

THE CONCEPT OF *MERDEKA BELAJAR* FROM THE VIEW OF CONSTRUCTIVISM

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Abstract

The Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Forward Indonesia cabinet, Nadim Makarim, issued the Merdeka Belajar as a concept of national education in the disruption era. In Merdeka Belajar, Students are offered advantages and possibilities to study based on their interests and career aspirations. This study analyzed the concept of Merdeka Belajar from the view of constructivism. The constructivist paradigm aims to interpret the world, understand life, and create meaning. This library research aims to understand the philosophical paradigm of the concept of Merdeka Belajar. The results of this study were generated from relevant sources such as scientific journals, books, theses, and dissertations. This study reveals links between the concept of Merdeka Belajar and Constructivism that both emphasize freedom, flexibility, and independence for educational institutions. Students are not bound by strict rules. Knowledge can be obtained from everyday experience.

Keywords: *Constructivism; Learning; Merdeka Belajar; Paradigm.*

Abstrak

Menteri Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset dan Teknologi kabinet Indonesia Maju, Nadim Makarim, mengeluarkan kebijakan Merdeka Belajar sebagai konsep pendidikan nasional di era disrupsi. Dalam Merdeka Belajar, peserta didik diberikan kemudahan-kemudahan tertentu dan peluang yang lebih besar untuk belajar sesuai dengan minat dan peluang dunia kerja. Penelitian ini menganalisis Konsep Merdeka Belajar yang digagas Mendikbudristek Nadiem Makarim dari perspektif filsafat konstruktivisme. Paradigma filsafat konstruktivisme memiliki tujuan menginterpretasikan dunia, memahami kehidupan, menekankan makna, dan menekankan pemahaman. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk memahami paradigma filosofis dari konsep Merdeka Belajar. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan dengan metode kepustakaan (Library Research). Hasil analisis penelitian ini diambil dari sumber data-data yang relevan seperti jurnal ilmiah, buku, skripsi, tesis, dan disertasi. Ada kesejajaran antara konsep Merdeka Belajar dengan Filsafat Konstruktivisme. Keduanya menekankan kepada kebebasan, keluwesan, dan kemandirian kepada lembaga pendidikan. Peserta didik yang tidak terikat dengan aturan-aturan yang ketat. Ilmu pengetahuan dapat diperoleh dari pengalaman sehari-hari.

Kata Kunci: *Konstruktivisme; Merdeka Belajar; Paradigma; Pembelajaran.*

INTRODUCTION

Every country, including Indonesia as a developing country, expects its citizens to obtain an education. Law number 20 of 2003 Chapter II Article 3 concerning the National Education System reads:

The National Education functions to develop the capability, character, and civilization of the nation for enhancing its intellectual capacity, and is aimed at developing learners' potentials so that they become persons imbued with human values who are faithful and pious to one and only God; who possess morals and noble character; who are healthy, knowledgeable, competent, creative, independent; and as citizens, are democratic and responsible.

Education is one of the factors in the global growth of the living culture. Quality and advanced education can lead to a better quality of life. Thus, education must be updated to reflect the times. This is in line with the statements of Ali ibn Abi Talib ‘Do not raise your children the way [your] parents raised you, they were born for a different time” (Wulansari 2020). Students should be educated according to their era. The method used by an educator when they learn things at a young age will be different from the ones they use in teaching. Following the rapid development of technological advancements, education must also adapt. Therefore, *Merdeka Belajar* is established.

The Minister of Education, Nadiem Anwar Makarim, proclaimed "*Merdeka Belajar*" which attracted the attention of educators, practitioners, and academics. The policy made by this government regarding the concept of *Merdeka Belajar* will relate to the surrounding environment and the interests of students. Students learn through experiences. Therefore, reviewing the *Merdeka Belajar* policy is very important. The curriculum of *Merdeka Belajar* has been implemented in several institutions as pilots or referred to as Sekolah Penggerak and SMK Pusat Keunggulan (Copy of Kepmendikbudristek No. 56, 2022, 5). *Merdeka Belajar* can now also be learned on the GTK Mengajar. Educators can learn online from training and workshops that have been scheduled by the Ministry of Education and Culture and Research and Technology on the GTK platform.

The philosophy of constructivism can provide learning freedom. In the philosophy of constructivism, learning invites the student to be the center of learning. Knowledge created through student building emphasizes life skills and concretely

displays abilities through evaluation by applying learning process activities and learning outcomes in the form of knowledge, attitudes, and life behavior (Nursikin 2016, 303-304). of students to think critically and intelligently. The realization of the concepts of *ing ngarso sung tuladha, ing* This is related to the concept of *Merdeka Belajar* which was researched by Ivan Prapanca Wardhana and his colleagues. The result of their research reveals the concept of *Merdeka Belajar* related to the freedom *madya mangun karso, tut wuri handayani* is expected to fulfill the objectives of the learning process (Wardhana, S dan Pratiwi 2020, 241).

Constructivism philosophy prioritizes the role of students to express ideas and increase the potential of their talents. Students are expected to adapt to future advances in science and technology. Furthermore, students can learn knowledge without relying solely on educators or other peers for direction and instruction. Knowledge may be gained through experience and is extremely valuable if you can address the challenges. This confirms the research results of Muhammad Yamin and Syahrir that in the era of the industrial revolution 4.0, The main requirement in the educational system, particularly by students, is the ability to master new literacy. The new literacy involves data literacy, technology literacy, and human literacy (Yamin dan Syahrir 2020, 135).

Constructivism, which promotes freedom, influences the development of natural individuals. Susi Martini in her research on the philosophical basis of constructivism in science learning describes a process or stage of personal, individual, and intellectual formation that results from one's own or daily activities. Learning science based on constructivism requires educators' mastery of various learning strategies and assessment methods (Martini 2017, 43).

Based on the brief description provided above, I seek to investigate how the constructivist philosophy paradigm is conceptualized, how the concept of *Merdeka Belajar* is developed by the Minister of Education of Indonesia, and whether there are parallels between the concept of the constructivist philosophy paradigm and the concept of *Merdeka Belajar*. This paper is very useful for the world of education to accomplish educational objectives and to meet the challenges of the times.

METHOD

This research was carried out using library research. The data in the form of primary data was supported by secondary data. The primary data in this study is a copy of Kepmendikbudristek No. 56/M/2022 Concerning Guidelines for Implementing Curriculum in the Framework of Learning Recovery. The secondary data was taken from printed and non-printed scientific journals, theses, proceedings, dissertations, and books. Data analysis was carried out using the deductive method by drawing conclusions from general situations leading to specific understanding.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Philosophy of Constructivism

Philosophy comes from ancient Greek, known as *philosophia* and *philosophos*, which mean people who love wisdom and knowledge (Lubis 2019, 2). Constructivism in learning is a philosophy that asserts that the outcomes of learning activities and experiences shape human understanding

(Martini 2017, 37). Constructivism is a philosophy that believes knowledge will develop through construction activities rather than transfer activities or processes (Permata, Rahmawati dan Fitriana 2018, 34). Knowledge cannot simply be transferred; it must be interpreted by the individual. Knowledge is not a one-time event, but rather a continual process. If knowledge is passed on to others, it will grow. Water that flows will always be clear, and water that does not flow will become hazy over time.

The constructivist principle holds that all knowledge is compiled and produced rather than being received solely through various senses such as touch, smell, sight, hearing, and so on. According to Kant, knowledge arises from experience but cannot be limited to what is experienced (Lubis 2019, 130). Without experience, knowledge does not develop or happen. It will evolve from previous knowledge as a result of the experience. Therefore the learning outcomes are subjective and highly dependent on each individual.

Constructivism assumptions can be seen from ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions. The ontological assumption holds that reality consists of multiple realities and layers. In this paradigm, the socio-cultural reality is a constructed reality (institutional facts). John R. Searle believes that there is a difference between natural facts and socio-cultural facts. If physical facts simply exist and are unaffected by socio-cultural factors, then socio-cultural facts are facts generated by socio-cultural factors. As a result, constructivists define theory or science as the transformation of a subject into an object (Lubis 2019, 176).

Epistemological assumptions in research assume that the researcher and the object have a bounded and interactive connection. Humans, according to constructivists, are creatures who are related to and united with their environment in the world, which is known as *dasein*. As a result, consciousness is thought to be influenced by socio-cultural factors.

Methodological assumptions suggest that research requires creativity and interpretation and that it does not end with material facts; thus, all types of interpretation are the outcome of construction. Swandt considers phenomenological interpretation, hermeneutic interpretation, post-structuralism, and symbolic interactionism to be constructivist methods.

The assumptions of constructivism are related to the assumptions of social cognitive theory, which asserts that humans, behavior/attitudes, and the environment are all mutually sustaining (Suparlan 2019, 83). The similarities between these assumptions include, first, the fact that individuals are active students who are thought to be capable of gaining and expanding their knowledge for themselves. Students are given the freedom to improve the knowledge they already have. This development can be obtained through practice, experimentation, and discussions with others so that knowledge will increase. Second, educators do not teach with traditional methods. Educators are situation builders, ensuring that students are always actively engaged in the subject matter through social activities. Educators serve as learning facilitators and guide students through the learning process. As a result, educators must be creative in their use of special strategies and approaches for teaching.

Dahar R.W. describe the implications of the constructivism paradigm in teaching and learning activities. First, educators should know the basic knowledge students have or have obtained from the environment outside the school. Second, learning is not seen as a process of passing on educators' perspectives to students, but rather as a process of modifying ideas that students may have incorrectly (Waseso 2018, 63). Hence, the educator's responsibility is to straighten out and encourage students to build their knowledge. Educators provide students with directions and instructions so that their minds can combine old and new knowledge.

The implementation of constructivism theory in learning can be demonstrated in a variety of learning characteristics. These characteristics include Active learning activities, authentic and situational learning, interesting and challenging learning, connecting understanding of basic knowledge with new knowledge, activities reflecting an understanding of knowledge, educators acting as facilitators, and educators assisting student activities in the learning process (Masgumelar dan Mustafa 2021, 49).

Learning and the Process of Learning

The constructivism framework, as previously established, argues that knowledge is non-objective, has a transient nature, and is based on experience and prior knowledge unlike behaviorism, which believes that knowledge is objective, certain, unchanging, and fixed (Yusuf dan Arfiansyah 2021, 124). According to behaviorism, learning is the acquisition of knowledge, whereas teaching is the transfer of knowledge to those who learn. Constructivism holds that learning is defined

as a process in and of itself, with knowledge being compiled from concrete things, activities, reflection activities, and interpretations. While teaching is the act of regulating the environment to urge students to uncover and analyze the meaning of uncertainty. As a result, pupils must interpret what they have received for themselves. In constructivist learning there are several learning principles (Supardan 2016, 6-7):

1. Learning is an active process. Learners are trained to get concepts and understand them through active learning
2. Learners learn through cognitive conflict resolution from their own and other people's experiences, reflection, and metacognition
3. Learning is a process of searching for meaning. Learners actively construct the meaning of learning activities
4. Knowledge is constructed not only individually, but also socially, via interaction with others.
5. Educators must be active, have learned child development theory, and comprehend learning theory to construct knowledge
6. Learning must always be conceptualized and related to what was previously known
7. Learning should be done thoroughly by constructing knowledge, not hasty learning by moving from one topic to another topic
8. Learning is a reflection of the experience of reality.

Yuleilawati revealed the characteristics of constructivism-oriented learning activities as follows (Ula 2019, 20):

1. Knowledge will be formed based on previous knowledge and experience.
2. Learning is a person's way of interpreting something.

3. Learning is how to interpret experience and activeness in the learning process.
4. Knowledge will develop through communicating with one another, exchanging ideas or points of view, and sharing information.
5. Learn from real-world or realistic events, make decisions through assignments, and are not a separate part of the learning process

Learning Environment

According to behaviorism, learning must be precise, structured, and orderly. So the environment must likewise be orderly and have rigorous rules. In behaviorism, failure and delay in learning is considered a mistake, while success must be appreciated.

In contrast to constructivism's view of freedom, students can only convey the meaning interpreted from reality in the natural environment. Failure and success are forms of interpretation that must be rewarded. In this case, freedom is a factor in learning success. Students' independence will help them develop their perspectives and ask diverse questions regarding life's facts.

There are five basic elements in the analysis of the constructivist learning environment (Suprianto 2019, 50-51).

1. Educators pay attention to students' prior knowledge. Educators encourage students to construct new knowledge by connecting them with their prior knowledge to enable a change in students' self-concept
2. Learning activities are optimally designed to provide meaningful experiences. Educators consider the interests, attitudes, and needs of students in

determining learning strategies. Educators can relate theory to students' daily life activities

3. A conducive learning environment can be created by providing students time and opportunity to interact with others productively
4. Educators should encourage students to be independent. Students can be responsible for their learning process and are allowed to self-reflect and organize learning activities.
5. Introducing students to the scientific world. Processes and social attitudes are included in addition to products.

The learning environment strongly supports the success of learning. A comfortable and beautiful environment can affect how students' brains work. A comfortable surrounding environment is needed to achieve learning objectives. Facilities and infrastructure must be fulfilled. For example, community learning in Islamic boarding schools requires dormitories and a wide environment. Thus, social learning can run for twenty-four hours. Students are allowed to understand each other better.

Learning Objective

Behaviorism emphasizes acquiring knowledge as a learning goal. Learning is viewed as an activity of re-expressing what the teacher has provided. Meanwhile, Constructivism emphasizes process learning, particularly how to develop new understanding, and students are encouraged to rethink and explain what is being studied or thought about (Yusuf dan Arfiansyah 2021, 126). Educators stimulate students' curiosity

about what they observe in reality. With this curiosity, new knowledge will emerge.

The goal of constructivism is to interpret the world, understand life, emphasize meaning, and encourage understanding (Lubis 2019, 179). Constructivism is more directed to meaningful learning. Anything can be a source of learning. All tangible objects in the surrounding environment will become a source of learning for those who think. Therefore, it is necessary to increase curiosity.

Constructivism may also be defined as learning that encourages students to engage with their surroundings, improve skills, build self-confidence, and be courageous in kindness (Ulfadhilah 2021, 11). Students are expected to interact with the surrounding environment to gain knowledge. Mingling will sharpen abilities and build confidence. Students should not be embarrassed or frightened to voice their thoughts.

Group learning activities based on constructivism can help students become more active (Maswi 2022, 2400). When working in groups students can exchange ideas and arguments. They solve problems together with rational and logical solutions. In Furthermore, students can get to know other individuals and their surroundings better.

Learning strategies

Behaviorism is defined as following rules and procedures in a systematic and orderly manner. As a result, behaviorist learning prioritizes its presentation. Meanwhile, constructivism emphasizes the meaningful use of knowledge, whether partially or sequentially. Conformity to the contents of

the curriculum or textbooks utilized is the result of behaviorism. In constructivism the result is the result of analysis, comparing, generalizing, and hypothesizing. Constructivism in education demands educators to master a variety of learning methodologies that are adapted to the needs of students (Martini 2017, 35).

According to Piaget, the constructivism paradigm underlies the cognitive strategy called meta-cognition. Metacognition is the skill of students in managing and controlling thought (Nurhidayati 2017, 6-7). Preisseisen mentions four types of metacognition skills (Nurhidayati 2017, 6-7).

The first one is problem-solving. Students are trained to solve a problem by collecting realities, analyzing information, developing problem-solving strategies, and determining the most effective solutions to the problem.

The second skill is decision-making. Learners are trained to decide the best by gathering information, comparing the advantages and disadvantages of reference, and analyzing information logically and reasonably.

Third, critical thinking trains students to analyze opinions/information. Students are encouraged to propose arguments based on correct and rational assumptions. Students can present problem-solving based on their personal opinion.

Fourth, creative thinking encourages students to use their thinking processes to gain new views, and arrange logical concepts and principles as well as individual views and thoughts. With new knowledge, new perspectives emerge, and the combination of new and old knowledge results in more complex thoughts.

Success in learning is strongly influenced by learning strategies. Educators must have skills in determining learning strategies. This strategy is adapted to the characteristics of students, the environment, and the material to be delivered. Various learning strategies keep students from being bored, increasing their interest in studying.

Constructivism philosophy allows students to be creative and develop their characters. To achieve this, several strategic constructivist approaches are required, including (Faiz dan Kurniawaty 2020, 161):

1. Consideration Model is a learning model with an emphasis on giving attention and consideration to other people. This model trains students to avoid negative thoughts about other people. It will bring tolerance, empathy, respect, and concern for the people around them. are strategies that can be used to achieve these objectives.
2. Value Clarification Technique is one way for students to determine the values they want. It seeks to reduce student confusion about the values obtained. The educator's role is limited to opening a dialogue with relevant news and directing students to respect the values of others, assess self-worth, and establish a rational direction of truth.
3. Cognitive Moral Development Assists students in developing moral reasoning abilities and progressing through the phases of moral development. Moral issues in the educational setting can be used by educators. Students can develop cognitive abilities that have an effect.

Learning strategies can be utilized in collaboration with educators, subjects, courses, and even educational institutions. This can help students understand their ideas and improve

their learning experience. For example, Islamic Religious Education subjects can collaborate with entrepreneurship subjects in Muslim Clothing Design to create meaningful learning. Besides that, the lesson for marriage in Islamic Religious Education lessons can also collaborate with Javanese language lessons on traditional wedding material.

Learning Evaluation

Evaluation is a process of giving appreciation or giving meaning and value to a process, activity, program, or product based on its level of achievement in meeting its objectives (Haryanto 2020, 16). Assessment in behaviorism prioritizes one type of positive response, skills independently, and frequently use paper tests. As a result, there are two types of answers in this assessment: correct answers and incorrect answers. The assessment is usually performed at the end of the semester or after the course. While constructivism's evaluation stresses construction/composition, activities that are actively meaningful and tied to real-world situations. As a result, answering the assessment requires specific reasoning.

However, assessment should be performed throughout the learning process (Yusuf dan Arfiansyah 2021, 127). Constructivism assesses learning through authentic assessments/alternative assessments like portfolios, observation procedures, group assignments, case studies, games, and appraisal performance rather than paper and objective tests (Martini 2017, 35). Constructivism evaluates flexibly and independently. An assessment can already be obtained by observation during the learning process. Students' thinking and

acting processes can be examined as they progress in their learning.

The assessment carried out by educators in constructivism is primarily that students show changes or improvements. To find out if there are improvements and changes, it is necessary to have an initial survey of learning. With an increase and new understanding, educators can provide an assessment of students. Assessments might take the shape of narratives or explanations of the changes that have occurred, rather than just numbers.

Constructivism and the Concept of Merdeka Belajar

The Programmer for International Student Assessment (PISA) in 2018 reported that in the field of maths and literacy, Indonesian students rank eighth from the bottom. It ranks 70 out of 78 countries (Yusuf dan Arfiansyah 2021, 128). Based on this, the Indonesian Minister of Education, Nadiem Anwar Makarim, formulated the *Merdeka Belajar*. *Merdeka Belajar* is a new program initiated by the government to provide comfort for educators and students during teaching and learning activities (Lestiyani 2002, 369). The concept of *Merdeka Belajar* leads to the freedom to think critically and intelligently. The realization of the concepts of *ing ngarso sung tuladha, ing madya mangun karso, tut wuri handayani* is expected to meet the objectives of the *Merdeka Belajar* (Wardhana, S dan Pratiwi 2020, 241).

The principle of *Merdeka Belajar* is based on Kepmendikbudristek No. 56 of 2022 are as follows (Copy of Kepmendikbudristek No. 56, 2022, 60):

1. Learning is designed by considering students' stages of development and the current level of achievement, learning needs, and the characteristics and development of students to ensure meaningful and fun learning.
2. Learning is designed and implemented to build students' capacity to become lifelong learners.
3. The learning process supports the development of students' competence and character holistically.
4. Relevant learners, which is learning designed by taking into account the context, environment, and culture of students, and involving parents and the community as partners.
5. Future-oriented and sustainable learning.

The concept of *Merdeka Belajar* which was taken from Ki Hajar Dewantara can be related to the concept of constructivism. Both of them emphasize the freedom of students. In this case, freedom is still regulated by educators. Educators serve as facilitators, directing students to understand concepts that fit values and norms.

The initial assessment of *Merdeka Belajar* aims to determine or identify the needs of students. Thus, they have the ability to choose the learning that will be offered. Educational units are provided flexibility in establishing learning activities and instructional methods based on learning objectives, educational unit context, and student characteristics. The assessment instruments and procedures are also released following the learning objectives. The following are the principles of assessment (Copy of Kepmendikbudristek No. 56, 2022, 60-61):

1. Assessment is an integrated part of the learning process, learning facilities, and holistic supply of information, as feedback for educators, students, and

parents or guardians to guide students in selecting learning strategies

2. Assessments are designed and carried out following the function of the assessment, with the flexibility to choose the technique and time of implementation to achieve learning objectives.
3. The assessment is designed in a fair, proportional, valid, and reliable manner to explain learning progress, make judgments about the next steps, and serve as a foundation for the future development of appropriate learning programs.
4. Reports on student learning progress and achievements are simple and informative, provide useful information about the characters and competencies achieved, as well as follow-up strategies
5. The assessment results are used as material for reflection by students, educators, staff, and parents/guardians to improve the quality of learning.

There are similarities and parallels if the assessment principles are related to the concept of constructivism philosophy. They have the concept of assessment that is not limited to paper tests but may be tailored to the requirements and characteristics of students. This assessment can be in the form of portfolios, products, and so on.

Nadiem Anwar Makarim describes that Educators will be the beginning point for students' independent thinking success. Educators will obtain a process of assessing students' competencies and the aims of learning these basic competencies by going through a process of interpretation, independent thinking, and reflection (Wardhana, S dan Pratiwi 2020, 240).

The *Merdeka Belajar* program expects that students will be able to think freely. Learning is not just something that

happens in the classroom; it may also happen outside of the classroom. In this way, learning will be more enjoyable and meaningful. There are four important points *Merdeka Belajar* (Mustaghfiroh 2020, 146):

1. The National-based School Examination (USBN) was replaced with an Assessment exam to each school. Each school is given the freedom to determine the assessment. The assessment can be in the form of papers, portfolios, assignments, projects, and others.
2. In 2021, National Examination was replaced by a Minimum Competency Assessment (AKM) and a character survey as an evaluation and improvement of learning in each school. The assessment consists of literacy and numerical reasoning. The assessment was carried out in grades 4, 8, and 11.
3. The simplification of lesson plans means that educators are free to choose, develop and make lesson plans. The main parts of preparing lesson plans are learning objectives, learning activities, and assessments. The Minister of Education expects that by reducing administrative burdens, educators will improve the competency and quality of learning with more time.
4. Making PPDB policies more flexible. 50% zoning path, 30% achievement path, 15% affirmation path, and 5% transfer path. Local governments are given the freedom to determine zoning.

Merdeka Belajar launched by the Government is to purify the national education system to the essence of the law. It gives freedom to educational institutions, educators, and students to

learn independently and creatively. This freedom must start with educators as the driving force of national education (Sherly, Dharma dan Sihombing 2020, 189). The era of *Merdeka Belajar* can be interpreted as a time of freedom. Educators and students have the right to freedom or freedom of thought, to be free of the administrative burdens that educators have accumulated to maximize their potential for educational purposes (Izza, Falah dan Susilowati 2020).

Merdeka Belajar provides opportunities for educators and students to be free in learning. Educators and students work together in exploring knowledge, complement each other, provide mutual benefits, and contribute to each other. The concept of *Merdeka Belajar* is humanizing humans. It is not always following the rules and sticking to a predetermined curriculum. Educators are no longer the center of truth, but rather work as facilitators in learning activities and activators to discover the truth.

Education Development in Merdeka The learning curriculum is projected to be a learning method with applicable systems and instruction in the Industrial Revolution 4.0 era. Therefore, by mastering technology in the Industrial Revolution 4.0 era, students can add new literacy. These include data literacy, technology literacy, and human literacy (Yamin dan Syahrir 2020, 135). Data literacy refers to an individual's capacity to read, analyze, and utilize information in the digital environment. Technological literacy is a person's understanding of how machines work and technology applications. Meanwhile, human literacy means strengthening one's humanities, communication, and design. If these three literacy

objectives are met, students will be qualified human resources ready to help build the country in the future.

The learning reinforcement in *Merdeka Belajar* as a co-curricular activity is the *Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila (P5)*. P5 is a project-based co-curricular activity aimed to increase efforts to attain competency and character under Pancasila students profiles, which are constructed using graduate competency standards (Copy of Kepmendikbudristek No. 56, 2022, 63). implementation time. The themes that have been set by the government in the *Merdeka Belajar* include:

1. Early Education Level: I love the earth, I love Indonesia, playing and working together/ we are all brothers, and my imagination and creativity
2. Elementary School Level: Sustainable lifestyle, local wisdom, *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*, and optimizing the body and soul.
3. Junior High School level: Sustainable lifestyle, local wisdom, *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*, optimizing the body and soul, voice of democracy, engineering and technology, and entrepreneurship
4. Senior High School level: Sustainable lifestyle, local wisdom, *Bhineka Tunggal Ika*, optimizing the body and soul, voice of democracy, engineering and technology, entrepreneurship, and employment.

It can be inferred that there are similarities in the concept of *Merdeka Belajar* with Constructivism in terms of freedom, independence, and flexibility for educational institutions to explore students' competencies. When these components are combined, they will produce learners who are free to develop naturally. Learning is based on experience, educators serve as

facilitators rather than knowledge providers, educational institutions serve as educational laboratories, and joint activities at home and at school.

The goal of structuring learning activities using a constructivist approach is to offer comfort, safety, and ease of learning. Learners can be regarded as learning subjects who play a very important role in structuring the learning environment. Furthermore, strict rules will kill the student's initiative as a learner. This freedom will erase fear and instill courage.

A free learning environment promotes good behavior and perceptions of learning activities by focusing on the interests of all participants engaged. As a result, learning activities will be regarded as enjoyable and interesting. As a result, educators should assist students in developing positive behaviors and views so that they are at ease while learning.

The concept of *Merdeka Belajar* will have a significant impact on advanced and high-quality education in Indonesia. To support this program, educational institution stakeholders must focus on educator development from pedagogical, social, spiritual, and professional perspectives. To accomplish a democratic and humanist education, educators must shift their perspective from the teacher's role to teach to the student's role to learn (Faiz dan Kurniawaty 2020, 160).

CONCLUSION

Constructivism in learning is a philosophy that holds that the outcomes of learning activities and processes are the foundation for knowledge construction. *Merdeka Belajar* and

Constructivism has many in commons. They emphasize the freedom, independence, and flexibility of educational institutions in exploring their students' competence. The *Merdeka Belajar* concept is to generate exceptional human resources who are ready to face the challenges of developing the country.

This study suffers from several limitations in terms of analysis, understanding, and source of information. As a result, future readers and researchers are recommended to learn more about and to seek updates about the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

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