

An Analysis of Elementary School Preparedness in The Merdeka Curriculum Implementation

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Abstract: The background of this study is done by the reason of the researcher is interested in investigating the readiness and problems experienced by the teacher of grade II, III, V, and VI who will implement the Merdeka Curriculum in the new school year. Qualitative type with phenomenological method is applied in this study to determine the readiness of schools and teachers in implementing the curriculum. Data collection interviews, observations, and literature review using the Miles & Huberman Model are used in data analysis. The results of the analysis show that teachers and principals work together to prepare for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, which will implement Merdeka Curriculum-based learning in the new school year. The preparation carried out by the teacher is to participate in the socialization of the Merdeka Curriculum so that the teacher gets the administrative readiness of the Merdeka Curriculum. The school plays a role in Curriculum readiness as a liaison for teachers to prepare and implement the Merdeka Curriculum in accordance with the Merdeka Curriculum regulations. Elementary schools also have the responsibility of preparing facilities to prepare and implement learning models based on the Merdeka Curriculum.

Keywords: School Readiness, The Merdeka Curriculum, Elementary School.

INTRODUCTION

The development of the times provides challenges in the world of education by becoming the existence of the curriculum has an important concept as a pillar in the world of education so that a balanced collaboration between students, teachers, the environment, and parents is obtained. The technology and development of times play essential roles in educational world. Curriculum changes will follow the needs of the times so as the curriculum used in education is expected to be able to answer the challenges in every era (Pugach, et al, 2020: 100). The theory proposed by (Hernawan, 2017: 10) states that the word "curriculum" comes from the Latin terms "curir" (runner) and "currere" (place to race), which was first used in the world of athletics. The two main components of the curriculum: a) learning that students must complete, and b) the goal of obtaining a formal education certificate. Indonesia currently adheres to the

Merdeka Curriculum system even though it has not been implemented nationally. The theory related to the Merdeka Curriculum is proposed by (Ramadina, E., 2021: 137) which states that the Curriculum is created with a variety of intracurricular learning opportunities for students have sufficient time to increase their conceptual understanding and competence. This curriculum gives teachers freedom in choosing teaching strategies that can be adjusted to the interests and needs of each student so that both teachers and schools need readiness to implement the Merdeka Curriculum in Elementary School degree.

According to (Ningsih, L. W., & Suniasih, N. W., 2020: 18) readiness is a competence possessed by someone so that individuals who already have this competence are able to carry out something they will do so that it can run smoothly. Readiness is an indicator that has a long process and long factors in preparing something so that the thing prepared can run smoothly in accordance with the previous preparations. Teachers and institutions must prepare so they can provide students with an environment where they can advance their knowledge and potential. Based on the readiness theory put forward by (Tirtoni, F., & Wulandari, F., 2021: 11), it is stated that the indicators that schools have carried out readiness to implement the Merdeka Curriculum are that schools have good management and have supportive facilities and infrastructure.

According to the theory by (Febriana, R., 2019: 4), the indicators that teachers are ready to implement learning based on the Merdeka Curriculum that teachers have good responsibilities, are able to become models for students, are able to realize educational goals, and carry out their roles and functions at school properly. The lecture approach is the teacher's readiness to carry out learning as stated by (Aini, L. N., Muryaningsih, S., & Irawan, D., 2020: 44) that the lecture method is a method that demands students to pay attention to the teacher so that students are less active in exploring their abilities. This causes teachers are required to have readiness related to creating innovation in the world of learning so that the learning process in achieving learning objectives.

Banyumas Regency is a regency in Central Java with a total of 1,359 schools from elementary to senior high school levels. Based on data from the statistical agency, Banyumas regency has 14 universities, polytechnics, high academic schools, and

institutes. The diversity of education levels in Kembaran sub-district can be used as evidence that there are already quite a number of educational institutions and this diversity can be used as an indicator that Banyumas regency has succeeded in becoming an area that is able to provide education levels from the lowest level to the highest level. Based on the results of observations conducted with one of the Korwilcam supervisors, it is found that there are 31 primary schools. The primary school that is the location of the researcher's study is Kembaran State Elementary School where it has implemented the Merdeka Curriculum in grades 1 and 4. Kembaran State Elementary School is still in the second stage (independent change), which means that not all classes have received Merdeka Curriculum-based learning. In addition, based on the principal's interview, he explained that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is more organized when compared to the 2013 Curriculum.

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, which is supported by features in the Merdeka Teaching Platform (PMM), is very helpful for the teacher because the feature provides a variety of knowledge about the Merdeka Curriculum and makes it easier for teachers to implement it. The existence of the Merdeka Curriculum also produces learning designs according to student needs, in order to increase student creativity in learning. This is stated in the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile (P5). Teachers have not received important socialization and training needed to manage the Merdeka Curriculum at school, which makes their understanding is not good enough. In addition, in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, there are various obstacles and challenges, such as teacher preparation in developing their competencies. Hence, the preparation carried out by the teacher requires supporting factors, such as: students, fellow teachers, school principals, facilities and infrastructure. Teachers are also required to be aware of the use of technology in learning so that they need to hone and improve their skills to apply them in learning based on the Merdeka Curriculum.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was conducted according to the phenomenological method and in qualitative form. Phenomenology is a type of narrative study used to report stories related to the experiences of one or more individuals (Yusanto, Y., 2020: 9. In this research, two types of data were used, namely primary and secondary data sources. The

results of observations and interviews with grade II, III, V, and VI teachers as well as school principals are used as primary data sources. In this research, secondary data sources are data that support and complement primary data which are related documents, documentation or pictures of research activities as well as the results of learning activities at the school concerned.

The data analysis technique is the method used in this research to collect and process data. Creswell (2013: 274) states that the data obtained is analyzed and evaluated continuously. According to Milles and Huberman (in Rijali, A. 2018: 83) the following strategies can be used for analysis: 1) data collection 2) data reduction 3) presentation of information and 4) conclusion drawing.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

1. Teacher Readiness in Implementing Merdeka Curriculum at Kembaran State Elementary School

The Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum used by the government as an effort to restore learning based on the Decree of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia Number 56/M/2022 concerning Guidelines for Curriculum Implementation in carrying out educational improvements in Indonesia as a result of Covid-19 causing education in Indonesia to experience loss learning. The Merdeka Curriculum focuses on material, character development, and student competence (Zelvionita, Y., & Wirman, A, 2021: 40). The Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum designed to create a pleasant learning atmosphere, believe in God Almighty, and maintain cultural values. The Merdeka Curriculum can be interpreted as a curriculum that encourages students to think independently and gives teachers and students the freedom to choose the learning updates needed to foster a positive learning environment, and learning in the Merdeka Curriculum is creative learning. The Merdeka Curriculum provides a position for teachers for becoming the facilitators to develop potential in their students (Shandri, R., 2023: 204).

Teacher as educator plays a role in helping students learn. The Merdeka Curriculum has not yet been implemented nationally, requiring careful preparation from teachers so that teachers are able to provide educational services to students evenly. Before introducing the Merdeka Curriculum into the learning process, teachers must go

through a number of seminars and training relevant to the Curriculum (Pertiwi, P. D., Novaliyosi, N., Nindiasari, H., & Sukirwan, S, 2023: 1720). Training or workshops have an important role in the preparation carried out by teachers considering the many differences between the Merdeka Curriculum and the 2013 Curriculum. The results obtained by the researcher, who conducted a study of the preparations carried out by grade 2, 3, 5, and 6 teachers at Kembaran State Elementary School, showed that teachers had attended workshops or training on the Merdeka Curriculum. In addition, teachers also conduct independent learning by accessing the website provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture through a special website for the Merdeka Curriculum.

Coordination and sharing related to the Merdeka Curriculum are other readiness that has been carried out by teachers at Kembaran State Elementary School, which is facilitated by using the teacher performance group through the WhatsApp platform. This activity provides benefits for teachers to know the administrative terms of the Merdeka Curriculum such as teaching modules, CP, ATP, TP, P5, and strategies suitable for use in implementing the learning process base on the Merdeka Curriculum at Kembaran State Elementary School in grades 2, 3, 5, and 6 for the new school year. The existence of this careful preparation causes teachers to be able to analyze the evaluation of the learning process based on the Merdeka Curriculum which is being carried out in accordance with the objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum (Zelvionita, Y., & Wirman, A, 2021: 40). Nevertheless, teacher preparation in implementing learning based on the Merdeka Curriculum puts pressure on teachers to understand the documents needed in the Merdeka Curriculum. Teachers have an important role in implementing the Independent Curriculum paradigm. If the teacher has superior quality, the teacher will be able to act professionally to carry out his duties. This causes teachers to be more creative, innovative, and committed to continuous learning, especially to learn new things in the digital era (Kasman, K., & Lubis, S.K, 2022: 761).

The preparations carried out by teachers to implement the Merdeka Curriculum certainly have obstacles and challenges in the preparations carried out. The obstacle experienced is the difficulty of teachers in capturing socialization materials related to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum because it has not yet been implemented nationally. Although teachers and students are given the freedom to choose a strategy

that is suitable and can be absorbed by all students, but this is a challenge (Nurcahyono, N. A., & Putra, J.D., 2022: 381). Another obstacle in preparing for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is that teachers are still unable to develop appropriate lesson plans, so continuous training is still needed. In addition, financial problems in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum training are only allocated to schools that are already in the driving school phase. So that schools that are still in the second stage must fulfill the school's own finances (Rizki, R. A., & Fakhrunisa, L, 2022: 35).

The various preparations, obstacles, and challenges faced by teachers cause teachers at Kembaran State Elementary School to minimize this by conducting sharing activities as outlined in a KKG (teacher performance group) forum so that discussions are obtained between good teachers who have implemented and prepared the curriculum to be implemented in the next school year. In addition, teachers' awareness to independently search for sources related to the Merdeka Curriculum is needed so that teachers are well prepared to implement learning based on the Merdeka Curriculum at Kembaran State Elementary School, especially for teachers who teach grades 2, 3, 5, and 6 so that teachers are able to create learning that is not boring and attracts students' interest in learning (Zulaiha, S., Meisin, M., & Meldina, T, 2022: 174).

2. Principal Readiness in Implementing Merdeka Curriculum at Kembaran State Elementary School

Principals play an important role in developing teachers' abilities to support student learning. This is aimed for teachers to enhance their competencies and develop into professional teachers. Principals are required to provide professional services, so that they can be used as role models for teachers in order to improve teachers' professional competence. The explanation of Winarno, J., Fitria, H., & Fitriani, Y, (2021: 478-479) states that leaders are required to have supervisory competence which includes planning academic supervision programs to improve professional teacher competence which is carried out by taking the right approach. Support is given to teachers from schools to prepare for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in the form of providing training, supervision, and fulfilling the facilities and infrastructure needed to implement the Merdeka Curriculum. The principal also has responsibility for the implementation of educational management so that the principal acts as the leader of a learning change, administrator, and is responsible for the successful quality of the

graduates produced (Simanjuntak, R., Elfrianto, E., Yusmidani, Y., & Saragih, V, 2023: 2615).

In preparing for the Merdeka Curriculum at Kembaran State Elementary School, the principal provides information to teachers by holding socializations that teachers can participate in to prepare themselves to implement the Merdeka Curriculum. In addition, the principal of Kembaran State Elementary School also provides sufficient facilities such as internet networks and supporting infrastructure that can be used by teachers to carry out preparations for implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. Education management has an important role to organize, provide direction, and manage resources so that educational goals can be achieved effectively and efficiently. School management is needed to provide supervision and direction to teachers who are preparing for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at Kembaran State Elementary School, especially to teachers who teach grades 2, 3, 5, and 6 (Gemnafle, M., & Batlolona, J. R, 2021: 31). Management is needed to overcome various conflicts that occur in the school environment such as: communication problems, people, interpersonal conflicts, interpersonal, intragroup, intergroup, and interorganizational conflicts. Therefore, school management led by the principal is needed to provide good things and minimize the bad effects of conflict in the school. In dealing with conflict, principals should not avoid conflict, but principals are required to be able to provide encouragement to schools so that conflicts occurred cannot hinder school programs (Larasati, R., & Raharja, S, 2020: 192).

Moreover, in applying the implementation preparations of the Merdeka curriculum often faces problems and obstacles, which have an impact on the disruption of the preparations organized by the principal. Steps taken by the principal of Kembaran State Elementary school in minimizing obstacles and constraints related to the preparation for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at Kembaran State Elementary school. The obstacles faced by Kembaran State Elementary school regarding the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum are the inequality between classes that have used the Merdeka Curriculum and those that have not, the lack of references, the lack of socialization regarding the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum which causes confusion in schools and teachers, uneven access to the

platform, and the need to evaluate the material in the Merdeka Curriculum reference whether it is in accordance with the preparation of students to compete with the global community (Dewi, L. M. A. W., & Astuti, N. P. E, 2022: 36).

The principal as an individual who has more ability to manage the course of organizational development, especially in developing professionalism. The competence possessed by the principal will have an impact on the success of the program being run (Tonich, T, 2021: 52). The Merdeka curriculum that can be implemented by the school principal is by underlying strategies that are in accordance with the principles of curriculum design, namely: concentrating on the abilities and personality of Pancasila developed by students, mutual cooperation, and paying attention to learning outcomes and feedback. Principals are also required to be visionary so that they can create an atmosphere that supports teachers in preparing the Merdeka Curriculum (Mastur, M., 2023:15). In addition, the principal also provides training facilities to prepare the teachers to implement the Merdeka Curriculum in the new school year. The principal is also an individual who should prepare strategies that are able to assist teachers in preparing for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, so the principal must continue to update the current Merdeka Curriculum issues (Anggraini, H., Haryono, S. E., Muntomimah, S., Wijayanti, R., & Akbar, M. R, 2022: 186).

This curriculum implementation strategy can be implemented by the principal by focusing on school readiness which is carried out by providing assistance in analyzing school readiness which is carried out for several periods periodically so that suitability for the needs of students is obtained. School principals can also provide tools used in supporting the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, such as focusing on developing technology used in learning based on the Merdeka Curriculum (Irawati, D., et al, 2022: 2509). In addition, a strategy that can be used by school principals to prepare for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is to facilitate space for teachers who have or have not implemented the Merdeka Curriculum so that it becomes a forum used to exchange experiences between teachers so that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum can run effectively and efficiently (Fitriana, L. N. L., Ahid, N., Prasetyo, G. E., & Daratista, I, 2022: 1508-1509).

Based on this explanation, the findings show that the preparation for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at Kembaran State Elementary School,

Banyumas, presents that findings related to implementation are still in the "crawling" and "groping" stages where all teachers who teach grades 2, 3, 5, and 6 are still trying to understand how the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum should be carried out in accordance with government regulations. The interesting thing about the findings related to the preparation for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is that teachers who have implemented the Merdeka Curriculum in grades 1 and 4 do not hesitate to share their knowledge with teachers who are still confused about the Merdeka Curriculum regulations. Mutual cooperation between teachers is a positive thing because it can advance Kembaran State Elementary State in providing education and knowledge to students.

CONCLUSION

The readiness to implement the Merdeka Curriculum at Kembaran State Elementary School is in the second stage. Readiness for implementing the Merdeka Curriculum is the responsibility of educators and school leaders who are still implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in grades 1 and 4. In other cases, teachers who teach grades 2, 3, 5, and 6 have time to prepare for implementation in the new school year. Readiness is carried out by teachers who have not implemented the Merdeka Curriculum in the learning process. The obstacles and constraints experienced by teachers related to the preparation for implementing the Merdeka Curriculum are that teachers still have difficulty understanding the regulations related to the Merdeka Curriculum. The Principal also has a role in providing socialization facilities related to the Merdeka Curriculum to teachers so that teachers and principals are able to provide innovations in implementing learning preparation based on the Merdeka Curriculum. Another step that can be taken by the principal to support teacher preparation in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum is to implement school management and create a teacher group so that teachers who have implemented the Merdeka Curriculum can provide an overview to teachers who are still preparing for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.

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