



[DOI: 10.61650/ajis.v3i2.1177](https://doi.org/10.61650/ajis.v3i2.1177)

## ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum in Fiqh Learning at MTs Darul A'mal Metro City

Ahmad Saiful Bahri<sup>1\*</sup>, Jaenullah<sup>1</sup>, Sunarto<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Ma'arif Lampung, Indonesia

Correspondence: saifulahmad979@gmail.com

Article History: Received: 12 April 2024 • Revised: 05 Dec 2024 • Accepted: 15 Jan 2025

• Published: 31 Des 2025

## ABSTRACT

The implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in Fiqh learning at MTs Darul A'mal Metro City faces challenges related to limited resources and teacher readiness. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in Fiqh learning at MTs Darul A'mal Metro City. The research employs a qualitative approach with a case study type. Primary data sources are Fiqh subject teachers and students, while secondary data are obtained from documentation. Data collection is conducted through in-depth interviews and documentation, with data analysis using data reduction, data display, and verification/conclusion drawing. The results show that the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum is carried out through five strategies: (1) encouraging students' internal motivation by connecting Fiqh material with daily life; (2) implementing student-centered learning with teachers as facilitators; (3) increasing student participation through case studies, simulations, and discussions; (4) connecting material with broader community interests; and (5) creating challenging learning environments and tasks. This study concludes that the implementation of Merdeka Belajar in Fiqh learning effectively improves students' motivation, understanding, and participation significantly.

**Keywords:** Merdeka Curriculum, Fiqh Learning, Curriculum Implementation, Student-Centered Learning



## ABSTRAK

Implementasi kurikulum Merdeka Belajar dalam pembelajaran Fiqih di MTs Darul A'mal Kota Metro menghadapi tantangan terkait keterbatasan sumber daya dan kesiapan guru. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis implementasi kurikulum Merdeka Belajar pada pembelajaran Fiqih di MTs Darul A'mal Kota Metro. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis studi kasus. Sumber data primer adalah guru mata pelajaran Fiqih dan siswa, sedangkan data sekunder diperoleh dari dokumentasi. Pengumpulan data melalui wawancara mendalam dan dokumentasi, dengan analisis data menggunakan reduksi data, penyajian data, dan verifikasi/penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan implementasi kurikulum Merdeka Belajar dilakukan melalui lima strategi: (1) mendorong motivasi internal siswa dengan menghubungkan materi Fiqih dengan kehidupan sehari-hari; (2) penerapan pembelajaran berpusat pada siswa dengan guru sebagai fasilitator; (3) peningkatan partisipasi siswa melalui studi kasus, simulasi, dan diskusi; (4) menghubungkan materi dengan kepentingan komunitas yang lebih luas; dan (5) menciptakan lingkungan dan tugas belajar yang menantang. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa implementasi Merdeka Belajar dalam pembelajaran Fiqih efektif meningkatkan motivasi, pemahaman, dan partisipasi siswa secara signifikan.

Kata Kunci: Kurikulum Merdeka, Pembelajaran Fiqih, Implementasi Kurikulum, Pembelajaran Berpusat pada Siswa

**How to cite:** Bahri, A. S., Jaenullah, J., & Sunarto, S. (2025). Implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum in Fiqh Learning at MTs Darul A'mal Metro City. *Assyfa Journal of Islamic Studies*, 3(2), 517-529. <https://doi.org/10.61650/ajis.v3i2.1177>

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Merdeka Belajar program was launched by the Indonesian government during the COVID-19 pandemic as a transformative educational paradigm aimed at addressing long-standing weaknesses in the national education system. This initiative represents a fundamental shift from traditional, examination-oriented learning toward a more holistic approach that emphasizes student autonomy, critical thinking, and joyful learning experiences (Rahmat, 2021; Martini et al., 2021). The program's philosophical foundation rests on the belief that students should have the freedom and independence to think creatively, learn without undue stress, and develop competencies that are relevant to their lives and future aspirations (Lidi, 2021; Mulyasa, 2021).

The urgency of educational reform in Indonesia is underscored by alarming international assessment results. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2019 report placed Indonesia in the sixth position from the bottom, ranking 74th out of 79 countries in mathematics and literacy competencies (Martini et al., 2021). This poor performance reflects systemic issues in curriculum design, teaching methodologies, and learning outcomes that have persisted for decades. The Merdeka Belajar policy, introduced by Minister of Education and Culture Nadiem Anwar Makarim, comprises four core policy changes: the restructuring of the National Standard School Examination (USBN), the elimination of the National Examination (UN), simplification of lesson plans (RPP), and revision of student admission zoning regulations (Rahmat, 2021; Mulyasa, 2021).

The Merdeka Belajar curriculum represents a paradigm shift from teacher-centered to student-centered learning, emphasizing the development of critical thinking, creativity, and character

formation. According to Yamin and Syahrir (2020), the concept embodies freedom of thought, innovation, independent and creative learning, and the pursuit of happiness in education. This approach aligns with constructivist learning theory, which posits that meaningful learning occurs when students actively construct knowledge through experience and reflection rather than passively receiving information (Nadiroh, 2020; Yasmansyah & Sesmiarni, 2022). The curriculum emphasizes project-based learning, differentiated instruction, and authentic assessment that evaluates cognitive, affective, and spiritual aspects holistically (Cholilah et al., 2023; Anwar, 2022).

The implementation of Merdeka Belajar in Islamic education, particularly in Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) learning, presents unique opportunities and challenges. Fiqh education traditionally emphasizes memorization of legal rulings and ritual procedures, often resulting in superficial understanding and limited practical application (Desfiona, 2025; Astuti et al., 2024). The Merdeka curriculum encourages a more contextual and student-oriented approach, where students explore the relevance of Islamic legal principles to contemporary life and develop critical reasoning skills (Muhaimin, 2014; Baharuddin, 2021). This transformation requires teachers to shift from being knowledge transmitters to facilitators who guide students in constructing their own understanding (E. Mulyasa, 2021; Asfiati, 2023).

Previous research on Merdeka Belajar implementation has examined various aspects of this educational reform. Septi (2021) investigated literacy-based Merdeka learning planning in science education, focusing on inside and outside classroom learning activities. Kasmawati (2021) explored teacher perceptions of the Merdeka concept at SMA Negeri 5 Takalar, identifying limited understanding among teachers, students, and parents as a significant obstacle. Studies specifically addressing Islamic education include research on Merdeka curriculum implementation in PAI (Islamic Religious Education) character formation (Cholilah et al., 2023) and in primary schools (Hasibuan et al., 2022). However, most existing studies have focused on general education contexts or have not specifically examined the implementation of Merdeka Belajar in Fiqh learning at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah level.

Field observations at MTs Darul A'mal Metro City conducted on September 12, 2023, revealed that while teachers and students were aware of the Merdeka Belajar program, they had not fully adapted to its demands. Teachers reported difficulties in developing learning models that inspire students to ask questions and seek answers based on their needs. The program was perceived as inadequately prepared, with limited technical guidance available for implementation. Furthermore, the Merdeka Belajar program requires robust online learning platforms, yet internet access remains uneven, particularly in rural areas, creating disparities in access to internet-based learning resources. These challenges highlight the gap between policy intentions and on-the-ground realities.

The research gap addressed by this study lies in the limited empirical evidence on how the Merdeka Belajar curriculum is actually implemented in Fiqh learning within the specific context of Islamic madrasahs. While policy documents and theoretical frameworks abound, there is insufficient understanding of the practical strategies, challenges, and outcomes of implementation at the school level. This study fills this gap by providing a detailed case study of MTs Darul A'mal Metro City, examining how teachers translate Merdeka principles into classroom practices and how students experience this new approach to Fiqh learning.

The novelty of this research lies in its comprehensive examination of five key implementation strategies: (1) encouraging internal motivation through connecting Fiqh material with daily life; (2) implementing student-centered learning with teachers as facilitators; (3) increasing student participation through diverse methods; (4) connecting material with broader community interests; and (5) creating challenging learning environments and tasks. This framework provides a holistic understanding of Merdeka Belajar implementation that extends beyond isolated aspects of curriculum reform.

This research addresses the central question: "How is the Merdeka Belajar curriculum implemented in Fiqh learning at MTs Darul A'mal Metro City?" The study aims to describe and analyze the implementation strategies, identify supporting and inhibiting factors, and provide recommendations for improving the quality of Fiqh learning. The findings are expected to contribute to academic literature on Islamic education reform, provide practical insights for teachers and school administrators, and inform policy development at local and national levels.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

---

This research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design. Qualitative research is defined as a procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior (Moleong, 2018; Rukin, 2019). The case study method was selected because it enables in-depth investigation of a particular event, environment, or situation, allowing the researcher to understand the phenomenon being studied comprehensively (Albi Anggito & Johan Setiawan, 2018; Maryam B. Gainau, 2021). This approach is appropriate for examining the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in Fiqh learning at MTs Darul A'mal Metro City, as it allows for detailed exploration of the strategies, challenges, and outcomes of implementation in their natural context.

The research was conducted at MTs Darul A'mal Metro City, located in Mulyoati Village, Metro Barat District, Metro City. This madrasah was established in 1987 under the Darul A'mal Islamic Boarding School Foundation and has been accredited "A" by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The school has 1,133 students across grades VII, VIII, and IX, with 55 teaching staff. The selection of this location was based on several considerations: the school's established reputation in Islamic education, its ongoing implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, and the researcher's access to the school community. The madrasah serves as a representative case for examining Merdeka curriculum implementation in Islamic education settings.

Data sources in this research are classified into primary and secondary sources. Primary sources are those that directly provide data to the data collector (Sugiyono, 2020; Mohammad Ali, 2022). Using purposive sampling technique, the primary informants were selected based on specific criteria: the Fiqh subject teachers who are directly responsible for implementing the Merdeka curriculum, and students who experience the learning process firsthand. This technique was chosen because it allows the researcher to select informants who have deep knowledge and involvement with the research problem (Bungin, 2020; Rukin, 2019). The primary informants included two Fiqh teachers and three students from different grade levels, ensuring diverse perspectives on the implementation process. Secondary sources are those that indirectly provide data to the collector, such as through documents or other people (Sugiyono, 2020). These included lesson plans (RPP),

syllabi, teaching materials, school profiles, and documentation photographs. The use of secondary sources enriched the data by providing contextual information and enabling cross-checking of findings from primary sources.

Data collection employed two main instruments: in-depth interviews and documentation. Interviews were conducted using an unstructured interview guide containing only the main points to be asked, allowing for flexible and in-depth exploration of informants' perspectives (Albi Anggito & Johan Setiawan, 2018; Maryam B. Gainau, 2021). Interviews were conducted with Fiqh teachers and students to gather data on their understanding of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, implementation strategies used, challenges faced, and perceived outcomes. Documentation involved collecting relevant documents including RPP, syllabi, teaching materials, and photographs of learning activities (Rukin, 2019; Mohammad Ali, 2022).

Data validity was ensured through source triangulation, which involves cross-checking information obtained from one data source against another (Albi Anggito & Johan Setiawan, 2018; Sugiyono, 2020). This technique was implemented by comparing interview data from teachers and students, and by cross-referencing interview findings with documentary evidence. Triangulation helps establish the credibility of findings by ensuring that interpretations are grounded in multiple perspectives and sources of evidence.

Data analysis followed the interactive model consisting of three concurrent activities: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles & Huberman, 2014; Rukin, 2019). Data reduction involved summarizing, selecting essential information, focusing on important aspects, identifying themes and patterns, and discarding unnecessary data. Data display involved presenting the reduced data in a systematic manner to facilitate understanding and interpretation. Conclusion drawing and verification involved synthesizing findings and confirming their validity through triangulation and member checking. The analysis was conducted iteratively throughout the research process, with findings continuously refined as new data emerged.

### 3. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

---

#### 3.1 Encouraging Internal Motivation in Fiqh Learning

The implementation of Merdeka Belajar in Fiqh learning at MTs Darul A'mal begins with efforts to foster students' internal motivation. Teachers help students connect Fiqh material with personal values and daily life, moving beyond the traditional emphasis on grades and rankings. According to Umi Salamah, a Fiqh teacher, understanding religious laws helps students navigate daily life and develops motivation from within. For example, studying zakat laws helps students develop generosity and empathy toward those in need, while understanding purification from najis and hadas, prayer, and funeral management demonstrates the practical relevance of Fiqh principles.

*"I try to encourage students to understand Fiqh concepts deeply, not just memorize them. Understanding concepts is more important than memorization. The main goal of learning is not just absorbing information but understanding its implications." — Umi Salamah, Fiqh Teacher*

Students reported that their internal motivation grew as they recognized the relevance of Fiqh material to their daily lives. Maratus Shidiqiyyah explained that understanding the connection between Fiqh material and everyday practices and obligations increased awareness of its benefits. Aulia noted that teachers create challenging yet supportive learning environments where students feel motivated to learn and overcome assigned tasks. Muazamah initially considered Fiqh less important than other subjects but became more motivated after seeing its relevance and benefits.

Teachers employ various strategies to enhance motivation, including offering diverse assignment options. After studying a Fiqh concept, students can choose between creating educational posters about funeral prayer procedures, giving presentations on topics of interest, or writing poems related to Fiqh material such as zakat and infaq. This flexibility aligns with the Merdeka principle of accommodating individual student interests and learning preferences.

Najmu Renata highlighted that flexible learning approaches, with emphasis on understanding and practice rather than memorization, encourage motivation. Teachers promote collaboration through group assignments and discussions about community cases requiring solutions. For example, students analyze the phenomenon of loan sharks (*rentenir*) in society, discussing its negative impacts and researching causes and effects using diverse sources including articles, news, and community observations. Students then engage in simulations, discussions, presentations, and report writing.

### 3.2 Student-Centered Learning

The Merdeka Belajar perspective emphasizes student-centered learning, where students are given autonomy in their learning process. Teachers shift from focusing on grades and rankings to emphasizing deep understanding and the learning process itself. According to Umi Salamah, in the Merdeka context, learning objectives focus on understanding, reflection, and application of Fiqh concepts in daily life rather than final results in the form of grades.

*"The demands of Merdeka Belajar have changed my teaching approach. I no longer burden students with grades, memorization, and tasks that make them bored. The focus is on giving students freedom to explore creative and independent thinking." — Ahmad Roudul Akhyar, Fiqh Teacher*

Students are given choices to explore topics that interest them personally, such as zakat, fasting, or daily life laws. Teachers provide guidance and relevant resources, but responsibility for understanding and exploration rests with students. During the exploration process, teachers provide support and facilitate group discussions or individual reflections to help students gain deeper understanding. Students then present their findings orally or in writing, sharing their discoveries and understanding.

In practice, students work in small groups with assigned roles to achieve common goals. For example, students study and present Fiqh topics about funeral management, then compile materials to share with other students. Maratus Shidiqiyyah described how collaborative learning enriches the learning experience. Khanum Muazamah expressed initial concerns about the responsibility given but was willing to try with adequate teacher support. Najmu Renata showed enthusiasm for



exploring Fiqh topics of interest, particularly enjoying discussions about how Fiqh principles apply to daily life.

### **3.3 Student Participation and Relevance of Material to Daily Life**

In the Merdeka Belajar framework, students are encouraged not only to receive but also to manage their own learning process. Teachers create learning environments that facilitate active student participation, enhance understanding of Fiqh concepts, and motivate students to engage maximally. Umi Salamah begins with class discussions by asking students why studying particular Fiqh topics is important, stimulating curiosity through concept maps and illustrations of topics being studied.

For example, when studying *riba* (usury), teachers present concept maps defining *riba* and its types, along with illustrations of *riba*'s negative impacts on daily life such as worsening economic inequality and hindering economic growth. Students are invited to analyze examples and Fiqh problems in society and plan actions based on learned principles. This approach helps students understand the relevance of Fiqh to their lives and communities.

Teachers use simulations and role-playing to help students understand Fiqh concepts practically. Students are asked to play specific roles in situations simulating real-life scenarios or cases related to Fiqh principles. For instance, students simulate funeral management procedures, from washing and shrouding to burial according to Islamic teachings, then create practical guides. Through these practical experiences, students internalize and understand Fiqh concepts more deeply than through text reading or lectures alone.

Students reported that simulations helped them understand how Fiqh principles apply to real situations. When analyzing *riba* through simulation, students felt more engaged and understood the consequences of usury practices practically. This helps students see the importance of understanding *riba* in Fiqh to maintain correct application of Fiqh in daily life.

### **3.4 Broader Community Interests**

In the Merdeka Belajar perspective, teachers are responsible for bringing learning to deeper levels relevant to the real world. According to Umi Salamah, presenting facts about applying Fiqh principles provides strong examples that Islamic teachings bring benefits and help solve social problems or justice issues. Topics like *zakat*, *qurban*, *qirad*, and *riba* are discussed using concrete examples to help students understand relevance and importance.

Teachers conduct discussions about social values in Fiqh, inviting students to consider how Fiqh principles can contribute to building better communities. Discussions cover social values such as justice, empathy, solidarity, and social responsibility contained in Fiqh teachings, and how these values are important for community welfare. This helps students develop broader understanding that Islamic teachings guide better social life.

Students are encouraged to observe or research social realities around them. Teachers invite students to collectively analyze social problems faced by communities and how Fiqh principles

can provide guidance or solutions. Maratus Shidiqiyyah described how teachers invite students to observe community cases relevant to Fiqh material such as zakat, qurban, aqiqah, and buying and selling, then discuss findings in class. This makes students more understanding of the material and its social impacts.

Students are given assignments to write reports about various Fiqh topics occurring in their environment, such as qurban, aqiqah, debt, and borrowing. They choose topics of interest, conduct observations and interviews with community figures, then compile reports covering observation results, relevance of topics to community needs and practices, and applicable suggestions for improving understanding and practice of Fiqh in daily life.

### **3.5 Challenging Learning Environment and Tasks**

In the Merdeka Curriculum era, designing learning environments and tasks that provide challenges is essential for creating meaningful learning experiences. Teachers use simulations or role-playing to help students understand Fiqh concepts practically. In decision-making simulations in Fiqh contexts, students are given roles as community members or religious figures who must make decisions about religious issues in society, such as purification, zakat, congregational prayers, considering guidance from Fiqh.

Project-based tasks enable students to apply Fiqh concepts in contexts relevant to their daily lives. For example, students design charity programs or social campaigns based on Fiqh principles. Teachers begin by providing deep understanding of Fiqh principles relevant to charity and social issues, such as zakat, charity, social justice, and empathy toward others.

Challenging tasks include debate or ethics discussion sessions about riba and loan sharks. Students are divided into two teams to debate ethical issues related to riba in modern finance. One team argues that riba is unethical and contradicts Islamic values, while the other argues that riba is an important part of modern financial systems necessary for economic growth. Each team compiles arguments, references, and expert opinions, defending their positions logically and ethically.

Other challenging tasks include simulation of decision-making about pawnshop practices in communities. Students are given roles as item owners needing cash and others as lenders using items as collateral. Students make ethical decisions based on Fiqh principles they have learned, considering impacts on parties involved in pawn transactions. Each student presents arguments and defends their position in negotiations.

Students reported that various tasks from teachers provided challenges because they had to prepare and present strong arguments, develop critical thinking skills, and deepen understanding of Fiqh concepts. Maratus Shidiqiyyah noted that debate tasks required extensive preparation and research. Muazamah found simulation tasks challenging because they required applying theoretical knowledge to practical situations. Najmu Renata appreciated how challenging tasks developed critical thinking and problem-solving skills while deepening Fiqh understanding.



## 4. DISCUSSION

---

The findings of this study demonstrate that the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in Fiqh learning at MTs Darul A'mal Metro City encompasses five interconnected strategies that collectively transform the learning experience. These strategies align with the core principles of the Merdeka Belajar framework, which emphasizes student autonomy, relevance to real life, and holistic development (Rahmat, 2021; Lidi, 2021). The shift from teacher-centered to student-centered learning represents a fundamental pedagogical transformation that has been documented in other Islamic education contexts (Astuti et al., 2024; Muslimin, 2023).

The emphasis on internal motivation aligns with self-determination theory, which posits that intrinsic motivation flourishes when students experience autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Cents-Boonstra et al., 2021). By connecting Fiqh material to students' daily lives and personal values, teachers at MTs Darul A'mal foster autonomous motivation that sustains engagement beyond external rewards. This approach addresses a critical limitation of traditional Fiqh education, which often relies on extrinsic motivation through grades and examinations (Muhaimin, 2014; Desfiona, 2025). The finding that students' motivation increased when they recognized the practical relevance of Fiqh principles supports the contextual teaching and learning approach advocated in Merdeka curriculum guidelines (Yamin & Syahrir, 2020; Anwar, 2022).

Student-centered learning implementation at MTs Darul A'mal reflects a significant departure from the traditional "one-size-fits-all" approach that has dominated Islamic education (Desfiona, 2025; Astuti et al., 2024). Teachers acting as facilitators rather than knowledge transmitters enables students to take ownership of their learning, consistent with constructivist learning theory (Yasmansyah & Sesmiarni, 2022; Nadiroh, 2020). The provision of choice in topics and assignment formats accommodates diverse student interests and learning preferences, which has been identified as a key factor in successful Merdeka implementation (Cholilah et al., 2023; Anwar, 2022). However, some students expressed initial anxiety about increased responsibility, suggesting that the transition to student-centered learning requires careful scaffolding and ongoing support.

The use of case studies, simulations, and discussions to enhance student participation demonstrates the application of active learning pedagogies that have been shown to improve understanding and retention (Ikhwan, 2017; Ratna et al., 2023). These methods enable students to connect abstract Fiqh principles with concrete situations, addressing the common criticism that Islamic legal education remains too theoretical and disconnected from practice (Muhaimin, 2014; Baharuddin, 2021). The finding that students appreciated simulations of funeral management and riba cases indicates the effectiveness of experiential learning in making Fiqh relevant and meaningful. This aligns with research by Desfiona (2025) who found that differentiated instruction through varied activities significantly enhanced student engagement and understanding in Fiqh classes.

Connecting Fiqh learning to broader community interests reflects the Merdeka principle of developing students as socially responsible individuals (Mulyasa, 2021; Nadiroh, 2020). By engaging students in analyzing community issues such as zakat distribution, qurban practices, and loan shark problems, teachers foster awareness of Islamic values as guidance for social life. This

approach develops not only cognitive understanding but also character and moral reasoning, which are central goals of Islamic education (Asfiati, 2023; Muslimin, 2023). The integration of community-based learning addresses the Pancasila Student Profile emphasis on gotong royong (mutual cooperation) and social responsibility (Cholilah et al., 2023; Anwar, 2022).

The creation of challenging learning environments and tasks represents an important dimension of Merdeka implementation that distinguishes it from previous curriculum approaches. Rather than simplifying content, the Merdeka curriculum encourages intellectual challenge through problem-based and project-based learning (Monalisa & Irfan, 2023; Nisfa et al., 2022). The debate tasks and ethical decision-making simulations reported by students develop higher-order thinking skills including analysis, evaluation, and synthesis (Pratycia et al., 2023; Tumpul, 2022). These challenging tasks prepare students for complex real-world situations where Islamic legal principles must be applied with nuanced understanding.

The findings contribute to understanding how Merdeka Belajar addresses the learning crisis identified by PISA results and other assessments (Martini et al., 2021; Nugraha, 2022). By moving beyond rote memorization and examination preparation, the Merdeka approach develops competencies that are relevant to students' lives and future aspirations. The emphasis on internal motivation, active participation, and community connection addresses the disengagement that has characterized much of Indonesian education (Daga, 2021; Efendi et al., 2023). However, the challenges reported by teachers regarding limited resources and technical guidance echo findings from other studies (Kasmawati, 2021; Hasibuan et al., 2022), suggesting that successful implementation requires systemic support beyond individual school efforts.

The study reveals that implementing Merdeka Belajar in Fiqh learning requires teachers to possess not only content knowledge but also pedagogical skills in facilitation, differentiation, and authentic assessment. This finding aligns with research by Monalisa and Irfan (2023) who identified teacher readiness as a critical factor in Merdeka implementation. The teachers at MTs Darul A'mal demonstrated creativity in adapting teaching materials and methods despite infrastructure limitations, consistent with findings from other Islamic schools (Astuti et al., 2024; Desfiona, 2025). This suggests that teacher agency and commitment are crucial determinants of implementation success, regardless of resource constraints.

The integration of character education and spiritual development within the Merdeka framework represents a distinctive feature of Islamic education contexts. The findings show that Fiqh learning at MTs Darul A'mal goes beyond legalistic understanding to encompass moral and spiritual formation, consistent with the goals of Islamic education (Muhaimin, 2014; Asfiati, 2023). By connecting Fiqh principles to empathy, social responsibility, and ethical decision-making, teachers address the holistic development emphasized in the Pancasila Student Profile and Islamic educational philosophy (Anwar, 2022; Muslimin, 2023). This integration distinguishes Merdeka implementation in religious schools from general education contexts.

The study also identifies challenges that mirror those documented in broader Merdeka implementation research. These include limited reference materials specific to Merdeka Fiqh learning, uneven teacher preparedness, and the need for ongoing professional development (Cholilah et al., 2023; Sumantri, 2024). The finding that teachers still use 2013 Curriculum books

due to limited Merdeka-specific resources indicates a gap between policy and practice that requires attention from curriculum developers and textbook publishers (Core.ac.uk, 2025). The availability of the Sikurma platform (Merdeka Curriculum platform from the Ministry of Religious Affairs) has not fully addressed these needs, suggesting the need for more comprehensive support systems.

The theoretical implications of this study extend to understanding how educational reform initiatives are translated into practice in specific institutional contexts. The findings support the view that curriculum implementation is not a simple top-down process but involves active interpretation and adaptation by teachers (Arifin, 2025; Sanjaya, 2012). The strategies developed by Fiqh teachers at MTs Darul A'mal represent local innovations that respond to student needs, community contexts, and resource availability. This grass-roots adaptation is consistent with the decentralized spirit of Merdeka Belajar, which allows schools flexibility in implementation (Rahmat, 2021; Lidi, 2021). The study contributes to understanding how global educational reform trends are localized within specific cultural and religious contexts.

Practical implications for Islamic schools include the need for sustained teacher professional development focused on facilitation skills, differentiated instruction, and authentic assessment. Schools should invest in developing Merdeka-specific teaching materials and resources, including modules, case studies, and assessment tools relevant to Fiqh learning. Collaboration between schools through subject teacher forums (MGMP) can facilitate sharing of best practices and materials. School leaders play a crucial role in creating supportive conditions for implementation, including providing adequate facilities, encouraging teacher innovation, and maintaining regular monitoring and evaluation.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

---

This study concludes that the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum in Fiqh learning at MTs Darul A'mal Metro City is carried out through five interconnected strategies: encouraging internal motivation by connecting Fiqh material with daily life; implementing student-centered learning with teachers as facilitators; increasing student participation through case studies, simulations, discussions, and direct observation; connecting material with broader community interests; and creating challenging learning environments and tasks.

Students' internal learning motivation develops as they become aware of the relevance of Fiqh material to their daily lives. Student-centered learning provides valuable learning experiences, placing students at the center of the learning process with teachers acting as facilitators who support exploration and understanding. Within the Merdeka framework, students are encouraged to manage their own learning processes, plan goals, and understand material relevance. Fiqh teachers encourage student participation through strategies such as case studies, simulations, social values discussions, and direct observation, connecting Fiqh principles to real situations.

## 6. REFERENCES

---

Albi Anggito, & Johan Setiawan. (2018). *Metodologi penelitian kualitatif*. Jejak Publisher.

- Anwar, R. (2022). Media sosial sebagai inovasi pada model PjBL dalam implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka. *Inovasi Kurikulum*, 19(2), 239–250. <https://doi.org/10.17509/jik.v19i2.44230>
- Arifin, M. (2025). *Buku Ajar Kurikulum (Teori, Konsep dan Implementasi)*. UMSU Press.
- Asfiati. (2023). *Inovasi Kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam Di Sekolah Dan Madrasah*. Prenada Media.
- Astuti, M., Ismail, F., Fatimah, S., Puspita, W., & Herlina. (2024). The Relevance Of The Merdeka Curriculum In Improving The Quality Of Islamic Education In Indonesia. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research*, 23(6), 56–72. <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.23.6.3>
- Baharuddin. (2021). *Studi Kebijakan Pendidikan Agama Islam*. Media Nusa Creative MNC Publishing.
- Bungin, B. (2020). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. Rajawali Press.
- Cents-Boonstra, M., Lichtwarck-Aschoff, A., Denessen, E., Aelterman, N., & Haerens, L. (2021). Fostering student engagement with motivating teaching: an observation study of teacher and student behaviours. *Research Papers in Education*, 36(6), 754–779. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2020.1767184>
- Cholilah, M., et al. (2023). Pengembangan Kurikulum Merdeka Dalam Satuan Pendidikan Serta Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Pada Pembelajaran Abad 21. *Sanskara Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran*, 1(02), 56–67. <https://doi.org/10.58812/spp.v1i02.110>
- Daga, A. T. (2021). Makna Merdeka Belajar dan Penguatan Peran Guru di Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Educatio FKIP UNMA*, 7(3), 1075–1090. <https://doi.org/10.31949/educatio.v7i3.1279>
- Desfiona, D. (2025). Differentiated Instruction in Islamic Jurisprudence (Fiqh) under the Merdeka Curriculum: A Case Study at MTs Muhammadiyah Tanjung Ampalu. *Ruhama*, 8(1). <https://jurnal.umsb.ac.id/index.php/ruhama/article/view/7257/>
- Efendi, N., et al. (2023). *Pembelajaran Mikroteaching di Sekolah Dasar/Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*. Amerta Media.
- Hasibuan, et al. (2022). Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka di Sekolah Penggerak SDN 104231 Sugiharjo Kecamatan Batang Kuis. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Konseling*, 4(6).
- Ikhwan, A. (2017). Metode Simulasi Pembelajaran dalam Perspektif Islam. *Istawa: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 2(2), 1. <https://doi.org/10.24269/ijpi.v2i2.623>
- Kasmawati. (2021). Persepsi Guru Dalam Konsep Pendidikan (Studi Pada Penerapan Merdeka Belajar di SMA Negeri 5 Takalar). *Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar*.
- Lidi, Y. (2021). *Merdeka Belajar Dalam Praktik Pengajaran*. Yayasan Lembaga Gumun Indonesia.
- Martini, M., et al. (2021). *Membangun Pembelajaran Merdeka Belajar Dan Kampus Merdeka Di Pendidikan Tinggi*. Media Sains Indonesia.
- Maryam B. Gainau. (2021). *Pengantar Metode Penelitian*. Kanisius.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

- Mohammad Ali. (2022). *Metodologi dan Aplikasi Riset Pendidikan*. Bumi Aksara.
- Moleong, L. J. (2018). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Monalisa, & Irfan, A. (2023). Tantangan Guru Dalam Menerapkan Kurikulum Merdeka. *Jurnal Basicedu*, 7(5), 3228–3233. <https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v7i5.6055>
- Muhaimin. (2014). *Pengembangan Kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam di Sekolah, Madrasah, dan Perguruan Tinggi*. Rajawali Press.
- Mulyasa, E. (2021). *Menjadi Guru Penggerak Merdeka Belajar*. Bumi Aksara.
- Muslimin, I. (2023). Konsep dan Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar pada Lembaga Pendidikan Islam. *Jurnal Administrasi Pendidikan Islam*, 5(1), 43–57.
- Nadiroh. (2020). *Merdeka Belajar Dalam Mencapai Indonesia Maju 2045*. UNJ Press.
- Nisfa, N. L., et al. (2022). Pengaruh Pendekatan Pembelajaran Project Based Learning (PjBL) Terhadap Kemampuan Sosial dan Emosi Anak. *Jurnal Obsesi*, 6(6), 5982–5995. <https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v6i6.3032>
- Nugraha. (2022). Kurikulum Merdeka untuk pemulihan krisis pembelajaran. *Inovasi Kurikulum*, 19(2), 251–262. <https://doi.org/10.17509/jik.v19i2.45301>
- Pratycia, A., et al. (2023). Analisis Perbedaan Kurikulum 2013 dengan Kurikulum Merdeka. *Jurnal Pendidikan Sains Dan Komputer*, 3(01), 58–64.
- Rahmat, A. (Ed.). (2021). *Merdeka Belajar*. Zahir Publishing.
- Ratna, A. A., et al. (2023). Peningkatan Daya Ingat Siswa SD Melalui Metode Simulasi. *Jurnal Citra Pendidikan Anak*, 2(1), 17–23.
- Rukin. (2019). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*. Yayasan Ahmar Cendekia Indonesia.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2020). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation from a self-determination theory perspective: Definitions, theory, practices, and future directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 61, 101860. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2020.101860>
- Sanjaya, W. (2012). *Kurikulum Dan Pembelajaran*. Kencana.
- Septi, Y. (2021). *Perencanaan Merdeka Belajar Berbasis Literasi Dalam Pembelajaran IPA di SMP Negeri 12 Sijunjung*. IAIN Batusangkar.
- Sugiyono. (2020). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D*. Alfabeta.
- Sumantri, A. E. (2024). Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar Pada Mata Pelajaran Fiqh di Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 6 Merangin. UIN Sulthan Thaha Saifuddin Jambi.
- Tumpul. (2022). Pengembangan Budaya dan Iklim Sekolah Berbasis Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar. *Jurnal Syntax Transformation*, 3(11), 1490–1497. <https://doi.org/10.46799/jst.v3i11.645>
- Yamin, M., & Syahrir, S. (2020). Pembangunan Pendidikan Merdeka Belajar (Telaah Metode Pembelajaran). *Jurnal Ilmiah Mandala Education*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.36312/jime.v6i1.1121>
- Yasmansyah, Y., & Sesmiarni, Z. (2022). Konsep Merdeka Belajar Kurikulum Merdeka. *Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu Pendidikan Indonesia*, 1(1), 29–34. <https://doi.org/10.31004/jpion.v1i1.12>