

Curriculum Changes from the Perspective of Educational Sociology

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses curriculum changes in Indonesia from the perspective of educational sociology, focusing on the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) policy. Using a qualitative approach through literature review, this research examines how the curriculum functions as a social instrument influenced by and influencing various social factors. The 2013 Curriculum emphasizes competency-based learning aimed at developing critical and creative skills, while MBKM provides students with opportunities to engage in practical learning experiences outside the classroom. The findings indicate that curriculum changes have significantly impacted social interactions within educational settings, enhancing student engagement and building more adaptive individual character. However, challenges such as infrastructure gaps and educator readiness persist in its implementation. This study suggests stronger collaboration between the government, educational institutions, and society to address these challenges and achieve inclusive and relevant educational goals.

Key words: Educational Sociology; 2013 Curriculum; Merdeka Belajar; MBKM; Social Interaction

INTRODUCTION

A sociological review of curriculum changes in education examines the social structures, processes, and impacts of curriculum within the context of Islamic education. The 2013 Curriculum and the Independent Curriculum are systems that design and organize lesson plans, objectives, teaching methods, and evaluations to facilitate affective, cognitive, and psychomotor learning (Vhalery et al., 2022). From a sociological perspective, an educational curriculum is seen not merely as a set of learning materials but as a social instrument influenced by and influencing various factors within society (Maksum, 2013).

The willingness to continually innovate is pursued by adapting the curriculum to the advancements of the times and the competencies that students must acquire. A key effort to improve the quality of education in Indonesia is through implementing the 2013 Curriculum and the Freedom to Learn-Independent Campus Policy (MBKM) (Alawiyah, 2017). The 2013 Curriculum is designed to shape character, enhance skills, and prepare students to be independent individuals capable of adapting to rapid developments in science and technology. This concept positions students as active agents who control their own learning processes, encouraging creativity based on their interests, talents, and individual needs. In the Independent Curriculum, teachers serve as learning facilitators who support and encourage students to develop creativity, critical thinking, and independence in the learning process. The Independent Curriculum emphasizes the development of students' personal potential, inviting them to actively explore areas of interest and creating an inclusive learning environment. By allowing students to explore their interests, they are expected to gain a deeper understanding and discover their passions in specific fields (Dini et al., 2023).

However, implementing curriculum changes is not without challenges and social dynamics faced by the community. This change involves various stakeholders, including students, educators, parents, and the broader society (Idi, 2011). Thus, sociological analysis becomes crucial in understanding how these curriculum changes impact social relationships, interactions between individuals, and their effects on existing social values and norms. The MBKM policy introduced by the Ministry of Education and Culture strengthens the paradigm shift in education in Indonesia. MBKM offers students the freedom to explore various learning experiences outside the classroom, whether through internships, community service, or student exchange programs. This approach aims to develop individuals who not only have academic competence but also strong social and emotional skills. In other words, curriculum changes must align with and consider the philosophy or sociological perspective of education (Afryansyah, Ria Wahyuni & Rukiyah, 2022).

Adaptation to these changes has elicited varied responses within society. While some fully support the changes, others resist, finding it challenging to adapt to the new educational system. Therefore, it is essential to analyze these curriculum changes sociologically to understand the broader context and the effects they have on everyday life (Adib, 2024). This article theoretically examines how educational sociology views curriculum changes and how the two mutually influence developments in Indonesia's education system. Through this theoretical analysis, we can gain insights into the sociological perspective on curriculum changes within the field of educational sociology.

METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach, with data collection conducted through library research. In the literature review, data is gathered by examining

relevant literature, including articles, books, documents, and online sources (Mekarisce, 2020). The collected data is then analyzed, described, and discussed in alignment with the study's theme. The focus of this article's analysis is on curriculum changes from a sociology of education perspective. The data analysis process involves tracking and collecting data related to the study's theme, analyzing the data, and presenting it according to the research objectives (Warsihna et al., 2023).

RESULT AND DISUSSION

The curriculum is a field—a domain in which social actors strategically use their habitus and capital to acquire various other forms of capital (Hidayat Rakhmat, 2011). Over time, curricula are continually evaluated and designed to meet evolving needs and reflect societal developments. The shift from the 2013 curriculum to the Merdeka Curriculum illustrates a deliberate design grounded in the sociology of education (Afryansyah, Abdullah Idi, Karomah, Aiman Fikri, Nurbuana, 2024). Below is an outline of the factors driving curriculum changes:

A. Factors Driving the Change from the 2013 Curriculum and the MBKM Policy

The transition from the 2013 Curriculum to the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Policy reflects a response to the need for a more innovative and relevant education system in tune with modern progress (Efriyanto, Aminah, 2023). A primary driving force behind this change is the necessity to enhance the quality of education in Indonesia, as disparities in knowledge and skills persist among formal education graduates. The 2013 curriculum emphasized competency-based learning to foster critical, creative, and collaborative skills (Lestari et al., 2024).

Additionally, globalization and rapid technological advances compel educational systems to align with trends in developed nations. The digital age requires graduates to possess not only academic knowledge but also practical, relevant skills. The MBKM policy aims to create avenues for students to develop these skills outside the traditional academic setting by incorporating learning experiences in industry, research, and community service. Another significant factor is the shift in educational paradigms that prioritize character development and soft skills (Meilani et al., 2022). A more humanistic educational approach that fosters emotional maturity is seen as crucial in shaping well-rounded individuals capable of positive social interaction. In this context, the MBKM policy emphasizes flexible, student-centered learning that encourages active student participation without the rigidity of traditional formal education paths.

The 2013 Curriculum changes and the MBKM policy are the result of a comprehensive analysis of urgent educational needs (Kande, 2022). The key drivers of these changes include:

1. The Need for Improved Educational Quality

A primary motivation is to enhance the quality of education in Indonesia. Although there have been advancements, international assessments like PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) indicate that Indonesian students still score below global standards. Hence, curriculum refinement is crucial for increasing graduates' global competitiveness. The 2013 curriculum focuses on competency-based learning, enabling students to actively engage in the learning process.

2. Technological Advances and Globalization

The digital era and rapid developments in information technology have drastically transformed how people learn and access information. Today's youth grow up with technology, making it essential to integrate technological aspects into the curriculum. The MBKM policy encourages collaboration between higher education institutions and industries to strengthen the connection between academic theory and workplace practice, helping students better prepare for a competitive job market.

3. Response to Demographic Challenges

Indonesia's large youth population requires an education system capable of accommodating their needs and potential. Therefore, the curriculum must align with students' interests, talents, and aspirations. MBKM offers students the freedom to choose educational paths that suit their interests, such as internships, research, or community service, thus fostering character and skill development.

4. Changing Educational Paradigms

There has been a shift from a solely academic competence-oriented education toward a more holistic approach. This new approach emphasizes character development, soft skills, and social abilities. The 2013 curriculum integrates character values, teaching students not only to think critically and analytically but also to empathize and collaborate with others. MBKM also supports a diverse educational approach that values diversity, offering students the chance to learn from various life experiences.

5. Public Demand for Relevant and Quality Education

Society increasingly demands education that aligns with contemporary needs. There is pressure from parents, communities, and private institutions to produce job-ready graduates with essential skills. MBKM encourages students to participate in real-world projects within the community or industry, creating synergy between education and real-world demands.

6. External Participation and Institutional Collaboration

Curriculum development also involves contributions from various stakeholders, including academics, industry practitioners, and civil society. Feedback from these stakeholders is essential to ensure the curriculum

aligns with market needs and societal progress. This collaboration is evident in MBKM's implementation, where educational institutions partner with companies and community organizations to offer students diverse learning experiences.

These driving factors illustrate how the changes in the 2013 Curriculum and MBKM aim to create a more adaptive, relevant, and high-quality education system. Ultimately, the goal is to cultivate a young generation that is not only academically proficient but also ready to face global challenges and positively contribute to society. Furthermore, these changes are intended to address Indonesia's upcoming social and economic challenges.

B. Social Impact of the 2013 Curriculum and MBKM Implementation

The implementation of the 2013 Curriculum and the "Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka" (MBKM) policy has brought significant social impacts across various aspects of Indonesian society. These impacts include shifts in perspectives on education, social interactions, character development, and relationships between educational institutions and the community. Overall, these impacts can be seen within the context of improving education quality based on competence, innovation, and relevance to societal needs (Meke et al., 2021).

Firstly, the 2013 Curriculum, which focuses on thematic and competency-based learning, has positively impacted how students learn and interact. Students are encouraged to be more active in the learning process, allowing them to develop critical thinking, collaboration, and communication skills. With more interactive teaching methods, students not only passively receive information but also engage in discussions, group projects, and hands-on activities. This approach boosts students' confidence in social interactions and encourages them to express their opinions and participate in discussions (Warsihna et al., 2023). Such impacts play a crucial role in shaping a generation not only equipped with knowledge but also adept at socializing in diverse situations.

Secondly, the MBKM policy strengthens connectivity between the educational world and society. By providing students with opportunities to engage in real-world practice through internships, community service projects, and collaborative research, MBKM not only creates valuable learning experiences but also raises students' social awareness. They become more familiar with diverse communities, face different challenges, and learn how to contribute to social problem-solving. Thus, graduates are expected to be not only academically prepared but also socially conscious and actively engaged in community development.

Thirdly, another social impact lies in the shift in parental roles in their children's education. The 2013 Curriculum, which emphasizes closer connections between schools and families, encourages parents to become more involved in the learning process. This involvement also strengthens communication between parents and

teachers, creating a positive synergy that supports both academic and social development. Parents' involvement not only benefits the learning process but also fosters stronger family bonds. By better understanding the educational approaches used, parents can provide more effective support, both in terms of motivation and the resources needed.

Additionally, the influence of the new curriculum and MBKM policies is also evident in character development and social values. The 2013 Curriculum emphasizes character building and moral values as central components (Vhalery et al., 2022). By integrating values such as mutual cooperation, tolerance, and responsibility into lessons, the curriculum aims to foster students who are caring towards others and the environment. This focus helps mitigate social issues such as intolerance, discrimination, and conflict (Sintiawati et al., 2022). Through MBKM, students are encouraged to engage in community service activities that prompt them to think broadly about their social responsibilities. These experiences provide real-world contexts for students to understand their roles in society and contribute through their skills.

However, implementing these policies is not without challenges. For instance, the unequal access to education across different regions in Indonesia can create social disparities. Schools in remote or underdeveloped areas often lack sufficient resources to effectively implement the 2013 Curriculum, leading to significant educational quality gaps and potentially hindering equal opportunities for all students. Additionally, the dissemination of information about MBKM may not be comprehensive, which presents a challenge to its implementation. Greater efforts are needed to promote this policy so that all parties can actively participate and benefit from it.

In summary, the social impacts of the 2013 Curriculum and MBKM can be seen as positive steps toward developing a more effective and relevant education system (Kurniasih et al., 2022). Although challenges in implementation remain, focusing on improving education quality, character development, and community involvement in the education process is a strategic approach to meet the demands of the times. It is hoped that these changes will produce a generation that is not only knowledgeable but also empathetic, ready to contribute to community development, and capable of tackling the challenges faced by the nation in the era of globalization. Additionally, it is essential for all stakeholders to work together in overcoming existing challenges to ensure the successful implementation of these education policies.

C. Challenges in Implementing the 2013 Curriculum and MBKM

The implementation of the 2013 Curriculum and the "Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka" (MBKM) policy in Indonesia brings great hope for improving the quality of education. However, the challenges faced in its implementation process are also substantial. These challenges include infrastructure, educator understanding and

readiness, parental involvement, and the gap between formal education and the needs of the workforce. Understanding these challenges is essential to finding the right solutions for achieving educational goals optimally (Sintiawati et al., 2022).

Firstly, the most significant challenge lies in the uneven distribution of educational infrastructure across Indonesia. Many schools in remote and underdeveloped areas face inadequate physical conditions, such as disorganized learning spaces, a lack of supporting facilities, and limited access to information technology. The 2013 Curriculum, which demands more modern and interactive teaching methods, requires adequate facilities to support learning activities. However, not all schools, particularly those in isolated areas, have access to the digital learning media and information technology necessary for effective curriculum implementation. As a result, disparities in educational quality across different regions remain a serious issue, leaving students in underdeveloped areas behind their urban counterparts (Warsihna et al., 2023).

Secondly, the readiness and understanding of educators regarding the 2013 Curriculum and MBKM are equally important challenges. Although training and socialization efforts have been made, not all teachers feel comfortable with the changes in teaching approaches demanded by the new curriculum. Many teachers are accustomed to traditional teaching methods and struggle to adapt to more project-based and collaborative approaches. This lack of adaptation may reduce the effectiveness of the curriculum, meaning students may not experience learning that aligns with the vision and mission of the 2013 Curriculum. Furthermore, limited opportunities for teachers to engage in continuous training and professional development can hinder their efforts to innovate in teaching (Nofia, 2020).

Thirdly, parental involvement is also a key challenge. The 2013 Curriculum and MBKM emphasize the importance of parental engagement in children's education, yet parents often lack sufficient understanding of these policies. Many parents are still focused on traditional academic values and may not fully appreciate the benefits of a more comprehensive learning approach. This lack of understanding causes them to be less actively involved in supporting their child's learning at home, creating a disconnect between school expectations and parental roles. Therefore, effective communication programs are needed to convey information about the curriculum and its benefits to parents so they can be more engaged in their children's education (Bhakti et al., 2022).

Additionally, the gap between formal education and workforce needs is a significant challenge in implementing MBKM. Although this program aims to bridge the gap between education and industry, there is often a lack of alignment between curriculum content and job market demands. Many graduates feel unprepared for challenges in the workforce, as the material taught in schools or universities does not always align with the skills sought by employers. Furthermore, not all educational institutions have strong networks with industry, which hinders students from gaining real-world work experience. To reduce this gap, closer

cooperation between educational institutions and industry is needed, as well as regular curriculum adjustments to meet market needs.

Lastly, the challenge of evaluation and assessment is an important issue in implementing the 2013 Curriculum and MBKM. The assessment process, which is often still quantitative, such as final exams, does not capture the holistic aspects of student development expected by the new curriculum. In a more holistic learning approach, evaluation should be qualitative, covering social skills, creativity, and critical thinking abilities. However, many educators lack the tools or methods needed to conduct such evaluations. This gap may lead to students feeling burdened by assessments that are not relevant to the actual learning objectives. To address this, training for educators on suitable evaluation strategies for a more comprehensive learning approach is essential.

In conclusion, the challenges in implementing the 2013 Curriculum and MBKM highlight the need for collaboration among the government, educational institutions, and society (Warsihna et al., 2023). Addressing infrastructure challenges, improving educator quality, involving parents, aligning curricula with industry needs, and providing comprehensive learning assessments are steps that must be taken in synergy. By tackling these challenges, it is hoped that curriculum implementation can proceed more effectively and produce high-quality, relevant educational outcomes for Indonesia's social development. All parties must commit to optimizing the potential of these educational policies so that the younger generation can contribute maximally to national development.

CONCLUSION

The changes in Indonesia's education curriculum, including the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Policy, aim to enhance the quality of education by focusing on students' competency development, character building, and soft skills. This approach seeks to equip students to meet global challenges by fostering critical, creative, and collaborative thinking skills, preparing them to be more workforce-ready and able to contribute positively to society. These reforms also promote increased social interaction within educational settings, encouraging students to become more independent while teachers play a supportive role as facilitators, fostering students' potential development. However, the implementation of these policies faces challenges related to educational infrastructure equity, teacher readiness, and parental involvement.

In developing the curriculum, the government and educational institutions need to integrate sociological perspectives to understand the curriculum's impact on social structure and community dynamics. With this approach, the curriculum can be designed to be more responsive to social changes and inclusive, taking into account cultural diversity, economic backgrounds, and individual student needs. Future

research could focus on field studies in educational sociology, addressing current educational challenges.

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