

# Curriculum Implementation in Surabaya Schools: Approaches, Challenges and Innovations

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## Abstract

This study about implementation of curriculum in Surabaya, including SMP Wachid Hasyim 7, SMA Al-Falah, and SMK PGRI 7, with a focus on use of Merdeka and 2013 Curriculum. This also examines the integration of technology, application of inclusive concepts, and collaboration and evaluation in learning process. The curriculum is developed with philosophical foundations such as Pancasila, humanism, and progressivism, which are adapted for students and the development of the times needs. Information and communication technology is integrated into learning to increase effectiveness and interactivity, although some schools still experience limitations in facilities. Inclusive concepts in some schools shows positive steps, although there are still challenges in preparing special educators for students with special needs. The results show that schools in Surabaya are trying to implement a curriculum that is adaptive and relevant to students needs. However, challenges related to resources and facilities still need to be addressed to optimal implementation. Efforts of collaboration and evaluation conducted periodically are positive steps towards improving the quality of education. Improvements in facilities and resources are needed to support the integration of technology and inclusion, as well as to strengthen collaboration with parents and the community for a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

*Keywords:* curriculum; challenges; innovation; Pancasila; humanism; inclusion

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## 1. Introduction

Education is a system consisting of input, process, and output components. One important element in this system is the curriculum. According to Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, Article 1 Paragraph 19, "The curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements regarding the objectives, content, and learning materials and methods used as guidelines for organizing learning to achieve certain educational goals." This statement emphasizes that the curriculum is a framework that regulates how education is delivered and how student learning outcomes are measured.

The curriculum serves as a guide in providing learning experiences to students, which are ultimately expected to change their behavior and increase their knowledge. This set of arrangements that are written completely and systematically includes the objectives to be achieved, methods to achieve these objectives, and evaluation mechanisms to assess the achievement of the objectives. This concept is known as a written curriculum, which emphasizes the importance of documentation and planning in the educational process. In the book "Konsep Dasar Kurikulum" by Zainuri (2018), education is described as an effort to "humanize humans to become humane," which means developing humans into ideal, rational, and virtuous individuals.

Education functions as a science that directs humans from ignorance to knowledge. With education, human potential can develop to be better, allowing them to become more mature and responsible, and able to contribute positively to society. Education also facilitates the growth of good character, such as discipline and the ability to express ideas or concepts that can be beneficial to oneself and the nation. Therefore, education is very important for every element of society because it has a major influence on the quality and fate of the nation in the future. This very important function of education gives rise to the term curriculum as a system or guideline for learning activities that contain plans, content, objectives, and learning materials. From this statement, it can be concluded that the curriculum as a reference for educators has a major role in the world of education. Curriculum development should not be done carelessly; it requires serious attention from the concept to its implementation. Educators and prospective educators must truly understand

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the nature of the curriculum along with all related dimensions. This is important so that they can compile and implement a curriculum that is effective and relevant to the needs of students and society.

As part of the education system, the curriculum must be designed by considering various aspects such as student needs, scientific developments, and societal dynamics. A good curriculum is one that is adaptive to changes in the times and is able to prepare students to face future challenges. In addition, the curriculum must be able to foster critical, creative, and collaborative thinking skills in students. In the current era of globalization and digitalization, the curriculum must also include elements that are relevant to the development of technology and information. Students need to be equipped with 21st century skills in order to compete globally. Therefore, the curriculum must be continuously evaluated and updated to remain relevant and effective in achieving educational goals.

Overall, the curriculum is a key element in the education system that determines the direction and quality of learning. By understanding and developing the curriculum properly, education can be an effective tool to advance individuals and society towards a better life. The curriculum is a key element in the education system that serves as a guide in the learning process. In Surabaya, various schools implement a combination of the Merdeka Curriculum and the 2013 Curriculum to meet the dynamic needs of education. This study aims to explore how this curriculum is implemented and the challenges faced.

The curriculum is the heart of the education system, acting as a guideline and framework that guides the learning process in schools. In an era full of global changes and challenges, effective and adaptive curriculum implementation is key to preparing the younger generation to face the future. This study explores the implementation of the curriculum in various schools in Surabaya, from elementary to secondary levels, with a focus on the transition from the 2013 Curriculum to the Merdeka Curriculum. Through in-depth observation and interview steps, this study reveals how schools in Surabaya adapt and implement the national curriculum, while maintaining their unique characteristics and values. From SD At-Taqwa Wiyung to SMA Tri Karya, each institution demonstrates a unique approach in integrating philosophical, psychological, and sociological foundations into their learning practices.

This study also highlights the important role of information and communication technology in educational transformation, as well as the challenges faced by schools in adopting learning innovations. Furthermore, this study explores schools' efforts in implementing the concept of inclusion and strengthening collaboration between teachers, students, parents, and the community. By analyzing the components of the curriculum, the principles applied, and the evaluation strategies used, this study aims to provide a comprehensive picture of the educational landscape in Surabaya. These findings are expected to provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and other education stakeholders in their efforts to improve the quality and relevance of education in Indonesia. Through a deeper understanding of curriculum implementation at the local level, we can better design educational strategies that are responsive to student needs, community demands, and global developments, while maintaining local values and wisdom that are the foundation of national education.

## 2. Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach. This approach was chosen because it can provide an in-depth picture of the implementation of the curriculum in various schools studied. Qualitative methods allow researchers to explore the experiences, perspectives, and practices of educators in implementing the curriculum in their respective school environments. Research Locations The research was conducted in several schools in Surabaya, including: Pertrama Wachid Hasyim 7 Middle School, Al-Falah High School, PGRI 7 Vocational High School, At-Taqwa Wiyung Elementary School, Shafta Islamic Junior High School, Wachid Hasyim 5 High School, Muhammadiyah 15 Elementary School, Jajar Tunggal 3 State Elementary School, At-Taqwa Integrated Islamic Junior High School, Lidah Kulon IV/467 State Elementary School, Sumur Welut 1 State Elementary School, 59 State Junior High School, and Tri Karya High School. The selection of this location is based on the diversity of school types (Primary Schools, Middle Schools, High Schools, Vocational Schools) and the variety of curricula applied (2013 Curriculum, Independent Curriculum, and special school curricula).

The subjects of this study were the Principal, Vice Principal for curriculum, Teachers, and representatives of the school committee. The selection of subjects used purposive sampling techniques to ensure that participants had relevant knowledge and experience related to curriculum implementation in their respective schools. Data Collection Techniques.

- a) In-depth interviews were conducted with the principal, vice principal for curriculum, and teachers to obtain in-depth information about the concept, implementation, challenges, and evaluation of the curriculum in their respective schools.
- b) Participatory Observation, conducted to observe the learning process in the classroom, the use of technology in learning, and interactions between teachers and students in the context of curriculum implementation.
- c) Document analysis includes syllabus, Learning Implementation Plan (RPP), teacher and student guidebooks, and school curriculum evaluation documents.
- d) Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were conducted with groups of teachers to discuss their experiences in implementing the curriculum, the challenges faced, and the strategies used to overcome these challenges.

The main instrument in this study is the researcher himself. In addition, also used: Semi-structured interview guide, Observation sheet, Document analysis guide, and Focus group discussion guide. Data Analysis Techniques using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which includes: a. Data Reduction: The process of selecting, focusing attention, and simplifying rough data from field notes. b. Data Presentation: Data is presented in the form of narratives, tables, or diagrams to facilitate drawing conclusions. And the last is c. Drawing Conclusions/Verification.

### **3. Result and Discussion**

Based on the analysis of curriculum implementation in various schools where the author conducted research, several results and discussions can be drawn as follows:

#### *3.1. Curriculum Implementation*

The results of the study showed that most of the schools observed were in a transition period between the 2013 Curriculum (K13) and the Merdeka Curriculum. Several schools such as SMP Wachid Hasyim 7 Surabaya, SDN Lidah Kulon IV/467, and SMP Islam Terpadu At-Taqwa implemented both curricula simultaneously for different grade levels. This shows a gradual effort in adopting the new curriculum policy. This gradual curriculum transition has its own advantages and challenges. On the one hand, it allows schools to adapt slowly and prepare the necessary resources. However, on the other hand, implementing two different curricula simultaneously can create complexity in the management and coordination of learning. Schools need to ensure consistency and continuity in the learning process between grade levels even though they use different curricula.

#### *3.2. Philosophical and Psychological Basis*

The results of the study showed that the schools observed had diverse philosophical foundations in developing their curriculum. Some of the foundations that were often mentioned included progressivism, humanism, constructivism, and Pancasila values. Meanwhile, the psychological foundations used generally focused on understanding the stages of cognitive, emotional, and social development of students. The diversity of philosophical foundations used reflects the school's efforts to develop a holistic curriculum that is relevant to the needs of students and the demands of the times. A progressive and humanistic approach allows for the development of a student-centered curriculum and encourages active learning. Meanwhile, the integration of Pancasila values shows a commitment to character building and national identity. The use of psychological foundations in curriculum development shows an awareness of the importance of adapting the learning process to the characteristics and needs of students. This can help create a more meaningful and effective learning experience.

#### *3.3. Integration of Sociological Foundations and Science and Technology*

The results of the study show that most schools strive to integrate sociological aspects and developments in science and technology into their curriculum. Several schools such as SMA Al-Falah and SDN Sumur Welut 1 explicitly mention their efforts to develop social skills and readiness to face technological challenges in students. The integration of sociological aspects into the curriculum reflects an awareness of the importance of preparing students to play an active role in society. This is in line with the national education goal of forming responsible citizens who contribute positively to their environment. Meanwhile, the integration of science and technology into the curriculum shows the school's response to the development of the digital era. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) in learning not only increases the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process, but also helps students to be better prepared to face challenges in an increasingly competitive world of work. Schools that adopt technology in learning, such as the use of e-learning platforms, learning videos, and other digital tools, show progress in creating interactive and engaging learning experiences.

### 3.4. Curriculum Components

The results of the analysis show that the curriculum components commonly applied in the observed schools include learning objectives, materials, learning strategies, and evaluation. Many schools also develop various teaching modules and learning activities to support the achievement of educational objectives. The importance of clear and structured curriculum components cannot be ignored. Well-defined learning objectives will provide clear direction for teachers and students in the learning process. In addition, materials that are relevant and in accordance with students' needs will increase interest and motivation in learning. Various learning strategies, such as project-based learning, inquiry-based learning, and collaborative learning, can help students to be actively involved in the learning process and develop critical thinking skills and creativity. Periodic evaluations are also important to assess student progress and the effectiveness of the curriculum being implemented.

**Table 1.** Curriculum in Surabaya schools

School	Curriculum	Technology Usage	Inclusion	Unique Programs/Innovation
SMP Wachid Hasyim 7 Surabaya	Kurikulum Merdeka (Grades 7 & 8), K13 (9)	Limited use of ICT, still relies on paper tests	No inclusion program yet, future plan	Focus on Islamic values, comprehensive evaluation system
SMA Al-Falah	National Curriculum, Pesantren, Character	ICT integrated well, balanced with funding	Not mentioned	SMALFA Superior, religious and project-based learning
SMK PGRI 7 Surabaya	Combination of Merdeka & K13	ICT integration through e-learning platforms	No specific inclusion program	Innovative teachers, project-based learning, but lacks practicum
SD At-Taqwa Wiyung	Competency-based, moral & ethical values	Technology used effectively in teaching	Sociological inclusion considered	Flexible learning, values-based curriculum
SMP Islam Shafta	Kurikulum Merdeka	ICT integrated, but with some challenges	No specialized staff for disabilities	Emphasizes religion, culture, and flexible learning approaches
SMA Wachid Hasyim 5	Merdeka	ICT supported learning	No mention of inclusion	Religious foundation, psychological and sociological inclusion
SD Muhammadiyah 15	Merdeka	ICT and learning technology incorporated	Supports students with disabilities	Digital platforms for collaboration, innovative learning
SDN Jajar Tunggal 3	Merdeka (Grades 1 & 2), K13 (3-6)	ICT partially implemented	Accepts students with special needs	Project-based learning, focusing on sociological integration
SMPN 59 Surabaya	Merdeka (Grades 7 & 8), K13 (Grade 9)	High ICT integration, including e-learning	Inclusion planned for future	Strong focus on digital learning and collaboration
SMA Tri Karya	National Curriculum with project-based	Technology integrated but limited by resources	Inclusion and collaboration with parents	Holistic and student-centered approach, project-based learning
SDN Lidah Kulon IV/467	Merdeka	ICT highly integrated in learning	Inclusive education principles applied	Flexible and innovative learning approaches, collaboration focus
SDN Sumur Welut 1	K13 (Grades 2, 3, 6), Merdeka (Grades 2, 5)	ICT used, but facilities limited	Inclusive approach	Project-based and digital learning, strong local integration

### 3.5. Advantages and Disadvantages of Curriculum

In the analysis results, it can be seen that each school has its own advantages and disadvantages in implementing the curriculum. The advantages that are often mentioned include innovative teaching, adequate use of technology, and student involvement in learning. However, some of the identified disadvantages include limited resources, lack of interpersonal skills development, and challenges in implementing the inclusive curriculum. The advantages possessed by these schools indicate good efforts in improving the quality of education. The use of innovative learning methods and appropriate technology can encourage students to be more active and creative in learning. However, the existing disadvantages need to be a serious concern for the school. Limited resources, both in terms of facilities and teaching staff, can affect the overall quality of learning. In addition, the challenges in implementing the inclusive curriculum indicate the need for more attention to the needs of students with special needs. Schools need to develop more inclusive strategies and programs to ensure that all students get equal opportunities to learn.

### *3.6. Curriculum Evaluation*

The results of the study show that curriculum evaluation is conducted periodically in most schools. This evaluation includes formative and summative assessments to identify areas of improvement and ensure the effectiveness of the implemented curriculum. Systematic and data-based evaluation is essential to improve the quality of education. Through evaluation, schools can determine the extent to which learning objectives have been achieved and identify weaknesses in the learning process. The results of the evaluation can be used as a basis for making improvements and adjustments to the curriculum, so as to increase the effectiveness of learning in the future.

### *3.7. The Concept of Inclusion*

Based on the analysis, most of the schools observed have not fully implemented the concept of inclusion, although some have considered adopting the approach in the future. These schools still need to take concrete steps to ensure that all students, including those with special needs, receive quality education. The implementation of the concept of inclusion in education is an important step to create a fair and equal learning environment. Schools need to develop policies and programs that support students with special needs so that they can actively participate in learning activities. This also reflects the school's commitment to the principles of social justice and human rights.

### *3.8. Collaboration between Stakeholders*

The results of the analysis show that collaboration between teachers, students, parents, and the community is very important in implementing the curriculum. Based on table 1, many schools have strengthened this collaboration through socialization activities, work meetings, and programs involving parents and the community. Good collaboration between all related parties can create positive synergy in the education process. The involvement of parents and the community in their children's education can increase student support and motivation to learn. In addition, this collaboration can also help schools identify the needs and challenges faced in implementing the curriculum.

## **4. Conclusion**

The conclusion of this study shows that the implementation of the curriculum in various schools in Surabaya, involving the Merdeka Curriculum and the 2013 Curriculum, took place gradually with variations in adaptation in each institution. The transition from the 2013 Curriculum to the Merdeka Curriculum reflects the school's efforts to respond to the dynamics of educational needs, but the challenges faced, such as limited facilities and resources, still hamper the optimization of curriculum implementation. Although the integration of information technology in learning has been carried out in several schools, limited technological facilities are still a major obstacle.

The philosophical and psychological foundations used in curriculum development, such as progressivism, humanism, and Pancasila values, play an important role in creating a student-centered curriculum. However, the implementation of the concept of inclusion has not been fully implemented in most schools, despite awareness of the importance of inclusive education for students with special needs. This study also found that collaboration between teachers, students, parents, and the community plays a crucial role in supporting curriculum implementation. With the active involvement of various parties, schools can be more effective in facing challenges and improving the quality of learning. Periodic curriculum evaluations in schools also help identify areas that need improvement and adjustment so that the curriculum remains relevant and responsive to student needs and developments.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that although the implementation of the curriculum in Surabaya has been going well, improvements are still needed in terms of facilities, development of teaching staff, and application of the concept of inclusion to achieve more inclusive and adaptive educational goals.

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