Teacher's Paradigm in Interpreting the Birth of the Merdeka Curriculum Policy

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Abstrak

Perubahan kebijakan pemerintah di bidang kurikulum pada kenyataannya tidak diikuti dengan pandangan atau pola pikir guru yang juga harus menyesuaikan diri. Hal itulah yang kemudian menjadi salah satu faktor dominan yang menghambat implementasi kurikulum dengan baik. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui paradigma guru dalam memaknai lahirnya Kebijakan Kurikulum Merdeka. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah deskriptif kualitatif. Pengumpulan data menggunakan teknik dokumentasi dan kepustakaan. Data yang diperoleh dalam penelitian ini kemudian dikaji dan dianalisis secara mendalam yang disajikan dalam bentuk analisis deskriptif. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa paradigma guru dalam memaknai lahirnya Kebijakan Kurikulum Merdeka adalah dengan memahami posisi dan perannya dalam mengimplementasikan kurikulum. Peran guru dalam Kurikulum Merdeka tidak lagi hanya sebagai administrator yang disibukkan dengan tugas-tugas administratif dalam kesehariannya; guru sebagai pengembang kurikulum bertugas menganalisis, menafsirkan, dan mentransformasikan kurikulum dalam proses pembelajaran; guru tidak lagi sebagai satu-satunya sumber belajar, tetapi guru harus menerapkan metode pembelajaran dengan memanfaatkan berbagai sumber belajar; dan sebagai fasilitator pembelajaran guru mengarahkan dan memberikan fasilitas belajar (directing and facilitating the learning) agar proses pembelajaran lebih memadai.

Kata Kunci: Paradigma, Kebijakan, Kurikulum Merdeka

Abstract

Changes in government policy in the field of curriculum are in reality not followed by the views or mindset of teachers who should also adjust. That is what then becomes one of the dominant factors that hinder the implementation of the curriculum properly. The purpose of this research was to find out the teacher's paradigm in interpreting the birth of the Merdeka Curriculum Policy. The method used in this research was qualitative. Data collection used documentation and literature techniques. The data obtained in this research were then studied and analyzed in depth which was presented in a descriptive analysis. The results of this research indicated that the teacher's paradigm in interpreting the birth of the Merdeka Curriculum Policy was to understand its position and role in implementing the curriculum. The role of the teacher in the Merdeka Curriculum is no longer just an administrator who is busy with administrative tasks in his/her daily life; the teacher as a curriculum developer is tasked with analyzing, interpreting and transforming the curriculum in the learning process; the teacher is no longer the only source of learning, but the teacher must apply learning methods by utilizing various learning sources; and as a learning facilitator the teacher directs and provides learning facilities (directing and facilitating the learning) so that the learning process is more adequate.

Keyword: Paradigm, Policy, Merdeka Curriculum

INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic that hit Indonesia has resulted in many changes in various sectors. One of the sectors that has quite felt the impact due to the Covid-19 Pandemic is education. In the field of education, the Covid 19 pandemic was a special condition that caused learning loss which varied in the achievement of student competencies. In addition, many national and international studies state that Indonesia has also been experiencing a learning crisis for a long time (Khoirurrijal et al., 2022). To overcome education problems due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Government has issued the Merdeka Curriculum Policy. Although at the level of implementation this curriculum is not implemented simultaneously and massively in all schools in Indonesia. In this case, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology still provides policies regarding the flexibility of education units in implementing the curriculum according to their level of readiness (Nugraha, 2022).

As an illustration, since the Academic Year 2021/2022 the Merdeka Curriculum has been implemented in nearly 2,500 schools participating in the School Mobilization Program (PSP) and 901 Vocational High School Centers of Excellence (SMK PK) as part of learning with a new paradigm (Kemenristekdikti, 2022). Meanwhile, starting in the Academic Year 2022/2023, educational units can choose to implement the curriculum based on their individual readiness, starting from Kindergarten B, grades I, IV, VII, and X (Kemenristekdikti, 2022). The main characteristics of this curriculum that support learning recovery are (a) project-based learning for the development of soft skills and character according to the Pancasila student profile; (b) focus on essential material, so that there is sufficient time for in-depth learning of basic competencies such as literacy and numeracy; (c) flexibility for teachers to carry out differentiated learning according to students' abilities and make adjustments to the context and local content (Santika et al., 2018).

The advantages of the Merdeka Curriculum are (a) it is simpler and more in-depth. The Merdeka Curriculum focuses more on essential material and the development of student competencies; (b) more independent. Schools also have the authority to develop and manage learning curriculum according to the characteristics of educational units and students; (c) more relevant and interactive. Learning through project activities provides wider opportunities for students to actively explore actual issues such as environmental, health, and other issues to support the development of character and competency in the Pancasila Student Profile. But it needs to be understood, that no matter how good the curriculum is, the success factor in implementing it really depends on the quality of the teacher itself. The teacher in the education system is the driving force behind the wheel of the curriculum. Teachers have a very important role, because no matter how good the education system is without the support of qualified teachers, the system will not function (Baro'ah, 2020). Moreover, the main assumption of the Merdeka Curriculum is giving trust to the teacher, so that the teacher feels free in carrying out learning (Fauzi, 2022).

However, often the problems found in the field are that teachers are not mentally prepared to accept changes in education policy made by the government. Even though the teacher as an educator should be someone who is always adaptive in dealing with existing changes. Besides having to be able to adapt to the times, teachers must also be able to adapt to various paradigm shifts and policy changes in the world of education (Hadi, 2020). Unfortunately, changes in government policy in the field of curriculum are in reality not followed by the views or mindset of teachers who should also adjust. That is what then becomes one of the dominant factors that hinder the implementation of the curriculum properly. Even though like it or not, the teacher as the main actor in the world of education should be ready to accept changes in education policy.

In an effort to eliminate the problems faced by teachers in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, the action that is considered important for the Government to take is to restructure or change the teacher's paradigm in viewing the Merdeka Curriculum (Santika et al., 2019). Do not let teachers interpret curriculum changes as something that is very troublesome and detrimental to them. Because misunderstanding in understanding the curriculum will be fatal for teachers in their efforts to realize the goals of the curriculum itself. Therefore, it is deemed necessary to provide a brief understanding to teachers on how to interpret their position and role in this Merdeka Curriculum. Every teacher must understand a his/her role in supporting the Government's policy which is currently intensively campaigning for this Merdeka Curriculum. Based on the background of the problems above, it is interesting to write an article to describe teacher's paradigm in interpreting the birth of merdeka curriculum policy.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research belongs to the type of descriptive qualitative research. This type of research was qualitative as a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of writings that originate from one's own writings or that of others. Description is a description of the characteristics of the data accurately and in accordance with the nature of the data itself. The data analyzed was the Merdeka Curriculum as the Government's new policy in the field of education which at the practice and implementation level certainly influences the teacher's paradigm. The data collection technique that researchers used was library literature so that the data collection method used was documentation, namely tracing written sources containing various themes and topics discussed in this research (Santika & Sudiana, 2021). The data that has been obtained was then analyzed using descriptive analysis method. The descriptive analysis method in this research was carried out by describing facts related to the Merdeka Curriculum, which was then followed by an analysis of the teacher's expected role in it. Thus not only explaining but also providing an understanding and explanation of the teacher's paradigm of interpreting his/her role in the Merdeka Curriculum Policy in a comprehensive manner.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The paradigm of the teacher in interpreting the birth of the Merdeka Curriculum Policy which is meant is how a teacher understands his position and role in implementing the curriculum in learning activities. Broadly speaking, several roles of the teacher in the Merdeka Curriculum will be presented. The first paradigm that must be understood by teachers in the Merdeka Curriculum is the spirit, which is the main essence of the curriculum itself. The essence of the Merdeka Curriculum is the freedom of teachers and students in the learning process. It is a hundred degrees inversely proportional to the paradigm of the previous curriculum which always placed the teacher as a mere administrator in education and learning. In the Merdeka Curriculum, the teacher is no longer his main task as an administrator who is always preoccupied with purely administrative matters.

Precisely one of the problems that encourages the birth of the Merdeka Curriculum Policy is that teachers are often trapped in administration, so that the implementation of learning in the classroom does not run optimally (Mulyadi et al., 2022). So far the teacher understands that one of his/her main tasks is only to prepare, compile and carry out rigid learning administration. Model educational activities like that are of course very boring because they become routines that do not direct and optimize the potential of the teacher (Egan, 1989). Unknowingly, teachers and schools have slipped in making education administration a goal and priority in educational activities. On this side the teacher only thinks about bureaucratic provisions, accreditation, grades and exams. So far, education in Indonesia is considered to limit the space for creativity and innovation of students and teachers with various bureaucratic and administrative matters (Wijaya et al., 2020).

Teachers in the Merdeka Curriculum do not follow the existing educational bureaucratic process, but what is really needed and must be carried out in the future are activities to always be creative and innovate in the learning process (English & Kaufman, 2011). Teachers in the Merdeka Curriculum are not limited to being teachers who prepare plans, explain material, but must have the intention and ability to lead, innovate and make changes (Riowati & Yoenanto, 2022). Through the Merdeka Curriculum, teachers are free to innovate and realize their creative thinking to foster students' motivation to learn independently. The independent concept in question is independent in producing learning innovations that are carried out (Suryana & Iskandar, 2022). Therefore, in the Merdeka Curriculum teachers are not only required to be able to teach and manage classes effectively but also to build educative relationships with students and the school community.

This is in accordance with the considerations of the Merdeka Curriculum, teachers are considered to know and understand the characteristics of their students best. So to build an effective relationship through learning, the teacher has independence in it. Moreover, this curriculum provides a very broad space for a teacher to develop quality learning in order to print and produce an educated generation, and can compete globally thereby increasing the quality of education in Indonesia (Suhandi & Robi'ah, 2022).

The next paradigm that needs to be understood is its position in the Merdeka Curriculum, namely the teacher as a curriculum developer. As with other curriculum, that success is greatly supported by qualified teachers (Flores, 2016), who are professionally able to study, analyze, interpret, transform and actualize messages implied in curriculum documents through the learning process (Doyle & Carter, 2003). As mentioned earlier, no matter how good the curriculum is without being supported by the teacher's ability to translate and transform it into an effective and quality learning process, the curriculum by itself will not be meaningful for students.

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum Policy encourages the role of the teacher both in curriculum development and in the learning process (Daga, 2021). At the implementation level, the Merdeka Curriculum encourages the teacher's role both in developing the applicable curriculum, as well as in the learning process. The teacher's contribution in the curriculum development process is important to adapt the curriculum content to the needs of students in the community (Annisa et al., 2022). Here the teacher as the main component in education has the freedom to independently translate the curriculum before it is taught to students, with the teacher being able to understand the curriculum that has been set, the teacher will be able to answer the needs of the students during the learning process (Faiz & Faridah, 2022).

The role of the teacher in developing the Merdeka Curriculum, namely (1) formulating specific learning objectives in accordance with the curriculum objectives and the characteristics of the subjects and students and class conditions; (2) designing learning processes that can effectively help students achieve learning objectives or predetermined competencies; (3) carrying out the learning process as curriculum implementation; (4) carry out evaluation of learning processes and outcomes; (5) carry out an evaluation of the interaction of curriculum components that have been implemented (Anggraini et al., 2022). In general, the role of the teacher as a developer can be divided into four. Four roles that teachers can play in the curriculum development process (Soto, 2015); (1) implementers, (2) adapters, (3) developers, (4) researchers (Agustinus, 2022).

At the curriculum implementer stage, the teacher only plays the role of implementing the existing curriculum in accordance with the curriculum developer's policy. There is no room for teachers to determine curriculum content and targets. The teacher's role is very limited in implementing the curriculum that has been prepared. The normative role of the teacher at the implementer stage is only as a technical person who seeks to implement whatever is contained in the formal curriculum document (Santika et al., 2022).

The role of the teacher as an adapter in the Merdeka Curriculum is to align the curriculum with the characteristics, needs of students and regional needs. In this stage the teacher is given the space and independence to adapt the curriculum to the characteristics of the school and local needs. Even though the curriculum developer has determined the minimum standards that must be achieved, further development and implementation are left to each teacher (Alawiyah, 2013). As a developer in the Merdeka Curriculum, the teacher has a wide scope in designing a curriculum. Here the teacher is not only free to determine the objectives and content of the lesson to be delivered, but also determines what strategy to use and how to measure its success (Alsubaie, 2016). The role of the teacher in the Merdeka Curriculum is as a determinant of curriculum content. The Merdeka Curriculum provides broad space and freedom for teachers in determining the content and targets of the curriculum.

As curriculum researchers, teachers are required to always improve their performance. This strategic role is also his responsibility as part of his professional duties. In the Merdeka Curriculum, teachers have the responsibility to examine various components of the curriculum, such as curriculum materials, program effectiveness, strategies and so on (Wahyuni et al., 2022). In the end the teacher must also be able to collect data on student success after participating in learning. Therefore, within a certain time it is necessary for the teacher to conduct classroom action research. Another paradigm that needs to be understood by teachers in the Merdeka Curriculum is that it is no longer the only source of learning. In contrast to the previous paradigm, that the situation and condition of education in Indonesia can be described as a class without a teacher. Children learn when there is a teacher. But strangely immediately boisterous when the teacher left

the class (Hendri, 2020). It can be described at that time, apart from books, the only source of learning in schools was teachers. In this context, it is the teacher who feels the most knows and understands the subject matter.

In the Merdeka Curriculum, a new paradigm emerges, that teachers and students have the same position, namely as subjects in the learning system. From this, the teacher must understand that he is not the only one who is used as a source of truth by students, but teachers and students collaborate and seek the truth. This means that the teacher's position in the classroom is not to instill or standardize the truth according to the teacher, but to explore the truth, reasoning and criticality of students in seeing the world and phenomena (Yamin & Syahrir, 2020). In the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, according to the platform, Freedom Learning provides freedom in learning, that is, it can be anywhere, anytime, even from any source. Especially in a pandemic situation and condition like today, like it or not, like it or not, teachers must apply varied, innovative, and effective learning methods by utilizing various learning resources. One of the sources of learning through technology (Mundy & Graham, 1991).

In the current technological era, learning resources are increasingly available to students to support learning activities. In contrast to the past, due to limited learning resources, students can only refer to one learning resource, namely textbooks, and the teacher is positioned as the main center in learning. In this era of the Merdeka Curriculum, students can get teaching materials from any source, especially Google and the internet, which provide access to many digital books, videos, or web articles (Santika & Suastika, 2022). The Merdeka Curriculum provides awareness that in this era the teacher is no longer a central resource in learning, because without a teacher students can learn independently from the internet. Especially with the internet which continues to trigger the development of technology, information and communication. This is a valuable momentum for teachers in their efforts to support the Government in realizing independent learning (Santika, 2021). With the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum like this, teachers can be said to be capable of hacking the Indonesian education system which was previously running rigidly or did not liberate students.

The paradigm that must be understood by the teacher in the Independent Curriculum is his role as a learning facilitator. The role of the teacher is not merely providing information, but also directing and facilitating the learning so that the learning process is more adequate (Zein, 2016). Today the teacher is no longer the only source of information for students. Emphasizing that the teacher now plays more of a facilitator role is intended to make the class more lively and passionate (Matiisen & Schulman, 2017). Students will be more active both physically and mentally. This will also automatically make a paradigm shift in teacher teaching from teacher-centered to studentcentered (Rahmawati & Suryadi, 2019). Apart from being a source of learning, in independent learning the teacher acts as a learning facilitator supported by professional, pedagogic, personality and social competencies with these competencies the teacher can realize the implementation and objectives of implementing the independent learning policy (Aritonang & Armanto, 2022).

As a facilitator, teachers in the Merdeka Curriculum must have a holistic understanding, that students in the 21st century are not human beings who are empty of knowledge, so they must be stacked and filled with teacher knowledge. Teachers need to provide space and independence for students to utilize and develop the knowledge they have (Bjeki & Milo, 2010). In the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, learning that takes place should not be dominated by the teacher, but is able to build student motivation in optimizing their potential (Santika, 2018).

Teachers in interpreting the Merdeka Curriculum must understand their position as learning facilitators who are able to create a good learning environment for students. A good environment is certainly manifested in learning activities that are fun, challenging, and motivate students to develop and optimize their potential (Shawer, 2009). Fun learning is learning where the interaction between teachers and students, the physical environment, and the atmosphere provide opportunities to create conditions that are conducive to learning. The learning atmosphere is fun, the teacher will never make students feel bored and will not feel afraid to involve themselves in the learning process (Nurhalisah, 2010). In essence, the Merdeka Curriculum provides opportunities for students to learn as comfortably as possible in a happy atmosphere without feeling pressured (Riowati & Yoenanto, 2022). In the Merdeka Curriculum paradigm, the teacher is the person most responsible for providing an educational environment that is able to liberate students, so as to create the expected learning atmosphere.

In accordance with its motto, that the Merdeka Curriculum provides learning opportunities that are free and as comfortable as possible for students to learn in a calm, relaxed and happy manner without stress and pressure by taking into account their natural talents, without forcing them to study or master a field of knowledge. beyond their hobbies and abilities, so that each of them (Wisnujati et al., 2021). This needs to be done with the aim of producing effective learning. In the Merdeka Curriculum, effective learning is when a student is given the opportunity to learn on their own with the aim that they can develop the abilities or potential they have on their own. (Arviansyah & Shagena, 2022).

In order to arrive at the teacher's role as a facilitator in the Merdeka Curriculum, like it or not, the teacher must fully master the learning model, learning approach, learning strategies, and learning methods. Because this will help teachers realize the goals of the Merdeka Curriculum. Collaborative, innovative and experimental learning models are needed by teachers in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum (Khatimah et al., 2022). The learning model that is considered appropriate for optimizing the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is projectbased learning or project-based learning. Project based learning or project based learning is a learner-centered learning model to conduct an in-depth investigation of a topic (Krajcik & Blumenfeld, 2006). Learners actively and constructively deepen learning with a research-based approach to problems and questions that are weighty, real, and relevant (Susanty, 2020). For the learning approach that must be used by the teacher to interpret the Merdeka Curriculum is a student centered approach. The educational paradigm has changed from being teacher-centered to student-centered (Faiz & Faridah, 2022). Learning provided by teachers is also expected to actively and proactively develop and encourage other educators to implement student-centered learning (Setiyaningsih & Wiryanto, 2022). As for the learning strategies that must be applied by the teacher to achieve learning objectives effectively and efficiently are exposition-discovery learning and group-individual learning (Sudrajat, 2008).

The discovery learning strategy is very much applied by teachers in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. Because discovery learning learning strategies are centered on student activities (Hammer, 2012), Learning materials are sought and found by students themselves through various activities, so that the teacher's task is more as a facilitator and guide for students (Rahim, 2020). The purpose of discovery learning is to build knowledge by means of independent learning (Triastuti et al., 2015). The group-individual learning strategy is very suitable to be applied to support the success of learning in the Merdeka Curriculum. Individual learning strategies are carried out by students to build their independence in learning. The speed, slowness and success of students is largely determined by the individual abilities of the students concerned (Rahim, 2020). Group learning also encourages students to collaborate in solving problems encountered in learning (Doymus, 2007). The learning methods used to implement or realize plans that have been prepared in the form of real and practical activities to achieve goals are debate, brainstorming, discussion, symposium and similar methods compared to the lecture method.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that the teacher's paradigm in interpreting the birth of the Merdeka Curriculum Policy is to understand its position and role in implementing the curriculum. The role of the teacher in the Merdeka Curriculum is no longer as a mere administrator whose daily life is preoccupied with administrative tasks; the teacher as a curriculum developer is tasked with analyzing, interpreting and developing the curriculum in learning; the teacher is no longer the only source of learning but the teacher must apply learning methods by utilizing various learning resources. In this case the teacher gives freedom in learning, that is, it can be anywhere, anytime, even from any source; and as a learning facilitator the teacher directs and provides learning facilities (directing and facilitating the learning) so that the learning process is more adequate.

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