



## Analysis of the Influence of progressivism education philosophy on the implementation of the free learning curriculum – merdeka campus (MBKM)

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### ARTICLE INFO

#### *Article history:*

Received Mei 02, 2023

Revised Mei 16, 2023

Accepted Mei 30, 2023

#### *Keywords:*

Curriculum, Merdeka campus;  
Campus curriculum (MBKM);  
Progressivism Flow;

### ABSTRACT

Education has an important role in shaping humans to become intelligent individuals and able to create quality human resources to face today's modern life. The Independent Campus Learning Policy is an idea to develop education in a better direction by seeking to make the learning process in Higher Education more flexible. The concept of Merdeka curriculum campus Merdeka is very close to the philosophy of progressivism which gives more freedom in the field of education and emphasizes that the education curriculum is not too dense. The purpose of this study was to analyze the influence of the progressive philosophy of learning on the Merdeka curriculum campus Merdeka policy. The method used in this study is the method of studying literature related to education and the theory of the philosophy of progressivism. The results obtained are in the form of an analysis that the philosophy of progressivism is closely related to the Merdeka curriculum campus Merdeka policy in terms of the importance of educational progress so as to provide the best possible benefits to students through the development of interests and talents.

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## INTRODUCTION

One of the efforts to shape humans into intelligent, responsible and moral individuals is education. Education is also an effort and process to form the whole self of students as an effort to find their identity as a human being who has reason and morality and to achieve the common good (Suwandi, 2020). As stated in *Law No. 20 years 2003* implicitly means that education is a planned learning process carried out by students with the aim of developing the potential that exists in students. Education plays a very important role so that it is designed, implemented and developed

in a better direction by taking into account the potential of educators and students themselves. At present education is not only centered on educators, but has begun to be centered on students. The quality of human resources in welcoming the Big Data Era strongly encourages the Indonesian government to create human resources who have digital skills, are creative and are able to innovate. This is the role of the Indonesian government through the *Ministry of Education and Culture*. In addition, the government's task is also to try to align education with the world of work and industry, with the aim that university graduates are ready to work with expertise and according to the needs of the world of work in the field.

*campus Merdeka* or better known as *Merdeka curriculum campus Merdeka* is a new education policy implemented by Minister Nadiem Makarim at the higher education level. MBKM consists of two concepts, namely "*Merdeka curriculum*" and "*campus Merdeka*". Freedom of learning is freedom of thought and freedom of innovation. While the independent campus is a continuation of the independent learning program for higher education (Vhalery et al., 2022). The main points of the *Merdeka curriculum campus Merdeka* policy or abbreviated as MBKM include: (1) the opening of new study programs regulated in Permendikbud No. 7 year 2020 concerning Establishment, Amendment, Dissolution of State Universities, and Establishment, Amendment, Revocation of Permits for Private Higher Education, as well as Permendikbud No. 5 No 2020 concerning Accreditation of Study Programs and Higher Education; (2) the higher education accreditation system regulated in Permendikbud No. 5 year 2020 concerning Accreditation of Study Programs and Higher Education; (3) higher education legal entities regulated in Permendikbud No. 4 year 2020 concerning Changes in State Higher Education to Legal Entity State Universities and Permendikbud No 6 of 2020 concerning Admission of Undergraduate Program Students at State Universities; and (4) the right to study three semesters outside the study program regulated in Permendikbud No. 3 of 2020 concerning National Higher Education Standards. One of the keys to success in implementing the MBKM Policy is to make the learning process in Higher Education more autonomous and flexible (Baharuddin, 2021).

The goal of the Freedom to Learn Campus Merdeka policy is to encourage students to master various fields of knowledge in accordance with their areas of expertise, so that they are ready to compete in a global world (Baharuddin, 2021; Fatmawati, 2021; Tohir, 2020). The concept of *Merdeka curriculum campus Merdeka* (MBKM) initiated by Nadiem Makarim is actually in line with the concept presented by Ki Hajar Dewantara. This concept emphasizes the principle of independence in students, which provides opportunities for students to develop their potential to stand on their own but still under the supervision of teachers and parents so that their potential value does not lead to negative things. The role of the educator is not to be a human being who seems to know everything, but the educator's role is to be a facilitator for students by mutual acceptance and sharing of knowledge.

The concept of *Merdeka curriculum campus Merdeka* (MBKM) is very close to the philosophy of progressivism which gives more freedom in the field of education. Progressivism developed by Dewey emphasizes an educational curriculum that is not too dense. This has been conceptualized by the Minister of Education and Culture that there should be a reduction of subjects in schools so that they are not too many and too crowded. Too many subjects will have an impact on the stress level of students (Mualifah, 2013). Progressivism is a theory that emerged in reaction to traditional education which always emphasizes formal methods of teaching. Basically this theory emphasizes several principles, including; 1) The educational process begins and ends with students; 2) Learners are something active, not passive; 3) The teacher's role is only as a facilitator, guide, and director; 4) Schools must create a climate that is cooperative and democratic; 5) Learning activities focus more on solving problems not on teaching study material (Yunus, 2016). The flow of progressivism teaches that students can survive in facing all challenges. Thus, facing the progress of the times in the 21st century, the flow of progressivism contributes its thoughts with concepts that must be developed by policy makers in terms of its application to the curriculum in education. By

understanding and applying the perspective of the philosophy of progressivism education and connecting it with the breakthrough policy of "Merdeka curriculum" with a clear direction and purpose. In addition, education in Indonesia is becoming more advanced, of better quality and in accordance with the expectations of all Indonesian people and in line with what has been mandated by the UUD 1945.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, researchers used a qualitative descriptive approach. The method used is the method of literature study. In this study, data collection techniques and information were obtained by researchers through documentation studies and literature studies. Researchers try to explore and provide arguments related to the condition of education with the analysis of the philosophy of progressivism and the results of the analysis are interpreted in the form of scientific narratives. The literature in this study is generally divided into two, namely primary and secondary sources. Primary sources focus on scientific journals, because they have high validity, and secondary sources focus on official state documents, thereby minimizing the occurrence of conceptual errors.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Results

The concept of *Merdeka curriculum* focuses on students' active learning to gain direct experience of various social phenomena that occur in society (Kusumawati & Astuti, 2022). This concept emerged as an effort to improve the abilities of students in the future. *Merdeka curriculum campus Merdeka* Curriculum currently implemented in Higher Education is a policy enforced by the Minister of Education and Culture, Research and Technology, Nadiem Makarim. This policy is set to provide freedom and independence to students in developing their potential in acquiring knowledge but still under the supervision of educators. The implementation of the independent learning campus independent curriculum is also directed at providing flexibility to tertiary institutions to obtain bureaucratic convenience in the accreditation process or higher education acceleration. The MBKM (*Merdeka curriculum campus Merdeka*) curriculum is a higher education curriculum issued by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) of the Republic of Indonesia in 2019. The MBKM curriculum aims to produce graduates who have broader and deeper competencies, as well as able to compete globally (Kholik et al., 2022).

Explained through Permendikbud No. 3 year 2020 concerning National Higher Education Standards, that each tertiary institution has the autonomy to develop its own curriculum. The fact that represents the educational philosophy of progressivism is that it gives authority to develop curriculum to study programs, to deal with the dynamics and complex challenges of the times quickly and accurately. Including the substance of learning on an independent campus, which is explained by the Learning Handbook *Merdeka curriculum campus Merdeka* (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi., 2020) that learning on an independent campus is: 1) student exchange, 2) work practice, 3) teaching assistance in educational units, 4) research, 5) humanitarian projects, 6) entrepreneurship, 7) independent projects, and 8) thematic KKN or building villages, of course the learning objectives emphasize that independent campus learning is exploratory, contextual and primarily focuses on efforts to strengthen student skills. Implementation of the MBKM curriculum to answer the challenges of technological developments, with an OBE (Outcome Based Education) based learning system education so that graduates focus on learning outcomes that are in line with the disciplines (Deni Sopiannyah, Siti Masruroh, Qiqi Yulianti Zaqiah, n.d.)

According to the language, the term progressivism comes from the word progressive, which means moving forward. In the Big Indonesian Dictionary it is stated that the word progressive is defined as towards progress; aiming toward improvement now; and levels up. Thus,

in brief, progressive can be interpreted as a change movement towards improvement. Often the term progressivism is associated with the word progress, namely progress. This means that progressivism is one of the streams that wants progress, where this progress will bring about a change. Another opinion states that progressivism is a trend that wants rapid progress (Muhmidayeli, 2011).

Progressivism is a stream in modern educational philosophy. According to John S. Brubacher as quoted in (Jalaludin; Idi, 2018) the flow of progressivism leads to the pragmatism philosophy introduced by William James (1842-1910) and John Dewey (1859-1952) which focuses on the practical aspects of life. That is, both of these streams both emphasize maximizing human potential in an effort to deal with various problems of everyday life. Progressivism requires progressive (advanced) education, all of which is carried out by education so that humans can experience progress (Progress), so that people will act with intelligence in accordance with the demands and environment (Nursikin, 2016). In addition, this similarity is based on the belief in pragmatism that the human mind is very active and always wants to research, not passive and does not just accept certain views before being proven empirically true. Progressivism is a school of thought in education that emphasizes the development of practical skills and knowledge that can be applied in everyday life. In the curriculum context, the flow of progressivism emphasizes developing a curriculum that is more responsive to the needs and interests of students (Ramadani & Desyandri, 2022). Progressivism also views that the educational curriculum is not limited to subject-based learning, but must be based on the needs of students, learning must be active, exploratory, contextual, fun and dynamic so that students' creativity and power grow (Muttaqin, 2017).

## Discussion

*Merdeka curriculum campus Merdeka Curriculum (MBKM)* is a new curriculum implemented in universities in Indonesia. The MBKM curriculum emphasizes greater learning freedom for students, so students can take courses that interest them, take part in lecture programs tailored to their interests and talents, and participate in relevant academic and non-academic activities (Triyatno, Endang Fauziati, 2022). Implementation of the MBKM curriculum for learning can be done through the following steps:

1. Develop a more flexible learning plan: In the MBKM curriculum, students have the freedom to choose the courses they want and take part in lecture programs that are tailored to their interests and talents. Therefore, universities must develop more flexible lesson plans so that students can adapt to their needs.
2. Provide support to students in selecting courses: Universities can provide assistance and guidance to students in choosing courses that suit their interests and talents. This can be done by providing information about available courses, as well as holding academic guidance and counseling programs for students.
3. Encouraging participation in academic and non-academic activities: The MBKM curriculum emphasizes student participation in relevant academic and non-academic activities. Therefore, tertiary institutions must encourage students to participate in activities that can enhance their learning experience, such as seminars, conferences, community service activities, and so on.
4. Adopt innovative and interactive learning methods: The MBKM curriculum emphasizes the use of innovative and interactive learning methods. Universities can adopt various learning methods such as discussions, question and answer, simulations, and projects that enable students to actively participate in the learning process.

Implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka Curriculum* provides students with opportunities to gain knowledge and freedom. Opportunities to gain knowledge are provided not only within the campus itself but are also entitled to obtain it from other campuses with schemes

offered such as student exchanges, teaching assistance, internships/practical work, humanitarian projects, research/research, thematic community colleges, entrepreneurship and independent projects. These schemes will certainly open up students' insights to be even wider and not fixated on the scope of the campus itself. As explained in *Merdeka curriculum campus Merdeka Handbook* (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi., 2020), the general objective of the independent campus policy, especially in tertiary institutions, is to master scientific disciplines and various skills so that they are useful in the future. Of course, this goal implies an orientation of progressive education. This is very much in line with what is conveyed in the flow of progressivism in educational philosophy. In terms of education in general, the curriculum as the core of education is not only interpreted as a set of subjects offered as the soul of an educational program in schools, but the curriculum also contains a broader meaning. Therefore, experts interpret the curriculum with a different emphasis.

The *campus Merdeka* policy was heavily influenced by the philosophy of progressivism education, which emphasized the importance of progress in education. Dewey (Yunus, 2016) explains that progressivism is a school of educational philosophy that wants educational advancement, so that it is quality and modern and provides real benefits for students in dealing with the times, in order to develop the capacity of students, based on their interests and talents. Progressivism is a necessity in education policy planning and implementation, due to the reality of current science and technology advances. Of course, progressivism increases the chances of democratization in the education sector, because it emphasizes the involvement of all parties in advancing the nation's education (Nanggala & Suryadi, 2020).

The orientation of education and learning initiated by the school of progressivism philosophy is to provide the best possible benefits to students or students, through optimizing their interests and talents. The benefits of the intended education and learning process are not only for oneself, but also for the social world, so that their existence has an important contribution in the realization of a just and prosperous society. Of course, progressivism emphasizes the importance of mastering various skills or skills that are useful (pragmatic) for students or students for future careers. Progressivism views that educational goals must be based on the future, through optimizing the interests and talents of students, so that they become capital knowledge and skills to solve dynamic and complex problems, both personal and social problems (Nursikin, 2016).

The *campus Merdeka* has a very strong basis for its progressivism, because it wants independence, modernization and democratization of education. Of course, this orientation needs to be supported and supervised by all parties, in order to minimize the negative impacts of educational liberalization in Indonesia in practice. It is undeniable that this negative impact has made opportunities for tertiary education, efforts to fulfill student rights not optimal, thus giving birth to injustice. Ideally the reality of progressivism in higher education in the Indonesian nation, both in terms of concept, policy and practice, should be an opportunity to advance national education, even to form Indonesian human resources with character, competitiveness and excellence.

In relation to the concept of *Merdeka curriculum*, this flow of progressivism has parallels in viewing how education should be carried out. Both of them emphasize the independence and freedom of educational actors in exploring the abilities and potential of various learners optimally and naturally. *Merdeka curriculum* and the philosophy of progressivism both view that learners must be independent and free to develop naturally, and assess that the best stimulus for learning is direct experience (Faris, 2015). In addition, educational institutions are required to become laboratories in education to foster students so that they become mature, courageous, independent and able to work on their own.

The *Merdeka curriculum campus Merdeka* is a form of learning in universities that is autonomous and flexible so that a learning culture is created that is innovative, not restrictive, and in accordance with student needs (Hasim, 2020). The *Merdeka curriculum campus Merdeka* policy

emphasizes the formation of the character of each student. This can be seen from the element of character assessment that will determine the graduation of a student. With character education it is able to provide a balance between intellectual elements in the academic field with the emotional, moral and spiritual development of students. One of the approaches in character education related to progressivism is the constructivism approach strategy. The constructivism approach is in line with the philosophy of progressivism which gives freedom for students to develop their character values, but not as freely as possible. The teacher's role should still be there in keeping students on the right track.

The flow of progressive education philosophy has a major influence on the implementation of the *Merdeka curriculum campus Merdeka* (Irawan et al., 2022). Some of these influences include:

1. Student Empowerment

The flow of progressivism emphasizes real experience and empowering students, so that in implementing MBKM, students are given the opportunity to choose the desired courses and flexibility in completing courses. Students are also given the opportunity to take courses off campus or at other campuses. This allows students to develop their potential to the fullest and pursue their interests and talents.

2. Active Learning

The flow of progressivism also emphasizes active learning, where students become actors in the learning process and are given the freedom to find solutions to existing problems. This is in accordance with the learning approach promoted by teaching and learning activities, namely problem-based learning, creativity, and experience.

3. Holistic Education

The flow of progressivism also emphasizes holistic education, which includes the development of the physical, intellectual, emotional, and social aspects of students. Implementation of the *campus Merdeka Curriculum* also has the same focus, where the curriculum includes holistic learning and is oriented towards developing student character.

4. Social Change

The flow of progressivism also emphasizes social change, where education is expected to bring positive changes to society. Implementation of the *campus Merdeka Curriculum* also has the same focus, where the curriculum includes learning that is relevant to the needs of society and the world of work.

Thus, the educational philosophy of progressivism has a significant influence on the implementation of the *campus Merdeka Curriculum*. MBKM promotes holistic learning, student empowerment, active learning, and social change, which is in accordance with the principles promoted by the flow of progressivism.

## CONCLUSION

The *Merdeka curriculum campus Merdeka* Policy focuses on building the character of students. Character assessment is an important element that supports student graduation. With the addition of character assessment, it is able to provide a balance between intellectuals in the academic field with the emotional and moral conditions of students. The link between character education in the *Merdeka curriculum campus Merdeka* curriculum and progressivism lies in the constructivism approach strategy. The most important point in the flow of progressivism and the concept of independent learning is that both emphasize the independence and freedom of educational actors. An educational method that maximally and naturally explores the diverse abilities and potential of students. The philosophy of progressivism emphasizes that freedom and development of the potential of students is the principle thing to provide benefits and progress for students both individually and in groups. Progressivism requires independence and freedom for educational

institutions to explore the intelligence and abilities of students according to the potential, interests and inclinations of each student in a democratic, flexible and fun way.

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