

Optimizing Character Education in the Independent Curriculum Through a Project Approach to Strengthening Pancasila Student Profiles

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Abstract

Education with Pancasila values, the Merdeka Curriculum aims to create students who are not only academically skilled but also have a solid moral foundation. The method used in this research is library research. This research describes understanding in descriptive research that is scientific and inductive. The need for a curriculum that is responsive to student needs and the global environment is becoming increasingly important. The existence of Pancasila values in the face of the social crisis currently hitting Indonesian society, where the teaching and implementation of these values has been proven to have a positive impact on student behavior. In developing character education, Pancasila values have a central role as a moral and ethical foundation that is rooted in Indonesian culture and history.

Keywords: Education, Curriculum, Independence

INTRODUCTION

The introduction of the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia reflects a very important response to global dynamics, the shifting needs of the ever-changing labor market, and society's expectations for a more holistic education system.(Arisanti, 2022). This innovation not only involves developing a curriculum that includes academic knowledge, but also recognizes the crucial role of moral values and character in forming a strong and ethical generation. By aligning education with Pancasila values, the Merdeka Curriculum aims to create students who are not only academically skilled but also have a solid moral foundation. Therefore, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum requires a strategic approach that can ensure the integration of Pancasila values in every aspect of learning, bringing a positive impact in shaping the character of students to face future global challenges.

In developing comprehensive character in students, this curriculum places significant emphasis on the integration of Pancasila values(Arisanti, 2022). This approach aims to create a learning environment that does not only focus on academic aspects, but also focuses on moral values and character that develop students into individuals with integrity, responsibility and the ability to contribute positively to society. By incorporating Pancasila values into every aspect of learning, this curriculum recognizes the crucial role of ethics and morality in forming students as individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have strong personalities and care about the surrounding environment. Thus, the integration of Pancasila values in the Curriculum is the basis for producing a generation that is not only superior in terms of knowledge, but also has strong character, making it a holistic and relevant approach to today's educational needs.

Suryaman (2020)states that dynamic, innovative and periodic curriculum development is an integral part of educational evaluation trends, responding to technological advances and the ever-changing demands of society. In this context, implementing curriculum changes does not only pay attention to the latest developments in the world of technology, but also responds carefully to the evolution of society's needs and expectations in facing the challenges of the times. The process of regularly evaluating and adapting the curriculum reflects a commitment to relevant and adaptive education, ensuring that students not only acquire up-to-date knowledge, but are also equipped with relevant skills and values to face an ever-changing world. Therefore, dynamic changes in the curriculum become an urgent need in anticipating and responding to changes in world conditions that continue to move forward.

The implementation of educational changes, including the Independent Curriculum, has the noble aim of improving the quality and relevance of education, but it should be noted that its implementation is not free from criticism and rejection, especially those that emerged in the context of the 2003 National Education System Law.(Matlani & Khunaifi, 2019). Such criticism may include concerns about a lack of stakeholder engagement, lack of clarity on certain aspects of the change, or even resistance to change that is perceived to disrupt the status quo. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of the dynamics, challenges and perspectives that arise during the implementation of educational changes, including the Merdeka Curriculum, is crucial in supporting sustainable educational reform efforts.

Although faced with a number of challenges, the emphasis on character education, as seen in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, is considered a very important component for Indonesia's development.(Dewiyani, 2011). By empowering strong character values and moral integrity, the Merdeka Curriculum seeks to not only create a generation that is academically skilled, but also individuals who have courage, ethics and social responsibility. This focus is the basis for forming a society that is cultured, moral, and has a collective awareness of national development. Therefore, efforts to maintain the emphasis on character education in the curriculum reflect a policy that sees the importance of non-academic dimensions in forming quality citizens and contributing positively to the nation's progress.

Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum demands a different approach to ensure that students not only develop academic knowledge, but also develop strong character. One of the strategies promoted is through the project to strengthen the Pancasila Student Profile, an initiative that highlights local wisdom and the central role of teachers as role models in the character formation process (Diputera et al., 2022,Nurasiah et al., 2022,Sutisna et al., 2019). The successful implementation of this project is crucial in demonstrating the contribution of local values to student character in the context of a more independent curriculum. In addition, the importance of integrating character education and optimizing students' holistic development is the main focus, with special emphasis on universal moral values and basic character values as key components in the educational process(Sahroni, 2017). Thus, the discussion regarding the implementation of the Independent Curriculum not only enriches academic aspects, but also highlights the essence of holistic character education and cultural values that strengthen students' identities in responding to global dynamics.

The significance of character education as a joint effort between educational institutions, families and society is clearly emphasized by a number of leading researchers, including(Fatmah, 2018,Sutisna et al., 2019,Labudasari & Rochmah, 2019, AndAslan et al., 2019). In her contribution, Fatmah highlighted the important role of education as the main pillar in character formation, emphasizing that the moral and ethical values instilled through education form a solid foundation for personal and social development. On the other hand, Sutisna gave special attention to the role of teachers as role models, describing how the presence of teachers as inspirational figures has a substantial impact on students' character development.

Not only that,Labudasari & Rochmah (2019) AndAslan et al., (2019) collectively contribute an in-depth understanding of the impact of specific educational initiatives on student character development.Labuddasari & Rochmahfocuses on the impact of school literacy programs on character formation, highlighting the close relationship between literacy skills and the development of moral values in students. On the other hand,Aslan et al.examines the role of the curriculum in shaping student character, showing that curriculum design that combines character values in every aspect of learning makes a significant contribution to holistic character development.

Overall, these studies collectively provide strong support for the need for a comprehensive approach to character education. By involving various stakeholders and implementing a holistic educational strategy, an in-depth and sustainable educational environment can be produced, which not only enriches academic aspects but also shapes students' character in accordance with the moral and ethical values that are upheld.

Devita Cornelia et al., (2022) emphasizes the role of Pancasila in shaping the identity and character of the Indonesian nation as an irreplaceable dimension, even though its values are vulnerable to erosion due to the impact of globalization and technological progress. Efforts to strengthen these values are realized in character education which emphasizes the principles of Pancasila, such as respect, honesty and caring. (Prianto, 2021). Prianto highlighted the importance of peace education as a pathway to foster understanding and appreciation of diversity as a central aspect of the principles of Pancasila.

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia is faced with several complex challenges, such as limited resources, lack of in-depth understanding of the concept by teachers, and the need to accommodate students with special needs (Swandari & Jemani, 2023). These challenges especially show a significant impact on the key role of teachers, who are expected not only to be facilitators of learning but also inspirers and motivators for students in the context of the Independent Curriculum. (Widiyaningsih & Narimo, 2023). Additional challenges arise in understanding complex concepts, for example chemical equilibrium, that educators face, adding to the complexity of implementing the curriculum. (Indriani et al., 2017).

However, the Independent Curriculum framework which emphasizes flexibility and emphasis on essential content and character development provides space for teachers to explore their creativity and abilities, while providing opportunities for students to optimize their potential. (Rifa'i, Kurnia Asih, et al., 2022). This initiative illustrates that, despite challenges, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum offers significant opportunities to stimulate student innovation and personal development in a more holistic learning context.

Character development and instilling values in students, including efforts to apply the principles of Pancasila, are very important elements in the realm of education. (Kurniawan, 2015). This idea can be realized through the use of student-centered learning models, which stimulate active participation and application of knowledge. In the context of mathematics learning, emphasis on creativity and communication can be the key to increasing the effectiveness of implementing Pancasila values (Yuniarti, 2016a).

Furthermore, Yosada & Kurniati (2019) states that creating a child-friendly school environment is an effective strategy to support the practical implementation of these values in students' social interactions, moral decision making, and community participation. By creating a supportive atmosphere, schools can become a forum that facilitates the development of students' character and moral values, aligning them with the principles of Pancasila in a broader and more applicable context.

This research aims to contribute a deeper understanding of how the project to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students can effectively strengthen the character of students in the context of the Independent Curriculum. By understanding the impact, we can identify potential improvements and further development in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum to support better character education goals.

RESEARCH METHODS

A method is a way to solve a research problem. The method used in this research is library research, (Wahidwarni, 2017), emphasizing that in library research or library research, data is

collected through reviewing textual sources such as books and archives, creating a strong foundation for further investigation. This research specifically adopts a qualitative approach, in accordance with its focus on describing the implementation of character education in an independent curriculum through a project approach method, as also stated by (Wahidwarni, 2017).

This research illustrates understanding in descriptive research which is scientific and inductive, (Rukminingsih et al., 2020) highlighting the role of research in finding practical and theoretical solutions in education. Making this research provide understanding, (Maryaeni, 2005) added that a broad understanding in cultural research is essential, underlining the importance of understanding the cultural context in designing relevant and meaningful research. Overall, this set of statements explores various important dimensions in the context of research methods, providing a solid foundation for further knowledge exploration.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Character Education Concept

Character education is an educational approach that focuses on developing positive ethical, moral and character values in individuals. This approach involves a series of learning processes aimed at developing good behavior, integrity, responsibility, empathy and other social skills. The importance of character education in Indonesia, especially in the Merdeka curriculum, has been given sufficient attention in various studies.(Alfarisy et al., 2021)And(Amalia et al., 2022), highlights the central role of character education in shaping students' moral and ethical values. Alfarisy emphasized the need for consistent and positive character in the younger generation as a crucial aspect in developing people with integrity.(Amalia et al., 2022)also illustrates the importance of character education as the main pillar of individual moral formation.(Subianto, 2013)highlights the need for sustainable and reflective efforts in character formation, involving various parties such as family, school and community. Through this approach, character formation is expected to become an integral part of students' daily lives, creating ethical and responsible individuals.(Marzuki & Hakim, 2019)emphasizes the critical role of educators in designing effective learning strategies to instill important values, such as hard work, in students. This research shows that character education efforts do not only rely on the formal curriculum, but also require the active involvement of educators in inspiring and guiding students to internalize these values.

Definition and dimensions

The role of teachers is very important in instilling discipline in students at the elementary school level, with an approach through example and habituation that is carried out consistently, as highlighted by(Uge et al., 2022). The importance of character education is not only limited to elementary school level, but also has major implications for early childhood education. One significant opportunity to develop character at this stage is through storytelling activities, especially by focusing on culture(Yuhelmi, 2014). This approach not only enriches children's understanding of local culture, but also creates a strong foundation of character.Related to character development in early childhood,(Suyanto, 2015)highlighting that the focus must be placed on universal values and national character. Therefore, it is necessary to have themes and activities that are relevant to early childhood development, so that the character education process can be integrated meaningfully.

The important role of education in forming character is the main focus in the Independent Curriculum Context, which holistically integrates Pancasila values to instill a strong moral foundation in students (Wana, 2023). In particular, in early childhood education, emphasis on character values is essential, with deep integration in all subjects, including Citizenship Education (PKn), as expressed by (Wana, 2023). The practical application of character education is crucial and the involvement of family and community has a very important role to ensure its success (Alfarisy et al., 2021). The concept of synergy between home, school and society is also emphasized which provides a deep framework for character education, as proposed by (Setyaningsih, 2022).

The Merdeka Curriculum ensures that character education is not only considered as a separate addition to the main subject matter, but is integrated as an inseparable component of every aspect of learning. This approach ensures that character values are not simply taught as separate entities, but are infused within the main subject matter. In other words, each subject is directed to actively contribute to the formation of students' character, creating individuals who not only excel academically, but are also morally and ethically grounded. Character education has a broader goal than just creating academically intelligent students. This approach is not only limited to the classroom, but includes character formation in every aspect of students' lives, from the school environment to interactions in society. Therefore, the Merdeka Curriculum encourages students to not only pursue academic achievement, but also internalize and apply positive values in all aspects of daily life by creating a solid foundation to form a young generation that is not only intelligent and competitive, but also have high morality and ethics.

Principles and Foundations of Curriculum

The introduction of the Merdeka Curriculum into the Indonesian education system, which aims to provide schools with more freedom and flexibility in curriculum development, is a significant innovative milestone. The need for a curriculum that is responsive to student needs and the global environment is becoming increasingly important, as emphasized by (Bachtiar, 2020). Global developments and the dynamics of modern society demand a curriculum that can accommodate changes and prepare students to face future challenges. This is in line with the Japanese approach which emphasizes teachers' continuous professional development and curriculum adaptation to changing needs, in accordance with research findings (Miliyawati, 2016). This approach emphasizes the importance of involving teachers in curriculum development and implementation to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. Therefore, although the Merdeka Curriculum marks a positive step towards innovation in the education system, it is important to ensure that its implementation is not only effective but also continuously adapted to dynamic changes in student needs and the development of the education system as a whole.

The principles and foundations of the Merdeka Curriculum are designed with the main aim of creating a more contextual, relevant and responsive learning experience for students, as emphasized by (Yaumi, 2013). To achieve this, the curriculum focuses attention on developing effective and meaningful teaching and learning processes. This approach carefully considers the needs and characteristics of students, and formulates specific learning objectives (Yaumi, 2013); (Irawati, 2021). Apart from focusing on the effectiveness of the learning process, the Independent Curriculum also places emphasis on understanding the basic assumptions, roles

and functions of students in the learning context. This approach, as proposed by (Irawati, 2021), aims to ensure that each curriculum element reflects a deep understanding of the characteristics and needs of students. In line with its holistic approach, this curriculum also emphasizes the importance of the principles of leadership, transparency and accountability in managing school finances, as expressed by (Rahmah, 2016). The principles of effective leadership in schools are crucial for creating a conducive and competitive learning environment, while transparency and accountability in financial management ensure the efficient and effective use of school funds.

The Merdeka Curriculum not only prioritizes academic aspects, but also explores essential aspects that influence the learning process and the school environment as a whole. Thus, this curriculum creates a solid foundation for student-centered learning and ensures that their learning experiences are integrated with real-life contexts.

Implementation in the Context of Character Education

The integration of Pancasila values in the Independent Curriculum plays a key role in efforts to strengthen character education in Indonesia, as expressed by (Sati et al., 2021). The existence of Pancasila values is becoming increasingly vital in facing the social crisis that is currently hitting Indonesian society, where the teaching and implementation of these values has been proven to have a positive impact on student behavior, in accordance with research findings by (Misnaini, 2018). In the context of increasingly widespread globalization, the application of Pancasila values in the Independent Curriculum has become a very important need. The Merdeka Curriculum plays a strategic role in forming individuals who are not only academically intelligent but also have integrity and awareness of the nation's noble values. Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn) subjects have a central role in ensuring the integration of Pancasila values is effective in all aspects of life. (Madani & Kurnia, 2022) emphasized that PPKn functions as a solid foundation for the application of Pancasila values in everyday life. By understanding these values, students not only gain conceptual understanding, but also gain practical skills to apply Pancasila values in their daily actions.

The integration of Pancasila values in the Independent Curriculum is not just academic achievement, but also a commitment to forming student character as the main pillar in building a society with integrity and competitiveness. In the global and local context, Pancasila values are a strong foundation that supports the formation of the character of the Indonesian nation in an era that continues to change. (Munawati, nd) And (Rifa'i, Elis, et al., 2022). This approach opens the door to a more holistic understanding of concepts and encourages students' active involvement in the learning process, giving a practical dimension to the values taught. This approach ensures that character education is not just a theory, but is also applied in students' daily practice, forming their character as a whole.

The development of the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia shows a holistic approach to character education, covering not only academic aspects, but also students' values, ethics and attitudes, as emphasized by Nurhalimah (2020). This curriculum is designed with great flexibility, emphasizing essential content, character development, and increasing student competency, as highlighted by research (Swandari & Jemani, 2023). Focusing on aspects of character

is not only a complement, but an integral part of every element of the curriculum. The uniqueness of the Merdeka Curriculum is more visible with its emphasis on considering each student's unique cognitive abilities in its implementation (Swandari & Jemani, 2023).

Implementation of the Independent Curriculum also faces various challenges, including an imbalance between students, the role of educators, availability of resources, and leadership, as reflected by research (Swandari & Jemani, 2023). This challenge shows the need for continuous efforts to optimize curriculum implementation, ensuring that every aspect of the Merdeka Curriculum can be integrated effectively in real learning contexts. The importance of character education in the Independent Curriculum Context can be seen from its crucial role in forming active, responsible and environmentally aware citizens, as emphasized by (Aulia et al., 2018). The Merdeka Curriculum clearly highlights the role of schools in developing citizens who have environmental ethics, linking character education with responsibility towards the surrounding environment. Furthermore, the integration of local values into the curriculum contributes to the development of good citizenship, as highlighted by (Fikri & Anggraeni, 2021). The emphasis on local values not only enriches the curriculum with cultural heritage, but also strengthens identity and citizenship rooted in local cultural values and traditions. Character education in the Merdeka Curriculum is not only about forming academically intelligent individuals, but also carries the important mission of forming citizens who have environmental awareness, local values, legal awareness, and a sense of national responsibility.

Evaluation of the Implementation of the Strengthening Pancasila Student Profile Project

The implementation of the Strengthening Pancasila Student Profile (P4) project which aims to strengthen student character through Pancasila values has had a significant impact on the development of an entrepreneurial spirit, as proven by research (Ayub et al., 2023). This project shows that instilling Pancasila values from an early age has a crucial role in forming students' entrepreneurial spirit, preparing them to face challenges and developing a proactive attitude in overcoming various situations. Although P4 projects have had a positive impact, their effectiveness can be hampered by various challenges, such as limited resources and the need for effective leadership in their implementation, as identified (Normah et al., 2020); (Putri, Dwi et al., 2023). These challenges show that P4 project implementation requires strong support and careful management to overcome these obstacles.

The Strengthening Pancasila Student Profile Project approach has been the focus of several in-depth research. According to (Widiatmaka, 2021) Citizenship education in higher education plays an important role in forming the character of students based on Pancasila values. This research highlights the need for contextual and relevant learning experiences to integrate Pancasila values in the formation of student character. (Alaby, 2021) emphasizes the influence of Pancasila education courses on students' understanding and application of Pancasila values, including religious, humanistic and democratic values. The research results show that an in-depth learning experience about Pancasila values can have a positive impact on student attitudes and behavior. (Suhartono, 2021) discussing the implementation of Pancasila deliberative values through class discussions, emphasizing the importance of fostering a sense of responsibility and prioritizing the public interest. This research provides insight into how the project approach can be implemented in classroom practice to develop student character based on Pancasila values.

The P4 concept emphasizes the significance of character education and the formation of national identity, which does not only include the transfer of knowledge, as emphasized by (A. Abdullah, 2021). This becomes more relevant, especially in the Islamic boarding school educational environment, where the character of the students is formed through the guidance of *kiayi*, creating a strong character foundation for the younger generation. (D. Abdullah, 2021). In the context of developing mathematical communication skills in basic education, the role of creativity and communication skills becomes important, in line with research (Yuniarti, 2016b). Understanding and mastery of mathematical communication does not only include technical aspects, but also focuses on students' ability to think critically, creatively and effectively in conveying their ideas.

Implementation of character development programs through habituation activities in schools is the main key in shaping student character, as expressed by (Suryana et al., 2023). This process includes implementing desired values through daily routines, ensuring that character is not only conceptually understood but also applied in students' daily actions. The importance of involving various stakeholders, such as teachers, parents and the community, is crucial in the success of character development programs, creating the necessary synergy and support. (Iswatiningsih, 2019) and (Mustofa et al., 2022) together emphasizing the urgent need for character education, each of which is based on local wisdom and Pancasila values. Their research highlights that the project approach provides an effective platform for students to understand, internalize, and apply these values in their daily lives. (Fajri & Alfurqan, 2021) and (Rahayu, 2021) provides practical insight into the implementation of character education, highlighting the importance of the role of collaboration between schools and communities, as well as the integration of religious character values in the context of learning based on local wisdom. The use of project-based learning as an innovative approach in strengthening students' Pancasila profiles marks a new step capable of optimizing character education. Findings (Muthoharoh, 2022) and (Lisnawati et al., 2022) together highlight the urgency of active and engaging learning methods as the key to character development, in line with a project-based approach.

Contribution to Optimizing Character Education

The contribution to optimizing character education is very significant in two main aspects, namely the development of Pancasila values and strengthening the character profile of students. In developing character education, Pancasila values have a central role as a moral and ethical foundation that is rooted in Indonesian culture and history. Through the application of Pancasila values in education, we can form a young generation who is not only academically intelligent but also has strong character. This process requires the use of a variety of learning methods, both direct and indirect, with continuous reinforcement to ensure understanding and application of these values in students' daily lives. In this context, the application of Pancasila values plays a central role in shaping student character. Pancasila values, as a strong ethical foundation, provide a consistent moral basis for character development. Education that integrates Pancasila values can be an important foundation for building characters with integrity, justice and civility.

Context of Independent Curriculum Implementation

In the context of implementing the Independent Curriculum, there are a number of supporting and inhibiting factors that can influence the success of this process. The main supporting factors involve support from various parties, including the government, educational institutions, teachers, students, and the community. Alignment between government policies, the views of educational institutions, and the active involvement of teachers and students provides a strong foundation for successful implementation. In addition, positive support and participation from the community is essential to creating a learning environment that is stimulating and responsive to local needs. The quality of education does not only depend on one element, but is the result of an interplay between various factors and requires continuous support from various stakeholders.

Student welfare and educational success cannot be separated from health and supportive environmental conditions. Therefore, the involvement and support of all parties, including family and community, is crucial in forming a supportive and comprehensive learning environment. In the overall context, close collaboration and communication between all stakeholders is the key to success. By supporting each other and working together, they can create optimal conditions to achieve common goals, namely providing quality education and improving the welfare of society as a whole. The challenges faced by the education sector cannot be separated from limited resources, both financial and educational, as expressed by (Affendy, 2015). This imbalance is further exacerbated by the mismatch between teachers' understanding and competence and the demands of the newly introduced curriculum, as emphasized (Khowim, 2020). This phenomenon requires ongoing maintenance of educational resources so as not to harm the quality of learning (Affendy, 2015). Applying methods that suit the specific needs of the educational environment and local context can increase the effectiveness of guidance and counseling in overcoming the challenges of the education sector. Efforts to maintain resources, increase teacher competency, and the strategic role of guidance and counseling are crucial elements in facing the challenges of the education sector. Contextualizing solutions and developing appropriate methods can help create a learning environment that is more adaptive and responsive to changes in the world of education.

The gap between teachers' understanding and competence and the demands of the new curriculum has become a significant obstacle in the world of education, as stated by (Yuniarti, 2016b). In order to overcome these challenges, teachers must prioritize understanding basic assumptions, developmental tasks, and student rights, while developing pedagogical competencies that include a deep understanding of the foundations of education. (Irawati, 2020).

(Sutrisno et al., 2023) highlighting the importance of carefully designed teaching modules within the framework of this project approach. (Darmawati, 2019) And (Siregar, 2019) together emphasize the crucial role of educators in implementing this approach, with Darmawati specifically highlighting the effectiveness of using student worksheets in the context of a constructivist approach to improve learning outcomes. Siregar's study highlights the important role of Catholic religious education teachers in instilling the values of responsibility in students. The collective analysis of this research shows that effective educational management, good teaching module design, and the active and involved role of educators have a positive impact in implementing the Project Approach to strengthen the Pancasila student character.

Implications for Independent Curriculum Development

The implications for the development of the Merdeka Curriculum bring a number of important recommendations to improve implementation and strengthen integration with other learning programs. First, there needs to be increased support and full involvement from all stakeholders, including teachers, schools, parents and the government. The development of the Independent Curriculum has significant implications in improving implementation and strengthening integration with other learning programs, in line with the findings of several previous studies. (Rochaety et al., 2005) highlights the need for effective management information systems in educational contexts, indicating that the application of information technology can support better curriculum management.

(Hamzah, 2021) adding a practical dimension to the implementation of the Independent Learning Program, especially at the elementary school level. The implications of the findings point to the importance of providing practical experiences to students, giving them the opportunity to learn actively through real-world situations. (Tabroni, 2015) emphasizes the role of quality education, highlighting aspects of improving learning abilities, optimizing the learning environment, as well as effective evaluation and monitoring. This shows the need to embed quality education as a basis for successful implementation. (Imron et al., 2021) shows the importance of practical training in improving student competence, especially in the field of computer networks. The implications of the findings indicate that effective curriculum implementation must include aspects of practical and applicable experience to ensure that students can apply their knowledge directly.

CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia marks an important step in adapting education to global dynamics and the changing needs of the labor market. This innovation not only focuses on developing academic knowledge, but also recognizes the important role of moral values and character in forming a strong and ethical generation. By emphasizing the integration of Pancasila values in every aspect of learning, the Merdeka Curriculum aims to create students who are not only academically skilled, but also have a solid moral foundation. Emphasis on character education, especially through the project to strengthen the Pancasila Student Profile, is the main strategy in ensuring that students not only develop knowledge, but also form strong characters, in accordance with the moral and ethical values that are upheld. Despite being faced with challenges such as limited resources and a lack of in-depth understanding of concepts by teachers, the Merdeka Curriculum framework provides opportunities for innovation and student personal development in a more holistic learning context.

Thus, the implementation of the Independent Curriculum not only enriches academic aspects, but also emphasizes the importance of holistic character education to form a quality generation and contribute positively to the nation's progress. Therefore, the development of the Independent Curriculum must be supported by increased support and full involvement from all relevant parties, while strengthening integration with other learning programs to achieve the common goal of providing quality education and improving the welfare of society as a whole.

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