Vocational High School Teachers’ Perception of Teaching

Modul (Modul Ajar) in Merdeka Curriculum

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Abstract

This study examines vocational high school teachers’ grasp of the Merdeka curriculum, particularly Modul Ajar, as “Merdeka” curriculum modifications. The Merdeka curriculum framework, block learning method, and learning device components, which guide the teacher, have changed. With this research, the author understands the Merdeka curriculum better. This study covers education challenges, particularly in the Merdeka curriculum. This qualitative study examined vocational high school EFL instructors’ views on Merdeka curriculum implementation. Vocational high school English teachers were interviewed and transcribed. Reduction analysis followed. This study found that Merdeka’s extracurricular learning group is divided into two groups: a mandatory general group to form student norms and a significant group assigned to each student based on their expertise program to prepare them for the workforce. The Pancasila Student Profile outlines the teacher’s hopes for students in the Merdeka curriculum. Implementing the learning system requires a block system. The teacher can customize the Teaching Module to fit their Learning Outcomes.

Keywords: Curriculum, Merdeka Curriculum, Teachers Perception, Merdeka Curriculum Structure, Block Learning System, Modul Ajar

Introduction

Educators must be familiar with current curriculum policies to perform their primary duties as educators effectively. Therefore, this study examines how teachers perceive the new curriculum at the vocational high school level. This Merdeka Belajar curriculum is considered more accessible and comprehensive, as it focuses on only the essentials and develops students’ competencies in phases; in terms of teaching, teachers will provide instruction according to each student’s level of achievement (KEMENDIKBUD, 2021). Based on the Merdeka curriculum concept, teachers are given the freedom and actualization to apply the national curriculum to their school’s resources in teaching and learning activities.
This concept is not much different from the concept possessed by the previous curriculum, namely the 2013 curriculum, which also provides an excellent opportunity for teachers to be experts in finding resources (Maba, 2017)—considering that the Merdeka curriculum is a simplified version of the 2013 curriculum. Therefore, it is not surprising that there are not many differences between the two. So, the teacher's perception of this curriculum is fascinating to study further. For this reason, a teacher's understanding of this curriculum needs to be investigated to determine how far their understanding extends.

The previous curriculum was the 2013 curriculum, designed to allow teachers to explore a wide range of material (Maba, 2017). The 2013 curriculum allows teachers to develop the material being taught. On the other hand, in the Merdeka curriculum, students are free to explore learning materials from various sources to implement the local wisdom-based learning process and optimize school resources (Prakoso et al., 2021). This is considered appropriate because the "Merdeka" curriculum is viewed as the curriculum that gives teachers the freedom to explore the best way to learn. Furthermore, knowing freedom permits the teacher to experiment more with learning strategies. And for its students, this policy provides an opportunity to add experience, insight, and knowledge to this program. They can learn outside their scope (De Vega & Nur, 2022). In other words, students now have greater freedom regarding their learning resources, and the teacher's material is no longer the only basis for learning.

According to Pertiwi & Pusparini (2021), several teachers know little about the simplification lessons plan in Merdeka Curriculum. They claim that they do not understand this curriculum's absolute fundamentals. The teachers give no explanations to clarify their answers because this policy is still new, and not many researchers have done thorough research. Perception of Merdeka Curriculum on Junior High School Based on Aulia (2021) Finds the results that most of the teachers agreed with simplifying the components in the lesson plan because, according to them, not all components should be included in the lesson plan. With the new policy, they welcome and are happy because it can save time preparing lesson plans so they can pay more attention to teaching practices and evaluate students. Then they also added that this new policy makes lesson plans more flexible because teachers can easily compose them without spending much time. In addition, it can be adapted to the learning needs of teachers teaching in the classroom as well as the conditions and needs of students. Therefore, they prefer to draft lesson plans freely.

Also, in General, in High School or SMA, according to research subject by Prakoso (2021), The policy of independent learning is considered one of the right mechanisms to implement the learning process based on local wisdom and optimize the resources owned by the school. Moreover, freedom to learn allows teachers to explore the best strategies for learning. Therefore, based on the background of the study, the perception of the Merdeka curriculum from the point of view of vocational school teachers about their understanding according to the new curriculum, also their perceptions of what they feel in the implementation of Modul Ajar in the Merdeka curriculum, such as the changes they feel in this curriculum and the extent of their knowledge of this teaching module in this curriculum by collecting data by interviews. The researcher chose Vocational High School teachers as the research subject because the study examining
the perception of Independent Learning from the point of view of vocational high school teachers is still limited.

Literature Review

Teaching materials or teaching modules are used to support learning and training on existing competencies in the world of work. Teaching modules in the Merdeka Curriculum are learning tools teachers use to plan the learning process and usually consist of objectives, steps and learning media, and required assessments (Kemendikbud, 2021). Teaching modules are learning tools that are based on the applied curriculum with the aim of achieving predetermined competencies. Teaching modules also play a major role in supporting teachers in designing lessons. According to Maulidia (2022), she states that the teaching module has a systematic concept. In essence, teaching modules have systematic and sequential concepts that enable teachers and students to perform learning activities more effectively and efficiently. The formed teaching module consists of several components needed in a topic based on learning objectives. For the vocational high school level, of course, it is also in accordance with the competencies required for the industrial and business worlds. Creating teaching modules aims to provide teachers with tools to help them teach. There are concepts and components of teaching modules made by KEMENDIKBUD (2020).

There are significant differences between the K-13 curriculum towards an independent curriculum, so prospective educators experience problems in developing learning tools, including not being able to read CP properly, not being able to compile TP (learning objectives from existing CP (learning achievements), not being able to compile ATP (flow of learning objectives) from TP, difficulties in developing teaching modules, an independent curriculum allows for thematic forms (Rindayati et al., 2022). Therefore, teachers must be more creative and innovative, not to be the only source of the learning process (teacher-centered), to place students not only as learning objects but also as learning subjects, and ultimately lead a fun, happy, and democratic learning process that respects every opinion. In this way, learning becomes genuinely internalized.

There are concepts and components of teaching modules that have been made by KEMENDIKBUD (2020), there are:

1) Curriculum Independent Teaching Module Concept
   a) The teaching module is one teaching tool with a learning implementation plan to help direct the learning process to achieve Learning Outcomes (CP). Learning achievement / CP at the level of concentration of expertise is the minimum competency in that skill. Vocational schools and partners can develop learning objectives following the employment context in the world of work.
b) If the education unit uses a teaching module provided by the government, then the teaching module can be paired with the RPP Plus because the teaching module has more complete components than the RPP.

c) If the education unit develops a teaching module independently, then the teaching module can be matched with the lesson plan.

d) Education units can use various teaching tools, including teaching modules or lesson plans, with multiple components and formats in accordance with the characteristics and needs of students.

2) Teaching Module Components

a) The teaching module contains learning objectives, learning steps (which include learning media that will be used), assessments, and other learning information and references that can assist teachers in learning.

b) Teaching module components can be added according to the subjects and their needs.

c) Educators are free to develop components for teaching modules according to students’ environment and learning needs.

3) Core Components of Teaching Module

a) Learning Objectives

Learning objectives should cover the essentials of learning. It is also used to determine learning activities, the resources used according to the diversity of students, and also the methods used. Learning objectives can also take various forms, ranging from knowledge (facts and information), procedural, conceptual understanding, thinking, reasoning skills, collaboration, and communication strategies.

b) Learning Activities

Learning activities include a sequence of core learning activities in concrete steps, including options/alternative learning and steps to adapt to student learning needs. The steps of learning activities are also written sequentially according to the planned time duration, in three stages, namely introduction, core, and closing, based on active learning methods.

c) Assessment Plan

The assessment plan includes the instruments and methods of conducting the assessment. Achievement criteria must be clearly defined in accordance with the learning objectives set. The assessment can be in the form of a formative assessment or a summative assessment. However, these two types of assessment do not always have to be used in teaching modules but can be adjusted depending on the scope of learning objectives and student needs. In
planning assessments, teachers need to understand one of the assessment principles in the Independent Curriculum, which is to encourage the use of various forms of assessment, not just written tests. This is done so that learning can focus more on meaningful activities and information or feedback from assessments about student abilities becomes more prosperous and more helpful in designing the next lesson.

It is essential for the teacher to arrange the teaching modules as maximum as possible. However, many teachers still do not understand the techniques for compiling and developing teaching modules, especially in the “Merdeka” curriculum. Modul Ajar is a new language of RPP, but there are significant differences in the content of teaching modules and lesson plans. The points compiled include learning objectives and Learning Objective Flow (ATP) (Maulidia, 2022). Therefore, to ensure a smooth learning experience, it is important to prepare the teaching modules as well as possible. If the teaching modules are not appropriately designed, the material delivery to students is inevitably not structured, which can cause inequality between teachers and students.

Methods

This research was conducted using a qualitative approach. The method used is thematic analysis. Location and source of research data at several vocational high schools in Surabaya were taken from the perception of vocational high school teachers—technique and research instruments using interviews technique and documentation. Meanwhile, to analyze the data using data reduction techniques, data presentation, and conclusion.

Findings and Discussions

As a teacher who has attended training and has become driving teacher in implementing the independent curriculum, all teachers already know what components are in the teaching module. “Teaching modules are the same as RPP, and I prefer this teaching module because it is more practical and not complicated; there are no indicators and the like, and it can be used as a lesson plan if we implement it” (T-1) “The teaching module is the same as the RPP, and it is just that this teaching module is more detailed and, in my opinion, a little difficult” (T-3).

According to vocational high school teachers, the teaching modules and learning implementation plans, or lesson plans used in the previous curriculum have the same uses. According to T1 and T3, this teaching module is the same as the lesson plan, but this teaching module is more detailed and less convoluted. However, according to T3 this teaching module is quite challenging to implement. Therefore, the perception of T-2 is inversely proportional to the perception of T-1 and T-3, in contrast to that of T-2. “In my opinion, I prefer the former, namely the previous curriculum RPP. Because there is the knowledge that there are skills for this teaching module, this is turned into a simple question, then there are more
non-cognitive and cognitive questions in the assessment, cognitive is like daily tests, then non-cognitive, like we teach using an application or manual for the media, and this, in my opinion, is a bit a little less effective, especially for senior teachers who have minimal knowledge of current technological developments, while this requires us to use current technology” (T-2)

According to T-2, this teaching module was felt to be less effective, especially for senior teachers who were used to using lesson plans because even though previous sources said that the teaching modules and lesson plans were the same, several components had been changed; this made senior teachers less familiar with this teaching module, and In this independent curriculum, in its application, it is required to use technology where the senior teacher’s knowledge of this technological development is still lacking.

“The components in the learning module include the first student identity or profile; this student profile emphasizes learning, there are teaching facilities and infrastructure, then learning outcomes, learning objectives, and learning flow. So, the flow of learning and learning objectives are related and gradual. However, not all teachers are the same. Here learning activities still need me to improve” (T-1)

Among the components of the teaching module are identity, student character, Pancasila profiles, learning facilities, learning models, learning approaches, learning outcomes, and learning objectives, as well as learning activities (including preliminary activities, core activities, and closing activities) which conclude with a student worksheet, however, before making the Teaching Module the teacher must know or make learning outcomes or “Capaian pembelajaran” in advance. “This learning achievement is the same as KD, but CP is not sequential. In CP, teachers are welcome to develop but may not reduce” (T-2)

Learning Outcomes or “Capaian Pembelajaran” are made before the formation of teaching modules. Learning Outcomes were formed because they were guidelines for making teaching modules. Vocational high school teachers think the Learning Outcomes are the same as the Syllabus. In CP, the teacher may add but cannot reduce the provisions or content in the Learning Outcomes. L is made before the formation of teaching modules. Learning Outcomes were formed because they were guidelines for making teaching modules. Vocational high school teachers think the Learning Outcomes are the same as the Syllabus. In CP, the teacher may add but not reduce the provisions or content in the Learning Outcomes.

The Teaching Module (Modul Ajar) is one of the tools used as a guide by the teacher in distributing material in learning activities in the “Merdeka” curriculum. Modul Ajar used in the Merdeka curriculum is the same as the RPP; it is just that it is more detailed and complicated. So it had been said by Maulidia (2022) in his study; while Modul Ajar is a new language of lesson plans, there are significant differences between teaching modules and RPP. The points compiled include learning objectives and Learning Objective Flow. The components in the learning module include the first identity or student profile. This student profile emphasizes learning, and then there are teaching facilities and infrastructure, learning outcomes, learning objectives, and learning flow. Therefore, the flow of learning and learning objectives are interrelated and gradual. It contradicts the statement in the research conducted by Pertiwi & Pusparini (2021), who said that the RPP teaching materials became one sheet RPP in the Merdeka curriculum. However, not all teachers are the same. Setiawan et al. (2022) also state in their study that teachers can make their own, choose, and modify the available teaching tools according to their students’ context, characteristics,
and needs. However, some still feel there are improvements in their teaching modules. Therefore, the teacher must be able to arrange teaching modules as well as possible. In addition, teaching modules must be well designed to ensure that teachers and students can continue during the learning process.

Conclusions

RPP, which turned into a Teaching Module in the Merdeka curriculum. The Teaching Module is practically the same as the lesson plan in the previous curriculum, and it is just that the contents of the Teaching Module are more detailed and a little challenging to implement. The Teaching Module is made based on the existing Learning Outcomes. In this case, the teacher is free to modify or add but may not reduce the content contained in the Learning Outcomes. And some teachers are still unsure about the teaching modules they make. Therefore, this study expected that it would be able to conduct more in-depth research, especially regarding the learning process or model applied to the Merdeka curriculum, as well as examine more in a specific form of the Teaching Module (Modul Ajar).

References


