



Student-Centered Classroom Management: Transforming the Teacher's Role from Knowledge Transmitter to Values Facilitator within the *Kurikulum Merdeka* Ecosystem

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Abstract: The implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* in Indonesia necessitates a fundamental shift in classroom management from teacher-centered knowledge transmission to student-centered value facilitation. This study examines how teachers transform their roles from transmitters of knowledge into facilitators of values within the *Kurikulum Merdeka* framework. Employing a narrative literature review approach, data were collected from peer-reviewed journal articles and credible educational reports indexed in Google Scholar, published between 2019 and 2024. Thematic analysis revealed three key findings: (1) the transformation of physical and psychological classroom environments through flexible seating arrangements and co-constructed classroom agreements; (2) the shift from instructional monologues to dialogic and reflective teacher-student interactions, including emotional check-ins; and (3) the integration of value facilitation practices through differentiated instruction and formative assessment aligned with the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*. However, challenges such as role confusion, fear of losing control, and administrative overload persist. The study concludes that successful transformation requires sustained systemic support, including targeted professional development, instructional leadership, and active professional learning communities. These findings offer practical insights for educators, school leaders, and policymakers seeking to bridge the gap between curriculum policy and classroom reality.

Keywords: student-centered classroom management, *Kurikulum Merdeka*, facilitator of values

Introduction

The landscape of 21st-century education has undergone a fundamental paradigm shift, moving away from industrial-era models of knowledge transmission toward learner-centered approaches that prioritize critical thinking, collaboration, and character development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2020). In this evolving educational ecosystem, the teacher's role is no longer confined to that of a sole knowledge provider; rather, teachers are increasingly expected to serve as facilitators who nurture students' holistic development, including their social-emotional competencies and moral reasoning (O'Flaherty & McCormack, 2019; Omar et al., 2024). This transformation is further accelerated by the ubiquity of digital technologies and artificial intelligence, which have rendered the traditional "transfer of knowledge" model increasingly obsolete (OECD, 2023).

In the Indonesian context, this global paradigm shift has been institutionalized through the implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* (Emancipated Curriculum), officially launched by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology in 2022 (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). The curriculum's philosophical core centers on the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (Pancasila Student Profile), which identifies six essential character dimensions—faith, global diversity, mutual cooperation, independence, critical reasoning, and creativity—that students must internalize throughout their learning journey (Rahayu et al., 2022). Consequently, the curriculum demands a pedagogical reorientation in which teachers move beyond delivering content to actively facilitating the internalization of these values within everyday classroom interactions (Suryaman, 2020).

Despite this progressive policy framework, a significant gap persists between curricular

aspirations and actual classroom practices. Empirical evidence suggests that many Indonesian teachers continue to employ authoritarian and compliance-oriented classroom management strategies, prioritizing order and discipline over student agency and value development (Wilfred, 2023). This disconnect is partly attributable to deeply entrenched beliefs about teaching, insufficient professional development, and the persistent pressure of high-stakes assessments that reward content coverage over character formation (Liacouras & Liacouras, 2021). As a result, the classroom often remains a site of knowledge transfer rather than a dynamic space for value co-construction.

The urgency of reimagining classroom management as a value-facilitation practice is underscored by contemporary research on student engagement and well-being. Student-centered classroom management—characterized by collaborative rule-setting, restorative practices, and differentiated instruction—has been shown to foster intrinsic motivation, self-regulation, and a sense of belonging among learners (Ryan & Deci, 2020). When teachers function as facilitators of values rather than mere transmitters of information, they create psychologically safe learning environments in which students can explore, question, and internalize ethical principles through authentic experiences (Biesta, 2020). This approach aligns with the constructivist understanding that values are not taught through direct instruction but are cultivated through meaningful social interactions and reflective dialogue (Mishra, 2023; Teo, 2019).

Given this backdrop, the present study aims to examine how teachers in *Kurikulum Merdeka*-implementing schools transform their classroom management practices from knowledge-centered to student-centered approaches, with a particular focus on their evolving role as facilitators of values. Specifically, this research investigates (1) the forms of transformation in physical and psychological classroom management, (2) the pedagogical strategies teachers employ to facilitate character values, and (3) the challenges encountered during this transition. By addressing these questions, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on curriculum reform implementation and offers practical insights for educators, school leaders, and policymakers seeking to bridge the gap between policy intent and classroom reality.

Method

This study employs a narrative literature review approach to examine the transformation of the teacher's role in student-centered classroom

management within the context of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Unlike a systematic literature review (SLR) that relies on strict, reproducible protocols such as PRISMA, a narrative review is utilized here to allow for a broader, critical synthesis of emerging concepts and diverse pedagogical perspectives without being constrained by exhaustive quantitative mapping. The primary database used for data collection was Google Scholar, selected for its comprehensive coverage of both international and context-specific educational research relevant to the Indonesian curriculum. The search strategy involved using targeted keyword combinations, including "student-centered classroom management," "Kurikulum Merdeka," "teacher as facilitator," "value facilitation," and "character education." To ensure the currency and relevance of the reviewed literature, the inclusion criteria were strictly limited to peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, and credible educational reports published between 2019 and 2024.

Following the initial retrieval, the gathered literature was screened based on title and abstract relevance, specifically retaining studies that addressed the shift from knowledge transmission to value facilitation, student agency, and psychological classroom climate. After excluding duplicate records and studies outside the scope of the research objectives, the final corpus of literature underwent thematic analysis. The data synthesis process involved a close reading of the full texts to extract key findings, pedagogical strategies, and implementation challenges encountered by educators. These extracted insights were then categorized into core themes—namely, the transformation of physical and psychological classroom environments, dialogic teacher-student interactions, and the practical integration of the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* into daily routines. This thematic organization enabled a coherent conceptual synthesis, effectively bridging theoretical frameworks of student-centered learning with the practical realities of classroom management under the *Kurikulum Merdeka*.

Results and Discussion

Transformation of Physical and Psychological Classroom Environment

The reviewed literature consistently indicates that student-centered classroom management begins with a deliberate reconfiguration of the physical learning space. Traditional row-based seating arrangements, which reinforce teacher dominance and passive reception, are being systematically replaced by flexible configurations such as U-shapes, discussion clusters, and circular formations (Tobia et al., 2020). These spatial adjustments are not merely aesthetic;

they serve as physical manifestations of the pedagogical shift toward collaboration and shared knowledge construction (Gibson, 2021; Nortvig et al., 2020). Teachers reported that rearranging furniture signals to students that their voices and interactions are valued, thereby fostering a sense of ownership over the learning environment.

Beyond physical arrangements, the psychological dimension of classroom management has undergone a more profound transformation. The conventional "classroom rules" imposed unilaterally by teachers have been replaced by "classroom agreements" (*kesepakatan kelas*) co-constructed with students at the beginning of the academic year. This participatory approach aligns with restorative justice principles, where students internalize behavioral norms through dialogue rather than compliance through fear (Lodi et al., 2021; Lyubansky et al., 2022). The literature reveals that such agreements typically emphasize mutual respect, empathy, and collective responsibility, reflecting the six dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile (Hasbi et al., 2023; Pinem & Nuryadi, 2023; Rifki et al., 2024).

The synthesis of physical and psychological transformations reveals a coherent framework for student-centered classroom management. The table below summarizes the key shifts identified across the reviewed studies, illustrating the multidimensional nature of classroom transformation under *Kurikulum Merdeka*.

Table 1. Comparison of Teacher-Centered and Student-Centered Classroom Management Practices

Dimension	Teacher-Centered Approach	Student-Centered Approach
Seating Arrangement	Fixed rows facing the board	Flexible clusters, U-shape, or circle
Rule-Making	Unilateral teacher-imposed rules	Co-constructed classroom agreements
Discipline	Punitive and compliance-based	Restorative and relationship-based
Teacher Role	Knowledge transmitter and controller	Facilitator and guide

Student Role	Passive recipient	Active co-constructor of learning
Conflict Resolution	Detention, reprimand, exclusion	Dialogue, reflection, repair
Assessment Focus	Summative testing	Formative and reflective assessment

Table 1 illustrates the multidimensional nature of classroom transformation under *Kurikulum Merdeka*. The shift from teacher-centered to student-centered management is evident not only in spatial arrangements but also in the underlying philosophy of discipline, assessment, and teacher-student dynamics (Zubaidah, 2022). These findings suggest that the transformation is holistic, encompassing both visible structural changes and deeper philosophical reorientations.



Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Student-Centered Classroom Management

Figure 1 presents a conceptual map of the student-centered classroom management framework derived from the literature synthesis. The diagram highlights how physical, psychological, pedagogical, and value-facilitation dimensions interconnect to support the

development of the Pancasila Student Profile. This integrated framework serves as a guiding model for teachers navigating the transformation process.

Shift from Instruction to Reflective Dialogue

A second major finding concerns the transformation of teacher-student interaction patterns. The literature indicates that teachers in *Kurikulum Merdeka*-implementing schools have significantly reduced their talking time and increased the use of guiding questions to stimulate critical thinking (Rahman et al., 2023). Instead of delivering monologues, teachers now facilitate dialogic exchanges where students construct meaning through peer discussion and reflective inquiry. This shift is consistent with Vygotskian constructivism, which posits that learning emerges through social interaction and scaffolding (Mishra, 2023).

Emotional check-ins at the beginning of lessons have emerged as a distinctive practice in student-centered classrooms. Teachers dedicate the first few minutes of each session to acknowledging students' emotional states, using tools such as emotion wheels, mood meters, or simple verbal reflections (Hoffmann et al., 2020). This practice not only validates students' experiences but also creates a psychologically safe environment conducive to deep learning. Research indicates that such socio-emotional routines significantly improve student engagement and reduce behavioral issues (Huguley et al., 2022).

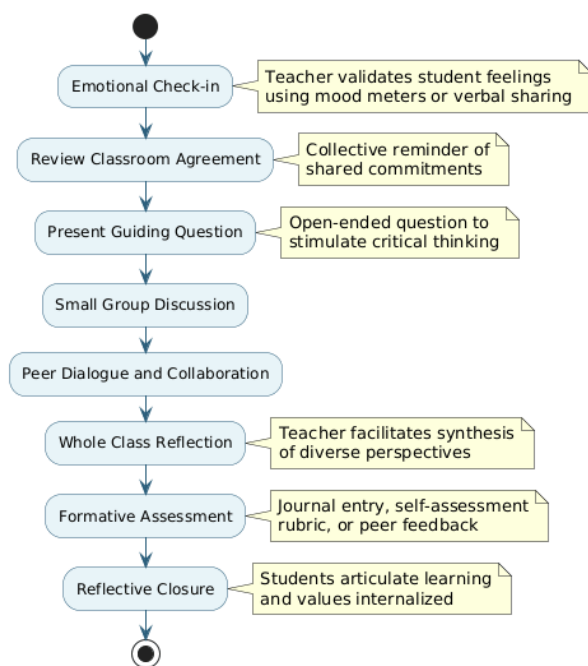


Figure 2. Flow of a Student-Centered Learning Session

Figure 2 depicts the typical flow of a student-centered learning session, highlighting the integration

of emotional check-ins, dialogic instruction, and reflective closure. This sequence represents a departure from the traditional transmission model and embodies the teacher's role as a facilitator of values. The cyclical nature of the process ensures that values are not merely taught but continuously practiced and reflected upon.

Value Facilitation Practices in Assessment and Learning

The third key finding relates to how teachers operationalize value facilitation through differentiated instruction and formative assessment. The literature shows that teachers provide students with choices in how they learn and demonstrate understanding, thereby nurturing independence and critical reasoning (Fitrianto & Hidayat, 2024). Differentiation is applied across content, process, and product, allowing students to engage with materials at their own pace and through modalities that suit their learning preferences (Grecu, 2023). This approach aligns with the *Kurikulum Merdeka*'s emphasis on meeting diverse learner needs rather than enforcing uniformity.

Formative assessment has replaced summative testing as the primary tool for monitoring student development. Teachers use reflective journals, peer feedback, and self-assessment rubrics to help students track their progress not only academically but also in terms of character development (Hawe et al., 2021). These assessment practices align with the *Kurikulum Merdeka*'s emphasis on assessment *for* learning rather than assessment *of* learning (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). The integration of the Pancasila Student Profile dimensions into assessment rubrics ensures that character development is systematically monitored and celebrated.

Table 2. Value Facilitation Strategies Identified in Reviewed Literature

Strategy	Description	Target Value Dimension
Differentiated Instruction	Providing choices in content, process, or product	Independence, Critical Reasoning
Reflective Journaling	Students document learning experiences and emotional insights	Self-awareness, Faith

Peer Feedback Circles	Structured peer review emphasizing constructive dialogue	Mutual Cooperation, Empathy
Project-Based Learning (P5)	Collaborative projects addressing real-world issues	Global Diversity, Creativity
Ethical Dilemma Discussions	Guided conversations on moral scenarios	Critical Reasoning, Faith
Self-Assessment Rubrics	Students evaluate their own character growth	Independence, Self-regulation
Classroom Agreement Reflection	Periodic review of shared commitments	Mutual Cooperation, Responsibility

Table 2 outlines the specific value facilitation strategies identified in the reviewed literature. The integration of these strategies into daily classroom routines demonstrates how teachers embody the role of facilitator of values in practice (Ulum & Riswadi, 2023). Notably, these strategies are not isolated activities but are woven into the fabric of everyday teaching, ensuring that value development is continuous and authentic.

Theoretical Interpretation: Constructivism and Restitution

The findings of this review can be interpreted through the lens of social constructivism and restorative practice theories. Vygotsky's zone of proximal development explains how teachers scaffold students' value development through guided interaction rather than direct instruction (Fletcher, 2024). When teachers pose reflective questions and facilitate peer dialogue, they create opportunities for students to internalize ethical principles through authentic experience (Biesta, 2020). This constructivist perspective underscores why value facilitation cannot be reduced to mere character education lessons; it must be woven into the fabric of everyday classroom life.

Restorative practice theory further illuminates the shift from compliance-based to agreement-based classroom management. Unlike punitive approaches that rely on external control, restorative practices emphasize repairing harm, rebuilding relationships, and fostering intrinsic motivation (Sood et al., 2021). The classroom agreements co-constructed by

students reflect this philosophy, as they encourage students to take ownership of their behavior and its impact on the learning community (Moura et al., 2023). This approach aligns with the *Kurikulum Merdeka*'s vision of developing students who are not only knowledgeable but also ethically grounded.



Figure 3. Hierarchical Breakdown of Theoretical Foundations.

Figure 3 presents a hierarchical breakdown of the theoretical foundations underpinning student-centered classroom management. The integration of constructivist, restorative, self-determination, and character education theories provides a robust framework for understanding the teacher's evolving role. This multi-theoretical lens explains why the transformation is both complex and deeply meaningful for educators and students alike.

Dynamics and Challenges of Role Transformation

Despite the promising findings, the literature also reveals significant challenges in the transformation process. Many teachers experience role confusion and anxiety as they transition from authoritative figures to facilitators (Lee et al., 2022). The fear of losing classroom control is particularly prevalent among teachers who have spent decades in teacher-centered environments. This resistance is compounded by the lack of sustained professional development and the persistent pressure of administrative burdens that leave little time for reflective practice (Abakah et al., 2023; Baker et al., 2019).

A common misconception identified in the literature is the conflation of student-centered management with permissiveness. Some teachers interpret "*berpihak pada murid*" as allowing students to do as they please, which can lead to chaotic classrooms and frustration. However, the literature clarifies that student-centered management actually requires more sophisticated pedagogical skills, as teachers must balance student autonomy with clear boundaries and expectations (Damşa & de Lange, 2019; Ho & Tang, 2023). This nuanced understanding is essential for successful implementation.

Table 3. Key Challenges and Misconceptions in Role Transformation

Challenge/Misconception	Description	Recommended Response
Role confusion	Uncertainty about new facilitator identity	Ongoing mentoring and peer coaching
Fear of losing control	Anxiety about reduced teacher authority	Training in restorative classroom management
Permissiveness myth	Equating student-centered with no rules	Clarifying boundaries within agreements
Administrative overload	Excessive paperwork limiting reflection time	Streamlining documentation requirements
Lack of PD support	Insufficient training on new approaches	Sustained, practice-based professional development
Parental resistance	Parents expecting traditional discipline	Transparent communication about curriculum goals

Table 3 summarizes the key challenges and misconceptions identified in the literature. Addressing these issues requires targeted professional development and ongoing support from school leaders (Brauckmann et al., 2023). The table also offers practical recommendations that can guide policymakers and school administrators in supporting teachers through the transition.

Implications for the Kurikulum Merdeka Ecosystem

The implications of this review extend beyond individual classroom practices to the broader educational ecosystem. The success of *Kurikulum Merdeka* depends not only on teacher transformation but also on the support of school leaders, peers, and policymakers. Professional learning communities (*Komunitas Belajar*) have emerged as critical spaces for teachers to share experiences, reflect on practices, and collaboratively solve problems (Adeoye et al., 2023; Krismanto et al., 2022; Rostikawati et al., 2024). These communities foster a culture of continuous

improvement and collective responsibility for student development.

School leaders play a pivotal role in creating an environment where teachers feel safe to experiment with new pedagogical approaches. Principals who prioritize instructional leadership over administrative compliance empower teachers to take risks and innovate (Paletta, 2019). Furthermore, policy alignment is essential; assessment systems, teacher evaluation criteria, and resource allocation must all support the student-centered vision of *Kurikulum Merdeka* (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). Without systemic coherence, individual teacher efforts risk being undermined by contradictory institutional pressures.

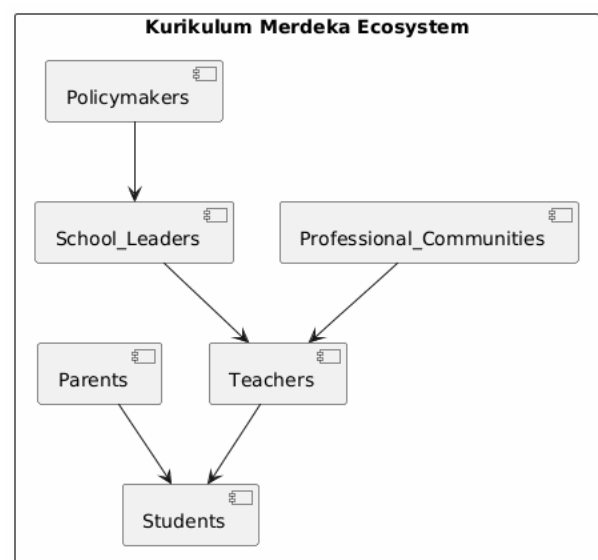


Figure 4. The Kurikulum Merdeka Implementation Ecosystem

Figure 4 illustrates the interconnected ecosystem supporting the implementation of student-centered classroom management under *Kurikulum Merdeka*. The diagram highlights the critical roles of teachers, school leaders, professional communities, policymakers, and parents in sustaining the transformation. This ecosystem perspective emphasizes that classroom-level change cannot succeed in isolation; it requires alignment across all levels of the educational system.

Conclusion

This review demonstrates that the transition from a teacher-centered to a student-centered classroom management paradigm under *Kurikulum Merdeka* represents a profound transformation in both the physical and psychological dimensions of learning. Teachers are evolving from mere transmitters of knowledge into facilitators of values, a shift

manifested through flexible classroom arrangements, co-constructed classroom agreements, dialogic instruction, and reflective assessment practices. These changes are not merely procedural but reflect a deeper philosophical reorientation toward nurturing the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*, where students are recognized as active co-constructors of their learning and character. The integration of socio-emotional routines and differentiated instruction further underscores the holistic nature of this transformation, positioning the classroom as a psychologically safe ecosystem for ethical and intellectual growth.

Despite these promising developments, the success of this transformation hinges on sustained systemic support, including targeted professional development, instructional leadership from school principals, and the active functioning of professional learning communities (*Komunitas Belajar*). Policymakers and school administrators must address persistent challenges such as administrative overload, role confusion, and misconceptions about student agency by streamlining documentation requirements and fostering a culture of reflective practice. Future research should explore the long-term impact of student-centered classroom management on students' self-regulation and ethical decision-making, as well as comparative studies across diverse educational contexts to refine implementation strategies and ensure the sustainable realization of *Kurikulum Merdeka*'s vision.

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