



## English Teacher's Perceptions of The Change in Curriculum to an Independent Curriculum

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**Abstract.** *The curriculum is part of a learning management system that involves planning the implementation of learning and becomes a guideline and guide for teachers in carrying out learning activities. The purpose of this research is to find out the teacher's perception of curriculum changes in Indonesia, especially for English teachers. In this research, the method used is descriptive qualitative research method and the data obtained is from the results of interviews. The results of the study show that the opinions of the teachers reflect diverse views regarding curriculum changes in Indonesia. Some considered it to have a positive impact, such as an increased focus on attitudes and skills, as well as enhancing students' creativity. However, others noted negative impacts such as students' adaptation difficulties and new problems arising, including a lack of support from some students and the learning environment for the government standards.*

**Keywords:** *teacher's Perception, implementation of Curriculum, independent curriculum.*

**Abstrak.** Kurikulum merupakan bagian dari sistem manajemen pembelajaran yang menyangkut perencanaan pelaksanaan pembelajaran dan menjadi pedoman bagi guru dalam melaksanakan kegiatan pembelajaran. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui persepsi guru terhadap perubahan kurikulum di Indonesia, khususnya guru bahasa Inggris. Dalam penelitian ini metode yang digunakan adalah metode penelitian deskriptif kualitatif dan data yang diperoleh berasal dari hasil wawancara. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pendapat para guru mencerminkan pandangan yang beragam mengenai perubahan kurikulum di Indonesia. Ada pula yang menilai hal tersebut memberikan dampak positif, seperti peningkatan fokus pada sikap dan keterampilan, serta peningkatan kreativitas siswa. Namun ada pula yang mencatat dampak negatif seperti kesulitan adaptasi siswa dan munculnya permasalahan baru, termasuk kurangnya dukungan dari sebagian siswa dan lingkungan belajar terhadap standar pemerintah.

**Kata kunci:** persepsi guru, implementasi kurikulum, kurikulum mandiri

### BACKGROUND

The curriculum is developed as an effort to improve the teaching standards found in the learning management design. The curriculum serves to structure learning activities to meet national education goals. It includes plans and arrangements for objectives, content, and learning resources and techniques. The curriculum is designed to take into account future developments. It can be said that the availability of educational resources allows the organization of all teaching and learning activities according to a predetermined schedule, which results in the achievement of planned goals and achieved objectives, to produce a young generation that will shape the fate of this country. It can

be understood in the context of the literature on pedagogical innovation, which suggests that improving future learning is a prerequisite for determining interventions.

The existence of a curriculum is absolutely necessary in order to prepare a learning program that is in accordance with the expected target, this is in accordance with the opinion expressed by Nation & Ma Calister (2010) which explains the curriculum as a set of guidelines designed in a learning program consisting of principles, environment and needs in accordance with the target of the program, the learning carried out. After the inauguration of Nadiem Makarim on October 23, 2019 as Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Mendikbud ristek), excellent policies and programs in the field of education were issued. One of them is Sekolah Penggerak. The Driving School program was launched by the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology on February 1, 2021. This program began in 2021/2022 in 2,500 schools spread across 34 provinces and 111 districts/cities.

The Sekolah Penggerak program is still gradually being implemented and still requires structured assistance to schools that qualify to become driving schools. Nevertheless, the program has gained attention from observers and educationists in Indonesia. The emergence of this program is a form of education reform that focuses on cultural transformation. According to Nadiem (2020), school culture should not only focus on administrative approaches, but should also be able to be oriented towards innovation and learner-focused learning, with the hope that the graduates produced are in accordance with the Pancasila learner profile.

The education curriculum in Indonesia often changes in terms of its application in education units. The curriculum that has been implemented in Indonesia includes the 2006 KTSP, the 2013 Curriculum and what is currently still running is the Merdeka Curriculum (Merdeka Belajar) (Sekarwati & Fauziati, 2021). The purpose of implementing the curriculum in education units is a reference for the realm of running education at the education unit level (Restiana, Agustina, Rahman, Ananda & Witarsa, 2022). However, not all applications of this curriculum run smoothly, because there are still many differentiating variations to achieve equitable results achieved by students. The teacher as a driver of independent learning, means a teacher who is required to be able to be active

and enthusiastic, creative, innovative and skilled in order to become a facilitator of driving change in schools.

Teachers as drivers in the implementation of the MerdekaBelajar concept not only need to have effective teaching skills, but also must be able to create good relationships with students through building closeness. In addition, teachers are expected to utilize technology as a means to improve teaching methods. It is important for teachers to continue practicing and improving themselves to overcome mistakes and shortcomings during the teaching and learning process. With the renewal of MerdekaBelajar policy, all educators need to do self-introspection in order to adapt to the times and prevent students from missing out on information and technology utilization. MerdekaBelajar driving teachers are also expected to be able to instill positive values in the midst of rapid changes due to easy access and use of technology (Mulyasa, 2021).

The Merdeka Curriculum as a form of improvement to the 2013 Curriculum certainly received a variety of responses from teachers, students and parents. Until now, the concept of the Merdeka Curriculum has received a variety of responses from various educational institutions that facilitate students' learning, both at the primary, secondary and tertiary education levels (Abidah, et al., 2020). Teachers can analyze and adapt teaching materials consistently through curriculum developers if teachers have knowledge of the curriculum itself (Bradfield & Exley, 2020). From this statement, it shows that an educator has a view regarding his insight into the curriculum, in addition, the curriculum also plays a role in supporting the professionalism of educators.

Previous research that is similar and has been done with this research is as follows: (1) research with the title "Teacher Perceptions of the Implementation of the Merdeka Learning Curriculum in Elementary Schools" conducted by Sunarni&HariKaryono in 2023, based on the results of interviews on teacher perceptions of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, the advantages are: (1) teachers can be more creative and develop, (2) learning can be more fun and meaningful, (3) learning is directed towards the needs of students, and (4) learning in the Merdeka Curriculum is directed towards student-centered learning models. Meanwhile, the obstacles for teachers who are domiciled or reside in geographical areas where access to the internet is difficult or the signal is weak. In addition, teachers who are elderly, over 50 years old, sometimes find it

difficult to keep up with IT developments. (2) Further research with the title "The Impact Of The Change Of The Educational Curriculum On Basic School Students" conducted by ArinTentremMawati, et al, concluded that the Implementation of the 2013 Curriculum in Elementary Schools has not been carried out optimally, as reflected in the condition of teachers who do not understand the process of preparing lesson plans, scientific learning, and learning evaluation, and teachers have not received comprehensive guidance and coaching or training. Meanwhile, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum has been carried out quite well in the first year, but each Mover School has the task of how to develop in preparing and implementing this Merdeka Curriculum so that it can be applied in all its classes, in the current year. Thus, based on the results of the analysis and comparison of the two curricula above, it can be said that the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum is more optimal than the 2013 Curriculum even though it has only been implemented for one year.

So that in its implementation, this study aims to determine curriculum changes and teacher perceptions of curriculum changes that occur. It is hoped that this research can be useful regarding curriculum changes experienced in learning in schools so that it can add insight for readers, especially teachers and prospective teachers and can find out the views of teachers. This study uses data collection techniques through interviews. So that the data taken comes from factual data in the field. The target in the interview activity is English teachers who have an understanding and knowledge of curriculum changes.

## **METHODS**

The research method used in this research is quantitative research method. According to Priadana&Sunarsi (2021; 51), quantitative research is research that focuses on measuring and analyzing cause-and-effect relationships between various variables. This method aims to describe the findings in detail in accordance with the phenomena that occur. According to Sugiyono (2017), a questionnaire is a data collection technique that is carried out by giving a set of questions or written questions to respondents. A questionnaire can be open, where respondents write answers in descriptive form, or closed, where respondents choose one answer from the options provided.

Based on the methods and instruments of this research, data collection was carried out using the survey method. The survey method is a data collection technique that will be carried out by giving questionnaires or conducting interviews to several teachers, especially to English teachers to obtain information.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### ***The results of the research***

One of the most important components of a school's instructional process is its curriculum. Teachers need to get training on how to apply a revised curriculum because implementing a high-quality learning process requires teachers to have a thorough comprehension of the updates and modifications made to documents like the curriculum. The most crucial individuals in the creation and execution of curricula in schools are the teachers. Any endeavor to establish a curriculum must revolve around teachers because of their expertise, knowledge, and experience. Since they are the ones who know the most about teaching techniques and are in charge of introducing the curriculum in the classroom, better teachers promote better learning.

Researchers collected data related to teacher perceptions of curriculum changes to the independent curriculum. The research results obtained are as follows:

In answer to the first question, the teachers' opinions reflect mixed views on the curriculum changes in Indonesia. Some see it as having a positive impact, such as an increased focus on attitudes and skills, and enhancing students' creativity. However, others noted negative impacts such as students' adaptation difficulties and new problems arising, including a lack of support from some students and the learning environment for the government standards. The opinions of these teachers illustrate that views on curriculum change in Indonesia are mixed. Some teachers see positive impacts, particularly in increasing the focus on students' attitudes, skills and creativity. However, there are concerns from some other teachers regarding the negative impacts, such as students' adaptation difficulties and the emergence of new problems due to rapid curriculum changes. In addition, one teacher noted that the implementation of the curriculum still faces obstacles, mainly because not all students and learning environments support the standards set by the government. These conclusions reflect the

complexity of evaluating curriculum change, involving both positive and negative aspects from different perspectives.

Secondly, the conclusion from some of the teachers' opinions is that the objectives of curriculum change should be clear, easy to apply, and in accordance with the needs and developments of the times. Teachers also emphasized the importance of active student interaction in learning, skill development, and curriculum adaptation to learner characteristics. In addition, curriculum change should be based on direct understanding through teacher-student interaction and consider virtues in accordance with students' learning environment. Teachers agreed that the objectives of curriculum change should be clear and easily applicable so that students understand what they need to learn for their future. They highlighted the importance of fun and balanced language skills learning.

The third answer is the conclusion from the teachers' opinions is that educators need to understand learning objectives in general, adapt learning methods to student characters, and implement various strategies such as learning outcomes analysis, diagnostic assessment, and teaching module development. Challenges faced involve lack of IT mastery, students' readiness for new learning patterns, curriculum changes, and internal and external challenges. The teachers' opinions show that educators need to have a deep understanding of learning objectives and students' abilities. They must be able to adapt learning methods to student characteristics and technology-based learning environments. Strategies such as learning outcomes analysis, diagnostic assessment and teaching module development are considered important. Challenges faced include lack of IT mastery, students' readiness for changes in learning patterns, and adaptation to the new curriculum. In addition, teachers emphasized the need for creativity and innovation in planning lessons so that students feel happy, comfortable and interested in learning. Internal and external challenges, such as changing documents and new understandings in the learning process, are also part of the teaching dynamics faced by educators.

Fourth answer, In conclusion, the teachers agreed that technology has an important role to play in education, especially in English language learning. They noted the ability of technology to facilitate interaction, provide access to various learning materials, and create a more interactive and enjoyable learning experience. In addition, optimizing the

role of technology through creative learning design is considered key to maintaining student engagement and happiness in both online and offline learning contexts.

And in answer to the last question, some teachers' opinions were that learning evaluation has an important role in measuring student progress. Teachers emphasized the use of diverse assessment instruments, including formative and summative assessments. They also highlighted the importance of actively involving students, thinking critically and creatively in the evaluation process. In addition, the evaluation approach in the new curriculum emphasizes a different perspective, with assessment not only limited to written tests but also involving project work, teacher observation and student self-reflection. It is important to evaluate learning every meeting with a variety of instruments, including formative and summative assessments. Student activity is prioritized, encouraging critical and creative thinking. Teachers emphasize a variety of evaluations such as project work, observation and self-reflection. In the new curriculum, evaluation takes into account active learning principles and local context. Teacher 4 highlights the importance of involving students' full potential in every assessment, creating an inclusive approach to student development.

### ***Discussions***

Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum with diverse intracurricular learning, where content will be optimized so that learners have enough time to explore concepts and strengthen competencies. Teachers have the flexibility to choose various teaching tools, so that learning can be tailored to the learning needs and interests of students. Projects to strengthen the achievement of the Pancasila learner profile are developed based on specific themes set by the government. The project is not directed to achieve specific learning outcome targets, so it is not tied to subject content.

The involvement of teachers as the center of curriculum development leads to the achievement of effective education reform. Therefore, teachers are an important factor in the success of curriculum development including the implication and evaluation steps. In addition, teacher involvement in the curriculum development process is important to align curriculum content with the needs of learners.

The problem is that not all teachers in elementary schools have had the opportunity to participate in training on the Merdeka Curriculum. Especially socialization and technical guidance that is specific to the formation of the Pancasila Student Profile. Another obstacle is the constraints of teachers who live or reside in geographical areas that are difficult to access the internet or have weak signals. In addition, teachers who are elderly, over 50 years old are sometimes difficult to keep up with IT developments and there are some teachers who still lack creativity. So, based on the description above, it can be seen that they have different perceptions, and from the differences in perception, it shows that they agree with this curriculum change because this change makes the learning process better than before.

This curriculum emphasizes the development of students' character and covers vital subject in simpler classes. Since an autonomous curriculum is designed to meet the needs of students, it is reasonable to assume that it will exist and that it will enhance educational institutions' ability to impart knowledge. A stand-alone curriculum was created utilizing the Non-Cognitive Assessment Framework to incorporate the psychological and emotional components of pupils as well as their enjoyment of learning in an attempt to sustain the learning activities. visiting the families of the pupils at home. Cognitive tests are another feature of the autonomous curriculum that evaluate students' understanding and performance. In addition, the role of a teacher in the world of education is very important because he is in direct contact with students and has a role in implementing lesson plans and evaluating education. Therefore, teachers' views on curriculum reform are very important.



## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results and discussion above, the conclusion of the teachers' opinions illustrates that views on curriculum change in Indonesia are mixed. Some teachers see positive impacts, particularly in increasing the focus on students' attitudes, skills and creativity. However, there are concerns from some other teachers regarding the negative impacts, such as students' adaptation difficulties and the emergence of new problems due to rapid curriculum changes. In addition, one teacher noted that the implementation of the curriculum still faces obstacles, mainly because not all students and learning environments support the standards set by the government. These conclusions reflect the complexity of evaluating curriculum change, involving both positive and negative aspects from different perspectives. The curriculum is crucial for schools. Teachers' views on curriculum change in Indonesia are mixed. Challenges faced include a lack of IT mastery and students' readiness for new learning patterns. Technology plays an important role in education, especially in English language learning. Diverse assessment instruments and student engagement are strongly emphasized. Teacher engagement is important for effective education reform. Some teachers face obstacles in implementing Merdeka Curriculum. Overall, teachers' views on curriculum reform are important.

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