English Teachers' Perception toward *Merdeka* Curriculum at Junior High Schools in Koto Tangah, Padang

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Abstract

The implementation of *Merdeka* curriculum brings many change for the teachers. It can influence the teachers' perceptions toward the implementation of this curriculum. The purpose of this research is to investigate the English teachers' perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka* curriculum. Ten English teachers from three Junior High Schools in Koto Tangah, Padang were assigned to complete the questionnaire about their perception of *Merdeka* curriculum. Quantitative analyses were employed in this research using liker scale approach to measure the questionnaire and calculated the average score. The results showed that the majority of the English teachers had a positive or good perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka* curriculum with average score 3,1. The teachers agree that it is easy to design the teaching module and they feel convenient using the assessment from *Merdeka* curriculum. Also, the teachers agree that the implementation of differentiated learning Project based learning link with Pancasila profile and can give a good impact to the students.

INTRODUCTION

Merdeka curriculum is formed by *Merdeka Belajar* Policy and characterized as flexible, based on competencies, focused on developing character and soft skills, and accommodated to the world needs (Permendikbud No. 22, 2020). *Merdeka* curriculum has three characteristics; 1) project based learning to strengthen the students' Pancasila profile, 2) focus on essential material, so that the students are able to develop their basic competencies, 3) flexible which means the teachers have the freedom to adapt, add, and align the curriculum based on the students' characters. It brings the concept "freedom of learning". It means that the teachers can compile,

carry out the learning process and develop the curriculum based in the students' needs.

The implementation of *Merdeka* curriculum might bring many changes in some aspects. The first change is in designing lesson plan. *Merdeka* curriculum allows the teacher to create the teaching module by themselves. So, the teachers must be able to create the lesson plan based on the students' needs and interest. Second, the change in learning model. In differentiated learning, the teachers must modify the lesson based on the students' needs. Another change is in the implementation of project-based learning to strengthen the students' character. Based on Dewi (2022), the successful of the implementation of project-based learning is largely determined by the role of the teacher as a learning facilitator. Therefore, the teachers are expected to have strategies and techniques in implementing project-based learning. To sum up, the change of curriculum gives big impact to the teachers. Also, it can influence the teachers' perception toward this new curriculum because they are the subject who implement it directly. Thus, this condition might bring different perceptions from the teachers.

Perception is a process in which someone gives meaning to the surrounding environment. It can be defined as a response provided to get the information. According to Rosyida (2016), teachers' perceptions affect how they teach in class. Sutjipto (2018) also mentions how teachers' view the curriculum can significantly impact its implementation. In brief, teachers' perception toward curriculum is important in its implementation because it can influence their decision-making. Therefore, this study will investigate the teachers' perception toward *Merdeka* curriculum.

Several previous studies deal with the teacher's perception on *Merdeka* Curriculum. The first study was conducted by Rahina (2023) who researched related to the Indonesia language teachers' perception on *Merdeka* curriculum. The finding of this study was the teachers' perception were in medium category which shown positive perception of *Merdeka* curriculum. Second, the research that conducted by Damayanti and Muhroji (2022) that focuses on the teachers' difficulties in implementing *Merdeka* curriculum. The result shows that the teachers have problems and lack understanding in developing learning instruments. Another study related to *Merdeka* curriculum was conducted by Supriatna et al., (2023) which focused on the teachers' perception toward the implementing *Merdeka* curriculum in elementary school. The result shows that teachers have a good perspective toward *Merdeka* curriculum.

All previous studies have similarities in taking the teachers' perception to *Merdeka* curriculum. Although this study also takes the teachers' perception on *Merdeka* curriculum, it still has differences. This study will focus on the English teachers' perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka* curriculum at Junior High Schools. Meanwhile, the previous researches discussed the Indonesia language and elementary school teachers' perceptions of *Merdeka* curriculum. In addition, none of the research conducted at the school that located in suburban area in Koto Tangah district, Padang. Therefore, the researcher would like to conduct a study entitled "English Teachers' Perception toward *Merdeka* curriculum at Junior High Schools in Koto Tangah, Padang."

METHOD

This is descriptive quantitative research aimed to analyse the English teachers' perception on the implementation of *Merdeka* Curriculum at Junior High Schools in Koto Tangah, Padang. The population of this study were ten English teachers at three Junior High Schools that located in the suburban area in Koto Tangah district. The questionnaire was used to collect the data with 46 statements and were analysed using Liker Scale. The results were calculated using Microsoft Excel and categorized based on the range of interval below:

Table 1 Interval Score

Mean Score	Category
1,00 – 1,7	Very bad / very negative
1,8 – 2,5	Bad / negative
2,6 – 3,2	Good / positive
3,3 – 4,00	Very good / very positive

Source: Dwipayana (2013)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data Description,

This study used questionnaire to gather the data with divided into four indicators. They are designing teaching module, implementing Project-based learning link with *Merdeka* curriculum, implementing differentiated learning, and assessment. Each statement was given 4 responses with options Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree. All of the items were arranged in positive statements with score1, 2, 3, and 4. The explanation of each indicator is given below:

Table 2 Designing Teaching Module

No	Sub Indicators	Average Score	Category
1	Understanding learning outcome or *Capaian Pembelajaran* (CP)	3,2	Positive
2	Formulating learning objective or *Tujuan Pembelajaran* (TP)	3,3	Very positive
3	Develop learning objective flow or *Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran* (ATP)	3,1	Positive
4	Planning the lesson	3,2	Positive
	Total	3,2	Positive

From table 2, it can be seen that the highest score is in sub indicator 2, formulating learning objective with average score 3,3 in category very positive. Then, followed by sub indicators 1 and 4 with the same average score 3,2 in category positive. The lowest score is sub indicators 3,1 developing learning objective flow with average score 3,1 in category positive. The final score from the indicators the designing teaching module is 3,2 in category positive. Therefore, most of the respondents have positive perception in designing teaching module in *Merdeka* curriculum.

Table 3 Implementing Project-Based Learning link with Merdeka Curriculum

No	Sub Indicators	Average Score	Category
1	Pre teaching	3,3	Very positive
2	While teaching	3	Positive
3	Post teaching	3,5	Very positive
	Total	3,2	Positive

Based on table 3, the highest score is sub indicator 3, post teaching with average score 3,5 in category very positive. Continue with sub indicator 1 with average score 3,3 in category very positive. The lowest score is in while teaching in positive category with average score 3. The average score for all sub indicators is 3,2 which means the teachers have positive perception toward the implementation of project-based learning link with Pancasila profile with.

Table 4 Implementing Differentiated Learning

No	Sub Indicators	Average Score	Category
1	Content	3,1	Positive
2	Process	2,8	Positive
3	Product	2,9	Positive
4	Learning environment	3	Positive
	Total	2,9	Positive

From table 4, it can be seen the highest score is sub indicator 1 with average score 3,1 in positive category. The lowest score is in indicator 2 with average score 2,8. All of the items have the same category, which is positive. After calculating the data, the total score for indicator differentiated learning is 2,9 in category positive. It means that the teachers have a positive perception in implementing differentiated learning

Table 5 Assessment

No	Sub Indicators	Average Score	Category
1	Formative assessment	3,4	Very positive
2	Summative assessment	3,2	Positive
	Total	3,3	Very positive

Based on table 5, the formative assessment has the highest score with average 3,4 in category very positive. Then, summative assessment has average score 3,2 in category positive. The average score is 3,3 that shows the teachers have very good perception toward assessment in *Merdeka* curriculum.

Finding

The researcher drew the research finding on the table below:

Table 6 English Teachers' Perception toward the Implementation of Merdeka Curriculum

No	Indicator	Average Score	Category
1.	Designing teaching module	3,2	Positive
2.	Implementing project based learning link with Pancasila profile	3,2	Positive
3.	Implementing differentiated learning	2,9	Positive
4.	Assessment	3,3	Very positive
	Total	3,1	Positive

Based on table 6, there are some findings that can be concluded. First, the highest score with the teachers' perception is in assessment. This points out that the teachers feel convenient using the assessment from *Merdeka* curriculum. Also, the assessment in *Merdeka* curriculum are very helpful for the teachers to measure the students' achievement in the teaching learning process. Second, the teachers are able to follow each steps in designing the teaching module. The learning outcome or *Capaian Pembelajaran* provided by the government is suitable with the students' ability and can direct the teachers in making the lesson plan. Third, project based learning link with Pancasila profile can give good impact to the students. The students are more active in doing the project rather than regular learning activity. Last, the lowest score with the teachers' perception is implementing differentiated learning. This learning model can give good impact to the students because the they get the lesson based on their need. In conclusion, the teachers have a good perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka* curriculum.

Discussion

The finding showed that the English teachers' perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka* curriculum at Junior High Schools in Koto Tangah, Padang, is in category positive. First, the teachers' perception of indicators designing teaching modules was positive. Based on the data obtained from the questionnaire, the teachers have a positive perception of understanding learning outcomes or *Capaian Pembelajaran*. The learning outcome is a series of knowledge, skills, and attitudes assembled as a single unit and built complete competence (Kemendikbudrestek, 2022). The teachers agree that learning outcomes can guide the teachers in designing the teaching module. The teachers also have a very positive perception in formulating learning objectives. A learning objective or *Tujuan Pembelajaran* can be formed by finding the keyword from the learning outcome (Kemendikbudrestek, 2022). In this aspect, there are no significant problems in elaborating learning outcomes into learning objectives. In developing the learning objective flow, *Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran* gets positive perceptions from the teachers. It is done by self-designing it or modifying it from the example provided by the government (Kemendikbudrestek, 2022).

Developing a learning objective flow can guide the teachers in designing the lesson plan.

The second indicator is implementing project-based learning with a positive category. In line with the previous research, Rahina (2023) found that the teachers have fairly good perceptions regarding the project. Kemendikbudrestek (2022), concerning *Project Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila*, mentions that the teachers must follow some steps in the project. In pre-teaching activity, the teachers start the learning by giving the students the triggering question and authentic problem. Based on the data, the teachers have a very positive perception of doing pre-teaching activities, which means the teachers agree that this activity can attract the students' attention and stimulate the students to think critically. In while-teaching activity, the data shows positive category. The students become more active and they get various learning environment while doing the project. In post teaching activity also has very positive perception from the teachers. The teachers strongly agree that learning celebration in post teaching activity can improve the students confident.

Then, the teachers have positive perception toward the implementation of differentiated learning. According to Tomlinson and Imbeau (2011), differentiated learning is a teaching approach that recognizes the students' diversity in the classrooms. The teachers have positive perception toward this aspect. Differentiated learning is a teaching and learning process where students can learn according to their ability (Purba., et al, 2022). The teachers feel convenient implement this learning model and give the students opportunity to learn based and their learning style.

Last, the teachers' perception in term of indicators assessment is in very good category. Formative assessment can help the teachers in assessing the students' readiness and progress in the teaching learning process. Meanwhile, summative assessment is very helpful for the teachers in doing the evaluation. The teachers strongly agree that *Merdeka* curriculum assessment is very helpful in measuring the students' achievement.

In conclusion, the teachers have positive perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka* curriculum. This result is similar with Supriatna., et al (2023) were the teachers have a good perception in implementing *Merdeka* curriculum in elementary schools.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion that have been presented in the previous chapter the researcher concludes the English teachers' perception in implementing *Merdeka* curriculum at Junior High Schools in Koto Tangah, Padang is in good category. The final result has average score 3,1 which means the teachers have positive perception toward *Merdeka* curriculum.

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