



Science Teachers' Perceptions The Merdeka Curriculum Implementation In Entikong Border State Junior High Schools

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Abstract

Merdeka Curriculum emphasises the implementation of differentiated learning and considers the unique characteristics of each student. Teachers have an important role in the development and implementation of this curriculum, and must have interpretations in accordance with the provisions of curriculum development. Teachers' perceptions of the Merdeka Curriculum are very diverse and can significantly affect the readiness and quality of learning to be carried out. This study aims to determine teacher perceptions based on aspects of cognition, affection, conation. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method with data collection techniques using questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The research questionnaire used is an open question that has been validated for content by 3 Merdeka Curriculum experts and validated for items by Merdeka Curriculum experts and Educational Psychology Experts. The results showed that teachers' perceptions are very important in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, cognition about general concepts is positive, but for in-depth concepts, teachers' perceptions are negative. Schools that provide gradual training have succeeded in building teachers' positive cognition, although many still think that teaching modules are the same as lesson plans from the 2013 Curriculum. Teachers support the development of Merdeka Curriculum even though they feel there are limitations in understanding and readiness of infrastructure in schools. Teachers are also positive about the support and cooperation between teachers, especially through MGMP, but still feel that they are not fully capable of making their own learning tools. Although the teaching modules are in accordance with the provisions, teachers have not fully implemented differentiation plans or utilised the results of learning style diagnosis in learning.

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INTRODUCTION

The Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Mendikbudristek) published a new policy in the field of education, namely the Merdeka Curriculum at the end of 2019. The Merdeka Curriculum is known as curriculum development that focuses more on competencies and involves the participation of all parties involved in the education unit (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). The Merdeka Curriculum programme aims to give freedom to schools and teachers to design a curriculum that suits the needs of students and the surrounding conditions. In the context of Merdeka learning, the Merdeka Curriculum tends to carry out differentiated learning implementation, which takes into account the unique characteristics of each student, such as learning style (Gusteti & Neviyarni, 2022). (Gusteti & Neviyarni, 2022).

The main focus in designing the Merdeka Curriculum is the principle of Merdeka learning, as stipulated in the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 22 of 2020. Thus, the

Merdeka curriculum is prepared to assist educators in building a situation that urges students to have Merdeka awareness in managing their learning process to suit their suitable learning style. With the existence of the Merdeka Curriculum, there is hope that this matter will be able to become an improvement programme in learning with three special characteristics, namely project-based learning, soft skills development, and character building according to the profile of Pancasila students. (Jojo & Sihotang, 2022). The Merdeka Curriculum was developed by considering that the curriculum is prepared by the education unit to accommodate the needs and potential of the region and students. Although it provides freedom for students, the Merdeka Curriculum always refers to national education standards to ensure the achievement of the goals or targets of national education.

The role of the curriculum in education is very important, so it can be stated that the curriculum has a major role and is the key in the education system. The matter relates to the determination of the direction, content, and process of education which will determine the type and qualifications of graduates from an educational institution. The success of education, the ability of students, and teachers to assimilate and deliver subject matter, as well as the achievement of overall educational goals is highly dependent on the curriculum (Triwiyanto, 2022).

The role of teachers is very important in curriculum development and implementation through the implementation of learning designs that are no longer centred on the dominant role of the teacher, but use a variety of media and varied learning methods. This will motivate students to actively participate and train their critical thinking skills. (Herawati & Naerofah, 2022).. Teachers also play a significant role in the implementation of the Merdeka learning policy. Teachers are expected to contribute by collaborating and building effectiveness with school curriculum development to organise and create materials, textbooks, and learning content. Teacher involvement in the curriculum development process is an important stage to harmonise curriculum content with the needs of learners in the classroom. (Alsubaie, 2016). Thus, teachers are required to have interpretations that are in accordance with the provisions of curriculum development. A teacher's interpretation of the curriculum is closely related to the teacher's perception of the curriculum.

Perception is known as an experience in objects, phenomena, or relationships obtained by gathering information or interpreting messages. Perception includes the process in which messages or information enter a person's brain through consistent interaction between humans and their surroundings (Slameto, 2015). Teachers' views hold an important role in supporting the implementation of the new curriculum that is ready to be implemented to students at all levels of education (Novianti & Ahman, 2024). Bimo Walgito (2015) states that there are three aspects that form a person's perception, namely cognition (knowledge, views, expectations, ways of thinking, and individual experience), affection (feelings and emotional state of individuals towards objects), and conation (motivation, attitude, behaviour, ability, behaviour, and activity).

Teachers' perceptions arising from the Merdeka Learning Curriculum are very diverse. This is natural considering that there are several differences with the previous curriculum. Several previous studies have stated that the perceptions of a teacher have a significant impact on the readiness and quality of learning that will be carried out. (Saputra & Hadi, 2022).

Based on interviews conducted with science teachers at Entikong Border State Junior High School, information was obtained that at SMP Negeri 1 Sekayam, SMP Negeri 1 Entikong, and SMP Negeri 3 Entikong have been implementing learning using the Merdeka Curriculum since the 2022/2023 academic year. According to the interviews that have been conducted, it is concluded that science teachers at the Entikong border State Junior High School only get the socialisation of the Merdeka Curriculum from the princSciencel and the Sanggau Regency Cultural Education Office and lack training on the Merdeka Curriculum. For this reason, it is

important to conduct research on the perceptions of junior high school science teachers on the Entikong border. Through research, it is hoped that it will be obtained in depth about the actual perceptions of science teachers so that the results of this study can be used as input to make improvements and improve the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at the Entikong Border State Junior High School. This research can be used as a basis by schools in making policies and following up on teachers from concrete real conditions.

METHOD

This research applies a descriptive qualitative method of case study research type because this research conducts an assessment of teacher perceptions of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at Entikong Border State Junior High School in terms of cognition (knowledge of the Merdeka Curriculum), emotion (support for the Merdeka Curriculum), and conation (ability to implement the Merdeka Curriculum).

According to Creswell (2016), qualitative research aims to explore and understand the meaning of various individuals and groups involved in the context of social problems. Qualitative research aims to explore a particular phenomenon, which can include various aspects such as behaviour, perception, motivation, or actions that the research subject experiences. This research aims to describe holistically using words, which reflect the true condition of the phenomenon.

This research was conducted in 3 schools in the border area of Entikong, Sanggau Regency, namely SMP Negeri 1 Sekayam, SMP Negeri 1 Entikong, and SMP Negeri 3 Entikong. The population in this study amounted to 6 science teachers from the three schools who had agreed to become respondents. Data collection techniques used in this study were questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The questionnaire distributed to respondents in the study was an open-ended questionnaire.

This research uses source triangulation and technical triangulation because the research data in the field that the author gets through questionnaires, interviews and documentation will be proven and validated by several sources to ensure the credibility of the data obtained, so that it can be analysed and conclusions drawn. The research questionnaire used was validated for content and validation of questionnaire items. Content validation was carried out by 3 experts by scoring 1-5 on each question item which measured aspects of instrument format, instrument content, instrument language, and instrument usefulness. The analysis of the content validity of the instrument in this study uses the Aiken formula (1985) with the formula below.

$$V = \sum S/n(c-1), \text{ with } S = r - l_0, \text{ with}$$

V = content validity index; r = the score given by the assessor; l_0 = lowest assessment value; n = number of validators; c = number of value categories. In simple terms, Koestoro, Budi, and Basrowi (2006) developed categories in determining validity based on the value of content validity according to Aiken's V . After obtaining the Aiken's V calculation value, it is interpreted into a validation level seen from the range of scores and categories.

Table 1. Categories of Aiken's V Formula Score Range

Score Range	Category
0,8 - 1	Very High
0,6 - 0,79	High
0,4 - 0,59	Simply
0,2 - 0,39	Low
< 0,2	Very Low

The questionnaire used in this study was also carried out item validation to determine the relevance of each questionnaire question. The validation of the questionnaire items was carried out by 2 experts, namely educational psychology experts and Merdeka curriculum experts. The results of the validation of the questionnaire items carried out by experts were analysed using the Gregory test which could then be interpreted into the categorization of instrument validity. The coefficient category based on Gregory (2004), namely 0.81-1.00 (very good), 0.61-0.80 (good), 0.31-0.60 (sufficient), 0.21-0.30 (less), and 0.00-0.20 (not good). The formula used in the Gregory test, namely:

$$V_i = \frac{D}{A+B+C+D}$$

While V_i = validity; A = first and second validators disagree; B = the first validator agrees, while the second validator disagrees; C = the first validator disagrees, while the second validator agrees; D = first and second validators agree.

This research flow applies the Miles and Huberman analysis flow which is arranged in a chart as in Figure 1.

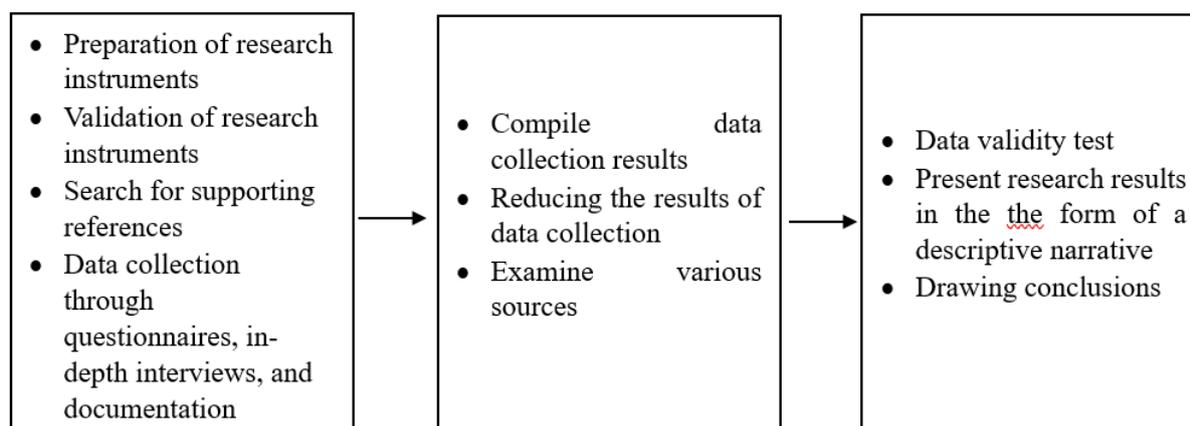


Figure 1: Research Stages

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study aims to determine the perceptions of science teachers in the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum at the Entikong Border State Junior High School. This research uses an open questionnaire to get data from teachers. The questionnaire used was validated from the aspects of construct, language, and material to prove the feasibility of the questionnaire to be used. Validity is known as the extent to which a test is able to measure what is intended in the measurement objectives.

Generally, there are three approaches in examining the validity of a measuring instrument, namely 1) content validity, 2) construct validity, and 3) usefulness validity (Suryabrata, 2005). Content validity is known as testing the feasibility of research instruments carried out by experts to ensure that the resulting instruments are suitable for research. The content validation of the perception questionnaire in this study was carried out by 3 experts which included 2 lecturers and 1 principal of the driving force 1 of Pontianak City.

A research instrument that has been declared valid means that the instrument can measure the object being measured in the research. The results of instrument validation in this study can be seen in Table 2. The results of this validity test show that the research instrument has been valid

with a validity value of 0.76 (high validity) so it is feasible to use. In addition to the validation of research instruments, validation of questionnaire items was also carried out.

Table 2. Calculated Results of Questionnaire Aspect Validation

Aspects	Indicators	Σs	V	Description
Instrument Format	Clarity of the contents of the questionnaire introduction	8	0.66	High
	Clarity of questionnaire numbering	10	0.83	Very High
	Clarity of questionnaire instructions	9	0.75	High
Instrument Content	The content coverage of the question describes the objectives set	8	0.66	High
	Conformity of all questions with the questionnaire grid	11	0.91	Very High
	Clarity of all questions formulated	8	0.66	High
Instrument Language	Use of communicative language	9	0.75	High
	Use of language in each question is specific and does not lead to multiple interpretations	8	0.66	High
	Appropriateness of the use of writing, spelling, and punctuation according to PUEBI	11	0.91	Very High
Instrument Usability	Questionnaires can measure the perceptions of science teachers in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum	10	0.83	Very High
Overall average of questionnaire content validation		92	0.76	High

The item validation was carried out by educational psychology experts to ensure relevance to the perception aspect and Merdeka curriculum experts to ensure relevance to the concept of an Merdeka curriculum. The results of expert validation for each questionnaire item can be reviewed in Table 3.

Table 3. Expert Validation Results for Each Question Item

Aspects	Problem Indicator	Validator I	Validator II	Description
Cognition	Source of Merdeka Curriculum introduction	3	4	D
	Knowledge of teaching modules	3	3	D
	Knowledge of baseline, summative, and formative assessments	2	3	C
	Knowledge of differentiated learning	4	3	D
	Knowledge of the project to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students	4	4	D
Affection	Approval of Merdeka Curriculum as a programme that must be developed	3	4	D
	Assessment of school readiness	3	4	D
	Assessment of support and co-operation between teachers	4	4	D
	Feelings in implementing the Merdeka curriculum	4	4	D

Conation	Ability to make TP and reduce to ATP	3	3	D
	Ability to create teaching modules	3	3	D
	Ability to create initial, formative, and summative assessments	4	3	D
	Ability to implement differentiated learning	3	3	D
	Project Activity Strengthening the Profile of Pancasila Students	4	4	D
	Teacher activity in accessing the teaching freedom platform	4	4	D
	Ability to design new paradigm learning	4	3	D
	Ability to reflect on learning	4	3	D

After obtaining the results of the expert assessment score for each questionnaire question item, it is processed using the Gregory formula to get the coefficient which will be interpreted into the validity level of the questionnaire question items. The validation results on each questionnaire item can be reviewed in Table 4.

Table 4. Calculated Results of Questionnaire Item Validation

		Validator I	
		Not relevant Score (1-2)	Relevant Score (3-4)
Validator II	Not relevant	(A)	(B)
	Score (1-2)	0	0
	Relevant	(C)	(D)
	Score (3-4)	1	16

$$\text{Question Item Validation} = \frac{D}{A+B+C+D} = \frac{16}{0+0+1+16} = 0,94 \text{ (Very High)}$$

The results of the validation of the questionnaire items on the perception of science teachers in the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum in the Entikong Border State Junior High School have been valid with a validity value of 0.94 (very high). The results of this validity indicate that the 17 questionnaire items have very good relevance to perceptions and the Merdeka curriculum.

The Merdeka Curriculum, as a curriculum with a new paradigm, aims to provide useful, exciting, meaningful learning experiences for students, and prepare the golden generation of 2045 in accordance with the lofty ideals launched by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Through the Merdeka Curriculum, students are expected to be able to develop their potential and skills in accordance with the field of study taken. The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, as an effort to improve the 2013 Curriculum, raises various perceptions from several parties, such as teachers, students and parents. Although some support this step, there are also concerns about the speed of the curriculum change from the 2013 Curriculum to the Merdeka Curriculum. The Merdeka Curriculum offers an innovative approach to education that gives teachers the freedom to design learning that is relevant and interesting to students.

The most core objective of Merdeka Curriculum is to train students to think Merdekaly, which is highly dependent on the teacher's role as a facilitator. If the teacher is not Merdeka in teaching, students' freedom of thought may be limited. However, the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum in schools does not always run smoothly, there are challenges and obstacles in implementing this curriculum. An important aspect that must be understood is the teacher's perception in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum.

Entikong Border State Junior High School Science Teacher Cognition in Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum

In the implementation of an Merdeka curriculum, the cognition of an educator is an important factor. Good cognition will encourage the role of teachers to include developing curriculum or curriculum implementation including intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular learning processes. (Annisa Alfath et al., 2022).. The alignment of the knowledge possessed by the teacher with the curriculum concept is very important in the implementation of learning.

Table 5. Perception Questionnaire Results from the Cognition Aspect

Indicators	Results
Merdeka Curriculum Knowledge Source	Social media and Merdeka Mengajar <i>platform</i> , with additional contributions from webinars, <i>In-House Training</i> (IHT), and Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran (MGMP).
Knowledge of Teaching Modules	The teaching tools are simple and practical for teachers, similar to the lesson plans in Curriculum 2013, but more suited to the needs of schools.
Knowledge of baseline, formative and summative assessments	Initial assessments are used to determine students' initial abilities, formative assessments are conducted during the learning process, and summative assessments are conducted at the end of learning to assess students' final understanding of the material that has been learned.
Knowledge of differentiated learning	Differentiated learning is an approach that tailors learning to the needs, interests, abilities and learning styles of individual students.
Knowledge of the project to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students	Cross-subject curricular activities to achieve the Pancasila learner profile, which aims to prepare students to be able to keep up with the times in accordance with the values of Pancasila.

The Merdeka Curriculum is known as a new breakthrough published by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) in 2022. The purpose of launching the Merdeka Curriculum in 2022 is to overcome learning loss and simplify the curriculum in emergency conditions (emergency curriculum). The implementation of the IKM can be done Merdekaly through three alternative options. First, the Merdeka learning option to provide freedom for education units to implement various parts and principles of the Merdeka Curriculum without making changes to the curriculum currently used in the education unit. Second, the Merdeka change option to provide flexibility opportunities for education units to implement the Merdeka Curriculum by using teaching tools that are already available for education units. Third, the Merdeka sharing option provides an opportunity for leeway for education units to implement the Merdeka Curriculum by Merdekaly developing teaching tools for education units. Schools can make their choice of only one Merdeka Curriculum option that best suits their readiness. (Angga et al., 2022).

The State Junior High School at the Entikong Border has just implemented the Merdeka Curriculum in the 2023/2024 academic year by choosing the Merdeka option, of course, the first thing to note is where the teachers know the Merdeka Curriculum. Based on the results of interviews, some science teachers at Entikong Border State Junior High School know the Merdeka Curriculum through social media, the Merdeka teaching platform, socialisation, and

In House Training (IHT). The introduction of the Merdeka Curriculum, both by individuals and encouragement by the school, is one of the important factors in building teachers' understanding and motivation for the Merdeka Curriculum. This is evidenced by the information obtained by science teachers at SMP Negeri 3 Entikong is more comprehensive than other schools because teachers have been given socialisation and In House Training before the school implements the Merdeka Curriculum. Inadequate training and debriefing will make it difficult for teachers to understand and implement the Merdeka Curriculum. (Mantra et al., 2022)..

Although the curriculum has shifted to the Merdeka Curriculum, most teachers still have the perception that teaching modules are the same as lesson plans in the 2013 curriculum. Based on the interview results, teaching modules are considered similar to lesson plans in the previous curriculum but the difference lies in differentiated learning plans. Teaching modules are a new term that replaces lesson plans, but there are significant differences in content between teaching modules and lesson plans. The preparation of teaching modules in the Merdeka Curriculum is considered better than lesson plans because teaching modules that are made Merdekaly are more flexible and can be adjusted based on the needs of schools or learning environments, materials, and subthemes whose development is carried out in the curriculum so that they are mutually sustainable. (Ceda & Purnomo, 2024).

The Merdeka Curriculum focuses on optimising learning outcomes in accordance with the abilities of students. Thus, the learning design is required to be in accordance with the needs of students. Assessment is known as an important aspect of the Merdeka Curriculum to ensure the achievement of learning objectives. Assessment is carried out at the beginning or at the end of learning to obtain comprehensive information about the abilities of students. (Muktamar et al., 2024).. In the concept of assessment, most of the public junior high school teachers on the Entikong border already have a correct understanding of the initial, formative, and summative assessments in Merdeka Curriculum learning. Based on the results of interviews, teachers' understanding of assessment is built and developed through the Science Subject Teacher Conference (MGMP SCIENCE) in subrayon 8 gradually. Although some teachers are still learning and exploring this assessment concept, an understanding of the importance of assessment in supporting the teaching and learning process has begun to form.

The knowledge of science teachers in Entikong Border State Junior High School on differentiated learning is only limited to the general concept. This is reflected in all the results of teacher interviews that convey differentiated learning is learning that is tailored to the potential, abilities, and learning styles of diverse students. Apart from this, there is an opinion that differentiated learning provides freedom for students to choose their preferred way of learning, such as visual or auditory. In Merdeka Curriculum learning, differentiation is carried out by content differentiation, process differentiation, and product differentiation. In learning that contains differentiation, teachers deliver material by focusing on the desires, interests and learning methods of students. In addition, teachers are also not familiar with the *Culturally Responsive Teaching* (CRT) and *Teaching at the Right Level* (TaRL) approaches to learning the Merdeka Curriculum. In fact, in the Merdeka curriculum, teachers must be able to make modifications in the process, learner learning environment, results and products, and learning objectives. (Gusteti & Neviyarni, 2022).

The implementation of this differentiated instruction gives teachers the possibility to teach according to the characteristics of each student. Schools can utilise the differentiated learning process to give students freedom in learning, so that they are not required to excel in all scientific aspects, but can explore themselves according to their abilities. The principle of differentiated learning in the Merdeka Curriculum is not just to gain understanding or learning experience, but to build the profile of Pancasila learners as well. (Martanti et al., 2022).

The Merdeka Curriculum is known as the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5). The Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project is a means to shape the profile of Pancasila students, providing opportunities for students to "experience knowledge" as a character building process and also opportunities to learn from the environment. In the profile project activities, students have the opportunity to conduct research on important topics and issues such as anti-radicalism, technology, culture, democratic life, entrepreneurship, climate change, and mental health that cause students to decide on concrete actions in solving these various issues according to their stage in learning and their needs. (Pratiwi et al., 2024).. When interviewed, teachers answered compactly that this project provides opportunities for students to express their creativity in accordance with the themes chosen by the school, so that they can develop their skills and creativity in a relevant educational context. However, when asked further about the dimensions and elements in the project to strengthen the profile of Pancasila learners, many teachers did not know.

Changes in the merdeka curriculum have a significant impact on teachers' knowledge of the curriculum. Teachers have a fairly comprehensive knowledge of the curriculum due to the demands of teachers to continue to develop themselves through the platforms that have been provided and school encouragement through training from the results of evaluations and supervision of school principals. Teachers' knowledge of learning models and media is varied due to the concept of differentiated learning introduced in the merdeka curriculum.

Science Teacher's Affection in Entikong Border State Junior High School in Implementing the Merrdeka Curriculum

Affection is an important component in building perceptions from within the teacher's personality. The affection component, or emotional component, relates to feelings of pleasure or displeasure towards the attitude object. Feelings of pleasure are considered a positive response, while feelings of displeasure are considered a negative response. (Barus, 2020). Affection is a connecting pathway for teachers to apply their cognition.

Table 6. Perception Questionnaire Results from the Affective Aspect

Indicators	Results
Approval of Merdeka Curriculum as a programme that must be developed	Agree with curriculum changes in accordance with the times and technology, as long as they are balanced with thorough socialisation and pay attention to the conditions and resources of the school.
Assessment of school readiness	Ready to implement the Merdeka Curriculum due to active training and the availability of infrastructure, although some still feel not fully ready because they are still in the stage of learning the new curriculum.
Assessment of support and co-operation between teachers	Cooperation between teachers and MGMP activities are very helpful in making teaching modules and sharing experiences.
Feelings in the implementation of Merdeka curriculum	Feeling happy with the learner-centred approach of Merdeka Curriculum and involving the active role of teachers and peers, although some feel burdened by some things they do not understand and administrative constraints in teaching.

The change from the 2013 curriculum to the Merdeka Curriculum has many impacts on all elements of education. The implementation of the curriculum in schools is influenced by

several factors including support from school leaders, internal teacher support, and peers. (Jamjemah et al., 2022). Based on these three factors, individual teachers are known to determine the success of curriculum implementation in schools. Although an institution has good potential, if teachers do not carry out their duties effectively, then curriculum implementation cannot achieve optimal results. (Tiara & Sari, 2019).

Internal teacher support and teacher motivation at the Entikong Border State Junior High School in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum are still very lacking. Teachers have limited understanding and feel that it takes longer to understand the new curriculum. Teachers compare the Merdeka Curriculum with the 2013 curriculum, teachers feel that the administrative burden in the Merdeka Curriculum is increasing and causes time constraints for teachers. However, teachers support the Merdeka Curriculum to be developed because of the development of the times and technology, but teachers need regular and massive training. This matter is further strengthened by the statement of the deputy curriculum who said that teachers have difficulty in designing lessons due to reduced intracurricular hours.

School readiness is also an influence on teacher perceptions in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. To ensure school readiness in dealing with curriculum changes, two basic aspects must be considered: teachers who have good abilities and are supported by adequate facilities and infrastructure. (Puspitasari et al., 2019). When teachers have a positive perception of the readiness of the school where they teach to be ready to implement the Merdeka Curriculum, teachers will have motivation for self-development. Science teachers at Entikong Border State Junior High School have ambiguous feelings about the school's readiness to implement the Merdeka Curriculum. Some teachers said that they were not fully ready, but had to be ready because of the demands and obligations imposed by the government. Teachers admit that resources and infrastructure are not fully ready, but teachers have participated in training and tried to solidify their understanding. However, some teachers from other schools said they were ready because they had attended training and had sufficient school facilities. This perception was built because the school held training before the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and always tried to provide the needs of teachers in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum.

Teachers' good perceptions of the Merdeka Curriculum can also be present due to the support and cooperation between teachers in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. The Subject Teacher Conference in subrayon 8 is one of the main factors in supporting teachers in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. The teacher group regularly discusses the Merdeka Curriculum, from analysing learning objectives to making ATP, as well as discussing differentiated learning. Teachers can share experiences and share stories in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum.

The implementation of an Merdeka curriculum is inseparable from the feelings of the actors in implementing it, including teachers. Analysis of questionnaires and interviews found that most teachers were happy with the learner-centred approach that involved the active role of teachers and peers. However, many also feel burdened by several things, such as not fully understanding the concept of an Merdeka curriculum, administrative constraints, and additional tasks assigned. Some regarded curriculum changes as normal because they had experienced them many times, but still felt the need to adapt quickly. While some found the new experience helpful, the administrative burden and lack of understanding of the teaching modules were a challenge. Teachers also found it difficult especially due to the lack of technological mastery among senior teachers. Overall, although the majority felt happy, the feeling of burden remained due to the administrative complexity and the demand for rapid adaptation. Teacher cognition and conation are strongly influenced by teacher affection. Teachers' internal support has an impact on teachers' desire to develop themselves. In addition, the feeling of teachers

who feel that their administrative burden has increased affects the implementation of the merdeka curriculum.

Entikong Border State Junior High School Science Teacher's Conation in Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum

The conation aspect is the result of the cognition aspect and the affection aspect which is manifested in the form of skills and individual abilities in implementing the perceived object. In the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum, the ability of teachers is vital in carrying out the concept of an Merdeka curriculum in learning and developing teacher competence.

Konasi or skill, although conceptually this aspect has a consistent nature over the other two aspects, but some research results often manifest this aspect very differently and depends on the conditions of the surrounding situation. Conation can also be defined as a tendency to act towards certain objects, such as students' attitudes towards subjects and attitudes towards their profession (Sudjana, 2011). Thus, it is important to have knowledge of the relevance of the conation aspect of teachers in implementing an Merdeka curriculum to determine the success of implementing an Merdeka curriculum.

Table 7. Perception Questionnaire Results from the Conation Aspect

Indicators	Results
Ability to make TP and reduce to ATP	How to reduce learning objectives (TP) to flow of learning objectives (ATP) by adjusting competencies and content based on learning outcomes (CP) and student needs, some still find it difficult in the process.
Ability to create teaching modules	While some teachers have tried or created teaching modules, many face difficulties especially in creating learning models or strategies and the lack of clear guidelines.
Ability to create initial, formative, and summative assessments	Teachers face various obstacles in making assessments, including preparing questions, mapping students' interests and talents, time constraints, lack of understanding, and difficulties in determining the right instrument to measure students' abilities.
Ability to implement differentiated learning	Some teachers have tried to implement learning strategies that are tailored to learners' talents and interests, despite facing obstacles such as time constraints, while others have never implemented them.
Project Activity Strengthening the Profile of Pancasila Students	Have implemented P5 entrepreneurship, democratic voice, and sustainable lifestyle through concrete practices such as plant cultivation, student council election, and local processed product making.
Teacher activity in accessing the teaching freedom platform	Have accessed various features in PMM, including updates, inspiring videos, self-paced training, learning commons, and e-performance, to support their learning and professional development.

Ability to design new paradigm learning

Teachers admit that they still face difficulties in implementing the new learning paradigm.

Ability to reflect on learning

Most teachers reflect on learning at the beginning, during and at the end of the lesson using techniques such as direct questioning, making personal notes or journals, and evaluating students' learning processes and outcomes.

In Merdeka Curriculum learning, learning objectives and the flow of learning objectives are fundamental components in classroom learning. In the Merdeka Curriculum, the flow of learning objectives is generated from analysing the learning outcomes (CP) that have been provided by the government in each subject. This long and complex stage requires teacher skills in analysing and creating a flow of learning objectives according to the characteristics of the subject and student needs. The results of questionnaires and interviews stated that the making of learning objectives (TP) and the flow of learning objectives (ATP) for science teachers in Entikong Border State Junior High School was facilitated by MGMP. Teachers receive socialisation and training at MGMP to develop ATP, the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum learning in all schools uses the ATP from MGMP which is adjusted to each school. However, teachers personally said that the ability to make a flow of learning objectives is still very low, especially analysing CP and reducing it to TP.

No less important skill in implementing Merdeka Curriculum learning is the teacher's ability to prepare teaching modules. Analysis of the interview results stated that teachers still experience difficulties when making teaching modules that are in accordance with the Merdeka Curriculum. The part that is the teacher's difficulty when compiling teaching modules is the differentiation and assessment plan that is in accordance with the material the teacher wants to teach. The teaching modules used by several science teachers at the Entikong State Border Junior High School are currently the result of making modules in groups at the Subject Teacher Conference (MGMP) which are then modified by the teacher. School efforts are always made to improve the ability of teachers when compiling teaching modules such as classroom observations by the principal and supervision by school supervisors.

The changes in the Merdeka Curriculum have significant implications for the measurement tools used during the learning process, which is commonly known as assessment. Assessment is known as a process that involves collecting and processing information to identify the achievement of learning outcomes, development, and learning needs of students. The results of this assessment are then used as reflection material and a basis for improving the quality of learning. (Munawar et al., 2024).. Analysis of the interview results revealed that teachers still face several challenges in making effective assessments in Merdeka Curriculum learning. The teacher's ability to make assessments is due to the teacher's understanding of the purpose and function of the assessment. Teachers only understand assessments from e-raports, so they do not have direct experience in using assessments as a learning evaluation tool. Teachers also have not used initial or formative assessments as a benchmark in learning. Teachers feel that they have limited time to make assessments, especially if they have crowded classes. The assessments used so far are the results of MGMP, and the assessments are also used late because they are only completed when the learning has started. However, in the teaching module created, teachers have tried to use diagnostic assessment through learning style tests, formative through LKPD, and summative through daily tests.

Significant changes in learning with the Merdeka Curriculum also come with the concept of differentiated learning. Differentiated learning is not something new in education, however, there are still many educators who have not practised this approach in their learning activities.

Enikong Border State Junior High School science teachers stated that the differentiated learning aspect is a tough challenge in implementing Merdeka Curriculum learning. One of the reasons is the limited ability of teachers to manage students who have different abilities and manage effective time. Differentiated learning has never been carried out, although teachers have received socialisation. According to the deputy curriculum of SMP Negeri 1 Sekayam, the school has actually facilitated various efforts for teachers to implement differentiated learning, but many teachers are reluctant to implement it. The learning media used by teachers show that differentiation has not been used in content, process or product.

All improvements in the ability of teachers to implement the Merdeka Curriculum have actually been facilitated by using the Merdeka Teaching Platform (PMM). The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) has developed the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM) as a means to support teachers in strengthening their understanding, obtaining inspiration and references while strengthening their skills in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum with a spirit of collaboration and sharing. (Arnes et al., 2023). So far, teachers at the Entikong Border State Junior High School have massively accessed PMM to adopt teaching modules, as well as participate in Merdeka training and filling out e-performance. Teachers assess that the PMM application is very helpful in improving teachers' abilities in implementing Merdeka Curriculum, especially in Merdeka training. However, the Merdeka training that teachers participate in regularly is not followed by evidence of teacher work. From the good positive perceptions of teachers towards the Merdeka teaching platform, there is a perception in using this platform, namely that teachers are given the burden of Merdeka training targets so that teachers feel burdened with limited time.

Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum that prioritises new paradigm learning. Merdeka Curriculum focuses on learner-centred learning, so that students actively participate during the learning process. Students are given the opportunity to explore interests and talents, develop strengths, and overcome weaknesses. From the results of the interviews, it is known that most teachers have never designed or implemented learning with a new paradigm. Some teachers claimed to have heard about the new paradigm, but still did not understand or try to apply it. Many teachers feel they can design learning with the new paradigm if there are clear guidelines, but currently they rely more on self-directed learning. The majority of teachers do not understand this concept, so there has been no implementation.

CONCLUSION

Teacher perception is a very fundamental factor to know because it affects the implementation of the merdeka curriculum. In the aspect of cognition, teachers' knowledge of the general concepts of the parts of the merdeka Curriculum is positive but for detailed and in-depth concepts teachers still have knowledge that is not absolute. The training provided early before the school implements the independent school curriculum and the training gradually builds teachers positive cognition and makes teachers' knowledge comprehensive. However, teachers tend to have the perception that the teaching modules in the merdeka curriculum are the same as the lesson plans in the 2013 curriculum.

Teachers' knowledge of assessment is positive but for independent preparation, teachers are still exploring. Knowledge about differentiated learning by definition is positive but cognition about the division of differentiation in learning and differentiation techniques has not been built. From the affective aspect, teachers personally expressed their agreement for the independent curriculum to be a programme that is always developed even though teachers still assess the limited understanding and time to understand the concept of an merdeka curriculum. School readiness is considered by teachers to be not fully prepared in terms of resources and

infrastructure. Teachers' feelings feel burdened because of the increased administrative burden and difficulties in mastering technology. However, teachers' affections are positive about the support and cooperation between teachers, especially MGMP.

In the conation aspect, teachers have the perception of not being able to make the Flow of Lesson Objectives (ATP) so that in learning teachers use MGMP results. Teaching modules made by teachers have followed the provisions of the merdeka curriculum although they have not included differentiation plans and their use during learning. Teachers have tried differentiated learning through learning style diagnosis but teachers have not tried to implement it in learning. Teachers are also active in increasing their potential through the Merdeka Teaching Platform (PMM) through independent training and adopting teaching tools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions obtained, the author recommends that the school and stake holders supervise the implementation regularly and encourage teacher competence through training. Further research can be conducted again when all classes at the Entikong Border State Junior High School have implemented learning using the Merdeka curriculum. After gaining perceptions through this research, further research should discuss the analysis of teacher ability.

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