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Foundations of Kurikulum Merdeka development in elementary education (from a philosophical perspective)

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ABSTRACT

The mismatch of philosophical foundations often causes the ineffectiveness of curriculum implementation. Ideally, the philosophical basis of a curriculum guides its implementation direction. This research examines the philosophical foundation for developing primary education curricula, particularly the Kurikulum Merdeka. The method employed Library Research by sourcing data from nationally and internationally indexed journals. This study is crucial to understanding the philosophical basis underlying the "Kurikulum Merdeka" in primary education. Findings reveal diverse approaches in the learning process, reinforcement of specific values, and a unique focus in preparing students for complex societal life. The Kurikulum Merdeka in basic education is based on various philosophical schools ranging from idealism, realism, pragmatism, existentialism, and perennialism to progressivism, reconstructivism, postmodernism, and humanism in education to create a learning environment that is diverse, responsive, and relevant for students' overall development. By applying these streams, the curriculum aims to create a responsive and holistic learning platform that caters to students' needs in this ever-evolving era.

ABSTRAK

Ketidakefektifan implementasi kurikulum sering kali disebabkan oleh ketidaksesuaian landasan filosofi yang digunakan. Landasan filosofi sebuah kurikulum memperjelas arah implementasinya. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengamati landasan filosofis yang digunakan dalam pengembangan kurikulum pendidikan dasar, khususnya Kurikulum Merdeka. Metode pada penelitian ini menggunakan studi kepustakaan dengan pengambilan data dari jurnal yang terindeks nasional dan internasional yang memiliki kaitan dengan Kurikulum Merdeka. Penelitian ini penting untuk memahami dasar filosofis yang melandasi Kurikulum Merdeka pada pendidikan dasar. Hasilnya menunjukkan beragam pendekatan dalam proses pembelajaran, penguatan nilai-nilai khusus, dan fokus unik dalam mempersiapkan siswa menghadapi masyarakat yang kompleks. Kurikulum Merdeka pada pendidikan dasar didasarkan pada berbagai aliran filsafat mulai dari idealisme, realisme, pragmatisme, eksistensialisme, perenialisme, hingga progresivisme, rekonstruktivisme, postmodernisme, dan humanisme dalam pendidikan untuk menciptakan lingkungan pembelajaran yang beragam, responsif, dan relevan bagi perkembangan siswa secara menyeluruh. Dengan menerapkan aliran-aliran ini, kurikulum tersebut bertujuan menciptakan platform pembelajaran yang responsif dan holistik bagi kebutuhan siswa di era yang terus berkembang.

Kata Kunci: Landasan filosofis; pengembangan kurikulum; pendididkan dasar

INTRODUCTION

The importance of primary education lies not only in the mastery of subject matter but also in shaping ways of thinking and moral and ethical character that will serve as a foundation for everyday life. Through primary education, individuals acquire critical abilities to evaluate information and solve problems in various contexts. Moreover, this stage of education also establishes a strong foundation for developing individual potential and interests in relevant fields. The curriculum in the context of primary education serves as the backbone of the entire learning structure and acts as a crucial guide for shaping students' character, knowledge, and skills. In developing a primary education curriculum, philosophical aspects are vital as they provide direction, principles, and values that underpin every facet of education. The Kurikulum Merdeka in primary education is a concrete expression of an educational philosophy that views education as a vital tool for liberation, creativity, and active student participation in learning (Bahri, 2019).

The philosophy underlying the *Kurikulum Merdeka* reflects a deep understanding of the true meaning of education. It is a philosophical foundation emphasizing freedom, independence, participation, and personal development as the pinnacle of meaningful education (Mubin, 2019). In this approach, education is not merely about teaching, but a process that equips students with the tools to explore their potential, think critically, and become active, contributing members of society. The philosophy of the Kurikulum Merdeka views each student as a unique individual with their own needs, interests, and talents. It recognizes that education must allow students to explore their interests, design their learning journey, and develop a deep understanding of topics that truly engage them (Rahman & Hamami, 2020).

This approach emphasizes students' active participation in the learning process. Students are not passive recipients of information but active participants in constructing their own knowledge. They are encouraged to ask questions, engage in discussions, collaborate, and think critically. The Kurikulum Merdeka views mistakes as essential to learning and promotes experimentation, problem-solving, and creative exploration (Syuhada, 2019).

The importance of primary education lies not only in the mastery of subject matter but also in shaping ways of thinking and moral and ethical character that serve as a foundation for everyday life. Through primary education, individuals develop critical skills to evaluate information and solve problems in various contexts. Moreover, this stage of education provides a solid foundation for developing individual potential and interests in appropriate fields. This study aims to explore the philosophical foundations used in developing the Kurikulum Merdeka in primary education, delving deeper into the values underpinning a holistic educational process.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Curriculum Development Concept

A curriculum is a plan or program containing statements about educational goals and specific objectives to be achieved. In addition, the curriculum includes the selection and organization of learning content. This means that the subject matter to be taught must be carefully selected and arranged in a logical structure (Islamy, 2021). In line with Khair (2022), it is shown that the curriculum today no longer refers to a lesson plan or a specific subject area, but rather encompasses the entire range of activities that take place in the educational process at school. The curriculum can also reflect specific patterns in learning and teaching. These patterns may emerge due to the demands of predetermined educational goals or the content layout requiring a particular instructional approach. For instance, if the educational goal is to develop an understanding of scientific concepts, the curriculum will reflect a learning pattern that prioritizes conceptual understanding over rote memorization of facts (Muslim, 2023). Finally, the curriculum must also include

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an evaluation program. This evaluation measures the extent to which the predetermined objectives have been achieved. Evaluation can involve various methods, such as examinations, project-based assignments, or observations (Bahri, 2019). In this regard, it highlights the importance of objectives, the selection and organization of content, learning patterns, and evaluation as essential components in developing an effective curriculum. This perspective has assisted educators in designing and implementing curricula that are responsive to the needs of students (Hunnekuhl, 2017).

A clear understanding of the two key concepts in education: curriculum and instruction. The curriculum is a program that includes the planned content, materials, and learning experiences. It outlines what students need to learn and the learning objectives. On the other hand, instruction involves the implementation of that curriculum through teaching methods, the teacher's instructional actions, and the delivery of content to students (Mjør, 2021). A clear distinction between curriculum and instruction allows educators to design a strong curriculum that aligns with educational goals, while also providing flexibility in teaching methods that can be tailored to the needs and characteristics of students. This also enables teachers to be more creative in their teaching and responsive to the individual needs of their students.

Hamalik, in his book *"Kurikulum dan Pembelajaran"*, offers relevant perspectives on curriculum development in education. Several of these perspectives can be explained as follows:

1. Curriculum Foundation: The curriculum should provide the foundation, content, and guidelines for developing students' abilities. This source emphasizes the importance of the curriculum as a guide to achieving national educational goals and responding to the demands of societal development. In this context, the curriculum must consider students' development, the environment, and national needs.

2. Factors in Curriculum Development: Several factors are the foundation for curriculum development. Let us discuss these factors further:

   a. Philosophical Goals and National Education: The curriculum must align with the national philosophy and education goals. This means that the curriculum's objectives should be tailored to the vision and mission of national education that underpins a country's educational system. The philosophy and the values that form its foundation should be the basis for determining the objectives within the curriculum.

   b. Religion and Social Culture: The curriculum should reflect society's religious norms and social culture. It is important to integrate education with local values and culture.

   c. Development of Students: The curriculum must consider students' developmental characteristics. Each age group has different educational needs, and the curriculum should be adjusted to meet those needs.

   d. Environmental Conditions: The environment, in a broad sense, such as the human environment, culture, science, technology, and the natural environment, must be considered in curriculum development. This means the curriculum should be relevant to social, cultural, technological, and natural conditions.

   e. Development Needs: The curriculum must also address development needs in various aspects, such as public welfare, the economy, law, and national defense and security. This will help produce graduates who are ready to contribute to national development.

   f. Science and Technology Development: The curriculum must align with the development of science and technology. This includes updating learning materials and teaching methods to keep pace with advancements in science and technology while remaining in harmony with social and cultural values. In line with Suryaman (2020), the curriculum is a crucial part of education that must undergo continuous improvements in accordance with the times and advancements in science and technology.

This approach provides a comprehensive framework for designing a student-centered curriculum responsive to social, cultural, and technological development demands. Considering these factors, the curriculum can become an effective tool for achieving national education goals.

Philosophical Foundations in Curriculum Development

Philosophy comes from the word "love of truth." A philosopher is someone who enjoys the truth. Experts in philosophy are called philosophers (in English), *faylasūf* (in Arabic), and *filsuf* (in Indonesian). Therefore, philosophers love the truth, strive to attain it, and give special attention to it. They also try to develop a positive attitude toward the truth, reveal the true nature of everything, connect cause and effect, and interpret human experience (Kaplan, 2019). Philosophizing means thinking holistically, structured, logically, and fundamentally. Holistic thinking not only involves knowledge but also perspectives beyond the existing knowledge. Being systematic means thinking with full awareness, comprehensively, and in a structured manner according to established principles. Logical refers to the deep use of logic in the philosophical thinking process. Radical (from *radix* = root) means getting to the issue's core.

However, truth in philosophy is relative. This means that the concept of truth continuously evolves as time progresses and society changes. A truth is considered valid if it fits the context of space and time. What is considered valid in one society may not be true in another. Philosophical truth is heavily dependent on human thinking abilities. Plato and Aristotle stated that in order for a truth to be accepted, it must be consistent with previous statements. In other words, truth in philosophy serves as a benchmark to compare past events with future ones. If it is consistent, it is considered valid; if not, it is false. This truth is relative because it depends on the context of space and time (Vorozhikhina, 2019).

Humans need philosophy to respond to the questions that arise in various aspects of life. The answers to these questions result from comprehensive, structured, logical, and deep thinking. These solutions also aim to address various problems that arise in society, including education. The form of philosophy specifically applied within the context of education is referred to as the philosophy of education.

According to John Dewey, education is a process that builds fundamental intellectual and emotional human skills, leading individuals towards their natural essence. Therefore, the primary focus of education is the individual, which aligns with the focus of philosophy that also centers on humans. This shared focus gives rise to a new realm of thought and a new discipline known as the philosophy of education. The philosophy of education applies educational theories to human experiences in the educational realm. It is an effort to answer various questions within the context of education (Thao et al., 2023).

Joe Park describes the philosophy of education as an effort to answer several important questions related to education. Educational philosophy is also defined as the foundation of general theory in education, forming the basis for all educational theories. When linked to educational issues as a whole, the philosophy of education becomes the direction and guideline for implementing and achieving educational goals.

Philosophers have divided the fields of philosophy into various areas of study. Philosophy covers the entire scope of human thought, which is very broad, including everything that exists and is truly real, both concrete material objects and abstract concepts that cannot be seen. Therefore, the subject of philosophical inquiry is vast and unlimited. Will Durant, as mentioned by Bahri (2019), classifies the scope of philosophy into several main parts:

1. Logic: This is the study of ideal methods of thinking and conducting research, including observation, introspection, deduction, induction, hypothesis, analysis, and various forms of human cognitive activities that use logic to understand.

2. Aesthetics: This is the philosophy of art and aesthetics that investigates the concept of beauty and the true forms.

3. Ethics: This is the study of behaviors considered good and valuable in science. Socrates regarded ethics as knowledge about good, bad, evil, and wisdom in life.

4. Politics: This field studies important social organizations such as monarchy, aristocracy, democracy, socialism, Marxism, and feminism as expressions of actual political thought. Art and knowledge are also visible in politics when carrying out administrative functions.

5. Metaphysics: This studies the highest essence of all things, including the reality of objects (ontology) and the relationship between human thought and the objects observed and known (epistemology). Metaphysics considers the relationship between human reason and the highest reality of all things.

6. Each area provides a unique philosophical perspective, expanding human understanding of various aspects of existence and knowledge.

Each area presents a unique philosophical perspective, expanding human understanding of various aspects of existence and knowledge.

Overall, the field of philosophy encompasses all issues related to human life, the universe, and its surrounding environment. This also becomes the primary focus in the study of philosophy of education, which includes explicitly: (a) the essence of education, (b) the fundamental nature of humans, (c) the relationship between philosophy, humanity, education, religion, and culture, (d) the interaction between philosophy, philosophy of education, and educational theories, (e) the correlation between the philosophy of the state, the philosophy of education, and the educational system, and (f) the system of values, norms, or morals that form the essential goals of education. Therefore, the scope of the philosophy of education encompasses all human efforts to understand the essence of education itself, the methods of conducting the educational process, and the strategies needed to achieve educational goals (Mjør, 2021).

Hamalik, in his book Kurikulum dan Pembelajaran, states that there are four primary schools of philosophy: pragmatism, existentialism, idealism, and realism. These four schools study various branches of philosophy, such as metaphysics (the nature of the reality of the world), epistemology (the nature of knowledge), and axiology (principles of values). Each school of philosophy has a different perspective, including:

1. Idealism

    Idealism is a philosophical school that highlights the importance of ideas or concepts in reality. While there are various forms and interpretations, the essence of this school is that ideas or concepts are fundamental to the universe. At the same time, the physical or material world is merely a reflection or expression of these ideas (Qolbi & Hamami, 2021).

2. Realism

    Realism believes that humans can initially know and recognize reality through general laws. However, this effort is limited by the individual's capacity and knowledge. Therefore, knowledge is acquired through a scientific approach based on facts. According to this school, truth lies in the ability to be proven through experience; something is considered valid if empirically verified (Mubin, 2019).

    Regarding norms or values, the realism school associates them with scientific discoveries. Improving quality of life is considered achievable through advancements in science and technology. The primary goal of life is to enhance quality through scientific research (Dewantara, 2022). Educational institutions

that follow the realist school prioritize knowledge tested through research and are systematically organized in various disciplines or subjects. This curriculum approach does not consider students' interests; it emphasizes fostering interest in academic material. Students are expected to diligently study various scientific subjects and gain a broad understanding from intensive studies, which are considered the best preparation for further study and life in society. This may create difficulties for students who cannot keep up with such an academic curriculum (Purwati & Fauziati, 2022).

3. Pragmatism

Pragmatism believes that reality is primarily rooted in the social interactions between individuals. Through these interactions, humans can improve the quality of life. The knowledge gained is based on social observation and is helpful for the progress of society. Its focus is on society's civilization, with norms varying according to the community's needs. The primary goal of life is to contribute to society by enhancing human well-being (Istiqomah et al, 2022).

In this view, educators do not merely convey knowledge but provide opportunities for children to engage in problem-solving actively. This is based on the belief that genuine learning can only occur through activities carried out by the learners themselves. The focus is not solely on "what to think," but instead on "how to think," particularly through the process of solving problems (Kurniawan, 2019).

Pragmatism supports the idea that schools should serve as progressive institutions in building and transforming society. It rejects indoctrination and encourages students to analyze social issues critically. In curriculum planning, the participation of families and communities is considered essential to integrate formal education with social, political, and economic resources to improve human living conditions. Some proponents of this philosophy even regard schools as miniature replicas of society (Rahman & Hamami, 2020).

4. Existentialism

Existentialism acknowledges that, as individuals, every person has weaknesses; however, each individual can improve themselves according to the standards and beliefs they have established. Each individual has the freedom to determine their standards following their own freedom. Thus, individuals may have different standards, with the ultimate goal in life being self-improvement and self-actualization (Wahid, 2022).

Schools that adopt an existentialist perspective educate children to make their own choices and decisions, rejecting authority imposed by others. They encourage students to think freely and take responsibility for their own decisions. This approach rejects using curricula, guidelines, instructions, and textbooks imported from external sources. Children are encouraged to seek and develop their own identities. This also means that learners are not specifically prepared for national examinations. The social sciences may be the most engaging for students (Mubarok et al., 2021).

5. Perennialism

Perennialism cultivates children's intelligence through knowledge considered eternal, universal, absolute, or timeless—discovered and created by the great thinkers throughout history—compiled in a collection of works known as "the Great Books" (Kardiyanto, 2019). The truths contained in these books are considered timeless, even amidst changing circumstances. The curriculum recommended by this school model consists of distinct subject areas, avoiding integrated approaches such as combining natural and social sciences. Only subjects deemed to develop students' intellectual abilities are taught,

such as mathematics, physics, chemistry, and biology. In contrast, subjects related to emotional and physical aspects, like visual arts or physical education, are considered less important and may be excluded. The components taught are typically more challenging, requiring high levels of intelligence. This curriculum aims to rigorously prepare students for advanced studies in higher education (Sari, 2020).

According to Thao et al. (2023), in education, there are several closely related paradigms: essentialism, progressivism, perennialism, reconstructionism, existentialism, postmodernism, and humanism. The postmodernism paradigm is a more recent development that contributes to the dynamic nature of the educational world. The following is a brief overview of these paradigms:

1. Essentialism

   The essentialist paradigm emphasizes transmitting cultural heritage from generation to generation as its primary focus. It brings individuals into society to acculturate them. From the essentialist perspective, education serves as a means of introducing individuals to cultural life (Fanani, 2020).

2. Progressivism

   Progressivism, also known as pragmatism, emphasizes serving the needs of learners. Students' interests are at the core of education. The progressive view also asserts that education should be democratic, with its primary focus on the interests of the students (Mustaghfiroh, 2020).

3. Perennialism

   The perennialism paradigm views education as the discipline of the mind, the development of reasoning, and the dissemination of truth that is considered unchanging and eternal. It emphasizes a curriculum focused on academics, logic, grammar, rhetoric, and modern languages (Vorozhikhina, 2019).

4. Reconstructionism

   This paradigm contrasts with essentialism, which views the school as a fundamental agent of social change. It rejects the concept of stability or status quo (Undari, 2022).

5. Existentialism

   Existentialism emphasizes that no principles or truths can be universally applied. They highlight that life is finite, and individual freedom is key to this paradigm (Syuhada, 2019).

6. Postmodernism

   This paradigm emphasizes a focus on individuals and society, as well as the unique approaches of learners in understanding reality. Postmodernism deeply highlights cultural issues, emphasizing individual differences that result in diverse perspectives (Fanani, 2020).

7. Humanism

A philosophical school that emphasizes the dignity, value, and potential of human beings as the primary subject in philosophical thinking. This philosophy developed during the Late Middle Ages and the European Renaissance as a reaction against the dominance of religion and theology in that era's thinking (Ilham, 2018).

The Kurikulum Merdeka Curriculum in Primary Education

Efforts to implement the new learning paradigm require improvements in a learning organization. According to Mustaghfiroh (2020), the *Merdeka Curriculum* policy is designed following John Dewey's concept of progressivism, giving educational institutions freedom and flexibility to explore and develop potential according to students' interests. Meanwhile, according to Yuhastina et al. (2020), the *Kurikulum Merdeka* creates a learning environment that makes students feel unburdened by achieving grades. The concept of the *Merdeka Curriculum* allows teachers to explore learning outcomes. Both the central and regional governments have their respective authorities, which are divided into:

1. The central government's authority includes regulating the curriculum structure, implementing the values of Pancasila, achieving learning outcomes, and establishing the basic principles of learning and assessment (Hilmin et al., 2022).

2. The local government's authority covers improving the quality of education in their region by managing local wisdom and ensuring equitable access to education, even in remote areas (Hilmin et al., 2022).

3. The educational institution's authority includes regulating the school's vision, mission, and objectives, student profiles at the institutional level, regional policies on the curriculum, learning, and assessment processes, and the development of KOSP (Kompetensi Organisasi Sekolah Pendidikan) and teaching modules.

The Kurikulum Merdeka has a structure at the elementary school level, as explained in Keputusan Menteri Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi (Kemendikbudristek) Nomor 262/M/2022 tahun 2022 adalah tentang Perubahan atas Keputusan Menteri Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi Nomor 56/M/2022. Keputusan ini mengatur tentang Pedoman Penerapan Kurikulum dalam Rangka Pemulihan Pembelajaran. The curriculum structure at the elementary education level is divided into two main activities and one additional activity.

1. Intra-curricular Learning

Intra-curricular learning activities for each subject refer to the learning achievement goals.

2. Co-curricular Learning

The Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila (P5) aims to achieve the Profil Pelajar Pancasila (P3), based on the *Standar Kompetensi Lulusan*.

3. Local Content Curriculum

Educational units have the flexibility to add local content that the local government has determined and adjust it to the region's characteristics. When adding additional content, there are three options that the educational unit can choose:

a. Integration into other subjects;

b. Integration into the P5 theme; and/or

c. Development of new independent subjects.

The structure of the elementary school curriculum is divided into 3 three phases:

1. Grade I and Grade II in Phase A;

2. Grade III and Grade IV in Phase B; and

3. Grade V and Grade VI in Phase C.

Elementary schools have the option to manage learning materials using a subject-based or a thematic approach. Of the total annual learning hours (JP) that have been determined, 20% are allocated for P5 activities.

The structure of the Elementary School curriculum in terms of subjects can be seen in **Table 1** as follows.

Table 1. Subject Time Allocation

No	Grade	Total JP Per Year	Total JP Intracurricular Per Year	Total JP P5 Per Year
1	Grade I	1.080	828	252
2	Grade II	1152	900	252
3	Grade III	1.126	1044	252
4	Grade IV	1.126	1044	252
5	Grade V	1.126	1044	252
6	Grade VI	1.152	928	224

Source: Permendikbud 2022

METHODS

This research method uses library research or literature to explore relevant information and data related to the foundation of the development of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in elementary education. The literature study method is a commonly used approach in research to collect data from various literature sources such as books, journal articles, and other documents relevant to the research topic (Indarta et al., 2022).

In the context of this research, the researcher collects data from various literature sources related to the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. This data may include theories, perspectives, and information that support an understanding of the philosophical foundation and basic concepts of the Kurikulum Merdeka. The researcher seeks explicit data sources from national and international journals through Google Scholar and Taylor & Francis to obtain detailed views from experts and researchers in this field.

The literature study approach allows the researcher to describe an overview of the foundational development of the Kurikulum Merdeka in primary education by referring to the already established understanding in literature sources. Thus, this research provides a more comprehensive understanding of the philosophical foundation of primary education in Kurikulum Merdeka.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Idealism in the Primary Education Curriculum

Idealism in education emphasizes the understanding of abstract concepts and values and the development of intellectual and moral qualities. In Kurikulum Merdeka, idealism influences both the intracurricular learning and the integration of the Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila (P5). A theoretical approach is used in teaching, encouraging critical thinking, philosophical discussions, and the development of abstract thinking skills (Islamy, 2021). The evaluation focuses on understanding concepts and their application, emphasizing students' competency in conceptual thinking.

In the Kurikulum Merdeka P5 project, idealism influences the approach and dimensions of the Profil Pelajar Pancasila by emphasizing abstract values, character development, moral reflection, and philosophical thinking. This project allows students to delve into Pancasila's values, participate in critical discussions, and apply these values in social activities and everyday life. Student evaluation is based on applying Pancasila values to create a generation that understands and is committed to these values for the progress of society (Dewantara, 2022).

Realism in the Primary Education Curriculum

The realism stream in Kurikulum Merdeka for primary education emphasizes a practical approach and applying knowledge in real-life situations (Ali, 2017). In this stream, students are not only taught theories and concepts without practical relevance but also how to apply that knowledge in everyday situations. This includes the development of practical skills relevant to the real world.

The realism approach in primary education allows students to recognize real-world problems and teaches them to seek applicable solutions. This makes learning more meaningful, as students directly see the relevance of what they are learning to their daily lives (Kusumawati, 2016).

Additionally, the realism stream can prepare students for future careers by providing a better understanding of various fields of work and industries. Students can gain practical insights into jobs and career opportunities, which can help them make more informed decisions about their future (Kusumawati, 2016).

Pragmatism in the Primary Education Curriculum

Pragmatism in the Primary Education Curriculum emphasizes the relevance of learning to real-life situations and the practical application of knowledge (Istiqomah et al., 2022). In intracurricular learning, teachers focus on concepts that students can directly apply in their daily lives, encouraging them to identify problems, find solutions, and apply knowledge in real-world situations.

On the other hand, in the co-curricular dimension, the pragmatic approach expands students' experiences through extracurricular activities such as science clubs or projects connected to the surrounding environment. Both intracurricular and co-curricular activities focus on the same goal: ensuring that students not only master theoretical concepts but also develop the ability to apply that knowledge practically. This approach helps them develop skills relevant for dealing with the complexities of life in the future (Kurniawan, 2019).

Existentialism in the Primary Education Curriculum

Existentialism in the Primary Education Curriculum highlights the importance of developing autonomous individuals, critical thinking, and exploring the meaning of life (Hunnekuhl, 2017). In the intracurricular dimension, the existential approach to learning emphasizes fostering individual freedom in exploring their understanding of themselves, their values, and their life goals. Teachers are not just instructors but facilitators who encourage students to explore and find meaning in their learning, promoting existential questions about life and their existence.

In the co-curricular dimension, the existential approach may involve activities focused on personal development and self-reflection outside the classroom. Activities such as philosophy clubs, mentoring programs, or self-exploration projects help students discover meaning in their lives, understand their values, and face challenges in interpreting their identities (Wahid, 2022).

In the existential approach, intracurricular and co-curricular dimensions aim to provide space for students to explore themselves, find meaning in learning, and understand the importance of meaningful connections with the world around them (Mubarok et al., 2021). This approach aims to help students become more self-aware, autonomous, and critical in understanding themselves and their societal roles. Thus, the existential approach in primary education focuses on personal development, preparing students to live meaningful lives and build meaningful relationships with the world around them (Fanani, 2020).

Perennialism in Primary Education Curriculum

The Perennialist stream in the Primary Education Curriculum emphasizes teaching values and knowledge considered timeless and universal (Mjør, 2021). In the extracurricular dimension, the Perennialist approach encourages a deep understanding of essential knowledge deemed important for every student. This includes the study of mathematics, science, history, and language—subjects that form the core of human culture and civilization. Teachers are responsible for transmitting this knowledge in a systematic and structured manner.

Meanwhile, in the co-curricular dimension, the Perennialist approach may involve additional programs that reinforce essential knowledge beyond the classroom. Activities such as book clubs, seminars, or projects focusing on timeless and essential values can be part of this approach (Mubarok et al., 2021).

Both dimensions—extracurricular and co-curricular—of the Perennialist approach aim to preserve core knowledge values considered vital and timeless for the sustainability of human civilization. This approach emphasizes the importance of structured learning around concepts essential to human progress. The goal is to create a solid foundation of knowledge for students, which is considered crucial in shaping and developing personalities rooted in universal values. Thus, the Perennialist approach in primary education aims to instill a strong foundation of knowledge and values regarded as timeless for the growth and development of students.

Essentialism in the Primary Education Curriculum

The Essentialism stream in the Primary Education Curriculum emphasizes understanding fundamental concepts and skills considered essential for student development (Khair, 2022). In the extracurricular dimension, this approach focuses on mastery of core subjects such as reading, writing, mathematics, and science, taught in a structured and systematic way. Teachers act as sources of knowledge, providing an in-depth understanding of core material and emphasizing discipline and repetition to ensure strong comprehension.

On the other hand, in the co-curricular dimension, the essentialist approach may involve additional programs that support the mastery of core material outside the classroom. Activities such as remedial programs, tutoring, or extracurricular activities that reinforce basic concepts are designed to strengthen students' understanding of essential content (Mubarok et al., 2021).

The essentialist approach's intracurricular and co-curricular dimensions aim to provide a solid foundation for student development. This approach stresses mastering fundamental concepts and skills essential for academic growth. The goal is to build a strong base for students' understanding of core subjects, preparing them for further education and equipping them with foundational knowledge to better understand the world around them. Thus, the essentialist approach in primary education ensures that students possess a solid grasp of key concepts and basic skills critical for success in various aspects of life.

Progressivism in the Primary Education Curriculum

The Progressivism stream in the Primary Education Curriculum focuses on student experience, active participation, and learning that is relevant to real life (Khair, 2022). In the intracurricular dimension, the progressivist approach emphasizes teaching methods responsive to individual student needs and interests. Teachers act as facilitators in creating a learning environment that allows students to explore, ask questions, and learn through direct experience. Progressivist learning highlights the development of students' social, critical, and creative skills, providing space for them to take an active role in the learning process.

On the other hand, in the co-curricular dimension, the progressivist approach may include extracurricular activities that emphasize student participation, collaboration, and practical experiences beyond the classroom. Additional programs such as community-based projects, discussion clubs, or arts and cultural activities are designed to broaden students' experiences and offer opportunities to develop social, creative, and leadership skills (Anbiya, 2020).

The progressivist approach's intracurricular and co-curricular dimensions aim to create a learning environment enabling students to develop their potential fully. This approach acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and provides opportunities for students to engage in learning relevant to their everyday lives. Its main goal is to empower students to become critical thinkers, innovators, and active participants in the learning process and prepare them to become engaged and positively contributing members of society.

Reconstructionism in the Primary Education Curriculum

The Reconstructionism stream in the Primary Education Curriculum emphasizes learning connected to students' experiences, problem-solving, and applying knowledge in real-world contexts (Khair, 2022). In the intracurricular dimension, the reconstructionist approach encourages students to view lessons from a broader perspective, critically analyze, and explore diverse viewpoints in solving problems. Teachers serve as facilitators who motivate students to identify important issues, ask critical questions, and construct knowledge from real-life experiences that are relevant to them.

Meanwhile, in the co-curricular dimension, the reconstructionist approach may involve out-of-class activities focusing on problem-solving in broader contexts. Extracurricular activities such as community-based projects, simulations, or group discussions broaden students' understanding of the real world and allow them to apply knowledge in various situations (Indarta et al., 2022).

In the reconstructionist approach, intracurricular and co-curricular dimensions aim to provide students with opportunities to develop analytical, creative, and problem-solving skills necessary to face real-world

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challenges (Nasikin & Khojir, 2021). This approach emphasizes learning connected to real life, allowing students to design solutions, collaborate, and apply knowledge in meaningful and relevant contexts. Thus, the reconstructionist approach in primary education seeks to prepare students to become critical thinkers, adaptive individuals capable of navigating change with relevant and applicable knowledge and skills (Hafidh et al., 2023).

Postmodernism in the Primary Education Curriculum

The Postmodernism stream in the Primary Education Curriculum challenges traditional views of learning by emphasizing diversity, criticism of singular narratives, and the importance of individual experiences and perspectives (Mubarok et al., 2021; Ilham, 2018). In the intracurricular dimension, the postmodernist approach advocates for including diverse perspectives, cultures, and student experiences within the learning process. Teachers take on the role of facilitators who enable intercultural dialogue, encourage students to voice their views, and provide the freedom to explore a wide range of ideas and concepts..

On the other hand, in the co-curricular dimension, the postmodernist approach may involve extracurricular activities that value and celebrate diversity and individual student experiences. Activities such as discussion groups, cultural events, or art projects are designed to broaden students' understanding of cultural diversity, promote intercultural dialogue, and acknowledge the values of different perspectives (Maskhuroh, 2021).

In the postmodernist approach, intracurricular and co-curricular dimensions aim to create an inclusive learning environment that recognizes the diversity and complexity of students' experiences and viewpoints (Ilham, 2018). This approach highlights the importance of engaging students in constructing knowledge from various sources, raising awareness of differences, and encouraging individual reflection. Through this approach, primary education seeks to equip students to become more adaptive, open to differences, and capable of thinking critically and creatively in the contemporary world's complexities.

Humanism in the Primary Education Curriculum

The Humanist stream in the Primary Education Curriculum emphasizes students' holistic development, addressing their emotional, social, and intellectual needs (Akhsani et al., 2022). In the extracurricular dimension, the humanist approach focuses on caring teacher-student relationships, open dialogue, and the recognition of individual uniqueness and diversity. Teachers act as facilitators who attend to students' personal development, offer support, and encourage intellectual and emotional growth (Akhsani et al., 2022).

On the other hand, in the co-curricular dimension, the humanist approach may involve extracurricular activities that emphasize personal development and students' interpersonal skills (Bahri, 2019). Counseling programs, personal growth clubs, or social engagements enhance students' social skills, strengthen self-confidence, and help them navigate daily challenges.

The humanist approach's extracurricular and co-curricular dimensions aim to create a learning environment that respects individual diversity and addresses students' personal needs. This approach emphasizes student empowerment, supporting their development as whole individuals—emotionally, socially, and academically. The main goal is to nurture students to become self-aware, empathetic individuals who can interact positively with others daily. Through this approach, primary education aims to prepare students to become good individuals who contribute positively to society (Ekawati & Yarni, 2019).

Discussion

Various streams of educational philosophy have influenced the Primary Education Curriculum, particularly in intracurricular learning and the *Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (P5). Each philosophy offers a unique approach to shaping primary education, emphasizing different values and diverse methods of instruction (Bahri, 2019). For example, Idealism emphasizes understanding abstract concepts and ethical values. At the same time, Realism and Pragmatism focus more on the relevance of learning to real life and applying knowledge in real-world situations.

Various streams of educational philosophy have influenced the Primary Education Curriculum, particularly in intracurricular learning and the *Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (P5). Each philosophy offers a unique approach to shaping primary education, emphasizing different values and diverse methods of instruction (Bahri, 2019). For example, Idealism emphasizes understanding abstract concepts and ethical values. At the same time, Realism and Pragmatism focus more on the relevance of learning to real life and applying knowledge in real-world situations.

Additionally, Existentialism emphasizes the development of autonomous individuals and critical thinking, while Perennialism strengthens the understanding of core values considered timeless and universal. Progressivism and Reconstructionism emphasize students' experiences, the application of knowledge in real-life contexts, and student involvement in responsive and interest-based learning. Postmodernism highlights diversity and focuses on students' experiences and perspectives, while Humanism emphasizes holistic development—emotionally, socially, and intellectually (Istiqomah et al., 2022).

Overall, these philosophical approaches provide distinct foundations for primary education. Each one offers different insights into teaching and learning, reinforces particular values, and focuses uniquely on preparing students for life in a complex society. As such, the Kurikulum Merdeka in primary education is guided by diverse educational philosophies to create an inclusive, responsive learning environment relevant to students' comprehensive development.

CONCLUSION

The various philosophical streams in education within the context of the Primary Education Curriculum offer different approaches to intracurricular and co-curricular learning. Philosophies such as Idealism, Realism, Pragmatism, Existentialism, Perennialism, Progressivism, Reconstructionism, Postmodernism, and Humanism each have a unique influence in shaping educational approaches and determining the ultimate goals of the curriculum. Each stream provides a distinct philosophical foundation for the learning process, emphasizing specific aspects such as conceptual understanding, practical application, individual exploration, universal values, diversity, and the holistic development of students.

Integrating these educational philosophies into the curriculum is crucial in providing students with diverse learning experiences. This enables students to engage in richer, more personalized learning that is responsive to their individual needs and relevant to real-life situations and future challenges. Within the framework of Kurikulum Merdeka, such a diverse approach contributes to creating an inclusive and responsive learning environment that supports the comprehensive development of learners. Hence, combining multiple philosophical perspectives in primary education enriches the learning process and better prepares students to become adaptive, open-minded individuals capable of navigating the complexities of future life.

For future research, it is recommended that the practical implementation of these philosophical streams in real educational settings be investigated further. Empirical studies could also focus on measuring the effectiveness of each philosophical approach in improving student learning outcomes within the *Kurikulum*

Merdeka framework. Furthermore, continued exploration is needed to examine how these philosophies can be integrated to align the curriculum with the dynamic educational developments and global demands.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

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