Trends and Problems in Merdeka Belajar Curriculum Research from 2018 to 2023: Bibliometric Analysis

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini melakukan analisis bibliometrik terhadap publikasi ilmiah tentang Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar di Indonesia dari tahun 2018 hingga 2023. Kurikulum ini diperkenalkan untuk memberikan fleksibilitas dan otonomi dalam pendidikan, mendorong kreativitas dan inovasi di sekolah. Dengan menggunakan metode bibliometrik, studi ini mengidentifikasi peningkatan signifikan dalam jumlah publikasi sejak tahun 2020, dengan mayoritas artikel berasal dari Indonesia. Analisis topikal menyoroti fokus utama pada implementasi kurikulum, dampaknya terhadap hasil belajar, kesiapan sekolah dan guru, serta inovasi pembelajaran. Masalah yang sering muncul termasuk keterbatasan sumber daya di daerah terpencil, kurangnya pelatihan untuk guru, dan tantangan dalam pengembangan sistem penilaian yang sesuai. Kolaborasi antar peneliti dan institusi juga menjadi tema penting, menunjukkan upaya bersama dalam memahami dan mengembangkan Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar. Temuan ini penting bagi kebijakan pendidikan dan praktisi untuk meningkatkan kualitas implementasi kurikulum di masa depan, dengan rekomendasi untuk lebih memperkuat pelatihan guru dan pengembangan sistem penilaian yang inovatif.

Kata Kunci: tren dan masalah, kurikulum merdeka belajar, analisis bibliometrik

Abstract

This study conducted a bibliometric analysis of scientific publications on the Independent Learning Curriculum in Indonesia from 2018 to 2023. This curriculum was introduced to provide flexibility and autonomy in education, encouraging school creativity and innovation. Using bibliometric methods, the study identified a significant increase in publications since 2020, with most articles coming from Indonesia. Topical analysis highlights the main focus on curriculum implementation, its impact on learning outcomes, school and teacher readiness, and learning innovation. Frequently raised issues include limited resources in remote areas, lack of teacher training, and challenges in developing appropriate grading systems. Collaboration between researchers and institutions is also an important theme, showing joint efforts in understanding and developing the Independent Learning Curriculum. These findings are important for education policy and practitioners to improve the quality of curriculum implementation in the future, with recommendations to strengthen teacher training further and develop innovative assessment systems.

Keywords: trends and problems, independent learning curriculum, bibliometric analysis

Introduction

In recent years, the education sector in Indonesia has undergone various significant transformations (Cahaya et al., 2022; Indrawati & Kuncoro, 2021; Suharno et al., 2020), one of which is the implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum. The Ministry of Education and Culture introduced this program in response to the need to improve the quality of national education that is more flexible, inclusive, and by global dynamics. Merdeka Learning aims to

provide freedom and autonomy to educational institutions, teachers, and students in the teaching and learning process so that it can encourage creativity, innovation, and learning independence (Arung et al., 2023; Irawati et al., 2022; July Iswanto, 2022; Kurniati et al., 2024; Nelly et al., 2022).

Research on Freedom of Learning has increased since this concept was first introduced. Several studies have highlighted various aspects and implications of implementing this curriculum. For example, Hadi et al. (2023) describe the Independent Learning curriculum in schools. Meanwhile, Prakoso et al., 2021) examined the impact of this policy on teachers' workload and welfare.

Furthermore, research by Bastian et al. (2023) assesses school readiness in implementing the Independent Curriculum. Meanwhile, a study by (2022) discusses that educational institutions continue to compete to produce the quality of graduates and develop the curriculum.

Although a lot of research has been done on Freedom of Learning, several gaps still need to be explored further. Most previous studies have focused more on this policy's implementation and direct impact. Still, few have examined the trends and problems that arise in research related to Freedom of Learning. My research aims to fill this gap by conducting a bibliometric analysis of scientific publications on Freedom of Learning from 2018 to 2023. With this approach, I seek to identify research trends, frequently arising issues and areas that still receive less attention.

This research is necessary because it can provide a comprehensive overview of the development of research related to Freedom of Learning and identify existing challenges and opportunities. By understanding existing trends and issues, policymakers, educators, and researchers can formulate more effective strategies for implementing and developing this curriculum in the future. In addition, the results of this research are expected to be an essential reference for future studies that want to explore various aspects of Freedom of Learning.

This study aims to conduct a bibliometric analysis of the studies published regarding the Independent Learning Curriculum in the 2018-2023 period. Specifically, this study aims to 1) Identify trends in scientific publications related to Freedom of Learning; 2) Analyze topics that often arise in research; 3) Identify problems that are often faced in research related to Freedom of Learning; and 4) Provide recommendations for future research based on the findings of bibliometric analysis.

Method

This study uses a bibliometric analysis method to examine trends and problems in research related to the Independent Learning Curriculum during the 2018-2023 period. Bibliometric analysis is a quantitative technique used to measure and analyze scientific publications, helping to identify research, collaboration, and development patterns in a field of study (Donthu et al., 2021).

The data used in this study came from leading scientific databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. These databases are selected based on their broad scope and reputation for providing quality scientific literature. Keywords used for the search include "Merdeka Belajar," "Curriculum," "Education Reform," and "Indonesia."

The search is carried out using the keywords that have been determined above. Search results are limited to journal articles published between 2018 and 2023. The selected articles are relevant to Freedom of Learning, covering various aspects such as implementation, impact, challenges, and evaluation. Irrelevant articles, such as those that focus on curricula outside Indonesia or are unrelated to education reform, will be excluded from the analysis.

Data analysis is carried out in several stages, namely 1) Descriptive analysis, which includes the number of publications per year, geographical distribution, type of publication, and source of publication; 2) Topical analysis, namely identifying topics that often arise in research related to Freedom of Learning. This is done by analyzing the keywords and abstracts of the article; 3) Linkage analysis, which examines the relationship between researchers, institutions, and countries to identify collaboration patterns. Network analysis techniques are used in this stage; and 4) Problem identification, namely identifying problems that often arise in research related to Freedom of Learning by analyzing the content of the selected article.

The analysis tools used include 1) visualization and analysis of collaborative networks between researchers and institutions and 2) Microsoft Excel for descriptive data processing and graphing. In addition, to ensure the validity and reliability of the research, the steps are 1) The use of multiple sources, namely

using multiple databases to reduce bias and increase the scope of the analyzed literature; 2) Peer review, where the results of the analysis will be reviewed by peers who are experts in the field of education and bibliometric analysis to ensure the accuracy and accuracy of data interpretation; and 3) Triangulation, which is using various analytical tools to validate the results obtained.

This research is conducted by adhering to scientific research ethics, including avoiding plagiarism and giving due credit to the original author of the analyzed article. The data used is secondary data that has been publicly published and does not require special permission to access.

Result and Discussion

Result
Descriptive Analysis
1. Number of Publications by Year

From the results of a search in Dimensions with predetermined keywords, namely "Merdeka Belajar," "Curriculum," "Education Reform," and "Indonesia," it was found that the number of publications experienced a significant increase from 2018-2019, when there were no publications, and from 2020 to 2023 there was an increase in publications. In 2020, there was only one publication. In 2021, there were 11 publications; in 2022 there were 25. In 2023, there was a significant increase of 54 publications.
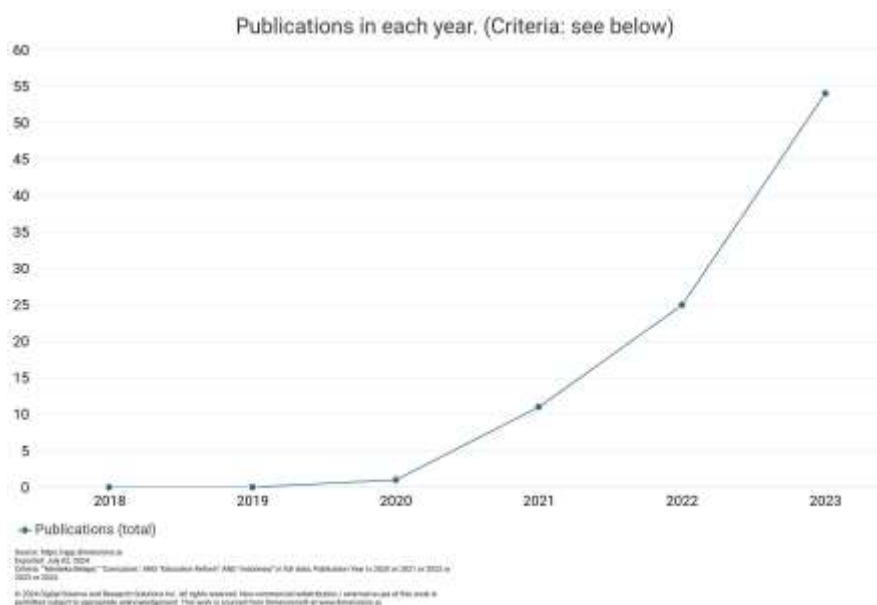

Figure 1. *Number of Publications from 2018 to 2023*

2. Geographical Distribution

Publications related to Freedom of Learning mostly come from Indonesia, with some contributions from other countries such as Japan, which is only one book.

3. Publication Type

The majority of publications are books (60 books), followed by journal articles (49 articles), and the rest are in the form of proceedings (6 proceedings).

Topical Analysis

The analysis of keywords and the abstract of the article reveal several central topics in research related to Independent Learning., namely 1) In terms of curriculum implementation, it shows that many studies discuss how the Independent Learning Curriculum is implemented in schools and universities; 2) In terms of impact on learning outcomes, it shows that previous studies have evaluated the influence of the new curriculum on students' academic and non-academic achievements; 3) In terms of school and teacher readiness, it shows that several previous studies have examined the readiness of infrastructure and human resources in supporting this curriculum; and 4) In terms of learning innovation, it shows that the focus of educational institutions is more on innovative learning methods that emerge as a result of the implementation of this curriculum.

Problem Identification

Some of the problems that often arise in research related to Freedom of Learning include 1) Limited resources, namely many schools in remote areas face difficulties in terms of adequate infrastructure and human resources; 2) Teacher training, namely the lack of adequate training for teachers in implementing this curriculum; and 3) Assessment and evaluation, which is a challenge in developing an assessment system that is by the principles of Freedom of Learning.

Discussion

Increase in the number of publications

The increase in publications from year to year shows the growing interest from academics in the Independent Learning Curriculum. This may be influenced by government policies that encourage research and development in education, as well as the need to continue improving the quality of education in Indonesia.

Geographical Distribution and Types of Publications

The dominance of publications from Indonesia shows that Freedom of Learning is a very relevant and important topic at the national level. However, contributions from other countries also show that education reform in Indonesia has received international attention, which can open up opportunities for cross-border collaboration in educational research. However, until 2023, there have been very few publications related to independent learning conducted by foreign researchers.

Key Topics in Research

Identifying the main topics shows that the implementation and impact of the Independent Learning Curriculum is the most researched area. This strongly focuses on how these policies are implemented and the results produced. However, the topic of learning readiness and innovation suggests a need to evaluate and improve this curriculum's practical aspects continuously.

Collaboration Between Researchers and Institutions

The increased collaboration between researchers and institutions shows a joint effort to understand and develop Freedom of Learning. This collaboration can improve the quality of research by sharing resources and expertise and producing more comprehensive and applicable findings.

Problems in Research

Identifying problems often arising in research provides important insights for policymakers and education practitioners. Issues such as resource limitations, lack of teacher training, and assessment challenges indicate areas requiring special attention. Overcoming this problem is the key to successfully implementing the Independent Learning Curriculum.

Conclusion

This study reveals trends and problems in research related to Freedom of Learning and shows increased interest and collaboration in this field. These findings are essential for policymakers, educators, and researchers to continue to develop and improve the implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum. The recommendations for further research include increasing the focus on teacher training and developing an innovative assessment system on the principles of Freedom of Learning.

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