The Paradigm of Progressivism: Strengthening Education in The Era of Merdeka Belajar

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ABSTRAK

Berdasarkan Undang Undang No 20 tahun 2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional disebutkan bahwa pendidikan adalah usaha pendidikan yang dilakukan melalui peningkatan suasana belajar di kelas dan belajar proaktif yang mengedepankan potensi diri, spiritual, pengendalian diri, kepribadian, kecerdasan, akhlak mulia, serta keterampilan yang diperlukan dirinya sendiri, masyarakat sekitar maupun bangsa dan negara. Hingga saat ini kurikulum terbaru baru dapat menjawab UU tersebut yakni pada kurikulum merdeka. Kurikulum merdeka adalah kurikulum yang memberikan kebebasan kepada guru dan sekolah untuk mengembangkan potensi peserta didik secara optimal, sesuai dengan kebutuhan dan minat serta bakat peserta didik, sehingga hal ini sejalan dengan amanat UU tersebut. Ini juga sejalan dengan salah satu paradigma atau filsafat pendidikan yakni paradigma progresivisme. Aliran progresivisme menentang pelaksanaan pendidikan tradisional. Aliran progresif menunjang adanya pelaksanaan pendidikan yang dipusatkan pada partisipan didik serta mengembangkan berbagai kemampuannya sebagai bekal menghadapi kehidupan sosial di lingkungannya. Maksudnya progresivisme merupakan salah satu aliran yang menghendaki suatu kemajuan, yang mana kemajuan ini akan membawa suatu pergantian. Aliran progresivisme sangat menghargai kemampuan seseorang dalam upaya pemecahan permasalahan lewat pengalaman yang dimiliki oleh setiap orang. Metode penelitian yang digunakan pada penelitian ini studi kepustakaan dengan mengumpulkan sumber jurnal, buku maupun artikel terkait, kemudian dilakukan pemahaman, pengolahan dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian ini ditunjukkan bahwa aliran progresivisme sudah memberikan sumbangan yang besar di dunia pendidikan di Indonesia. Aliran ini telah meletakkan dasar-dasar kemerdekaan dan kebebasan kepada anak didik. Siswa diberikan kebebasan, baik secara teori maupun praktik, guna mengembangkan bakat dan keahlian yang terpendam dalam dirinya tanpa terhambat oleh rintangan yang dibuat oleh orang lain.

ABSTRACT

Based on Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, it is stated that education is an educational endeavor carried out through improving the learning atmosphere in the classroom and proactive learning that prioritizes self-potential, spiritual, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills needed by himself, the surrounding community and the nation and state. Until now, the latest curriculum can only answer this law, namely the Merdeka Belajar curriculum. The Merdeka Belajar curriculum is a curriculum that gives freedom to teachers and schools to develop the potential of students optimally, according to the needs and interests and talents of students,

so this is in line with the mandate of the Law. This is also in line with one of the paradigms or philosophies of education, namely the paradigm of progressivism. Progressivism opposes the implementation of traditional education. The progressive school supports the implementation of education that is centered on student participants and develops their various abilities as provisions for facing social life in their environment. This means that progressivism is one of the schools that wants progress, which will bring about a change. Progressivism highly values a person's ability to solve problems through the experiences that everyone has. The research method used in this research is a literature study by collecting sources of journals, books and related articles, then understanding, processing and drawing conclusions. The results of this research show that progressivism has made a major contribution to the world of education in Indonesia. This school has laid the foundations of independence and freedom to students. Students are given freedom, both in theory and practice, to develop talents and skills latent in themselves without being hampered by obstacles made by others.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education serves as a conduit for the attainment of wealth for all humanity. Quality education is indicative of a progressive and contemporary society. Education is a very important part of human life. Learning must be able to provide various kinds of changes for humans (Simatupang & Yuhertiana, 2021). Through education, people can have an understanding of something that makes them a critical human being in thinking and acting. Law No. 20 of 2003 regarding the National Education System defines education as a purposeful and systematic endeavor to cultivate an educational environment and activities that enable students to enhance their capabilities, fostering religious spirituality, self-discipline, character, intellect, ethical values, and the skills essential for themselves, their citizenship, and the nation (Simatupang & Yuhertiana, 2021).

In the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, which prioritizes independent learning, educational institutions are anticipated to possess competitiveness and innovation to ensure they remain relevant. The Merdeka Belajar strategy, introduced by the Minister of Learning, is anticipated to address several issues, particularly concerning the establishment of learning objective orientations. The Merdeka Belajar policy emerges in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and Society 5.0. Educational institutions want to cultivate Human Resources (HR) capable of advancing, enhancing, and actualizing the nation's educational policy principles, including the development of autonomous individuals. Educational institutions must align their learning systems with the advancements of the period (Rokhyani, 2022). The learning system is anticipated to acknowledge that student participants possess critical thinking abilities, problem-solving skills, creativity, innovation, and effective communication and collaboration capabilities (Supriyadi, 2021).

The Merdeka Belajar idea addresses the requirements of the educational system in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Nadiem Makarim stated that Merdeka Belajar represents intellectual freedom (Mustaghfiroh, 2020). It is an effort that is given to each learning unit to be free to carry out innovations, of course, adjusted according to the area of each education unit as an open learning process from home that can later provide learning experiences without being demanded by completeness standards or graduation standards. This is what the implementation of Merdeka Belajar is all about (Purba, 2022).

Learners are not just instructed in material that they are supposed to memorize and recollect when prompted; rather, they are trained to think critically in a manner that is non-conformist and unrestricted. The purpose of educators who teach as a practice of freedom is not just to provide knowledge to students, but also to participate in the intellectual and spiritual development of their students (Surahman et al., 2022). Teachers who teach as a practice of freedom teach not just to communicate information with their students, but also to involve themselves in the intellectual and spiritual development of their students.

The curriculum under Merdeka Belajar is intended to help students catch up in terms of reading and numeracy. Merdeka Curriculum, there are three different decision alternatives that learning units can choose from in order to apply the Merdeka Belajar curriculum during the 2022/2023 school year. To start, the application of some of the ideas that are included in the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, while at the same time not totally removing the previous curriculum. In the second place, there is the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum through the utilization of pre-prepared instructional materials. The third priority is the adoption of a Merdeka Belajar curriculum, which includes the autonomous development of a variety of instructional components (Priantini et al., 2022).

Through the mastery and application of the methods of the progressivism school of learning philosophy, as well as in conjunction with the "merdeka belajar" policy breakthrough that has been initiated by the Minister of Education and Culture Nadiem Makarim, it is hoped that the educational system in Indonesia will have a distinct path and objective. In addition, the education system in Indonesia will be more sophisticated, of a higher quality, and in accordance with the aspirations of the entire Indonesian population, as well as in accordance with what has been prescribed by the Constitution of 1945 (Mustaghfiroh, 2020).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Progressivism Paradigm

The term "progressivism" originates from the word "progressive," which indicates that those who belong to this ideology always make an attempt to continue to enhance and advance their own development. This paradigm sees students as individuals with potential background abilities that must be developed through creative and innovative ways (Yudianto & Fauziati, 2021). The curriculum used will be centered on real-life problems and contexts, flexible and adaptable to learners' needs, and integrate various disciplines. Learning methods are diverse and creative, such as projects, discussions and experiments, encouraging collaboration and cooperation, and utilizing technology to support learning. According to Sulistyaningsih (2023) the progressive educational philosophy places an emphasis on the implementation of learner-centered education and the role of the teacher as a facilitator in the classroom. The educational paradigm known as progressivism places an emphasis on the growth of the individual, learning by experience, and the active role of the teacher as a facilitator. The goal of this paradigm is to cultivate individuals who are prepared for the future and possess abilities in critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving. In light of this, it is possible to draw the conclusion that this paradigm places a high priority on the potential and capabilities of students and promotes inclusive learning for them.

2.2 Merdeka Belajar Curriculum

Students' needs and interests will be taken into consideration when designing the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, which is a framework that allows for flexibility in student learning demands. As a result of this curriculum, the instructor is regarded as a facilitator and a companion in the learning process (Anggraini et al., 2022). Learning is no longer fixated on textbooks, but rather focuses on real experiences and the application of knowledge in everyday life. The primary principles established in the learning process are creativity, independence, and mutual cooperation. The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture's notion of independent learning aims to realign the national education system with legal foundations, granting schools autonomy in interpreting the fundamental competences of the curriculum for their assessments (Rahayu et al., 2022). The Merdeka Belajar Curriculum is not a fixed framework, but rather a guideline that may be tailored to diverse settings. The objective is to cultivate a new generation endowed with robust character, critical thinking skills, and problem-solving capabilities for the future. It may be inferred that the Merdeka Belajar curriculum will provide teachers the autonomy to enable learners to develop their abilities, potential, interests, and talents.

3. METHOD

The employed methodology is literature study research. This research employs a qualitative descriptive methodology utilizing a literature review approach, exploring theoretical frameworks and expert perspectives while sourcing literature from diverse media, including books and research journals. The acquired data is subsequently presented for analysis to derive conclusions and address the research questions (Nuha et al., 2023; Rahmah & Aly, 2023).

Steps in library research in Abadi et al. (2023) the methodologies employed in the study, including the delineation of the principal notion of the research problem, Requesting information that validates the subject. Identifying the central focus of the investigation, Identifying and classifying the requisite reading resources. Engaging in reading and synthesizing research notes. Assessing and improving reading materials, reclassifying them, and initiating writing.

Researchers acquire data from many journals, research articles, books, and other electronic resources that align with the study's objective. The data gathering method employed in this study is documentation, namely by sourcing information from notes, books, papers, articles, journals, and similar materials (Azizah & Purwoko, 2019).

The analytical method employed by researchers is content analysis. Content analysis methodology in (Sabarrudin et al., 2022) a researcher formulates and employs a systematic methodology to derive a reliable conclusion utilizing sources from books or records. In summary, it serves as an effective instrument for deriving findings by identifying the attributes of communications through a rigorous and methodical analytical procedure.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Progressivism Paradigm

Progressivism derives from the term progressive, signifying advancement. The term progressivism is frequently linked to the concept of progress. This indicates that progressivism is a philosophical framework advocating for advancement, wherein such progress will engender transformation (Fadlillah, 2017). Learning progressivism can be tried with reconstruction or reorganization of experience, which means increasing the meaning of experience from the first to make after that you can improve the next skill (Soedardi, 2019). The philosophy of progressivism also has 2 other very basic characteristics in order to obtain this change, including: 1). Negative character, in the sense that progressivism rejects authoritarianism and absolutism in all forms, such

as in religion, politics, ethics and epistemology. 2). Positive character, in the sense that progressivism harbors a belief in the natural powers of man, the powers inherited by man from his birth-man's natural powers (Salu, 2017). For progressivism, everything is forward-looking. All that is behind is a record that is useful for learning and if needed can be displayed again at the present time (Mualifah, 2013). Progressivism constitutes one of the paradigms within contemporary educational philosophy. Progressivism is an educational philosophy advocating for swift transformations in learning methodologies aimed at constructive outcomes. Education must facilitate the transformation of pupils into resilient persons capable of confronting diverse challenges and adapting to communal social life.

Consequently, progressivism necessitates addressing issues within the learning process (Fadlillah, 2017). The primary tenets of John Dewey's progressivism include: 1) Experiential Learning. John Dewey's Experiential Learning approach is a fundamental component of the progressivism paradigm in education. This concept underscores the significance of authentic experience as the primary foundation of education and student characterization. Dewey posits that pupils will more effectively grasp concepts and derive inspiration when they engage in tangible experiences connected to their everyday contexts. 2). Engaged and Participatory Learning. John Dewey's concept of Active and Interactive Learning is a crucial component of the progressivism paradigm in education. This concept underscores that students need not to be only passive recipients of information from educators, but rather engage actively in the learning process.

Dewey believed that students better master and internalize concepts when they participate in direct interaction with educational modules and the immediate area. Progressivism theory emphasizes the importance of students' active role in education. Students are given the space to raise issues, design projects, and participate in dialog and collaborative activities. Interaction between students and teachers is also considered important to facilitate the learning process. 3). Contextual Education. Contextual Education espoused by John Dewey is a learning approach that emphasizes the meaning of the connection between educational modules and the context of students' daily lives. Dewey commented that education should be relevant to students' real-life experiences and settings. This contextual education approach shares significant effects on student motivation and description. By seeing the instant value of what they learn, students are more likely to feel motivated and engaged in the educational process.

Moreover 4). Education for Personal Advancement. The notion of "Learning for Individual Development," introduced by John Dewey, is a significant aspect of progressivist educational philosophy. It emphasizes that education encompasses not just the acquisition of academic knowledge but also the cultivation of personality, ethical principles, and other personal attributes that contribute to a well-rounded individual. It additionally fosters the cultivation of autonomous reasoning abilities and accountable decision-making. Students are urged to contemplate, consider the consequences of their acts, and undertake measures that align with their ideals. Subsequently 5) Problem-Based Learning. Problem-Based Learning, linked to John Dewey, is an educational framework that aligns closely with the tenets of progressivism in education. Problem-based learning cultivates both academic competencies and social skills, as well as fostering independence. Students acquire the ability to collaborate with peers, distribute responsibilities, and engage in discourse to achieve optimal solutions. 6). Development of Critical Skills. Critical Skill Development is a fundamental component of the learning process articulated by John Dewey.

Dewey posited that education should not merely provide factual knowledge, but also cultivate robust critical and analytical thinking skills in students. This concept aligns with the progressive approach, which prioritizes comprehensive description and practical application of concepts in real-world contexts. This theory underscores the importance of enhancing critical, analytical, and evaluative thinking abilities. Students are urged to interrogate evidence, reason, and make judgments grounded in logical reasoning (Jome, 2023). The principles of learning at the

progressive school are as follows (Mustaghfiroh, 2020). Students must possess autonomy and develop naturally. Practical experience is the most effective catalyst for learning. Educators must possess the ability to provide guidance and serve as effective facilitators. Educational institutions should serve as experimental environments for transforming students. Learning activities at educational institutions and at home should be collaborative.

4.2 Education Curriculum in the Era of Merdeka Belajar

Students must exhibit autonomy and evolve organically. Practical experience serves as the most potent accelerator for learning. Educators must have the capacity to offer direction and act as proficient facilitators. Educational institutions ought to function as experimental settings for the transformation of pupils. Educational activities in institutions and at home ought to be collaborative. According to Nasution in Mawati et al. (2023) A curriculum must consistently be revised and enhanced to address the demands and problems of each era; nevertheless, it is also shaped by other elements, including research on the utilization of technology that remains underutilized. Indonesia is presently undergoing a transformation in its education curriculum, emphasizing the necessity for student assessment (Vhalery et al., 2022). This achievement is derived from the word Merdeka Belajar itself, which signifies freedom in independent thinking and choosing according to the needs of each individual (Kardiyem et al., 2023; Siregar et al., 2020).

The fundamental principle of freedom of thought must be instilled and imparted to potential educators or current educators from the outset. The autonomy of educators will impact their commitment to achieving educational objectives, specifically in cultivating pupils who are exceptional, creative, collaborative, inventive, and participatory in the future (Daga, 2022). The underlying theme of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum is the industrial revolution 4.0 which is related to how teachers' efforts to instill lifelong learners in students. So the main point or common thread of Merdeka Belajar is to explore or explore the best of teachers and learners to innovate and improve the quality of learning that characterizes them (Daga, 2022).

Nonetheless, the transition from the thirteen curriculum to the independent curriculum presents several challenges. Firstly, implementation pertains to the direct application within educational institutions, necessitating adaptation by both educators and students. Secondly, teacher preparedness is crucial, as instructors require comprehensive understanding, training, and intensive learning regarding the characteristics of the independent curriculum and the skills necessary for facilitating a non-directive learning environment. Thirdly, the availability of high-quality teaching and learning materials, such as textbooks and modules aligned with the independent curriculum, is essential. Fourthly, effective evaluation and assessment of student progress must be established. Lastly, active parental involvement in their child's education is imperative (Setioyuliani & Andaryani, 2023). The significance of Merdeka Education is no longer confined to extensive teacher-led explanations; it instead emphasizes cultivating students' critical reasoning, analytical thinking, career selection, accountability, and active participation in the learning process. Learners will henceforth be regarded as the primary subjects of the educational process rather than mere objects (Rodiyah, 2021). Education plays a significant part in educating and cultivating Human Resources (HR) who are proficient and capable of competing on a global scale.

The fundamental vision and mission of the autonomous curriculum is a directive articulated by Ki Hadjar Dewantara, the progenitor of Indonesian education. He asserts that the Pancasila learner profile, which emphasizes character and the competences essential for contemporary society, should be introduced to pupils at an early age. The five major ideals of enhancing character education are religiosity, nationalism, independence, mutual collaboration, and integrity. The term "student" in the Pancasila student profile signifies persons who engage in active, lifelong learning without recognizing a definitive conclusion to the educational process (Irawati et al., 2022).

4.3 Curriculum Strengthening Viewed form the Progressivism Paradigm

The view of educational progressivism is a means or equipment that is prepared to develop the ability of students to survive all the challenges of life that will instantly progress (Fadlillah, 2017). The ideology of progressivism seeks to ensure that individuals evolve in tandem with their environment and the ever-changing dynamics of societal advancement (Aristyasari, 2019). Progressivism regarding the Merdeka Belajar curriculum is predicated on the notion that students possess inherent advantages over others. Progressivism advocates for the notion of flexibility to enhance education. Progressivism aims to enhance education using adaptable ideas (Ramadani & Desyandri, 2022).

The novel Philosophical Alternatives in Education asserts that progressive learning highlights many key issues: Progressive education should empower students to evolve organically through activities that foster initiative, creativity, and self-expression. All forms of instruction must engage the child's attention, which is elicited through interaction with the real world. The progressive educator serves as the child's guide, facilitating the research activity rather than instructing or assigning chores. Students' accomplishments are evaluated based on cognitive, physical, ethical, and social development. Collaboration among the teacher, school, home, and the child's family is essential to address the requirements of children during their developmental and growth stages. The progressive school functions as a laboratory for innovative educational concepts and practices (Fadlillah, 2017).

The educational process in progressivism learning can at least accommodate some of the following issues, among others: 1). Teachers design education that arouses students' attention and curiosity. Every education in the implementation of the philosophy of progressivism strives towards education that always opens up space for students to think in search of new discoveries. 2). Not only reading novels, students are also required to be in contact with nature, for example through field work or hiking. 3). Teachers arouse students' attention through games that challenge students to think. 4). Students are encouraged to connect with others in order to build social descriptions. 5). The curriculum emphasizes nature research and students are exposed to new scientific and social developments. 6). Learning as a process that continuously enriches students to develop, not merely preparing students for old age (Salu, 2017). The concept of Merdeka Belajar education with progressivism education is Woenardi et al. (2022): 1). Learner-centered (child-centered). Active students are the pupils that are engaged in the learning process. 3). Social class of a broader category. 4). Concentrate on resolving issues This stage follows a pragmatic emphasis on experience and problem-solving epistemology. 5). Collaborative and democratic formation of the educational institution (Woenardi et al., 2022).

5. CONCLUSION

Progressivism derives from the term progressive, signifying advancement. The term progressivism is frequently linked to the concept of progress. Educational progressivism is a framework designed to enhance students' capacity to navigate the continual challenges of their lives. Progressive education should provide students the autonomy to evolve and mature organically through activities that foster initiative, creativity, and self-expression. Progressivism advocates for the notion of flexibility to enhance learning. Progressivism aims to enhance education using adaptable ideas.

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