

EXPLORING EDUCATIONAL POLICY INNOVATIONS AND CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN INDONESIAN HIGHER EDUCATION: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

Asep Rosidin

Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia
Jalan. Dr. Setiabudhi No. 229 Bandung 40154
Jawa Barat, Indonesia
Email address: asepsosidin@student.upi.edu
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8465-9416>

Sudirman Sudirman

Makassar State University, PGSD Education Faculty: Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia
Jalan. Tamalate I Tidung Makassar 90222
Makassar, Indonesia
E-mail address: dirman64@unm.ac.id
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7607-2973>

Mohamad Irfan Mufti

Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Tadulako University, Bumi Tadulako Tondo
Palu – Central Sulawesi Campus, 94118, Indonesia
Email address: irfanmufthi66@gmail.com
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-0136-4868>

Susatyo Adhi Pramono

Universitas wijaya Kusuma Purwokerto
Jl. Raya Beji Karangsalam No.25Kec. Kedungbanteng Kab. Banyumas
Jawa Tengah 53152-Indonesia
Email address: SusatyoAdhiPramono@gmail.com
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6326-9133>

Lela Susanty

STBA Yapari Bandung
Jl. Cihampelas No.194, Cipaganti, Coblong, Kota Bandung, Jawa Barat 40131, Indonesia
Email address: leilashanty7@gmail.com
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-8962-8081>

Achmad Dudin

Center for Educational Research, National Research and Innovation Agency
Gedung Widya Graha, Jl. Gatot Subroto No.10 6th & 9th Floor, RT.6/RW.1,
Kuningan Barat., Mampang Perapatan., Kota Jakarta Selatan, Daerah Khusus
Ibukota Jakarta 12710, Indonesia

E-mail address: achm042@brin.go.id

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2987-7300>

Ernawati

Research and Evaluation Education Program, Postgraduate School
of Universitas Muhammadiyah Prof.DR.HAMKA
Jl. Warung Buncit Raya No. 17 A Pancoran, Jakarta Selatan, Indonesia

Email address: ernawati.pep@uhamka.ac.id

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8033-2803>

Ardian Arifin

Universitas PGRI Pontianak, Kalimantan Barat Indonesia
Jl. Ampera, Sungai Jawi, Kec. Pontianak Kota, Kota Pontianak,
Kalimantan Barat 78114, Indonesia

Email address: Ardian.arifin@yahoo.com

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8183-6701>

ABSTRACT

Aim. This study examines the implementation of Indonesia's *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum in higher education, focusing on analysing educational policy and curriculum related to this initiative. The research aims to understand how the curriculum empowers students to choose their learning paths and address challenges related to disparities in resources and facilities across institutions.

Methods. Conducted through a systematic review, this research comprehensively reviewed literature from databases such as CINAHL, Pubmed, Google Scholar, and Scopus. Specific keywords like "educational policy," "*Merdeka Belajar*," "students," and "higher education" were used to identify relevant articles. The study analysed 20 articles to gain insights into the educational policy and curriculum aspects of *Merdeka Belajar* in higher education.

Results. The findings underscore the importance of customising education policies to recognise students' rights and empower them to explore their potential through the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum. While the curriculum aims to enable students to choose their learning paths, challenges such as disparities in resources and facilities exist across

institutions. It emphasises the need for thorough implementation reviews and adequate resources to promote equity and prevent disparities.

Conclusion. This study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing insight into the implementation of the Indonesian Independent Learning curriculum in higher education. Its originality lies in its focus on the analysis of education policy and curriculum aspects related to this initiative, especially in addressing challenges such as resource and facility gaps.

Keywords: curriculum, education policy, higher education, *Merdeka Belajar*, student autonomy

INTRODUCTION

Educational policies play a crucial role in shaping the trajectory of learning and academic development within a nation's educational landscape. In Indonesia, the policy of *Merdeka Belajar* (Freedom to Learn), introduced by the Minister of Education in 2020, stands as a testament to the commitment towards fostering innovation and autonomy within higher education institutions. Under the framework of *Merdeka Belajar*, students are empowered to embark on a journey of self-directed learning, liberated from the constraints of traditional educational paradigms (Krishnapatria, 2021). The main goal of *Merdeka Belajar* is to ensure student independence and maximize student potential. The *Merdeka Belajar* method is considered relevant because it optimizes students' potential and gives students freedom in choosing fields to develop their potential (Supriyoko et al., 2022).

The essence of *Merdeka Belajar* lies in its emphasis on student autonomy and the exploration of diverse fields of knowledge essential for career readiness (Ferary, 2023). By offering students the freedom to choose their subjects, *Merdeka Belajar* seeks to cultivate a learning environment conducive to individual growth and skill development, aligning with the evolving needs of the workforce. Central to the *Merdeka Belajar* initiative is the notion of independence in learning, whereby students are encouraged to pursue their passions and interests, thereby creating a portfolio reflective of their talents and aspirations (Supriati et al., 2022). This approach not only enhances students' academic experiences but also fosters the development of well-rounded individuals equipped with both knowledge and skills essential for success in a dynamic global landscape (Firmansyah et al., 2023).

However, the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum poses challenges, with disparities emerging across educational institutions regarding readiness, resources, and facilities (Alingh et al., 2021). While some schools have embraced the concept wholeheartedly, others struggle to adapt, highlighting the need for a comprehensive review of the policy to ensure equitable implementation nationwide. This study aims to explore the Educational Policy and Curriculum of *Merdeka Belajar* in Indonesia's Higher Education, focusing on its flexibility, impact on student learning experiences, and challenges associated with its implementation. By addressing these research questions, this study seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the *Merdeka Belajar* policy and its implications for higher education in Indonesia.

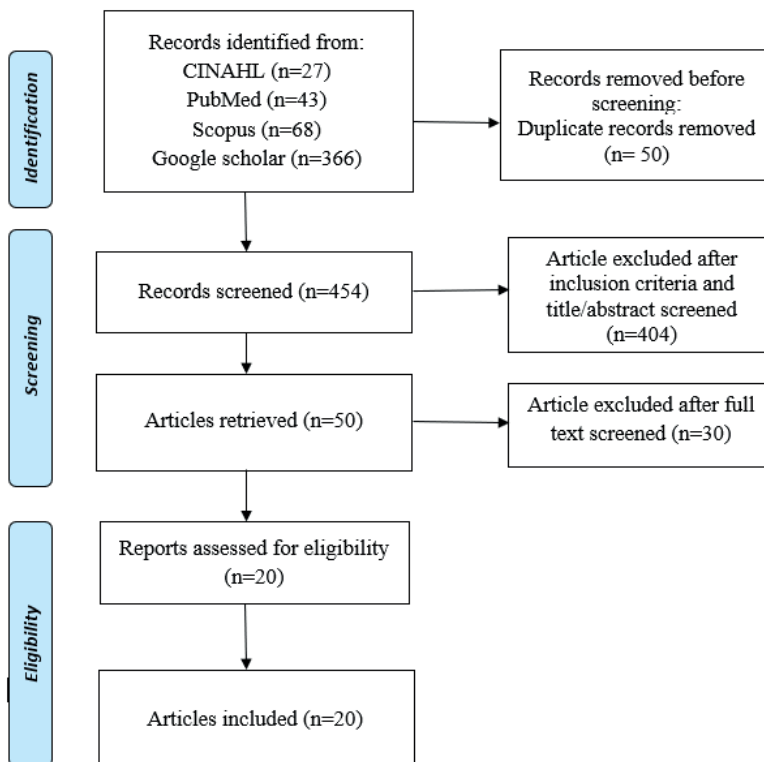
METHODOLOGY

Research method

This study employs a systematic review methodology to explore Educational Policy Innovations and Curriculum Development in Indonesian Higher Education, specifically focusing on the *Merdeka Belajar* initiative. A systematic review is a rigorous research method designed to identify, analyze, and synthesize existing literature relevant to specific research questions or topics. It offers a structured approach to reviewing diverse research findings, providing policymakers and stakeholders with a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

Figure 1

PRISMA flow diagram



Source : Own Reserch

Data Collection

A comprehensive search strategy is implemented to identify relevant literature from multiple databases, including CINAHL, PubMed, Google Scholar, and Scopus. The search strategy incorporates specific keywords related to educational policy, curriculum development, and the *Merdeka Belajar* initiative in Indonesian higher education. Inclusion criteria encompass studies conducted within the last ten years (2014-2023), focusing on original research articles published in English and addressing the *Merdeka Belajar* policy in higher education settings. Non-individual samples from higher education are excluded from consideration.

Data Analysis

The data analysis approach employed in this study is descriptive, focusing on providing a narrative synthesis of the findings extracted from the selected articles. A systematic process is followed to review and extract relevant information from each article, including details such as authorship, publication year, research design, sample characteristics, intervention methods, and study outcomes. These data is organised and analysed to identify patterns, themes, and variations across the literature, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the educational policy innovations and curriculum development in Indonesian higher education.

Research Validity and Reliability

The systematic review methodology enhances the validity of this study by ensuring a thorough and systematic examination of the existing literature on the topic. Specific inclusion and exclusion criteria are employed to maintain the integrity and reliability of the data collection process. Additionally, the use of established guidelines, such as the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA), ensures transparency and rigour throughout the review process. By adhering to rigorous methodological standards, this study aims to provide reliable insights into the Educational Policy Innovations and Curriculum Development in Indonesian Higher Education.

RESULTS

A total of 504 articles were initially identified through the search process. After removing duplicates, 451 unique articles remained. Following a meticulous screening

process based on inclusion criteria, 50 articles were considered relevant for further examination. Subsequently, a thorough review of the full-text content led to the final selection of 20 articles for inclusion in this systematic review.

These 20 selected articles offer comprehensive insights into the Educational Policy and Curriculum of *Merdeka Belajar* within the context of Indonesian Higher Education. Through their analysis, key themes, impacts, and challenges associated with the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum have emerged, shedding light on its implications for higher education in Indonesia.

Table 1

Comprehensive Insights Into The Educational Policy And Curriculum Of Merdeka Belajar

No	Author(s), Year	Purpose	Methods	Samples	Results
1.	(Simamora & Pasaribu, 2023)	to analyze <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> 's curriculum on their learning	narrative analysis approach	35 students	There are seven main themes of the <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> curriculum: understanding of <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> , experiences of students with family and teacher involvement, children's learning abilities, the role of school on student's life, experiential learning, equality and diversity, and reflections of learning.
2.	(Fuadi & Irdalisa, 2022)	To examine the format of <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> on students	descriptive qualitative research	-	There are eight themes of <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> : student exchange, internship for work experience, learning method, village projects, research experiences, entrepreneurial experiences, the study of independents, and projects of humanitarian.
3.	(Amalia, 2021)(Dray et al., 2017)	To examine the law of <i>Merdeka Belajar</i>	empirical legal research	-	The challenges of <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> include lack of teacher guidance, unstable internet access, availability of devices, inability to access online learning applications, lack of parental assistance, and limited time in preparation.

No	Author(s), Year	Purpose	Methods	Samples	Results
4.	(Supriati et al., 2022)	to explain how implementing the <i>Merdeka Belajar</i>	Descriptive study	lecturers, students, and education staff	The main topics of <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> are the programme environment, <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> curriculum documents, research courses, and entrepreneurial activities.
5.	(Yuastina et al., 2020)	To test <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> 's curriculum <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> on high education	Descriptive study	-	The <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> curriculum has not been understood contextually by the teacher, so the teacher only carries out instructions from the school.
6.	(Apoko et al., 2022)	to analyse the level of awareness and participation of students in the <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> policy	Survey	11579 students	The results of this study indicate that the level of student awareness of the <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> policy is relatively high, including the level of student participation. At the same time, the response to the impact of the <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> policy for students is said to be high.
7.	(Putera & Sugianto, 2020)	To investigate the students' perception and optimism on the <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> curriculum	survey	229 students	The students positively perceived the off-curriculum <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> programme (49%) and were very optimistic that the <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> curriculum would be effective when implemented (71%).
8.	(Krishnapatria, 2021)	to investigate students' independence in developing a curriculum	qualitative descriptive study	-	The challenge of building a <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> curriculum is building partnerships between study programmes and external parties.
9.	(Lhutfi & Mardiani, 2020)	to analyze <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> 's policy	Descriptive Literature Method	-	The study results show that the <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> curriculum can improve skilled and strong character students. The main aspects of the <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> curriculum are having more experience and knowledge and becoming more competitive graduates.

No	Author(s), Year	Purpose	Methods	Samples	Results
10.	(Purwanti, 2021)	To investigate the <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> policy, especially its implementation in HEIs.	Descriptive method	-	Prepare the implementation of the MBKM policy, and based on the concept of graduate employability such as possession, position, and process, the higher education must prepare various activities, such as learning methods and some parties, to improve the quality of education.
11.	(Maipita et al., 2021)	to develop a curriculum structure that is compatible with <i>Merdeka Belajar</i>	prospective policy research	lecturers, faculty functionaries, and practitioners	the curriculum structure of <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> is an interpretation of national policies, interpretation of higher education policies, conceptual basis, study programme curriculum structure, course composition, and reference for developing learning tools.
12.	(Yudhawasthi & Christiani, 2022)	to find out the readiness of the institution to implement the <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> curriculum	Qualitative study	-	To realise human resources for implementing <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> , there is a need for bright, rich, and proper human resources for documentary institutions.
13	(Irawati et al., 2022)	to describe the fifteenth episode of <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> policy.	Literature Research		The results, among other things, show that schools can be flexible and creative in being free to design and carry out learning according to students' abilities. This curriculum change will be successful if changes in the mindset of educators and education staff and other education stakeholders support it.
14	(Tricahyati & Zaim, 2023)	to investigate English teachers' readiness and the obstacles to implementing the <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> curriculum.	Quantitative study	Thirteen junior high school English teachers	The results of this study show that teachers' readiness to implement the curriculum at level 3 or in the category ready needs a slight improvement, with an average score of 3.20.

No	Author(s), Year	Purpose	Methods	Samples	Results
15	(Fathurrahman et al., 2022)	to analyse the change of the curriculum into the <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> curriculum.	Quantitative	Principal, Teachers, Curriculum Development Team, and School Management at SMPIt Nurul Islam, totaling 22 people.	The results of this study show that school management strongly influences readiness in the <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> curriculum.
16	(Zakiyyah et al., 2021)	to implement the <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> curriculum among high school students	Qualitative study	teachers, students, and stakeholders in the science education study programmed.	Teachers' competencies for implementing <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> are understanding students' perceptions and involvement in implementing the <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> curriculum.
17.	(Sihombing et al., 2021)	To demonstrate the concept and implementation of <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> during COVID-19.	Quantitative study	students and teachers	The problem of practical implementation of the <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> curriculum is the limited number of teachers, innovators, and role models for the other teachers.
18	(Sagala & Widyastuti, 2022)	to investigate implementing <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> with E-module Mathematics for SMP class VII based on project-based learning	Quantitative study	Students	The results showed that the practical aspects of students and mathematics teachers were 3.50 (87.5%) and 3.64 (91%) in the functional category.
29.	(Wayan Sumandya et al., 2022)	to determine the skills of teachers in utilizing the <i>Merdeka Belajar</i> platform	Mixed methods research	36 teachers	The quality of learning did not increase, and students obtained more learning outcomes under the KKTP (Criteria for Completeness of Learning Objectives).

Source: Own Research.

This systematic review delves into the Educational Policy and Curriculum of *Merdeka Belajar* in Indonesian Higher Education, focusing on its flexibility, impact on student learning experiences, and challenges associated with its implementation. The synthesis of findings from the selected studies illuminates key aspects of the *Merdeka Belajar* policy and its implications for higher education in Indonesia. One of the central findings of this review is the pivotal role of comprehending the *Merdeka Belajar* concept for its practical application. Studies reveal variations in teachers' understanding of the concept, which can hinder its optimal execution. Moreover, family and teacher involvement emerge as crucial factors shaping students' experiences with *Merdeka Belajar*, underscoring the importance of collaborative engagement in creating a nurturing learning environment conducive to students' growth.

The review highlights the curriculum's emphasis on offering tailored learning experiences that cater to individual students' diverse abilities and needs. Educational institutions are recognised as key influencers in shaping students' lives, with the potential to foster flexibility within the educational system by creatively adapting to students' unique talents and abilities. Experiential learning stands as a cornerstone of the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum, with various programmes such as student exchanges, internships, and community projects contributing to enriched learning experiences. This hands-on approach not only enhances students' academic knowledge but also fosters practical skills and real-world insights essential for their personal and professional development. The *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum places a strong emphasis on promoting equality and diversity within education, ensuring equitable access to educational opportunities for students from various backgrounds. This commitment to inclusivity aligns with broader efforts to foster a more equitable and inclusive educational system in Indonesia. *Merdeka Belajar* encourages students to engage in reflective practices regarding their learning experiences, fostering self-awareness and continuous improvement. This introspective approach empowers students to take ownership of their learning journey and actively contribute to their personal and academic growth.

In conclusion, this systematic review sheds light on the multifaceted nature of the *Merdeka Belajar* policy and its implications for higher education in Indonesia. By exploring its flexibility, impact on student learning experiences, and implementation challenges, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of the Educational Policy and Curriculum of *Merdeka Belajar*, paving the way for informed decision-making and future research endeavours in the field.

DISCUSSION

This systematic review scrutinizes the Educational Policy and Curriculum of *Merdeka Belajar* in Indonesian Higher Education, with a focus on its flexibility, impact on student learning experiences, and implementation challenges. The analysis of 20

scholarly articles reveals significant insights into the complexities surrounding the adoption and execution of the *Merdeka Belajar* policy within higher education institutions in Indonesia. The transition to the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum necessitates careful adjustment within educational institutions. Challenges such as inadequate facilities, limited human resource readiness, and protracted adaptation processes underscore the importance of adopting a phased approach to implementation. This approach ensures that the curriculum's objectives are optimized while addressing institutional constraints effectively (Usanto, 2022). The transition from the previous curriculum to the independent *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum represents a fundamental shift, encompassing alterations to its structural framework, foundational underpinnings, learning objectives, and pedagogical modules. Educators face considerable challenges in facilitating effective student learning experiences within this new framework, highlighting the need for comprehensive support and training initiatives (Sasikirana & Herlambang, 2020).

The implementation strategy for the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum varies across educational institutions, tailored to each school's readiness and specific conditions. This tailored approach acknowledges that successful implementation hinges not solely on content or supporting facilities but also on the mindset and adaptability of educators. Leadership embracing innovation, a collaborative work culture, and strong partnerships with parents or families are critical elements for successful policy implementation (Apoko et al., 2022; Lhutfi & Mardiani, 2020). Implementing the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum requires embracing flexibility and adaptability within educational institutions, diverging from rigid structures to effectively cater to students' needs. Pre-programming learning activities and fostering partnerships among stakeholders are essential strategies for facilitating effective learning experiences within this framework. Effective implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum necessitates comprehensive training initiatives for educators and support staff within educational institutions. Challenges arise from teachers' varying comprehension of the curriculum, highlighting the need for tailored training programs to enhance their understanding and proficiency. Additionally, challenges related to facilities and students' readiness underscore the importance of holistic training initiatives to address implementation barriers effectively (Maipita et al., 2021; Zahro & Lutfi, 2021).

Learning media holds significant importance in facilitating a conducive teaching and learning environment. Scholarly discourse has identified four pivotal components in learning activities: instructional materials, the learning environment, media and learning resources, and educators as subject matter experts (Simatupang & Yuhertiana, 2021). With the existence of learning media, the learning process will take place effectively and positively impact learning outcomes. Good learning outcomes can be realized because of a good and maximum learning process. A good learning process can be created because of the learning media that supports it (Krishnapatria, 2021).

The effective utilization of learning media plays a crucial role in facilitating a conducive teaching and learning environment within the *Merdeka Belajar* framework.

Learning media stimulates students' interest, motivation, and engagement, contributing to positive learning outcomes. Teachers play a pivotal role in selecting materials that align with students' needs and interests, underscoring the importance of comprehending the curriculum's underlying vision (Hasanah et al., 2021). Comprehending its underlying vision is a fundamental prerequisite for successfully implementing the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum. The *Merdeka Belajar* vision aims to nurture empowered Indonesian citizens who are sovereign, independent, and possess a strong character, emphasizing six key attributes of Pancasila Students: faith, independence, critical thinking, global awareness, collaboration, and creativity (Fathurrahman et al., 2022).

Despite the advantages of the *Merdeka Mengajar* platform in enhancing the learning process and student outcomes, various challenges persist, including limited teacher proficiency and occasional student disengagement. However, the platform's flexibility and innovative learning inspirations present valuable opportunities for enhancing educational practices within the *Merdeka Belajar* framework (Apriliyani et al., 2022; Tricahyati & Zaim, 2023; Yudhawasthi & Christiani, 2022).

Active literacy and numeracy programmed, library access initiatives, extracurricular activities, and technology adaptation support initiatives enhance the educational landscape within the *Merdeka Belajar* framework. However, challenges such as human resource constraints and infrastructural limitations necessitate comprehensive strategies to address implementation barriers effectively (Al Yakin et al., 2023). The Freedom to Learn concept, particularly during the COVID-19 period in online learning, signifies a transformative shift in the learning paradigm. Students are empowered to proactively seek information from diverse sources, with teachers assuming the roles of facilitators, guides, motivators, and reflective mentors. Understanding this concept has profound implications for addressing educational challenges and promoting independence and freedom in learning (Anis & Anwar, 2020; Yudhawasthi & Christiani, 2022).

Merdeka Belajar represents a significant government initiative aimed at enhancing the learning process and fostering students' potential. However, the implementation of the independent campus curriculum presents multifaceted challenges, necessitating comprehensive steps to facilitate a smooth transition to the *Merdeka Belajar* framework. By addressing these challenges and leveraging opportunities, educational institutions can optimize the *Merdeka Belajar* policy's potential to revolutionize higher education in Indonesia.

CONCLUSIONS

The systematic review of 20 articles examining the Educational Policy and Curriculum of *Merdeka Belajar* in Indonesian Higher Education offers valuable insights into the evolving educational landscape in Indonesia. The *Merdeka Belajar* policy signifies a departure from traditional educational approaches, prioritising student

autonomy and freedom in shaping learning experiences. However, this innovative policy also presents challenges and adjustment periods for educational stakeholders. The implications drawn from this research highlight crucial considerations for successfully implementing the *Merdeka Belajar* policy in Indonesian higher education. Firstly, comprehensive orientation programmes targeting students, teachers, and staff are essential to familiarise them with the unique features of the *Merdeka Belajar* policy. These programmes can facilitate a smoother transition into this novel educational paradigm. Secondly, investment in teacher professional development is paramount, as teachers play a central role in effectively implementing the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum. Professional development initiatives should focus on pedagogical skills and strategies for creating dynamic and inclusive learning environments.

Thirdly, fostering collaboration among various stakeholders, including government entities, educational institutions, teachers, students, and parents, is crucial for the policy's success. Establishing an open and supportive collaborative ecosystem can facilitate communication, mutual support, and problem-solving, enhancing the overall learning experience. Additionally, continuous evaluation and adaptation of the *Merdeka Belajar* policy are vital. Integrating feedback mechanisms into the policy framework enables stakeholders to identify areas for improvement and make informed adjustments as necessary. Lastly, adequate resource allocation is essential for facilitating the effective implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum. Policymakers and educational institutions should prioritise resource provision for facilities, technology, and teaching materials to create a conducive learning environment.

In conclusion, the *Merdeka Belajar* policy represents a significant educational transformation in Indonesia, emphasising student empowerment and potential. Despite initial challenges, collaborative efforts, comprehensive orientation, teacher development, ongoing evaluation, and resource allocation can pave the way for a successful transition. Ultimately, the *Merdeka Belajar* policy has the potential to foster a more innovative, inclusive, and student-centred educational landscape in Indonesia.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure the successful implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* policy in Indonesian higher education, several key recommendations emerge. Firstly, comprehensive orientation programmes targeting students, teachers, and staff are crucial for providing a clear understanding of the policy's unique features and objectives, thus facilitating a smooth transition. Secondly, investing in teacher professional development is paramount, extending beyond pedagogical skills to create dynamic and inclusive learning environments. Thirdly, fostering collaboration among various stakeholders, including government bodies, educational institutions, teachers, students, and parents, is essential to establish a supportive ecosystem. Continuous evaluation and adaptation mechanisms

must be integrated to keep the policy relevant and effective over time. Adequate resource allocation, encompassing facilities, technology, and teaching materials, is vital to create an optimal learning environment. Implementing monitoring and accountability measures ensures that all stakeholders actively contribute to the policy's success. Public awareness campaigns are necessary to gain support from the broader community, and research and data collection efforts provide evidence-based guidance for policy refinement. These recommendations collectively pave the way for a more innovative, inclusive, and student-centred educational landscape in Indonesia.

REFERENCES

- Al Yakin, A., Muthmainnah, Ganguli, S., Cardoso, L., & Asrifan, A. (2023). Cybersocialization Through Smart Digital Classroom Management (SDCM) as a Pedagogical Innovation of “Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM)” Curriculum. In A. Choudhury, A. Biswas, & S. Chakraborti (Eds.), *Digital Learning based Education. Advanced Technologies and Societal Change* (pp. 39–61). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-19-8967-4_3
- Alingh, J. F., Fleerkotte, B. M., Groen, B. E., Rietman, J. S., Weerdesteyn, V., van Asseldonk, E. H. F., Geurts, A. C. H., & Buurke, J. H. (2021). Effect of assist-as-needed robotic gait training on the gait pattern post stroke: a randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Neuroengineering and Rehabilitation*, 18(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12984-020-00800-4>
- Amalia, M. (2021). Challenges And Efforts Of Legal Education In The Pandemic Time In Improving The Role Of Education Through Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka. In J. Helmie, N. Kurniawati, E. H. Maolida, V. A. Salsabila, & A. Sofarini (Eds.), *Proceedings International Conference on Education of Suryakencana (iConnects,2021)* (pp. 124-129). Univ Suryakencana Press. <https://jurnal.unsur.ac.id/cp/article/view/1327>
- Anis, M., & Anwar, C. (2020). Self-organized learning environment teaching strategy for ELT in Merdeka Belajar concept for high school students in Indonesia. *JEES (Journal of English Educators Society)*, 5(2), 199–204. <https://doi.org/10.21070/jees.v5i2.869>
- Apoko, T. W., Hendriana, B., Umam, K., Handayani, I., & Supandi. (2022). The Implementation of Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka Policy: Students' Awareness, Participation, and its Impact. *Journal of Education Research and Evaluation*, 6(4), 759–772. <https://doi.org/10.23887/jere.v6i4.48040>
- Apriliyani, N. V., Hernawan, D., Purnamasari, I., Goris Seran, G., & Sastrawan, B. (2022). Implementasi Program Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka [Implementation of the Independent Learning Independent Campus Program]. *Jurnal Governansi*, 8(1), 11–18. <https://doi.org/10.30997/jgs.v8i1.5045>
- Dray, J., Bowman, J., Campbell, E., Freund, M., Hodder, R., Wolfenden, L., Richards, J., Leane, C., Green, S., Lecathelinais, C., Oldmeadow, C., Attia, J., Gillham, K., & Wiggers, J. (2017). Effectiveness of a pragmatic school-based universal intervention targeting student resilience protective factors in reducing mental health problems in adolescents. *Journal of Adolescence*, 57(1), 74–89. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2017.03.009>
- Fathurrahman, F., Arifin, B. S., Muhyi A., & Huda, M. (2022). The Influence of School Management on The Implementation of The Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. *AL-TANZIM: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 6(4), 1274–1286. <https://doi.org/10.33650/al-tanzim.v6i4.3461>
- Ferary, D. (2023). A Philosophical Perspective on the Purpose of Education in Indonesia. In D. G. Hebert (Ed.), *Comparative and Decolonial Studies in Philosophy of Education* (pp. 51–71). Springer Nature Singapore. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-99-0139-5_4
- Firmansyah, C., Ubaidillah, U., & Busriyanti, B. (2023). Design of The “Merdeka Belajar” Program for Students of High School Education. *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 4(1), 38–48. <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v4i1.328>
- Fuadi, T. M., & Irdalisa, I. (2022). Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka: Application in Education Faculty. *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 13(3), 2747–2756. <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v13i3.1125>

- Hasanah, V. R., Ardiwinata, J. S., Hatimah, I., & Wulandari, H. (2021). Management of Equality Education Program in Daarut Tauhiid Community Learning Center (CLC). *Edukasi*, 15(1), 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.15294/edukasi.v15i1.27986>
- Irawati, D., Najili, H., Supiana, S., & Zaqiah, Q. Y. (2022). Merdeka belajar curriculum innovation and its application in education units. *Edumaspol: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 6(2), 2506–2514.
- Krishnapatria, K. (2021). Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) curriculum in English studies program: Challenges and opportunities. *ELT in Focus*, 4(1), 12–19. <https://journal.unsika.ac.id/index.php/ELTINFOCUS/article/view/5276>
- Lhutfi, I., & Mardiani, R. (2020). Merdeka Belajar - Kampus Merdeka Policy: How Does It Affect the Sustainability on Accounting Education in Indonesia?. *Dinamika Pendidikan*, 15(2), 243–253. <https://doi.org/10.15294/dp.v15i2.26071>
- Maipita, I., Dalimunthe, M. B., & Sagala, G. H. (2021). The Development Structure of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum in the Industrial Revolution Era. In A. O. Norman, P. D. Puta, G. H. Sagala, & C. G. G. T. Sibarani (Eds.), *Proceedings of the International Conference on Strategic Issues of Economics, Business and Education (ICoSIEBE 2020)* (pp.145–151). Atlantis Press. <https://doi.org/10.2991/aebmr.k.210220.026>
- Purwanti, E. (2021). Preparing the Implementation of Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka Policy in Higher Education Institutions. In A. Nurmandi, H. Latief, A. Gomes, Z. Rafique, B. Wadham, B. Barendregt, H. Mustafa, M. R. Bustami, M. van Bruinessen, D. Holmes, & B. Cipto (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Sustainable Innovation 2020–Social, Humanity, and Education (ICoSIHESS 2020)* (ICoSIHESS 2020) (pp. 384–391). Atlantis Press. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210120.149>
- Putera, L. J., & Sugianto, R. (2020). Perception and Optimism About Two-Semester Off-Campus Internship Program of the Kampus Merdeka-Merdeka Belajar (Freedom Campus-Freedom To Learn) Policy Among University Students. *Journal of Languages and Language Teaching*, 8(3), 264-275. <https://doi.org/10.33394/jollt.v8i3.2756>
- Sagala, P. N., & Widyastuti, E. (2022). Development of Junior High School Mathematics E-Modules Based on Project Based Learning Integrated by Merdeka Belajar. In B. Sinaga, R. Husein, & J. Rajaguguk (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 6th Annual International Seminar on Transformative Education and Educational Leadership (AISTEEL 2021)* (pp. 891–897). Atlantis Press. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.211110.200>
- Sihombing, A. A., Anugraharsi, S., Parlina, N., & Kusumastuti, Y. S. (2021). Merdeka Belajar in an Online Learning during The Covid-19 Outbreak: Concept and Implementation. *Asian Journal of University Education*, 17(4), 35–48. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1328612.pdf>
- Simamora, R. M., & Pasaribu, D. (2023). Education Should Embrace All Potential: Students’ Reflective Essays on the Meaning of Merdeka Belajar. *Studies in Learning and Teaching*, 4(1), 68–87. <https://doi.org/10.46627/silet.v4i1.200>
- Simatupang, E., & Yuhertiana, I. (2021). Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka terhadap Perubahan Paradigma Pembelajaran pada Pendidikan Tinggi: Sebuah Tinjauan Literatur [Independent Learning Independent Campus towards Paradigm Changes in Learning in Higher Education: A Literature Review]. *Jurnal Bisnis, Manajemen, Dan Ekonomi*, 2(2), 30–38. <https://doi.org/10.47747/jbme.v2i2.230>
- Supriati, R., Royani Dewi, E., Triyono, Supriyanti, D., & Azizah, N. (2022). Implementation Framework for Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) in Higher Education Academic Activities. *IAIC Transactions on Sustainable Digital Innovation (ITSDI)*, 3(2), 150–161. <https://doi.org/10.34306/itsdi.v3i2.555>
- Supriyoko, Rochmiyati, S., Irfan, M., & Ghazali, I. (2022). Online Survey: Evaluation of Indonesian Higher Education Curriculum. *Pegem Journal of Education and Instruction*, 12(4), 235–240. <https://doi.org/10.47750/pegegog.12.04.24>
- Tricahyati, S., & Zaim, M. (2023). English Teachers’ Readiness in Implementation of ‘Merdeka Belajar’ Curriculum in Teaching English at Junior High School in Padang. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 12(1), 97-105 <https://ejournal.unp.ac.id/index.php/jelt/article/view/121783>
- Usanto, S. (2022). Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar dalam Meningkatkan Pemahaman Siswa [Implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum in Improving Student Understanding]. *Cakrawala Repositori IMWI*, 5(2), 494–502.
- Wayan Sumandya, I., Wayan Widana, I., & Nugraha, S. (2022). The Skills of High School Mathematic Teachers in Utilizing the Merdeka Belajar Platform How to Cite. *IRJE [Indonesian Research Journal in Education]*, 6(2), 455–464.

- Yudhawasthi, C. M., & Christiani, L. (2022). Challenges of Higher Educational Documentary Institutions in Supporting Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka Program. *Khazanah Al-Hikmah : Jurnal Ilmu Perpustakaan, Informasi, Dan Kearsipan*, 9(2), 193-209. <https://doi.org/10.24252/kah.v9cf2>
- Yuhastina, Y., Parahita, B. N., Astutik, D., Ghufronudin, G., & Purwanto, D. (2020). Sociology Teachers' Opportunities and Challenges in Facing "Merdeka Belajar" Curriculum in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4.0). *Society*, 8(2), 732-753. <https://doi.org/10.33019/society.v8i2.234>
- Zahro, N., & Lutfi, A. (2021). Students' Well-Being and Game Implementation in Learning Chemistry in Merdeka Belajar Era. *Jurnal Pendidikan Kimia Indonesia*, 5(1), 34-43. <https://doi.org/10.23887/jpk.v5i1.30127>
- Zakiyyah, Z., Cahyani, M. D., & Fatmah, N. (2021). Readiness of the Science Education Study Program in the Implementation of the 'Merdeka Belajar - Kampus Merdeka' (MBKM) Curriculum. *Scientiae Educatia: Jurnal Pendidikan Sains*, 10(2), 160-168. <https://doi.org/10.24235/sc.educatia.v10i2.9243>