

**TEACHER'S PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS MERDEKA CURRICULUM
AT SMPN 2 PALEMBANG**

A THESIS

by

Ruth Arihta

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**ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM
LANGUAGE AND ARTS EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**



**FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY
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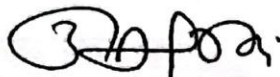


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TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS MERDEKA BELAJAR

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This thesis was defended by the researcher in the final program examination and it was approved by the examination committee on:

Day : Tuesday

Date : 24 December 2024



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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned,

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Certify that thesis entitled "TEACHERS PERCEPTIONS TOWARDS MERDEKA CURRICULUM AT SMPN 2 PALEMBANG" is my own work and I did not do any plagiarism or inappropriate quotation against the ethics and rules commended by the Ministry of Education of Republic Indonesia Number 19, 2010 regarding plagiarism in higher education. Therefore, I deserve to face court if I am found to have plagiarized this work.

Palembang, 24 December 2024
The Undersigned,


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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my bones and heart. This is intended for you, Mama Rosfelly, and Papa Roy. I dedicate this thesis to my beloved siblings. This is intended for you, Mario Sahalatua Sinulingga, and Nathanael Christian Sinulingga. In addition, I dedicate my thesis to my advisor, who has provided me with counsel, support, encouragement, and guidance in order for me to complete this thesis, as well as to my lecturers, who gave me knowledge and guidance during the lecture session. In the end, I dedicate this thesis to the love of my life Opung Ruhut Hutasoit and Opung Lamudo Simatupang who always take care and give me infinite love.

MOTTO

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand."

(Isaiah 41:10)

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In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful, All praise and thanks to our Almighty God, who always showers me with love, affection, strength, guidance, and protection as I complete this thesis. I can overcome any challenges in completing this thesis with His great grace and providence. With His blessings, I can reach this phase and obtain my bachelor's degree at the English Education Study Programme, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Sriwijaya University. In the composition of this thesis, many individuals have provided motivation, advice, support, and even remarks that have been instrumental in my journey. In this chapter, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to the following people who have played a vital role in my academic pursuit:

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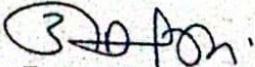
ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 2 Palembang. This curriculum was introduced as an initiative to improve the quality of education through a more flexible, student-centered approach. The research method used is descriptive qualitative, with data collection through questionnaires and interviews with 50 teachers. The results show that the majority of teachers have a positive perception of the Merdeka Curriculum. They stated that this curriculum enhances the quality of education, and promotes creativity, critical thinking, and student independence. However, several challenges were identified, such as limited resources, lack of training, and adaptation to changes in teaching methods. The study also identifies strategies that can be implemented, such as intensive training for teachers, school infrastructure development, and the use of technology in the learning process. These findings are expected to contribute to the development of educational policies and the future implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.

Keyword : Teachers' Perceptions, Merdeka Curriculum, Education Quality


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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers key aspects related to the research topic, including the background, research questions, objectives, and significance of the study. Each of these points is discussed in detail within the respective sections.

1.1 Background of the study

The Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, being implemented in Indonesian schools, aims to enhance the quality of education by enhancing teaching and learning methodologies. The Merdeka Belajar Curriculum is one of the government's programs aimed at enhancing education in Indonesia. Indonesian schools have incorporated and implemented the curriculum. Instructions for implementing the curriculum within the framework of learning recovery are laid out in regulation No. 56/M/2022 by the Ministry of Education and Culture, and the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum is utilized for this purpose. According to Indonesia's Minister of Education Nadiem Makari, the new strategy aims to stress the enjoyment of studying rather than placing the responsibility on students to achieve a specific score. Moreover, He stated that Merdeka Belajar Curriculum is expected to enhance the quality of Indonesian human capital. As per the Law on the National Education System of 2003 and Article 31 Section 3, the functioning of the national education system should aim to enhance the quality of human capital.

In order to effectively handle the requirements of the current curriculum, instructors must possess a comprehensive understanding of the goals, resources, instructional techniques, strategies, and assessment methodologies, and effectively implement them in the teaching and learning procedures. Successful implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum is essential

for adequately preparing teachers. The preparation of instructors has a direct influence on students' ability to engage in activities that enhance their skills in observing, inquiring, thinking, and communicating, as determined by the learning materials provided to them (Nurzen, 2022). Furthermore, the role of teaching as a catalyst for autonomous learning necessitates that educators exhibit the capacity to actively, fervently, imaginatively, innovatively, and proficiently facilitate transformative experiences in the classroom. To effectively promote autonomous learning, educators must possess not just classroom proficiency but also the ability to cultivate favorable connections with their students.

The next step is for educators to have the necessary skills to make effective use of the many technologies that are now in use in the classroom. Therefore, teachers need to take advantage of professional development opportunities often if they want to be abreast of the latest innovations in educational technology. In order to enhance their ability to integrate technology into their courses and provide their students with engaging learning possibilities, they must practice making changes during educational activities. Therefore, the process of understanding data gathered from the human senses is known as perception. Based on their experiences, the study examines how teachers' opinions on the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum's implementation have evolved over time. Teachers, students, and parents respond in different ways to the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, which is an upgrade over the 2013 Curriculum. Each individual possesses assistance. Many individuals expressed dissatisfaction with the rapid pace of curricular modifications. (Saputra & Hadi, 2022). Nevertheless, several educators have enthusiastically accepted the modifications and are adjusting their instructional approaches accordingly. In order to effectively adopt new curriculum ideas, educators must prioritize maintaining an open-minded and flexible approach.

The implementation of curriculum changes can have both positive and negative effects on the quality of education. However, when implemented successfully, principals, teachers, staff, students, and even the institution itself support students in following the advancements of a more advanced era (Hidayah et al., 2022; Johnston & Glancey, 2022; Kılıç & Saygılı, 2022). The use of this cooperative method might result in a more unified and efficient educational setting for all parties concerned, guaranteeing the successful execution and favorable results. Schools can successfully manage curricular changes and promote the growth and development of teachers and students by promoting a culture of continual learning and cooperation. This strategy additionally facilitates the establishment of a feeling of community within the school, promoting a supportive and inclusive atmosphere for all individuals. Additionally, it allows for more personalized and tailored educational experiences for students, ultimately leading to better academic outcomes. Furthermore, this collaborative approach encourages innovation and creativity among educators, leading to more engaging and effective teaching practices. Ultimately, this results in a more dynamic and enriching educational experience for all involved. Teachers must be competent, which means they must impart knowledge that students can understand, just as principals must cultivate positive relationships with their superiors and subordinates. Additionally, students need to be of the highest caliber, which entails having the ability to learn effectively, work hard in the classroom, and develop critical thinking skills in every subject.

According to Srakang (2013) "an idea, belief, or teacher's belief" is what is meant by perception. Teachers must be conscious of their own beliefs regarding the process of teaching and learning. It implies that when teachers make decisions, their perspectives serve as their fundamental presumptions. In addition, by being aware of their own perceptions, teachers can

better understand how they approach new curriculum initiatives and make adjustments as needed. This self-awareness can lead to more effective teaching practices and improved student outcomes.

Pertiwi and Pusparani (2021) looked at the concepts and lesson plans of Merdeka Belajar Curriculum from the teacher's point of view. According to the survey, there is still a lack of awareness among teachers regarding the Freedom of Learning program, and the process of creating lesson plans still deviates from the curriculum. In spite of this, the teachers fully support Indonesia's autonomous curriculum implementation. They recognize the importance of adapting their teaching methods to align with new initiatives and are willing to make the necessary changes to enhance student learning. By actively engaging with the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, teachers can ultimately contribute to the success of the Freedom of Learning program in Indonesia. According to Patriantini et al. (2022) The Merdeka Belajar Curriculum has numerous benefits. The first is straight forward and gives depth priority. This curriculum's teaching and learning methodology places a strong emphasis on helping pupils advance to the next level. Furthermore, putting depth first meant that time was not a constraint and that learning took place in a laid-back, joyful fashion. Secondly, there is greater interaction in this program. That is, in addition to learning and working on projects, students are given the chance to actively explore and discuss issues that are genuinely occurring in the environment. After that, the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum develops into a separate entity. Unlike the curriculum from 2013, this one does not include a specialty program. Students are allowed to select courses based on their areas of interest. Teachers are also allowed to select and create materials or media that enhance the learning process. Overall, the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum aims to foster a more dynamic and engaging learning experience for students. By providing flexibility in course selection and

encouraging interactive discussions, students are able to delve deeper into topics that interest them and develop critical thinking skills. Additionally, the emphasis on teacher autonomy allows for a more personalized approach to education, catering to the diverse needs and learning styles of students.

1.2 Research Questions

Based on the background of the study above, the researcher focuses her study on teaching perceptions by Teachers towards the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum at SMPN2 Palembang. The research questions are as follows :

1. What are the teachers' perceptions of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum at SMPN 2 Palembang?
2. How do teachers perceive the implementation of the learning process under the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum?

1.3 Research Objectives

Referring to the research questions above, the objectives of this study are :

1. To describe teachers' perceptions of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum at SMPN 2 Palembang.
2. To examine teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the learning process under the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum.

1.4 Significances of the study

This study is expected to benefit English teachers and future researchers. The following are the significant contributions of the study. Theoretically, the results of this study can be a scientific contribution to English education research. This research can also be a reference for researchers examining Teachers' perceptions towards the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum in SMPN2 Palembang. This research can be a reference for teachers to find out what and how the

perceptions teachers need towards the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, can help to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of English learning in the classroom specifically in Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. This research can be additional knowledge regarding research on Teachers' perceptions towards the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. This research can also be a reference for similar research. This research is useful for the government to obtain information regarding the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum at SMPN2 Palembang. The government can also know teachers' difficulties and needs in implementing the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, especially in English lessons so that the government can improve them.

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