

**THE IMPACTS OF IMPLEMENTING AN INDEPENDENT
CURRICULUM (MERDEKA BELAJAR) FOR STUDENTS OF
ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM OF
ARTHA WACANA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**

A THESIS



SARAH PETRILIA ISLIKO

**ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM
TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION FACULTY
ARTHA WACANA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**

KUPANG

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A THESIS

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SARAH PETRILIA ISLIKO

**ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM
TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION FACULTY
ARTHA WACANA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
KUPANG
2025**

APPROVAL PAGE



This Thesis en title *the impact of implanting an independent curriculum (merdeka belajar) for Student of English Education Study Program Arta Wacana Christian University* written by *Sarah Petrilia Isliko* has been presented in a Thesis.

First Supervisor

(Dr.phil. Festif Rudolf Hoinbala S.Pd, MA.TEFL)
NUPTK. 2957757658130152

Second Supervisor

(Tiarna Marpaung S.Pd., M.Pd)
NUPTK. 845758659300052

Kupang, 27 February 2027

Acknowledged by,

Dean of Teachers Training and Education
Faculty



(Dra. Anggreni D.A. Kupidara, M.Si, Ph.D)
NUPTK. 7157746647230103

Head of English Education Study
Program

(Ifoni Ludji S.Pd, M.Hum)
NUPTK.9955764665230232

Examination Date: 13 February 2025

	Name	Signature	Date
1	First Examiner Prof. Dr. Magdalena Ngongo, M.Pd _____ NUPTK. 0844738639230092	 _____	28/02/2025 _____
2	Second Examiner Theresia Magdalena Tamelan, S.Pd.,M App.Ling,Ph.D. _____ NUPTK. 1047757658231203	 _____	27/02/25 _____
3	Third Examiner Dr. phil. Festif Rudolf Hoinbala, S.Pd.,MA. TEFL. _____ NUPTK. 2957757658130152	 _____	27/02/25 _____
4	Fourth Examiner Tiarna Marpaung S.Pd., M.Pd _____ NUPTK. 845758659300052	 _____	22/02/25 _____

Universitas Kristen Artha Wacana
KUPANG
A Ω
(Dra. Yuni Hein D...)
NUPSI 1577406472301

Head of English Education
Study Program

(Ifoni Ludji S.Pd, M.Hum)
NUPTK.9955764665230232

MOTTO

"Humbled in the eyes of man Exalted in the eyes of God," prove Them Wrong"

"Gonna Fight and don't stop, until you are proud"

There is always a price in a process. Just enjoy that tiredness, expand that patience again. Everything you invest in making yourself the same person you dreamed of, may not always go smoothly. But those waves are what you will be able to tell about.

(Boy Chandra)

Rest assured that one day, your tears will be repaid with a smile you didn't expect.

Blessed is the one who endures temptation, for when he has endured the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to whoever loves Him"

(James 1:12)

Sarah Petrilia Isliko

DEDICATION

This writing is dedicated to the writer's beloved:

1. Almighty God for all the power, for his boundless love, kindness, wisdom, and health to successfully complete her studies at Artha Wacana Christian University.
2. Parents: Daniel F. Isliko and Erny Isliko
3. Brothers: Tommy C. Isliko
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The Impacts of Implementing An Independent Curriculum (Merdeka Belajar) For Student's English Education Study Program

Abstrak

Sarah Petrilia Isliko¹ Festif R.Hoinbala² Tiarma Marpaung³

This study aims to analyze the impact of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum on students' learning strategies in the English Education Study Program at Universitas Kristen Artha Wacana Kupang. The study employs two research instruments, utilizing both questionnaires and interviews to collect data on students' experiences and perceptions of the Merdeka Curriculum and the implementation of a student-centered learning approach (Student-Centered Learning/SCL). Based on the data obtained, the questionnaire results show that most students feel more engaged and motivated in learning after implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, with 50% reporting more opportunities for active participation and 53% feeling more creative in the learning process. In-depth interviews revealed that students feel empowered by the freedom to choose courses and learning methods, but also face challenges related to increased responsibility in time management and independent learning. The SCL approach has proven effective in enhancing students' intrinsic motivation, engagement in learning, and the development of skills relevant to the demands of the workforce. These findings provide insight into how the Merdeka Curriculum can positively influence students' learning experiences, although challenges related to increased personal responsibility remain. This study also offers recommendations for further development of the Merdeka Curriculum, emphasizing the need to strengthen flexibility and support for students in managing more independent and interest-based learning.

Keywords: *Merdeka Curriculum, Student-Centered Learning, learning motivation, student experience, higher education*

Dampak Penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka (Merdeka Belajar) untuk Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Mahasiswa

Abstract

Sarah Petrilia Isliko¹ Festif R.Hoinbala² Tiarma Marpaung³

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis dampak penerapan kurikulum Merdeka terhadap strategi pembelajaran mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Kristen Artha Wacana Kupang. Penelitian ini menggunakan dua instrumen penelitian, yaitu kuesioner dan wawancara, untuk mengumpulkan data mengenai pengalaman dan persepsi mahasiswa terhadap kurikulum Merdeka serta penerapan pendekatan pembelajaran yang berpusat pada mahasiswa (Student-Centered Learning/SCL). Berdasarkan data yang diperoleh, hasil kuesioner menunjukkan bahwa mayoritas mahasiswa merasa lebih terlibat dan termotivasi dalam pembelajaran setelah penerapan kurikulum Merdeka, dengan 50% responden merasa memiliki lebih banyak kesempatan untuk berpartisipasi aktif dan 53% merasa lebih kreatif dalam proses pembelajaran. Wawancara mendalam mengungkapkan bahwa mahasiswa merasa diberdayakan oleh kebebasan dalam memilih mata kuliah dan cara belajar, namun juga menghadapi tantangan terkait dengan tanggung jawab yang lebih besar dalam manajemen waktu dan pembelajaran mandiri. Pendekatan SCL terbukti efektif dalam meningkatkan motivasi intrinsik mahasiswa, keterlibatan dalam pembelajaran, dan pengembangan keterampilan yang relevan dengan kebutuhan dunia kerja. Temuan ini memberikan gambaran tentang bagaimana kurikulum Merdeka dapat mempengaruhi pengalaman belajar mahasiswa secara positif, meskipun ada tantangan terkait dengan tanggung jawab pribadi yang meningkat. Penelitian ini juga memberikan rekomendasi untuk pengembangan lebih lanjut kurikulum Merdeka, dengan memperkuat fleksibilitas dan dukungan bagi mahasiswa dalam mengelola pembelajaran yang lebih mandiri dan berbasis minat.

Kata kunci: *kurikulum Merdeka, Student-Centered Learning, motivasi belajar, pengalaman mahasiswa, pendidikan tinggi*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COVER.....	I
APPROVAL PAGE.....	II
LEGITIMATION PAGE	III
MOTO	IV
DEDICATION	V
ACTNOWLDGEMENT	VI
ABSTRAK.....	VII
TABEL OF CONTEN	VIII
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Research Problem	3
1.2.1 Implication	4
1.2.2 Application.....	4
CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW	6
2.1 Review of Related Studies.....	6
2.2 Concept	8
2.2.1 Independent Learning Curriculum (Merdeka Belajar).....	8
2.2.2 The Implementation Independent Curriculum (Merdeka Belajar)	8
2.3 Theoretical Framework.....	9
2.3.1 Independent Learning Curriculum	9
2.3.2 Implementasi Merdeka Belajar in English Education Study Program.....	14
CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHOD	16
3.1 Research Design	17
3.2 Research Locus.....	17
3.3 Type and Data Resource	17
3.3.1 Population	17
3.3.2 Sample	17
3.4 Data Collection Technique and Research Instrument	17

3.5 Research Procedures.....	18
3.6 Data Analysis.....	19
3.7 Research Timeline	19
CHAPTER IV FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	20
4.1 Findings	20
4.1.1 Quesionare.....	21
4.1.2 Interview	24
4.2 Discussion.....	32
4.2.1 Student’s Understanding of the Merdeka Curriculum.....	33
4.2.2 difference Between the Merdeka Curriculum and the Previous	34
5.2.3 The Impact of the Merdeka Curriculum on Learning Motivation	35
4.2.4 The Impact of Student-Centered Learning (SCL in the Merdeka Curriculum.....	35
5.2.4 Challenges in the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.....	36
4.2.6 Student’s Expectation for the Future development of the Merdeka Curriculum.....	37
CHAPTER V CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION	39
5.1 Conclusion.....	39
5.2 Suggestion	40
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	43
APPENDIX	