strengthening of basic competencies, alignment with students' needs and interests, as well as project-based learning that is oriented towards the development of the Pancasila Student Profile (Akbar et al., 2025). In the Merdeka Curriculum, the learning material is organized to be simpler and more essential, allowing students more time to deeply understand concepts and apply them in real-life situations (Andreani & Gunansyah, 2023). The focus of learning is no longer solely on achieving narrow academic targets, but on achieving comprehensive competencies, encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects.

Teachers are given the flexibility to develop creative and innovative teaching materials in accordance with the characteristics of their students and the context of the school environment. This provides teachers with the opportunity to design adaptive, responsive, and relevant learning experiences (Caesaria, 2024) that reflect the real conditions faced by students. Teachers can

choose from a variety of strategies, methods, and learning media that align with students' potential, learning styles, and local needs, making the learning process no longer uniform and rigid, but instead dynamic, personalized, and meaningful.

Students are also encouraged to take a more active role in the learning process, becoming the primary agents in discovering meaning from each learning activity they engage in. Through various approaches such as project-based learning, differentiated instruction, and the Pancasila Student Profile (P5) reinforcement projects, students are trained to develop creativity, critical thinking skills, collaboration abilities, as well as character values such as mutual cooperation, independence, and integrity (Fitroni et al., 2024; Ubaidillah et al., 2025). The learning process in the Merdeka Curriculum is carefully designed so that students not only acquire knowledge but also develop their full potential across various fields, in accordance with their talents, interests, and aspirations. Thus, the Merdeka Curriculum not only equips students for academic success but also prepares them to become strong individuals with character, adaptive to change, and capable of making positive contributions to society in the future.

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in educational institutions requires effective and comprehensive educational management. This process involves four main functions: planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling. Each of these stages must be carried out synergistically to ensure that the curriculum is implemented optimally and educational goals are achieved. Furthermore, the success of curriculum implementation does not rely solely on teachers as the primary executors, but also requires active support from school principals, educational staff, parents, and the wider community (Humam & Hanif, 2025).

SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni in Pekalongan Regency is one of the schools that has implemented the Merdeka Curriculum. Based on the 2024 National Education Report, the school has demonstrated impressive achievements across various indicators, such as a literacy rate of 91.11%, a numeracy competency rate of 82.22%, improvements in the quality of learning, character development, and the creation of a safe and comfortable school climate. These achievements indicate that SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni has successfully adapted the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum into daily teaching practices. This condition serves as an important background for the author to conduct an in-depth investigation into how the implementation process of the Merdeka Curriculum is carried out at the school, including planning, organizing, execution, and curriculum supervision.

Relevant studies related to this research include the study by Rois (2024) from Yogyakarta State University, which examined the implementation of the *Merdeka Curriculum* in Social Studies at SMP Negeri 4 Klaten. The findings indicate that the curriculum was implemented through three main stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation. However, teachers encountered several obstacles, such as insufficient training, limited facilities, and lack of support from relevant stakeholders, which hindered the effectiveness of curriculum implementation. Meanwhile, the study by Assyifa et al. (2023) focused on Indonesian language instruction at SMP Muhammadiyah Al-Mujahidin Gunung Kidul. They found that teachers faced challenges in mastering teaching skills aligned with the *Merdeka Curriculum*, especially in the context of digital education, classroom management, and limited access to supporting references.

Furthermore, Afriani et al. (2023) conducted a study at SMP Patra Dharma 2 Balikpapan. Their research showed that the implementation of the *Merdeka Curriculum* ran smoothly due to strong commitment from school principals and teachers, as well as support from parents and students. The processes of planning, implementation, and assessment were conducted systematically in accordance with the principles of the curriculum. In addition, a study by Resti Rosmiati et al (2023) investigated the implementation of the *Merdeka Curriculum* in Mathematics learning at SMP Negeri 3 Kota Serang. Their findings revealed that planning had referred to collaborative teaching modules, yet the application of differentiated learning was not yet optimal, and assessments were still conducted in conventional ways, although they included both formative and summative aspects.



Lastly, a study by [Suja'i \(2023\)](#) examined the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in Islamic Education (PAI) at SMP Nurul Qomar. This study concluded that the curriculum provides opportunities for strengthening student character through stages of planning, implementation, and evaluation. However, challenges remained, such as teachers' limited understanding of the *Merdeka Belajar* approach and the lack of appropriate character education media. Overall, these five studies emphasize that the success of the Merdeka Curriculum implementation highly depends on teacher preparedness, managerial support from the school, and the availability of adequate facilities.

Based on a review of these previous studies, it can be concluded that research on the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum has been extensively conducted across various subjects and educational settings, focusing primarily on implementation stages, teacher challenges, and institutional support. However, there remains a gap in the form of limited comprehensive studies that describe the implementation holistically within a specific educational institution, covering both managerial and pedagogical aspects. Additionally, few studies have examined local contexts such as SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni in Pekalongan Regency. Existing research tends to focus on specific subjects or isolated aspects of curriculum implementation. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by providing a comprehensive overview of how the Merdeka Curriculum is implemented at SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni, covering planning, implementation, and evaluation, as well as the challenges and strategies encountered by all relevant stakeholders, including teachers, school leaders, and students.

Unlike previous studies, this research specifically focuses on the managerial analysis of the Merdeka Curriculum implementation, which includes planning, organizing, actuating, and supervising at SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni. This study not only examines the implementation of learning or the adaptation of teachers and students, but also highlights the role of the school principal, managerial policies, and the supervisory systems that support curriculum success. Moreover, it presents improvements in literacy, numeracy, and character values based on the education report card as indicators of successful curriculum implementation. Thus, the approach taken in this study is more holistic and encompasses structural aspects of educational management that have not been widely explored in previous research.

This study aims to describe and analyze the comprehensive implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni, Pekalongan Regency, with a focus on four key aspects of its execution: planning, organizing, actuating, and supervising the curriculum. In terms of planning, the study will explore how the school designs a curriculum that aligns with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, as well as the role of stakeholders in developing a flexible and relevant curriculum that meets students' needs. The organizational aspect will examine how the curriculum is structured and implemented through learning activities that foster a conducive and meaningful learning environment. Regarding actuating, the study will analyze how teachers implement the curriculum using approaches that emphasize freedom, creativity, and diverse teaching methods, as well as how students are engaged in a more active and participatory learning process. Finally, the supervision aspect will discuss the evaluation and monitoring mechanisms used to ensure that the curriculum is implemented as intended. This research is expected to present best practices that can be adopted by other schools and identify challenges in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, thereby providing useful solutions or recommendations to improve the quality of education in the future.

The benefits of this research are divided into two categories: theoretical and practical. Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich the body of knowledge, particularly in the field of educational management and curriculum implementation in an era of change. In addition, it may serve as a reference for future studies on similar topics. Practically, for the Department of Education and Culture, the findings of this study can be used as an evaluation tool in formulating curriculum development policies and school guidance strategies. For school principals, the research findings can serve as a foundation for improving the effectiveness of curriculum and instructional management. For teachers, this study is expected to provide inspiration for developing teaching strategies aligned with the principles of the Merdeka



Curriculum. Finally, for other researchers, the results of this study can serve as a reference for further research in the areas of curriculum implementation and instructional innovation.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a naturalistic research design. The qualitative approach was chosen because the study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of how the Merdeka Curriculum (*Kurikulum Merdeka*) is implemented at SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni, Pekalongan Regency, in a natural context without manipulating any variables. Qualitative research seeks to understand phenomena holistically through detailed descriptions, with the researcher acting as the main instrument, directly involved in both data collection and analysis (Waruwu, 2024). The naturalistic design was selected because the research is conducted in a natural setting, where the researcher interacts directly with subjects and observes various activities related to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum without any intervention. The research site for this study is SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni, located in Pekalongan Regency. This school was selected because it has demonstrated significant improvement in the National Education Report following the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, making it a suitable subject for in-depth analysis.

The study will be conducted from December 2024 to July 2025. The research activities include proposal preparation, consultations, proposal seminar, field data collection, data analysis, final report writing, and thesis defense. The research subjects are informants directly involved in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, including the principal, vice principal, teachers, and students of SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni. The object of the research is the implementation process of the Merdeka Curriculum itself, covering aspects of planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision of the curriculum at the school (Yunita et al., 2023). To collect data, the researcher uses three primary techniques: observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, to gain a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni, Pekalongan Regency. Direct observation was conducted to monitor the field implementation of the curriculum, focusing on three main stages: curriculum planning, learning implementation, and learning outcome evaluation (Yunita et al., 2023). During the observation, the researcher noted the interactions between teachers and students, as well as how learning activities were organized according to the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, including flexibility in teaching approaches and strategies.

In-depth interviews were conducted with various parties directly involved in the curriculum implementation, such as the school principal, teachers, and students. The aim was to explore their perceptions, experiences, challenges, and strategies in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. These interviews were designed to gather more detailed information on how each group understands and addresses the dynamics of applying a curriculum that is more open and student-centered. Interviews with teachers also aimed to understand the teaching approaches they choose, as well as the challenges they face in adapting methods and teaching materials to the principles of Merdeka Belajar. In addition, document study was conducted by examining various documents relevant to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. The documents reviewed included teaching modules used in learning, annual and semester programs designed to accommodate curriculum objectives, documents related to the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5), which is an important part of the Merdeka Curriculum, and reports on learning evaluations that cover student achievements and feedback on the learning process. This document study aimed to obtain more objective and structured information regarding the policies and practices implemented at the school.

The instruments used in this study include an observation guide, which serves to guide the researcher in recording important aspects related to the curriculum implementation, an interview guide designed to explore qualitative data from the informants, and a documentation checklist that will be used to verify the completeness and relevance of the documents related to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. By using these three techniques, it is hoped that





the study will provide valid and in-depth results regarding the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni. Data analysis was conducted following the steps developed by Miles and Huberman, which include data collection, data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. The data obtained from observation, interviews, and documentation were collected and categorized according to the research themes. Data condensation was then performed to simplify and focus the information, followed by the presentation of data in the form of descriptive narratives and tables. Subsequently, conclusions were drawn based on patterns found in the data, and these conclusions were verified to ensure their accuracy.

To maintain the validity of the data, the researcher employed source triangulation, technique triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing. Source triangulation was carried out by comparing data obtained from various informants, while technique triangulation was conducted by using more than one method of data collection (Adhimah, 2020). Member checking was conducted by confirming the interview results with the respective informants to ensure data accuracy (Hujaimatul & Iwan Zulfikar, 2024). Peer debriefing involved discussing the research findings with colleagues or supervisors to gain feedback and test the consistency of the results (Dewi & SH, 2025). The research procedure began with a preliminary study and initial field observation to gain a general overview of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka). Subsequently, the researcher developed data collection instruments and carried out data collection through observation, interviews, and documentation. Once the data were collected, the researcher analyzed the data using qualitative analysis techniques and validated their credibility. The final step was to compile the research report, which included the presentation of findings, discussion, conclusions, and recommendations.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni is located in Pekalongan Regency, Central Java. This school is one of the educational units designated as an independent implementer of the Merdeka Curriculum. According to the 2024 national education report card, SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni has shown impressive achievements in various indicators, such as literacy, numeracy, character development, quality of learning, and school climate. With the support of competent human resources, adequate facilities and infrastructure, and a positive school culture, SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni has been able to implement learning innovations in line with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum.

### 1. Planning the Merdeka Curriculum

The planning for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni is carried out through the preparation of comprehensive and structured curriculum administration documents, which include the Annual Program (Prota), Semester Program (Promes), Learning Objectives Flow (ATP), Teaching Modules, and planning for the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5). During this preparation process, the school forms a curriculum development team consisting of various parties, including the school principal, subject teachers, and curriculum development staff, who work collaboratively. This team is responsible for designing and drafting the planning documents in accordance with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, while still considering the characteristics of the students and the conditions of the school environment that provide the learning context.

In developing the planning, SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni consciously integrates the values of the Pancasila Student Profile into all subjects and project activities. This approach aims to cultivate students' character based on the values of Pancasila, as well as to make education more relevant to students' daily life contexts. It also reflects the school's commitment to developing students' potential not only in cognitive aspects but also in character and social aspects, in line with the objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum.

To ensure the quality of implementation, the school also conducts internal training for teachers, aimed at strengthening their understanding of the structure, principles, and implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. This training involves a deeper introduction to



changes in the curriculum, as well as equipping teachers with the skills needed to design and manage more flexible, student-centered teaching modules. Teachers are also trained to adapt more innovative and engaging teaching methods, which allow students to learn according to their individual learning styles in a freer environment.

## **2. Organization of the Merdeka Curriculum**

The organization of the Merdeka Curriculum implementation at SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni is carried out by establishing a clear and effective organizational structure aimed at ensuring the smooth implementation of the curriculum at all levels. The school principal serves as the main leader who coordinates all activities related to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. As the leader, the principal is responsible for ensuring that the vision and objectives of the curriculum are achieved through effective management, as well as providing support and guidance to the entire implementation team at the school.

The vice principal for curriculum has a more specific role, which is to supervise the development of teaching materials, such as teaching modules and Lesson Plans (RPP), and ensure that all teaching materials are consistent with the principles and objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum. In addition, the vice principal for curriculum is also responsible for conducting periodic evaluations of the curriculum implementation in the field and providing constructive feedback to teachers to improve the quality of learning.

Teachers are assigned roles according to their individual competencies, allowing them to contribute optimally to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. Teachers not only act as instructors but also as facilitators in the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5), which aims to develop students' character through project-based activities grounded in the values of Pancasila. Moreover, teachers also play a role as implementers of differentiated learning in the classroom, focusing on flexible teaching approaches that meet the needs and learning styles of students. Task division is carried out proportionally and systematically, ensuring that each teacher has an active role that complements one another in implementing the curriculum.

In addition to the internal task division within the school, SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni also establishes close cooperation with parents and the surrounding community to support the successful implementation of character-based programs and projects. This collaboration includes regular communication with parents regarding students' progress, as well as involving the community in activities related to character development and project-based learning. Thus, the organization of the Merdeka Curriculum implementation at this school not only involves internal elements but also emphasizes the importance of the role of parents and the community as part of a broader educational ecosystem. The success of this curriculum heavily relies on good collaboration between all parties involved in the educational process.

## **3. Driving the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum**

In terms of driving the implementation, the school principal at SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni plays a crucial role in motivating all teachers and educational staff to commit to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. To achieve this, various activities such as socialization, workshops, training, and mentoring are conducted regularly as efforts to enhance educators' understanding and skills. These activities are designed to provide teachers with the opportunity to delve deeper into the principles and teaching strategies that align with the Merdeka Curriculum, as well as to foster their creativity in designing more innovative learning experiences. The principal actively encourages a spirit of collaboration and innovation among teachers, as these two factors are considered key to the successful implementation of a more flexible curriculum based on students' needs.

Furthermore, to motivate and appreciate teachers' efforts in developing creative and innovative teaching, the principal provides awards to teachers who successfully design and implement learning based on the Merdeka Curriculum. These awards not only serve as a form of appreciation but also act as a way to inspire other teachers to continue innovating and striving to improve the quality of education. The principal must ensure that all teachers receive adequate support in terms of resources, time, and opportunities for growth through continuous



professional development programs (Dacholfany et al., 2023). Differentiated instruction has become the main strategy implemented at this school (Yulaichah et al., 2024), where teachers are given the freedom to adjust their teaching methods and materials to match students' needs, interests, and talents. As a result, each student can learn according to their own style and pace, ultimately enhancing both learning outcomes and student motivation.

In practice, teachers at SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni strive to create more personalized and relevant learning experiences, enabling students to fully develop their potential. The Strengthening the Profile of Pancasila Students (P5) projects are implemented intensively at this school, with a focus on contemporary and relevant themes such as "Sustainable Lifestyle" and "Global Diversity." These themes are chosen to foster students' character and competencies holistically by integrating the values of Pancasila into each project activity. P5 projects do not merely focus on academic achievement; they are also aimed at building students' character with an emphasis on national values, diversity, and environmental awareness. Through these projects, students are encouraged to think critically and creatively and to actively engage with global issues while developing essential social skills for life in a pluralistic and sustainable society (Redhana, 2024). With this approach, students are expected not only to gain knowledge but also to apply these values in their daily lives.

#### 4. Supervision of the Merdeka Curriculum Implementation

Supervision of the Merdeka Curriculum implementation at SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni is carried out periodically through academic supervision led by the school principal along with the curriculum supervision team. This supervision aims to ensure that the curriculum is being implemented according to the plan and achieving the expected goals (Wulandari & Maulidin, 2024). The supervision process includes various activities, such as reviewing teaching materials, direct observation of the learning process in the classroom, monitoring the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5), and conducting reflection sessions with teachers to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching. The principal and the supervision team also hold discussions with teachers to provide constructive feedback, which aims to improve and optimize the implementation of the curriculum.

Evaluation of the Merdeka Curriculum implementation is conducted comprehensively at the end of each semester. This evaluation covers various aspects, such as the assessment of student learning outcomes, evaluation of the curriculum program's implementation, and identification of any obstacles or challenges encountered during the implementation process. The evaluation also includes analysis of feedback provided by students, teachers, and parents regarding the effectiveness of the curriculum. With this thorough evaluation, the school can obtain a clear picture of how well the learning objectives have been achieved and identify areas that may require improvement or enhancement.

Based on the evaluation results, SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni developed a clear and structured follow-up plan. This plan includes various strategic steps, such as strengthening teacher training to enhance their understanding and skills in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum more effectively (Efendi & Sholeh, 2023). In addition, curriculum administration is improved to ensure that teaching materials, planning documents, and evaluation reports are regularly updated and aligned with curriculum developments (Mesra & Salem, 2023). The development of innovative teaching practices is also a key focus of the follow-up plan, encouraging teachers to continuously innovate in designing and implementing creative, inclusive, and student-centered learning.

With this structured and continuous supervision system, SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni is able to maintain the quality of the Merdeka Curriculum implementation effectively. The periodic and comprehensive supervision ensures that every aspect of the curriculum is continually improved and adapted to the changing times, providing an optimal learning experience for students and achieving the desired educational goals. Therefore, the school can continuously enhance the quality of education and ensure that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is sustainable, adaptive, and successful.

#### 5. Supporting and Hindering Factors in Implementation



The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni is supported by several key factors that significantly influence the success of its execution. One of the main factors is the strong commitment and leadership of the school principal. The principal plays a vital role in guiding, motivating, and coordinating all activities related to the Merdeka Curriculum, including providing strategic direction, administrative support, and ensuring effective collaboration among all school stakeholders (Muzaini, 2023). This visionary leadership creates a conducive environment for teachers to innovate and adapt to the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum (Umami & Wahyudi, 2025). Teacher readiness is also a crucial factor in the implementation of this curriculum. SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni continuously enhances teacher capacity through various training and professional development programs. These training sessions cover not only theoretical understanding of the Merdeka Curriculum but also practical skills in developing differentiated learning, designing creative teaching materials, and applying various teaching approaches suited to students' needs. With ongoing training, teachers are increasingly able to optimize curriculum approaches based on student characteristics, making learning more inclusive and relevant (Soegiarto et al., 2023).

Support from parents and the community also plays a significant role in the successful implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni has established close cooperation with parents and the surrounding community. Parental participation in school activities, such as parent meetings, discussion forums, and community-based projects, helps create synergy that supports the development of students' character and competence. Additionally, community support is evident in their involvement in the *Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (P5) activities, which provide students with real-world experiences in interacting with their local environment.

The availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure is also an essential factor. With sufficient facilities, such as comfortable classrooms, well-equipped laboratories, and adequate technology devices, both teachers and students can carry out the learning process more effectively. These facilities support the use of more interactive and project-based learning methods, which align with the characteristics of the Merdeka Curriculum.

However, behind the various forms of support, there are still several challenges that need to be addressed. One of the main challenges is that some teachers still struggle to effectively implement differentiated instruction. Differentiated instruction requires a deep understanding of students' individual needs and the ability to adapt both content and teaching methods to suit each student's learning style and pace (Sholeh & Rofiki, 2024). This demands greater creativity and flexibility from teachers in designing learning experiences, which is not always easy to implement in a heterogeneous classroom environment.

The limited use of technology to support project-based learning also presents a distinct challenge (Said, 2023). Although the infrastructure is generally adequate, not all teachers and students are able to maximize the use of technology, particularly in designing and carrying out projects that require digital access and competence. This issue is often linked to a lack of digital literacy among teachers in utilizing technology to manage project-based learning, as well as limited access to technological devices among some students.

To address these challenges, SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni has adopted a collaborative approach and intensive mentoring. The principal, along with the curriculum supervision team, provides direct support to teachers who face difficulties by offering practical guidance and resources needed to enhance the quality of learning. Additionally, the school continues to enhance the professional development program for teachers, both through supplementary training and collaborations with external organizations, such as educational institutions or experts in educational technology. By doing so, it is hoped that these barriers can be minimized, allowing the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum to run more optimally and provide maximum benefits for students.

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni, Pekalongan Regency, shows that the process of curriculum change can be effective if supported by good educational management. Based on the research findings, the implementation of the



Merdeka Curriculum at this school includes four main management functions: planning, organizing, mobilizing, and supervising, which are interrelated with each other.

In the planning aspect, SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni has taken strategic steps by developing comprehensive curriculum documents, such as the Annual Program, Semester Program, Learning Objectives Flow (ATP), and Teaching Modules. The planning is based on the needs of the students and integrates the values of the Pancasila Student Profile. This aligns with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes flexibility, contextual relevance, and a focus on strengthening essential competencies. In terms of organization, the school has established an effective work structure by assigning responsibilities proportionally to all school members. Teachers are not only responsible for delivering lessons in the classroom, but also serve as facilitators for character-building projects through P5 (Saragih & Marpaung, 2024). This distribution of roles reflects the successful implementation of the flexibility principle within the Merdeka Curriculum. Furthermore, the involvement of parents and the community in supporting various project activities demonstrates the successful application of the spirit of collaboration (gotong royong), which is a core value in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum (Pitaloka & Patmisari, 2024). This reinforces the view of Sagala in Harahap as cited in Subekti (2022), who stated that effective organization in education must prioritize cooperation among all components of the school.

In terms of mobilization, the principal plays a key role in motivating teachers to innovate in their teaching practices (Musa et al., 2022). Through regular training, workshops, and mentoring, teachers are empowered to implement differentiated and project-based learning. Providing awards to outstanding teachers for developing innovative teaching methods is one strategy used to boost teacher motivation and performance (Kurniawan & Hasanah, 2021).

Regarding supervision, SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni conducts structured academic supervision through classroom observations, monitoring of P5 projects, and learning outcome evaluations. These evaluations are conducted not only to identify weaknesses but also to discover opportunities for improving the quality of learning (Dukhroini, 2024). This supervision process reflects a formative supervision approach, where evaluation serves to improve and enhance the implementation of the curriculum (Adhim, 2024).

The main supporting factors in the successful implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni are the principal's visionary leadership, the continuous development of teacher readiness through training, and a supportive environment both within the school and externally, including parents and the wider community. On the other hand, challenges such as the lack of readiness among some teachers to fully implement differentiated learning and limitations in the use of technology have been addressed through continuous professional development strategies and the enhancement of digital-based learning facilities.

## CONCLUSIONS & SUGGESTIONS

The Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni demonstrates a systematic and structured approach, beginning with a carefully conducted planning stage. The school prepares curriculum administrative documents, including the Annual Program, Semester Program, Learning Objectives Flow (ATP), Teaching Modules, and plans for the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5). This planning is designed based on students' needs, taking into account local characteristics and focusing on the holistic development of students' competencies and character.

The next stage is organization, carried out by establishing a proportional curriculum implementation structure. The principal, vice principals, teachers, and education personnel play strategic roles with clear and effective task distribution. In addition, the involvement of parents and the wider community becomes an integral part of the implementation process, aiming to strengthen the synergy between the school environment and students' social surroundings.

The mobilization process in implementing the curriculum is carried out through various capacity-building strategies for educators, such as training, workshops, and ongoing mentoring. The principal acts as a driving force in fostering an innovative culture within the school,



encouraging teachers' creativity in applying differentiated learning, and integrating character values through the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5).

To ensure quality implementation, continuous supervision is carried out through academic supervision, learning monitoring, and evaluation of learning outcomes.

This evaluation aims to identify weaknesses that need improvement and to reinforce best practices that have emerged during the implementation process.

The success of the Merdeka Curriculum implementation at SMP Negeri 1 Kedungwuni is supported by several enabling factors, including strong leadership commitment, teacher readiness, parental support, the availability of facilities and infrastructure, and the establishment of a collaborative school culture. Nevertheless, several challenges remain, particularly the unpreparedness of some teachers to conduct differentiated learning and limitations in optimizing the use of educational technology, which pose obstacles to the optimal implementation of the curriculum.

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