

IMPLEMENTING OF MERDEKA CURRICULUM; HOW DOES SCHOOL IN BORDER REGION DEAL WITH IT?

(A Case Study of SMA Negeri 1 Putussibau Academic Year 2022/2023)

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana sekolah khususnya SMA Negeri 1 Putussibau dalam mengimplementasikan Kurikulum Merdeka. Penelitian ini menggunakan studi deskriptif dengan pendekatan kualitatif. Penelitian ini menggunakan wawancara dan dokumentasi sebagai alat untuk mengumpulkan data. Populasi untuk penelitian ini adalah Kepala Sekolah, Wakil Kepala Sekolah Bidang Kurikulum, dan Guru Bahasa Inggris SMA Negeri 1 Putussibau yang terlibat dalam penelitian ini. Kemudian peneliti menggunakan triangulasi oleh Miles dan Huberman untuk menjawab pertanyaan penelitian.

Berdasarkan hasil penelitian melalui wawancara, peneliti menemukan kemajuan implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka, tantangan dan upaya yang dihadapi dalam implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka, dan pengaruh dari implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka.

Kata Kunci : *Implementasi, Kurikulum, Kurikulum Merdeka. SMA Negeri 1 Putussibau*

Abstract

This study investigates the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMA Negeri 1 Putussibau, a school located in the border region of West Kalimantan, during the 2022/2023 academic year. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design, data were collected through interviews and documentation involving the principal, vice principal for curriculum, and English teachers. The findings reveal several key aspects: (1) positive perceptions of the Merdeka Curriculum, particularly in fostering synergy between teachers and students; (2) progress in implementation, including the adoption of differentiated learning, diagnostic assessments, teacher workshops, and Pancasila Student Profile projects; (3) noticeable impacts on both teachers and learners, such as increased interaction, creativity, and the integration of digital technology; and (4) challenges related to teacher readiness, development of learning resources, and adapting to students' diverse characteristics. To address these challenges, the school conducted workshops, strengthened teacher-student relationships, and applied diagnostic tests to better accommodate learners' needs. Overall, the study highlights both the opportunities and obstacles of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in a border-region school context, offering insights into how schools navigate educational reforms in unique geographical and social settings.

Keywords: *Implementation, Merdeka Curriculum, Border Region, SMA Negeri 1 Putussibau*

INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture regularly revises the national curriculum. In collaboration with various stakeholders, the government consistently evaluates and refines educational policies to ensure effective implementation across all levels. The curriculum serves as a core guideline for educational activities, encompassing all learning experiences both inside and outside the classroom, with students' needs as a top priority in selecting materials and strategies.

Recently, a new policy called "Merdeka Belajar" was introduced to replace the 2013 Curriculum. However, some teachers still face challenges in adapting to the new curriculum, particularly in aligning Learning Outcomes (CP) which differ from the previous Core Competencies (KI) and Basic Competencies (KD).

SMA Negeri 1 Putussibau, recognized as a leading school in Kapuas Hulu Regency, West Kalimantan, was selected as a pioneer school and began implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in the 2022/2023 academic year. Based on preliminary observations, some teachers found it difficult to adjust to the new curriculum model, especially following previous transitions from the 2013 Curriculum and the Emergency Curriculum used during the COVID-19 pandemic. Key challenges included inadequate teacher readiness, limited coordination, and lack of inter-school collaboration. Considering these issues, the researcher became interested in exploring teachers' and students' perceptions of the Merdeka Curriculum through this study.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a case study design, focusing on specific issues and analyzing in-depth interactions within a particular context. A qualitative approach was used to examine how the Merdeka Curriculum is implemented at SMA Negeri 1 Putussibau. The research investigates various activities, programs, and processes involved in the curriculum's execution.

Data collection was carried out through interviews and direct observation of selected informants, including the principal and teachers. Two main tools were used: interviews and documentation. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model, emphasizing triangulation to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Finding

The researcher will describe the results of the research that has been conducted in one of school in West Borneo, Kapuas Hulu regency, namely SMA Negeri 1 Putussibau. The researcher provides details of the findings from the data collected, which in this study describes and analyzes data collected from the results of interviews at school.

1. Perception of Implementing of Merdeka Curriculum

According to the Principal of Headmaster "With the creation of a learning concept in accordance with the Merdeka Curriculum, hopefully between students and teachers as educators and facilitators have good synergy in order to give birth to a quality young generation and golden generation."

According to Head Deputy Curriculum "the excellent development and positive response from students made the teaching and learning process between students and teachers more relaxed and enjoyable, because students and teachers both learn and teach each other. Through the P5 program, the school expects that the interests and talents of students are well channeled, can develop a business spirit for students, make students more independent and creative."

2. Implementation of Merdeka Curriculum**a. Progress in Implementing of Merdeka Curriculum****1) Strategies to Encourage Learner Involvement and Activeness**

According to Mrs. Multiani Djuharsih, S.Sos as the teacher and Head Deputy of Curriculum explained that "To encourage students to be actively is recognize the characteristics of students such as their nature, interests and learning styles, and also motivate and give advice for the interests and expectations that students want." Meanwhile, according to Mr. Mochamad Djusanudin, S.Pd., M.Si "to find out the extent of learner involvement starts from holding Cognitive diagnostic tests and non-cognitive diagnostic tests to be able to accommodate everything that learners need."

2) Teaching Material

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum (IKM) at SMA Negeri 1 Putussibau began in the 2022/2023 school year. The steps to prepare for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum include: Workshop or training for subject teachers, in the form of designing and preparing learning objectives called TP-ATP (previously known as lesson plans), planning and developing teaching modules and projects to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students, and the last is to apply for approval of the school operational curriculum.

3) Projects Student Profile Pancasila

Pancasila Profile Strengthening Project with three project themes in 2022/2023 academic year, namely:

- a) Entrepreneurship (Kewirausahaan)
- b) Local Wisdom (Kearifan Lokal)
- c) Membangun Jiwa Raganya

Then, followed by the next two project themes in the 2023/2024 academic year, namely:

- a) Gaya Hidup Berkelanjutan
- b) Suara Demokrasi

SMA Negeri 1 Putussibau provides 20-25 types of extracurricular activities, including arts, sports, English Club, traditional dance studio, language studio and compulsory extracurricular activities, namely faith development and scouting.

4) Impacts for Teachers and Learners

The impact felt according to Headmaster of SMA Negeri 1 Putussibau is "Between educators and enthusiastic students, making learning fun." The same thing was also conveyed by the Head Deputy of Curriculum "The impact received by teachers and students includes teachers and students being actively interacting and establishing communicative synergy."

b. Changes after the Implementation of Merdeka Curriculum

1) Teaching and Learning Activities in the Classroom

The Merdeka Curriculum focuses on developing students' character, such as attitudes of cooperation, leadership, and initiative. In Class X Merdeka 6, the learning methods used in the classroom are also in accordance with the concept of the Merdeka Curriculum, such as focusing on essential material, differentiated learning, and 4C learning (Critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication). Similarly, in Class XI Merdeka 2, these two classes are more focused on learning in groups, discussing and collaborating and the teacher who is free to facilitate and accommodate students' learning needs.

2) Aspects Affected by Learning after the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is felt to have affected several aspects of learning, including focusing on students, digital technology, and developing creativity. This was conveyed by Mrs. Nurhayani, S.Pd as the teacher who teaches English lessons, in her interview explaining that "The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum affects various aspects such as learning methods, becoming more focused on students, prioritizing students' interests and needs. Then, the use of digital technology that helps the learning process to be more effective and practical. As well as, developing the character and creativity of students.

3. Challenges and Efforts in Implementation of Merdeka Curriculum

According to the results of the interview conducted with a senior English language instructor at SMA Negeri 1 Putussibau, "the challenges faced in implementing the new curriculum are in the area of learning resource development, with the aim of ensuring the availability of relevant and well-written learning materials. The next step is to understand the characteristics of each learner because each learner has unique characteristics and learning styles and can be difficult to adapt to." On the other hand, according to Head Deputy of Curriculum "the key to implementing the Merdeka curriculum is to adjust and strengthen the teacher-student relationship in order to create a teacher who is trustworthy and meets the requirements."

The headmaster of SMA Negeri 1 Putussibau has described "the measures taken to overcome the obstacles in putting the Merdeka Curriculum into practice based on the challenges and problems encountered. The first step in determining a student's character and involving them is to provide diagnostic tests, both cognitive and non-cognitive. Cognitive diagnostic exams are used to identify learners' foundational knowledge in a subject. This assessment aids educators in determining the areas of weakness, strength, or difficulty that students have when learning a subject. Teachers can enhance the learning process and identify steps that may be performed to support learners by employing cognitive diagnostic tests. Non-

cognitive diagnostic assessments, on the other hand, focus on social emotions, learning styles, character traits, and psychological states of students."

In the meantime, workshops have been undertaken to train teachers in designing and developing learning objectives, planning and producing modules and projects to increase the profile of Pancasila pupils, and dealing with teacher preparation in implementing the Merdeka curriculum (P5). Activities designed to help teachers grasp the ideas and tactics associated with implementing the Merdeka curriculum are conducted as workshops for teacher training in its implementation. Teachers attending the session will gain knowledge of the fundamental ideas behind the Merdeka curriculum, as well as the many learning strategies and how to employ them to enhance student learning. The purpose of this workshop is to support educators in enhancing the caliber of their instruction and in comprehending the ideas and methods related to the Merdeka curriculum.

B. Discussion

The usage of qualitative method in the research has been covered in the sub-chapter in research method. Qualitative method are employed in this study as disclosed and cited by Deddy Mulyana's book, Qualitative Research Methodology "In qualitative research, data derived from quantitative reasoning, numerical concepts, or statistical technique is not relied upon. Rather than transforming into qualitative entities, qualitative research seeks to preserve the structure and content of human behavior while analyzing its attributes." (Mulyana, 2017:150)

The title of this research is "Implementing of Merdeka Curriculum; How Does School in Border Region Deal with it? (A Case Study of SMA Negeri 1 Putussibau Academic Year 2022/2023)". This research uses interview techniques with informants as a form of data search and direct documentation, after which the data is analyzed. This research focuses on the progress and process, as well as the difficulties or challenges of SMA Negeri 1 Putussibau in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. For the data collection stage, the researcher compiled several interview points in the form of a list of questions regarding the problem to be analyzed.

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMA Negeri 1 Putussibau has been carried out through the In House Training (IHT) program championed by the Deputy Regent of Kapuas Hulu, Wahyudi Hidayat, ST. This IHT is an effort to help students be more optimal

and have enough time to explore concepts and strengthen competencies. The government's support for accessibility and facilities has made SMA Negeri 1 Putussibau successful in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. The five projects to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students that have been carried out include Kewirausahaan, Kearifan Lokal, Membangun Jiwa Raganya, Suara Demokrasi, and Gaya Hidup Berkelanjutan.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMA Negeri 1 Putussibau demonstrates both opportunities and challenges faced by schools in border regions. The study revealed that teachers and students have generally shown positive perceptions toward the new curriculum, particularly as it promotes synergy, creativity, and active participation in the learning process. Various initiatives, such as diagnostic assessments, differentiated learning, teacher workshops, and the Pancasila Student Profile projects, have contributed to the progress of curriculum implementation.

At the same time, several challenges remain, especially in terms of teacher readiness, development of relevant learning resources, and adaptation to students' diverse characteristics. Efforts to address these issues include providing continuous training through workshops, conducting diagnostic tests to understand learners' needs, and fostering strong teacher-student relationships.

Overall, the findings suggest that the Merdeka Curriculum has had a significant impact on teaching and learning activities at SMA Negeri 1 Putussibau, particularly in encouraging more student-centered practices and the integration of digital technology. While challenges persist, the school's proactive strategies and government support have played an important role in ensuring the curriculum's effective implementation. This case highlights how schools in border areas can adapt to national education reforms while considering their unique geographical and social contexts.

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