



The Evaluation of Implementation Merdeka Curriculum at The Centre of Excellence Vocational High School

Abdul Muin Sibuea¹, Muhammad Amin², Bima Mustaqim^{3*}, Ginagor Tumanggor⁴

^{1,2}Electrical Engineering Education, ^{3*}Educational Technology,
Universitas Negeri Medan, Indonesia

⁴SMKN 1 Percut Sei Tuan, Medan, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author. Email: mustaqim.bima@gmail.com

Abstract: This study aims to evaluate the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at the Centre of Excellence vocational high schools in North Sumatra. This study used a qualitative approach with CIPP (context, input, process, and product) evaluation model. The subjects used were school principals and teachers from vocational high school in North Sumatra by purposive sampling. Data collection techniques were carried out using questionnaires sent online via Google form and data analysis techniques using descriptive analysis. The research results showed that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in vocational high schools, which have become centers of excellence, had been running quite effectively and efficiently even though, in terms of implementation, it still needs to be improved. Based on the research results, data was obtained in the context evaluation of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at the Center of Excellence Vocational School; it was in the very good category. Likewise, the input evaluation was in the good category. Furthermore, the process evaluation was in the very good category, and the product evaluation was in the good category. The conclusion from this study is that teachers must be role models for students and can inspire students to develop their creativity. In addition, teachers need to upgrade their competence so that they can continue to learn to implement differentiation learning that is fun and pro-student.

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Introduction

Education is an activity that is carried out and is always planned and should end with an evaluation activity (Anaelka, 2018). This evaluation aims to reflect on every program that has been passed and implemented, whether it is in accordance with the plan or not as expected (Glewwe et al., 2021). The evaluation also has the aim of knowing the strengths and weaknesses of the program that has been implemented so that in the future, it can minimize errors and maximize the components so that the program can run well (Carroll, 2018). The existence of this evaluation will measure the success of a program, which will determine whether the program needs to be developed, repeated, or even if the program is not running effectively, it will be stopped (McCormick & James, 2018).

Curriculum changes are mandatory and adapt to the developments and needs of the times, not only adapting to the needs of the current situation but also anticipating the development needs of user groups (Jannah et al., 2022). Therefore, a fun and dynamic learning atmosphere should continue to be developed following the times of renewal which must always be pursued (Prakoso et al., 2023). The condition of education in Indonesia has become even worse with the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic (Justine Estrellado, 2021).



As revealed by (Amin et al., 2022), research results from the Ministry of Education and Culture show that the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has created significant gaps and learning losses. Education providers must move quickly to improve, preparing the nation's next generation to be able to adapt to the times through policies in the field of curriculum (Rahardja et al., 2022). A quality education, of course, starts from a well-planned and precise curriculum so that the curriculum has a vital role in the success of education. More narrowly, the education policy will focus on the use of a nationally enforced curriculum, namely the Merdeka Curriculum (Prakoso et al., 2023).

If we look at the history of the previous Curriculum, the educational Curriculum that has been implemented in Indonesia has existed since 1947 and has continuously changed according to the times, and until now, it has become the Freedom to Learn Curriculum. The presence of this new Curriculum is very relevant to the demands of 21st-century skills education, which is full of the importance of literacy and numeracy skills as well as 4C competencies of Critical Thinking and Problem Solving, Creative Thinking, Communication, and Collaboration, which are competencies that must be mastered by students, especially in today's digital era (Insani, 2019); (Soleman, 2020). According to the Ministry of Education and Culture (2022) quoted by Azka (2022) it was revealed that based on an analysis of the last 20 years since the emergence of the 2000 Curriculum (KBK), 2006 Curriculum (KTSP), 2013 Curriculum (K13) there are several advantages of the Merdeka curriculum, including: (1) simpler and deeper, (2) more Merdeka, 3) more relevant and interactive (Lestari, 2023); (Wiguna & Tristianingrat, 2022).

Evaluation is an essential part of the educational curriculum. With evaluation, we get an overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum developed in schools (Purwaningsih & Dardjito, 2021). The success of an educational process is determined by a curriculum in which all the components in it are well-planned (Erdogan & Mede, 2021). Therefore, schools/educational institutions are required to mobilize all their potential, assets, and resources to make it successful. According to the explanation of (Puspitasari et al., 2023), which explains that curriculum development is not only focused on the theoretical field but must also be reflected in the practical field.

The curriculum is dynamic, changing from time to time according to changing times and dynamic communities (Fussell & Truong, 2022). Curriculum development is a must to improve the development and growth of students (Shava et al., 2020). Therefore, several curriculum components, which include structure, objectives, content, methods, and evaluation in the curriculum itself, must be developed in the learning process to achieve educational goals (Adam & Wahdiah, 2023). Evaluation of the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum in the school environment is very important to analyze the goals, benefits, impacts, successes, and obstacles, as well as strategies as efforts that must be made to overcome obstacles arising from the current implementation of the Merdeka curriculum (Damayanti & Muhroji, 2022). North Sumatra has a substantial number of vocational schools registered in the Center of Excellence Vocational School. With many schools having adopted this curriculum and reached its third year of implementation, the region provides an ideal context to evaluate the impact and success of the Independent Curriculum. Furthermore, focusing on vocational schools specializing in the field of electrical power installation offers significant advantages. This is because the curriculum can be tested in a highly relevant environment, allowing for more in-depth research and a focus on students' progress and success in this field (Nur, 2021). Additionally, an evaluation in a region with a strong demand for electrical power installation jobs can provide valuable insights into how well the curriculum prepares students for relevant careers in the area (Arofah, 2021). Thus, this



research in North Sumatra is the right choice to investigate the effectiveness and impact of the Independent Curriculum, especially in the context of vocational education and highly specific skills (Sunawardhani & Casmudi, 2022). The evaluation model used in this study is the CIPP model evaluation, which evaluates the curriculum from context, input, process, and product (outcome) aspects (Darma, 2019). Through the evaluation of the CIPP model, it is hoped to help gather information about the effectiveness of implementing the Merdeka curriculum in Vocational High Schools.

Research Method

This study used a qualitative approach with the CIPP evaluation model (Context, Input, Process, Product). The purpose of using a qualitative descriptive method in this research is to make a systematic description of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum with the CIPP evaluation model for the 2022-2023 school year in vocational high schools (Sibuea et al., 2021); (Sugiyono, 2015). The subjects used were school principals and teachers from vocational high schools in North Sumatra by purposive sampling, which are objects of people who understand and master the topic of the problem under study. The registered vocational high schools become centers of excellence that have used the Merdeka Curriculum in the 2022-2023 school year. However, its implementation was being carried out in stages only for grades X and XI.

The data collection technique was carried out by distributing questionnaires to respondents via Google Forms with a question instrument accompanied by alternative answers related to the research topic. There were 15 questions divided into sub-variables in the CIPP evaluation model including 4 context evaluation questions, 4 input evaluation questions, 3 process evaluation questions and 3 product evaluation questions as well as 1 question to identify obstacles and 1 question to identify efforts that must be made to expedite the program. The collected questionnaire data was then processed using the Microsoft Excel application and analyzed by descriptive with context, input, process, and product. After that, the data analysis results would be described based on the following rating scale categories:

Table 1. Rating Scale Categories (Purwanto, 2020)

| Percentage Scale | Category |
|------------------|-----------|
| 76% - 100% | Very good |
| 51% - 75% | Good |
| 26% - 50% | Enough |
| 0% - 25% | Less |

Results and Discussion

This research was conducted at a Vocational High School in Deli Serdang Regency, where the school is a school of excellence in the electricity sector. In the process of evaluating the Merdeka curriculum, starting from the evaluation of the context to the subsequent evaluation, each aspect will be analyzed to find out what needs to be improved in implementing the Merdeka curriculum. Based on the results of the study, several data were obtained, which were classified according to the specified scale intervals and then analyzed by the researcher so that the following data was obtained:

Table 2. Distribution of Merdeka Curriculum Implementation

| Model | Indicator | Percentage (%) |
|---------|------------------------|----------------|
| Context | Operational Curriculum | 82 |
| | Learning Access | 83,5 |
| | Learning materials | 62 |

| | | |
|---------|---|------|
| | Learning Media | 80,5 |
| Input | Parties involved | 74,5 |
| | Facilities and infrastructure | 71 |
| | Teacher Competency | 76 |
| | Student Response | 72 |
| | Learning strategies and methods | 76,5 |
| Process | Use of technology and information | 83 |
| | Assessment and reflection | 77 |
| | Achievement of learning objectives | 72 |
| Product | Fulfillment of learning needs | 76 |
| | Planting Pancasila Student Profile characters | 74 |

Context Evaluation

The goals and strategies to be developed are influenced by the situation or background, such as organizational policies, targets to be achieved by the school or educational institution within a certain time, and problems faced by the school/educational institution. Aspects of needs, problems, assets, and opportunities will be evaluated through context evaluation to help decision-makers set goals and priorities. The purpose of context evaluation is nothing but to assess whether the goals and priorities that have been set meet the needs of the parties as organizational goals. Context evaluation was obtained by analyzing the Education Unit Operational Curriculum, Learning Outcomes, learning materials in the Merdeka curriculum, and learning tools.



Figure 1. Context Evaluation Results at SMK Centre of excellence

Based on Figure 1 shows that the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum at the Centre of Excellence Vocational School in the context aspect is included in the successful category. This success was achieved on the KOSP suitability indicator of 82% in the "Very Good" category. In comparison, the suitability of learning outcomes was 83.5% in the "Very Good" category, the suitability of learning materials was 62% in the "Good" category, and the suitability of learning devices was 80.5% in the "Very Good" category. Therefore, the context aspect has succeeded in supporting the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum. It means that the components of the context are met, namely KOSP in accordance with the school's vision and mission, learning outcomes that are relevant to the competence and scope of the material, as well as learning materials that are appropriate to the needs of students, then complete learning tools are prepared by the teacher.

Input Evaluation

Input evaluation is used to determine the potential of available assets or resources, possible alternative strategies, and the best way to meet identified needs. In addition, this input evaluation aims to determine the potential of available assets, assist in managing

decisions and alternatives taken, plans and strategies to achieve goals, and work procedures to achieve them. Questions to analyze input evaluation are often directed at solutions or solving problems in the implementation of the curriculum that has been implemented. Input evaluation was obtained by measuring the extent of school readiness, condition of facilities and infrastructure, related parties, teacher competence, and student responses to learning in the Merdeka curriculum.

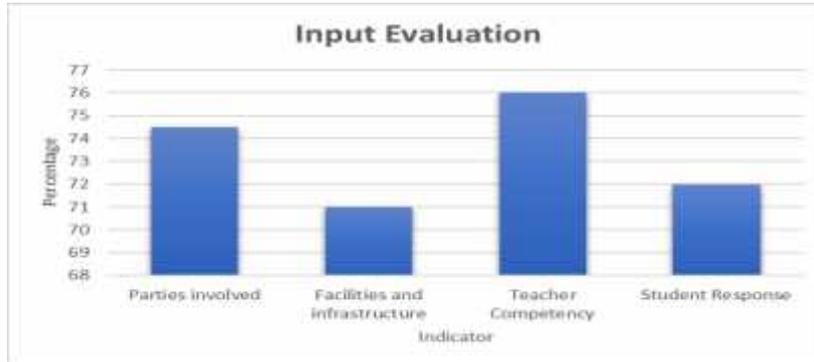


Figure 2. Input Evaluation Result at SMK Centre of excellence

Based on Graph 2, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at the Centre of Excellence Vocational School in the input evaluation aspect is included in the successful category. This success was achieved on the indicator of the parties involved by 74.5% in the "Good" category, the availability of infrastructure by 71% in the "Good" category, while the teacher's competency level was 76% in the "Very Good" category and the student response was 72% in the "Good" category. Therefore, the input aspect indicator components are fulfilled and are good enough to support school readiness in implementing the Merdeka curriculum. From the indicators, the parties involved can collaborate well in learning, and student responses in the learning process have shown positive developments and responses. However, on the other hand, aspects of the availability of infrastructure and the competency level of teachers still need improvement so that the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum can run optimally.

Process Evaluation

Process evaluation aims to see whether the curriculum that has been implemented is in accordance with the planned strategy. Evaluation of this process refers to what learning activities are carried out in the curriculum, who is the person in charge of implementing the curriculum, and when the curriculum will be completed. Process evaluation is obtained from an analysis of the learning process in the Merdeka curriculum.



Figure 3. Process Evaluation Results at SMK Centre of excellence

Based on Graph 3, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at the Centre of Excellence Vocational School in the process evaluation aspect was included in the successful

category in supporting the implementation of the learning process in the Merdeka curriculum. This success was achieved in indicators of learning strategies and methods of 76.5% in the "Very Good" category, and the use of information technology (digitalization) was 83% in the "Very Good" category. In comparison, assessment and reflection were 77% in the "Very Good" category." Therefore, the components of the process aspect indicators are fulfilled and are quite good but still need improvement. It can be seen from the indicators of the use of strategies and learning methods used by teachers. There is a tendency that still needs to be more varied. In addition, of course, the level of teacher competence still needs to be explored deeper and updated so that teachers can have techniques and methods of transferring subject matter in an interesting and fun way that can arouse student learning motivation. Meanwhile, in the assessment and reflection assessment indicators, the implementation has been carried out but not comprehensively and sustainably, so the results are not optimal.

Product Evaluation

Product evaluation is used to assess the success of a curriculum in achieving predetermined goals. The purpose of this product evaluation is to assess the success of the program in meeting the program's target needs. Researchers can provide a recommendation as a follow-up to decision-makers on whether a curriculum program that has been implemented can be continued, developed/modified, or even discontinued. Product evaluation is obtained from an analysis of the results of learning implementation products in the Merdeka curriculum.



Figure 4. Product Evaluation Results at SMK Centre of excellence

Based on Graph 4, it appears that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at the Centre of Excellence Vocational School in the product evaluation aspect is included in the successful category in supporting the implementation of the learning process in the Merdeka curriculum. This success was achieved on the indicator of achievement of learning objectives by 72% in the "Good" category, fulfilling student learning needs by 76% in the "Very Good" category, while cultivating Pancasila Student Profile characters by 74% in the "Good" category. Therefore, the product aspect indicator components are met, but some of the indicators still need improvement. It can be seen from the indicators of achievement of learning objectives that have not yet reached their maximum because there is a tendency for the assessment process to be not comprehensive and sustainable, so teachers need to reflect on learning and diagnose the level of mastery of students' competencies to improve the learning process and provide learning treatment according to the needs of students. Meanwhile, the indicators for fulfilling learning needs have also yet to reach their maximum because there is a possibility that teachers have not packaged differentiated learning in the classroom so that teachers do not understand students' learning needs and learning gaps occur.



This research is in line with research conducted by (Puspitasari et al., 2023), with the results of the research showing that the implementation of the independent curriculum was good, but there was still a need for improvement and developing the competence of teachers. Furthermore, research conducted by (Arofaturrohman et al., 2023) discussed teacher readiness in implementing the independent curriculum, which resulted in teachers being ready to implement the independent curriculum. However, there were still several obstacles and challenges in its implementation. So, evaluation is very important to carry out. It is because it is to see to what extent the application or implementation of a program has gone well or not, whether it is in line with expectations or not. So that with this evaluation, in this case, is an evaluation of the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum to see whether the curriculum can be implemented well or not.

According to survey results and data analysis, several aspects are obstacles to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at the Centre of Excellence Vocational School, including (1). The Merdeka curriculum requires teachers to carry out an ongoing assessment evaluation system starting from diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments. However, in practice, teachers do not yet have sufficient competency to meet these demands (2). Teachers are required to apply varied, interactive, and fun learning strategies and methods such as inquiry, discovery, contextual, problem-solving, project-based learning methods, and so on, but in practice, there are still some teachers who experience obstacles such as limited time and not mastering technology; (3). Many students still need assistance from the teacher, so students are not mentally ready to be Merdeka in learning (4). Lack of digitization infrastructure, such as laptops and LCD projectors available in schools (Jannah et al., 2022; Susetyo, 2020).

From the results of the analysis, several strategies were obtained that could be pursued to overcome obstacles in the process of implementing the Merdeka curriculum. Some strategies to overcome the obstacles in question include: (a). Look for reference materials and other learning resources both from print media and social media; (b). Design fun and project-based learning; (c). Make a complete assessment format and carry out ongoing assessments starting from diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments; (d) Innovate by making teaching aids and learning media; (e) Upgrading oneself by taking part in online-based Merdeka training through the use of the Merdeka Platform for teaching and technical guidance regarding the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum; (f) Utilizing the learning community in schools as a forum for exchanging good practices in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum (Fitriana et al., 2022; Idhartono et al., 2022).

Conclusion

The implementation of the Independent Curriculum in elementary schools has been running quite effectively and efficiently, although seen from the aspect of implementation, it is still not optimal and needs improvement. Through the CIPP evaluation model, in terms of context, input, process and product evaluation, the implementation of the independent curriculum at the SMK level was included in the successful category. If viewed from the aspect of the context, components are fulfilled, namely from KOSP, which is in accordance with the school's vision and mission, Learning Outcomes that are relevant to the competence and scope of material, as well as learning materials that are suitable to students' needs. Data was obtained that, in the context evaluation of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at the Center of Excellence Vocational School, it was in the very good category. Likewise, the input evaluation is in the good category. Furthermore, the process evaluation was in the very good category and the product evaluation was in the good category.



When viewed from the component indicators on the input aspect it is fulfilled and good enough to support school readiness in implementing the independent curriculum. It can be seen from the indicators that the parties involved can collaborate very well in learning, and student responses in the learning process have shown positive developments and responses. However, on the other hand, aspects of the availability of infrastructure and the competency level of teachers still need improvement so that the implementation of the independent curriculum can run optimally. Meanwhile, if viewed from the component aspects of the process, it is fulfilled and quite good but still needs improvement. It can be seen from the indicators of the use of strategies and learning methods used by teachers that there is a tendency that be still monotonous or not yet varied. In addition, of course, the teacher's competency level still needs to be updated so that teachers can teach subject matter in an interesting, innovative, and creative way that is able to arouse student learning motivation. Meanwhile, in the assessment and reflection assessment indicators, the implementation has been carried out but not comprehensively and sustainably, so the results are not optimal.

On the other hand, when viewed from the components, the product aspect indicators are fulfilled, but some of the indicators still need improvement. It can be seen from the indicators of achievement of learning objectives that have not reached their maximum because there is a tendency for the assessment process to be not comprehensive and sustainable, so teachers need to reflect on learning and diagnose the level of mastery of student competencies so that teachers can improve learning and provide appropriate learning treatment to students. Meanwhile, the indicators for fulfilling learning needs have not reached their maximum because there is a possibility that the teacher has not packaged differentiated learning in the classroom so that the teacher does not understand the learning needs of students, and learning gaps occur.

Recommendation

In the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum, learning is directed to prepare students to have spiritual character, virtuous character, and understand the basics of religion, be independent, creative, reason critically and how to apply it in everyday life. In addition, through the implementation of this independent curriculum, it is hoped that in the future teachers can become role models for students and can inspire students to develop their creativity. Therefore, teachers need to upgrade their competence so they can continue to learn to implement differentiated learning, fun learning, and pro-student learning. This is none other than improving the learning process and increasing the achievement of learning objectives in the independent curriculum so that it can produce students who have the character of a Pancasila student profile and produce lifelong learners as a process of strengthening character as well as providing opportunities to always learn from experience and the environment around them.

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