

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM IN PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE DISTRICT OF LIMA PULUH KOTA: Reviewed from the Perspective of Teacher Readiness

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ABSTRACT

This study was motivated by observations made during fieldwork and the discovery of problems related to teachers' lack of knowledge, understanding, and skills in implementing the independent curriculum. This study aims to explore information about teachers' readiness in planning, implementing, and evaluating learning based on the independent curriculum in terms of teachers' knowledge, understanding, and skills. This research is quantitative descriptive research. The population in this study were all 223 public high school teachers in Lima Puluh Kota Regency, with a sample size of 72 people determined using the Slovin formula. The sample was taken using proportional random sampling. The instrument used to collect data was a Likert scale questionnaire with five alternative answers. Before use, the questionnaire was tested for validity and reliability. The validity of the questionnaire was tested using a tiered formula, and its reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha. The data analysis technique used the mean formula. Overall, the implementation of the independent curriculum in public high schools in Lima Puluh Kota Regency: in terms of teacher readiness, it has an average score of 3.96 TCR 79.26, which is in the "Fairly Good" category.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education plays a crucial role in human life, not only as a means of transmitting knowledge, but also for preparing quality human resources. Through a planned and conscious process, education is expected to foster creative and innovative ideas in each student, in line with the dynamics of the times. This is in accordance with the National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003, which defines education as a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential. This potential includes religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the skills needed by themselves, the community, the nation, and the state (Habe & Ahiruddin, 2017). Curriculum can be defined as a set of plans regarding the objectives, content and subject matter, as well as learning methods to achieve specific educational goals (Arifin, 2012). This definition is reinforced by Hilda Taba (in Lase, 2015), who sees the curriculum as a statement of educational objectives with structured material. In short, the curriculum includes the subject matter that must be completed in the educational process and is a written plan of learning experiences. The history of education in Indonesia shows dynamic changes in the curriculum since independence, starting from the 1947 Curriculum to the 2013 Curriculum, reflecting efforts to adapt to the needs and challenges of the times (Munandar in Insani 2019). Curriculum transformation in Indonesia faced another significant challenge in 2020 with the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. To address this issue, the government introduced the

Merdeka Curriculum as one of the options for restoring learning in educational units (Kemendikbudristek, 2022).

In the context of the successful implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, the role of educators is essential in the independent learning program. Teachers are at the forefront and play a key role in achieving student learning objectives (Putri et al., 2025). The active involvement of teachers in the development and preparation of curriculum materials at the school level is crucial to ensure the relevance of learning content to the needs of students (Alsubaie in Heryahya et al., 2022). To be able to implement the curriculum properly, teachers must be prepared. According to Sanusi (2005) in (Fatchurrohman, 2017), readiness is a person's willingness to do something. Meanwhile, according to Wati & Jailani (2016), readiness is the level of willingness or preparation of an individual's overall mental, physical, knowledge, skills, and attitude to respond to and practice an activity and be able to respond or answer in a certain way to a situation and condition faced. Based on the above description, it can be concluded that the success of the Merdeka Curriculum implementation greatly depends on the readiness of teachers in planning learning activities, such as developing appropriate teaching modules for students, implementing learning activities in accordance with the Merdeka Curriculum, ensuring differentiated learning, and finally, evaluating learning in accordance with the Merdeka Curriculum using formative and summative assessments.

Independent learning is a new policy in Indonesia today. This independent learning policy gives freedom to students, teachers, and schools in creating innovative education (Anjelina, W, Silvia, N & Gistituati, N, 2021). More than just a set of materials, the Merdeka Curriculum is interpreted as a learning design that creates a calm, relaxed, enjoyable, stress-free, and pressure-free learning environment, so that students have the opportunity to show their natural talents optimally (Rahayu et al., 2022). The essence of the "independent" curriculum in this curriculum is also reflected in the effort to promote freedom of thought for all elements of education, from teachers to students (Febriani et al., 2023).

According to Hamalik (2007), curriculum implementation is the application or execution of a curriculum program that has been developed in the previous stage, then tested through implementation and management, while constantly making adjustments to the field situation and characteristics of students, including their intellectual, emotional, and physical development. Curriculum implementation is the operationalization of curriculum concepts that are still potential (written) into actual learning activities (Mulyasa, 2009). Curriculum implementation will be less effective if changes only occur at the document level, without being followed by changes in the way teachers teach in the classroom (Fullan, 2007). In relation to curriculum implementation, readiness is a must. This readiness is in terms of knowledge, understanding, skills, and guidance (Gistituati, 2010). The readiness referred to here is the readiness of teachers to plan, implement, and evaluate learning in accordance with the independent curriculum.

However, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at public high schools in Lima Puluh Kota Regency still faces several obstacles. From preliminary observations conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Suliki, several phenomena were observed that need to be studied further, including: Some teachers have not fully implemented differentiated learning methods in the teaching and learning process, some teachers still predominantly use lecture methods in class, which are not in line with the Merdeka Curriculum approach, teachers still face difficulties in developing teaching modules that are in accordance with the principles and format of the Merdeka Curriculum and there are teachers who still tend to use old forms of assessment, compared to forms of assessment that are relevant to the current Merdeka Curriculum. Formative assessments are still not fully implemented, such as the need for quizzes, role-playing/drama.

Based on the above issues, the objectives of this study are to determine: the level of knowledge, understanding, and skills of teachers in planning learning in accordance with the Merdeka Curriculum in public high schools in Lima Puluh Kota Regency, the level of teachers' knowledge, understanding, and skills in implementing learning in accordance with the Merdeka Curriculum in public high schools in Lima Puluh Kota Regency, and the level of teachers' knowledge, understanding, and skills in evaluating learning in accordance with the Merdeka Curriculum in public high schools in Lima Puluh Kota Regency.

2. METHOD, DATA, ANALYSIS

This type of research is quantitative descriptive research. The population in this study was all 223 public high school teachers in Lima Puluh Kota Regency, with a sample size of 72 people determined using the Slovin formula. The sample was taken using proportional random sampling. The instrument used to collect data was a Likert scale questionnaire with five alternative answers. Before use, the questionnaire was tested for validity and reliability. The validity of the questionnaire was tested using a tiered formula, and

its reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha. The test results showed that all items were valid and reliable with a value of 0.984. The data analysis technique used the mean formula.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Overall, the implementation of the independent curriculum in public high schools in Lima Pulu Kota Regency: in terms of teacher readiness, with an average score of 3.96 TCR 79.26%, which is categorized as "Fairly Good". The following is a summary of the data processing results:

Table 1. Summary of Average Scores for the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in Public High Schools in Lima Pulu Kota Regency: Reviewed from the Perspective of Teacher Readiness

No.	Indicator	Average	TCR (%)	Criteria
1.	Learning Planning	3,97	79,37	Fairly Good
2.	Learning Implementation	3,96	79,28	Fairly Good
3.	Learning Evaluation	3,96	76,13	Fairly Good
Average		3,96	79,26	Fairly Good

Based on the recapitulation of the calculation, then: The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in lesson planning was rated "Fairly Good" with an average of 3.97 and a TCR of 79.37%. The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in learning delivery is categorized as "Fairly Good" with an average of 3.96 TCR 79.28%. The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in learning evaluation is categorized as "Fairly Good" with an average of 3.96 TCR 79.28%.

Discussion

Based on the results of the above research, it can be explained as follows. In learning planning, there is still a low score for integrating cross-subject learning into learning modules in accordance with the Merdeka Curriculum. Integrating cross-subject learning into learning modules in accordance with the Merdeka Curriculum can be interpreted as an effort to combine several subjects into one teaching module that is structured based on the principles and provisions of the Merdeka Curriculum. Learning planning is a very important initial stage in the learning process, where learning planning is a guideline for teachers in carrying out learning activities in order to achieve learning objectives optimally. According to Majid (2014), learning planning is the process of systematically compiling learning materials, methods, media, and assessments to achieve specific learning objectives. Learning planning is the first step that determines the success of learning implementation and evaluation (Uno, 2016). Learning planning based on the Merdeka Curriculum is realized through the development of flexible and contextual teaching modules. According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (2002), teaching modules are developed based on learning outcomes, learning objectives, learning activities, and assessments that are appropriate to the needs of students. This means that learning planning based on the independent curriculum requires teachers to be more creative.

In the implementation of learning, there are still low scores in adapting learning materials to the local context and student needs. Adapting learning materials to the local context and student needs in the implementation of learning means that teachers adjust teaching materials to the environment, culture, and daily experiences of students, as well as to their ability levels and learning needs. The implementation of learning is the stage where all learning plans are realized in the teaching and learning process so that students are active in learning and learning objectives can be achieved (Lestaria et al., 2024). According to Bahri and Aswan Zain, the implementation of learning is an activity that has educational value, and this educational value colors the interactions that occur between teachers and students. These interactions are educational in value because the implementation of learning is directed towards achieving specific objectives that have been formulated before the learning process begins. According to Rusman (2017), effective learning must be contextual and student-centered, so teachers need to connect the material to real-life situations experienced by students. This is in line with the independent curriculum, which gives teachers the freedom to adapt learning materials based on the needs and characteristics of their students (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, 2022). In this way, teachers can provide examples of cases and problems that exist in the students' environment as part of the learning material.

In the learning evaluation, there is still one item that scores low, namely determining the reliability of assessment instruments in accordance with the Merdeka Curriculum. Determining the reliability of

assessment instruments in accordance with the Merdeka Curriculum means the ability of teachers to ensure that the assessment tools used can provide consistent and reliable results when used to assess student learning outcomes. In the Merdeka Curriculum, assessment not only serves to give grades, but also to support the learning process through formative and summative assessments. According to (Khoirul & Supahar, 2018), the reliability of assessment instruments indicates the level of consistency of the measuring tools in providing relatively the same results when used in similar conditions. Instruments with high reliability can produce stable and reliable assessment data so that the evaluation results truly reflect the abilities of students. In the independent curriculum, teachers are required to have good evaluation skills, including in determining the reliability of assessment instruments, because assessments are used as the basis for learning decisions (Ariefianti et al. 2024). Reliable assessments support the implementation of formative and summative assessments objectively and help teachers improve the learning process.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion presented in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in public high schools in Lima Puluh Kota Regency: In terms of teacher readiness, it is in the "Fairly Good" category. In detail, it can be concluded as follows: in planning learning in public high schools in Lima Puluh Kota Regency: reviewed from the readiness of teachers obtained an average score of 3.97 with a TCR of 79.37%, which is categorized as "Fairly Good". In conducting learning in public high schools in Lima Puluh Kota Regency: in terms of teacher readiness, it received an average score of 3.96 with a TCR of 79.28%, which is categorized as "Fairly Good". In evaluating learning in public high schools in Lima Puluh Kota Regency: viewed from the readiness of teachers, with an average score of 3.96 and a TCR of 79.13%, which is categorized as "Fairly Good". Based on the results of the study, teachers need to improve their skills in planning, implementing, and evaluating learning in accordance with the Merdeka Curriculum with support from school principals, while future researchers are expected to further enrich studies related to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.

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