

Enhancing Historical Understanding Through the Debate Method in the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum

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Abstract

Students' character can be shaped through an understanding of national identity and values, which are delivered through History education. Unfortunately, History learning is still often perceived as boring and conventional. In the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, the debate method offers an innovative approach that can enhance students' understanding of History. This study aims to explore how the debate method can be applied in History learning to encourage critical discussions and in-depth analysis.

Various historical perspectives can be explored through the debate method, sharpening students' critical thinking, teamwork, and communication skills. Through debates, students not only learn historical facts but also understand the social, political, and cultural contexts that influence historical events. Moreover, active involvement in debates fosters a sense of responsibility and ownership of their learning.

In the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes flexibility and student engagement, debates can be integrated into various History topics. By allowing students to prepare arguments and respond to opposing views, they are trained to think analytically and critically. This study uses qualitative methods, with observations and interviews to gather data on the experiences of students and teachers in applying the debate method.

The results show that students feel more motivated and better understand historical material when learning through debates. Furthermore, they demonstrate improvements in collaboration skills and the ability to present arguments. Thus, the debate method can be an effective strategy for enhancing the understanding of History while supporting the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes active and participatory learning.

Keywords: Merdeka Curriculum, Debate Method, History, Active Learning

A. INTRODUCTION

History learning has an important role in strengthening collective identity, fostering tolerance, and preventing the repetition of past mistakes. This can increase students' awareness of History which is important for understanding Historical events and realizing responsibilities in their lives (Nurul Fuziah Yusran, 2024). History learning is important in shaping students' character and understanding of the nation's identity and values. Through learning History, students can understand the moral values contained in History, such as national values and events that have shaped the identity of the **Indonesian nation**. However, there are still many schools that apply History learning conventionally. This event can be seen when the teacher delivers material through lectures so that learning seems monotonous. As a result, they become less motivated to delve into the material presented. Thus, the main goal of learning History becomes difficult to achieve. This challenge can be realized through the approach applied in the Independent Curriculum.

The Independent Curriculum in Indonesia can improve the quality of learning through freedom and flexibility, enabling innovative and personalized content and methods, promoting inclusivity and diversity in the teaching and learning process (Koni Olive Tunas, 2024). The Independent Curriculum is based on the philosophical, psychological, sociological, technological, History, and philosophy foundations of KHD, promoting a simpler, more in-depth, relevant, interactive, and communicative learning experience (Desmy Yenti, 2024). Thus, the Independent Curriculum as an approach that offers

flexibility and emphasizes active learning, allows students to play a more active role in the learning process and can open up opportunities for teachers to use more varied and innovative methods. With this freedom, methods that trigger direct student engagement, such as debate, become relevant and worth considering. The debate method can introduce elements of critical discussion and encourage students to explore different perspectives of History. Through debate, students not only memorize historical facts, but are also invited to understand the social, political, and cultural contexts that affect an event.

Historical Studies using the debate method which includes discussing procedural concepts, historical interpretation, and moral learning. It emphasizes critical thinking, understanding evidence, and the relationship between History and other subjects, encouraging a comprehensive approach to History education (Davies, 2010). The debate method is raised as an effective way to improve critical thinking and analytical skills among students. By using debate, students are encouraged to explore different perspectives of History, strengthen arguments, and develop rhetorical and logical thinking skills. In addition, the History debate helps students understand historical events or facts chronologically and examine the impacts, controversies, and various viewpoints surrounding them. This method supports open and interactive discussions, which are important in enriching students' understanding of the History subject matter and fostering evaluative skills (Salim, 2015).

The debate method in History learning is expected to provide several benefits for students, including critical thinking skills, communication skills, and teamwork. According to students, through debate, they can present arguments logically and responsively, which in turn can hone their ability to formulate ideas and express opinions effectively. In addition, this method also trains students to think critically and analytically, as they must understand different viewpoints and respond appropriately to the opponent's view. Thus, students are trained to look at historical events from different perspectives, to improve their understanding of the complexity of History and its implications.

History Learning in the Independent Curriculum emphasizes independent strategies through the LMS, allowing students to engage in independent activities, collaborate in groups, and utilize technology for information processing, encouraging critical thinking and lifelong learning aligned with curriculum goals (Tunggul Wijaya, 2023).

In the context of the Independent Curriculum, the debate method is very relevant because it can allow students to become active learners who have a sense of responsibility and ownership over their learning process. In addition to improving understanding of the material, active involvement in debate can also foster students' motivation to learn, as they feel they have a role to play in conveying and defending their ideas. The Independent Curriculum, which focuses on a participatory approach, allows the application of debate methods flexibly, according to the topic or historical event to be studied. As such, debate can be an effective means of delving deeper into different aspects of History, helping students see History not only as a collection of facts, but also as a complex narrative that has multiple points of view.

Based on the above explanation, this study aims to explore the application of debate methods in History learning, especially in supporting the implementation of the Independent Curriculum. This study examines the experiences of students and teachers in applying the debate method and the impact of this method on students' understanding of History and relevant skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and communication. This research is expected to provide insight into the effectiveness of the debate method in improving the quality of History learning, as well as its contribution in achieving the goals of the Independent Curriculum which emphasizes active, flexible, and participatory learning.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a non-participatory observational method with a sociological approach. This data mining is in the form of interviews, observations, and literature reviews from several sources that are relevant to the theme raised and the problems discussed. The object of this research is students of SMA Negeri 1 Bojong who have followed the History debate learning method.

C. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

History learning in schools often faces challenges in motivating students to delve into the material and understand the historical values contained in it. Learning that is carried out conventionally makes students tend to consider History as a boring memorization subject. In fact, History learning plays an important role in shaping students' character and understanding of the nation's identity and values. Therefore, a more innovative and interactive approach, such as the debate method, is needed, which is in line with the principles of the Independent Curriculum.

The Independent Curriculum focuses on important materials and the development of student competencies. Deep learning through project activities to explore real-world problems (Mahmudah, 2022). In the Independent Curriculum, active and flexible learning is the core of the educational process. This approach provides space for students to be directly involved in learning activities, encouraging them to become active, creative, and reflective learners. The debate method in learning History is one of the efforts to translate the spirit of the Independent Curriculum into real and relevant learning practices. The debate method can also create a dynamic learning environment, where students not only receive information passively, but also actively participate in understanding and analyzing the material. Through debate, students are expected to be able to see historical events from diverse perspectives, so that they can develop critical and analytical thinking towards the material studied.

1. Increase Student Motivation and Understanding

The debate method can increase students' learning motivation for History subjects. When students are allowed to express their views, they feel more visible and have an active role in learning. Students are also more encouraged to understand the material in depth to be able to formulate strong arguments in debates. The results of interviews with students showed that they felt more motivated because of the challenges in preparing arguments and exploring the context of historical events. Thus, the debate is not just a learning method, but also a means for students to feel "owned" by the learning process, thereby increasing their interest in better understanding History material.

2. Developing Critical and Analytical Thinking Skills

The debate method encourages students to think critically in analyzing various perspectives of History and preparing logical arguments. Critical thinking skills are one of the main skills that need to be developed in the Independent Curriculum, in the debate method provides an ideal environment to hone these skills. When students are faced with opposing arguments, they are trained to evaluate different views, question assumptions, and structure arguments based on relevant data and facts. In other words, the debate method helps students see History not as just a static fact, but as a narrative rich in various points of view.

In addition, the debate also allows students to understand the social, political, and cultural aspects that surround historical events. For example, when discussing themes such as the struggle for independence or social conflict, students will try to relate the event to the context, understand the reasons behind the decisions taken by the figures, and explore the impact of the event. Thus, the debate method not only increases students' understanding of historical facts but also increases their analytical depth towards the context of History as a whole.

3. Improving Collaboration and Communication Skills

In addition to the ability to think critically, the debate method is also effective in improving collaboration and communication skills. In the debate process, students are trained to work together in teams, where they must share roles, collaborate in formulating arguments, and support each other in responding to the views of other groups. Communication skills are also an important aspect, because students must convey their arguments, persuasively, and in a structured manner.

Students interviewed in this study showed improvements in their ability to listen and respond politely to different views.

Through this debate, it is also very important to build the character of students who can work together in a dynamic social environment. Collaboration and communication skills are not only relevant in the context of learning, but are also life skills that are more useful in the real world. Debate as a learning method also supports the objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum, which is to equip students with 21st-century skills that include critical thinking, collaboration, and effective communication.

4. Challenges in Implementing the Debate Method

Although debate provides many benefits, this implementation also has some challenges. One of them is the different readiness of students. In this case, not all students have the ability to speak and construct arguments well. Some students feel less confident speaking in front of their friends, especially if they are not yet familiar with debate techniques. This certainly hinders the learning process and reduces the effectiveness of debate as a learning method.

In addition, teachers are also faced with the challenge of managing debates so that they run smoothly and remain conducive. Teachers must also ensure that discussions are not dominated by certain groups. This means that every student has an equal opportunity to participate and express their opinions. For this method to run smoothly, it certainly requires good classroom management skills and a mature strategy so that the debate process can run effectively and according to objectives.

To anticipate these challenges, it is recommended that teachers provide clear guidance on the structure and procedures of the debate, including the rules that students must follow during the debate. Teachers also need to provide more support and guidance to students who find it difficult, for example by providing examples and ways to construct arguments or training them to speak in public.

D. CONCLUSION

The debate method in History learning has proven to be an effective strategy in improving the quality of learning, especially within the framework of the Independent Curriculum. With this approach, students are trained to better understand the material through exploration of various perspectives and in-depth analysis, which ultimately develops critical thinking skills, analytical skills, as well as communication and collaboration skills. Learning History through the debate method makes students more actively involved, motivated, and have a sense of ownership of the learning process, which is in line with the participatory principle of the Independent Curriculum.

The debate method also helps students see History as a complex narrative, not just a collection of static facts. It trains students to consider the social, political, and cultural context of each historical event, and to understand the impact and decisions made by the figures. These skills are not only important for mastering the material, but also useful in developing 21st-century competencies that include critical thinking, teamwork, and effective communication skills.

However, the implementation of the debate method is not without challenges. The varying readiness of students and the lack of confidence in public speaking can hinder the effectiveness of learning. Teachers need to have good classroom management skills and strategies to ensure that every student participates equally and that the discussion remains conducive. Guidance and support from teachers, including preparation exercises and examples of arguments, are essential to overcome these obstacles.

Overall, the debate method in History learning supports the objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum which emphasizes active, flexible, and participatory learning. With proper implementation, this method can have a significant positive impact on students' understanding, motivation, and skills in learning History, as well as preparing them with relevant competencies for life in the modern era.

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