

# **Merdeka Curriculum in The Constellation of Educational Curriculum Theory**

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## **Abstract**

The Merdeka Curriculum is one of the policies issued by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology to overcome the education crisis facing Indonesia after COVID-19. The Merdeka Curriculum focuses on the use of technology and learning communities to share practices between teachers and students. In this way, it is hoped that learning can be restored from 2022 to 2024. This research aims to analyze the Merdeka Curriculum based on the viewpoint of the educational curriculum theory constellation, the concept of the Merdeka Curriculum in terms of Curriculum Theory fulfills the curriculum elements as stated by John D. Neil. He put forward four types of curriculum concepts, namely: academic, humanistic, social reconstruction and technological curriculum. This is the aim of the Merdeka curriculum, namely to restore the quality of education and perfect the curriculum that has been implemented. More than that, the Merdeka curriculum can be a valuable and cutting-edge breakthrough to boost the quality of our education so that it is on par with the quality of education in developed countries. This policy certainly has very broad implications in the practice of implementation, both by schools, teachers and students. Freedom is a human right, everyone has the freedom to be creative and innovate according to their talents and abilities. Likewise in thinking, in the context of school education, teachers are required to be independent in their thinking so that they can teach all the information they obtain to students. Teachers are no longer fixated on providing information from one source, with a learning process that leads to critical thinking, in this case, students are required to be able to search for information and discover various concepts and be able to solve problems. That is why the government, in this case the Ministry of Education and Culture, has issued a curriculum that

provides room for freedom for teachers and students. The curriculum is called the Merdeka Curriculum. The method used in this research is the descriptive analysis method, namely the method used to systematically explain empirical facts obtained during field research. Researchers attempt to map empirical facts or data obtained in the field, then analyze them and present them in narratives and arguments.

**Keyword :** Merdeka Curriculum, Curriculum Theory, Learning Recovery

## INTRODUCTION

"Change the Minister, Change the Curriculum" is a well-known saying in the field of education related to modifying the curriculum and subjects. This proverb shows that the status quo of education in Indonesia still exists and the only feasible approach to improving the quality of education is to modify the curriculum. In addition to curriculum reform, the government is working to improve the quality of educators through initiatives such as Teacher Mobilization and Indonesia Mengajar. Sometimes, aspirations to raise educational standards differ from the perspectives held by educators in the region. "The current curriculum is not understood, there is already a new curriculum," complained the teachers.

Since its initial introduction, the Indonesian curriculum has undergone ten revisions. In 1947, the first curriculum was formulated. Until 1950, Pancasila was still the basis of education and could only be put into practice in that year. The curriculum was then established in 1952 (Priantini, Suarni, and Adnyana, 2022). The 1964 curriculum was revised with the aim of instilling in students a sense of moral and religious fortitude, harmony with state values, and adherence to the principles of Pancasila (Ritonga, 2018).

The implementation of the 1975 Curriculum resulted in a real increase in effectiveness and efficiency. This can be caused by curriculum design that adheres to appropriate management principles of objectivity and facilitates the emergence of PPSI, or lesson unit education (Hadiansyah, Pradhana, and Mustiningsih, 2020). Students are more focused on their respective fields of study and areas of expertise in the 1984 education curriculum; they are the focal point of the learning process. CBSA (Active Student Learning Method) was developed as a result of students' instructions to observe, classify, debate, and make reports (Ananda and Hudaidah, 2021).

The 1994 and 1999 Curriculum was formulated as a complement to the Curriculum implemented in 1975 and 1984, replacing the 1984 Curriculum. In practice, the 1994 and 1999 curriculum received a lot of resistance; Students are considered burdened with too many subjects. Curriculum revision occurred in 2004. Emphasis

on student competence and assessment of the success of the learning process was given greater weight in the 2004 curriculum (Iramdan and Manurung, 2019).

KTSP or educational unit level curriculum was established in 2006. The KTSP curriculum has been modified in an effort to perfect the previous curriculum; has been adapted to the education system in Indonesia. The curriculum has been revised again to reflect 2013. This revised curriculum includes various subjects that have been developed and simplified. In addition, the overall educational curriculum has been modified again. The initiative to implement autonomous curriculum and autonomous teaching was initiated by the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education (Priantini et al., 2022).

The education system must develop along with the times. To optimize the impact of education on the welfare of society as a whole, modifications were made (Amalia, 2022). The curriculum, which serves as the central element of all educational efforts, is essential to achieving educational goals. The curriculum influences the trajectory, content and procedures of education, which ultimately influences the graduation rate of an institution (Hatim, 2018). The curriculum development process includes various components including planning, learning procedures, assessment and learning evaluation (Fajri, 2019).

In an effort to restore learning in early childhood, primary and secondary education units, the government through the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology has established an Merdeka Curriculum which will be implemented starting in the 2022/2023 academic year. Apart from that, Minister of Religion Decree Number 347 of 2022 concerning Guidelines for Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in Madrasas was issued by the Ministry of Religion to determine the policy for implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in Madrasas. (Kemendikbudristek, 2022).

It needs to be understood that the Merdeka Curriculum is a choice of educational units that can be utilized in the context of learning recovery, before it is implemented. The learning recovery period takes place between 2022 and 2024. Madrasas can choose to apply the 2013 Curriculum or the Merdeka Curriculum during the learning recovery period. Every decision should be focused on improving the efficiency of pedagogical administration in madrasas. To inspire students and teachers to be enthusiastic about learning, madrasas must have the fortitude to innovate, make breakthroughs, and develop a conducive learning environment. To improve the quality of education, both teachers and students are given the widest possible opportunities to be inventive and creative (Kemendikbudristek, 2022).

As the main actor in the field of education, teachers must always be informed about any policy changes that occur in this field. At this time, it is very important for

all parties involved to play an active role in continuing to provide education to the public about the Merdeka Curriculum to ensure that educators are sufficiently prepared to implement it. Without any differentiation, socialization of this curriculum must reach the implementing instructor. This shows that the new curriculum can be implemented as long as socialization has been carried out efficiently and effectively. In addition, there are three additional factors that must be considered during the outreach process: educator readiness, geographic circumstances, and information dissemination. The curriculum in each educational unit should prioritize the achievement of student competencies in various situations during its implementation. Students experienced learning loss due to this situation and the policy requiring home learning due to Covid-19.

The explanation above provides insight into the various educational challenges that have emerged after the COVID-19 pandemic. Considering the learning crisis that is occurring, the gap in student competency achievement requires the implementation of learning recovery policies within the specified time period. The Merdeka Curriculum is one potential initiative to overcome this challenge.

The Merdeka Curriculum strongly emphasizes the principle of "Freedom to Learn" for students, an initiative intended to facilitate their recovery from the education crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the foundations of the Merdeka Curriculum is the need for skills in the current era and the application of technology (Marisa, 2021). In an effort to recover from the learning crisis, the government is implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, including the Mobilizing Schools, Mobilizing Teachers, Center for Vocational Excellence Schools (SMK-PK) initiatives, and increasing the prevalence of technology integration.

## **METHOD**

This study adopts the literature analysis method. Literature analysis: literature study is a process for conducting a general review of previously published literature related to the topic of Merdeka Curriculum in educational discourse. The literature reviewed or studied can refer to scientific papers, theses, dissertations or writings outside scientific works but are still non-fiction writings such as books or articles.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

A theory consists of a collection of interrelated statements arranged in such a way as to give functional significance to a series of events. The above assertions are expressed in functional constructions, terms, assumptions, hypotheses, generalizations, laws, or descriptive or functional definitions. The content of the formulation is determined based on the extent of empirical knowledge regarding the series of events

discussed, the breadth and depth of theory and research surrounding the event, and the scope of the event itself.

By incorporating these principles into the curriculum, one can develop a curriculum theory, which consists of a collection of declarations that give importance to the academic curriculum. This interpretation emerges from the guidelines governing curriculum construction, implementation, and assessment. The subject matter discussed in curriculum theory study materials is related to curriculum development, evaluation, utilization and planning.

Bobbitt believes that curriculum theory is basically related to human existence. Despite variations, human existence is essentially identical, and shaped by a variety of occupational competencies. With precision and attention, education aims to instill these abilities. Life requires a diverse set of skills, which vary greatly according to the level and nature of the environment. Mastery of certain knowledge, abilities, attitudes, habits and appreciation is required at every level and environment of life. These are the goals that guide the curriculum. Children must master a series of experiences to achieve this goal. The goals and experiences mentioned above are the basis for studying curriculum theory (Franklin, 1918:28).

Curriculum theory underwent further evolution with the contribution of Hollis Caswell. During his tenure as head of curriculum development divisions in four US states (Tennessee, Alabama, Florida, and Virginia), Caswell conceived the idea of interactive curricula centered on the community or workplace. Caswell places significant emphasis on teacher involvement in the curriculum development process. This includes participation in determining the curriculum, determining the organizational structure, selecting content, determining activities, formulating learning activities, designing the curriculum, and assessing results (Cawel, 1974: 46).

Ralph W. Tylor (1949), as quoted by Sukmadanata, put forward the following four fundamental concerns which form the basis of curriculum studies: (1) For what educational goals does the institution want to achieve? (2) What academic experiences should be offered to achieve this goal? (3) How can educational experiences be structured efficiently? (4) By what means can the achievement of objectives be ensured? As stated by Sukimadanata (2000).

Beauchamp provides a synopsis of the evolution of curriculum theory from 1960 to 1965. Beauchamp (1975) describes six constituent elements that constitute the domain of curriculum studies: curriculum foundations, curriculum content, curriculum design, curriculum engineering, evaluation and research, and theory development. .

Thomas L. Faix (1966) explained the concept of curriculum using structural-functional analysis originating from sociology, biology and anthropology. The

curriculum function is defined as the procedure by which its structure is developed and maintained. A number of questions are raised by this structural-functional analysis. The main material and subtopics of these questions represent curriculum phenomena. The investigations relate to the following topics: (1) a thorough investigation of curriculum phenomena; (2) curriculum system; (3) analysis unit and its constituent parts; (4) curriculum system architecture; (5) operation of the curriculum system; (6) curriculum process; and (7) procedures for structural-functional analysis.

The distinction between curriculum and curriculum development procedures was made by Mauritz Johnson in 1967. Although the curriculum development system produces a curriculum, the system is not the curriculum itself. The curriculum, according to Johnson, consists of a structured collection of learning objectives. Therefore, the curriculum emphasizes goals rather than activities. The integration of children's learning experiences into the teaching process is determined by the curriculum formulation (Sukmadinata, 2000: 29). John D. Neil put forward four categories of curriculum concepts in curriculum: academic, humanistic, social reconstruction, and technology (Neil, 1980).

#### *Academic Curriculum Concept*

This academic curriculum is the earliest and most ancient model; This format has remained unchanged since the school's founding, although other formats have emerged. In general, educational institutions continue to adhere to this special curriculum model. As a result, this plant is highly functional, versatile, and easy to integrate with other varieties.

The academic curriculum is rooted in the ancient principles of classical education (essentialism and perennialism). The understanding of all values and science can be attributed to previous philosophers. Education functions to preserve and pass on the cultural heritage of the past. Curriculum content is prioritized for educational purposes. Trying to gain as much knowledge as possible is learning. Those who achieve learning success are those who have mastered all or part of the teaching material delivered or developed by the teacher.

Content for education comes from all disciplines. Each expert has expanded their knowledge systematically, logically and solidly according to their respective fields of expertise. Educators and curriculum designers don't need to bother compiling and creating their own materials. Selected scientific materials written by authorities in the respective fields are all that is necessary for a systematic rearrangement according to the educational goals and progress of the students who will study them. As a deliverer of teaching materials, educators have a crucial function. It is very important for them to achieve a comprehensive understanding of the entire curriculum. He

must have extensive knowledge and expertise in the discipline he teaches. Apart from that, educators are expected not only to have expertise in the academic field but also to be role models for their students. Both the content and the method of delivery must be imbued with the character of the instructor. Individuals who are followed and imitated are considered teachers.

Because of the emphasis on knowledge in academic curricula, education is inherently more intellectual. Curriculum development includes a progressive emphasis on the student learning process, in addition to the content presented. The learning approach chosen is largely determined by the elements of the subject matter that are emphasized.

According to S. Nasution who quoted Jerome Bruner in *The Process of Education*, curriculum development should reflect the structure of scientific disciplines. In addition, he underscored the importance of basing the curriculum of a subject on a basic understanding that can be derived from the guiding principles that establish the framework of a scientific field (Nasution, 1982: 26).

There are at least three methodologies used in the formulation of academic curricula: To begin with, a knowledge structure approach must be maintained. Students learn not only how to memorize data, but also how to obtain and evaluate it. Second, the study is integrative. As a result of societal developments that require a more comprehensive and integrated knowledge model, this strategy has been developed. Lessons consist of learning elements, which go beyond the limits of individual knowledge. Based on natural phenomena, scientific work processes, and existing problems, learning themes are developed. Third, the methods applied by institutions with a fundamentalist curriculum. They continue to use a subject-based teaching approach, placing special emphasis on reading, writing and problem solving (Sukmanadata, 2000: 83-84).

#### *Humanistic Curriculum*

Humanists believe that the curriculum has the capacity to facilitate the development of children's personalities. Curriculum can be thought of as a procedural framework capable of meeting the unique needs of each student to facilitate their progress towards self-actualization. New Mysticism, Confluent Education, and Radical Criticism were all adherents of this school. Education that views the child as a whole is convergent. Radical Criticism, which emerged from the schools of Naturalism or Romanticism, places educational emphasis on facilitating children's self-discovery and the development of their full potential, as well as the creation of an environment that encourages optimal development. The current trend in mystical science is to prioritize sensitivity training, meditation and other transpersonal techniques in order to

discover the value of nobility of character, emotions and practice (Sukmanadata, 2000: 21-23).

The humanistic curriculum is based on the idea that children should be the primary focus of educational efforts. Children occupy a central position as subjects in educational activities. There are many strengths, abilities and potential that children can develop independently. Humanist educators, in turn, adhered to Gestalt philosophy. This shows that the baby functions as a cohesive unit. Education aims to encourage holistic development, which includes not only cognitive and physical growth, but also affective dimensions such as emotions, feelings, and values. The Humanism curriculum emphasizes integrative (comprehensive) education between affective (emotions, attitudes and values) and cognitive (knowledge and intellectual abilities) components, in accordance with the assumptions above. In other words, this curriculum adds a curriculum that focuses on subject matter with an emotive component.

#### *Social Reconstruction Curriculum*

The Social Reconstruction curriculum prioritizes societal problems faced by students. This curriculum philosophy states that education is a collaborative effort that requires interaction and cooperation, not a solitary effort. Collaboration or interaction can arise between students themselves, between peers, or between students and members of their environment. By engaging in this form of collaboration, students seek to address the challenges plaguing society with the ultimate goal of improving it. In accordance with the social reconstruction curriculum framework, education has an impact, encourages transformation, and provides a new aesthetic to society and culture (Sukmanadata, 2000: 91-95).

#### *Technology Curriculum*

From a technological perspective, the curriculum functions as a technological procedure designed to generate the need for decision-making personnel. Specifically regarding the curriculum, the application of technology in education includes two different manifestations: software and hardware. Tool technology (tulls technology) refers to the application of hardware technology in the field of education. Likewise, system technology shows the application of software technology (Syarif, 1996: 25-26).

Tool technology, in relation to educational technology, emphasizes the application of technological instruments to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of education. The curriculum includes a learning model that combines the use of tools alongside plans for implementing various media and tools. Programmed teaching, machine teaching, module teaching, teaching with the help of computer tools, and teaching with a systems approach are examples of teaching models. Educational technology, in the sense of technology as a system, emphasizes the use of systems to



develop programs or teaching plans. Teaching programs can consist of teaching tools and media, in the form of a separate system program, or in the form of a system program together with teaching tools and media. In its initial iteration, teaching did not require the use of sophisticated tools and media. In the second form, teaching continues even without using sophisticated tools and media; however, it would be better if such resources were available.

Teaching, the third form, would not be effective without the use of sophisticated instruments and media. Therefore, media and tools are prerequisites that are included in the program. Technology is utilized to facilitate the teaching and learning process, with special emphasis on teaching techniques, to ensure the same results. The teaching and learning process is supported by scientific and empirical evidence provided by educational technology. The 1975 curriculum recognizes the importance of technology integration, mandating that all educators utilize Learning System Development Procedures (PPSI), Module Teaching, Final Stage Learning Evaluation (EBTANAS), New Student Admission System (SIPENMARU), internet-based learning, and other similar tools.

### **Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum**

The Merdeka Curriculum development policy introduced by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Kemdikbudristek) as one of the learning recovery options was published. In 2022-2024, educational units are given alternative policy options for developing the Merdeka Curriculum as an additional effort to recover from the learning crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

A review of the Merdeka Curriculum policy by the Ministry of Education and Culture is scheduled for 2024. This study is based on an evaluation carried out during the learning recovery period, which relates to the condition of educational units whose learning processes have been greatly disrupted and impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. This is in line with the findings of Amalia and Sa'adah (2020) who found that COVID-19 had an impact on the teaching and learning process in schools and presented a number of obstacles that had to be overcome, including limited ability to adapt and mastery of students and teachers. information technology, inadequate infrastructure and facilities, limited internet access, and reluctance to allocate funds (Amalia, 2020: 214-225).

Only the 2013 curriculum was implemented in educational units before the pandemic as part of the learning process. The Ministry of Education and Culture issued a policy on implementing the 2013 Curriculum and the Emergency Curriculum (simplified 2013 Curriculum) during the pandemic in 2020 and 2021. This implementation then became a benchmark for the curriculum of educational institutions.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Education and Culture issued a policy regarding the use of the 2013 Curriculum, Emergency Curriculum, and Merdeka Curriculum at Driving Schools (SP) and Vocational High Schools (PK) Centers of Excellence during the pandemic which will take place from 2021 to 2022.

The Ministry of Education and Culture issued a policy regarding the use of the 2013 Curriculum and its simplification into an emergency curriculum before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. This policy aims to facilitate the management of learning process materials by educational units by providing essential substances. As one of the best practices implemented in efforts to improve and recover from the learning crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic which began in 2021, the Merdeka Curriculum is present at SP/SMK-PK.

The Ministry of Education and Culture also provides policies for schools that are not ready to implement the Merdeka Curriculum at the implementation stage. These educational institutions can continue to use the 2013 Curriculum as a basic framework for managing learning so that they can recover from the learning crisis that will occur between 2022 and 2024. The Emergency Curriculum, which is an adaptation of the 2013 Curriculum, can still be applied by these academics. institution.

To ensure which educational institutions are ready to adopt the Merdeka Curriculum as an option for implementing the learning process, a data collection process is carried out during the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. The Ministry of Education and Culture will then determine the Merdeka Curriculum policy in 2024, following an assessment of the curriculum carried out during the learning recovery period. After the learning crisis is resolved, the Ministry of Education and Culture will use the results of this evaluation as a reference in formulating additional policies. The importance of post-pandemic learning recovery is something emphasized by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The implementation of post-pandemic education will be greatly influenced by the internet, big data, artificial intelligence, 5G, and cloud computing throughout this recovery process (Zhu & Liu, 2020). This is in line with the strategy outlined by the Ministry of Education and Culture which prioritizes the use of technology, information and communication to facilitate post-pandemic learning recovery (Zhu, 2020: 695-699).

Simultaneous and extensive implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum was not achieved. The Ministry of Education and Culture establishes policies regarding the autonomy of educational institutions in implementing the curriculum according to their respective levels of readiness. The Driving School (SP) and the Central Vocational High School of Excellence (SMK-PK) are two programs that jointly contribute to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum (IKM). Through this initiative, the Ministry of Education and Culture enables IKM to gain valuable practical

experience in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. The content of exemplary learning and best practices is stated and explained precisely in the IKM at SP/SMK-PK, so that it can become a model for other educational units. Providing support for IKM by Research and Technology and the Ministry of Education and Culture is an effort by the Ministry of Education and Culture to facilitate independent learning for IKM and data collection through independent channels. Furthermore, the support provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture will show that potential academic institutions have officially declared their intention to adopt IKM. Furthermore, prospective educational units will be given learning assistance to independently implement the Merdeka Curriculum. This will enable stakeholders, school principals, educators and supervisors to organize activities to share best practices related to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, in the form of workshops and seminars.

The readiness of educational units to implement the Merdeka Curriculum will be determined based on data previously collected by the Ministry of Education and Culture. This information will be used to identify which educational units will receive support in the form of assistance from the Ministry of Education and Culture in running independent IKM channels. Various best practices and learning materials from the Merdeka Curriculum pathway are identified in detail, so that they can be designated for future assistance by the Ministry of Education and Culture. This support guides the integration of IKM to increase student engagement and adaptability by providing autonomy to educational institutions to carry out project-based learning processes (Faiz et al., 2022).

By enabling SP/SMK-PK institutions that have adopted the Merdeka Curriculum to exchange learning experiences and best practices, it is hoped that educators and support staff will form a support network to facilitate the exchange of learning content and best practices of the Merdeka Curriculum. If lucky, a developing society will be able to strengthen an ecosystem that is ready to implement the Merdeka Curriculum broadly and specifically in 2024. As stated in research by Apriliyanti et al. (2022), this support network between educators functions as a useful ecosystem to facilitate the implementation of a program in the learning process. This allows educators to exchange strategies, methods and experiences regarding implementing learning activities, especially in dealing with the pandemic.

The policy, known as Merdeka, which originates from the Ministry of Education and Culture, is planned to be implemented in driving schools starting in 2021. The Ministry of Education and Culture plans to collect data in 2022 which will then become the basis for implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in academic institutions. The Ministry of Education and Culture has developed a number of unrelated SME strategies; This particular strategy will serve as a continuation of this policy.

Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum pathway in stages is the initial approach. This strategic approach centers on initiatives that enable academic institutions to assess their readiness to implement IKM and provide consistent feedback on a quarterly basis. This was done in order to identify the need for modifications to SME assistance provided by the Central and Regional Governments. Providing learning and assessment instruments is the second strategy (high technology). The second strategy emphasizes the strategic use of information and communication technology (ICT) to present a variety of teaching tools and assessment alternatives (e.g. textbooks, teaching modules, curriculum examples, and project examples) in digital format. Education units can utilize these assessments and learning resources to facilitate learning in accordance with the Merdeka Curriculum.

Providing independent training and teacher learning resources (High Technology) is the third strategy; This approach also utilizes information and communication technology. To encourage the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, education staff and teachers can access online training modules on these subjects through the use of information and communication technology. These modules consist of learning resources such as ebooks, videos and podcasts, and can be distributed via storage media. The second and third strategies place more emphasis on implementing the Merdeka Curriculum through the use of technology. In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, educational integration is greatly influenced by technology. The presence of this technology functions as a channel for learning resources and technical implementation, thereby enabling distance learning amidst restrictions on educational implementation caused by the pandemic (Churiyah et al., 2020).

Providing Merdeka Curriculum Resource Persons (High Touch) is the fourth strategy. The fourth strategy involves utilizing a strategic approach where individuals from driving schools or PK vocational schools that have adopted the Merdeka Curriculum become resource persons for the Merdeka Curriculum. Implementation of this approach can be done through offline meetings, webinars, or seminars, workshops, or other meetings organized by educational institutions or local governments. Facilitation of Learning Community Development (High Touch) is the fifth strategy. The fifth approach emphasizes the use of learning communities, initiated by school supervisors and composed of Master Teacher graduates. The aim of these communities is to facilitate the exchange of exemplary approaches in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, both within and between academic divisions. Learning communities can foster an environment that is conducive to open dialogue and collaboration.

The fourth and fifth strategies emphasize meetings, both with the learning community and individual resource persons. This is in accordance with the

statement by Mutiani et al. (2020) that community involvement can facilitate the creation of an inclusive environment for educators, students and scholars to engage in collaborative sharing during learning activities related to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.

The aim of the strategy for implementing the Merdeka Curriculum independent route, which begins with data collection from the Ministry of Education and Culture, is to assess the readiness of educational units in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. This data collection aims to enable the Ministry of Education and Culture to assess the level of readiness of educational institutions that will adopt the Merdeka Curriculum in the future, thereby preventing its implementation on a massive scale. The approaches above illustrate the extent to which the Ministry of Education and Culture relies on the learning community and technology to implement the Merdeka Curriculum. Furthermore, this shows that the Ministry of Education and Culture chose to implement the Merdeka Curriculum gradually and methodically. Apart from that, there are also other influencing conditions, especially those that have arisen since the COVID-19 pandemic, which need attention and are now becoming a concern in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum as an effort to recover from the education crisis.

### **Merdeka Curriculum in the Construction of Educational Curriculum Theory**

Curriculum Theoretically, the Merdeka Curriculum concept fulfills all curriculum components identified by John D. Neil. Neil (1980) proposed four distinct categories of curriculum concepts: technological, academic, humanistic, and social reconstruction.

The Merdeka Curriculum was reconstructed academically, humanistically, socially and technologically comprehensive. This is in line with the aim of the Merdeka Curriculum, namely to restore educational standards after the Covid-19 pandemic. The Merdeka Curriculum also has the potential to be an innovative and useful innovation in raising our nation's education level to the same level as developed countries.

Nadiem Makarim, Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, has achieved important milestones over the last five years with the implementation of the freedom to teach and freedom to learn policies (Pratikno et al., 2022). Clearly, this policy has far-reaching consequences for the implementation practices of educational institutions, instructors and students. Freedom is a fundamental human right; According to their talents and capacities, each individual is free to innovate and be creative. Likewise, in the world of education, educators are expected to have independent thinking so that they can transmit to students all the knowledge they have

acquired. Educators are no longer busy presenting information from just one source. According to Tohir (2020).

Educators can increase their knowledge by immersing themselves in a variety of technology platforms, as well as by becoming familiar with the cultural and social contexts that directly impact the lives of their students. Teachers will be able to convey any information effectively to their students, and furthermore, they will be able to relate each information to the students' actual needs. Moreover, because it has the potential to improve the teaching and learning process and provide a positive influence on every aspect of life, its influence will be more significant. On the contrary, students show an unabashed willingness to investigate every challenge they face and have the ability to understand and relate every problem to universal principles that affect their personal affairs (Kemendikbudristek, 2021:9).

Educational advances that encourage the application of critical thinking to solve problems. For this reason, the government, in this case the Ministry of Education and Culture, has issued a curriculum that provides flexibility for teachers and students. The name for this curriculum is "Merdeka Curriculum".

## CONCLUSION

The Ministry of Education and Culture's policy regarding the Merdeka Curriculum seeks to restore the learning process in educational institutions, considering the significant disruption and impact caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on educational activities and presented many obstacles that must be overcome. These challenges include limited adaptability and mastery of information technology by students and teachers, inadequate infrastructure and facilities, limited internet access, and reluctance to allocate funds. The Merdeka Curriculum includes a comprehensive curriculum concept, which includes technological, academic, humanistic and sociocultural programs. It is hoped that the Merdeka Curriculum can be a catalyst for educational progress in Indonesia.

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