

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Research Background

Education is one of the most important factors in determining the quality of human resources and the progress of a nation. The educational process can give birth to creative and innovative ideas in the dynamics of the times. The right education policy will emerge through the application of the applied curriculum because "the curriculum is the heart of education" which determines the continuation of education (Munandar, 2017). According to Law Number 20 of 2003, "curriculum is a set of learning plans related to the objectives, content, teaching materials and methods used and used as guidelines in organizing learning activities to achieve a national education goal".

In addition, in the process of implementing the curriculum and the learning and learning process for students in schools, the role of teachers is one of the important factors, as a determinant of curriculum implementation and to educate the nation's children. Teachers are all people who have authority and are responsible for guiding and nurturing students (Hamid, 2017). For this reason, teachers must work professionally according to teacher competency standards in Indonesia. Teachers as a key factor in the world of education must certainly be ready and able to follow the development of science and technology, especially those related to the world of education. Therefore, to achieve high student learning achievement, of course, it is supported by a good curriculum, because the curriculum plays an important role in the formation and development of the character of the nation's children. Teachers as curriculum actors in the field, that teachers are required to work creatively, innovatively, and professionally. (Ainia, 2020) "Teachers as the main subjects that play a role are expected to be able to be a driving force to take actions that provide positive things to students".

Teachers and curriculum have a very significant role in the learning process. The curriculum is also not only used as a reference in learning in schools, but the quality of the curriculum is a determining factor for the success of education and the creation of quality and moral graduates. Likewise, teachers, no matter how good the curriculum is, if it is not supported by professional teachers, then the purpose of education will not be achieved. Therefore, sometimes teachers and curriculum are considered as factors causing school education failure due to the low quality of educational outcomes, morals, and achievements in society. The low quality of human resources is caused by the low quality of education, so efforts to improve the quality of education both formally and non-formally in order to produce quality human resources are absolutely necessary. One of the efforts to improve the quality of education is to develop the curriculum. One of the curricula currently being developed by the Ministry of Education is the Merdeka curriculum.

Merdeka Belajar is an educational process to create a happy and pleasant learning atmosphere (Bahar, 2020). Then the Ministry of Education and Culture stated, "Freedom of learning is freedom of thought". In his remarks, the Ministry of Education and Culture also discussed that there are four national learning programs in the policy. The four programs are the national education policy of Merdeka Belajar first, the National Standardized School Examination (USBN) will be submitted to schools. Second, the 2021 National Examination (UN) will be replaced with the Minimum Competency Test (AKM). Third, a shortened Learning Implementation Plan (RPP). Fourth, the New Student Admission Zoning Regulations (PPDB) are more flexible.

The existence of the Merdeka curriculum which is a rearrangement in the national education system in Indonesia (Yamin & Syahrir, 2020) "shows that the statement is in order to welcome the changes and progress of the nation in order to adapt to changing times". Similarly, Education Minister Nadiem Makarim stated that "education reform cannot be carried out solely using an administrative approach, but must carry out cultural transformation"

(Satriawan et al., 2022). This is also in line with the opinion that "the concept of Free Learning can then be accepted considering the vision and mission of Indonesian Education in the future for the creation of quality humans who are able to compete in various fields of life" (Sibagariang et al., 2021). With this Merdeka curriculum, it is hoped that students can develop according to their potential and abilities because, with the Merdeka curriculum, they get critical, quality, expressive, applicative, varied, and progressive learning. "As well as changes to this new curriculum, cooperation, strong commitment, sincerity and real implementation from all parties are needed so that the profile of Pancasila students can be embedded in students" (Fetra Bonita Sari, Risda Amini, 2020).

The Merdeka curriculum learning system is a new policy which of course must be prepared by teachers in its implementation. Especially for teachers who are an integral part of education and an important component in learning, of course, have a series of problems that must be solved. Based on this, the author is interested in conducting a research entitled "Teacher Preparation in Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum Learning System". Based on initial observations made at SMA Negeri 2 Simpang Hilir, the school has just implemented an independent learning curriculum in the new school year, namely in July 2022, which is implemented in grade X of SMA Negeri 2 Simpang Hilir.

So far, there have been several studies conducted on the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum. For example, the journal *Education and Studies* Vol. 3, No. 6. December 2020 by Yeyen Afista, Ari Priyono R, and Saihul Atho Alaul Huda in 2020 in their research entitled: "Analysis of PAI Teachers' Readiness in Welcoming the Free Learning Policy (Case Study at Mtsn 9 Madiun)". This study aims to analyze: (1) the readiness of PAI teachers in facing the independent learning policy of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia against USBN, UN, RPP, and PPDB Zoning; and (2) learning conditions of supporting facilities in welcoming the freedom of learning policy. The results showed that: 1. The readiness of PAI

teachers in facing the independent learning policy has high readiness in the preparation of concise RPP and has low readiness in the implementation of AKM and character surveys as a substitute for UN Low in the implementation of AKM and character surveys as a substitute for UN in terms of cognitive, physical readiness, and psychological readiness; (2) The condition of learning support facilities in Mtsn 9 Madiun in welcoming the Freedom of Learning policy has exceeded the minimum standards of Permendikbud No. 24 of 2007 in quantity, and meets the criteria of good conditions in quality. Laboratory learning facilities have not been able to prepare and support the learning process outside of class hours.

Other studies have discussed the analysis of teachers' readiness in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum (Rahmawati, 2022). Another study discusses teacher readiness in implementing the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum in elementary schools (Febrianningsih & Ramadan, 2023). Another study discusses the Implementation of Merdeka Belajar Based on Student Teaching Gardens in English Language Learning Children's Classroom Institutions (Kurniawan, 2020). Another similar research is about teacher preparation in the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar learning system in elementary schools (Sinomi, 2022).

Previous studies shown above have inspired researchers to investigate Teacher readiness in Implementing of the Merdeka Curriculum Learning System in Secondary Schools. The difference with previous studies is that researchers focused on what readiness were carried out by teachers in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum learning system in Middle Schools, namely SMA Negeri 2 Simpang Hilir, where the researcher conducted research. The results of this study will show the readiness made by teachers in implementing the Merdeka curriculum. In addition, this study was conducted based on the limitations of previous research, namely to explore wider information about teacher readiness in implementing the Merdeka curriculum and teacher readiness, especially English subject teachers at SMA Negeri 2 Simpang Hilir. From the findings of this study, it is expected to be a reference

for schools to fix existing problems. The subjects used in this study were teachers at SMA Negeri 2 Simpang Hilir, namely the Head Master, English Language Teacher, and Vice Principal for Curriculum.

From the explanation above, this study aims to describe what readiness are carried out by teachers in the application of the Merdeka Curriculum learning system at SMA Negeri 2 Simpang Hilir. This research is expected to be useful as evaluation material and can be used as a reference plan by teachers in readiness that must be carried out in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum learning system in schools. This is the background of the researcher analyzing what readiness was made by teachers in implementing the Merdeka curriculum at SMA Negeri 2 Simpang Hilir.

B. Research Questions

Based on the research background, researchers formulate research questions How are teachers readiness to implement the Merdeka curriculum learning system at SMA Negeri 2 Simpang Hilir?

C. Research Objectives

Based on the focus of the problem, the general purpose of this research is to describe the readiness of teachers in implementing the Merdeka curriculum learning at SMA Negeri 2 Simpang Hilir.

D. Significant studies

The benefits contained in this paper are twofold, namely theoretical benefits and practical benefits. The benefits are as follows.

1. Theoretical benefits

This research is expected to contribute understanding in readiness for the application of learning with the Merdeka Belajar curriculum system

2. Practical benefits

Practically, the results of this research are expected to be useful for all parties including the following:

a. For schools

For schools, this research can be used as information to make creative and innovative changes in implementing learning with the Merdeka Belajar curriculum system so that the teaching and learning process can be achieved optimally.

b. For teachers

For teachers, this research is expected to be an alternative to the application of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum to improve students' abilities and learning outcomes as expected.

c. For students

For research students, it is expected to improve their learning ability with freedom of thought through learning the Merdeka Belajar curriculum.

d. For Researchers

For researchers of this research, it is hoped that they will gain a lot of experience and knowledge related to learning the Merdeka curriculum.

E. Scope of Research

The scope of this research includes research variables and operational definitions, as follows.

1. Research Variables

The research variable is the object to be studied. Variables are the object of research or what is the focus of research. While the data is the result of recording (Arikunto, 2013: 161). Both in the form of facts and data. The variable in this study is the readiness of teachers in implementing the Merdeka curriculum as a single variable.

2. Research Terminology

In this section, the author will describe the variables that will be used for his research.

a. Readiness

The goal of national education will be realized if the implementation of education at the school level (Educational Institutions) runs according to developments in the community (Pujiono, 2014). Therefore, teacher readiness is important because the teacher is someone who influences children's success in learning. Readiness such as, teacher understanding of the curriculum, the ability to compile learning tools, compile syllabi, and develop learning materials to be delivered, and others. Teachers are also core implementers in the educational process in schools who act as facilitators of knowledge transfer for students.

b. Teacher

Along with the development of education policy, teachers must be able to adapt to applicable policies. Teachers must also be able to change old paradigms by following new policies. In facing the industrial era 4.0, teachers must be able to upgrade themselves by developing pedagogical competence, so as to be able to guide and direct students to use reasoning power well. Teachers who have freedom of thought will certainly be able to provide stimuli that will stimulate students to use their reasoning power well and have creativity in accordance with their talents and abilities. Teachers have a very important role in learning. As professionals, teachers must be able to organize quality learning, which can produce an educated generation, a generation that is able to compete globally and has good morals (Murniarti, 2021).

c. Merdeka Curriculum

Self-study is a new policy program from the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (Kemendikbud RI) launched by the Minister of Education and Culture of the Advanced Indonesia Cabinet, the essence of freedom of thought,

according to Nadiem, must be preceded by teachers before they teach it to students. Merdeka Belajar is a form of policy adjustment to restore the essence of assessment that is increasingly forgotten. The concept of Free Learning is to return the national education system to the essence of the law to provide freedom to schools in interpreting the basic competencies of the curriculum as their assessment (Sherly et al, 2021).