



Perceptions of Class XII Students at SMA Negeri 1 Teras Boyolali Towards Arts and Culture Subjects in the Merdeka Curriculum

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ABSTRACT

The demands of the current era encourage the world of education to become more innovative. Implementing an independent curriculum is one form of implementation and answer to these challenges. However, the use of the merdeka curriculum that occurred in 2021 invited many types of opinions, one of which was from students. This research aims to describe the perceptions of class 12 students at SMA Negeri 1 Teras Boyolali towards arts and culture subjects in the context of the Independent Curriculum. The research method used is qualitative, with a focus on the interpretation of social phenomena based on interview data, observation and documentation. The research results show that students' enthusiasm for learning in arts and culture subjects varies, influenced by internal and external factors such as art experience, views on the relevance of the subject, and teachers' teaching methods. The implementation of the Independent Curriculum provides new opportunities for arts and culture learning experiences, but also gives rise to diverse opinions about its relevance in the modern era. The role of teachers as facilitators in developing students' interests and talents is recognized as important, but the Pancasila Student Profile program also raises questions about the relevance of arts and culture subjects. In conclusion, students' opinions about arts and culture subjects in the Independent Curriculum are influenced by various factors, and this understanding can make an important contribution to future curriculum development.

1. Introduction

Education is a very important aspect in the life of a nation. Education in Indonesia is considered a human right that must be given to every citizen without exception. This has been regulated in the UUD 1945 in Pasal 31 point 1 and 2 which states that every citizen has the right to education. Education in Indonesia is also regulated in Undang Undang Number 20 of 2003 point 1 and 2 which discuss the basis, function, purpose, and principles in education. This law becomes the legal basis that regulates the education system in Indonesia, from basic to higher levels. In its implementation, education in Indonesia is based on a guideline called the curriculum (Aringka, 2023). The curriculum is a learning plan that contains competency standards and basic competencies that must be achieved by students. This curriculum continues to develop and adjust to the needs and demands of the times

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(Komala & Nugraha, 2022). Curriculum changes are made to ensure that the education given to students is relevant to the development of science and technology and community needs.

There are several public views on the curriculum in education, including traditional and modern curriculum (Saefurrohman, 2023). According to Rosmilawati et al. (2023) the traditional curriculum, often known as content-based curriculum, usually limits the curriculum as a set of lessons or subjects studied by students at school. In this view, the curriculum is considered as a rigid and static structure, consisting of a series of topics or materials that students must learn within a certain period of time. This traditional view distinguishes between curriculum activities, curriculum participation activities, and extracurricular activities. The traditional view of the curriculum gives the impression that taking lessons at school is only limited to studying textbooks as learning materials. The teaching and learning process tends to be one-way, from teacher to student, and student performance assessment usually focuses on how far they can remember and reproduce information from textbooks.

Meanwhile, the modern curriculum has a broader and more holistic view of what is included in the curriculum. In this view, the curriculum is not only limited to the subject matter taught in class, but also includes all learning experiences experienced by students. This means that various activities and social activities, whether they are carried out with peers, teachers, school officials, or the community outside of school, are all considered part of the curriculum. Interaction with the environment, whether physical or social, is also considered part of the learning experience and is therefore included in the modern curriculum. Likewise, learning experiences outside of school, such as visits to museums, parks, or local businesses, can provide valuable insight into the world outside the classroom and help students make connections between what they learn at school and real life (Kamila & Agus, 2023).

Thus, schools that implement a modern curriculum can be seen as a forum for students, teachers and school officials to carry out small simulations of social life. At school, students learn how to interact with other people, how to work together in teams, how to respect differences, and how to be responsible citizens. Teachers and school officials also play an important role in creating a supportive and stimulating learning environment, where every student is given the opportunity to grow and develop.

The education curriculum in Indonesia has undergone several changes and revisions according to educational conditions and the urgency of the curriculum itself (Rosmilawati et al, 2023). Several significant changes that have occurred in the curriculum in Indonesia include the implementation of the 2004 curriculum, the 2006 curriculum or KTSP, the 2013 or K-13 curriculum, until now the implementation of the independent curriculum (Rahmadayanti & Hartoyo, 2022). Before 2004, the development of curriculum ideas and documents was carried out by experts, while the implementation of the curriculum was carried out by teachers and teaching staff at schools. After 2004, the development of ideas was still carried out by a number of experts, but the development of documents and their implementation were left to the teaching staff at schools. This shows that the curriculum has changed and adapted to the times. The flexibility of the education curriculum in Indonesia after 2004 seems more flexible and provides teachers with the opportunity to develop learning activities in accordance with curriculum guidelines so that learning activities have the same essence and main objectives even though they have different approaches.

Curriculum adjustments also occurred in the 2013 or K-13 curriculum, where learning focuses on student competencies which are divided into attitudes, knowledge and skills. The implementation of this curriculum seems less relevant and too rigid in 2020 which is full of technology and globalization in various aspects of life so that the curriculum has developed into an independent curriculum which gives students the freedom to get the widest learning experience according to their talents and interests (Weda et al, 2023).

The Merdeka Curriculum is a new approach to education in Indonesia which aims to increase the relevance, inclusiveness and competitiveness of students. In Indonesia, there are significant gaps in the quality of learning between regions and socio-economic groups. PISA (Program for International Student Assessment) shows that 70% of 15 year old students in Indonesia are below the minimum competency level in reading comprehension and basic mathematics (Muhammad Rafi Zidan & Zaitun Qamariah, 2023). To overcome this problem, the Ministry of Education and Culture developed the Merdeka Curriculum as a more flexible curriculum framework with a focus on core content and developing student character and competencies. The principles of the Independent Curriculum include the following:

- a. Learning design is based on student development stages and achievements. This principle emphasizes the need to understand students' developmental stages and abilities in designing appropriate learning.
- b. Building lifelong learning capacity. The Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes the importance of developing students' abilities to continue learning throughout their lives.
- c. Supports holistic competency and character development. This principle emphasizes the importance of developing students' overall competence and character.
- d. Designing relevant learning based on context and culture. The Merdeka Curriculum teaches learning that is relevant to local situations and culture.
- e. Focus on sustainable future-oriented learning. This principle emphasizes the importance of developing learning that is relevant to a sustainable future (Harahap et al., 2023).

The five principles that have been described should be implemented effectively in the learning process in every educational unit. The school has full authority to develop and manage the curriculum and learning process, which is adapted to the special characteristics of the educational unit and the needs of students (Shofiyuddin et al., 2017). The Indonesian government has also prepared Decree of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology Number 56/M/2022 which is a guide and provisions for implementing the Independent Curriculum.

The current implementation of the independent curriculum is the government's effort to improve the quality of education in this modern era. The principles and objectives of the independent curriculum are also in accordance with the modern curriculum view which considers that all learning experiences are included in the curriculum. This allows students to get learning outside the classroom, even outside school. The opportunity and freedom to explore each other's personal interests and talents is the main goal in the independent curriculum. The flexibility offered by this curriculum is an answer to the challenges of the times which are always dynamic and changing. Character education and the formation of a Pancasila Student Profile are also the main goals of the independent curriculum in forming a young generation based on Pancasila values (Ingias et al., 2022). Aringka (2023) state that this curriculum still has weaknesses in its implementation and implementation in the field and its structure is still unclear. The implementation of the independent curriculum after the Covid-19 pandemic has made teaching staff and students experience difficulties due to limited space and are still 'shocked' by the drastic changes in education even though the aim of this curriculum is to catch up with Indonesia itself. Apart from that, this curriculum does not yet have a clear structure and requires readiness both in terms of human resources and facilities.

The independent curriculum is applied to all subjects, including arts and culture subjects. Arts and culture have an important contribution in producing an educated young generation. Even though it is often considered trivial, both among the teaching staff themselves and among students, this subject has played an important role since the beginning of the development of education and the curriculum in Indonesia until the time this article was written, namely when the implementation of the independent curriculum has been implemented in almost all Indonesian schools (Husaeni &

Sukmayadi, 2023). The main role in arts and culture education is to teach the values of good behavior and character to students. Art education can process children's emotions because there are various activities that support it, such as creating, exploring and expressing oneself, as well as appreciating works of various shapes and types. This shows how important subjects are in formal education.

Curriculum changes, especially the implementation of the independent curriculum, have had a significant impact on the relevance and importance of arts and culture subjects. This subject has an important role in shaping student's character and identity, as well as giving them a deeper understanding of culture and art. Responses and opinions from various groups, including students, are very important in curriculum evaluation and development. Students' perceptions of what they learn can provide valuable insight into the effectiveness and relevance of the material being taught (Korompot et al., 2020).

This research aims to describe students' perceptions of arts and culture subjects in the context of the independent curriculum. The focus of this research is grade 12 students at SMA Negeri 1 Teras Boyolali, one of the schools that has implemented the independent curriculum. The selection of grade 12 students as research subjects was based on the fact that they were the last generation to use the K-13 curriculum and had experienced a transition to an independent curriculum. These unique circumstances make this research highly relevant and important. Through this research, we can understand more about how students perceive and respond to changes in the curriculum, especially in the context of arts and culture subjects. It is hoped that the results of this research can provide a valuable contribution to curriculum development and improvement in the future.

2. Methodology

In this research, the author uses a qualitative research method which focuses on explaining a phenomenon based on data interpretation from interview data, observation and documentation. The basic concept of qualitative research is understanding and describing the views of a group or individual towards a social phenomenon (Sugiyono, 2017). The basic steps in qualitative research include the process of asking questions according to procedures, collecting specific data from participants, analyzing the data results inductively from specific to general, and reinterpreting the meaning of the data collected. The use of qualitative research methods is a suitable method to use in this research because this research talks about social phenomena, namely the relevance and role of arts and culture subjects in the independent curriculum from the perspective of class 12 students at SMA Negeri 1 Teras Boyolali.

This research uses a qualitative approach, which focuses on explaining and interpreting social phenomena based on data obtained from interviews, observation and documentation. This approach allows researchers to understand and describe the views and perceptions of individuals or groups towards certain social phenomena. The social phenomenon studied is the relevance and role of arts and culture subjects in the independent curriculum. The research subjects were grade 12 students at SMA Negeri 1 Teras Boyolali, who had a unique experience in the transition from the K-13 curriculum to the independent curriculum.

The research process involves several basic steps. First, researchers ask research questions designed to elicit specific information from participants. This question was prepared in accordance with qualitative research procedures and was aimed at understanding participants' perceptions about arts and culture subjects in the context of the independent curriculum. Second, researchers collect data from participants. This data can be in the form of interview transcripts, observation notes, or relevant documents. This data is then analyzed inductively, namely by looking for patterns and themes that emerge from the data and generalizing them to a wider context. Third, the researcher reinterprets the meaning of the data collected. This involves critical reflection on the

findings and their interpretation in the context of previous theory and research.

3. Results

SMA Negeri 1 Teras Boyolali is a senior secondary education institution located on Jl. Sudimoro - Terrace, KM. 2, Etc. Sudimoro, District. Terrace, Kab. Boyolali, Boyolali 57363. This school is under the auspices of the central government and is an integral part of the education system in Central Java Province. SMAN Negeri 1 Teras Boyolali has adequate facilities to support the teaching and learning process. Some of these facilities include classrooms, laboratories, libraries and sanitation facilities. This school has a good reputation in the academic field. This is proven by the UTBK score reaching 517.514 and successfully entering the 850th national ranking and 176th provincial ranking in 2023. This achievement shows the school's commitment to providing quality education to its students. With 54 teachers and 1004 students, SMA Negeri 1 Teras Boyolali is committed to creating a conducive and inclusive learning environment for all its students.

SMA Negeri 1 Teras Boyolali has A accreditation with a total of 30 classes which are divided into 10 classes for class X, 10 classes for class XI, and 10 classes for class XII. In this research, the author carried out an introduction to the school environment (PLP) activity and got the opportunity to teach arts and culture learning in class XII, specifically in class XII IPS 5 and Arts and culture learning activities take place, there are many phenomena related to students' perceptions of the relevance of arts and culture subjects and their implementation in the independent curriculum, ranging from enthusiasm and enthusiasm in learning, assignments, to personal opinions from both individuals and groups.

The first aspect that researchers can observe directly is the student's enthusiasm for learning and motives. Motive is any force that encourages you to do something. Enthusiasm or motivation to learn is anything that influences or moves students to participate in learning activities, both from the students themselves and from external factors (Jaya, 2018). From the results of observations, it was found that grade 12 students had various motivations and enthusiasm for learning, both positive and negative. This enthusiasm for learning is also one of the factors that influences students' perceptions of arts and culture subjects in the independent curriculum.

Grade 12 students' enthusiasm for learning arts and culture shows positive and negative characteristics. The enthusiasm for learning is shown by the intensity of performance in carrying out tasks. This is in line with the results of assessing students' knowledge competency which is directly proportional to their enthusiasm for learning. The intensity of learning quality, such as accuracy in collecting assignments, students' results and efforts in making assignments, as well as activeness in learning are things that can be observed directly. The enthusiasm for learning is also marked by the attitude of students who pay attention to the teacher during learning. Apart from that, there are also several students who want to be actively involved in discussions with the teacher regarding the material presented by the teacher accompanied by active and conducive classroom conditions during learning activities. However, there are also some students who lack motivation and enthusiasm for learning. This can be seen from the behavior of students who tend to be passive when discussing and do not pay good attention to learning. Apart from that, this can also be seen from absenteeism where students who have low learning motivation tend to be absent and absent during learning.

There are several factors that influence students' enthusiasm for learning. According to (Purnawanto, 2022), these factors are divided into two, namely internal factors and external factors. Internal factors relate to the individual's perception of the lesson being taught. From the results of interviews and discussions with students, there are various opinions regarding the position of arts

and culture subjects, especially their implementation in the K-13 curriculum or the independent curriculum (Wiguna & Tristaningrat, 2022). Some students think that arts and culture are an important subject because they can be a means of self-development and expression. Art experience is also a factor that influences how important art subjects are in life. For example, students who like art or come from families who understand art consider arts and culture to be a subject that is still relevant today. Some students argue that its implementation in K-13 limits the room for arts subjects to develop because most of them are only oriented towards the end result of learning. With the implementation of the independent curriculum, arts and culture subjects are not limited to learning that focuses on basic educational competencies, but provide opportunities for students and teachers to gain learning experiences that suit their respective interests and talents.

Meanwhile, some students think that arts and culture are less relevant to current developments. The application of artistic knowledge is considered not to have a big contribution in preparing the nation's next generation. Moreover, due to the era of globalization which is full of technological advances and wide access to various things on the internet. This shows that the most needed competency nowadays is the ability to compete with other parties in the realm of technology and information. Its implementation in the independent curriculum makes it seem like a waste of students' opportunity to develop themselves properly.

External factors also influence students' perceptions of learning. A conducive learning environment and good learning behavior from teachers have a direct influence on the comfort and conduciveness of learning activities. Therefore, these factors, both internal and external to students, which influence students' opinions and learning motivation are proof of the advantages and disadvantages of implementing arts and culture lessons in this independent curriculum. The independent curriculum opens up opportunities for new learning experiences for arts education that are in line with the role of arts and culture subjects to form individuals who have artistic, creative, natural and emotional intelligence (Azis & Lubis, 2023). However, its relevance in modern times has decreased due to the position of performance capabilities and competition which are the main priorities in this era of globalization.

Motivation to learn is important, especially for students as active actors in learning. Several points about the importance of learning motivation for students include making students aware of their position in learning, informing them of their learning strengths with their peers, directing learning activities in a more serious direction, raising enthusiasm for learning, and making them aware of the learning process before work. Motivation in learning is an important aspect for students to achieve the desired educational competencies. In this way, educational goals can be achieved and produce a quality generation that can compete in the international arena. Motivation for learning has actually become a classic problem that often occurs in the realm of education, so the implementation of an independent curriculum is one effort to overcome this problem.

Teaching methods or methods and the role of teachers in the independent curriculum also play an important role in students' perceptions of arts and culture subjects (Nurqaidah & Hendra, 2020). At SMA Negeri 1 Teras Boyolali, arts and culture teachers use the lecture method, namely delivering material directly through verbal communication to students. The lecture method can generally be interpreted as learning in which the teacher reads and dictates learning using books to students. This method is a common and easy to use learning method, so it is often used by teachers as the main method in learning. The use of this method invited several student opinions which were divided into two, namely students who agreed that this learning method made arts and culture subjects still relevant in the independent curriculum and students who did not agree with the application of the lecture method in arts and culture learning which made it less relevant in the new curriculum. This.

The use of the lecture method in arts and culture subjects is considered quite important for students as the main provision in learning arts (Nurchahyo, 2020). According to several students, basic competencies need to be conveyed briefly by the teacher first to equip students with core abilities in the steps of implementing or practicing art in the field. However, there is also a perception of students who consider the lecture learning method to be boring. They prefer to practice directly to gain artistic experience rather than learning basic competencies first. This is because some students think that these basic competencies will be learned by themselves along with the field activities carried out. The independent curriculum itself makes learning experiences the main point in the implementation of education so that the lecture method is considered less relevant to be applied in arts and culture learning in the independent curriculum.

The main role of a teacher in independent curriculum learning is as a facilitator for students to develop their interests and talents. Teachers are not only required to be flexible and able to adapt to current developments so that their students are not left behind, but they must also be able to instill good values amidst technological developments which are increasingly easy to use nowadays. Class XII students think that arts and culture subjects have high relevance in the independent curriculum as a means of developing interests and talents. With arts and culture subjects, students can express themselves or develop themselves according to their respective interests and talents, which are then supported by the teacher's role as a facilitator. Even though the implementation of the independent curriculum has not been implemented perfectly, students tend to have a positive view of the role of arts and culture subjects in the independent curriculum as a suggestion to develop interests and talents.

An interesting thing that needs to be studied again is the Pancasila or P5 student profile program. In its implementation, P5 activities are carried out freely in formal conditions, flexibility and learning structure can be adjusted to suit learning time, and increase student activity in interaction (Rohani & Zulfah, 2021). The P5 program is the main and mainstay program in the independent curriculum which combines various learning areas with various themes such as character, environmental awareness, clean and healthy lifestyles, waste management, and other themes. In its implementation, P5 activities often contain elements and objectives of arts and culture learning which give rise to various opinions from students (Aditya, 2023).

According to several class XII students, they felt that arts and culture subjects had become less relevant with the P5 program. The reason is because they feel that the artistic experience they get through the P5 program is enough to fulfill their competencies as students. They feel that through the P5 program, they can learn important issues and take real action to address these issues according to their learning stages and needs. However, there are also students who believe that the P5 program cannot completely replace the basic competencies of arts lessons. They argue that although artistic experience is indeed the main goal in arts education, artistic skills cannot be taught well in P5 programs. Therefore, they feel that arts and culture subjects still have an important place in the Independent Curriculum.

Cultural arts subjects in the Merdeka Curriculum cover various aspects, such as Music, Fine Arts, Dance and Theater Arts. Each of these aspects has its own learning outcomes designed to help students develop their skills and knowledge in the arts. This debate shows the importance of a holistic approach in education, where every aspect of education, including arts and culture and P5 programs, has an important role in shaping students' competence and character. Therefore, it is important for educators to continually evaluate and adapt their curriculum and teaching methods to ensure that all aspects of education can complement each other and support optimal student development.

The level of students' creativity in creating art is also an aspect in finding their perception of arts and culture subjects. Students think that the presence of arts and culture subjects in the independent

curriculum increases their creativity. This is because there are increasing opportunities for students to access various learning resources and gain learning experiences outside formal education at school. As stated by (Riyadi & Sukmayadi, 2023), technology is now not a tool to help humans, but has the ability to replace humans themselves. Technology in the era of implementing the independent curriculum can even become a reference and source of effective learning, one of which is fine arts learning.

However, the author found that the work of class XII students did not tend to improve. This is shown by the large number of works by class XII students who still apply the ATM method (Observe, Imitate, Modify). In fact, giving freedom to gain learning experiences should be able to produce work with good originality with various considerations and references from the internet. This tendency may occur due to the implementation of the K-13 curriculum so that many students are still more concerned with the results than the process of creating the work itself. However, this does not change the opinion of class XII students regarding the relevance of arts and culture subjects as a trigger to increase creativity by utilizing the various facilities and programs offered in the independent curriculum.

4. Conclusions

Perception from various points of view is something that needs to be done to get various different opinions. Even though class Enthusiasm and motivation to learn is one aspect that influences students' opinions regarding arts and culture subjects in the independent curriculum. Artistic experiences and the learning environment are the main factors that influence students' opinions. Apart from that, learning methods and the role of the teacher also have a role in shaping student perceptions. The use of the lecture method is considered less relevant to arts and culture subjects in the independent curriculum, but there are also those who support it as a good method for teaching basic competencies. The presence of the P5 program and the level of student creativity also invites various opinions from students, some of whom still support the existence and relevance of arts and culture subjects, while others consider arts and culture subjects to be increasingly less relevant to the demands and developments of the times.

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