



Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in Elementary Schools: A Case Study at Padma Jaya Elementary School, Palembang

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at the elementary school level through a case study approach at Padma Jaya Elementary School, Palembang. The focus of the study includes lesson planning, instructional practices, assessment, and the role of the school environment in supporting curriculum implementation. This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through observations and semi-structured interviews with the principal, vice principal, and classroom teachers. Data analysis was conducted using a thematic model that includes data display, data reduction, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The analysis was strengthened through source and method triangulation. The findings indicate that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum has been carried out systematically. In the planning stage, teachers developed flexible and contextual teaching modules that align with students' needs and integrated the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project. In the implementation stage, learning activities were student-centered and active, using various methods such as discussions, hands-on activities, and project-based learning. Assessment was conducted authentically by covering attitudes, skills, and knowledge, and was followed by remedial and enrichment activities. In addition, support from the school environment, including facilities and collaboration among stakeholders, contributed to the effectiveness of curriculum implementation. The findings also reveal a strong alignment between planning, implementation, and assessment in supporting the success of the Merdeka Curriculum. This study provides empirical contributions to understanding contextual curriculum implementation practices at the elementary school level and may serve as a reference for improving educational policy and instructional practices.

Keywords:

Case study, elementary school, Merdeka curriculum, Pancasila student profile, student-centered learning



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INTRODUCTION

The education system in Indonesia has undergone multiple curriculum changes since 1947. These changes aim to address the limitations of previous curricula and to adapt to evolving societal needs and global demands (Fitriyah & Wardani, 2022; Santika et al., 2022). Policies established by educational stakeholders shape curriculum reform. These policies influence the direction and quality of national education and respond to social, technological, and global challenges (Gouëdard et al., 2020; Howson & Kingsbury, 2023). This dynamic reflects the adaptive and transformative nature of curriculum development. In this context, the curriculum serves as a central guideline for the learning process. It includes the planning of objectives, content, methods, and assessment, all structured according to students' needs and characteristics (Ardianti & Amalia, 2022; Cahapay, 2020). Therefore, the quality of the curriculum plays a critical role in achieving educational goals.

The latest curriculum reform in Indonesia is known as the Merdeka Curriculum, which is part of the Merdeka Belajar policy. This curriculum emphasizes learning that allows students to develop independence and creativity. The approach aligns with Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophy, which

positions students at the center of the learning process (Heryanti et al., 2023; Salsabilla & Jannah, 2023). Students are treated as active agents in constructing their knowledge. The Merdeka Curriculum also introduces several policy changes. The national examination has been replaced by the Minimum Competency Assessment and character surveys to measure foundational skills and character development (Puspita & Atikah, 2023; Rahmafritri et al., 2024). In addition, lesson planning has been simplified to improve efficiency and flexibility. The main components now focus on learning objectives, learning activities, and assessment (Ariesanti et al., 2023; Hayati et al., 2024).

The Merdeka Curriculum was designed as a response to post-pandemic educational challenges. It emphasizes the strengthening of competencies, character development, and students' soft skills (Cahapay, 2020; Rahmafritri et al., 2024). Learning loss became one of the key drivers behind this policy. This condition highlighted the need for more adaptive and flexible learning approaches (Gouédard et al., 2020; Puspita & Atikah, 2023). Its implementation is based on the principle of differentiated instruction. This approach is tailored to students' needs and developmental stages (Heryanti et al., 2023). In addition, the curriculum focuses on developing the Pancasila Student Profile. The goal is to instill character values relevant to twenty-first century demands (Salsabilla & Jannah, 2023). Thus, the curriculum does not focus solely on cognitive outcomes. It also emphasizes holistic character development.

The implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile is realized through various learning activities. These include intraclass activities, extracurricular programs, and project-based learning (Ariesanti et al., 2023; Hayati et al., 2024). This approach encourages active student engagement in the learning process. Students become more participatory and reflective in their learning (Fitriyah & Wardani, 2022). Through project-based learning, students contextually develop competencies. They also practice collaborative values such as cooperation (Ardianti & Amalia, 2022; Howson & Kingsbury, 2023). These activities create meaningful learning experiences. Learning focuses not only on outcomes but also on the process of character formation.

However, rapid technological development in the era of globalization has influenced students' social behavior. Intensive use of technology tends to reduce the quality of direct social interaction (Nguyen et al., 2022; Twenge et al., 2019). This condition contributes to the rise of individualistic attitudes and reduced social awareness among students (Albashrawi et al., 2021; Arpaci et al., 2020; Blakemore & Agllias, 2020). This phenomenon poses challenges for fostering collaborative values such as cooperation in schools. As a result, student participation in collaborative activities remains relatively low. In addition, the dominance of technology in daily life may weaken students' social skills (Haryono et al., 2025). Therefore, curriculum strategies are needed to balance the use of technology with character development.

Several studies indicate that the Merdeka Curriculum offers a more flexible and student-centered approach. It provides opportunities for contextual and adaptive learning (Ardianti & Amalia, 2022; Fitriyah & Wardani, 2022). The curriculum also promotes competency and character development through meaningful learning experiences (Rahmafritri et al., 2024). However, most studies still focus on conceptual aspects. Implementation at the elementary school level has not been widely explored (Ariesanti et al., 2023). In addition, the relationship between curriculum planning and classroom practice remains underexamined. This gap indicates a discrepancy between curriculum design and its implementation in practice (Gouédard et al., 2020).

Based on these considerations, this study employs a case study approach at an elementary school in Palembang that has implemented the Merdeka Curriculum. This approach allows for an in-depth and contextual understanding of lesson planning and instructional practices. A case study enables a comprehensive analysis of curriculum implementation within a real educational setting. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, focusing on curriculum planning and classroom practices at the elementary level. The findings are expected to provide empirical contributions to the study of curriculum implementation and serve as a reference for improving instructional practices.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in Elementary Schools

The Merdeka Curriculum is an educational policy that emphasizes flexibility and student-centered learning. At the elementary school level, this curriculum is adapted to students' needs and developmental stages (Ain, 2024; Septiani et al., 2025). The approach requires active student engagement in meaningful learning experiences. This is realized through differentiated instruction, which accommodates diverse student abilities (Darius et al., 2025; Fadil & Nurulpaik, 2026). This shift also redefines the role of teachers. Teachers are no longer the primary source of information but act as facilitators of learning (Digna et al., 2023; Syamsidar et al., 2025). As a result, learning becomes more adaptive and humanistic.

Curriculum implementation is not limited to changes in formal documents. It also involves actual practices in the classroom. Teachers are required to translate learning outcomes into operational plans (Edgerton & Desimone, 2018; Kusumawati et al., 2025). This process includes developing teaching modules, selecting appropriate strategies, and designing assessments that align with students' characteristics. In practice, implementation varies across schools. These differences are influenced by teachers' understanding and the readiness of supporting systems (Gouëdard et al., 2020; Wildan et al., 2026). In addition, constraints such as limited time and teacher competence affect the quality of implementation (Buabeng & Amo-Darko, 2025). This indicates a gap between curriculum design and classroom practice (Pak et al., 2020).

Opportunities for Contextual Learning Development

The Merdeka Curriculum provides opportunities for developing contextual learning. Learning materials are connected to real-life situations to enhance student understanding. This approach strengthens the relationship between knowledge and learning experiences (Faridah et al., 2025; Pertiwi et al., 2024). Students do not merely receive information but construct understanding through relevant and meaningful activities. This aligns with constructivist principles that emphasize active knowledge construction (Pertiwi et al., 2024). Contextual learning also supports the development of twenty-first-century skills, including critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity (Fachrin, 2025; Ndiung & Menggo, 2024). As a result, learning becomes more meaningful and applicable.

One form of contextual learning implementation is project-based learning. This model encourages students to explore problems collaboratively and actively (Amroni et al., 2024; Aryani et al., 2025). In addition, the surrounding environment can be used as an authentic learning resource. This supports experiential and contextual learning processes (Faridah et al., 2025). Project-based learning has been shown to improve student motivation, critical thinking, and learning outcomes (Taufik et al., 2025; Wahyudi et al., 2024). However, its implementation requires careful planning. Teachers need to ensure alignment between learning objectives, activities, and assessment to achieve effective learning outcomes (Kusumawati et al., 2025). With proper planning, learning can be conducted effectively and systematically.

Challenges in Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum

Curriculum reform has implications for human resource readiness. Teachers are required to understand new concepts within a relatively short time (Kusumawati et al., 2025; Sutinah et al., 2024). Not all teachers have experience in implementing differentiated or project-based learning. This affects the variation in implementation quality across classrooms (Darius et al., 2025; Koela et al., 2026). In addition, limited training opportunities influence teachers' readiness to adapt to curriculum changes (Zulaiha, 2025). These conditions indicate that teacher competence is a key factor in successful curriculum implementation (Rapisa et al., 2026).

Another influencing factor is the availability of facilities and infrastructure. Varied learning approaches require adequate support resources (Ariesanti et al., 2023; Gouëdard et al., 2020). On the other hand, students also need to adapt to more independent learning patterns. This process is not always smooth due to differences in ability and background (Heryanti et al., 2023). These conditions create challenges in classroom implementation. Limited resources and unequal readiness often hinder effective practice (Koela et al., 2026). As a result, a gap remains between curriculum concepts and actual practice (Pak et al., 2020). This highlights the importance of systemic support in curriculum implementation.

The Role of Collaboration in Successful Implementation

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum involves multiple stakeholders within the educational setting. Teachers are responsible for designing and delivering instruction. School principals oversee management and implementation processes (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Leithwood et al., 2020). Parents also play a role in supporting learning at home. Their involvement contributes positively to students' academic outcomes (Boonk et al., 2018; Sumar et al., 2025). Interactions among these stakeholders create a supportive educational ecosystem. Effective collaboration can enhance the success of curriculum implementation (Gouédard et al., 2020).

However, weak collaboration can hinder curriculum implementation. Limited communication often leads to differences in understanding among stakeholders (Rogers et al., 2019). Institutional support also affects the sustainability of educational programs (Viennet & Pont, 2017). In addition, low parental involvement may negatively impact the learning process (Boonk et al., 2018). These conditions highlight the importance of continuous coordination. Synergy among stakeholders is essential for successful curriculum implementation (Gouédard et al., 2020).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design. This design was selected because the study focuses on an in-depth examination of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum within a specific elementary school context. A case study allows the researcher to understand processes, dynamics, and interactions holistically (Putri et al., 2025; Yin, 2018). This approach is appropriate for exploring how curriculum policy is translated into classroom practices at the school level.

The case study design also enables a contextual analysis of the phenomenon. Curriculum implementation cannot be separated from the school environment, teacher characteristics, and student readiness. Therefore, this design supports the research objective, which emphasizes the analysis of lesson planning and instructional practices within the Merdeka Curriculum.

Research Sample or Participants

The study was conducted at an elementary school in Palembang that has implemented the Merdeka Curriculum. The site was selected purposively based on its experience in implementing the curriculum and its active engagement in project-based learning. This site was considered representative of curriculum implementation practices at the elementary level.

The participants consisted of a principal, a vice principal, and a fourth-grade teacher. A total of four participants were involved in the interviews. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in curriculum planning and implementation. Their characteristics included teaching experience, involvement in developing instructional materials, and roles in school-level decision-making. The fourth-grade teacher was selected because, at this level, instructional implementation is more structured and reflects the curriculum in practice.

Data Collection

Data were collected through observation and semi-structured interviews. The research instruments included an observation checklist and an interview guide. The observation checklist was used to examine classroom activities, teacher–student interactions, and the application of Merdeka Curriculum principles. The interview guide was designed to gather information on lesson planning, instructional practices, and challenges encountered during implementation.

Instrument validity was ensured through content validation based on relevant indicators of Merdeka Curriculum implementation found in the literature. The instruments were developed systematically to align with the research focus. In addition, the interview questions were open-ended to allow for in-depth data exploration. Data collection was conducted directly in the field to obtain contextual and comprehensive information.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach based on Miles et al. (2014), which includes data display, data reduction, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. In the data display stage, observation results and interview transcripts were organized into categories aligned with the research

focus, such as lesson planning, instructional practices, and implementation challenges. The data were structured systematically to facilitate the identification of patterns and relationships.

In the data reduction stage, relevant information was selected and simplified according to the research objectives. This process involved coding the data and grouping participant responses into thematic categories. Irrelevant or repetitive information was removed to maintain analytical clarity. As a result, the analysis became more focused and aligned with the research questions.

The interpretation stage involved synthesizing and connecting the findings into a coherent narrative. The researcher examined relationships among themes, such as the alignment between planning and instructional practices, as well as factors influencing curriculum implementation. This stage aimed to understand the underlying meanings and contextual factors behind the findings.

The final stage was conclusion drawing, which was based on patterns and relationships identified in the data. Conclusions were developed gradually while referring to the analysis results. To ensure data credibility, triangulation techniques were applied by comparing information from interviews, observations, and field notes. This process ensured the consistency and validity of the research findings.

RESULTS

The findings indicate that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at the elementary school level has been carried out systematically across several stages, including lesson planning, classroom instruction, assessment, and support from the school environment. These findings were obtained through observations, the results of which are presented in Table 1. In addition, the findings were strengthened by interview data from participants directly involved in curriculum implementation.

Table 1 Observation Checklist of Lesson Preparation

No.	Indicator	Yes	No
1	The teacher has a lesson plan (Lesson Plan/Teaching Module)	✓	
2	The plan aligns with students' age and developmental stage	✓	
3	There is a Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project activity	✓	
4	The material focuses on essential skills (literacy, numeracy, character)	✓	

Table 1 presents the results of observations related to lesson preparation before instruction begins. All indicators show that the teacher has developed structured teaching modules or lesson plans that align with students' developmental stages. The planning also integrates the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project. In addition, the learning materials focus on essential competencies, such as literacy, numeracy, and character development.

These findings indicate that lesson planning aligns with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasize simplicity and relevance. Teachers not only prepare instructional materials but also consider students' learning needs. This is supported by interview results, where one teacher stated that *"teaching modules are designed more flexibly, but they still refer to learning outcomes and students' needs in the classroom"*.

Table 2 Observation Checklist of Classroom Instruction

No.	Indicator	Yes	No
1	The teacher provides opportunities for active participation (questions/discussion)	✓	
2	Teaching methods are varied (discussion, practice, games, projects)	✓	
3	Students appear actively engaged in learning	✓	
4	The teacher integrates positive values (cooperation, responsibility, creativity)	✓	
5	The teacher uses appropriate learning media/tools	✓	

Table 2 shows the results of observations during classroom instruction. All indicators are fulfilled, indicating that the learning process is active and varied. Teachers provide opportunities for

students to ask questions, engage in discussions, and participate in various learning activities. The methods used include group discussions, hands-on practice, educational games, and project-based learning.

This condition reflects the implementation of student-centered learning. Students were actively engaged in the learning process, both individually and in groups. In addition, character values such as cooperation, responsibility, and creativity were integrated into learning activities. Interview findings support this result, as a teacher stated that *“students are more confident in expressing their opinions and more active when learning is conducted through project-based and discussion methods”*. Furthermore, teachers utilized instructional media that aligned with students’ needs to enhance their understanding of the material. The results of observations on the assessment process are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Observation Checklist of Assessment

No.	Indicator	Yes	No
1	The teacher assesses the learning process, not only the final result	✓	
2	There is follow-up to assessment (remedial/enrichment)	✓	
3	The Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project activity scores are separate from subject grades	✓	
4	Assessment covers attitudes, skills, and knowledge	✓	

Table 3 presents the results of observations related to assessment practices. The findings indicate that teachers have implemented assessment practices that focus not only on final outcomes but also on the learning process. Assessment is conducted comprehensively, covering attitudes, skills, and knowledge. In addition, follow-up actions such as remedial and enrichment programs are provided based on students’ achievement levels.

These findings suggest that the principles of authentic assessment have been implemented. Assessment of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project is conducted separately from academic assessment. This approach allows character assessment to be carried out more objectively. One participant stated that *“assessment does not only focus on results, but also on the learning process and students’ development”*.

Table 4 Observation Checklist of School Environment

No.	Indicator	Yes	No
1	The school provides learning facilities (books, practical tools, computers, internet)	✓	
2	The learning environment is safe, comfortable, and inclusive	✓	
3	There is support from the principal and other teachers in implementing the curriculum	✓	

Table 4 presents the results of observations related to the school environment as a supporting factor in curriculum implementation. The school provides adequate learning facilities, including textbooks, practical tools, and access to technology. The learning environment is safe and conducive. In addition, there is strong support from the principal and other teachers in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum.

These environmental conditions contribute to the effective implementation of the curriculum. Institutional support is reflected in teacher collaboration and school policies that encourage instructional innovation. Interview results indicate that *“the school provides space for teachers to innovate, including in the use of media and project implementation.”*

Furthermore, based on interview findings, the Merdeka Curriculum began to be implemented in the 2025/2026 academic year. The curriculum emphasizes the development of the Pancasila Student Profile, with a focus on character building and contextual learning. The school adapts the curriculum to

align with students' needs and contextual conditions. A broader overview of curriculum implementation is presented in Figure 1.

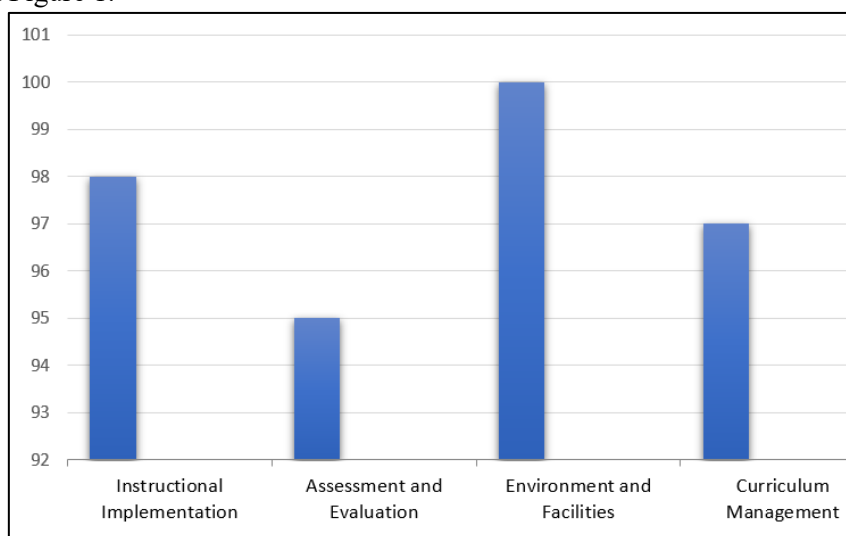


Figure 1. Curriculum Implementation Data Curve

Figure 1 shows that the level of curriculum implementation is in the very high category. The instructional implementation aspect reached 98%, indicating that learning activities were active and student-centered. The assessment aspect reached 95%, indicating that evaluation practices were applied comprehensively. The environment and supporting facilities aspect reached 100%, reflecting optimal support in terms of infrastructure and learning conditions. Meanwhile, the curriculum management aspect reached 97%, indicating systematic and well-organized management.

Overall, the findings indicate that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum has been carried out effectively across multiple aspects. The results demonstrate a strong alignment between planning, implementation, and assessment. However, variations in practice were still observed, particularly in adapting instructional methods and optimizing the use of available resources.

DISCUSSION

The Alignment Between Lesson Planning and Instructional Implementation

The findings indicate that lesson planning has been developed systematically and aligns with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum. The development of flexible, contextual teaching modules that are oriented toward learning outcomes reflects a shift in planning practices. This finding is consistent with the concept of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes simplified planning and flexibility in designing instruction based on students' needs (Azzahra et al., 2025; Kusumawati et al., 2025; Sutinah et al., 2024). This shift also aligns with broader curriculum reform trends that position curriculum as adaptive to social and educational changes, as highlighted in previous studies (Gouëdard et al., 2020). The integration of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project into planning further indicates that character development is not treated as an additional component but as a core element of instructional design.

The alignment between planning and implementation is clearly reflected in classroom practices. Flexible lesson planning enables teachers to apply various strategies that promote active student participation. This finding supports the view that the quality of planning has a direct impact on the effectiveness of instructional implementation (Capah et al., 2025; Ilmawan, 2024). It also confirms prior findings that translating curriculum objectives into operational teaching practices remains a critical stage in successful implementation (Edgerton & Desimone, 2018). In this context, adaptive and well-structured planning serves as a bridge between curriculum policy and classroom practice. Therefore, strengthening teachers' capacity in instructional planning becomes essential to ensure consistency between intended and enacted curriculum.

Student-Centered Learning and Character Development

The implementation of instruction shows that teachers have applied student-centered approaches through various methods, such as discussions, hands-on activities, and project-based learning. Active student engagement reflects a shift from traditional instruction to a constructivist approach. This approach allows students to construct knowledge through direct experience and social interaction (Ardianti & Amalia, 2022; Cahapay, 2020). These findings are consistent with previous studies emphasizing that meaningful learning occurs when students actively engage in constructing their own understanding (Pertiwi et al., 2024). In addition, the use of varied instructional strategies demonstrates the flexibility promoted by the Merdeka Curriculum in accommodating diverse learning needs.

Furthermore, the integration of character values into instruction indicates that the Merdeka Curriculum does not focus solely on cognitive development. Values such as cooperation, responsibility, and creativity are embedded in learning activities. This aligns with the objective of strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile, which emphasizes a balance between academic competence and character formation (Fitriyah & Wardani, 2022; Rahmafritri et al., 2024). The findings also reinforce previous research showing that project-based learning is effective in fostering collaboration, critical thinking, and real-world problem-solving skills (Amroni et al., 2024; Howson & Kingsbury, 2023). In this context, learning becomes not only a process of knowledge acquisition but also a means of developing essential life skills relevant to twenty-first century challenges.

Authentic Assessment and the Role of the Learning Environment

The findings show that assessment has been conducted comprehensively by considering both learning processes and outcomes. Assessment that includes attitudes, skills, and knowledge reflects the implementation of authentic assessment. This approach provides a more holistic view of student development compared to assessments that focus only on outcomes (Cahapay, 2020; Gulikers et al., 2006). These results are in line with previous studies that emphasize the importance of assessment as an integral part of the learning process rather than merely a tool for measuring achievement (Ariesanti et al., 2023). Authentic assessment also enables teachers to evaluate students' competencies in real and continuous contexts, which is essential in competency-based curricula.

In addition, the presence of remedial and enrichment programs indicates that assessment is used as a basis for improving instructional practices. This aligns with the principle of formative assessment, which supports continuous learning improvement. On the other hand, the school environment serves as a key supporting factor in curriculum implementation. The availability of facilities and a conducive learning atmosphere supports effective instruction. Support from the principal and other teachers also strengthens curriculum implementation (Gouédard et al., 2020; Mu'alimin et al., 2026). These findings confirm that successful curriculum implementation depends not only on teachers but also on institutional support systems. This is consistent with previous research highlighting the role of collaborative leadership and stakeholder involvement in improving educational outcomes (Leithwood et al., 2020; Sumar et al., 2025).

Research Implications

The findings of this study provide important implications for both practice and theory. From a practical perspective, the results highlight the need for teachers to design flexible and contextual lesson plans that align with students' needs. Effective planning facilitates the implementation of student-centered learning and ensures alignment with curriculum objectives. In addition, consistent integration of character values throughout the learning process is essential to achieve the goals of the Pancasila Student Profile. These findings reinforce the importance of teacher readiness and professional competence in implementing curriculum reforms (Kusumawati et al., 2025).

From a broader perspective, the study emphasizes that successful curriculum implementation is strongly influenced by the support of the school environment. Collaboration among teachers, school leaders, and other stakeholders is essential to sustain effective practices. Institutional support in the form of policies, infrastructure, and professional development plays a critical role in ensuring implementation quality. Theoretically, this study strengthens the argument that curriculum implementation should be examined through contextual approaches. The use of a case study design provides in-depth insights into real classroom practices and contributes to bridging the gap between

curriculum design and implementation, as highlighted in previous literature (Gouédard et al., 2020; Pak et al., 2020).

CONCLUSION

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at the elementary school level through a case study approach at Padma Jaya Elementary School, Palembang, with a focus on lesson planning and instructional practices. The findings indicate that lesson planning has been developed systematically through the use of flexible teaching modules that align with students' developmental stages. The integration of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project in planning demonstrates that character development has become an essential component of instructional design. In addition, the emphasis on essential competencies, such as literacy and numeracy, reflects alignment with the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum.

In the implementation stage, learning activities were conducted actively and were student-centered. Teachers applied various instructional methods that encouraged student engagement, including discussions, hands-on activities, and project-based learning. Assessment practices adopted an authentic approach by considering both the learning process and outcomes. Support from the school environment, including facilities and collaboration among stakeholders, played a significant role in facilitating successful curriculum implementation. Overall, the findings reveal a strong alignment between planning, implementation, and evaluation in supporting the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.

This study has several limitations. First, the study was conducted in a single school, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Second, the study employed a qualitative approach without quantitative analysis to strengthen the findings statistically. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve a larger number of schools with diverse characteristics and to combine qualitative and quantitative approaches. Such approaches are expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum across different educational contexts.

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