



Evaluation of the Kurikulum Merdeka in dance learning for junior high schools

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ABSTRACT

Curriculum evaluation is a crucial component in the educational process that assesses the effectiveness of curriculum implementation and identifies strengths and weaknesses in its planning and application. Curriculum evaluation plays a crucial role in ensuring the successful implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka, particularly in dance education, by assessing the effectiveness of planning, implementation, and learning outcomes. This study aims to evaluate the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka based on its relevance to the curriculum's achievements, covering the aspects of planning, implementation, and assessment of dance education. The study employs a descriptive method with a qualitative approach, collecting data through observation, interviews, and documentation from SMPN 1 Cimalaka. Participants in this research include the school principal, the vice principal of curriculum, art and culture teachers, and seventh-grade students. The study results indicate that the dance education planning at SMPN 1 Cimalaka aligns with the guidelines of the Kurikulum Merdeka. In practice, teachers have successfully adapted teaching methods to meet students' needs, though there are differences between the methods recommended in the modules and classroom practices. The evaluation of learning is systematically conducted using formative and summative assessments to measure student achievement.

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ABSTRAK

Evaluasi kurikulum merupakan komponen penting dalam proses pendidikan yang berfungsi untuk menilai efektivitas pelaksanaan kurikulum serta mengidentifikasi kekuatan dan kelemahan dalam perencanaan dan penerapannya. Evaluasi kurikulum berperan penting dalam memastikan keberhasilan penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka, terutama dalam pembelajaran seni tari, dengan cara menilai efektivitas perencanaan, pelaksanaan, dan pencapaian hasil belajar. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi pelaksanaan kurikulum merdeka, berdasarkan relevansinya dalam capaian kurikulum, dengan meliputi aspek perencanaan, pelaksanaan dan penilaian pembelajaran tari. Studi ini menggunakan metode deskriptif dengan pendekatan kualitatif, di mana data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi dari SMPN 1 Cimalaka. Partisipan dalam penelitian ini meliputi kepala sekolah, wakil kepala sekolah bidang kurikulum, guru seni budaya, dan siswa kelas VII. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perencanaan pembelajaran tari di SMPN 1 Cimalaka telah sesuai dengan panduan Kurikulum Merdeka. Dalam pelaksanaannya, guru berhasil mengadaptasi metode pengajaran sesuai kebutuhan siswa, meskipun ada perbedaan antara metode yang direkomendasikan modul dan praktik di kelas. Evaluasi pembelajaran dilakukan secara sistematis dengan menggunakan asesmen formatif dan sumatif untuk mengukur pencapaian siswa.

Kata Kunci: evaluasi kurikulum; pendidikan seni tari; kurikulum merdeka

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INTRODUCTION

Education in Indonesia faces various challenges and changes in line with the evolution of time and societal needs. Education is the process of development and learning aimed at enhancing a person's knowledge, skills, and attitudes. In education, the curriculum serves as a guide that determines what should be learned, how it should be taught, and how learning outcomes are measured. Education encompasses various aspects, from planning to implementing and evaluating the teaching and learning process. Education is always connected to the curriculum. The curriculum is a means to attain educational objectives and is a guiding framework for implementing education in Indonesia (Andari, 2022; Nabila et al., 2023). One significant educational reform effort is the Kurikulum Merdeka, launched by the Republic of Indonesia's Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. The Kurikulum Merdeka is designed to provide flexibility in learning, encourage creativity, and focus on students' character development. With this approach, it is hoped that education in Indonesia can become more adaptive and relevant to the needs of students and society. Implementing the curriculum naturally requires an evaluation process aimed at continuously aligning with educational goals.

Curriculum evaluation plays a crucial role in education. Without evaluation, we would not be able to identify the strengths and weaknesses in the planning or implementation processes of the applied curriculum. Performance indicators for curriculum implementation include the program's effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and feasibility. In this context, evaluation refers to assessing students' learning outcomes or competencies during the learning process. Without evaluation, we cannot identify the strengths and weaknesses in the planning or implementation of the curriculum used, and this information is crucial for feedback from various stakeholders, such as parents, teachers, curriculum developers, the community, and others. Thus, evaluation results can be used as a basis for improving and developing the curriculum in the future, enabling students to achieve educational goals more effectively (Chiu et al., 2021; Ngereja et al., 2020; Yani & Pratiwi, 2023).

In dance education, evaluation is essential, including curriculum evaluation. This is a critical process aimed at assessing the effectiveness of the curriculum in achieving dance education goals and identifying areas for improvement. One of the critical aspects to evaluate is the relevance of the planning, implementation, and assessment of learning about the components of the Kurikulum Merdeka. The curriculum must also have internal relevance, meaning consistency between its components (goals, content, delivery process, and assessment) (Laksono & Izzulka, 2022). This process involves analyzing various aspects, such as the alignment of teaching materials with competency standards, the success of teaching methods, and the achievement of students' skills and creativity. Dance is one of the essential subjects in the arts curriculum at Junior High Schools (SMP). Dance education aims to develop artistic skills, introduce students to cultural heritage, enhance teamwork, and support their emotional and social development. Under the Kurikulum Merdeka, dance education is hoped to be significantly improved through a more integrated and student-oriented approach. Several previous studies are relevant to this research. Previous research identifies and provides information about implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka in pioneering schools (Suryani et al., 2023). Then, the study offers insights into efforts to implement planned learning within the Kurikulum Merdeka following the COVID-19 pandemic (Ariga, 2022).

Furthermore, the research aims to determine how effectively the Kurikulum Merdeka has been implemented during the learning process at the junior high school level (Rahma & Hindun, 2023). The results of this study indicate that the curriculum's impact varies depending on its application in each school and the expertise of individual educators, with learning outcomes and student participation showing positive improvements in most cases. Lastly, another study highlights that the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka presents challenges and obstacles in the planning, classroom implementation, and

evaluation stage of learning due to the curriculum's recent introduction, which has caused some teachers difficulty in adapting to the new system (Wuwur, 2023). However, based on an analysis of previous research, no study has examined the relevance of dance education's planning, implementation, and evaluation to the achievements outlined in the Kurikulum Merdeka according to the government guidelines.

The implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka has not yet been uniformly carried out across Indonesia. One school that has adopted the Kurikulum Merdeka and incorporated dance education is SMPN 1 Cimalaka. Dance education aims to foster students' aesthetic and artistic sensitivity, encouraging the development of critical, creative, and appreciative attitudes, as noted by Sekarningsih and Rohayani (Herlambang, 2022). However, in practice, these objectives have not been effectively realized. Conceptually and procedurally, efforts to achieve learning outcomes have not yielded the expected results. Additionally, the *Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (P5) program and several new elements in the Kurikulum Merdeka add to the complexity of challenges from both students' and teachers' perspectives.

Implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka in dance education faces several challenges and opportunities. This curriculum allows schools and teachers to adapt materials and teaching methods according to students' needs. However, the flexible nature of the curriculum can also lead to variations in the quality and consistency of dance education across different schools. Challenges such as limited facilities, a lack of specialized training for dance teachers, and differences in curriculum implementation approaches can affect learning outcomes. This study aims to evaluate the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka based on its relevance to the curriculum's achievements, covering the aspects of planning, implementation, and assessment of dance education. The results of this evaluation are expected to provide valuable recommendations for future curriculum development and teaching practices.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Curriculum Evaluation

Evaluation is the process used to gather information to determine the extent of achievement towards a specific goal. Evaluation applies a structured scientific method to assess a program's design, implementation, and effectiveness. Meanwhile, the curriculum is essentially a plan that serves as a guide in conducting the educational process (Rusmani, 2023). Curriculum evaluation is a systematic effort to improve a curriculum either in the development stage or has already been implemented to improve it for the future. Additionally, curriculum evaluation serves as a means to control, assure, and establish the quality of the curriculum based on specific considerations and criteria, ensuring accountability for the effectiveness of the curriculum.

Curriculum evaluation has two functions, formative and summative, ultimately impacting educational, instructional, diagnostic, and administrative activities (Arofah, 2021). Learning evaluation is a systematic assessment conducted during the teaching and learning process. This evaluation targets components within the educational system, such as initial behaviors and instrumental input components like teachers' professional abilities, curriculum, and administrative components. Process components are the steps involved in implementing teaching. In contrast, output components are the results that indicate the extent of achievement in the learning process, as explained by Hamalik in a book titled *"Kurikulum dan Pembelajaran"*. Curriculum evaluation involves using scientific methods to collect valid and reliable data to decide on the current or implemented curriculum. Curriculum evaluation encompasses four main aspects: a) evaluation of curriculum implementation by teachers, b) evaluation of curriculum design, c) evaluation of student learning outcomes, and d) evaluation of the overall curriculum system. The data obtained from this evaluation process is used to improve the system and design of the curriculum, as well as the fundamental principles in its implementation (Suratno et al., 2022).

Evaluation assesses whether a program or activity has been implemented according to the established plan. Through the evaluation process, it is possible to determine the achievements that have been made or will be made and whether these outcomes meet the specified criteria. Based on the evaluation results, decisions can be made regarding whether the program should be continued, revised, or completely replaced (Laksono & Izzulka, 2022). The goal is to measure how much students understand the learning material. This helps educators evaluate students' comprehension of the concepts taught and their ability to apply them correctly. Through assessment, educators can identify students' strengths and weaknesses in learning, allowing them to design more effective teaching strategies and direct students' learning efforts toward areas that need improvement (Andayani & Madani, 2023). The indicators evaluated in this study include the assessment tools used, the criteria applied during evaluation, the implementation of daily assessments, diagnostic evaluations, and project-based assessments.

Kurikulum Merdeka

The curriculum is a plan for the implementation of the educational process. According to Undang-Undang Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional, "Kurikulum adalah seperangkat rencana dan pengaturan mengenai tujuan, isi, dan bahan pelajaran serta cara yang digunakan sebagai pedoman penyelenggaraan kegiatan pembelajaran untuk mencapai tujuan pendidikan tertentu." The curriculum plays a crucial role as a guide for learning, encompassing the planning of educational activities to acquire knowledge and experience through a series of learning activities (Hidayat et al., 2024). The curriculum is a crucial and obligatory element in educational institutions, functioning as a framework for teachers to organize efficient learning activities to gain knowledge and experience through a sequence of educational processes (Anggini, 2022; Fatmawati, 2021). The curriculum includes establishing learning goals while considering several factors, such as assessing needs, choosing appropriate materials and teaching methods, creating educational materials and activities, and evaluating learning outcomes to align with the developmental characteristics of students (Suratno et al., 2022).

The purpose of the curriculum is to equalize education across the country and to make students intelligent, quality-oriented, creative, innovative, responsible, and ready to enter social life, as explained by Hamalik in a book titled "*Kurikulum dan Pembelajaran*". This curriculum is a government effort to address the learning losses or delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. This policy has received strong support from various stakeholders, including academics, education practitioners, and other relevant parties (Tuerah & Tuerah, 2023). The Kurikulum Merdeka emerged to restore the disrupted educational process due to the COVID-19 pandemic (Nugraha, 2022). A variety of extracurricular learning experiences characterize it. The content is comprehensively designed, allowing students ample time to strengthen competencies and grasp learning concepts. Additionally, the Kurikulum Merdeka grants teachers greater flexibility in adapting teaching methods to meet student needs, fostering higher levels of creativity and responsiveness (Amalia et al., 2024).

The Kurikulum Merdeka is a prototype developed as a curriculum emphasizing more flexible, essential content and character development in line with Profil Pelajar Pancasila and students' abilities. The Kurikulum Merdeka allows students to develop their creativity while enhancing the soft skills they will need in the future. The role of teachers in the development and implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka is crucial for achieving the goals of this policy (Tuerah & Tuerah, 2023). Teachers are active change agents in designing and applying a curriculum that meets students' needs. Teachers play a crucial role in adapting the Kurikulum Merdeka to their local context, selecting and developing relevant teaching materials, and designing teaching strategies that suit students' needs.

As part of efforts to restore the learning process, the Kurikulum Merdeka focuses on a flexible curriculum and emphasizes essential teaching materials while developing students' character and abilities. The characteristics of the Kurikulum Merdeka include:

1. Project-Based Learning: Learning is conducted through projects that enhance students' soft skills, aligned with the Profil Pelajar Pancasila.
2. Focus on Core Materials: "Essential material" refers to the critical knowledge or content students need to learn and understand (Fauzan et al., 2023). Emphasis on literacy and numeracy, with flexible time allocations to deepen competencies.
3. Teacher Autonomy: Teachers have the flexibility to tailor instruction to meet the needs and abilities of students, considering local content.

The Kurikulum Merdeka's implementation features a curriculum structure that organizes learning outcomes, content, and learning obligations. This structure regulates compulsory learning content and its associated workload. The structure of the Kurikulum Merdeka includes intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities.

The Kurikulum Merdeka is divided into two main activities:

1. Intracurricular Learning: Systematic learning activities for each subject area.
2. Co-curricular Learning: Project-based learning focused on strengthening the Profil Pelajar Pancasila, enhancing and developing students' skills, interests, and talents. The Kurikulum Merdeka emphasizes building national character by developing the Profil Pelajar Pancasila for each learner within educational institutions (Putri et al., 2023). There are six competencies to support the achievement of Profil Pelajar Pancasila, including 1) *beriman, bertakwa kepada Tuhan Yang Maha Esa dan berakhlak mulia*; 2) *berkebhinekaan global*; 3) *bergotong royong*; 4) *mandiri*; 5) *bernalar kritis*; dan 6) *kreatif* (Rusnaini et al., 2021).

This curriculum was not carried out simultaneously across all educational institutions. During the initial phase of Merdeka Belajar, schools could implement it early, use a simplified version, or adopt the Kurikulum Merdeka gradually based on their readiness (Astuti & Krismawanto, 2023). Local education offices supported institutions interested in the process by offering outreach sessions, seminars, and workshops to enhance the understanding of teachers, principals, and supervisors. The Kurikulum Merdeka concept should now be uniformly introduced in all educational institutions in Indonesia. This approach impacts student development and helps teachers conduct innovative learning processes more easily (Saiful, 2024).

Lesson Planning

Lesson planning involves designing, organizing, and structuring teaching activities to achieve educational goals. In this process, a teacher or educator determines the materials to be taught, the methods and strategies to be used, and how to evaluate student achievement. Planning is a crucial step for teachers in the classroom learning process. Sanjaya, as cited in a book titled "*Perencanaan Pembelajaran*" by Ananda, explains the importance of planning in the learning process by highlighting that Learning is Goal-Oriented: Planning ensures that learning objectives are clearly defined and pursued effectively. Learning is a Collaborative Process: Planning facilitates cooperation among students, teachers, and other stakeholders. Learning is Complex: Effective planning addresses the complexities involved in learning, ensuring that all aspects are considered. Learning is Effective When Resources are Maximized: Proper planning ensures that all available resources are utilized efficiently.

According to Majid in a book titled "*Perencanaan Pembelajaran*" by Ananda, the benefits of lesson planning include that planning serves as a directional guide to achieving specific goals, provides a basic

framework to guide each component, functions as a tool to measure the achievement of learning objectives, helps in organizing data to ensure balance, and assesses the effectiveness of time, effort, resources, and costs. Overall, with proper lesson planning, the activities of both teachers and students can be carried out systematically, and every learning resource can be utilized effectively.

Learning planning is one of the first steps in learning to achieve the desired goals. Learning planning is planning a learning activity by analyzing competency standards, learning objectives, and students' ability to determine the proper methods, strategies, and media in the learning process. Learning planning in the Kurikulum Merdeka includes learning planning tools such as learning outcomes (CP), teaching modules, lesson objectives, learning materials, learning models/strategies/methods, and learning evaluation instruments, as explained by Anggraena in a book titled "*Panduan Pembelajaran dan Asesmen Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, Pendidikan Dasar, dan Menengah*".

The indicators in the evaluation of planning include several aspects, such as the development of teaching modules that align with the established components, namely general information and core components; identification of learning outcomes for each topic or subtopic to be taught; analysis of learning outcomes in the phase that will be mapped in learning activities; formulation of learning objectives by considering the competencies to be achieved, the material to be studied, and the variety of thinking skills that students need to master in order to reach the learning objectives. Additionally, the selected material should be aligned with the goals to be achieved, and the teaching models, strategies, and methods used should be appropriate for the learning outcomes (CP) and the material being presented. They are selecting/determining learning models, strategies, and methods that follow the learning objectives that have been set, especially the C (condition) element., selecting and determining the type of learning evaluation following the learning outcomes (CP), developing various learning evaluation tools/instruments following the learning achievement indicators (CP).

Lesson planning is one of the initial steps in teaching to achieve desired objectives. At SMPN 1 Cimalaka, lesson planning is aligned with the current curriculum guidelines, specifically the Kurikulum Merdeka. The planning process involves using teacher competency assessment tools to identify learning materials and set goals, develop and organize materials, media, and learning resources, plan learning activity scenarios, design classroom management strategies, and prepare assessment procedures, types, and tools. *Alat Penilai Kemampuan Guru (APKG)* is one of the critical steps in ensuring successful teaching. APKG serves as an assessment instrument, similar to a questionnaire, containing various components of teacher evaluation (Aryana et al., 2022). In this study, the researcher uses APKG to examine the planning process in teaching. These components are then adjusted to meet the research needs, aligning them with the Kurikulum Merdeka components.

Learning Implementation

Implementation is the execution or action of a plan that has been carefully and thoroughly prepared. Implementation occurs after the planning is deemed accurate (Salabi, 2022). The implementation of teaching is the process or activity that occurs in the classroom. According to Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi Nomor 16 Tahun 2022 tentang Standar Proses pada Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, Jenjang Pendidikan Dasar, dan Jenjang Pendidikan Menengah, the implementation of teaching should be conducted in a learning environment that is interactive, inspiring, enjoyable, challenging, motivating, provides adequate space, and sets a good example (see: https://jdih.kemdikbud.go.id/detail_peraturan?main=3092). The principles of teaching implementation, based on Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Nomor 65 Tahun 2013 Tentang Standar Proses Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah, include having an introduction, a conclusion, and a core part. In

teaching, known as a scenario, the teaching scenario is a sequence prepared by the teacher to achieve the desired educational goals (see: <https://www.peraturan.go.id/id/permendikbud-no-65-tahun-2013>).

Implementing the learning process is a critical component in achieving quality educational outcomes. It includes teaching and learning activities in the classroom, which are the core of school operations (Sanjani, 2021). Educators have flexibility in developing and organizing teaching materials, media, and learning resources. They can choose from existing teaching module examples, modify them, or create their own, as explained by Hadiansyah in a book titled *"Kurikulum Merdeka dan Paradigma Pembelajaran Baru"*. Schools are also free to develop learning models that maintain collaboration between subjects and integrate cross-disciplinary assessments. Additionally, schools create projects that emphasize character development, particularly aligning with the profile of Pancasila students. A distinctive feature of Kurikulum Merdeka's learning implementation is its adaptation to students' unique characteristics, as Barlian noted (Afriani et al., 2023).

The implementation of learning in the Kurikulum Merdeka follows a cycle that includes three stages:

1. Diagnostic Assessment: Teachers conduct initial assessments to recognize students' potential, characteristics, needs, stages of development, and learning achievement levels. This assessment is generally carried out at the beginning of the academic year so the results can be used for further planning regarding the appropriate teaching methods.
2. Planning: Teachers design the learning process based on the diagnostic assessment results and group students according to their ability levels.
3. Learning: During the learning process, teachers conduct periodic formative assessments to monitor students' progress and adjust teaching methods if necessary. At the end of the learning process, teachers can also conduct summative assessments to evaluate the achievement of learning objectives (Tuasikal et al., 2023).

The implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka aims to create an enjoyable learning atmosphere, considering the many complaints from parents and students about learning that requires achieving minimum competency scores, especially during the pandemic (Nafi'ah, 2023). This type of learning is expected to encourage student's enthusiasm to learn according to their learning needs. The evaluation of this learning implementation can be adjusted using APKG (Assessment of Learning Outcomes), paying attention to the following assessment aspects: 1) starting the lesson by preparing students physically and mentally, motivating them, setting up appreciation, outlining learning objectives, and presenting the scope of the material. 2) Core activities involve mastering the material by presenting it and applying the concepts to real-life situations. This measurement is conducted to assess the learning implementation's relevance to the Kurikulum Merdeka's components.

Assessment of Learning

Assessment can be defined as collecting comprehensive and continuous information to evaluate students' abilities or success in learning by assessing their performance individually and in groups (Hafidhoh, 2021). Assessment is used to measure students' understanding of the learning material. This allows educators to evaluate how well students have grasped the concepts and whether they can apply them correctly. Through assessment, educators can identify students' strengths and weaknesses in learning, which helps develop more effective teaching strategies and directs students' learning efforts toward areas that need improvement (Andayani & Madani, 2023). The term assessment is frequently heard in the field of education. Assessment is the process of evaluating student progress and learning outcomes (Fitriani, 2021). Therefore, it can be concluded that assessment is an appropriate term for evaluating both the process and student learning outcomes. In the assessment process of learning within the Kurikulum Merdeka, according to the education assessment standards outlined in Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan,

Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi Nomor 21 Tahun 2022 tentang Standar Penilaian Pendidikan pada Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, Jenjang Pendidikan Dasar, dan Jenjang Pendidikan Menengah, the forms of assessment in the Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar include formative assessment and summative assessment (see: https://jdih.kemdikbud.go.id/detail_peraturan?main=3104).

Formative assessment is conducted throughout the learning process to provide continuous feedback to students. It aims to monitor student progress, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and offer appropriate guidance to enhance their learning. Summative assessment is conducted at the end of a period or learning unit to evaluate students' final achievements (Andayani & Madani, 2023). This assessment provides an overview of how well students have met the established learning objectives. The main goal of summative assessment is to offer a final evaluation that reflects students' understanding and skills. The types of assessments commonly used in education include formative and summative assessments. Here is a further explanation of these two types of assessments. Formative and summative assessments are two interrelated types of evaluations. In the Kurikulum Merdeka, there is a greater emphasis on formative assessment, carried out continuously throughout the learning process. On the other hand, summative assessment focuses more on the final grades students receive, which means that student development may not be as closely monitored (Hamdi et al., 2022). Both types of assessments play crucial roles in secondary education. Formative assessment offers continuous feedback to students to improve their understanding and skills throughout the learning process. In contrast, summative assessment provides a final overview of student achievements and evaluates their overall understanding and skills. By using both types of assessments in a balanced manner, educators can optimize the learning process and enhance student performance.

METHODS

This study uses a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. Qualitative research involves using scientific object conditions with the researcher as the primary instrument in the study. According to Sugiyono in a book titled "Metode Penelitian Kualitatif", the research employs triangulation techniques and is inductive in nature. This qualitative method does not focus on generalization but rather on the uniqueness of the object being studied. This means the research findings can be implemented in other settings with similar, though not identical, characteristics. The choice of research method is of crucial importance, as it provides an understanding of the study's planning, implementation, and evaluation processes. The research location is conducted at SMPN 1 Cimalaka, located at Jalan Badai, Desa Cimalaka, Kecamatan Cimalaka, Kabupaten Sumedang, Provinsi Jawa Barat. The researcher chose SMPN 1 Cimalaka because the school has already implemented the Kurikulum Merdeka and uses dance education as teaching material in the arts and culture subject. The participants in this research include the Principal of SMPN 1 Cimalaka, the Curriculum Deputy Principal of SMPN 1 Cimalaka, the Arts and Culture Teacher at SMPN 1 Cimalaka, seventh-grade students of SMPN 1 Cimalaka, and the Sumedang District Education Office.

The data collection techniques used in this research are aligned with the research instruments developed through observation, interviews, and documentation methods. Observations were conducted at SMPN 1 Cimalaka. This observation aims to gather research data regarding dance learning using the Kurikulum Merdeka. The researcher employed interviews to collect data by exploring the research problem regarding the effectiveness of dance learning within the Kurikulum Merdeka at SMPN 1 Cimalaka. Documentation was carried out as an effort to obtain data by gathering visible evidence, such as documenting data in written form and audiovisual, audio, and visual formats to strengthen the research results. This research utilized documentation in the form of audio recordings, videos, and photos to enhance the research data. These methods facilitate the researcher in conducting qualitative research and obtaining detailed data.

Data analysis follows the techniques proposed by Miles and Huberman, as cited in Sugiyono in a book titled *“Metode Penelitian Kualitatif”*, which states that qualitative data analysis must be conducted comprehensively and thoroughly to ensure the collected data is saturated. The steps in data analysis include Data Reduction, Data Display, and Verification.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Planning of Learning with the Kurikulum Merdeka

Anggraena, in a book titled *“Panduan Pembelajaran dan Asesmen Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini, Pendidikan Dasar, dan Menengah”* explained that in the planning process, teachers often create and develop teaching modules in line with established components, which include planning devices such as learning achievement (CP), learning modules, learning objectives, learning materials, models/strategies/teaching methods, and evaluation instruments. Before developing these teaching modules, teachers, who play a crucial role in achieving goals, first identify and analyze the Learning Achievements at both the phase level and for each topic or subtopic to be taught. The results of this analysis are then mapped out in the learning activities. Teachers consistently formulate learning objectives by considering the competencies to be achieved, the content to be covered, and the variety of thinking skills that students need to master to reach the learning objectives. After establishing the learning objectives for each activity, teachers typically develop learning materials that align with those objectives. Teachers often select or determine models, strategies, and teaching methods corresponding to the Learning Achievements.

At SMPN 1 Cimalaka, lesson planning is aligned with the applicable curriculum guidelines, particularly the Kurikulum Merdeka. The learning objectives outlined in the teaching modules follow the goals of the Kurikulum Merdeka. However, they do not fully adhere to the ABCD format. The ABCD format (Audience, Behavior, Condition, and Degree) is a principle proposed by educational experts for formulating learning objectives (Pitasari & Febriyanti, 2023). Nevertheless, the objectives in the teaching modules do not entirely follow the proper formulation principles. In formulating learning objectives, teachers adhere to the guidelines of the Kurikulum Merdeka, thus adjusting the learning achievements. Teachers also use and modify learning achievements to suit the needs of students and the learning process.

Based on the interviews with the arts and culture teachers at SMPN 1 Cimalaka, it was noted that there is no significant difference between the use of RPP (Learning Plan) and Teaching Modules. RPP is an extension of the syllabus, while the Teaching Module is developed from the Learning Objectives (Nengsih, 2024; Sari et al., 2024). The terms KI and KD in the Kurikulum 2013 have been replaced with Learning Outcomes (Aulia et al., 2023). Although substantively similar, this term is more efficient and effective in defining learning objectives. In developing the Teaching Module, teachers align it with the modules available in the Dance Teacher Guide within the Kurikulum Merdeka. However, there are several components in the Teaching Module that teachers, such as the Profil Pelajar Pancasila, Teacher Identity, Understanding Meaning, and Glossary underutilize. Nevertheless, teachers have comprehensively used the minimal components required. This aligns with previous research that shows that teachers can design teaching modules. However, teaching modules must include minimal components such as learning objectives, learning activities, initial and final assessment plans, and any media used, as needed (Yulaehah & Utami, 2024). This situation occurs because teachers use the Teaching Module in the Kurikulum Merdeka Class VII Arts and Culture Guide without creating a personalized version.

The teachers believe that using the module from this book can simplify their tasks and meet the conditions and needs of teachers, students, and educational institutions. The lack of understanding of the Kurikulum Merdeka stems from insufficient socialization provided by the local Education Office, necessitating teachers to seek information independently and participate in various training sessions. However, during the development of the dance education plan, teachers encountered several difficulties, as highlighted in

the problem background. The implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka appeared abrupt and poorly prepared, requiring teachers to seek information about the curriculum independently. One challenge was the suboptimal planning of time allocation in the first semester due to the Profil Pelajar Pancasila Strengthening project, which used a block system and disrupted the intended teaching time. However, after the curriculum evaluation by the Vice Principal and the team, the Profil Pelajar Pancasila Strengthening project was integrated into regular teaching hours. Consequently, the time allocation planning has been better managed. Currently, the planning of dance education using the Kurikulum Merdeka is following the prescribed guidelines.

In designing classroom management, teachers consider student characteristics and pay attention to the learning environment, desk arrangements, classroom layout, the formation of groups, and the number of students. This is in line with Suharsimi Arikunto's view, as explained in a book titled "*Manajemen Kelas*" by Ariesta (2020), which states that in classroom organization, teachers must have skills in managing and utilizing various aspects. These include arranging student seating, organizing teaching aids within the classroom, managing student discipline, overseeing student interactions, assigning student tasks, organizing the physical classroom space, maintaining cleanliness and aesthetics, ensuring classroom completeness, and managing classroom displays.

Implementation of Learning with the Kurikulum Merdeka

The learning process is not merely a knowledge transfer but involves social interaction between teachers and students. The implementation of learning refers to activities where students interact with educators as part of the teaching process (Ina et al., 2019; Ubabuddin, 2019). This implementation involves interactions between teachers and students and among the students themselves. The execution of dance learning refers to the teaching modules designed by the subject teachers. The following aspects are evaluated in the Kurikulum Merdeka for dance education, such as the execution of teaching and the management of classroom interactions. The implementation of learning is the process or activity that occurs in the classroom. Teaching and learning are integral parts of this process. According to Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Nomor 65 Tahun 2013 Tentang Standar Proses Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah, there are three principles: Introduction, Core, and Closure.

Based on classroom observations, learning begins with greetings and prayer, followed by attendance. The teacher then conducts an ice-breaking activity, such as a cheer, to enhance students' motivation and administers a pre-test by asking about the fundamental elements of dance movement, linking them to the supporting elements of dance. The teacher introduces new material by asking students about the meaning of "Supporting Elements of Dance" and then provides understanding by relating these elements to everyday life. The teacher then grouped the students into seven groups, each consisting of four to five. After dividing the groups, the teacher assigned each group to observe a dance video and identify the elements used in the dance. Students were also tasked with filling out a worksheet and discussing it within their groups. Each group then presented their findings in front of the class. Together, students and the teacher conducted an evaluation, and the teacher reinforced the material, helping students understand the supporting elements of dance. At the end of the lesson, the teacher administered a final test on the material covered, which was done individually. The teacher and students concluded the learning that had taken place, and the teacher asked students to share their impressions after the lesson. Finally, the teacher provided guidance for the next meeting, and the lesson concluded with a prayer and singing of the regional song "Manuk Dadali".

The teacher effectively delivered the material during the learning process, as evidenced by good test results and excellent student responses. Students actively asked questions and shared their opinions. The students conducted the learning orderly and effectively, while the teacher consistently monitored their

activities. This aligns with one of the goals of the Kurikulum Merdeka, which aims to create an enjoyable learning atmosphere (Nafi'ah, 2023). This was further supported by student feedback during interviews, where they expressed that the dance arts lesson was delightful and that they understood the material well. The art teacher for the seventh-grade students explained that the implementation process adhered to the regulations despite facing challenges with the methods used. There was a gap between the methods outlined in the teaching module and their application in the classroom. The teacher found that the NHT (Numbered Heads Together) method described in the module posed difficulties for students, so they replaced it with a question-and-answer method, which the teacher believed facilitated students' understanding of the material. During the implementation, the teacher followed the steps outlined in the module and used the allocated time effectively. Students were very active throughout the lesson, as evidenced by their attentiveness, questions, responses, and engagement in group discussions. The teacher effectively conveyed the material and maintained an engaging demeanor, helping initially disinterested students participate more actively. Students reported that the learning experience was enjoyable and not boring. This aligns with the Merdeka learning framework, which emphasizes the importance of happiness in enjoyable education learning that sparks students' curiosity to explore the world and everything in it (Heryanti et al., 2023).

Assessment of Learning with the Kurikulum Merdeka

The evaluation process is conducted at the learning session's beginning, middle, and end. The teacher consistently uses various assessment methods, including tests, observations, and projects, to measure the achievement of learning indicators and objectives. Specifically, the teacher employs test-based assessments to evaluate learning outcomes, while project assessments for the Profil Pelajar Pancasila enhancement are conducted using descriptive notes. The teacher utilizes formative and summative assessments to assess the Profil Pelajar Pancasila projects. Formative and summative assessments are used to gauge the success of each learning objective. The teacher prepares assessment instruments following the Kurikulum Merdeka guidelines. The teacher proactively provides feedback and responds to each student's assessment results. Evaluations are made based on the learning domains: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor.

In the evaluation process, the teacher has used the assessment instruments planned in the teaching module. The teacher stated that they first review the students' needs before creating assessments to provide appropriate feedback. The evaluation process uses two types of assessments: formative and summative. Evaluation is carried out to determine how students have achieved the learning objectives (Idrus, 2019). The teacher observes students' attitudes and interests toward the material during instruction. This approach aligns with the assessment guidelines provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture. In conducting evaluations, the teacher divides the assessments into four sections based on the achievements outlined in the Kurikulum Merdeka, with each achievement having a distinct evaluation method. According to the teacher, the implementation of the art dance learning evaluation at SMPN 1 Cimalaka adheres to the Kurikulum Merdeka, which includes several assessment steps: diagnostic assessment at the beginning of the learning process, formative assessment during learning, and summative assessment at the end of learning.

In formative assessment, there is a diagnostic assessment aimed at understanding students' abilities and interests related to the material to be delivered. The teacher conducts this assessment before the learning process begins. The teacher observes students and gathers information about their interests, talents, motivation, and other diagnostic elements to inform the planning of the lessons. The results of this assessment serve as data and considerations for lesson planning. Formative assessment is also conducted during the learning process. The purpose of this assessment is to help the teacher understand and address students' needs throughout the lesson and identify areas for improvement based on students'

performance. During this phase, the teacher observes and monitors students' activities throughout the learning process, integrating the assessment into the ongoing educational activities. Assessment is conducted at each element of the learning steps, such as experiencing, creating, working and critical thinking, reflecting, and impacting. Each assessment is documented in the teaching module, which will be detailed in the research appendix.

Discussion

Based on field data, the teaching module prepared by teachers at SMPN 1 Cimalaka has been adapted to meet the needs of the learning process, in line with the flexibility principle of the Kurikulum Merdeka, which allows for adjustments based on student abilities and local context. This teaching module supports Nadiem Makarim's statement that modules can be adjusted to the needs of teachers, students, and educational institutions and aims to simplify administrative tasks so that teachers can focus more on delivering varied and engaging lessons (Rindayati et al., 2022). The lesson planning at SMPN 1 Cimalaka is aligned with the learning outcomes of the Kurikulum Merdeka, with educational resources, including the teaching module, enriching the educational framework (Ardianti & Amalia, 2022; Ariesanti et al., 2023; Maulida, 2022). Although teachers use the teaching module from the guidebook, the Kurikulum Merdeka still permits the use, modification, or creation of modules according to their needs. The implementation of learning in Grade VII at SMPN 1 Cimalaka follows the components of dance education in the Kurikulum Merdeka, including objectives, content, and methods. These components are crucial in educational implementation, as the process is expected to bring about behavioral changes in students. The learning objectives align with those specified in the teaching module, corresponding to the Dance Learning Outcomes. The content has been adjusted to match the Grade VII dance teacher's guidebook, specifically Unit 3 on supporting elements of dance. The methods used include discussions and question-and-answer sessions.

In addition, during the implementation, the teacher consistently provides role modeling and guidance and facilitates everything needed throughout the learning process. The teacher also offers individual mentoring to students. This aligns with the statement that teachers, as facilitators, are expected to create supportive conditions and use strategies that enable students to engage effectively in learning and enhance their motivation. Moreover, the teacher incorporates character education into each lesson, aligning with the Profil Pelajar Pancasila. The new approach to education in Indonesia, called "Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila", focuses on character development through project-based learning activities. It is hoped that, in the future, students will contribute to societal development that upholds the moral principles embedded in each precept of Pancasila (Asiati & Hasanah, 2022). Arts education can enhance the effectiveness of character education. This is reflected in how students interpret each lesson in class (Mahmudah et al., 2021). Despite some discrepancies between the teaching methods outlined in the module and those used during implementation, this has not posed a significant issue, as the teacher manages the situation effectively. Overall, implementing dance education with the Kurikulum Merdeka at SMPN 1 Cimalaka, Sumedang, aligns well with the objectives of the Kurikulum Merdeka.

The final assessment aims to determine the achievement of learning outcomes for both students and teachers. In this assessment, the teacher designs evaluations that align with the teaching module developed during the planning process. During implementation, the teacher utilizes assessment instruments planned within the teaching module. The teacher states that when creating assessments, they first review students' needs to provide appropriate feedback. Subsequently, the teacher observes students throughout the learning process to understand their attitudes and interests regarding the material. This approach is consistent with the assessment guidelines set by the Ministry of Education and Culture. In carrying out the evaluation, the teacher divides the assessments into four parts corresponding to the learning outcomes specified in the Kurikulum Merdeka, with each outcome having a distinct assessment

tailored to its objectives. The Sumatif Tengah Semester (STS) and the Sumatif Akhir Semester (SAS) are also conducted, with each question considering literacy and numeracy. This aligns with the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology's statement, which established the Kurikulum Merdeka as a strategy to strengthen literacy and numeracy.

CONCLUSION

Evaluating the implementation of the curriculum is crucial for measuring program achievements, identifying issues, making improvements, enhancing program quality, and providing recommendations to policymakers on how to refine the curriculum. In implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka, the roles of teachers and driving schools are critical. Key aspects that schools and teachers need to focus on include encouraging students to excel according to their talents and interests, improving students' literacy and numeracy skills, fostering holistic student development, teaching creatively, actively enhancing competencies, developing operational curricula, and providing adequate facilities and human resources (HR). Through comprehensive and continuous evaluation, it is hoped that the Kurikulum Merdeka can be implemented more effectively and provide maximum benefits for education development in Indonesia.

Implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka at SMPN 1 Cimalaka in dance education has been carried out effectively and is aligned with the components outlined in the Kurikulum Merdeka. The planning, implementation, and evaluation processes have adhered to the aspects that should be applied within the Kurikulum Merdeka framework. Considering the curriculum objectives, the planning process has incorporated teaching modules that align with the Kurikulum Merdeka guidelines. In its execution, the indicators for achieving the learning objectives in dance have been followed, and the teaching has been conducted effectively and engagingly following the designed teaching modules. Furthermore, the evaluation process has aligned with the assessment guidelines in the Kurikulum Merdeka, including both formative and summative assessments, ensuring that the educational goals are met.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

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