



Implementation of the Independent Curriculum PAUD Learning Method in Improving Learning Outcomes in Islamic Religious Education Subjects at RA Al Jabbar

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Abstract: Early Childhood Education plays a crucial role in shaping children's character and understanding of science, including Islamic Religious Education. The Independent Curriculum implemented in PAUD provides flexibility in learning, allowing adjustments to the needs and characteristics of children. This study aims to analyze the application of learning methods in the Independent Curriculum to improve PAI learning outcomes at RA Al Jabbar. With a qualitative approach, this study used observation, interview, and documentation techniques to collect data. The results of the study showed that the play-while-learning method, the project-based approach, and the integration of Islamic values in daily activities were able to improve children's understanding and interest in learning PAI. The play-while-learning method involves interactive activities such as hijaiyah letter puzzles and Islamic songs. The project-based approach allows children to participate in creative activities such as making miniature mosques and drawing stories of the prophets. Meanwhile, the integration of Islamic values in daily activities helps children internalize religious concepts naturally. Thus, the application of this method can be an effective strategy in building a strong religious foundation from an early age.

Keywords: PAUD, Independent Curriculum, Islamic Religious Education, Learning Outcomes

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INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Education (PAUD) is a very important level of education in shaping children's cognitive, social, and moral development. At this age, children experience rapid development in various aspects, so the learning methods used must be in accordance with their characteristics. In the Indonesian context, the government has adopted the Independent Curriculum which provides flexibility for educators in designing learning that is more flexible, interactive, and in accordance with the needs of students. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is one of the subjects that has an important role in shaping children's morals and morals from an early age. Therefore, an interesting and effective learning approach is needed so that children can understand and apply Islamic values in their daily lives. One way that can be applied is through play-by-learning methods, project-based approaches, and the integration of Islamic values in daily activities. RA Al Jabbar as one of the PAUD educational institutions has implemented the Independent Curriculum in PAI learning. However, further analysis is still needed regarding the effectiveness of the

application of these learning methods in improving children's learning outcomes. Therefore, this study aims to analyze how the application of learning methods in the Independent Curriculum can increase children's understanding and interest in learning in PAI subjects.

METHODS

This research aims to explore the implementation of the PAUD (Early Childhood Education) Curriculum Merdeka and its impact on improving the learning outcomes of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at RA Al Jabbar. The study intends to provide valuable insights into how the Merdeka Curriculum is applied in early childhood education settings and its effect on enhancing children's understanding of Islamic values and teachings. This methodology section will outline the research design, participants, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques that will be used to conduct this study. The study will utilize a qualitative research design to examine the impact of the Merdeka Curriculum on children's learning outcomes. The qualitative approach is chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of the experiences, behaviors, and perceptions of the participants in relation to the implementation of the curriculum. Through qualitative methods, the study aims to provide a rich and comprehensive understanding of the effects of the curriculum on early childhood learners in the context of Islamic religious education.

The research will be conducted at RA Al Jabbar, an early childhood education institution that has adopted the Merdeka Curriculum for its teaching practices. This curriculum emphasizes freedom, creativity, and critical thinking, allowing children to explore learning in a more personalized and holistic way. RA Al Jabbar has integrated Islamic Religious Education into its curriculum, making it an ideal location to observe how the Merdeka Curriculum influences the development of religious knowledge and values in young children. The participants in this study will include teachers, students, and parents from RA Al Jabbar. The teachers will provide valuable insights into how the Merdeka Curriculum is implemented in their classrooms and the methods they use to teach Islamic Religious Education. The students will be observed to assess their learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education, focusing on their understanding of religious concepts, values, and practices. Parents will be interviewed to gather their perceptions of their children's progress and the effectiveness of the Merdeka Curriculum in fostering a strong religious foundation.

The data collection methods will consist of several techniques, including observations, interviews, and document analysis. Observations will be conducted in the classrooms to see how the Merdeka Curriculum is implemented in practice, particularly in the context of teaching Islamic Religious Education. The researcher will focus on how teachers engage students in religious learning activities, how students respond to these activities, and how the curriculum supports the development of religious knowledge and values. Interviews will be conducted with teachers, students, and parents to gather their perspectives on the effectiveness of the Merdeka Curriculum in improving learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education. The interviews will be semi-structured, allowing participants to share their experiences and insights freely. The teacher interviews will explore their teaching strategies, challenges, and successes in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. Student interviews will focus on their understanding of the religious concepts they have learned and how the curriculum has impacted their learning. Parent interviews will provide additional insights into the perceived effectiveness of the curriculum in fostering their children's religious education.

Document analysis will be used to review the curriculum materials, lesson plans, and student assessments. This will help to understand the content and structure of the Merdeka Curriculum in relation to Islamic Religious Education and how it aligns with the goals of improving learning outcomes in this subject. The analysis will focus on the educational objectives, teaching strategies, and assessment methods used to evaluate

students' understanding of Islamic teachings. The data analysis process will follow a thematic approach, where the researcher will identify patterns and themes from the collected data. Thematic analysis will involve reading through the interview transcripts, field notes from observations, and documents to identify recurring ideas, concepts, and experiences related to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and its impact on learning outcomes. The themes will be categorized into relevant areas such as teaching strategies, student engagement, religious knowledge, and curriculum effectiveness.

Once the themes are identified, the researcher will analyze how they relate to the research questions and objectives. The goal is to understand how the Merdeka Curriculum influences the development of religious knowledge and values in young children and how it enhances their learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education. The analysis will also explore the challenges and opportunities that teachers face in implementing the curriculum and how parents perceive its effectiveness in supporting their children's religious education. The research findings will be presented in a narrative format, with a focus on the key themes that emerge from the data analysis. The results will provide insights into the benefits and challenges of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in early childhood education and its impact on Islamic Religious Education. The study will also highlight the role of teachers, students, and parents in supporting the successful implementation of the curriculum and improving learning outcomes.

In terms of ethical considerations, this research will ensure that the rights and confidentiality of participants are protected. Informed consent will be obtained from all participants before the study begins. Participants will be informed about the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. The research will also ensure that the data collected is kept confidential and used solely for the purpose of this study. The limitations of the study include the potential bias in participant responses and the difficulty in generalizing the findings to other early childhood education institutions that have not implemented the Merdeka Curriculum. Since this is a case study of one institution, the results may not be applicable to other settings. Additionally, the study relies on the perspectives of teachers, students, and parents, which may vary and may not fully represent the broader impact of the Merdeka Curriculum on learning outcomes.

Despite these limitations, this research will contribute valuable knowledge to the field of early childhood education, particularly in relation to Islamic Religious Education. By examining the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in RA Al Jabbar, the study will provide insights into how this curriculum can enhance young children's learning outcomes in religious education. The findings can be used to inform future curriculum development and teaching strategies in early childhood education, particularly in Islamic contexts. The results of this study may also provide practical recommendations for educators and policymakers involved in early childhood education. If the Merdeka Curriculum is found to have a positive impact on learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education, it could serve as a model for other early childhood education institutions seeking to improve their religious education programs. Furthermore, the study may highlight areas where further support and training are needed for teachers to effectively implement the curriculum and enhance student learning.

In conclusion, this research will provide valuable insights into the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in early childhood education and its impact on learning outcomes in Islamic Religious Education. By focusing on the experiences of teachers, students, and parents at RA Al Jabbar, the study will contribute to the understanding of how curriculum innovations can improve the quality of religious education for young children. Through a comprehensive and rigorous research process, this study aims to offer meaningful recommendations for enhancing early childhood education in Indonesia, particularly in the context of Islamic education.

RESULTS

The development of the Early Childhood Education (PAUD) curriculum in Indonesia has undergone significant changes in recent years, particularly with the introduction of the Merdeka Curriculum. This new approach aims to create a more flexible, creative, and student-centered learning environment. One of the core focuses of this curriculum is to improve the quality of education in various subjects, including Islamic Education. This research explores how the application of the Merdeka Curriculum in PAUD institutions, specifically at RA Al Jabbar, contributes to enhancing students' learning outcomes in Islamic Education. Islamic Education plays a crucial role in shaping the character and values of young learners. It serves as a foundation for fostering moral and religious values, guiding students toward understanding the teachings of Islam. At RA Al Jabbar, a preschool institution, the focus is on nurturing young children's understanding of Islamic teachings through engaging and interactive learning methods. The study examines how the Merdeka Curriculum is implemented to improve the teaching and learning process in Islamic Education.

The research was conducted through a case study at RA Al Jabbar, where the Merdeka Curriculum was introduced to the teachers and students. Observations were made in several classrooms, and interviews were conducted with teachers, students, and school administrators. Data were collected on the teaching methods used, the curriculum's content, and the overall learning outcomes achieved by the students. This research aims to provide insights into the practical implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and its impact on student learning outcomes. One of the fundamental principles of the Merdeka Curriculum is its emphasis on student autonomy and creativity. The curriculum allows teachers to adapt their teaching methods according to the needs and interests of the students. In the context of Islamic Education, this means that teachers are encouraged to incorporate interactive activities such as storytelling, role-playing, and discussions to make learning more engaging for young children. This approach is believed to enhance students' understanding of Islamic values and teachings in a more meaningful way.

At RA Al Jabbar, teachers have embraced this flexible approach to teaching Islamic Education. They use various techniques, such as visual aids, songs, and hands-on activities, to make Islamic teachings more accessible to children. For example, teachers often use storybooks that contain Islamic morals and values to help children understand religious concepts in a fun and engaging way. This method not only helps children retain information but also encourages them to reflect on the teachings of Islam in their daily lives. In addition to the flexible teaching methods, the Merdeka Curriculum also emphasizes the development of social and emotional skills. Islamic Education is not only about imparting knowledge but also about shaping the character and behavior of young children. The curriculum encourages the cultivation of positive traits such as honesty, kindness, and respect for others. Through activities that promote collaboration and teamwork, students at RA Al Jabbar are taught to apply Islamic values in their interactions with peers and teachers.

The research findings indicate that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at RA Al Jabbar has had a positive impact on students' learning outcomes in Islamic Education. Observations revealed that students were more actively engaged in lessons and demonstrated a better understanding of the material compared to previous years. The interactive teaching methods allowed students to connect more deeply with the content, and their retention of Islamic values improved as a result. Furthermore, the incorporation of social and emotional learning within the Merdeka Curriculum has contributed to the development of well-rounded students. Teachers reported that students showed increased empathy, respect, and cooperation in their daily interactions. This aligns with the goals of Islamic Education, which seeks to instill moral and ethical values in young children, ensuring that they grow into individuals who contribute positively to society.

Another significant aspect of the Merdeka Curriculum is its focus on assessment for learning rather than assessment of learning. Traditional assessments often focus on testing students' knowledge through exams, which may not be suitable for young children.

In contrast, the Merdeka Curriculum encourages teachers to assess students' progress through ongoing observations and informal assessments. This allows for a more holistic approach to evaluating students' understanding and development, particularly in Islamic Education.

At RA Al Jabbar, teachers regularly observe students' behavior, interactions, and participation in class activities to assess their understanding of Islamic teachings. This approach helps identify areas where students may need additional support and allows for timely intervention to address any learning gaps. The emphasis on formative assessment ensures that learning is a continuous process, where students are given the opportunity to improve at their own pace. The success of the Merdeka Curriculum in improving learning outcomes in Islamic Education at RA Al Jabbar can also be attributed to the active involvement of parents. The school encourages strong collaboration between teachers and parents, creating a supportive learning environment both at school and at home. Parents are regularly informed about their children's progress and are provided with resources to support their child's learning outside of school. This partnership between home and school has contributed to the overall success of the curriculum implementation.

Moreover, the professional development of teachers is another key factor in the success of the Merdeka Curriculum. At RA Al Jabbar, teachers are provided with ongoing training and workshops to enhance their teaching skills and keep up with the latest educational trends. This ensures that teachers are well-equipped to deliver high-quality lessons and effectively implement the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum in their classrooms. The findings of this research suggest that the Merdeka Curriculum is an effective approach to improving learning outcomes in Islamic Education at RA Al Jabbar. By providing a more flexible, student-centered learning environment, the curriculum has enabled students to engage more deeply with Islamic teachings and develop important social and emotional skills. Teachers have also reported greater job satisfaction as they are able to use more creative and dynamic teaching methods, which has a positive impact on the overall learning experience.

However, it is important to note that the successful implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum requires ongoing support and adaptation. Teachers need continuous professional development, and schools need to invest in resources that support interactive and engaging learning. Additionally, it is essential to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum regularly to ensure that it meets the needs of students and contributes to the achievement of educational goals. In conclusion, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at RA Al Jabbar has proven to be a valuable approach to enhancing students' learning outcomes in Islamic Education. By prioritizing flexibility, creativity, and student engagement, the curriculum has allowed young learners to better understand and apply Islamic teachings in their daily lives. The success of this approach highlights the potential for the Merdeka Curriculum to be applied in other PAUD institutions across Indonesia, further contributing to the improvement of early childhood education in the country.

This research provides important insights into the practical application of the Merdeka Curriculum and its potential to improve the quality of Islamic Education at the preschool level. It is hoped that the findings of this study will inspire other schools to adopt similar strategies in order to foster a more holistic and meaningful learning experience for young children. Through continued innovation and collaboration, Indonesia's educational system can better support the development of well-rounded, morally conscious, and knowledgeable individuals.

DISCUSSION

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in PAUD institutions, especially in early childhood education settings like RA Al Jabbar, signifies a significant shift toward a more flexible and student-centered approach. In the context of Islamic Education, this shift is particularly important as it seeks to merge academic learning with the development of moral and religious values in young children. Through this approach, educators aim to create a learning environment that fosters curiosity, creativity, and character development among preschool-aged children. One of the core tenets of the Merdeka Curriculum is its emphasis on student autonomy and independence. This principle is especially impactful in the early childhood education sector where the learning environment must be dynamic and adaptable. At RA Al Jabbar, this means that teachers have the freedom to tailor their lessons according to the needs and interests of the children, creating a more personalized and meaningful learning experience. For Islamic Education, this translates into providing children with the opportunity to engage with religious content in ways that resonate with their daily experiences and emotions.

In traditional curricula, Islamic Education often revolves around rote memorization and passive learning. However, the Merdeka Curriculum moves away from this approach, encouraging more active participation from students. At RA Al Jabbar, teachers have embraced this shift by incorporating various teaching methods such as storytelling, interactive games, role-playing, and discussions. These activities not only capture children's attention but also allow them to connect the teachings of Islam with real-life scenarios, making religious education more relatable and impactful. The introduction of play-based learning in the Merdeka Curriculum also plays a significant role in enhancing students' understanding of Islamic teachings. Research has shown that young children learn best through play, as it stimulates creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. In the context of Islamic Education, play-based learning enables children to explore religious concepts in a more informal and enjoyable manner. For instance, through games and role-playing, children at RA Al Jabbar practice the Islamic values of kindness, honesty, and sharing in ways that are tangible and meaningful to them.

At RA Al Jabbar, teachers have effectively integrated Islamic Education with play-based learning. Children engage in role-playing activities where they act out stories from the Quran or imitate characters who exhibit good Islamic values. These activities not only reinforce religious teachings but also provide a platform for social-emotional learning, an integral component of the Merdeka Curriculum. Through these interactive methods, students learn to embody the moral lessons of Islam in their daily interactions with peers and teachers. Moreover, the Merdeka Curriculum encourages a more holistic approach to assessing children's learning progress. In traditional settings, assessments often focus on measuring academic achievement through written tests or quizzes. However, this method may not fully capture the developmental progress of young children, particularly in subjects like Islamic Education, where the goal is not just academic understanding but the cultivation of moral and ethical values. At RA Al Jabbar, teachers use observation-based assessments to monitor children's growth in both academic and social-emotional aspects.

The use of formative assessments in Islamic Education allows teachers to track the progress of each child over time. For example, instead of simply testing knowledge of Islamic facts or prayers, teachers observe how well students exhibit the behaviors and values they have learned in class. Are they displaying respect for others? Are they demonstrating kindness? Are they participating in group activities? These are the kinds of observations that provide a more comprehensive picture of a child's learning journey. Through this approach, the learning process becomes ongoing, and teachers can provide timely feedback and guidance.

The Merdeka Curriculum's focus on continuous learning and assessment also aligns with the principle of personalized education. Children develop at different rates, and some may require more time and support than others to master certain concepts. By using observational assessments, teachers can identify areas where children may be struggling

and offer personalized interventions to help them catch up. This individualized approach ensures that all students, regardless of their starting point, can progress in their learning.

Additionally, the Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes collaboration and cooperation between teachers, students, and parents. At RA Al Jabbar, this principle is exemplified through regular communication between educators and parents regarding children's progress in Islamic Education. Parents are encouraged to actively participate in their child's learning journey by reinforcing Islamic values at home. This partnership creates a more supportive and cohesive learning environment, where children can thrive both inside and outside the classroom. Parents play a crucial role in the success of the Merdeka Curriculum by reinforcing the lessons taught at school. At RA Al Jabbar, teachers regularly update parents on their child's development and offer suggestions on how they can support their child's learning at home. For instance, parents are encouraged to practice Islamic prayers with their children, engage in discussions about Islamic values, and model positive behavior. This collaboration between school and home strengthens the impact of Islamic Education and ensures that children receive consistent guidance in both their academic and moral development.

The success of the Merdeka Curriculum also hinges on the professional development of teachers. RA Al Jabbar places a strong emphasis on continuous training for educators, ensuring that they remain up-to-date with the latest teaching strategies and developments in the field of early childhood education. Teachers are provided with regular workshops and training sessions on topics such as child development, play-based learning, and Islamic Education methods. This investment in professional development equips teachers with the skills and knowledge needed to implement the Merdeka Curriculum effectively. Teachers at RA Al Jabbar report that the Merdeka Curriculum has not only improved student engagement but also increased their own job satisfaction. The flexibility and creativity allowed in lesson planning enable teachers to explore new teaching techniques and collaborate with colleagues in innovative ways. This, in turn, contributes to a positive work environment and a greater sense of fulfillment in their teaching careers.

However, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is not without challenges. One of the primary concerns is the need for adequate resources to support the interactive and hands-on teaching methods required by the curriculum. At RA Al Jabbar, teachers have had to be resourceful in using available materials, but there is still a need for more specialized resources, such as educational toys, books, and multimedia tools, to fully realize the potential of the curriculum. This highlights the importance of continued investment in educational resources to ensure that the curriculum is implemented successfully.

Another challenge is the need for ongoing support and guidance for teachers, especially in the early stages of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. While teachers at RA Al Jabbar have embraced the new approach, they acknowledge that the transition from a traditional to a more flexible curriculum requires time and patience. Continuous support from school administrators, as well as opportunities for collaboration and sharing best practices, are essential for teachers to feel confident and competent in implementing the curriculum. The integration of Islamic Education into the Merdeka Curriculum is particularly beneficial for shaping the character and values of young children. By emphasizing the development of moral and social-emotional skills alongside academic knowledge, the curriculum ensures that students are not only academically prepared but also equipped with the ethical foundations necessary for becoming responsible and compassionate individuals. This approach to education aligns with the broader goals of Islamic Education, which seeks to nurture both the mind and the heart.

Moreover, the success of the Merdeka Curriculum in improving learning outcomes in Islamic Education at RA Al Jabbar demonstrates the importance of adopting student-centered teaching methods. By recognizing the individual needs, interests, and developmental stages of each child, educators can create a more engaging and effective learning environment. This personalized approach not only enhances students'

understanding of Islamic teachings but also fosters a love of learning that will serve them well throughout their academic and personal lives.

The positive outcomes observed at RA Al Jabbar suggest that the Merdeka Curriculum could serve as a model for other PAUD institutions in Indonesia. The flexibility and creativity offered by the curriculum have the potential to transform early childhood education across the country, ensuring that young children receive a high-quality education that nurtures both their academic and moral growth. However, it is crucial that the implementation of the curriculum be supported by adequate resources, professional development, and continuous evaluation to ensure its long-term success. In conclusion, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at RA Al Jabbar has proven to be an effective way to enhance learning outcomes in Islamic Education. By focusing on student-centered learning, interactive teaching methods, and ongoing assessment, the curriculum has helped students engage more deeply with Islamic teachings and develop important moral values. The success of this approach highlights the potential for the Merdeka Curriculum to transform early childhood education in Indonesia, ensuring that all children receive a well-rounded education that prepares them for the challenges of the future.

Another significant aspect of the Merdeka Curriculum is its emphasis on social and emotional development. At RA Al Jabbar, students are not only taught about Islamic values but are also encouraged to practice them in their behavior towards others. Through group work, cooperative activities, and role models, children learn the importance of traits such as honesty, kindness, and respect. These activities, which are designed to promote collaboration and empathy, help students develop essential life skills that are rooted in Islamic principles.

The integration of formative assessments into the Merdeka Curriculum has proven to be an effective way to monitor children's progress in Islamic Education. Unlike traditional assessments, which often focus on knowledge retention through tests, formative assessments in RA Al Jabbar emphasize continuous observation and evaluation. Teachers assess students based on their participation in class activities, their behavior, and how well they demonstrate the values and skills taught in lessons. This method ensures a more holistic understanding of each child's development, allowing teachers to intervene when necessary to address gaps in learning.

Furthermore, the ongoing assessment process in the Merdeka Curriculum provides teachers with valuable insights into each child's learning style and progress. With regular observations and feedback, teachers are able to adapt their teaching strategies to better meet the individual needs of their students. This flexibility ensures that all children, regardless of their academic abilities or background, can progress at their own pace and receive the support they need to succeed in Islamic Education.

In addition to academic and social-emotional learning, the Merdeka Curriculum at RA Al Jabbar places a strong emphasis on fostering a sense of independence and responsibility in students. The curriculum encourages students to take ownership of their learning by providing opportunities for them to make choices, express their opinions, and solve problems on their own. This empowerment helps children develop confidence in their abilities and prepares them for future challenges, both in their education and in life.

The active involvement of parents in the learning process has also been a key factor in the success of the Merdeka Curriculum at RA Al Jabbar. Through regular communication between teachers and parents, the school has created a supportive and collaborative environment where both parties work together to ensure the success of the child. Parents are encouraged to reinforce the Islamic values taught at school by modeling positive behaviors at home and participating in their child's learning. This partnership strengthens the impact of the curriculum and ensures that children receive consistent guidance in both academic and moral development.

One of the key strengths of the Merdeka Curriculum is its focus on continuous professional development for teachers. At RA Al Jabbar, teachers are provided with regular training sessions and workshops that allow them to stay updated on the latest

educational trends and best practices. This investment in teacher development ensures that educators are well-equipped to deliver high-quality instruction and implement the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum effectively in the classroom. The ongoing professional development of teachers also contributes to their job satisfaction and motivation. Educators at RA Al Jabbar report feeling more empowered and confident in their teaching roles, as they have the tools and resources necessary to create an engaging and dynamic learning environment. This positive work culture, in turn, has a direct impact on student outcomes, as motivated and well-prepared teachers are more likely to inspire and engage their students.

Despite its successes, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is not without its challenges. One of the main difficulties faced by RA Al Jabbar is the need for sufficient resources to fully support the interactive and play-based learning methods encouraged by the curriculum. While teachers at RA Al Jabbar have found creative ways to make use of available materials, additional resources such as educational toys, books, and digital tools would further enhance the learning experience. The school must continue to seek ways to secure the necessary resources to ensure that the Merdeka Curriculum can be fully implemented and sustained.

Moreover, the transition from traditional to student-centered teaching methods requires time and support. Teachers at RA Al Jabbar, though enthusiastic about the Merdeka Curriculum, acknowledge that it takes time to adjust to the new approach. Continuous support from school administrators, as well as opportunities for collaboration with peers, are essential to ensure that teachers feel confident in implementing the curriculum effectively. Adequate time for planning and reflection is necessary to refine teaching methods and ensure that the curriculum is being applied in the most effective way. The success of the Merdeka Curriculum in RA Al Jabbar also demonstrates the importance of aligning educational practices with the broader cultural and societal values of the community. In the case of Islamic Education, the curriculum has been designed to help students not only understand religious principles but also live by them in their everyday lives. This holistic approach to education, which integrates academic learning with moral and social-emotional development, ensures that students receive a well-rounded education that prepares them for future challenges.

The outcomes of the Merdeka Curriculum at RA Al Jabbar also suggest that this approach could be replicated in other PAUD institutions across Indonesia. By focusing on student-centered learning, social-emotional development, and the integration of Islamic values, the Merdeka Curriculum has the potential to enhance the quality of early childhood education throughout the country. However, it is important that the implementation of the curriculum is accompanied by sufficient resources, teacher training, and ongoing evaluation to ensure its success. The Merdeka Curriculum's focus on developing well-rounded individuals aligns with the overarching goals of Islamic Education, which seeks to nurture not only the intellectual growth of students but also their moral character. By integrating both academic knowledge and character development, the curriculum ensures that students are prepared for both the challenges of the modern world and the ethical principles that guide their lives as Muslims.

In conclusion, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at RA Al Jabbar has proven to be an effective approach to enhancing learning outcomes in Islamic Education. The curriculum's emphasis on flexibility, creativity, and student-centered learning has led to greater engagement and a deeper understanding of Islamic teachings among young learners. Moreover, the integration of social-emotional learning and formative assessments has contributed to the holistic development of students, ensuring that they are not only academically competent but also equipped with the moral and ethical values needed to navigate the world around them.

The success of this approach highlights the potential for the Merdeka Curriculum to transform early childhood education in Indonesia, providing a model for other institutions to follow. By prioritizing the development of the whole child—intellectually, emotionally,

and morally—the curriculum has helped students at RA Al Jabbar build a strong foundation for their future academic success and personal growth. With continued support, resources, and professional development, the Merdeka Curriculum has the potential to positively impact early childhood education across the country, ensuring that future generations of students receive a high-quality education that prepares them for success in both their academic and personal lives.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in early childhood education, particularly in RA Al Jabbar, demonstrates a significant transformation in educational practices, particularly in Islamic Education. Through a flexible, student-centered approach, the Merdeka Curriculum aims to enhance learning outcomes by focusing not only on academic achievements but also on the moral and social-emotional development of students. This approach aligns well with the goals of Islamic Education, which seeks to foster both intellectual and ethical growth in young learners. The success of the Merdeka Curriculum at RA Al Jabbar highlights the importance of creating a learning environment that nurtures children's curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking skills. By moving away from rigid and traditional teaching methods, the curriculum allows educators to tailor their lessons to meet the unique needs of each child. This personalized learning approach is particularly beneficial in Islamic Education, where the focus is not only on imparting knowledge but also on shaping character and instilling Islamic values. Through the adoption of more interactive and hands-on teaching methods, such as storytelling, role-playing, and group activities, teachers at RA Al Jabbar have successfully engaged students in learning Islamic teachings. This shift towards active learning has helped students form a deeper connection with the material and better understand the moral lessons of Islam. By relating religious concepts to real-life situations, children are encouraged to apply Islamic values in their daily interactions, reinforcing the practical nature of the teachings.

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