Integration of 21st Century Skills in the Merdeka Curriculum in Islamic Education Learning at SMA Al-Azhar Mandiri Palu

Erlis Wulandari Kurniawati[*1] & **Askar Askar**[2]

[1] *Islamic Religious Education Study Program State Islamic University Datokarama Palu, Indonesia*
[2] *State Islamic University Datokarama Palu, Indonesia*

*Corresponding Author: Erlis Wulandari Kurniawati E-mail: erliswulandarikurniawati@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Volume: 3	This research concerns the Integration of 21st Century Skills in the Merdeka Curriculum in Islamic Education Learning at Al-Azhar Mandiri High School in Palu, which includes the following problem statements: 1) How is the process of implementing the integration of 21st century skills in the Merdeka curriculum in Islamic Education learning, and 2) What are the results of the integration of 21st century skills in the Merdeka curriculum in Islamic Education learning at Al-Azhar Mandiri High School in Palu, focusing on classroom practices and student development. This research uses a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design. Data is collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews with Islamic Education teachers, the Deputy Head of Curriculum, and students. The data obtained is analyzed using techniques of data reduction, data presentation, data verification, and conclusion drawing. The results of this study show: 1) The implementation process begins with comprehensive lesson planning, which starts with training for teachers, including internal training (IHT), online platforms (PMM), teaching community groups (MGMP PAI), and webinars. Teachers are actively involved in the development of learning tools such as the education calendar, lesson plans, annual and semester programs, learning objectives flow, teaching modules, and assessment criteria. 2) The results of the integration of 21st century skills in the Merdeka Curriculum in Islamic Education learning at Al-Azhar Mandiri High School in Palu show significant improvements in student satisfaction and motivation, as well as positive developments in creativity, public speaking skills, teamwork collaboration, and the application of critical thinking and communication skills. Overall, this proves that this approach successfully enhances the quality of learning and better prepares students to face future challenges. This research has important implications for educators, students, schools, policymakers, and future researchers. It emphasizes the need for continuous training for teachers to effectively teach using 21st century skills. Additionally, it highlights the role of schools in providing resources and infrastructure to support innovative learning methods. These findings can help policymakers design educational policies that support the broader development of 21st century skills
KEYWORD	
21st Century skills, merdeka curriculum, learning	

1. Introduction

The Merdeka Curriculum is currently in high demand, considering that 21st-century students are required to possess creativity and skills. Moreover, students are also expected to be successful individuals in all aspects. Several essential 21st-century skills

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[*]**Erlis Wulandari Kurniawati** is a Student of Islamic Religious Education Program at Postgraduate School, State Islamic University Datokarama Palu, Indonesia. This paper was presented at the 3rd International Conference on Islamic and Interdisciplinary Studies (ICIIS) 2024, as a presenter, held by the Postgraduate School State Islamic University Datokarama Palu, Indonesia.

include Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, and Creativity. To develop these skills, students should engage in student-centered learning, group collaboration, and learning related to their everyday environment. Since the government introduced the Merdeka Curriculum, all teachers and educators must be ready to face the challenges of the 21st century. However, tackling these challenges is not an easy task; it requires the competence and quality of the teachers and educators themselves. This aligns with the idea that the quality of education is supported by various components, including the learning curriculum, operational syllabi, learning materials, teaching methods, facilities and infrastructure, and most importantly, educational evaluation. 21st-century learning poses a significant challenge, especially with the concurrent Industrial Revolution 4.0, placing heavy responsibilities on teachers and educators. These challenges can only be overcome with the support of school programs and the adequate quality of teachers. Hence, the Merdeka Learning program serves as a solution to the challenges of the 21st century. The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in high schools marks a paradigm shift from a prescriptive curriculum to one more responsive to students' needs. This change provides opportunities to integrate 21st-century skills into Islamic Education subjects, aiming to instill character education that forms students with good morals, perfect human beings, and individuals who are religious, cultured, and scholarly. This integration fosters an awareness of the human function as Allah's servants. The hope is that by integrating 21st-century skills into Islamic Education, students will understand how to instill good character and morals to compete in a rapidly developing world.

In this research, the author chose Al-Azhar Mandiri High School in Palu, one of the best schools in Central Sulawesi, well-recognized by the community for its quantity and quality. Currently, Al-Azhar Mandiri High School in Palu has implemented the Merdeka Curriculum and the 2013 Curriculum (K13). The application of these two curricula is still being adjusted; grades X and XI have already adopted the new curriculum, while grade XII continues with K13. Based on the above explanation, the author is interested in conducting research titled "Integration of 21st Century Skills in the Merdeka Curriculum in Islamic Education Learning at Al-Azhar Mandiri High School in Palu." The research problems are how the process of integrating 21st Century Skills in the Merdeka Curriculum in Islamic Education Learning at Al-Azhar Mandiri High School in Palu is implemented and what the results of this integration are.

2. Literature Review

The 21st century is markedly different from previous centuries. Reflecting on previous eras, the development of knowledge in the 21st century has advanced rapidly across all fields. Hence, the 21st century is also known as the Knowledge Age. This era is also characterized by the development and utilization of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in all aspects of life, particularly in education. The rapid advancement of technology undoubtedly facilitates students in enriching their knowledge through the internet. However, it also brings about negative impacts for society, the environment, and the students themselves. This is due to the uncontrolled and rampant information available on the internet, which makes it challenging for users to filter the information they need. This issue presents a challenge for teachers and educators in the 21st century. To address this challenge, teachers and educators must equip students with skills to become proficient individuals in the future. 21st Century Skills encompass three main components: 1) Life and Career Skills this includes flexible and adaptable skills, initiative, responsibility, and leadership qualities. 2) Learning and Innovation Skills this requires critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, and innovation. 3) Information, Media, and Technology Skills this involves information literacy, media literacy, and ICT literacy. These components are encapsulated in a schema known as the "21st Century Knowledge-Skills Rainbow." This schema is adapted by the nonprofit organization P21 (Partnership for 21st Century Learning), which develops a 21st-century education framework worldwide. Integrating 21st-century skills into learning is an effort to develop students' potential into competencies. This process requires a learning design created by teachers, implementing cognitive learning theory. This theory explains that teachers should guide and direct students in planning and carrying out learning activities. One of the cognitive learning theories is developed by Robert Mills Gagné, an American educational psychologist, known as Gagné's Learning Theory. Gagné's theory is a balanced integration of behaviorism and cognitivism, rooted in information processing theory. This theory involves the interaction between an individual's internal and external conditions. Internal conditions refer to the individual's state necessary for achieving learning outcomes, including the cognitive processes occurring within the individual.

The Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum concept directly developed by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud RI). It features diverse intrakulikular learning designs to optimize content, allowing students to delve deeper into concepts and strengthen competencies. Essentially, the Merdeka Curriculum aims to enhance the quality of education by granting schools and teachers the freedom to design learning based on students' needs and local contexts. Previously known as the Prototype Curriculum, it refines the 2013 Curriculum (K13). The Prototype Curriculum, the precursor to the Merdeka

Curriculum, can be implemented by educational institutions to facilitate learning recovery from the 2022/2023 to 2024/2025 academic years.

As an innovation from the 2013 Curriculum, the Merdeka Curriculum aims to produce superior, competitive, and character-driven students. The significant hope is that the Merdeka Curriculum will focus not only on classroom learning but also enable students to develop outside the classroom, making learning more enjoyable. This approach helps shape students' character, fostering independence, critical thinking, social skills, and competitiveness. Learning in the Merdeka Curriculum is considered a new paradigm in education. This paradigm ensures that learning is student-centered. In this new learning paradigm, the development framework is no longer linear but becomes a continuous cycle. Additionally, the new learning approach includes competency standards, the concept of independent learning, and minimal competency evaluation, providing educators with greater freedom to design learning and assessments suited to students' needs and characteristics.

The new learning paradigm of the Merdeka Curriculum comprises three components : 1) Pancasila Student Profile this profile is the main reference for directing educational policies and serves as a guide for teachers in building students' character. It includes six dimensions : Faith, piety to God Almighty, and noble character, global diversity, cooperation, independence, critical reasoning, creativity. 2) Learning As outlined in the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation (Permendikbud) No. 16 of 2022 concerning PAUD, Basic Education, and Secondary Education Process Standards, the learning process standards consist of learning planning, implementation, and assessment. 3) Assessment is part of the learning process, facilitating learning, and providing holistic information to offer feedback to teachers, students, and parents, guiding them in planning further learning strategies.

3. Methodology

The method used by the author in this research is descriptive qualitative research. It involves primary and secondary data sources and employs observation, interviews, and documentation as data collection techniques. The data analysis techniques include data reduction, data presentation, and data verification.

4. Results and Discussion
4.1 Implementation Process of Integrating 21st Century Skills in the Independent Curriculum for Islamic Education Learning at SMA Al-Azhar Mandiri Palu

Research Findings on the Implementation Process of 21st Century Skills in the Independent Curriculum for Islamic Education Subjects at SMA Al-Azhar Mandiri Palu

a. Attending Training

To prepare for Islamic Education (PAI) learning with the Independent Curriculum, PAI teachers must first attend training as this is a new curriculum. At SMA Al-Azhar Mandiri Palu, all teachers, including PAI teachers, are given the opportunity to attend orientation training for the Independent Curriculum. After that, teachers are free to attend self-training through the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM), teaching communities like MGMP PAI, webinars, and other training provided by the school. These training sessions aim to help teachers gain references, inspiration, and a deep understanding of the Independent Curriculum so they can implement it effectively according to learning objectives. SMA Al-Azhar Mandiri Palu also facilitates teachers in developing learning tools by holding activities that provide reinforcement to teachers.

b. Developing Learning Tools

The development of learning tools is part of the learning planning process. These tools function as guidelines for teachers to conduct classroom teaching. The development of learning tools for PAI class X begins by reviewing the educational calendar as a reference for a year's learning, then drafting an Effective Week Plan (RPE). The RPE includes the total number of effective weeks, facultative weeks, and non-effective weeks in an academic year. The next step is to draft an annual program (Prota) and a semester program (Prosem). The Prota allocates time for achieving basic competencies in the curriculum over a year, while the Prosem is a broad plan for teaching activities over a semester. Once the Prota and Prosem are drafted, the PAI teacher drafts the Learning Objective Flow (ATP). The ATP includes domains/elements such as the Quran and Hadith, creed, morals, learning achievements, learning objectives, time allocation, keywords, Pancasila Student Profile, and a glossary. PAI teachers must also draft teaching modules, which are implementations of the ATP developed from learning achievements with the Pancasila Student Profile as the target. The next step is to draft the Learning Objective Mastery Criteria (KKTP).

After planning the learning process, the next stage is the implementation of the learning process. This implementation is based on the teaching modules that have been created, with the following steps:
a. Preliminary Activities

These activities are conducted to initiate learning by preparing students, including ensuring attendance, orderliness, readiness, and learning supplies.

b. Core Activities

The core activities involve the learning process to achieve learning objectives using methods suitable to the characteristics and material of the subject.

c. Closing Activities

In the closing activities, the teacher summarizes the lesson with student involvement, encouraging them to recall important points through questions about the material.

d. Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5)

The Independent Curriculum introduces the P5 program, which is project-based to achieve specific objectives, involving research, problem-solving, and decision-making by students. The Pancasila Student Profile encompasses the character and abilities developed through school culture and learning within the P5 curriculum.

4.2 Results of Implementing the Integration of 21st Century Skills in the Independent Curriculum for Islamic Education Learning at SMA Al-Azhar Mandiri Palu

Results of Applying 21st Century Skills in the Independent Curriculum on 4C Aspects:

a. Critical Thinking

Students demonstrated critical thinking skills in addressing issues. For example, during a lesson on zakat, a student asked about the difference in zakat rates between natural and artificial irrigation and its impact on farmers' welfare. This indicates the students' ability to analyze and reason with the given information.

b. Creativity

Students were assigned projects to create posters and educational videos about zakat, increasing their interest in learning and developing their creative skills. They uploaded the projects on Instagram, involving digital technology and design applications like Canva.

c. Communication

Students became more confident in speaking and expressing their opinions, both in class discussions and outside. The teacher used simple language and body gestures to support explanations, making students more relaxed and engaged.

d. Collaboration

Students worked in groups to complete projects like posters and educational videos. Tasks and responsibilities were divided among group members, enhancing team collaboration effectiveness and mutual respect.

e. Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5)

Students were able to think critically in solving problems, such as providing nutrients to hydroponic plants. They discussed and collaborated on projects, freely expressed opinions, and produced outcomes like hydroponic green lettuce.

5. Conclusion

The implementation process of integrating 21st century skills in the Independent Curriculum for Islamic Education learning at SMA Al-Azhar Mandiri Palu begins with planning that involves various competency enhancement activities for teachers. These include In-House Training (IHT), the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM), Teaching Communities (MGMP PAI), and webinars. Islamic Education (PAI) teachers prepare learning tools that include the Educational Calendar, Annual Program (PROTA) and Semester Program (PROSEM), Learning Objectives Flow (ATP), Teaching Modules, and Learning Objectives Mastery Criteria (KKTP). The learning implementation is carried out through preliminary, core, and closing activities, as well as the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5), using learning media such as mobile phones and projectors.

The results of implementing 21st century skills in Islamic Education learning for class X show several significant successes. Students feel satisfied and motivated by the varied and non-monotonous teaching methods. They demonstrate increased creativity, such as producing creative posters. Students' confidence has increased, with greater courage to speak, ask questions, and express opinions in front of the class. Their collaboration skills have also improved, as seen in the effectiveness of teamwork in completing group assignments. Overall, the application of 21st century skills in the Independent Curriculum has successfully enhanced the quality of learning and students' skills, making them better prepared to face future challenges.

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