



Utilization of Kurikulum Merdeka to develop diversity character at Mentari Ambarawa School

Rosi Tunas Karomah¹, Santi Fahrma², Kulsum Nur Hayati³, Andi Prasetyo⁴

^{1,2,3}UIN Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

⁴UIN Salatiga, Salatiga, Indonesia

rositunas08@gmail.com¹, santifahrma354@gmail.com², kulsum.nurhayari@uin-suka.ac.id³, andripscoot24@gmail.com⁴

ABSTRACT

Good education races in an independent curriculum that promotes freedom in regulating learning patterns. A good education will produce good character in diversity. This study aims to analyze the results of using the independent curriculum in developing the character of diversity in children. The method used in this research is a phenomenological qualitative approach that relates to the findings. The subjects of this study were class teachers and observation to 25 students. Data collection techniques are done by observing, interviewing, and documenting. Data analysis by doing data reduction, presentation, and data verification. The results of this study indicate that the use of the independent curriculum to develop the character of diversity that has been implemented results in students becoming more polite in their actions, then adding broader insights related to diversity and full or supportive support in the implementation of other people's religious activities. The results of this study have implications related to the character of diversity which can be developed by applying independent curriculum-based teaching. And implementing an independent curriculum to form children's character who is high intolerance

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received: 30 Aug 2023

Revised: 20 Nov 2023

Accepted: 27 Nov 2023

Available Online: 30 Nov 2023

Publish: 21 Feb 2024

Keyword:

Diversity character; good character; Kurikulum Merdeka

Open access

Inovasi Kurikulum is a peer-reviewed open-access journal.

ABSTRAK

Pendidikan yang baik berpacu pada kurikulum merdeka yang mengedepankan kebebasan dalam mengatur pola pembelajaran. Pendidikan yang baik akan menghasilkan karakter yang baik dalam keberagaman. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana hasil penggunaan kurikulum mandiri dalam mengembangkan karakter keberagaman pada anak. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah pendekatan kualitatif fenomenologis yang berkaitan dengan temuan-temuan di sekitar. Subjek penelitian ini adalah guru kelas dan observasi kepada peserta didik sebanyak 25 orang. Teknik pengumpulan data dengan observasi, wawancara dan dokumentasi. Analisis data dengan melakukan reduksi data, penyajian dan verifikasi data. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa penggunaan kurikulum mandiri untuk mengembangkan karakter keberagaman yang telah diterapkan menghasilkan peserta didik menjadi lebih santun dalam bertindak, kemudian menambah wawasan yang lebih luas terkait keberagaman dan dukungan penuh atau suportif dalam penerapan lainnya. kegiatan keagamaan masyarakat. Hasil penelitian ini mempunyai implikasi terkait karakter keberagaman yang dapat dikembangkan dengan menerapkan pembelajaran berbasis kurikulum mandiri. Menerapkan kurikulum merdeka untuk membentuk karakter anak yang tinggi akan toleransi

Kata Kunci: Karakter kebhinekaan; karakter kesetaraan; Kurikulum Merdeka

How to cite (APA 7)

Karomah, R. T., Fahrma, S., Hayati, K. N., & Prasetyo, A. (2024). Utilization of Kurikulum Merdeka to develop diversity character at Mentari Ambarawa School. *Inovasi Kurikulum*, 21(1), 243-254.

Peer-review

This article has been peer-reviewed through the journal's standard double-blind peer review, where both the reviewers and authors are anonymised during review.

Copyright

2024, Rosi Tunas Karomah, Santi Fahrma, Kulsum Nur Hayati, Andi Prasetyo. This an open-access is article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0) <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author, and source are credited. *Corresponding author: rositunas08@gmail.com

INTRODUCTIONS

Education is known as a place designed to develop a person's potential. Education itself is governed by certain rules that regulate and direct educational institutions to ensure the achievement of educational goals (Arifitama, 2019). These rules are commonly referred to as the curriculum. The curriculum plays a crucial role in today's education system, as it governs the educational process and helps achieve Indonesia's educational goals of nurturing students with noble character and moral values (Indriyani et al., 2019). The curriculum is flexible and can adapt to the needs of the times. The curriculum currently being promoted in educational institutions is the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. The Minister of Education introduced *Kurikulum Merdeka* as a response to the problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. All activities and work usually done outside during the pandemic were moved indoors. *Kurikulum Merdeka* was proposed to address the challenges brought by COVID-19, to ensure that learning and the delivery of educational materials could still be carried out effectively, despite the limitations of distance and time (Alawi, 2022).

The *Kurikulum Merdeka* emphasizes the freedom of both educators and students in organizing the learning process according to their preferences. The goal is to create a more conducive and engaging learning environment (Marisa, 2021). Educators are granted the autonomy to deliver lessons using various teaching methods they are comfortable with and have mastered. When educators feel confident and comfortable with their methods, explaining and presenting the material effectively becomes easier (Nugraha, 2022). *Kurikulum Merdeka* is based on liberating the teaching and learning process within educational institutions by giving more autonomy to both educators and students. Students can choose learning methods that suit them and make the learning experience more enjoyable. At the same time, educators have the flexibility to apply diverse methods, approaches, and learning models. Implementing the *Kurikulum Merdeka* will be very enjoyable and eagerly anticipated by students because it uses methods and ways of learning that are different from the usual ones (Yulianti, 2022).

Educators faced several challenges in adapting to changing times and uncontrollable circumstances. Teachers experienced difficulties adjusting to the appropriate learning model during the COVID-19 pandemic (Rahmawati & Suharyati, 2022). There was also confusion regarding how learning should be conducted in such a situation (Mei & Yulita, 2021). Moreover, many educators lacked the understanding and knowledge to utilize modern learning technologies (Maya & Tafonao, 2021). These difficulties led to the emergence of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. The current curriculum is often called the *Kurikulum Merdeka* or post-COVID-19 (Nugraha, 2022). Unlike other curricula, this curriculum emphasizes the freedom of both teachers and students in the learning process. (Taroreh & Satria, 2020). This approach was taken to support the adaptation process in response to COVID-19.

The *Kurikulum Merdeka* was implemented by providing guidance and counseling to schools so that they could continue learning while adhering to the newly established regulations (Zaeriyah, 2022). The counseling focused on learning models and systematic teaching approaches while still complying with health protocols (Pangestu et al., 2021). The *Kurikulum Merdeka* introduced new learning models to students and provided new insights about using online learning technologies such as Zoom and Google Meet (Aji et al., 2020). Furthermore, the curriculum also introduced students to the national motto "*berbeda-beda tetap satu jua*," *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*. Emphasizing the importance of understanding diversity helps foster a high tolerance among students toward differences.

Education is considered successful when its students possess good character traits, according to the goals of national education, which are to enlighten the nation and develop individuals who are devout and have noble character. Character is a tangible result of the education experienced by an individual. It manifests as fundamental attitudes toward others, based on religious teachings and the principle of treating others humanely (Santika, 2020). The *Kurikulum Merdeka* emphasizes character formation within students, including the character of diversity. The character of diversity is often seen as a trait that enables students

to respond positively to the differences present in their environment. It is a character that values and respects diversity, recognizing that differences are not negative but bring color and meaning to life (Yudha & Aulia, 2023).

The character of diversity plays a crucial role in encouraging students not to feel discriminated against or marginalized because of the differences within themselves. Diversity is a motto upheld by the Indonesian nation, emphasizing *that bersatu kita teguh bercerai kita runtuh*. This means that differences should not divide people but serve as a unifying force and a beautiful reflection of Indonesia's richness. When students internalize the value of diversity, it strengthens unity and helps minimize social inequality in their surroundings. Sekolah Alam Mentari has made significant efforts to implement the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in its learning process. The school provides adequate facilities to support teaching and learning, offers guidance, and conducts training for teachers to help them update their teaching systems and methods. Thorough preparation has been carried out at this school to support the successful implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* (Sabanil et al., 2022).

Research related to *Kurikulum Merdeka* conducted by Wirdalena & Mayar (2022) shows that implementing *Kurikulum Merdeka* can enhance children's creativity. Permatasari et al. (2021) illustrate that using *Kurikulum Merdeka* can help improve school quality, particularly in utilizing technology. Suryaman (2020) explains that *Kurikulum Merdeka* can help increase teachers' ability to master technology for use in the learning process. This study aims to explore the benefits and implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* in developing the character of diversity among students at Sekolah Mentari Ambarawa. The findings of this research are expected to contribute new insights into how *Kurikulum Merdeka* can be used to nurture the value of diversity in students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Education

According to Undang-Undang Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 on the Sistem Pendidikan Nasional, "*Pendidikan adalah usaha sadar dan terencana untuk mewujudkan suasana belajar dan proses pembelajaran sedemikian rupa supaya peserta didik dapat mengembangkan potensi dirinya secara aktif supaya memiliki pengendalian diri, kecerdasan, keterampilan dalam bermasyarakat, kekuatan spiritual keagamaan, kepribadian serta akhlak mulia*". Education, as an ethical effort by humans for humans and society, aims to develop individual talents to the fullest in line with their inherent potential. The purpose of education is to involve every individual in the development of both themselves and their society in order to achieve a higher standard of living. Therefore, education and human beings are inseparable (Amelia, 2019).

According to Ki Hadjar Dewantara, education is a guide in children's growth, aimed at leading them to become individuals and members of society capable of achieving safety and happiness. Meanwhile, Plato viewed education as a lifelong learning process that begins from birth and continues until the end of life. Through education, humans can gain knowledge and social values, such as leadership skills and adherence to proper rules. Therefore, education is a human endeavor to develop and shape one's character within a social and cultural context. There are several essential elements in education, as outlined by Amelia (2019):

1. Effort, the activity is intentional and conducted consciously to guide and support the individual.
2. There are educators, mentors, or helpers;
3. There is a term for the educated;
4. The guidance activities have a basis and purpose; and
5. This activity has tools that are used as facilities.

Education is an effort to improve the quality of human resources in order to compete with other countries. Essentially, Indonesia is a developing country that has the potential to become a developed nation,

provided that its education system functions properly and effectively. However, education in Indonesia is still experiencing setbacks, which causes the country's education quality to lag behind that of others. P. H. Combs, as cited in Fitri (2021), identified several key issues that contribute to the decline in education, namely:

1. The imbalance between the number of students and the availability of quality educational facilities. Indonesia is projected to experience a surge in its youth population by 2045, known as the *generasi emas*, in which people of productive age will dominate. Therefore, the quality of education in Indonesia needs to be improved to produce an excellent future generation.;
2. Lack of facilities and infrastructure, especially funding to meet educational needs. The continuity of quality education certainly requires adequate support in terms of facilities and infrastructure, and sufficient funding to support educational needs. These needs include items such as books, school buildings, teachers, desks, and chairs
3. Unaffordable cost of education. Rapid advancement has become one of the causes of the high cost of living, including the cost of education. Meanwhile, free education can only be found in public schools in major cities, which becomes a barrier for people living in remote areas.
4. Mismatch between education outcomes. Currently, the education outcomes obtained by students do not meet the needs of society. Many graduates are unable to apply the knowledge they gained during their education in the community, which is, of course, very concerning. Therefore, students must master other up-to-date knowledge that aligns with the surrounding community's needs.
5. Mismatch between the current education system and the demands of an evolving era. For example, society must learn about the digital world in today's digital era. However, many educational institutions have not provided digital learning materials for their students, creating a disconnect between the education system and the evolving times.

The factors causing the issues mentioned above consist of three factors, according to Fitri (2021), namely:

1. The learning approach factor arises from the failure of the Indonesian education system, whether in the family, community, or school environment. If all these aspects are not optimal, it will lead to a failure in educating children.
2. The curriculum change factor refers to the frequent changes in the curriculum in Indonesia, which often result in lower educational quality. The curriculum serves as a guide for teachers in their teaching, and when it is changed frequently, it can lead to less optimal learning outcomes.
3. Teacher competence is a critical factor in establishing advanced education. A professional teacher must be able to understand each subject thoroughly and deeply. This competence ensures the teacher can effectively convey knowledge to students, adapt to their learning needs, and foster a productive learning environment.

Kurikulum Merdeka



Figure 1. History of the curriculum in Indonesia
Source: (Vhalery, 2022)

Based on the Undang-Undang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 states that “*Kurikulum merupakan seperangkat rencana pembelajaran yang berkaitan dengan tujuan, isi, bahan ajar dan cara yang digunakan dan dijadikan sebagai pedoman dalam penyelenggaraan kegiatan pembelajaran untuk mencapai sebuah tujuan pendidikan nasional*”. The curriculum in Indonesia has undergone continuous changes and improvements since 1947, as shown in **Figure 1**. In 2004, the curriculum was known as the *Kurikulum Berbasis Kompetensi* and later evolved into the *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (KTSP)* in 2006. This curriculum then transformed into the *Kurikulum 2013 (Kurtilas)*, which remained in use until 2018, evolving into the *Kurikulum Nasional*. The *Kurikulum Nasional* was later revised and improved into the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. The *Kurikulum Merdeka* provides opportunities for students to learn in a relaxed, enjoyable, and stress-free environment, allowing them to express their natural talents. The continuous changes in Indonesia's curriculum are largely attributed to the frequent changes in the education ministers during different periods, influencing policy shifts and adjustments (Rahayu et al., 2022).

Before transitioning to the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, Indonesia previously implemented the *Kurikulum 2013*, which was in effect for six years starting from 2013, with continuous improvements throughout its implementation period. In 2019, Minister of Education Nadiem Makarim introduced the *Kurikulum Merdeka* to enhance the *Kurikulum 2013*. The main strength of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* is its focus on essential content and competency development for students, allowing them to learn in a deeper, more meaningful, and enjoyable way. Additionally, the *Kurikulum Merdeka* is accompanied by the *Merdeka Belajar* policy, which, according to Rahmayanti and Hartoyo (2022), includes several key aspects:

1. In 2020, the *Ujian Sekolah Berstandar Nasional (USBN)* was replaced with assessments organized by the schools. These assessments allowed for a more comprehensive evaluation of students' competencies, allowing teachers and schools to assess students' learning outcomes through various assessment forms. This change aimed to provide a more tailored and holistic approach to evaluating students, focusing on their learning progress.
2. In 2021, the *Ujian Nasional* was replaced by the *Asesmen Kompetensi Minimum (AKM)* and Character Survey. These assessments evaluated students' literacy, numeracy, and character skills. The aim was to encourage teachers and schools to improve the quality of learning, drawing from best practices in international assessments such as PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) and TIMSS (Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study);
3. The simplification of the preparation for the *Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran (RPP)*, which consisted of 13 components, has been reduced to 3 core components: learning objectives, learning activities, and assessment. This aims to give teachers more time to prepare and evaluate the learning process and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of teaching.

4. The policy on new student admission has become more flexible in addressing inequalities in access and quality in various regions.

Characteristics in Education

Character refers to humans' habits in their actions, socializing, and interacting with their environment. Each individual's character is naturally different, shaped by diverse backgrounds such as ethnicity, religion, race, and customs. These differences influence the habits, personalities, and characters of each person. However, the main factor that most influences a person's character is the environment from which they come, including family, peer groups, and educational settings. Moreover, character is closely linked to personality, as it provides the inner drive to regulate and direct one's life goals. There are four stages in the development of human character: preparation, imitation, role-playing, acceptance, and the application of values and norms. These stages represent ideal ways humans can develop their character, but this character will form and change according to the environment in which the individual lives and experiences life. A person's character can evolve every second, minute, and moment throughout their life, leading to a unique character (Sutisna et al., 2019).

According to the Undang-Undang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional Nomor 20 Tahun 2003, "*Pendidikan nasional berfungsi mengembangkan kemampuan dan membentuk watak serta peradaban bangsa yang bermartabat dalam rangka mencerdaskan kehidupan bangsa, bertujuan untuk berkembangnya potensi peserta didik agar menjadi manusia yang beriman. dan bertakwa kepada Tuhan Yang Maha Esa, berakhlak mulia, sehat, berilmu, cakap, kreatif, mandiri, dan menjadi warga negara yang demokratis serta bertanggung jawab.*" Additionally, Budimansyah argues that students are considered as "not yet citizens", because they still need to be educated to become mature citizens who are aware of their rights and obligations. Therefore, schools provide character education to students so that they can possess traits such as faith, piety, self-confidence, honesty, humility, and responsibility for their actions. Thomas Lickona developed principles in character education, according to Sutisna et al. (2019), including:

1. School community to develop norms and core skills as a foundation for good character;
2. Schools define character comprehensively to include thoughts, feelings, and actions;
3. Schools use a comprehensive, deliberate, and proactive approach to developing students' character;
4. Schools create a community environment that cares about character;
5. Schools provide opportunities for students to act morally;
6. Schools offer an academic curriculum that values all students' characters and supports them to achieve success
7. Schools develop student motivation;
8. Staf School staff are a community that supports students' character education;
9. Schools develop shared leadership and provide strong support for character education;
10. Schools invite families and communities as partners in students' character education; and
11. Schools routinely assess the implementation of students' character in everyday life.

In addition, there are five national character values that students must develop as a form of good citizens. Referring to Shinta and Ain (2021), including:

1. Religious, reflects an attitude of obedience to one's beliefs, respect for religious differences, and tolerance for the implementation of worship;
2. Nationalist, reflects a way of thinking and behaving with loyalty, concern, love of the homeland, and respect for cultural diversity;
3. Independent, reflects an attitude that is not dependent on other people;
4. cooperation, shown by mutually helping other people who are in trouble, working together to solve problems; as well as;

5. Integrity reflects trustworthy behavior in both speech and actions, such as anti-corruption, love for the homeland, responsibility, and being a role model.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach to understand the research subject in depth and detail. The data collected in this research are not in the form of numbers or statistical calculations but are presented as narrative information about the subject studied. The approach used is qualitative phenomenology. In this case, the researcher conducted interviews with participants, allowing them to share their personal experiences (Assyakurrohim et al., 2023). The study involved three educators as interviewees. Observations were also conducted with 25 students, including five Muslim students attending Sekolah Mentari Ambarawa.

The phenomenological approach is a method in qualitative research that allows researchers to interpret events from their perspective (Yusanto, 2020). Data collection techniques in this study include interviews, observations, and document interpretation (documentary study) related to the research theme. The data sources consist of observation notes, documentation, and interview transcripts. The data obtained includes interview transcripts, photographs, and personal and other narrative documents. The interviews involved asking educators questions about the implementation process of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* for children, the obstacles encountered during the learning process, and the impacts observed following the curriculum implementation.

The data analysis conducted in this study involved data reduction (summarizing raw research data), data presentation (creating concise descriptions), and data verification (concluding the processed data). The validity of the data in this study was ensured through two techniques: Source Triangulation, which involves comparing data from different sources using the same method, and Method Triangulation, which tests the credibility of the data by examining the same source using different techniques (Sidiq, 2019).

Table 1. Diversity Character Indicators

No	Indicator	Sub Indicators
1	Character	Attitude Behavior
2	Diversity	Differences Tolerance
3	Character of Diversity	Attitude of tolerance Respect each other

Source: (Luma et al., 2022).

Referring to **Table 1**, this study uses indicators proposed by Luma et al. (2022). These indicators relate to character, diversity, and character-based diversity. These three indicators serve as the foundation for the researcher to observe how the *Kurikulum Merdeka* plays a role in developing character-based diversity in schools.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* to develop character-based diversity at Sekolah Mentari Ambarawa produced research data as shown in **Table 2** below:

Table 2. Research Findings on the Use of *Kurikulum Merdeka* to Develop Diversity Character at Sekolah Mentari Ambarawa

Character of Diversity	Implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka
Attitude of tolerance	Creating a project related to diversity in Indonesia Drawing a picture of your friend's place of worship
Appreciate the differences	Identifying the religious activities of classmates Completing a place of worship puzzle in groups

Source: Hasil Wawancara, 2023

The interviews with three educators revealed that implementing the *Kurikulum Merdeka* involves engaging all students in the learning process. Regarding the challenges faced during implementation, the educators expressed difficulties introducing new learning methods and finding appropriate media to support teaching and learning effectively. However, the impact of implementing the *Kurikulum Merdeka* has been positive. Students have become more enthusiastic about expressing their opinions, more confident in social interactions, and are gaining new learning experiences. This was confirmed in an interview with the principal, who stated that the school strives to support the *Kurikulum Merdeka* fully. The school has provided open spaces to promote freedom in early childhood learning and sought solutions by utilizing *loose parts* as learning materials. These materials are easy to obtain and free, but also environmentally friendly.

The results of classroom observations related to multicultural character development showed that students have begun to understand the value of tolerance toward others. This was evident in how they respected the religious practices of their Muslim peers, for example, remaining quiet and attentive when the call to prayer (*adzan*) was heard. The children demonstrated appreciation for the beauty of diversity, both in terms of religious differences and varying opinions. During lessons, they showed respectful behavior and speech. They addressed older peers using polite terms like “*Mas*” or “*Mbak*”. When asking for help, they did so politely for instance, “*mas, boleh minta tolong ambikan bukuku tidak. Aku susah ngambilnya*”. These simple actions reflect that the values of diversity and mutual respect are beginning to take root in their character.

The educators confirmed that they want their students to excel academically and develop strong moral character. Every activity is intentionally designed to include elements of diversity to help children learn to appreciate differing opinions, understand the various religions practiced by their peers, and foster respect and tolerance toward others. This study's findings regarding using the *Kurikulum Merdeka* to develop multicultural character among students at SD Mentari Ambarawa revealed that students became more polite in their behavior, gained new knowledge about diversity, and became more supportive in respecting differences.

Polite in Action

Through an experimental learning model, students gained new insights into religious diversity in Indonesia during the activities that utilized the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. As a result, their behavior became noticeably more respectful. This was demonstrated by TI, a Catholic student, who paused her play and remained silent upon hearing the call to prayer (*adzan*). The introduction to religious diversity among classmates also led ZY to show greater respect for BV, who is older than her. ZY spoke more gently when interacting with BV, which showed respect. Teachers helped students better understand the meaning of differences and how to show respect. Politeness is important in speaking kindly and behaving respectfully (Arif, 2019). Cultivating politeness enables children to appreciate others better and adapt more easily to their environment (Faizah, 2021).

Gaining New Knowledge

Implementing the *Kurikulum Merdeka* enables students to expand their knowledge and understanding of diversity. This is evident from PS, who learned about the appearance of a Konghucu place of worship, saying, “*ternyata rumah ibadahnya seperti ini ya*” (Putri Sari, October 4, 2023). Similarly, TR showed great enthusiasm when asking about the arts in Indonesia, stating, “*aku nggak nyangka, ternyata banyak sekali ya kesenian disini*” (Tria Rusta, October 4, 2023). Introducing diversity in Indonesia can be done by providing real-life examples or videos to the students. Expanding their horizons is important to ensure their minds develop optimally (Sumitra & Panjaitan, 2019). A broad perspective will significantly influence the attitudes and behaviors that students will apply (Kasumayanti & Elina, 2018).

More Supportive

In addition to gaining new knowledge, students become more supportive in appreciating differences. This is demonstrated by YI, who became more supportive of his Muslim friend's religious practices, saying, “*TQ kamu nggak sholat, udah ada panggilan tu*”. Similarly, TI, who had just learned about Islamic religious activities like fasting, told FT, a Muslim, “*jangan makan didepan FT, puasa dia*.” These simple actions are forms of full support from friends to encourage their peers in practicing their religious duties. Good support positively impacts individuals and always returns to benefit us (Hasanah & Sugito, 2020). Offering support to others helps achieve goals more quickly (Mei & Yulita, 2021).

Discussions

Several findings emerged based on the observations and interviews conducted regarding using the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in developing the character of diversity at Sekolah Mentari Ambarawa. One of the findings is that students have become more polite in their actions. This is demonstrated by changes in their attitudes and behavior, such as when students begin to understand differences and speak more politely to elders. Based on these findings, it can be said that using the *Kurikulum Merdeka* has made students more courteous in their actions, aligning with the character of diversity. An enjoyable learning model can help students become more polite, as seen with implementing the *Kurikulum Merdeka* (Ratnasari, 2018). Raras also presented research findings that show that good manners can be developed effectively as long as the delivery method is engaging (Putrihapsari, 2021).

Broader knowledge and insights are demonstrated by the students becoming more aware of the religious diversity in Indonesia. They were amazed and even skeptical about the vast variety of arts, dances, foods, and ethnic religions in Indonesia. The students explained that using a learning model that is not monotonous and involves the children in decision-making makes them more enthusiastic, and the information being conveyed is absorbed more effectively (Widiawati et al., 2022). Additionally, some students shared that acquiring new knowledge makes them more creative and better at solving problems they encounter (Juliana et al., 2022).

Being more supportive in appreciating differences, the benefits gained from using the *Merdeka* curriculum make children, who previously did not know, more informed. This is demonstrated by their growing understanding and efforts to comprehend other religious practices. Sri believes that a high level of tolerance needs to be instilled in children so that they develop a character that loves diversity (Wahyuni, 2018). Bhakti explains that having a high level of tolerance greatly influences a person's life and helps them understand that something different is not wrong (Bhakti & Kurniawan, 2020).

CONCLUSIONS

Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum to develop the character of diversity, carried out through various learning programs such as art projects and group assignments conducted fairly, has led to students becoming more polite in their actions. Additionally, it has broadened their understanding of diversity and provided full support for the religious activities of others. This shows that the *Kurikulum Merdeka* can help foster the development of diversity character in children at Sekolah Alam Mentari Ambarawa. The findings from implementing the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in developing the character of diversity at Sekolah Mentari Ambarawa include students becoming more polite in their actions, which is evidenced by the changes in attitudes and behaviors shown to the researchers, with children beginning to understand differences. They are also more polite when speaking to older individuals. The recommendation for future researchers is to delve deeper into themes related to the *Kurikulum Merdeka* and expand the number of schools involved in the research.

REFERENCES

- Aji, B. S., Nurpitasari, E., Hanum, N. C., Ahmat Ario Akbar, & Bhakti, C. P. (2020). Pengembangan asesmen berbasis teknologi untuk keberlangsungan BK di tengah pandemi COVID-19. *Seminar Nasional Daring IIBKIN*, 2(1), 98-103.
- Alawi, D., Sumpena, A., Supiana, S., & Zaqiah, Q. Y. (2022). Implementasi kurikulum merdeka belajar kampus merdeka pasca pandemi COVID-19. *Edukatif: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*, 4(4), 863-873.
- Amelia, C. (2019). Problematika pendidikan di Indonesia. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Fakultas Ilmu Sosial Universitas Negeri Medan*, 3(1), 775 - 779.
- Arif, M. (2019). Penanaman nilai-nilai islam dalam membentuk sopan santun anak di Raudlatul Athfal Al-Azhar Menganti. *Cakrawala Dini: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 10(1), 31-41.
- Arifitama, B. (2019). Pengembangan alat peraga pengenalan tata surya bima sakti menggunakan augmented reality di PAUD. *Sisfo*, 5(4), 1-12.
- Assyakurrohim, D., Ikhrum, D., Sirodj, R. A., & Afgani, M. W. (2023). Metode studi kasus dalam penelitian kualitatif. *Jurnal Pendidikan Sains dan Komputer*, 3(1), 1-9.
- Bhakti, C. P., & Kurniawan, S. J. (2020). Konsep psikoedukasi berbasis blended learning bagi remaja di masa pandemi COVID-19. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Bimbingan dan Konseling Mengukuhkan Eksistensi Peran BK Pasca Pandemi COVID-19 Di Berbagai Setting Pendidikan Akan*, 3(4), 52-60.
- Faizah, R. N. (2021). Sikap sopan santun anak dilihat dari pola asuh orang tua tunggal. *Jurnal Prasasti Ilmu*, 1(1), 13-18.
- Fitri, S. F. N. (2021). Problematika kualitas pendidikan di indonesia. *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai*, 5(1), 617-620.
- Hasanah, N., & Sugito, S. (2020). Analisis pola asuh orang tua terhadap keterlambatan bicara pada anak usia dini. *Jurnal Obsesi : Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 4(2), 913-925.
- Indriyani, V., Zaim, M., Atmazaki, A., & Ramadhan, S. (2019). Literasi baca tulis dan inovasi kurikulum bahasa. *Kembara: Jurnal Keilmuan Bahasa, Sastra, dan Pengajarannya*, 5(1), 108-118.
- Juliana, F., Syafrida, R., & Nirmala, I. (2022). Pengaruh penggunaan media loose part terhadap minat belajar anak usia 4-5 tahun di TKIT Ash-Sholihah Tambelang. *Peteka*, 5(3), 563-574.
- Kasumayanti, E., & Elina, Y. (2018). Perkembangan kognitif anak usia 5-6 tahun ditinjau dari tingkat pendidikan ibu di PAUD Kasih Ibu Kecamatan Rumbai. *Paud Lectura: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 1(2), 186-197.
- Luma, S., Siwu, I. C., & Lombogia, R. A. A. P. (2022). Peran guru dalam mendidik siswa pasca pandemi COVID-19 dengan perspektif pastoral konseling. *Poimen Jurnal Pastoral Konseling*, 3(1), 56-73.
- Marisa, M. (2021). Inovasi kurikulum “merdeka belajar” di era society 5.0. *Santhet (Jurnal Sejarah Pendidikan dan Humaniora)*, 5(1), 66-78.

- Maya, S., & Tafonao, T. (2021). Mengembalikan pendidikan anak usia dini di rumah sebagai bentuk tanggung jawab orang tua selama pandemi. *Caraka: Jurnal Teologi Biblika dan Praktika*, 2(2), 204-220.
- Mei, N. Y., & Yulita, R. (2021). Bimbingan konseling dan inovasi produk kipang pulut bonjol. *JMM (Jurnal Masyarakat Mandiri)*, 5(2), 784-792.
- Nugraha, T. S. (2022). Kurikulum merdeka untuk pemulihan krisis pembelajaran. *Inovasi Kurikulum*, 19(2), 251-262.
- Pangestu, D. P., Na'imah, N., Rachmy Diana, R., Putro, K. Z., & Saraswati, D. A. (2021). Implementation of healthy living behavior of early childhood during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Joyced: Journal of Early Childhood Education*, 1(2), 62-73.
- Permatasari, Y., Suhaili, N., & Firman, F. (2021). Inovasi program layanan BK berbasis digital pada masa pandemi COVID-19. *Jurnal Al-Taujih: Bingkai Bimbingan dan Konseling Islami*, 7(1), 38-44.
- Putrihapsari, R. (2021). Penanaman sikap sopan santun dalam budaya Jawa pada anak usia dini. *Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 5(2), 59-70.
- Rahayu, R., Rosita, R., Rahayuningsih, Y. S., Hernawan, A. H., & Prihantini, P. (2022). Implementasi kurikulum merdeka belajar di sekolah penggerak. *Jurnal Basicedu*, 6(4), 313-319.
- Rahmadayanti, D., & Hartoyo, A. (2022). Potret kurikulum merdeka, wujud merdeka belajar di sekolah dasar. *Jurnal Basicedu*, 6(4), 174-187.
- Rahmawati, Y., & Suharyati, H. (2022). Peningkatan literasi digital dalam pembuatan bahan ajar multimedia. *Aksara: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Nonformal*, 8(2), 977-990.
- Ratnasari, D. (2018). Penanaman sikap sopan santun sebagai pendidikan moral kepada siswa melalui tata tertib sekolah di SMK PGRI 2 Kertosono. *Jurnal Keluarga Sehat Sejahtera*, 3(2), 333-347.
- Sabanil, S., Sarifah, I., & Imaningtyas, I. (2022). Peran guru dalam pelaksanaan hidden curriculum untuk menumbuhkan karakter Kebhinekaan global siswa sekolah dasar. *Jurnal Basicedu*, 6(4), 6567-6579.
- Santika, I. W. E. (2020). Pendidikan karakter pada pembelajaran daring. *Indonesian Values and Character Education Journal*, 3(1), 8-19.
- Shinta, M., & Ain, S. Q. (2021). Strategi sekolah dalam membentuk karakter siswa di sekolah dasar. *Jurnal Basicedu*, 5(5), 45-52.
- Sidiq, U., Choiri, M., & Mujahidin, A. (2019). Metode penelitian kualitatif di bidang pendidikan. *Journal of Chemical Information and Modeling*, 53(9), 1-18.
- Sumitra, A., & Panjaitan, M. (2019). Meningkatkan kecerdasan naturalis anak usia dini melalui metode karyawisata. *PAUD Lectura: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 3(1), 35-42.
- Suryaman, M. (2020). Orientasi pengembangan kurikulum merdeka belajar. *Prosiding Seminar Daring Nasional: Pengembangan Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar*, 2(2), 13-28.
- Sutisna, D., Indraswati, D., & Sobri, M. (2019). Keteladanan guru sebagai sarana penerapan pendidikan karakter siswa. *JPDI (Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Indonesia)*, 4(2), 29-33.
- Taroreh, B. S., & Satria, M. H. (2020). Implementasi permainan CBA pada pembelajaran atletik sebagai solusi alternatif melestarikan permainan tradisional di Sumatera Selatan. *Jurnal Curere*, 4(1), 9-16.
- Vhalery, R., Setyastanto, A. M., & Leksono, A. W. (2022). Kurikulum merdeka belajar kampus merdeka: Sebuah kajian literatur. *Research and Development Journal of Education*, 8(1), 185-201.
- Wahyuni, N. S. (2018). Hubungan antara dukungan orang tua tunggal (ibu) dengan motivasi belajar pada siswa di Pondok-Pesantren Mawaridusalam. *Jurnal Diversita*, 4(1), 69-74.
- Widiawati, R., Permanasari, A., & Ardianto, D. (2022). Science, Technology, Engineering, dan Mathematics (STEM) terhadap kreativitas siswa: Analisis bibliometrik. *Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia Gemilang*, 2(1), 57-69.

- Wirdalena, S. Y., & Mayar, F. (2022). Pengembangan bahan ajar untuk meningkatkan kemampuan motorik halus anak berbasis pendekatan tematik. *Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 6(6), 242-252.
- Yudha, R. A., & Aulia, S. S. (2023). Penguatan karakter kebinekaan global melalui budaya sekolah. *Jurnal Kewarganegaraan*, 7(1), 596-604.
- Yulianti, M., Anggraini, D. L., Nurfaizah, S., & Pandiangan, A. P. B. (2022). Peran guru dalam mengembangkan kurikulum merdeka. *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan dan Sosial*, 1(3), 290-298.
- Yusanto, Y. (2020). Ragam pendekatan penelitian kualitatif. *Journal of Scientific Communication (JSC)*, 1(1), 1-12.
- Zaeriyah, S. (2022). Peningkatan motivasi belajar menggunakan Project Based Learning (PJBL) melalui media vlog materi senam aerobik. *Ideguru: Jurnal Karya Ilmiah Guru*, 7(1), 40-46.