

**THE DYNAMICS OF STUDENT LEARNING BEHAVIOR  
IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MERDEKA CURRICULUM**

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**Abstract**

This study examines the dynamics of student learning behavior in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at MAN Bondowoso, focusing on cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Employing a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design, data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews with 12 participants (vice principal for curriculum, Islamic Education teachers, general subject teachers, and students), and documentation study. Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The findings reveal three main themes. First, in the cognitive aspect, differentiated and project-based learning enhanced students' conceptual understanding, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. Second, in the affective aspect, the reinforcement of the madrasah's religious culture and teacher role modeling fostered disciplined, responsible, and enthusiastic learning attitudes. Third, in the psychomotor aspect, active engagement in P5 activities, entrepreneurship bazaars, digital presentations, and religious practices developed students' creativity and practical skills. The changes in learning behavior were intentional, positive-active, and effective-functional, characterized by self-aware learning, active participation, and the ability to apply learning outcomes in daily life. The study also identified challenges including uneven teacher readiness, dynamic classroom management, limited facilities, and adaptation of affective assessment systems. Limitations of this study include its single-case context, limited duration, and scope of perspectives that require further expansion. This research recommends comparative and longitudinal studies, as well as the development of affective and psychomotor assessment instruments for future research.

**Keywords:** *Learning Behavior; Merdeka Curriculum; Cognitive; Affective; Psychomotor.*



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## Abstrak

*Penelitian ini mengkaji dinamika perilaku belajar siswa dalam implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka di MAN Bondowoso, dengan fokus pada aspek kognitif, afektif, dan psikomotorik. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus deskriptif, data dikumpulkan melalui observasi partisipatif, wawancara mendalam dengan 12 partisipan (wakil kurikulum, guru PAI, guru umum, dan siswa), serta studi dokumentasi. Analisis data mengikuti model interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan tiga tema utama. Pertama, pada aspek kognitif, pembelajaran berdiferensiasi dan berbasis proyek meningkatkan pemahaman konsep, berpikir kritis, dan kemampuan pemecahan masalah siswa. Kedua, pada aspek afektif, penguatan kultur religius madrasah dan keteladanan guru membentuk sikap disiplin, tanggung jawab, dan antusiasme belajar. Ketiga, pada aspek psikomotorik, keterlibatan aktif dalam kegiatan P5, bazar kewirausahaan, presentasi digital, dan praktik ibadah mengembangkan kreativitas dan keterampilan praktis siswa. Perubahan perilaku belajar bersifat intensional, positif-aktif, dan efektif-fungsional, di mana siswa belajar dengan kesadaran diri, berpartisipasi aktif, dan mampu mengaplikasikan hasil belajar dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Penelitian juga mengidentifikasi tantangan berupa kesiapan guru yang belum merata, pengelolaan kelas dinamis, keterbatasan sarana, dan adaptasi sistem penilaian afektif. Keterbatasan penelitian meliputi konteks kasus tunggal, durasi terbatas, dan cakupan perspektif yang perlu diperluas. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan studi komparatif, longitudinal, serta pengembangan instrumen penilaian afektif dan psikomotorik untuk riset lanjutan.*

**Kata Kunci:** *Perilaku Belajar; Kurikulum Merdeka; Kognitif; Afektif; Psikomotorik.*

## INTRODUCTION

Changes in the educational curriculum are often a major factor influencing student learning behavior (Sari et al., 2023). The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum launched by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology gives schools and teachers the freedom to design learning that is oriented towards the needs of students (Atmojo et al., 2024; Mulyasa, 2023; Nasrodin & Rofiq, 2025; Ramadhan et al., 2024). This curriculum emphasizes project-based learning, differentiated learning, and strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile (Hanifah et al., 2025). Before the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, MAN Bondowoso used the 2013 Curriculum, which placed greater emphasis on the structured achievement of basic competencies (Rafiqie & Irfan, 2024). This system tends to make students focus on academic targets and cognitive assessment (Habibi & Alfatani, 2023). The space for exploration, creativity, and independence among students is relatively limited, so that students' intrinsic

motivation has not developed optimally (Gumilar, 2025; Umamy et al., 2024). After the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, there have been significant changes in learning patterns. Teachers act as facilitators, while students are given the freedom to explore their potential. P5 activities, project-based learning, and the use of digital media encourage active student engagement.

Previous studies have highlighted the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum from various perspectives. Fadhilah et al. found that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum focuses on improving students' critical and creative thinking skills at the secondary school level (Fadhilah et al., 2025). Meanwhile, Innisa and Aliyyah highlighted teachers' practices in managing students' interest in learning (Innisa & Aliyyah, 2024), and Paays et al. examined the application of Differentiated Instruction as a key strategy in this curriculum (Paays et al., 2025). The implications of these studies confirm that the Merdeka Curriculum encourages pedagogical changes in teachers from instructors to facilitators. From the students' perspective, research shows that this curriculum has a positive impact on increasing students' intrinsic motivation and self-regulated learning abilities (Apriyanto, Al Haddar, et al., 2025; Tarumasely, 2024).

Although these studies make important contributions, most of them still focus on learning outcomes (products) and teacher teaching strategies, rather than on changes in student learning behavior itself as a psychological process. In fact, the shift from teacher-centered to student-centered learning should not only change the way teachers teach, but also fundamentally change the way students think, respond, and behave in learning (Suhirman et al., 2025). Educational psychology literature emphasizes that genuine learning behavior is reflected in attitudes toward learning, self-control (inhibition), affective involvement, and internalization of values (Gusmaneli et al., 2024; Suhirman et al., 2025). These factual and psychological dimensions are still rarely studied in the context of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, especially in Madrasah Aliyah environments, which have a distinctive religious culture (Rafiqie et al., 2025).

Based on these gaps, the objectives of this study are to 1) Describe changes in student learning behavior in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects after the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at MAN Bondowoso. 2) Analyze the characteristics of changes in student learning behavior (intentional, positive-active, effective-functional) in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at MAN Bondowoso. 3) Identify the challenges faced in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum related to changes in student learning behavior at MAN Bondowoso. By explicitly formulating these objectives, this study aims to fill the gap in research by directly and comprehensively examining the dynamics of student learning behavior

in three main aspects. The novelty of this research lies in the integration of aspects of motivation, self-regulation, and other psychological dynamics into a comprehensive analysis of changes in student learning behavior in madrasah classrooms, which until now have been studied more from the perspective of learning outcomes and teacher practices alone.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study type. This design was chosen because the purpose of the study was to describe in depth and contextually the dynamics of student learning behavior in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at MAN Bondowoso as a single case. Descriptive case studies allow researchers to explore phenomena in real-life contexts, where the boundaries between phenomena and contexts are not entirely clear. The location was selected purposively, considering that MAN Bondowoso is one of the state madrasahs that has fully implemented the Merdeka Curriculum since the 2022/2023 academic year and shows interesting learning dynamics to be studied.

Participants in this study were determined using purposive sampling, which is a technique of deliberately selecting informants based on certain criteria. The inclusion criteria used included: being directly involved in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, having at least one year of work or learning experience at MAN Bondowoso, and being willing to participate voluntarily in the study. Based on these criteria, there were 12 participants in this study, consisting of the Deputy Head of Madrasah for Curriculum, four subject teachers including two Islamic Education teachers and two general subject teachers (Indonesian Language and Science), and seven students consisting of three 10th grade students, two 11th grade students, and two 12th grade students. Teachers from various fields of study were selected to obtain diverse perspectives, while students were selected based on recommendations from teachers using the snowball technique, considering that they were active in learning activities, able to communicate their learning experiences, and represented varying levels of participation in class.

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained directly from participants through direct observation and in-depth interviews, in the form of descriptive notes on student learning behavior in the classroom, transcripts of interviews about the experiences and perceptions of students and teachers regarding changes in learning, as well as photo and video documentation of learning activities. Secondary data was obtained from relevant official madrasah documents, such as teacher teaching modules, learning journals, teacher anecdotal notes, Merdeka Curriculum Lesson Plans (RPP), and archives of

student work such as P5 projects and assignment reports. This secondary data served to triangulate and enrich the research findings.

Data collection was carried out using three main techniques. First, passive participatory observation, in which researchers were present in classrooms and madrasah environments to observe the learning process, teacher-student interactions, and student learning behavior dynamics without actively participating in activities. Observations focused on student responses to new learning methods, activity in discussions and group work, and participation in P5 activities, and were conducted eight times in various classes. Second, semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted individually with all 12 participants. The interview guidelines were compiled based on the research objectives and developed flexibly to explore the participants' experiences, perceptions, and meanings of the changes in learning behavior. Each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes, was recorded with the participants' permission, and was transcribed verbatim. Third, a documentation study, in which the researcher collected and analyzed relevant documents to confirm and deepen the findings from the observations and interviews, such as teaching modules, student progress notes, and documentation of student project results.

Data analysis in this study used the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman (Miles, 2024) and Saldaña (Saldana, 2014), which consists of three simultaneous and cyclical activity streams. The first stage is data condensation, which is the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, and transforming data contained in interview transcripts, field notes, and documents. At this stage, researchers summarize, code the data, and group the codes into initial themes. The second stage is data presentation, where the condensed data is presented in the form of narrative descriptions, matrices, or charts to make it easier for researchers to see patterns and relationships between themes. The third stage is drawing and verifying conclusions, where researchers begin to search for meaning from the collected data, noting regularities, patterns, explanations, and propositions. The initial conclusions drawn are still tentative and will become more robust after undergoing a verification process with new data or through triangulation.

The validity of the data in this study was tested using triangulation techniques. Source triangulation was carried out by comparing information obtained from curriculum representatives, teachers, and students to see the consistency and possible differences in perspectives on the same phenomenon. Technical triangulation was conducted by comparing observational data with interview and documentation data, for example, comparing what students said about their activity during interviews with the researcher's observations in the classroom and teachers'

notes in learning journals. Time triangulation was conducted by conducting observations and interviews at different times, such as in the morning and afternoon or on different days, to ensure that the data obtained was not situational or temporary. Through this systematic series of methods, the study is expected to achieve data saturation and produce a comprehensive, credible, and in-depth picture of the dynamics of student learning behavior in the context of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at MAN Bondowoso.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

#### Improving Cognitive Capacity through Differentiated and Project-Based Learning

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at MAN Bondowoso encourages changes in students' cognitive aspects, especially in terms of conceptual understanding, critical thinking skills, and problem solving. Teachers begin the learning process with formative tests to map students' initial abilities, then design differentiated learning according to each student's level of understanding.

Observations in the 10th grade science class showed that teachers divided students into three groups based on the results of diagnostic assessments. The first group received more intensive assistance, the second group worked on independent worksheets, while the third group was given enrichment challenges. One of the PAI teachers, Mrs. NR, explained:

*"I usually start with a sparking question or a small quiz first, ma'am. From there, I see which children already understand and which still need guidance. After that, I assign different tasks. For those who are quick, I give them higher-level questions or ask them to help their friends who are having difficulty." (W.NR. G1, March 12, 2024).*

Project-based learning is also a key strategy in developing students' cognitive abilities. The P5 (Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project) activity with the theme of entrepreneurship encourages students to plan products, calculate capital, and develop marketing strategies.

An 11th grade student, AN, said:

*"In the past, when we studied economics, we just read books and memorized theories. Now we actually make products and sell them at the bazaar. So we really understand how to calculate profits and losses, promotional strategies, especially when looking for raw materials, it turns out we have to be smart in finding cheap but good quality ones." (W.AN.S3, March 5, 2024).*

The use of digital media such as Canva and learning videos also helps students understand the material more concretely. P5 project assignment documents show that students are able to make complete business reports with simple SWOT analyses. Indonesian language teacher, Mr. TH, added:

*"Nowadays, children use Canva for their presentations, which makes them more interesting. They also learn to search for images and organize points, so they don't just copy from books. I see that their understanding of the presentation material is much better because they have to process the information themselves." (W.TH.G3, March 18, 2024).*

### **Strengthening Affective Attitudes in the Religious Culture of Madrasahs**

Students' affective aspects experienced positive changes, which were evident in increased discipline, responsibility, and enthusiasm for learning. The relationship between teachers and students became more dialogical and humanistic. Observations in the 11th grade Religion class showed that before the lesson began, students and teachers read prayers and short verses together, after which the teacher gave brief advice relevant to the material. Another PAI teacher, Mrs. SF, explained the exemplary approach she applies:

*"I give examples rather than orders. For example, if I want the children to be disciplined and arrive on time, I have to arrive first. If I want them to pray dhuha, I also pray dhuha with them. The children see this, ma'am. Gradually, they follow without being told." (W.SF.G2, March 20, 2024).*

The strong religious culture of the madrasah also shapes the students' attitudes. Routine activities such as praying dhuha in congregation, reciting the Qur'an before class, and giving Friday alms become habits that shape character. A tenth-grade student, RA, said:

*"I used to rarely pray dhuha at home. Here, we pray together every morning, so I got used to it. Now, if I don't pray dhuha, I feel like something is missing. The teachers also pray, so I feel embarrassed if I don't pray." (W.RA.S1, March 22, 2024).*

Documentation of student progress notes from homeroom teachers shows an increase in positive notes regarding attitude. One note for a student with the initials DK states:

*"Has started to actively ask questions in class, dares to express opinions, and has improved in terms of politeness towards teachers." (Student Progress Notes Document, 2024).*

However, an interview with the Vice Principal for Curriculum, Mr. HM, revealed that affective assessment remains a challenge:

*"We have attitude assessment tools, but sometimes teachers find it difficult to translate their observations into numbers or grades. Especially if the class is large. The best we can do now is keep anecdotal records, but even that is not consistent among all teachers."* (W.HM.WK, March 25, 2024)

### **Development of Psychomotor Skills through Collaborative Project Activities**

Students' psychomotor skills develop rapidly through active involvement in P5 activities, Skills Week and Academic Competition (PKLA), entrepreneurship bazaars, and digital presentations. Students take the lead in each activity, while teachers act as facilitators.

Observations of the entrepreneurship bazaar activities show that students directly practice the skills of making products, packaging, marketing, and serving buyers. An 11th grade student, MF, recounted his experience:

*"We made banana chips and processed milk. From the beginning, we did everything ourselves, from buying the ingredients, peeling the bananas, frying them, making the packaging, to selling them. At first it was difficult, but eventually we got the hang of it. I learned that selling is not easy; you have to be friendly to buyers and promote your products well."* (W.MF.S4, March 27, 2024).

In digital presentations, students demonstrated technical skills using Canva to create attractive slides. Science teacher, Mrs. DN, observed this development:

*"The children are more creative now. In the past, presentations used plain PPT, but now they make infographics, short videos, and some even make simple animations. They teach each other if someone doesn't know how to do something. Sometimes I even learn from them."* (W.DN.G4, April 2, 2024).

The photo documentation of P5 activities shows students busy making products, designing packaging, and selling at their respective booths. Religious activities such as worship practices and tahfidz also serve as a forum for developing psychomotor skills. PAI teacher, Mrs. NR, explained:

*"Every Friday, PRA (Late Adolescent Education) students practice worship. They take turns being the imam, khatib, and muadzin. I see their confidence increasing. Those who used to be nervous when reciting the prayers are now fluent."* (W.NR.G1, April 4, 2024).

### **Challenges in Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum at MAN Bondowoso**

In addition to various positive changes, the study also found a number of challenges in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. The main challenges include the readiness of teacher resources, dynamic classroom management, limited infrastructure, and adaptation of the assessment system. The Deputy Head of Curriculum, Mr. HM, revealed the challenges related to teacher readiness:

*"There is training for the Merdeka Curriculum, but not all teachers can participate. Many are self-taught, sharing knowledge with each other. But yes, their understanding sometimes differs. Some understand it well, some only half-understand, especially senior teachers who are comfortable with the old ways." (W.HM.WK, March 25, 2024).*

Classroom management is also a challenge because students have become more active. Science teacher Mrs. DN shared her experience:

*"In the past, teachers would lecture, the class would be quiet, and it was easy to control. Now the children work in groups, discuss, and sometimes get noisy. But it's productive noise. I have to keep moving from one group to another. Sometimes I run out of time because one group asks for too much assistance." (W.DN.G4, April 2, 2024)*

The limitations of infrastructure were also acknowledged by Mr. HM:

*"Ideally, P5 needs a large space to move around in, perhaps outdoors, or a practice room. But we are limited. The labs are also not all adequate. So, it is the teachers' creativity that is being tested, how to keep activities going even with limited facilities." (W.HM.WK, March 25, 2024).*

Finally, the complex assessment system, especially the affective and psychomotor aspects, remains a challenge. Indonesian Language Teacher Mr. TH added:

*"Project assessment has many aspects: process, product, presentation, and collaboration. Sometimes we are overwhelmed trying to document everything. Not to mention when there are 30 students in a class, each with a different project. It feels less objective if we only look at the final result." (W.TH.G3, March 18, 2024).*

## **Discussion**

### **Improving Cognitive Capacity through Differentiated and Project-Based Learning**

Research findings show that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at MAN Bondowoso encourages an increase in students' cognitive abilities, particularly in conceptual understanding, critical thinking, and problem solving. The differentiated learning strategies applied by teachers, as seen in Mrs. NR's practice of dividing students based on diagnostic assessment results, enable each student to learn according to their level of readiness. These findings are in line with Tomlinson's theory of Differentiated Instruction, which emphasizes that learning must be responsive to differences in students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles (Tomlinson, 2014). Within this framework, teachers act as facilitators who design learning experiences tailored to each individual, rather than treating all students the same.

Furthermore, project-based learning such as the P5 entrepreneurship program experienced by AN and his friends provides meaningful contextual learning experiences. Students do not just memorize economic theory, but directly experience the production process, profit and loss calculations, and marketing strategies. This is in line with Piaget and Vygotsky's constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes that knowledge is actively constructed by individuals through interaction with the environment and real experiences (Azzahra et al., 2025). Vygotsky also emphasized the importance of the zone of proximal development, where students can achieve a higher level of understanding with the help of friends or teachers, which is evident in group work and peer teaching among students (Azis et al., 2025).

The use of digital media such as Canva in presentations, as acknowledged by Mr. TH, also contributes to improved understanding because students must process information independently. This supports Crow & Crow's view that learning is an active process influenced by experience, and technology can be a tool that enriches that experience (Crow, 1958).

### **Strengthening Affective Attitudes in the Religious Culture of Madrasahs**

Positive changes in students' affective aspects, such as discipline, responsibility, and enthusiasm, cannot be separated from the exemplary approach taken by teachers and the strong religious culture at MAN Bondowoso. These findings reinforce Bandura's social learning theory, which states that individuals learn through observation and imitation of behavioral models (Bandura, 2023). When teachers SF and NR set direct examples, such as arriving on time and

participating in the dhuha prayer, students tend to imitate this behavior because they see consistency between the teachers' words and actions.

The religious culture of madrasahs, such as morning recitation, congregational prayer, and Friday donations, creates an environment that continuously shapes students' attitudes. This is in line with the concept of internalization of values, whereby values that originally come from outside (external) are gradually accepted as part of an individual's personality (Burlian, 2022). RA's admission that he feels something is missing if he does not perform the dhuha prayer shows that religious values have been internalized into personal needs. However, the findings regarding the challenges of affective assessment revealed by Mr. HM show that although the change in attitude is apparent, its documentation and measurement are not yet systematic. In fact, in educational psychology, affective aspects such as attitude, interest, and values are important dimensions whose development needs to be monitored (Pipit, 2024). This indicates the need to strengthen instruments and consistency among teachers in conducting affective assessments.

### **Development of Psychomotor Skills through Collaborative Project Activities**

Findings on the development of students' psychomotor skills through P5 activities, bazaars, and digital presentations confirm Kolb's experiential learning theory. He emphasizes that learning is a process in which knowledge is created through the transformation of experiences (Kolb, 2014). The concrete-reflective-abstract-active learning cycle is evident in student activities. They gain direct experience (concrete experience) by making products, reflect on what works and what doesn't, draw abstract conclusions about effective strategies, and test their understanding in subsequent actions.

MF's statement about the difficulty of selling shows that he has gone through a deep learning process. Motor skills such as peeling, frying, and packaging, as well as social skills such as serving customers and promoting products, are developed through direct practice and repetition. This shows that motor skills are acquired through practice and direct experience (Aliriad et al., 2024). Kreativitas siswa dalam menggunakan Canva, bahkan sampai saling mengajar, juga menunjukkan perkembangan keterampilan teknis dan kolaboratif. Guru Ibu DN yang mengaku belajar dari mereka mengindikasikan terjadinya pembelajaran timbal balik, yang dalam teori Vygotsky disebut sebagai *scaffolding* kolektif, di mana pengetahuan dibangun bersama dalam komunitas belajar (Alviani & Budiati, 2025).

### **The Dynamics of Learning Behavior Change: Intentional, Positive-Active, Effective-Functional**

The changes in student learning behavior at MAN Bondowoso were not only partial, but formed a pattern that could be categorized as intentional, positive-active, and effective-functional changes. Intentional change is evident in students' awareness of learning because they find meaning in the learning experience. When AN said that he understood very well because he experienced it firsthand, he showed that learning was no longer an external obligation but an internal need. This is in line with Deci & Ryan's self-determination theory, which states that intrinsic motivation grows when the needs for autonomy, competence, and social relatedness are met (Shen et al., 2023).

Positive and active changes can be seen in the increased confidence of students in discussions, presentations, and religious activities. Piaget's theory of cognitive development explains that when students actively construct knowledge through interaction with their environment, they develop more complex cognitive structures, which in turn increase their intellectual confidence (Apriyanto, Judijanto, et al., 2025). Effective and functional changes are reflected in students' ability to apply what they have learned outside the classroom. The habit of memorizing the Qur'an, practicing worship, scientific writing skills, and entrepreneurship show that learning does not stop in the classroom, but becomes a provision for life. From a behaviorist perspective, habits formed through repetition and positive reinforcement will become permanent behaviors (Salman AlFarisi, Erfan Habibi, 2025).

### **Implementation Challenges from the Perspective of Innovation Diffusion Theory and Resource Dependence**

The challenges faced by MAN Bondowoso, such as uneven teacher readiness, dynamic classroom management, limited facilities, and assessment adaptation, can be understood through the Diffusion of Innovation theory. Rogers explains that the adoption of innovation in a social system does not occur simultaneously (Menzli et al., 2022). There are innovators and early adopters who adapt quickly, while others (late majority and laggards) take longer. In this context, teachers who are self-taught and actively share can be categorized as early adopters, while senior teachers who are still comfortable with the old ways fall into the group that needs more intensive assistance.

Limitations in infrastructure and assessment challenges can also be explained by Pfeffer & Salancik's Resource Dependence Theory, which states that organizations depend on the resources available in their environment (Jiang et al.,

2023). Madrasahs with limited facilities must develop creative strategies to continue achieving their curriculum objectives, as demonstrated by teachers at MAN Bondowoso by maximizing available resources. This shows that despite facing obstacles, madrasahs have a positive capacity for adaptation.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at MAN Bondowoso has encouraged multidimensional changes in student learning behavior, which are reflected in three main aspects. In the cognitive aspect, students showed an increase in critical thinking and problem-solving skills through differentiated and project-based learning that provided contextual learning experiences. In the affective aspect, students experienced a strengthening of discipline, responsibility, and enthusiasm for learning, which was formed through the example set by teachers and the strengthening of the madrasah's religious culture, such as the habit of worship and spiritual values. In the psychomotor aspect, students develop creativity and practical skills through active involvement in P5 activities, entrepreneurial bazaars, digital presentations, and worship practices, where they play a leading role while teachers act as facilitators.

These changes in learning behavior are intentional, positive-active, and effective-functional. Students learn with self-awareness because they find meaning in their learning experiences, demonstrate active participation in discussions and collaborative work, and are able to apply what they have learned in their daily lives, whether in the form of social skills, religious habits, or the production of tangible work. This confirms that the success of the Merdeka Curriculum is not solely measured by academic achievement, but also by the transformation of how students behave, think, and act in the learning process. However, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at MAN Bondowoso also faces a number of challenges, including the uneven readiness of teacher resources, increasingly dynamic classroom management, limited supporting facilities and infrastructure, and the adaptation of the assessment system, particularly in the affective and psychomotor aspects, which require better instruments and consistency in recording.

This study has several limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, the study was only conducted in one madrasah with a specific context, so the findings cannot be generalized broadly, although they can provide an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of implementation at the local level. Second, the three-month research period was relatively short to observe long-term and sustainable changes in learning behavior. Third, the study focused more on the perspectives of students and teachers as the main actors, without delving deeply

into the roles of parents and policies at a more macro level. Fourth, despite efforts at triangulation, the potential for researcher subjectivity in data interpretation cannot be completely avoided in qualitative research.

Based on these limitations, several directions for further research can be recommended. First, comparative research between madrasahs or between madrasahs and public schools is needed to understand the differences in context in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. Second, longitudinal studies with longer durations can be conducted to track the development of student learning behavior more comprehensively over time. Third, research involving the perspectives of parents and the community needs to be developed to understand the external factors that influence student learning behavior. Fourth, studies on the development of practical yet valid affective and psychomotor assessment instruments are important to address the assessment challenges faced by teachers in the field. Fifth, classroom action research or design-based research can be conducted to develop effective intervention models to overcome implementation challenges, such as dynamic classroom management or creative use of limited resources.

By acknowledging limitations and opening up opportunities for further research, it is hoped that this article will not only provide an empirical overview of the dynamics of student learning behavior, but also serve as a foundation for further studies that can enrich our understanding of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in various educational contexts.

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