

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MERDEKA BELAJAR CURRICULUM AT PRIVATE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN BENGKULU CITY: PROBLEMS AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to find out and obtain information about the problem and possible solution implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum in Bengkulu City Private High Schools. The method used in this study was qualitative method, which describes the state of the subject, and the data obtained during observations and questions so that becomes useful information and is easily understood by readers. The results of this study were problems faced by teachers in terms of preparation, lack of books, lack of outreach from the government, and teachers' lack of understanding of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. The possible solution was for the teacher to reflect and evaluate and then ask for advice from instructors, friends, and the deputy head of the curriculum so that they were better prepared to face the Merdeka Curriculum. For schools, they must complete a package book that is by the Merdeka curriculum and the government must increase the socialization of the Merdeka Curriculum.

Keywords: : *Implementation, Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, Private High School.*

Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui dan memperoleh informasi tentang permasalahan dan kemungkinan solusi penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar di SMA Swasta Kota Bengkulu. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah metode kualitatif yang menggambarkan keadaan subjek, dan data yang diperoleh selama observasi dan pertanyaan sehingga menjadi informasi yang berguna dan mudah dipahami oleh pembaca. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah permasalahan yang dihadapi guru dalam hal persiapan, kekurangan buku, kurangnya sosialisasi dari pemerintah, dan kurangnya pemahaman guru terhadap Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar. Solusi yang mungkin dilakukan adalah guru melakukan refleksi dan evaluasi kemudian meminta saran dari instruktur, teman, dan wakil kepala kurikulum agar lebih siap menghadapi Kurikulum Merdeka. Bagi sekolah harus melengkapi buku paket yang sesuai dengan kurikulum Merdeka dan pemerintah harus meningkatkan sosialisasi Kurikulum Merdeka.

Kata Kunci: *Implementasi, Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar, Sekolah Swasta*

I. Introduction

Curriculum is the sum of total of all experiences to be provided to the learners and transected by teachers (Bharvad, 2010). Merdeka Belajar Curriculum is interpreted as a learning design that provides opportunities for students to study in a calm, relaxed, enjoyable, stress-free, and pressure-free way, to show their natural talents Valen & Satria, (2021). According Manalu et al, (2022) The concept of an Merdeka Belajar Curriculum is the formation of independence in thinking. Merdeka is a Curriculum that contains an understanding of the ideas and principles of education based on

the thoughts of Ki Hajar Dewantara. According to Ki Hajar Dewantara, ideal learning is a teaching and learning process that facilitates students to grow according to their nature. Merdeka Belajar Curriculum focuses on freedom and creative thinking. This school program is designed to support each school in creating generations of lifelong learners who have the personality of Pancasila students.

At this time a new Curriculum was present, namely Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. Where Merdeka Belajar Curriculum is interpreted as a learning design that provides opportunities for students to study in a calm, relaxed, enjoyable, stress-free, and pressure-free

way, to show their natural talents Valen & Satria, (2021). With the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, private schools have greater freedom in developing their curriculum. They can adapt the curriculum to the needs of students and the desired vision of education. This gives private schools the flexibility to develop more innovative approaches and suit their strengths. The Merdeka Belajar curriculum places an emphasis on developing students' creativity and independence. Private schools, which often have better resources and learning environments, can take advantage of this to provide wider opportunities for students to fulfill their potential. They can create an environment that supports students in exploring their interests and talents independently. The Merdeka Belajar curriculum is designed to accommodate the educational needs of the 21st century, emphasizing critical thinking skills, collaboration, creativity, and problem-solving. Private schools that want to remain relevant and quality need to keep up with these developments. By implementing the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, private schools can ensure that their students are ready to face the challenges of the future.

Students are increasingly aware of the importance of developing creativity, independence, and adaptability in education. Implementing Merdeka Belajar Curriculum can be a pull factor for parents and students who are looking for a more holistic education that suits their individual needs. Private schools implementing the Free Learning Curriculum can fulfill this expectation and increase their attractiveness as educational institutions. Private schools compete with other schools in attracting prospective students and maintaining their reputation. By implementing the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, private schools can offer a unique and innovative approach to education. This can enhance a school's reputation and provide a competitive advantage in an increasingly competitive education market.

Merdeka Belajar Program is a policy that aims to encourage students to master various competencies and knowledge that are important and useful when entering the world of work Firmansyah et al., (2023) The Merdeka Belajar curriculum places attention on developing individual student potential. In a private school environment, where classes tend to be smaller and interactions between teachers and students are closer, the implementation of

the Independent Curriculum can provide a wider space for the development of students' talents and special interests. This helps create an environment that supports each student's personal growth and success. The Merdeka Belajar Curriculum allows private schools to adopt a more flexible educational approach adapted to their local needs. They can adapt curricula, teaching methods, and assessments to meet the needs of students and the community around the school. This can help create a relevant and meaningful learning environment for students. Private schools have complete and quality facilities and infrastructure, where these facilities and infrastructure can support student teaching and learning activities.

Research on the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum can assist in evaluating and updating the curriculum. By understanding the strengths, weaknesses, and challenges in implementation, research can provide recommendations and suggestions for improvements that can increase the effectiveness and sustainability of the Independent Curriculum.

II. Methodology

This research was qualitative. In this type of research, the researcher collected, analyzed, and drew a conclusion based on the data analysis. Creswell (2009: 4) states that a qualitative research is a study to investigate and understand the meaning individuals or groups assume to be a social or a human problem. It is used to determine why and how a social phenomenon happens. This research was designed to described problems and possible solutions in implemented merdeka belajar curriculum at private senior high school. The subject of this study were The Principal of SMA Muhammadiyah 4 and SMA IT Iqra, The Deputy Head of Curriculum SMA Muhammadiyah 4 and SMA IT Iqra, and 6 teachers SMA Muhammadiyah 4 and 7 teachers SMA IT Iqra Bengkulu City. This research was used as an approach to the qualitative study because the result of the analysis is the description of a certain phenomenon. According to Whitney (1960: 160) the descriptive method is the search for facts with the right interpretation. To collect the data, the researcher did observation and interview.

III. Result and Discussion

A. Result

The researcher observed 6 teachers of SMA Muhammadiyah 4 and 7 teachers of SMA IT Iqra Bengkulu City. Based on the observation it was found that Lack of Understanding, Resource Constraints, Assessment Challenges, Time Constraints, and Inadequate Training.

The researcher has conducted interviews with the Principals, the Deputy Head of Curriculum, and 6 teachers at SMA Muhammadiyah 4 and 7 teachers SMA IT Iqra Bengkulu City. There were 12 questions for principals, 10 questions for deputy of the curriculum and 10 questions for each teacher. Based on the interviews that the researcher conducted with the Principals of SMA Muhammadiyah 4 and SMA IT Iqra Mr. SI and Mr. SO The researcher got the data as follows.

1. What were their problems in the implementation of Merdeka Belajar curriculum?

Principal of SMA Muhammadiyah 4	Principals of SMA IT Iqra
In the division of time between intracurricular and projects, teachers do not fully understand Merdeka Belajar curriculum.	Teacher understanding, because this is something new so it takes a lot to learn

2. How did you overcome problems in implementing Merdeka Belajar Curriculum?

Principal of SMA Muhammadiyah 4	Principals of SMA IT Iqra
Continue to access Merdeka mengajar platform then synchronize with the existing schedule then deepen the IKM webinar training.	With a pattern of reflection, evaluation means that the points that become challenges are evaluated, and then discuss how the best solution is so that all challenges have a solution

3. What were your suggestions for this Merdeka Belajar Curriculum?

Principal of SMA Muhammadiyah 4	Principals of SMA IT Iqra
For related parties, finish Merdeka Belajar curriculum first, do not stop suddenly because this is a new school learning to apply Merdeka Belajar curriculum	Hoping that if there is a leadership regulation not to stop and replace it with a new curriculum this is not very good because it is just a mindset, even though it is not complete, the majority of people have started to understand the direction of developing this curriculum and this is very good, it's very pro-student so it's for the government In the future (who knows if there will be a change) it will still make this Merdeka Belajar curriculum a policy for transforming education in Indonesia

Furthermore, the researcher conducted interviews with the deputy head of Curriculum

at SMA Muhammadiyah 4 and SMA IT, Mrs.Z and Mrs.R Revealed as follows.

1. What were the problems to implementing Merdeka Belajar curriculum?

Deputy Head of Curriculum at SMA Muhammadiyah 4	Deputy Head of Curriculum at SMA IT Iqra
The teacher's lack of understanding of Merdeka Belajar curriculum, and the limitations of the existing books for this initial material were taken from Merdeka Belajar curriculum platform because we did take Merdeka Belajar curriculum	Preparation from school, because it is the first year and suddenly so it requires more time, assistance from facilitators or people who are experts in Merdeka Belajar curriculum

changed, you are welcome to take modules that are on Merdeka mengajar platform and adapt it to the conditions of the school and students	
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2. How did you overcome problems in the implementation of Merdeka Belajar Curriculum?

Deputy Head of Curriculum at SMA Muhammadiyah 4	Deputy Head of Curriculum at SMA IT Iqra
Conduct training on the implementation of Merdeka Belajar curriculum and then carry out learning with the community at school, then the next one must understand Merdeka mengajar platform because there we can learn a lot about Merdeka Belajar curriculum	Coordinate with superiors, the team in this school so we can find that solution

3. What were your suggestions for this Merdeka Belajar curriculum?

Deputy Head of Curriculum at SMA Muhammadiyah 4	Deputy Head of Curriculum at SMA IT Iqra
If want Merdeka Belajar Curriculum to be implemented in the next few years, don't change it until it is stable and has maximum results	Preparation of human resources before a school will implement Merdeka Belajar curriculum means that in terms of knowledge and mentality, the teacher needs to be prepared first before a school determines that it is ready to implement Merdeka Belajar curriculum.

Furthermore, the researcher conducted interviews with teachers in SMA

Muhammadiyah 4 and SMA IT Iqra, they said that :

1. What problems did you experience in implementing Merdeka Belajar Curriculum?

Teachers of SMA Muhammadiyah 4	Teachers of SMA IT Iqra
Mrs. LK ” Lack of time in learning in class so that students find it difficult to accept the learning given”	Mrs. S “The ptoblem was balancing learning according to student learning styles, it is not easy for the teacher to make one meeting with three learning styles then in the assessment section the standards are not very clear and the learning material is too difficult”
Mr. R “problem in preparing teacher teaching tools, because this Curriculum is still new”	Mrs.WY. “In implementing Merdeka Belajar Curriculum the teacher does not have too many problem because the support system built at SMA IT Iqra is very supportive of the implementation of Merdeka Belajar Curriculum itself. After all, the principal of SMA IT IQRA is an expert trainer or facilitator for driving schools in Bengkulu province and then there are also practical instructors. there are 4 people at sma it Iqra then there is also guru penggerak at sma it iqra meaning that everything related to Merdeka Belajar Curriculum can be

	conveyed properly so that the teachers here can quickly accept it but not all teachers can accept it quickly and understand Merdeka Belajar Curriculum”
Mrs.A “Problem dividing material between material in class and project material	Mr.BF“Problem from student readiness due to adjustment from students”
Mrs.R“There is too much learning material and not enough time.”	Mrs.RD“There have been no problems so far.”
Mrs. EQ” There have been no problems so far.”	Mr.FS “The first problem is that we choose essential material for teaching. The second is that there is a slight reduction in face-to-face teaching hours. Adjustment to student conditions, most students want it to be difficult to be independent, and the consistency of teachers to implement an Merdeka Belajar Curriculum is because it is still new so sometimes some teacher meetings still use the old method.”
Mrs.N“lack of Materials, printed books	Mr. Harun “When in a group there is something that is not evenly distributed”
	Mrs.M “There have been no problems so far”

2. How did you overcome problem in implementing Merdeka Belajar Curriculum?

Teachers of SMA Muhammadiyah 4	Teachers of SMA IT Iqra
Mrs. LK” By giving time with students, students can ask questions at any time to the teacher”	Mrs. S “Doing personal touch, having to be close, and using games so that learning is fun. In the assessment section, the teacher must be proactive in learning, and always be prepared for good grades, attitude values, knowledge, and skills, so assessment documents must be prepared.”
Mr. R “Look for references on the internet”	Mrs.WY.“ Must build a teacher paradigm, the Curriculum will always change because it is in accordance with the times and according to current needs. Then study Merdeka Belajar Curriculum through Merdeka platform”
Mrs.A “To overcome problems must follow the applicable system’	Mr.BF“Coordinate with the structure, deputy head of Curriculum or colleagues”
Mrs.R “Choosing the right material really has something to do with the nrxt material”	Mrs. RD There have been no problems so far”

Mrs.EQ “There have been no problems so far”	Mr.FS “After carrying out the learning the teacher reflects and evaluates then asks for suggestions from the structure, friends and deputy head of the Curriculum and continues to study Merdeka Belajar Curriculum”
Mrs.N “Look at the material on Google, then adjust it to the syllabus”	Mr.H “the teacher had to intervene to divide the group”
	Mrs.M “ask questions and seek information from the internet”

3. What are your suggestions for this Merdeka Belajar Curriculum?

Teachers of SMA Muhammadiyah 4	Teachers of SMA IT Iqra
Mrs. LK” The suggestion is to socialize teachers offline because it is easier to understand than online socialization”	Mrs. S “The suggestion is to determine how the assessment and learning as well as for the material must be adjusted again to the student's level”
Mr. R “multiply teaching materials, and learning resources for Merdeka Belajar Curriculum If there is one Curriculum, don't change the Curriculum but fix the old Curriculum”	Mrs.WY. “The suggestion is that training on Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, if it can be done offline and for Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, just continue”
Mrs.A “Complete the existing modules in the application, and fix the assessment system so that children are not stressed that they have to complete all subject areas so that if a child does not complete all subjects, the result is a problem of not going to class.”	Mr.BF“Continue Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, if we continue to master it, it will be even better”
Mrs.R “Need more training from the government due to lack of training”	Mrs. RD “The suggestion is to increase the socialization of Merdeka Belajar Curriculum”
Mrs. EQ” Teachers as well as schools or the government just go deeper into this Merdeka Belajar Curriculum later in the future if they have a better understanding of the implementation of this Curriculum it will be implemented as it should”	Mr. FS “It is hoped that this Curriculum will be consistent and not change again later”
Mrs.N“The Curriculum in Indonesia should not always change because it was difficult for teachers to understand the new curriculum, better in the KTSP Curriculum”	Mr. H “Class hours and materials must be added again”
	Mrs.M “It was further clarified that the

	segmentation was an adaptation from the previous Curriculum but the adaptation was because they were still learning so it was not understood and was not in line with the others”
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B. Discussion

From the results of observation conducted on teachers at SMA Muhammadiyah 4 and SMA IT Iqra in the implementation of Merdeka Belajar Curriculum were

1. Lack of Understanding: Teachers, students, and parents might struggle to understand the new curriculum's goals, methods, and changes, leading to confusion and resistance.
2. Resource Constraints: Implementing a new curriculum often requires updated teaching materials, technology, and resources. Private schools might face challenges in procuring these resources.
3. Assessment Challenges: Adapting assessment methods to the new curriculum's objectives can be difficult and might not align with traditional testing practices.
4. Time Constraints: Incorporating new content and teaching methods into an already packed schedule can lead to time-related stress for teachers and students.
5. Inadequate Training: Teachers might not receive sufficient training on how to effectively implement the new curriculum, leading to uneven adoption across classrooms.

These problems create a gap between expectations and reality that occurs. This is following the theory put forward by Mei Nur, et al., problems in a system what is changed is impossible no doubt, many things will happen if a system is changed Rusmiati et al., (2023). As well as some of the problems above shows that all orders must be built together and the success of this new system so that perfect success according to the target set.

From the results of interviews conducted by principals, and deputies of Curriculum there were still problems in implementing Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, such as at SMA IT Iqra preparation from school because it was the first year and it was sudden so it needed more time, assistance from facilitators or people who were experts in Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. while at SMA

Muhammadiyah 4 the problem was the teacher's lack of understanding of Merdeka Belajar Curriculum.

The problems faced by teachers were very diverse. At SMA IT Iqra there were still problems in balancing learning according to student learning styles, it was not easy for teachers to make one meeting with many learning styles, in the assessment section the standards were not very clear and for English learning material was too difficult. then selecting essential materials for teaching, after that there was a slight reduction in face-to-face teaching hours. Adjustment to student conditions, most students had difficulty being independent, and some teachers have problems with teaching consistency, and some teachers sometimes still used the old method. Whereas in SMA Muhammadiyah 4, some teachers had problems like lack of time in class so students found it difficult to accept the learning given, got problems in preparing teaching tools, in dividing material between class material and project material, and lack of textbooks in schools.

Schools must track the progress of teachers' implementation of Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, as well as evaluate the extent to which learning has been differentiated, how the assessment model is implemented, and whether the diagnostic assessment is being used internally to ensure that there is no impact on schools, the central government and the regions must work together better.

Finally, the possible solutions for Merdeka Belajar Curriculum were schools should communicate the rationale, benefits, and objectives of the new curriculum to all stakeholders: teachers, students, parents, and administrators. Provide comprehensive training and workshops for teachers to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to implement the new curriculum effectively. Ensure that the school allocates sufficient resources for updated teaching materials, technology, and other resources required for the new curriculum. Instead of a sudden shift, consider a phased approach where new elements of the curriculum are introduced gradually,

allowing teachers and students to adapt more smoothly. Modify assessment methods to align with the new curriculum's objectives, focusing on a mix of formative and summative assessments that measure holistic learning. Establish a support system where teachers can collaborate, share experiences, and seek guidance from curriculum experts or mentors. Involve parents in understanding the new curriculum and its benefits through workshops, meetings, and informational sessions. This is following the theory of Faridahtul, et al. In this Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, teachers are required to be more creative in designing teaching modules, learning objectives, and the flow of learning objectives so that a teacher can no longer be careless in making lesson plans to design teaching and learning activities every week. The purpose of school work is only to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students Jannah et al., (2022)

IV. Conclusion

All teachers taught very well in class during the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, but some teachers did not teach according to the full Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. There were still teachers who used the lecture method where the learning center was not in students, this was because the teacher did not fully understand the concept of a Merdeka Belajar Curriculum and this Merdeka Belajar Curriculum was only used in schools for one year. Problems faced by teachers were in terms of preparation, lack of books, lack of

outreach from the government, and teachers' lack of understanding of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum.

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