

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Education is an essential component of human life. Every human person requires education because education is critical to the development of a nation's civilization. Furthermore, education will define the excellent and bad quality of human resources, and that is a measurement for a country's success. Education will produce a generation of excellent and high-quality gold professionals who will contribute to the country's future prosperity.

Sulisworo (2016) state that education will produce a new generation that will bring a new spirit with improved values. The new generation is also a determinant of human resources in the production of a variety tangible and intangible product cultures. Because education is the major system for societal transformation. Many countries are making varied attempts in allocating state finances in order to establish the greatest education system, which will decide the country's future progress as well as how the country's position in the global system of competition will be determined.

The national education is required not only for individual human development, but also for the freedom of the nation, including the freedom and development of the nation's culture in the framework of coexistence with other nations throughout the world (Dewantara, 1997 in Febriyanti 2021). All Indonesians have the right to education, as stated in the 1945 Constitution, which states that every citizen has the right to obtain education.

According to Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the national education system, equal, quality, and significant opportunities in education must be guaranteed in order for students to be able to face challenges in accordance with the demands of changes in local, national, and global life, and educational reform must be planned, directed, and sustainable. As a result, the government has an obligation to continue to innovate and improve in all facets of education. Sukasni & Efendy (2017) stated that education is the primary vehicle for intellectual and professional development, and it plays a critical role in fostering global competitiveness. This is intended so that Indonesian education can stay up with the changes and tackle a variety of obstacles, particularly in the current era, which is known as the Industrial Revolution 4.0.

Starting with kindergarten, elementary school, junior high school, and high school, Indonesia has witnessed many changes in the realm of education. This may be observed in the numerous developments that have taken place, beginning with the pre-facilities and progressing through the creation of the teaching and learning process system. The government's response to the numerous challenges and disorganizations that arise in Indonesian education is the advances and developments that occur there. This has an impact on the government's varied policies at any given time. A change in the curriculum is the most significant alteration in the educational system.

Change ministers, change curriculum, is a popular belief among the general people, although this is not the case. Changes in the curriculum occur as a result of the impact of legislative changes on the national education system.

Because the curriculum is such an important element of education. Furthermore, curriculum modifications occur as a result of the need for education to enhancement in numerous areas. As a result, the curriculum is always evolving.

At least eleven times, Indonesian education has experienced system and curriculum reforms. Insani (2019) found that since 2004 the *Kurikulum Berbasis Materi* (KBM) has been replaced with *Kurikulum Berbasis Kompetensi* (KBK). The KBK has been renewed numerous times since 2004, including the establishment of the *Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan* (KTSP) in 2006 and the Kurikulum Nasional (Kurnas) in 2013. This curriculum creation is a natural result of multiple elements and considerations, because as the curriculum must pay close attention to generations and eras. As a result, the curriculum must be flexible.

Now that we have reached the twenty-first century, Indonesian education will face a variety of problems and opportunities that will undoubtedly differ from those of the past. As a result, revisions to the curriculum model that will be used in the future are required. In 2019, Indonesia's Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Anwar Makarim, introduced a new concept in the education sector called *Merdeka Belajar*.

During the Flag Ceremony Speech on the Commemoration of National Teacher's Day on November 25, 2019, Minister of Education and Culture Nadiem Makarim presented a greeting speech, as quated the Ministry o Education and Culture:

Indonesian teachers have the finest and most challenging task. Teachers have a responsibility to influence the nation's future, but they are frequently required to follow the rules rather than offered assistance. Teachers are frequently assigned administrative activities, causing their

teaching and learning processes to be impeded. Teachers are required to use test scores as a benchmark for students' capacity to meet stakeholder policies despite knowing that students' talents cannot be assessed by numbers. Although you are fully aware that each child has unique needs, uniformity has supplanted diversity as a key premise of bureaucracy. You want to inspire all of your students, but you are not trusted to come up with new ideas. I will not make promises to you that I will not keep. Change is tough and inconvenient. One thing is certain: I will fight for the right to study in Indonesia. Change, on the other hand, cannot begin at the top. The teacher is where it all begins and finishes. Don't wait for commands to come in. Start by taking the first step (kemendikbud.go.id., 2019).

The concept of *Merdeka Belajar* is a proposal for redeveloping the educational system, in which students must be able to think critically, communicate and collaborate effectively, and support one another in order to create a young generation nation capable of facing global challenges in the future. Yamin & Syahrir (2020) stated that the notion of *Merdeka Belajar* is an offer in the reconstruction of the national education system. Reorganization of the educational system to fulfill the needs of the nation's progress and ability to adapt to changing circumstances. As a means of recovering the essence of true education, namely, education that seeks to humanize or liberate people.

Furthermore, *Merdeka Belajar* is a policy that refers to instructors' flexibility to create innovative and creative learning in order for teachers to accommodate a wide range of students' abilities and interests. Without requiring similarities, teachers can delve further into each student's ability. The notion of *Merdeka Belajar* is the connection between teachers and students who are subjects in the learning system. This means that students do not use the teacher as a source of truth, but rather that teachers and students collaborate to become movers and explorers of the truth. As a result, the teacher's role in the classroom is to examine

the truth, reasoning power, and criticality of students' perspectives on the universe and phenomena, rather than to cultivate or standardize the teacher's truth. As a result, non-boring learning will be achieved, as well as a pleasant classroom atmosphere (Yamin & Syahrir, 2020).

The influence of the Father of Indonesian National Education, particularly Ki Hajar Dewantara, can not be separated from the space in the notion of education in Indonesia. He is regarded as a pioneer in Indonesia's educational history. He is at the forefront of efforts to raise awareness among Indonesians about the value of education in the country's quest to become an independent nation. He dedicated his life defending the nation's and state's interests, hence he should be regarded as a role model in Indonesian education.

Many of Ki Hajar Dewantara's ideas are still being implemented in the national education concept. Ki Hajar Dewantara's ideas have indeed proven effective of solving a variety of difficulties that the Indonesian people faced. In the education, Ki Hajar Dewantara's most basic philosophy is to encourage educational independence, which means that education should be used to guide students rather than to require them. Wiryopranoto et al. in his book entitled *Ki Hajar Dewantara Pemikiran dan Perjuangannya* states that, Ki Hajar Dewantara accomplishes his educational objectives by converting the orders and sanctions or punishment education system to *Pamong* education. The goal of this education is to change colonial educational techniques that are founded on racial discrimination. Whereas, colonial education is known for its materialistic, individualistic, and intellectualistic education (Wiryoranoto, 2017).

Furthermore, many education critics agree with Ki Hajar Dewantara, who

believes that education should be built on independence. Paulo Freire, for example, stressed the importance of education as a human right. He also says in his book *Education for the Oppressed* that education is a process of liberating humans from various forms of oppression. From this perspective, it is clear that Freire views education as a matter of not only cognitive development, but also the development of other dimensions of humanity (Berkamsyah, 2020).

All of Ki Hajar Dewantara's thoughts lead to the conclusion that education must be founded on independence. Independence entails having a free mind and a free spirit, both physically and psychologically. This indicates that independence is not achieved by dictation. This is in line with one of his ideas, the *Among* system, which is a kinship-based education system that prevents compulsion and punishment of students because it will only generate fear and hinder students' ability to develop their own skills.

According to research conducted by Taufikin and Lift Anis Ma'shumah (2021) stated that the *Merdeka Belajar* policy proclaimed by Minister of Education and Culture Nadiem Makarim is the idea of Ki Hajar Dewantara's thoughts, and there is harmony between the concept of *Merdeka Belajar* and the concept of education of Ki Hajar Dewantara. Both notions highlight educational institutions' freedom and flexibility in exploring the full potential of students, who by nature have a wide range of talents and abilities.

The Indonesian government's *Merdeka Belajar* policy is a fairly radical approach to education. Because *Merdeka Belajar* necessitates a significant transformation from the old to the new educational system. This transformation is unquestionably clearing the way for Indonesian education to make greater, more

advanced, and better breakthroughs in the future. However, there is no denying that education stakeholders will encounter many challenges in making the transition from the old curriculum to the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

According to Kasmawati's research (2021) entitled “Persepsi Guru dalam Konsep Pendidikan (Studi pada Penerapan Merdeka Belajar di SMA Negeri 5 Takalar)”, the misunderstanding that teachers, students, and parents have about the concept of *Merdeka Belajar* becomes an obstacle in the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar*. Furthermore, the lack of accessible facilities in the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* obstructs the learning process' aims.

This contrasts from Widyastuti (2020) in study entitled “Persepsi Guru tentang Konsep Merdeka Belajar Mendikbud Nadiem Makarim dalam Pendidikan Agama Islam di Mts Negeri 3 Sleman”, which found that teachers reacted positively to *Merdeka Belajar*. This development has sparked a lot of excitement among teachers. But, teachers, on the other hand, encounter challenges in implementing the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum, such as the lack of structural rules from the government in the production of lesson plans and issues with inadequate learning facilities for students. But, schools, on the other hand, are capable of taking the appropriate actions to address the issues they encounter.

Then, in a study conducted by Yuhastina et al. (2020) entitled “Sociology Teachers' Opportunities and Challenges in Facing Merdeka Belajar Curriculum in Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industri 4.0)”, stated that one of the challenges teachers had in implementing the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum was a lack of understanding of the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum procedures. There is no knowledge of the paradigm utilized by the teacher in the teaching process,

particularly the transition from the pedagogical to the andagogical paradigm. Furthermore, students are dependent on teachers as a result of the educational paradigm's effect. Last, teachers and schools must contend with infrastructure issues as well as students' socio-economic status in order to have access to education.

Based on previous study on the many issues that education stakeholders have encountered in implementing the *Merdeka Belajar* policy. The main obstacle, in the researcher's opinion, is the extent of the older curriculum's (KBM) impact, which has profoundly shaped the paradigm and practice of the government, educational units, educators, and parents/guardians of students. Suryaman (2020) found that the learning system in the curriculum only contains material in the form of courses in the form of face-to-face and practical, but no formulation of learning models established in the curriculum like in SN-Dikti. So that, information on student-centered learning and activities, such as face-to-face, independent assignments, structured assignments, the nature of learning, and end-of-semester assessments, is only included in the curriculum, learning techniques, and assessment systems that have been prepared. However, the development and evaluation of creative learning has not yet been done. So that, the curriculum now basically consists of a list of courses with no other components to serve as a foundation for implementation.

This assumption indicates that the curriculum not only contains objectives to be achieved, but also provides students with a knowledge of the learning process. Teachers, as the driving force behind this curriculum change, must transition their teaching paradigms and methods from the old curriculum to the

new curriculum pattern. Teachers can no longer educate in the traditional manner, that is, as a source of knowledge, because insight can now be easily gained through the media. To respond to these developments, teachers need the correct strategy. There should be no gap between the current situation and the way teachers teach as much as possible. That is, from a learning perspective, the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum develops a strong foundation for integrating and meaningfully connecting the components of learning to produce graduates who are superior and empowered internationally.

As a conclusion, we require a system that can assist teachers in making the transition from the old learning system to the *Merdeka Belajar* learning system. As a reason, the researcher proposes the relevance of the *Merdeka Belajar* learning system and the *Among* System Ki Hajar Dewantara in this study. Because the *Among* system is a notion formed from the cultural roots of the Indonesian people, the researcher assumes that it can be an implementable concept in successfully transitioning to the *Merdeka Belajar* system. And one of the concepts presented in the *Among* system is an education system based on the principle of kinship, which can be a good way to encourage and guide students' growth and development in accordance with their country's cultural identity. If it is related to the context of education in Indonesia, education stakeholders should be able to apply the concept that liberates students as human beings who are born with their particular advantages without being pressed by anything outside of their identity.

The purpose of the research is to open a discourse that the *Merdeka Belajar* learning system can be applied efficiently and sustainably using the *Among*

system.

B. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Based on the background of the study, the researcher purposes some following questions:

1. How was Ki Hajar Dewantara's perspective on the *Among* system?
2. How is the *Merdeka Belajar* learning system's concept?
3. How is the relevance between the *Among* Ki Hajar Dewantara system and the *Merdeka Belajar* learning system's concept?

C. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

Based on the problem the study, the general purpose of the research are:

1. To describe the perspective of the *Among* system according to Ki Hajar Dewantara
2. To describe the concept of the *Merdeka Belajar* learning system
3. To find out the relevance between the concept of the *Among* system of Ki Hajar Dewantara's thoughts and the differences and similarities of the *Merdeka Belajar* system of Nadhim Makarim

D. RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

The findings of this study provides many meanings, especially for theoretical and practical.

1. Theoretical
 - a. Increase knowledge about the importance of improving the quality of the

learning system with the concept of the *Among* system.

- b. The findings of this study are anticipated to provide a significant contribution to all science observers' understanding of how to implement the *Merdeka Belajar* learning system based on the *Among* system in schools.

2. Practical

a. For Researcher

To enhance the researcher's knowledge about the learning system of *Merdeka Belajar* based on the *Among* system according to Ki Hajar Dewantara

b. For School

- a) Knowing the *Merdeka Belajar* learning system based on the *Among* system.
- b) Can provide high-quality education through the *Among* system for the *Merdeka Belajar* learning system, and it is expected that this will contribute to a better *Merdeka Belajar* learning system.
- c) Can be used as a source of information and a point of reference for the implementation of the *Among* system in school learning activities.

c. For Readers

With this research study, it is hoped that it can contribute and increase knowledge about the *Merdeka Belajar* learning system based on Ki Hajar Dewantara's *Among* system of thought.

d. For Next Researcher

Adding insight for other researchers about the results of reseracher and can be used for further research.

E. SCOPE AND LIMITATION

Based on the identification of the problem and limitation of the problem above, not all problems are studies, so that study is more focused and in-depth, so that this problem will be limited to the relevance of the *Among* system of Ki Hajar Dewantara's though with the concept of the *Merdeka Belajar* learning system in terms of the position of students and the role of the teacher in learning, and the learning model and objectives of the learning system.