

Teachers' Perception Towards Curriculum Change in Indonesia

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Abstract. *Teachers' perceptions of changes to the curriculum are something interesting in language. The study aims to describe the perception of teachers on curriculum change in Indonesia. This research was conducted using qualitative methods in Gunungsitoli city, North Sumatra province. This research involved several teachers from various schools in Gunungsitoli city. Data collection was carried out through interviews by asking several questions about teachers' perceptions of curriculum changes.*

Keywords: *Curriculum Changes, Merdeka Curriculum, Teacher Perceptions.*

Abstrak. Persepsi guru terhadap perubahan kurikulum adalah sesuatu yang menarik dalam bahasa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan persepsi guru terhadap perubahan kurikulum di Indonesia. Penelitian ini dilakukan dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif di kota Gunungsitoli, provinsi Sumatera Utara. Penelitian ini melibatkan beberapa guru dari berbagai sekolah di kota Gunungsitoli. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara dengan mengajukan beberapa pertanyaan mengenai persepsi guru terhadap perubahan kurikulum.

Kata Kunci: Perubahan Kurikulum, Kurikulum Merdeka, Persepsi Guru

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the efforts to improve quality of human in the country. One way to make it better is by improving the quality of education (Rimadanti, 2018). The curriculum is one of the important elements in the education system. According to Minister of Education and Culture number 20, 2003 about national educational system, curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements covering education goals, contents, learning materials, and learning methods intended to serve as the guidelines in implementing the teaching and learning process to achieve the goals that have been set. Curriculum as a guideline of education is always changing. Indonesia has undergone many curriculum changes, such as 1947, 1952, 1964, 1968, 1975, 1984, 1994, 2004, 2006, and 2013 curricula (Mukminin et al., 2019 and now we use Merdeka curriculum.

The success of curriculum changes depends on the synergy of the supporting elements of education. The successful implementation of curriculum changes also depends on the educator (teacher). Curriculum changes require teachers to be more creative, innovative, critical, and practical in carrying out the learning and assessment process to achieve curriculum

targets. Perception plays an important part in the learning process since it influences someone's behavior or attitudes and motivation to learn. Related to the execution of Curriculum, the perception of the teachers toward new curriculum is important since teacher is the one who implement the curriculum in the classroom. According to Hornby in Srakang (2013, p. 17), perception refers to "an idea, belief teachers beliefs. Teachers need to be aware toward their beliefs about the teaching and learning process. It means that teachers' perceptions are the basic assumptions of the teacher to make decision.

Based on the description above, the purpose of this study is to describe the perception of teachers on curriculum changes in Indonesia especially English Teachers in Gunungsitoli city.

THEORITICAL REVIEW

The curriculum changes in Indonesia have become a crucial phenomenon in efforts to enhance the quality of education and adapt to the demands of the times. Since the era of independence, Indonesia has undergone several curriculum changes in response to global educational developments and local needs. Education in Indonesia always experiences curriculum changes from time to time (Ananda & Hudaidah, 2021). Curriculum as a guideline of education is always changing. Indonesia has undergone many curriculum changes, such as 1947, 1952, 1964, 1968, 1975, 1984, 1994, 2004, 2006, and 2013 curricula (Mukminin et al., 2019 and now we use Merdeka curriculum. Each change reflects the government's commitment to improving the quality of learning, emphasizing relevant skill aspects, and reinforcing cultural identity. However, every transformation is accompanied by various challenges, including teacher adaptation, infrastructure fulfillment, and societal acceptance of these changes.

The curriculum changes pose a new challenge, especially for teachers. They must re-learn the new curriculum independently or collectively (Hung, 2021). Teachers' perceptions of curriculum changes play a key role in the success of implementing new educational approaches. Some teachers respond with enthusiasm, viewing the changes as opportunities to enhance teaching methods and enrich students' learning experiences. However, others may face challenges, particularly related to readiness, knowledge, and the support required to adapt to these changes. Factors such as adequate professional training, open communication channels between the government and teachers, as well as understanding the goals of curriculum changes, are crucial in shaping positive perceptions or potential resistance among teachers. Therefore, in designing strategies that effectively support the implementation of curriculum

changes and have a positive impact on the classroom learning process, in-depth research and understanding of the complexities of teachers' perceptions are essential. So the aims of the research is to describe the perception of teachers on curriculum changes in Indonesia especially English Teachers in Gunungsitoli city.

RESEARCH METHOD

The research method used by researchers in this research is a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. According to Creswell (2012), qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social human problem. According to Moleong (2005), qualitative research is a type of research that aims to understand the phenomena experienced by the research subject. So it can be conclude that qualitative research is a research that aims to understand the phenomena or problem experienced by the research subject. The data collection technique in this study was by asking several questions to several school teachers in Gunungsitoli City. The subjects of this study consisted of 5 English teachers in Gunungsitoli. The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire. The questionnaire contained some question regarding the perceptions of English teachers regarding curriculum changes in Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data collection in this study was carried out by interviewing English teachers in Gunungsitoli city. The subjects of this study consisted of 5 English teachers. The instrument used in this research was a questionnaire. The questionnaire contained several questions regarding English teachers' perceptions of curriculum changes in Indonesia. The following are the results of interviews that have been conducted with several English teachers in Gunungsitoli city who teach in different schools including Anugrah Setiawan Gea, Arisman Gea, Ratna Gulo, Jun Herlin Zega, Charles Laowo.

Question	Answer
1. How do you respond to the latest curriculum changes in Indonesia, especially in English subjects?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>In my opinion, so far it is quite good and can be accepted and understood its purpose well</i> • <i>There are many things that make students more encouraged to practice</i>

	<p><i>the results of what teachers transmit to students in managing a comfortable and pleasant learning atmosphere.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Hopefully it will help the nation's education, it's just that it makes teachers confused because of the frequent changes in curriculum.</i> • <i>It's good</i> • <i>Curriculum changes have a big impact on the development of students towards learning English. Improving the shortcomings of the previous curriculum method through the implementation of the new curriculum is expected to have a significant impact on students' ability to learn English.</i>
<p>2. What do you think about the implementation of Merdeka Belajar Curriculum in your school environment, especially in English subjects?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Very good, Teachers and students are active and cooperate with each other in implementing the curriculum.</i> • <i>It is easier to determine learning and there are many ways that all students can communicate and collaborate in a healthy way.</i> • <i>Not yet implemented</i> • <i>The implementation is good, now English teachers are linear to elementary schools so that they can open new jobs.</i> • <i>The implementation of Merdeka Curriculum gives students more roles and involvement in the learning process. Differentiated learning implemented through the independent curriculum</i>

	<p><i>also has a major impact in meeting the needs of each student's different characters, abilities and basic knowledge of English subjects.</i></p>
<p>3. What are the main challenges for English teachers in adapting to the latest curriculum changes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Looking for interesting practices that relate to the theories learned.</i> • <i>The use of digitalization in appropriate learning media and teachers must be required to be more sportive and innovative.</i> • <i>Implementation of P5</i> • <i>The challenge is for teachers to become more professional, creative and prepared.</i> • <i>The challenge, especially for English teachers in implementing the independent curriculum, is the problem of facilities / infrastructure in maximizing the implementation of the independent curriculum in English language learning. The personal ability of teachers to master technology is also a big challenge in implementing this curriculum.</i>
<p>4. Are there any specific changes in learning materials or methods that you as an English teacher think have had a positive or negative impact?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Yes, of course there are negatives and positives.</i> • <i>Changes that are felt directly students are able to understand and explain what is being implemented.</i> • <i>Not yet implemented. It's just that this independent curriculum seems to make students have to spend more money because of implementing P5, in the</i>

	<p><i>environment of underprivileged children it feels very burdensome</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Yes. There are many positive impacts</i> • <i>The changes in the arrangement of materials and learning methods applied to the independent learning curriculum should have more positive impacts on teachers in general and on English teachers in particular. This is because each teacher can adjust each material and method to be used based on the needs of the learners which can be recognized by the teacher from the beginning through a pretest.</i>
<p>5. What can the government or related institutions do to better facilitate English teachers' adaptation process to the curriculum changes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Support the provision of more varied and interesting practical material facilities in the school environment and provide learning resources at school.</i> • <i>Various kinds of platforms and teacher learning in pmm applications in safe and useful learning media</i> • <i>No P5</i> • <i>The government keeps trying to provide the best service, not keep changing the curriculum which makes it difficult for teachers to adapt.</i> • <i>The government can help facilitate the process of adapting teachers to curriculum changes in many ways, including through trainings and also by providing infrastructure/facilities needed in implementing the new curriculum.</i>

Teachers express approval of the curriculum transition from 2013 to the "Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar (KMB)." However, challenges arise due to limited facilities in their teaching environments, complicating the curriculum implementation. Additionally, the success of the KMB is heavily dependent on the teachers' capabilities and perception of teachers. According to Hornby in Srakang (2005), perception refers to "an idea, belief teachers beliefs. Teachers need to be aware toward their beliefs about the teaching and learning process. It means that teachers' perceptions are the basic assumptions of the teacher to make decision, serving as a primary determining factor. In the implementation of the KMB, teachers positively embrace the change from the previous curriculum. Nevertheless, obstacles arise when confronted with facility limitations in their teaching spaces. Heriyati (2022: 179) The Merdeka curriculum at the level of implementation must have adequate learning tools. According to frameillia (2023) Complete and comfortable learning facilities can encourage students' learning motivation so that they can support the learning process. This condition adds complexity to curriculum execution, requiring teachers to find creative solutions to ensure optimal learning. While a majority of teachers agree with the curriculum change, the success of its implementation is closely tied to individual teachers' abilities. This factor becomes a crucial point in assessing how much impact the "Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar" can have on the learning process. Thus, special attention is needed for the development of teachers' competencies and skills to effectively execute the curriculum.

Teachers recognize positive aspects in the Merdeka Curriculum concerning teaching methods and materials. They have the flexibility to adjust materials and teaching methods according to students' needs from the pretest stage. Additionally, teachers can leverage digital platforms to support learning, opening new possibilities for interactive and inclusive education. Despite the benefits, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum requires teachers to become more professional, innovative, and creative as mentioned by Yatim (2023:122) the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in art education poses challenges in developing the creativity and innovation of teachers as educators.. Educators are faced with demands to develop different teaching strategies, use technology effectively, and create a dynamic learning environment. This indicates that curriculum changes not only necessitate adjustments to materials but also the development of new competencies and skills for teachers. In this context, teachers' hopes lie in government support. They hope the government can provide adequate training to assist teachers in adapting to curriculum changes. Such training is crucial to enhancing teachers' abilities in using innovative teaching methods and digital technology effectively. In addition to training, the provision of adequate facilities is also an urgent need.

Teachers need sufficient access to technology and educational resources to implement the Merdeka Curriculum optimally. Therefore, the government is expected to play a role in providing adequate facilities to support positive changes in the education sector. The teachers also hoped that the curriculum would not be changed too quickly so that they would not experience difficulties in adapting to the new curriculum.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Teachers in Gunungsitoli positively assessed the curriculum changes, particularly the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, as a beneficial boost to our education system. However, they face several challenges, including incomplete school facilities and constraints in teachers' ability to master technology and increase creativity in teaching methods. Nevertheless, they remain committed to overcoming these constraints to ensure the successful implementation of the new curriculum. On the other hand, they hope that the curriculum will not be continuously changed so that they can adapt to the Merdeka Curriculum. The teachers also suggested that the government could provide training to teachers regarding curriculum changes.

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