

Teachers' Perceptions of Assessment of the Independent Curriculum at SD Plus Al Burhan

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Abstract

Teachers in primary schools have not fully grasped the concept and objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum, including the assessment methods used, which can lead to doubt or lack of confidence in implementing these assessments. The shortage of training and necessary resources for carrying out assessments in line with the Merdeka Curriculum is also a significant obstacle. Teachers may find it challenging to apply assessments that align with the guidelines of this new curriculum. The Merdeka Curriculum introduces a different approach to learning compared to the previous curriculum, which can make it difficult for teachers accustomed to traditional assessment methods to adapt. This research aims to analyze the views and implementation of assessments by teachers at SD Al Burhan in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum. Additionally, the study seeks to identify areas that require improvement in its execution. The research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive analysis. Data is gathered through observations and interviews, while data analysis utilizes data condensation, data display, and drawing conclusions. The research findings indicate that teachers' perceptions of assessment implementation within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum tend to be negative, as they still encounter difficulties in practice. This poses a challenge to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SD Plus Al Burhan, highlighting the need for better training and support for teachers to overcome these obstacles.

Keywords: Assessment, Perception, Independent Curriculum

INTRODUCTION

Education is a cornerstone of a nation's development, playing a crucial role in shaping a competent and highly competitive younger generation. In Indonesia, the education system continues to undergo development and transformation to enhance the quality of learning. One of the latest innovations in the Indonesian education system is the "Merdeka" Curriculum, introduced with the aim of strengthening student independence, uncovering individual potential, and developing 21st-century skills. In its implementation, assessment plays a very important role as it provides an overview of the extent of learning achievement (Sunarni & Karyono, 2023). However, the views and perceptions of teachers regarding assessment in the context of the "Merdeka" Curriculum are crucial. Teachers, as the frontline in the learning process, have a significant influence on how assessment is applied in the classroom. Teachers' perceptions of assessment in the "Merdeka" Curriculum can encompass various aspects, from the suitability of assessment instruments with the taught competencies, to the impact of assessment on student motivation and interest in learning (Prakoso et al., 2021).

Understanding the perspective of teachers in facing this change is important, as it can affect the overall implementation of the "Merdeka" Curriculum. In this context, research on teachers' perceptions of assessment in the "Merdeka" Curriculum becomes highly relevant. Through a deep understanding of teachers' views, educational policy makers can make the necessary adjustments, training, and support needed to facilitate the smooth implementation of the "Merdeka" Curriculum (Helwig et al., n.d.).

"Merdeka Belajar" is taken as a lesson material from the Ministry of Education and Culture under the auspices of Nadiem Makarim. However, the Indonesian curriculum has been updated three times in 10 years. There is no other way to meet the ever-changing needs of Indonesia, both internally and externally. This explains why Indonesia is striving to empower its citizens to be competitive in the modern era.

In the implementation of the curriculum, there needs to be assessment as a tool used to evaluate curriculum development. In general, assessment, also referred to as evaluation, is a systematic process used to determine the level of success and effectiveness of a specific program. Measuring learning outcomes is the biggest challenge in evaluating an educational program. Measurement is the primary reason for establishing education. Only assessments based on measurement results can be used as reliable guidelines to express opinions or suggestions.

In order to achieve these goals, this research will delve deeper into teachers' perceptions of assessment in the "Merdeka" Curriculum. By understanding their perspectives, it is hoped that appropriate solutions can be found to improve the quality of the learning and assessment process in the era of the "Merdeka" Curriculum (McTighe et al., 2017).

METHODS

The author employs a qualitative descriptive approach in this research. Qualitative descriptive research is a problem-solving process used to comprehensively and extensively investigate a situation or social data to predict or anticipate it. This involves collecting, reading, and storing various library information and processing research materials into a summary, as well as utilizing interview methods. This research was conducted at SD Plus Al Burhan in Simbang Kulon Village, Buaran District, Pekalongan Regency. The author's skills in this article include data collection, analysis, and reporting the research results. Therefore, the instruments for qualitative research are typically people or humans. The researcher's task is to consult with the responsible party to gather as much information as possible. The data used in this research consists of sentence responses taken from interviews with selected teachers from SD Al Burhan as informants. Reference sources were used to validate the data from this research. Comparing interview results with teachers to obtain accurate or relevant information, and credibility is based on reference material. The interview instrument serves as a tool for conducting interviews and data collection (Yunizar, 2023).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Description of Perception

Perception in English is "perception," which means one's way of viewing something or an understanding expressed from mental processing. This implies that perception is related to external factors that react through the senses, memory, and psyche (Masje Wurarah, n.d.). Perception is the process of receiving, selecting, organizing, interpreting, testing, and reacting to sensory stimuli or data (Parek, n.d.). An individual's perception of a phenomenon or event experienced does not arise instantly, but is influenced by several factors causing two people observing the same object to provide different interpretations. These factors include the perception target, natural factors, and the individual possessing the perception itself (Siagian, n.d.).

The word "perception," according to Gege Agus, is often associated with other terms like "self-perception" or "social perception." Gege Agus also distinguishes between two understandings of perception, namely, a narrow and broad meaning. Narrowly, perception refers to sight, or how someone sees an object. Broadly, perception refers to a view or understanding, or how someone perceives or interprets something (Gege Agus S, n.d.). Essentially, perception is an assessment process of an individual towards a specific phenomenon or object. It begins with stimuli like events in the social environment, leading to the formation of different perceptions in each individual (Nur Ahid, n.d.).

According to Bimo Walgito, there are several conditions that must be met for an individual to become aware of and express their perception. These include:

1. The presence of a perceived object: An object can stimulate the senses. This stimulation can come directly from external sources affecting the senses, or from internal sources directly affecting sensory nerves.
2. Senses or Receptors: Senses or receptors are tools for receiving stimuli. In addition, sensory nerves play a role in transmitting the stimulus received by the receptor to the central nervous system, which is the brain as the center of consciousness.
3. The presence of attention: Attention is the initial stage necessary to prepare for perception. Without attention, a person cannot perceive.

Description of Assessment in the Merdeka Curriculum

1. Merdeka Curriculum:

The theory related to independent learning was initially introduced by a figure named Carl Ransom Rogers in the book "Freedom to Learn." This theory emerged from the thoughts of humanistic theory, which argues that the learning process is centered on

the student, famously known as student learning-centered (Widyastuti, n.d.). Therefore, the teacher's role here is to act as a facilitator, not as a full-fledged instructor. This is one of the principles believed to be effective by Rogers, as he believes that good learning processes are entirely entrusted to the initiative of the students. Thus, it can produce knowledge that is fully mastered and strongly embedded in the students' memory. The word "merdeka" in the Indonesian dictionary has several meanings, namely: free, not subject to or free from demands, not bound, not dependent on specific individuals or parties, and freedom. Meanwhile, learning according to Djamarag and Zain is a process of changing behavior, both in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes obtained from experience and practice. Therefore, the meaning of independent learning is a learning process that provides freedom to teachers and students while considering the needs in line with the interests and talents of the students, making learning activities more optimal, relaxed, and enjoyable without the burden of exceeding the students' abilities (Sunarni & Karyono, 2023).

The Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum with varied intracurricular learning that makes each learning content more optimal, aiming for students to have enough time to delve into concepts and strengthen competencies. The development of the Merdeka curriculum is part of the efforts of the Ministry of Education and Culture to address the learning crisis that is currently being faced. From this, it can be understood that the existence of this Merdeka curriculum is to provide freedom to teachers and students by selecting simple and fundamentally competency-based materials.

2. Assessment in the Merdeka Curriculum:

Assessment or evaluation is a systematic process that continuously gathers information about the educational process of students. Students can get their learning outcomes based on applicable criteria (Matodang et al., 2019; Febriana, 2021). In a broader context, the policies expressed here can be policies about students (such as the grades given to students), policies about the curriculum and educational program policies, or even policies about other issues. Assessment is a recognized standard described as the process of collecting information related to a work result. It is also used to create personnel reports, curriculum, programs, and educational objectives (Priowintato, 2020; Prasasati & Dewi, 2020). Assessment or evaluation is a process of selecting, collecting, and analyzing facts. Expressing opinions or evaluating the quality of a product, program, or other aspects can help solve problems and achieve goals (Zahro, 2015; Ananda & Rafida, 2017; Elisa et al, 2021).

Assessment in the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum:

a. Emphasizes integration. Reports that include the competency values of students cover:

- 1) Topics (learning outcomes).
- 2) Curricular projects.
- 3) In the report, the project section focuses on the integration of education and

character development and competencies according to the Pancasila instructor's profile.

- b. There is no more administration for a teacher
- . Writing reports, especially, is simpler, utilizing developing technology.
- c. Focus on something truly unique and different.

Principles of Assessment:

According to Setyawan & Masduki (2021), the basic principles are as follows:

- a. Assessment is the most important aspect of learning that needs to be promoted and provides information to teachers, students, and others.
- b. Assessment must be done honestly.
- c. Auditing used in a valid way can be justified. There is plenty of information for teachers, students, and everyday people. The milestone is decisions, achievements, and learning progress.
- d. The curriculum should include various tasks, tools, and techniques suitable for the specific course objectives.
- e. Progress reports and student achievements that are simple and informative provide derivative information to students and parents, and important information needed to improve safety and education levels.

Assessment Objectives:

Diagnostic tests are primarily for diagnosis, such as understanding basic skills and prerequisite students. Diagnostic assessment is an assessment made specifically to identify the needs, skills, and strengths of students so that instruction can be adjusted to meet these needs in order to maximize student success. Since the beginning of the learning process, diagnostic tests are conducted periodically to ensure that each student develops according to their potential, and at the end of the learning process, it is determined whether the student understands the lesson just completed. The results of this assessment can be used to provide students who are struggling with more learning opportunities to plan learning tailored to the student's abilities. Diagnostic assessment is conducted for both cognitive and non-cognitive aspects. Two types of diagnostic assessments are cognitive and non-cognitive assessments (Komalawati, 2020). The purpose of each diagnostic examination is as follows:

1. Non-cognitive Assessment, aims to:

- a. Understand the psychological and socio-emotional stability of students.
- b. Understand the student's status at home.
- c. Understand the student's family conditions.
- d. Understanding the social background of students.
- e. Understanding the learning interests and styles of students.

2. Cognitive Assessment aims to:

- a. Determine the skills of a student.
- b. Specialized learning in school driven at a level appropriate to the student's understanding.
- c. Teaching organization or instruction for students with average ability.

Types of Assessment:

Types of assessment can be divided into two categories:

1. Non-cognitive Diagnostic Assessment made for:

- a. Mental and socio-emotional stability.
- b. Student activities in learning at home.
- c. Cooperation between community groups and student organizations.
- d. "Learning style," "character," and "student interest."

Steps to follow non-cognitive diagnostic tests are:

- a. Preparation.
- b. Implementation.
- c. Supervision (Yunizar, 2023).

2. Cognitive Assessment:

Cognitive assessment is to improve the ability and character of delivery. It is related to the end results of students. The assessment results become the basis for strategic learning. Teachers recommend continuing this if the research results show that the subject wants to learn. A teacher can offer special assistance to students who have difficulty memorizing material. Characteristics of cognitive assessment may include:

a. Formative Assessment

1) A method to evaluate the process of student understanding, student needs, and student requirements throughout the year.

2) Formative assessment places great emphasis on feedback.

3) Summative assessment for students themselves serves as a tool used to help students identify their potential.

4) Summative assessment for schools and teachers is possible to provide sufficient information about students to support the learning process.

5) Formative assessment can be done by teachers, students, or even the students themselves.

b. Summative Assessment

- 1) Assessment method conducted at the end of learning.
- 2) Summative tests continuously raise this issue in such a way that it continuously affects the overall performance of students during the teaching process.
- 3) As feedback for final reviews (summaries). Used to manage and improve the level of student learning activities. Used by teachers and schools to discuss their plans for future projects.

Types of summative assessment include:

- 1) Unwritten reports, discussions about school theater, productions, performances, and oral exams.
- 2) Written reports, Miss Reflex, diaries, essays, posters, exams (McTighe et al., 2017).

Development of Assessment Literacy:

Assessment literacy can be interpreted as an understanding of the principles of assessment. In this case, the author predicts conclusions based on verified data. About the preparation of lesson plans/teaching methods, observations, special student scales, and background observations. Thus, the evaluation of the matrix, program evaluation analysis, can be done in a way that is widely understood by teachers as educators (Sari, 2020). The principles of assessment or assessment can help develop student assessments and improve the quality of learning and student learning outcomes. It cannot be said that there is a lack of understanding and too much space and infrastructure in the development of teacher evaluations (Irwan et al., 2019).

Teachers' Perception of Assessment in the Merdeka Curriculum:

Based on an interview with one of the class teachers who has implemented the Merdeka curriculum, it was stated that in the implementation of the assessment in the Merdeka curriculum, there were several difficulties, among the reasons being the lack of technical guidance from those who understand the assessment itself. In addition to this, some other underlying constraints are that a teacher's task is not only about assessment but also preparing learning achievements and learning goals, where in this Merdeka curriculum, teachers are encouraged to be more creative in designing learning. It includes several dimensions and elements that must be achieved. In addition, there are several projects in learning that must be carried out in each week of learning

(Sunarni & Karyono, 2023). From the sentence, it can be concluded that teachers have a less favorable perspective towards assessment in the Merdeka Curriculum because it is perceived as time-consuming and burdensome for teachers. This is also due to a lack of training and other factors.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that teachers' perception of the implementation of assessment in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum tends to be negative, as they still face difficulties in its practice. This poses a challenge in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SD Plus Al Burhan, highlighting the need for better training and support for teachers to overcome these obstacles.

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