
In-service Teacher Professional Education Program and the Implementation of Learning Tools in the *Merdeka* Curriculum

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Abstract

This research aimed to describe the understanding of teachers in in-service teacher professional education program [ITPEP] and the implementation of learning tools in the form of teaching modules, teaching materials, student worksheet, learning media, and grid and evaluation. The theory used in this research is the *Merdeka* Curriculum and learning tools in the *Merdeka* Curriculum. This descriptive qualitative research describes how ITPEP teachers understand the learning tools. Data were collected using a questionnaire sent via Google Forms because the average of ITPEP teachers Batch III students comes from various regions. Furthermore, the data are analyzed using a Likert scale to determine the teachers' understanding of the learning tools in the *Merdeka* Curriculum. The results indicated More than 85% of teachers participating in the research showed a lack of in-depth understanding of the various components of learning tools and how to apply them effectively in the learning process. The main obstacles faced include the lack of adequate training, limited school infrastructure and facilities, especially access to technology, and difficulty adapting to the change in learning paradigm from a teacher-centered approach to a learner-centered approach.

Keywords

Learning tools, *Merdeka* curriculum, in-service teacher professional education program.

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Introduction

The education world in Indonesia has experienced significant changes in recent years, especially with the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum. The curriculum aims to give students more autonomy and independence in encouraging them to become active learners and take responsibility for their education. However, curriculum implementation has posed challenges for teachers who have had to adapt their teaching strategies to meet the new curriculum requirements (Rahim et al., 2021). According to Damon (2013), every level and educational unit is expected to have a solid commitment to professionalism in their duties. They must be able to educate, educate, and build character or personality to create a better generation in the future.

The challenges teachers face in implementing the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum are rooted in the broader context of the Indonesian education system (Pertivi et al., 2022). Historically, the Indonesian education system has been characterized by a traditional teacher-centered approach, with little emphasis on learner autonomy and critical thinking skills. This approach has resulted in a system where memorization and memorization are prioritized over creativity, innovation, and problem-solving skills. The *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum seeks to shift focus towards a more learner-centered learning approach, but this requires a significant change in teachers' mindsets and a reorientation of their teaching practices (Pertivi et al., 2022).

Additionally, the challenges in implementing the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum are a lack of training and teacher professional development opportunities. Many teachers in Indonesia are not equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to implement the new curriculum effectively, and there is a need for ongoing support and training to ensure that teachers can adapt to the new curriculum requirements (Bongco et al., 2022). Responding to the demands of global economic change, the Indonesian government has introduced the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum to give students more flexibility and choice in their learning. This curriculum aims to promote a more student-centered teaching and learning approach and to improve education quality in Indonesia (Walewangko et al., 2022). However, the success of implementing this curriculum depends on the teacher's understanding and ability to implement it in learning.

Curriculum changes have caused the preparation of learning tools to undergo several changes, including in the *K-13* Curriculum, which previously contained basic competencies, now changed to competency achievements written down from several paragraph sentences. In the *Merdeka* Curriculum, there are no indicators. It goes straight to the learning objectives. There are three phases in the *Merdeka* Curriculum, so educators must collaborate with each phase to achieve learning objectives. Changes in the curriculum and several changes in the preparation of learning tools make it difficult for educators to develop learning tools due to internal and external factors. These include external factors that are used to being glued to teachers' and students' books, and educators are to be creative and innovative in developing learning tools. Meanwhile, the internal factor is a lack of understanding about changes to the *Merdeka* Curriculum in developing principles and procedures for developing themes so an educator finds it difficult or must think extra hard in developing integrated learning tools

(Astuti, 2024). There are significant differences between the *K-13* Curriculum and the *Merdeka* curriculum, resulting in problems experienced by educators in developing learning tools.

Additionally, students of ITPEP Batch III at the university, while carrying out ITPEP learning, often found that teachers did not understand the *Merdeka* Curriculum well. It can be seen when teachers have difficulty implementing learning tools through performance sheets uploaded via the *LMS*. The results of discussions in the synchronous room found that teachers' understanding of the *Merdeka* Curriculum was still lacking. This low understanding of students needs to be seen from various aspects. Therefore, research was essential to be conducted.

Literature Review

Teacher professional education

Teacher Professional Education [TPE] is one way to produce professional teachers (Afriadi & Triana, 2023). This program is designed to prepare bachelor's degree education graduates and non-education graduates interested in becoming teachers so that they can master teacher competencies comprehensively by national education standards. The goal of this program is to enable participants to obtain professional educator certificates at the early childhood education, elementary education, and secondary education levels. The TPE program is based on the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia No. 87 of 2013 Article 2 of the regulation explains that the objectives of the TPE program are (a) to produce prospective teachers who are competent in planning, implementing, and evaluating learning (b) to follow up on the evaluation results by providing guidance and training to students and (c) to have the ability to conduct research and sustainably develop professionalism.

Teacher certificates are obtained through the TPE program. The TPE program aims to produce prospective teachers who can realize national education goals and have competence in planning, implementing, and evaluating learning and conducting guidance, training, and research (Qadrianty et al., 2024). Additionally, the program aims to produce prospective professional teachers who can play a role in improving the quality of education and filling the teacher vacancies due to mass retirement. However, implementing TPE still requires many improvements. One of Indonesia's main education challenges is the low quality of teaching staff. Although many teachers have high motivation due to devotion and sincerity, their ability to master knowledge and skills is still lacking, which impacts the low quality of Islamic education and difficulties in achieving competitive advantage.

The TPE program applies several strict requirements to produce qualified and professional teachers. First, the organizing institution must be an educational study program accredited at least B, has at least two teaching staff with doctoral degrees and academic positions as lecturers, and four lecturers with master's degrees and at least senior lecturer positions. The institution must also have a micro-teaching laboratory, a field of study laboratory, and up-to-date and relevant book sources. Therefore, only a few educational study programs in Indonesia can meet these qualifications.

Second, the school where the internship participants are held must also meet the requirements, namely having a minimum accreditation of B, good human resources, adequate facilities, and status as a partner school, as evidenced by a memorandum of understanding. Cooperation between the organizing institution and the partner school is essential to producing professional teachers.

Third, mentor teachers must have a minimum academic qualification of a bachelor's degree in a relevant field of study, preferably already have a teacher certificate, have undergone training as a mentor teacher, and have at least five years of work experience. Fourth, the supervising lecturer must also meet the criteria, namely having a minimum of a master's degree in a relevant field, having a teaching certificate as a lecturer, having undergone training, and being able to carry out duties fully during the program.

Fifth, TPE participants are strictly selected by the government quota. The selection includes a study mastery test, an academic potential test, and a talent and interest test, where the number of participants is adjusted to the needs of teachers at each level of education. The final assessment is conducted comprehensively, including a written exam, performance test, and competency test, with examiners from partner schools, organizing institutions, and professional organizations. With these strict requirements, TPE graduates are expected to be more qualified and considered worthy of holding the title of an experienced teacher and immediately receive a teaching certificate. Graduates who have not worked are also likely to be immediately appointed civil servants and entitled to a professional allowance equivalent to one basic salary. This program aims to produce professional teachers through strict selection, a good training process, practical guidance, and comprehensive evaluation from internal and external examiners.

If the TPE program runs according to the provisions, it is expected to improve the professionalism of teachers in Indonesia. The positive impact is that over time, the input of this program will be increasingly qualified due to strict selection in two stages, namely when students enter the bachelor's degree education program and when taking the TPE selection. In the last few years, interest in entering the bachelor's degree education study program has continued to increase, so competition is getting tighter, and this trend is expected to continue. Lecturers and supervising teachers in TPE are responsible for preparing better prospective teachers.

Curriculum

The curriculum is a structured educational plan that is supported by schools and educational institutions, which is not focused on the teaching and learning process but rather on forming personalities and improving the students' living standards in the community (Lattuca et al., 2017). Meanwhile, according to Nurdin et al. (2023), the education curriculum is used as a goal for implementing education in Indonesia. The curriculum is not only limited to the fields of study contained in it and the learning activities but includes everything that influences the personal development and formation of students by the educational goals to be achieved to improve the quality of education (Fatih et al., 2022).

Curriculum renewal is very influential in the learning process because with this renewal, the learning process, model, or method will be more effective and efficient, and progress will be made to improve the quality of education in Indonesia so that education in Indonesia is better. Curriculum and learning are two things that cannot be separated. As a plan or program, the curriculum will not be meaningful if it is not implemented in the form of learning. Likewise, vice versa, without a clear curriculum as a reference, learning will not take place effectively. The problem of how to develop a curriculum is not as easy and simple as we imagine. In curriculum development, the components must be considered, such as objective, content, method, and evaluation components.

Curriculum implementation by educational units can use a curriculum that is appropriate to the learning needs of students and must pay attention to the achievement of student competencies in the educational unit in the context of learning recovery. Therefore, educational units are given the option to implement a curriculum that suits the learning needs of students. The three curriculum options are the 2013 Curriculum, the *Darurat* Curriculum (the 2013 Curriculum was simplified by the Ministry of Education and Culture), and the *Merdeka* Curriculum. The *Merdeka* Curriculum is a curriculum with diverse extracurricular learning where the content will be more optimal so that students have enough time to deepen concepts and strengthen competencies. Teachers have the freedom to choose various teaching tools so that learning can be tailored to student's learning needs and interests. Projects to strengthen the achievement of Pancasila student profiles are developed based on definite themes determined by the government.

The *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum is a policy designed by the government to make a big leap in the quality of education to produce students and graduates who excel in facing complex future challenges. The essence of *Merdeka Belajar* is freedom of thought for educators and students. It encourages the formation of an independent spirit character where educators and students can freely and happily explore knowledge, attitudes, and skills from the environment (Daga, 2021). In the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum, teachers are free to create learning that is educational and fun. Current pedagogical competence also requires teachers to be able to model and implement the learning process. Teachers are also given the mandate to act as a driving force to plan, implement, evaluate, and follow up on these evaluations (Sutrisno, 2022). Apart from being a learning resource, the teacher's role in the curriculum concept is as a learning facilitator where which can be supported by knowledge competencies, skills, and basic values that are reflected in the ability to think and act which are included in professional, pedagogical, personality, and social.

Curriculum changes always bring changes to the world of education. One of the changes from the 2013 Curriculum to the *Merdeka* Curriculum. The implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum is sometimes not followed by the readiness of teaching staff, so there are still many things that are not understood, which in the end, will affect student learning outcomes. *Merdeka Belajar* in Indonesia is faced with various challenges, including a lack of understanding and teacher capacity (Yuhastina et al., 2020). Meanwhile, the curriculum aims to promote learner-centered learning. Many teachers have difficulty adapting to this new approach.

Curriculum changes have caused the preparation of learning tools to undergo several changes, including in the *K-13* Curriculum, which previously contained basic competencies,

now changed to competency achievements written down from several paragraph sentences. Changes in the curriculum and several changes in the preparation of learning tools make it difficult for educators to develop learning tools due to internal and external factors. These include external factors that are used to being glued to teachers' books and students' books, and educators are required to be creative and innovative in developing learning tools. Meanwhile, the internal factor is a lack of understanding about changes to the *Merdeka* Curriculum in developing principles and procedures for developing themes, so an educator finds it difficult or must think extra hard in developing integrated learning tools (Kusudaryani et al., 2024).

There are significant differences between the *K-13* Curriculum and the *Merdeka* Curriculum, so there are problems experienced by prospective educators in developing learning tools, including not being able to read the CP well, not being able to prepare TP (learning objectives from the existing CP (learning outcomes), not being able to develop ATP (learning objective flow) from TP, difficulties in developing teaching modules, the *Merdeka* Curriculum allows for a thematic form. The research aims to explain the problems prospective educators have in developing learning tools in the *Merdeka* Curriculum development of learning tools in the *Merdeka* curriculum. The benefit of this research is to describe the difficulties experienced by prospective educators in developing learning tools in the *Merdeka* curriculum.

The education world in Indonesia has experienced significant changes in recent years, especially with the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum. The curriculum aims to give students more autonomy and independence, encouraging them to become active learners and take responsibility for their education. However, curriculum implementation has posed challenges for teachers who have had to adapt their teaching strategies to meet the new curriculum requirements (Rahim et al., 2021). The challenges teachers face in implementing the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum are rooted in the broader context of the Indonesian education system (Pertiwi et al., 2022). Historically, the Indonesian education system has been characterized by a traditional teacher-centered approach, with little emphasis on student autonomy and critical thinking skills. This approach has resulted in a system where memorization and memorization are prioritized over creativity, innovation, and problem-solving skills. The *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum seeks to shift focus towards a more student-centered learning approach, but this requires a significant change in teachers' mindsets and a reorientation of their teaching practices (Pertiwi et al., 2022).

In addition, the challenges teachers face in implementing the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum are compounded by a lack of training and professional development opportunities. Many teachers in Indonesia are not equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to implement the new curriculum effectively, and there is a need for ongoing support and training to ensure that teachers can adapt to the new curriculum requirements (Bongco & De Guzman, 2022). This curriculum aims to give students more flexibility and choice in their learning and promote a more student-centered teaching approach. However, the success of this curriculum is highly dependent on teacher understanding and implementation.

Universitas Bung Hatta holds in-service teacher professional education programs and is now entering its 3rd generation. From the teaching experience of teachers from various

elementary school areas, teachers still do not understand how to use innovative learning models, such as *PjBL* and *PBL*, which are two models that teachers can use in learning. It stems from their lack of understanding regarding the *Merdeka* Curriculum, especially teachers from remote areas. There are many problems faced by teachers including their lack of understanding regarding innovative learning models, selecting learning media, and making learning evaluations. If this condition continues, it will have an impact on student learning outcomes. Seeing these challenges, this research seeks to determine the understanding of *PPG Daljab* batch 3 teachers in implementing the *Merdeka* Curriculum in teaching modules, teaching materials, student worksheet, learning media and grids, and evaluations. Thus, it is expected this research can contribute to ongoing efforts to improve the quality of education and introduce innovative teaching and learning approaches, namely learning models that can encourage students to think critically, think creatively, and be able to collaborate in groups, namely through the Project-based Learning model (*PjBL*) and Problem-based Learning (*PBL*).

Methodology

This research used a survey approach. This approach is very suitable for research that seeks to understand complex social phenomena such as education to gain input into understanding the various factors that influence individual experiences and perspectives. In this research, the approach helps determine the level of understanding of Universitas Bung Hatta *PPG Daljab* Batch III teachers in implementing the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum.

Data were collected via through a questionnaire sent to ITPEP teachers Batch III via Google Forms to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences and perspectives of teachers regarding learning tools in the *Merdeka* Curriculum. The details of the statements given to teachers are (1) understanding of the concept of the *Merdeka* Curriculum, (2) teacher participation in training or guidance, (3) teacher understanding of the principles and objectives of *Merdeka* Curriculum, (4) understanding of teaching modules, (5) understanding of teaching materials, (6) understanding of learning media, (7) understanding of *LKPD*, (8) understanding of learning grids, (9) understanding of learning evaluation, and (10) whether it is needed training related to *Merdeka* Curriculum. This questionnaire was filled in by 129 respondents.

The second step is the data analysis. Data collected through questionnaires were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. It includes identifying key themes and patterns in the data and developing a detailed understanding of teachers' experiences and perspectives related to the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum. Analysis of the data collected in this research revealed several key themes. One of the main themes that emerged was the challenges teachers faced in implementing the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum.

Findings and Discussions

The details of the statements given to teachers are (1) understanding of the concept of the *Merdeka* Curriculum, (2) teacher participation in training or guidance, (3) teacher understanding of the principles and objectives of *Merdeka* Curriculum, (4) understanding of teaching modules, (5) understanding of teaching materials, (6) understanding of learning

media, (7) understanding of *LKPD*, (8) understanding of learning grids, (9) understanding of learning evaluation, and (10) whether it is needed training related to *Merdeka* Curriculum. This questionnaire was filled in by 129 respondents. Furthermore, the questionnaire details provided in the form of teachers' understanding regarding learning tools are in the following figure.

Figure 1. *The respondents' understanding of the Merdeka curriculum*

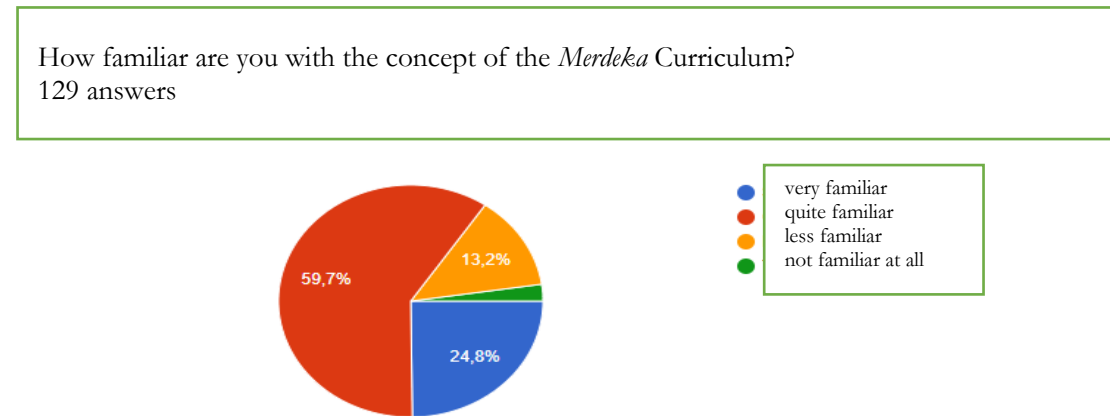
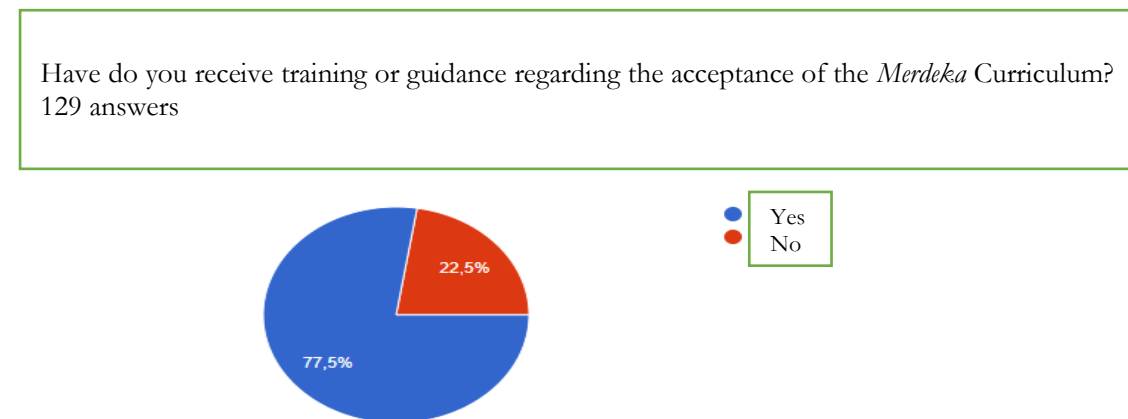


Figure 2 above shows the teacher's understanding of the *Merdeka* Curriculum concept is 24.8% very familiar, 59.7% quite familiar, and 13.2% less familiar. It means 13.2% of teachers are still not familiar with the *Merdeka* Curriculum concept, even though it has been applied in learning, so the implementation of learning tools is still lacking.

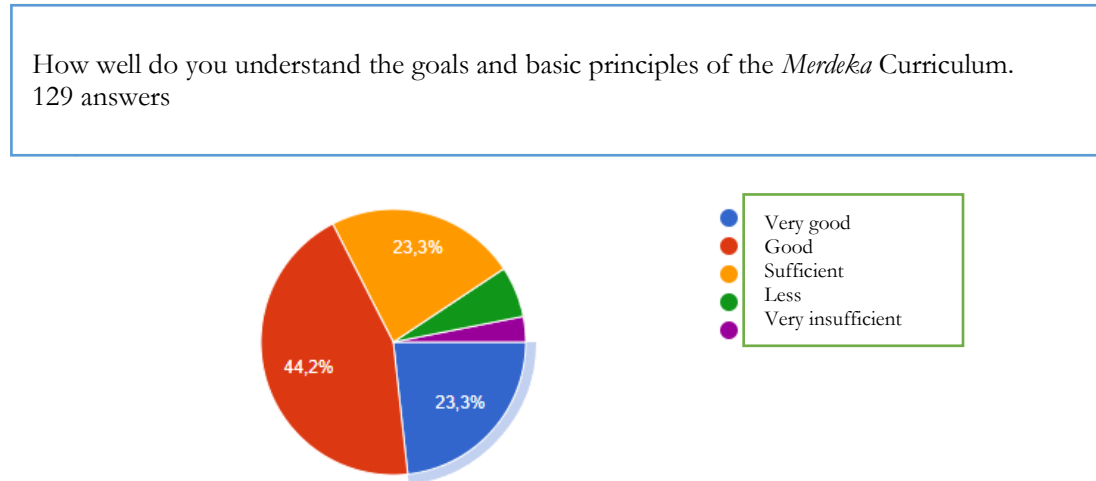
Figure 2. *The respondents' participation in Merdeka curriculum*



From the figure above, in general, teachers have received guidance regarding *the Merdeka* Curriculum. It can be seen from the questionnaire results that 77.5% of teachers stated that they had participated, and 22.5% had not received guidance regarding the implementation of

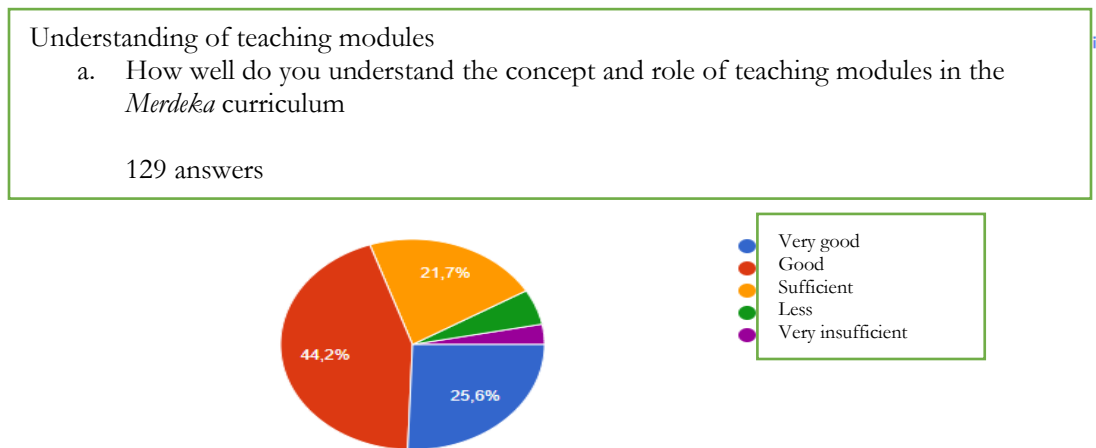
the Merdeka Curriculum. Of course, this is an essential note for policymakers because 22.5% will have a big influence on the learning process.

Figure 3. *The respondents' understanding of the Merdeka curriculum objectives and principles*



In the figure above, the question relates to how much they understand the objectives and basic principles of *the Merdeka Curriculum*, only 23.3% answered very well, and there were still those who had sufficient understanding, namely 23.3%. From the percentage distribution, the teachers should have a very good understanding of the objectives and basic principles of *the Merdeka Curriculum* so that their application in learning is more visible.

Figure 4. *The respondents' understanding of teaching modules*

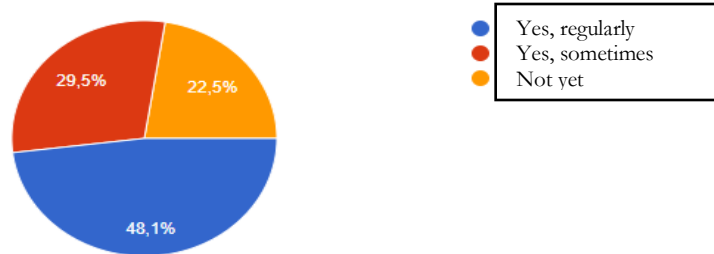


In the figure above, questions related to teachers' understanding of the teaching module are 44.2% good, 25.6 very good, and 21.7% poor. It also received attention because there were

still teachers who had sufficient understanding regarding the teaching module. How can teachers implement it if it is still lacking?

Figure 6. *The respondents' use of the teaching modules*

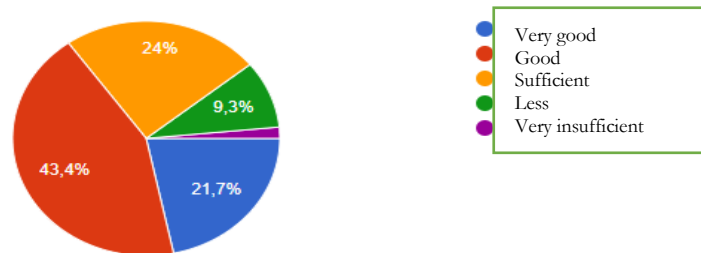
b. Have you used or designed open modules according to the *Merdeka* Curriculum in your teaching?
129 answers



In addition, in designing teaching modules in learning, some teachers sometimes design teaching modules not based on *Merdeka* Curriculum (22.5%).

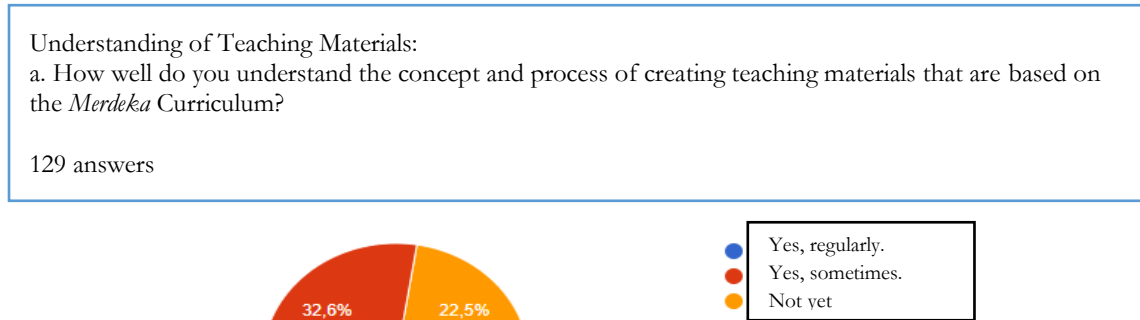
Figure 6. *The respondents' understanding of the Merdeka curriculum concepts*

Understanding of teaching materials
How well do you understand the concept and process of creating teaching materials that are based on the *Merdeka* curriculum?
129 answers



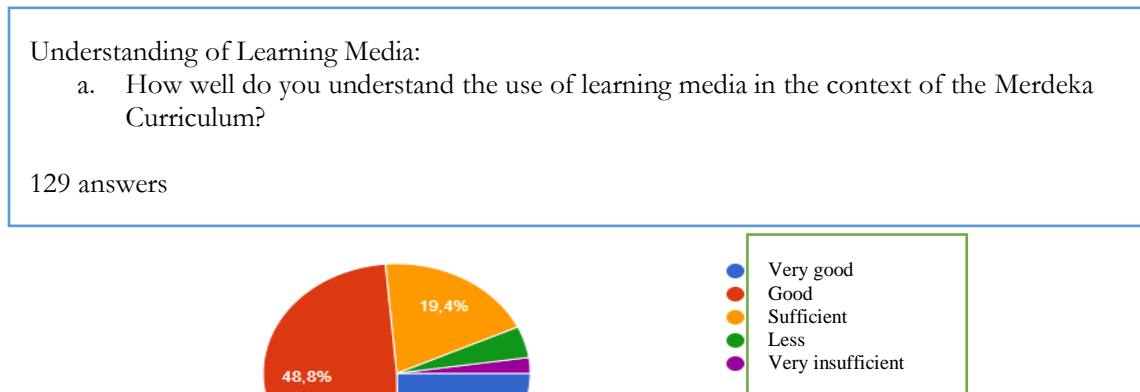
Furthermore, questions related to their understanding of making teaching materials. Some teachers still lack understanding (9.3%). Teachers should be able to understand and create teaching materials according to *the Merdeka* Curriculum.

Figure 7. The respondents' trial in designing teaching modules



The answer is also very worrying when teachers are asked whether they have tried to make teaching materials based on *the Merdeka* Curriculum that will be used in learning. In this item, there are still teachers who have not tried making teaching materials, namely 22.5%. Meanwhile, the distribution has been made, and sometimes the percentage is relatively high.

Figure 8. The respondents' understanding of using teaching media

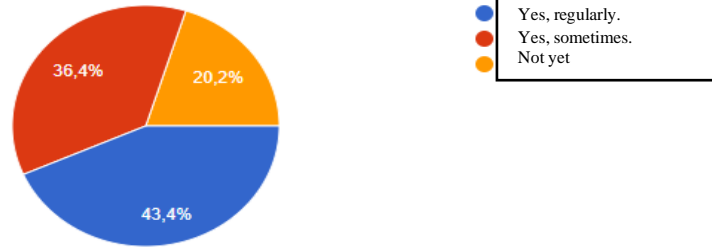


For understanding learning media in general, the answers were very good at 24.8%, good at 48.8%, and fair at 19.4%. It is hoped that after participating in this *PPG* activity, their understanding of learning media that integrates *TPACK* will also improve.

Figure 9. *The integration of teaching media in the Merdeka curriculum*

b. Have you integrated learning media that is by the Merdeka Curriculum in your learning?

129 answers



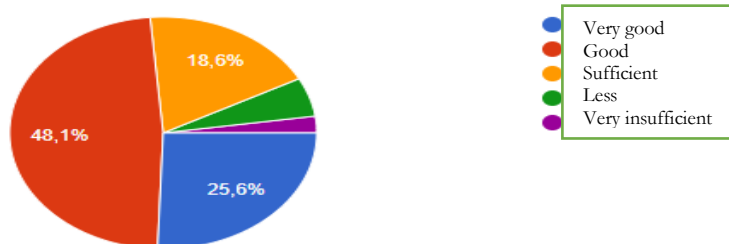
The same thing can also be seen from the teachers' answers regarding whether they have integrated learning media that is appropriate to *the Merdeka* Curriculum. It turns out that there are still some who have not, namely 20.2%, sometimes 36.4%, and those who have implemented it regularly are in the position of 36.4%.

Figure 10a . *The respondents' understanding of LKPD*

a. Understanding of Learning Grids:

How well do you understand the concept and creation of learning grids that are based on the *Merdeka* Curriculum?

129 answers



For questions related to *LKPD*, there are still teachers who do not understand it well and have not used *LKPD* according to the *Merdeka* Curriculum, namely 15.5%. It is hoped that through *PPG* learning, teachers can understand the *LKPD* well and apply it in learning.

Figure 10b. *The respondents' understanding of LKPD*

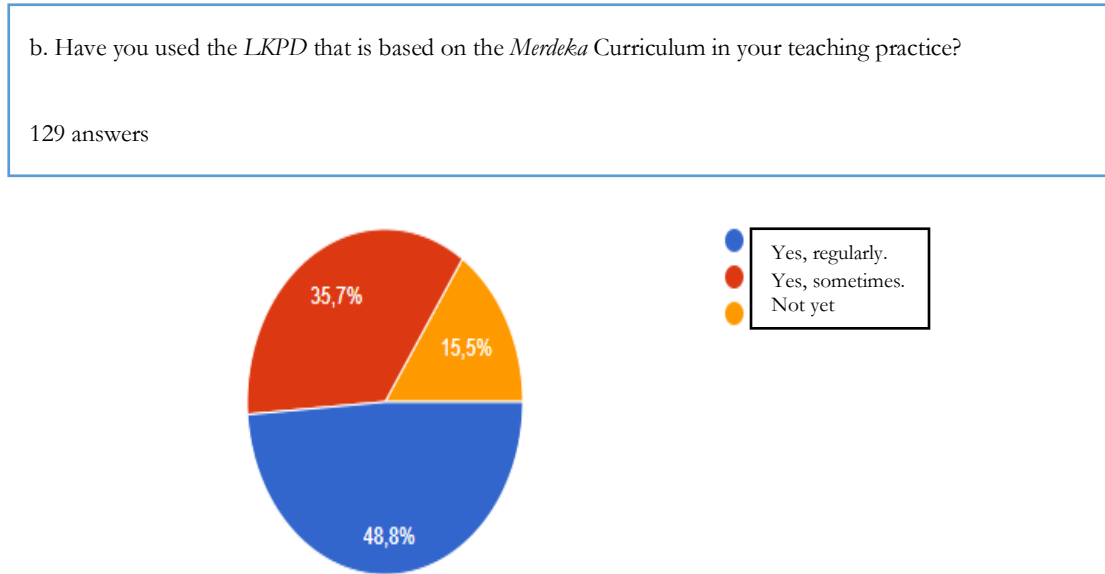
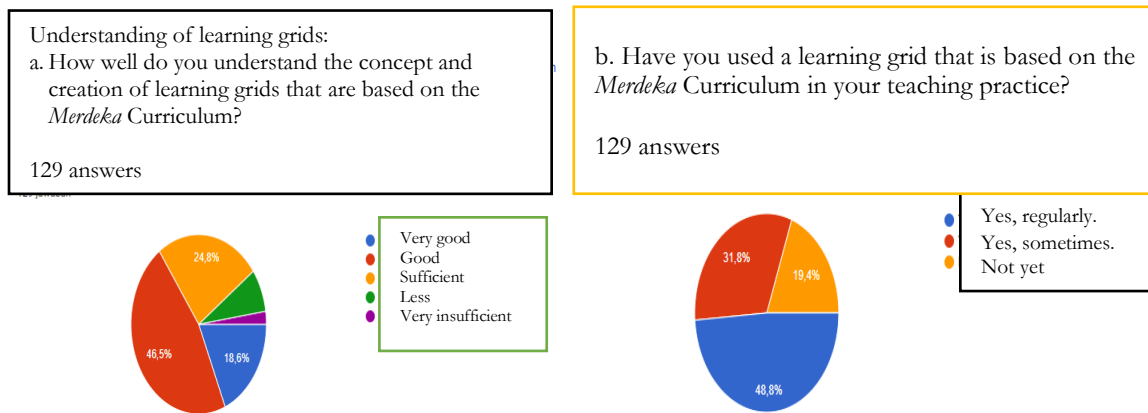
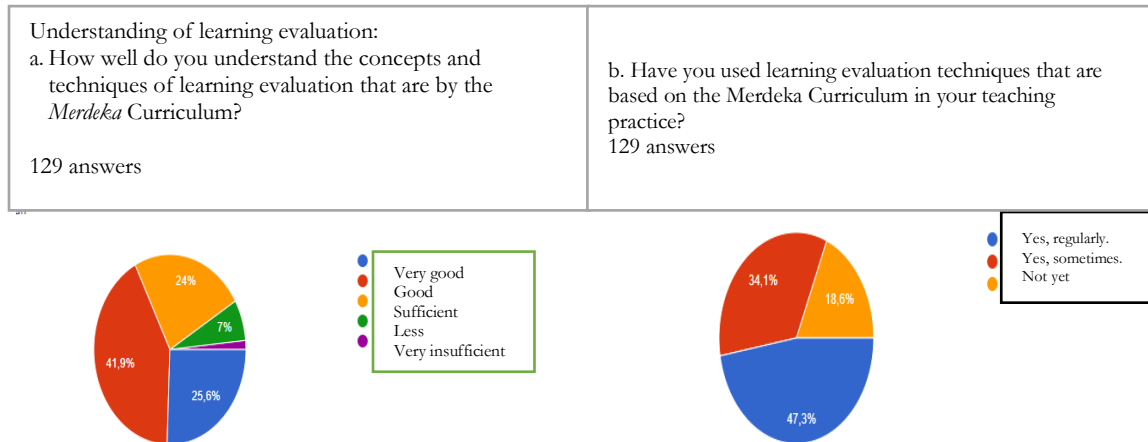


Figure 11. *The respondents' understanding of learning grid*



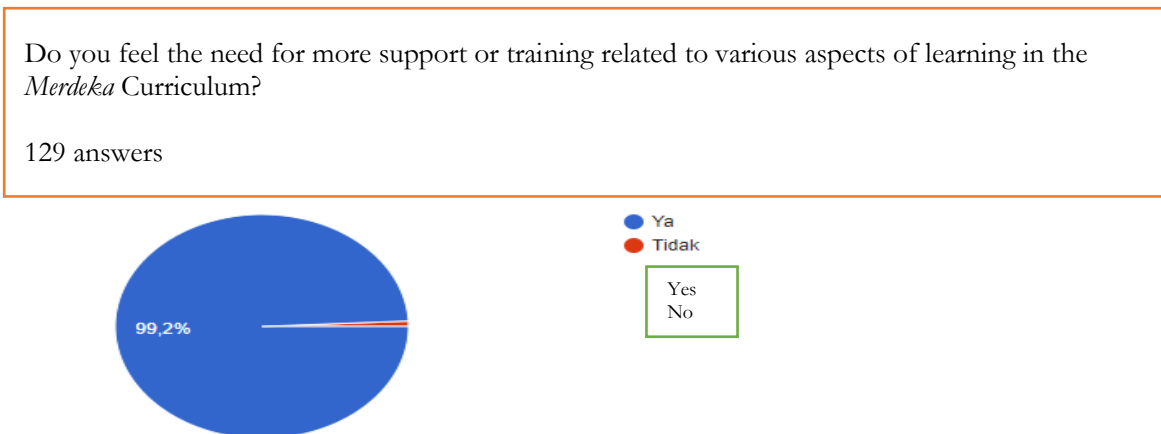
In terms of questions related to learning grids, 19.4% of teachers still have not used grids that are appropriate to *the Merdeka* Curriculum. With the word meaning, in giving assessments, teachers still use the previous curriculum grid. It should be a concern, especially for lecturers, so its implementation in the field is no longer found.

Figure 12. *The respondents' understanding of learning evaluation*



In questions related to learning evaluation, there are still 7% of teachers who lack understanding regarding learning evaluation according to *the Merdeka Curriculum*. Meanwhile, 18.6% of teachers still do not use learning evaluation according to *the Merdeka Curriculum*.

Figure 13. *The respondents' feelings about Merdeka curriculum aspects*



To the question of teachers, whether they felt they needed to get more support or training related to various aspects of the *Merdeka Curriculum*, 99.2% of teachers answered yes. It means that the government, in this case the Ministry of Education and Culture, must provide more training or workshops related to learning tools by Kumer. Furthermore, suggestions or input are given by teachers for improvements in the development and implementation of learning in the *Merdeka Curriculum*. One of the main findings from this research is that 85% of teachers hope there will be comprehensive training on curriculum implementation about the *Pancasila Student Profile* and how to design evaluations in the *Merdeka Curriculum*. In addition, 88% of

teachers stated that there is still a lack of learning facilities and infrastructure, especially for those from the regions, so in implementing learning, teachers still use old models.

Discussion

Understanding of the Merdeka curriculum

This research shows that *PPG Daljab* Batch III Universitas Bung Hatta teachers' knowledge of the Merdeka Curriculum and its implementation of its learning tools still needs to be improved. More than 85% of teachers stated that they needed to fully understand the learning tools (learning modules, teaching materials, LKPD, learning media, rubrics, and evaluations) and how to implement them in learning. This is in line with the findings of previous studies (Febrianingsih et al., 2024; Thamrin et al., 2023; Liana et al., 2023), which emphasized the need to improve teacher readiness in facing the *Merdeka* Curriculum. This low understanding is likely caused by several factors, including inadequate training and limited school facilities and infrastructure, especially in remote areas. This lack of understanding directly impacts teachers' ability to design and develop innovative learning tools that follow the *Merdeka* Curriculum principles, as indicated by Indarwati (2021) regarding the difficulties in developing integrated learning tools.

Teachers experience difficulties in various aspects of implementing learning tools. They face challenges in understanding and implementing changes from the 2013 Curriculum to the Merdeka Curriculum, especially in terms of compiling Learning Outcomes (CP), Learning Objectives (TP), Learning Objective flows (ATP), and developing thematic learning modules. As stated in the research abstract, limited school infrastructure and facilities, especially access to technology, are significant obstacles to integrating technology into learning (TPACK). This indicates the need for more comprehensive support, both in training and providing adequate infrastructure.

Although the *PPG Daljab* program aims to improve teacher professionalism, this research shows that the program has yet to fully succeed in overcoming the problems of understanding and implementing the *Merdeka* Curriculum. The fact that *PPG Daljab* teachers, most of whom have more than five years of teaching experience, still experience difficulties indicate the need for evaluation and revision of the *PPG Daljab* curriculum and learning methods to be more effective in preparing teachers to face the challenges of the *Merdeka* Curriculum. This research highlights the importance of integrating innovative learning models such as *PjBL* and *PBL* in *PPG Daljab* training to improve teachers' abilities to create active, creative, and collaborative learning.

The findings of this research have important implications for education policy in Indonesia. The government needs to improve the quality and quantity of teacher training on the *Merdeka* Curriculum, focusing on understanding and implementing practical and innovative learning tools. In addition, there is a need to improve school infrastructure and facilities, especially in remote areas, to support the optimal implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum. Investment in teacher capacity development and adequate resources are critical to successfully implementing the *Merdeka* Curriculum and improving the quality of education

in Indonesia. Further research is needed to explore more effective strategies for improving teachers' understanding and abilities in implementing the *Merdeka* Curriculum.

Conclusion

This research revealed the understanding of *PPG Daljab* teachers of Batch III of Universitas Bung Hatta regarding the *Merdeka* Curriculum, and the implementation of its learning tools still needs to be improved. More than 85% of teachers participating in the research showed a lack of in-depth understanding of the various components of learning tools and how to apply them effectively in the learning process. The main obstacles faced include the lack of adequate training, limited school infrastructure and facilities, especially access to technology, and difficulty adapting to the change in learning paradigm from a teacher-centered approach to a learner-centered approach.

This low understanding significantly impacts the quality of learning and the achievement of the objectives of the *Merdeka* Curriculum. The *PPG Daljab* program, although aimed at improving teacher professionalism, has not been fully effective in overcoming this problem. Therefore, more comprehensive efforts are needed from various parties, including the government, educational institutions, and schools, to improve the quality of teacher training, provide adequate infrastructure, and develop more innovative learning strategies for the *Merdeka* Curriculum. Increasing teacher capacity and ongoing support are the keys to successfully implementing the *Merdeka* Curriculum and improving the quality of education in Indonesia. Further research is recommended to explore more effective strategies in improving teachers' understanding and abilities in implementing the *Merdeka* Curriculum, as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of the *PPG Daljab* program in preparing teachers to face the challenges of the *Merdeka* Curriculum.

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