

## ANALYSIS OF VOCATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS` READINESS IN IMPLEMENTING *MERDEKA BELAJAR* CURRICULUM

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**Abstrak** : *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum is a new curriculum in Indonesia. For implementing this new curriculum, teachers are require to have readiness. The aim of this study was to analyze the teachers` readiness in implementing *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum. This research used descriptive qualitative and the questionnaire as the data collection technique which distributing to twelve of the vocational high school teachers by using Google form. The result showed that on average the teachers were strongly agree with all statements regarding the teachers` readiness to implement *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum, which consist of five aspects including; the teachers' readiness in implementing *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum. The aspects are; the teachers` ability to implement the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum, the ability to construct the lesson plan, the ability to apply the lesson plan based on *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum, to conduct assessment based on *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum and apply the learning media based on the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). It indicates that they have readiness in implementing *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum by having a good understanding and adequate experiences of *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum.

**Kata Kunci** : Teachers` Readiness, Merdeka Kurikulum, Implementation



## INTRODUCTION

The government has launched *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum in February 2022. It is in line with the aims of Ki Hajar Dewantara, namely the freedom to learn creatively and independently, so as to be able to encourage the creation of an independent spirit character and to be able to explore the knowledge of students and teachers from the environment surrounding (Kurniawan et al., 2020). According to Restu Rahayu et al. (2022), the learning design of *Merdeka Belajar Curriculum* also provides opportunities for students to show their natural talents with relaxed, fun and pressure-free learning conditions.

In this context, education has the goal of providing opportunities for teachers to develop learning based on the characteristics of each student and school (Anis & Anwar, 2020). The independent learning policy is also a new program from the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture which was stipulated by the Minister of Education and Culture Nadiem Makarim. The independent learning paradigm is acceptable because it is in accordance with the vision and mission of Indonesian Education, namely the creation of quality human beings who are able to compete in various fields of life (Sibagariang et al., 2021).

*Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum is a new curriculum in Indonesia. For implementing this new curriculum, teachers are required to have readiness. The readiness owned by a teacher to face the learning process gives the crucial impact on educational success in schools and teachers who have well readiness will be able to improve learning of the students (Arini & Kurniawati, 2020). In the same line, Korth et al. (2009) a teacher who are ready to learn in any condition will be able to improve teacher quality. In addition, Hanifa (2017) stated that teacher who have had a readiness to do the learning process, it can be by preparing an implementation of lesson plan, implementing, doing evaluation, and follow up with consider a few important things by the teacher. Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that *teachers`* readiness is the crucial thing for implementing *Merdeka Belajar Curriculum* successfully in school as a new curriculum in Indonesia. In addition, teachers are agents of change in implementing a *Merdeka Belajar Curriculum* such as implementing student-centered learning, carrying out differentiated learning, designing learning that collaborates with ICT, carrying out assessments according to the level and students need, reflecting and evaluating in each lesson so that further learning can be more effective, creative, innovative and fun.

There are some previous studies that relate with this study, they are the research conducted by Prihatini and Sugiharti (2022) entitled *Citra Kurikulum Baru: Kesiapan Guru dalam Menerapkan Kurikulum Merdeka*, the result showed that initially the teachers were not ready to apply the Independent Curriculum because the teachers did not have sufficient knowledge and experience. In the same line, Ibrahim, Fitriana., Agustang, P.T.A., Sriwahyuni, Elsa., dkk (2022) in their journal entitled *Analysis of Readiness and Obstacles of Driving School Teachers for the Implementation of the Prototype Curriculum (Independence Curriculum)* The results of the questionnaire indicated that teachers are quite prepared (54,5%) to execute the *Merdeka* Curriculum. It means that the teacher have ability to implement the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum, construct and apply the lesson plan based on *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum, conduct assessment based on the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum and apply the learning media based on the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Then the result of interview showed that teachers readiness in implementing *Merdeka* Curriculum averages 70%-100%. The readiness influenced by they already understand the purpose of implementing *Merdeka* Curriculum which is the content and components are according to students need.

In addition, Apriyani (2022), entitle *The Analysis Of Schools And Mathematics Teachers' Readiness To Face The Merdeka Belajar Curriculum Implementation*, The study revealed that 38 of Pacitan's 72 junior high schools, both public and private, would adopt the *Merdeka Belajar Curriculum*. Teachers were given the fundamentals of putting the *Merdeka Belajar Curriculum* into practice from planning to learning assessments through in-house training. It relates with the teachers' readiness in preparing the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar Curriculum* in their schools.

Based on the result of the research above, the purpose of this study is to analyze the teachers' readiness in implementing *Merdeka Belajar Curriculum*. Adopted and adapted from Abu, et al. (2022) in their journal entitle *Analysis of Readiness and Obstacles of Driving School Teachers for the Implementation of the Prototype Curriculum (Independent Curriculum)* there are five aspects to indicate the teachers' readiness such as the teachers' ability to implement the *Merdeka Belajar Curriculum*, their ability to construct and apply the lesson plan based on *Merdeka Belajar Curriculum*, the ability to conduct assessment based on the *Merdeka Belajar Curriculum* and ability to apply the learning media basen on the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Therefore, the result from this study can contribute to identify the teachers' readiness in implementing *Merdeka Belajar Curriculum*.

## RESEARCH METHOD

As part of the interpretative technique, which relates with the data findings to the interpretation of data collected in the field, it calls as qualitative methods (Sugiyono, 2020). This research is a qualitative descriptive study. The research was carried out in March 2023. Data were collected by distributing the questionnaire in Google form by share link. It was given to the vocational high school teachers to fill out it regarding the teachers' readiness in implementing *Merdeka Belajar Curriculum*. The questionnaire consist of ten questions based on five aspects to know the teachers' readiness with four options (strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree). To analyze the data the reseacher download the result from Google form in form of diagram, then interpret the result of the questionnaire in form of sentences.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

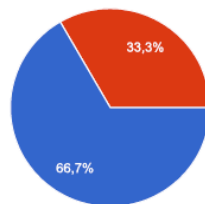
This studi used questionnaire to collect the data. The questionnaire consist of ten questions with four options (strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree). This questionnaire based on five aspects relate with the teachers readiness in implementing *Merdeka Curriculum*. The aspects are; the teachers' ability to implement the *Merdeka Curriculum*, the ability to construct the lesson plan, the ability to apply the lesson plan based on *Merdeka Curriculum*, to conduct assessment based on *Merdeka Curriculum* and apply the learning media based on the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). The questionnaire was created by using Google form and distributed via sharing link from the Whatsapp application. The questionnaire were given to the vocational high school teachers to fill out it regarding the teachers' readiness in implementing *Merdeka Belajar Curriculum*. And there are twelve teachers who have volunteered to be respondents in this study and have filled out the questionnare.

After the questionnare is filled in, the next step is analyze the result of the questionnare. To facilitate the analysis proses, the data from questionnare were transformed into diagram. The analysis will be explained in the discussion below.

### Readinees to implement *Merdeka Curriculum*

1. By participating in trainings or seminars on the *Merdeka Curriculum*, teachers have the knowledge and they are ready to implement *Merdeka Currilum*

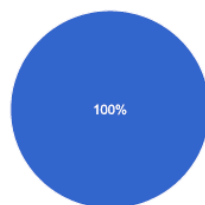
For the first statement, the data showed 66.7% teachers are strongly agree and 33.3% teacher agree. It means that after the government announced that *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum as a new curriculum that will be implemented in schools in 2023, it is necessary to socialize this discourse to school principals and teachers as agents of change. After being socialized, the next step is that teachers are expected to attend seminars related to implement *Merdeka* curriculum in schools. From the seminar the teacher has qualified knowledge. And then the teachers take part in training to prepare them to apply the new curriculum in their schools. It means that by participating in a series of activities, teachers have mature competence and readiness to implement the *Merdeka* curriculum in their schools optimally. It indicates that to prepare the *teachers*' readiness in implementing *Merdeka* Curriculum, they need to be participant of the seminars and the trainings for having the knowledge and well practice experience.



**Diagram 1.** *By participating in trainings or seminars on the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, teachers have the knowledge and they are ready to implement "Merdeka" Currilum*

2. In implementing the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum the teachers must know the characteristics of the students and conduct students center learning

For the second statement, the data showed number 100%. It indicates that all teachers strongly agree for implementing the *Merdeka* Curriculum, the teachers must know the characteristics of the students and able to conduct students center learning. Because by understanding the characteristics of each learner aims to the teacher being able to accompany their students during learning properly. By knowing the learning style, character, and intelligence of each student, the teacher can prepare appropriate teaching techniques, learning models, and evaluations and can carry out student-centered learning. In a student-centered learning environment, students take the lead in all learning activities, with the teachers only as a facilitator, mentor, and leader. Student-centered learning very effectively applied to student learning environments (Sutarto & Syarifuddin, 2013). Therefore, the teacher is truly able to develop the potential of each student.



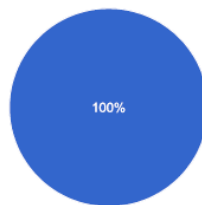
**Diagram 2.** *In implementing the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum the teachers must know the characteristics of the students and conduct students center learning*

**The ability to preapare the lesson plan with *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum as reference**

3. In compiling lesson plan the taechers must know the leraning objectives in learning outcomes

For the third statement, the data showed the number 100%. It means that all teachers strongly agree that incompiling lesson plan the teachers must know the

learning objective in learning outcomes. In *Merdeka Belajar Curriculum*, the lesson plan has a very important role because it is one type of teaching device in the *Merdeka Belajar Curriculum* that is designed in a complete and systematic way as a guide and guide for teachers in carrying out learning activities. This teaching tool is a form of implementing the Learning Objectives Plot (ATP) which was developed from Learning Outcomes (CP) and is equipped with learning steps, assessment plans, and the tools needed to be able to undergo a more organized learning. Learning outcomes consist of competencies and content. Competence is the ability indicated in the form of the verb and the content is material. After determining the CP according to the level of education (from early childhood to secondary) and phase (from phase A to phase F). After knowing the competencies that must be achieved by each student at the end of the phase, this can be a teacher's reference in determining learning objectives. Learning objectives can vary in formulation and number. It depends on each teacher. Of course, taking into the student's abilities, supporting infrastructure, school conditions, and others. And therefore, effective preparation will make it simpler for teachers to implement learning and assess what has been learned. Teachers must be able to design and develop lesson plan properly.

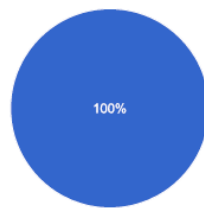


**Diagram 3.** *In compiling lesson plan the teachers must know the learning objectives in learning outcomes*

4. Lesson plan must include learning objectives, learning steps, learning models, assessment, and the media used

For the fourth statement, the data showed the number 100%. It means that all teachers strongly agree that lesson plan must include the learning objectives, the learning steps, the learning models, the assessment, and the media used. This is in line with the preparation of lesson plans, the Minister of Education and Culture issued Circular Number 14 of 2019 concerning Simplification of lesson plan. In the latest policy, it is explained that lesson plans only consist of three components, namely: the learning objectives, the learning activities and the learning assessments. Learning activities, resources, suitability for student diversity, and evaluation techniques will all be determined by the learning objectives. Learning activities consist of a series of basic learning tasks organized into concrete stages, including alternatives, additional learning, and modifications for individual student learning requirements. The introduction, core, and cover stages of the learning activity steps are written systematically in accordance with the time allotted, using active learning techniques and models. The assessment plan includes instruments and ways of conducting the assessment. Achievement criteria must be determined clearly according to the learning objectives set. Assessment can be formative assessment or summative assessment. However, these two types of assessment do not always have to be used in teaching modules, but can be adjusted depending on the scope of learning objectives and student needs. In planning assessments, Teachers must also be aware that one of the *Merdeka Belajar Curriculum's* assessment concepts is to promote the use of a variety of assessment methods, not only written test. It is done so that learning can be more focused on meaningful activities, and information or feedback from assessments about students' abilities also becomes more useful in the process of designing subsequent

lessons. And to support innovative teacher programs the use of media in learning by involving technology can encourage teachers to be more innovative in creating creative, innovative and fun learning.

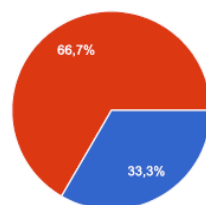


**Diagram 4.** Lesson plan must include learning objectives, learning steps, learning models, assessment, and the media used

#### The ability to design learning according to *Merdeka Belajar Curriculum*

5. Before learning, the teacher should carry out a diagnostic test to determine the characteristics, readiness, needs, and interest of students

The results of the fifth questionnaire data showed that 33.3% of teachers strongly agree and 66.7% agree with the statement that before carrying out learning the teacher should carry out a diagnostic test to determine the characteristics, readiness, needs and interests of students. This diagnostic test is carried out by adjusting what information is needed by the teacher. Does this test aim to determine the characteristics of students, to determine learning readiness, or to determine students' learning interest. From the results of the diagnostic test the teacher can carry out learning according to the students need. Diagnostic is a common word in the fields of medical, psychology, and education. Rupp, et al., (2010, p.1) stated that diagnostic means an effort to know precisely, to decide, and to agree. Rajeswari (2004, p.36) stated that a diagnostic test is a test used to diagnose the students' weaknesses and strengths in certain subjects. Zhao (2013, p.43) stated that the main diagnostic assessment is to find out the weaknesses and strengths of students and provide input to teachers and students to make decisions related to improving teaching and learning processes. Based on these three opinions, it can be concluded that a diagnostic test is a test that can be used to determine precisely and as certain the weaknesses and strengths of students in certain subjects. Teachers can use the results of diagnostic tests not only to decide the best learning strategies to apply, but also to improve their teaching experience, while this test can be utilized by students to enhance their learning. So, both teachers and students can use the information from diagnostic assessments to improve in the learning process.

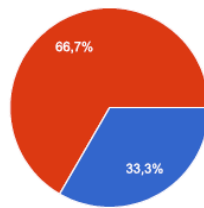


**Diagram 5.** Before learning, the teacher should carry out a diagnostic test to determine the characteristics, readiness, needs, and interest of students

6. After carrying out a diagnostic test the teacher is able to carry out differentiated learning

From the sixth statement, the data showed that 33.3% of teachers strongly agree and 66.7% agree with the statement that after carrying out a diagnostic test, teachers are able to carry out differentiated learning. It means that the teachers have adequate

knowledge of diagnostic test and differentiation learning, therefore they are able to implement it in their class. Tomlinson (2001: 1) suggested that differentiation learning means mixing all the differences to get information, make ideas and express what they learn. The result of diagnostic test can be used as a basis for teachers in mapping or profiling students so that the teachers can meet the students learning needs. Tomlinson (2001) said that we can categorize students' learning needs, at least based on 3 aspects. These three aspects are: student readiness (the capacity to learn new material), interests (such as the students interest in art, science, drama, cooking, etc.), and student learning profiles (related to learning styles whether visual, auditory or kinesthetic). According to Andini (2016) differentiation learning uses multiple approaches in content, process and product. In the differentiation class, the teacher will pay attention to 3 important elements in differentiation learning in class, namely (1) Content (input), which is about what students learn, (2) Process, namely how students will get information and make ideas about what they learn, (3) ) product (output), how students will demonstrate what they have learned. The three elements mentioned above will be modified and adapted based on the assessment carried out according to the level of student readiness, interest and learning profile. It can be concluded that differentiated learning provides opportunities for students to be able to learn naturally and efficiently with teachers who are able to collaborate on the methods and approaches needed.



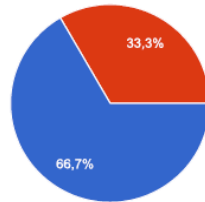
**Diagram 6.** *After carrying out a diagnostic test the teacher is able to carry out differentiated learning*

### **The ability to conduct assessment according to *Merdeka Belajar Curriculum***

#### **7. The teacher prepares question to determine student learning readiness**

From the seventh statement, the data showed that 66.7% of the teachers were strongly agree and 33.3% agree with the statement that teachers should prepare several questions to determine students' learning readiness. It indicates that the teachers agree before the learning proses, some teachers should determine students' learning readiness by giving them question or as call as cognitif diagnostic assessment. An effective way to find out students' learning readiness both in new classes and in new schools is to do a diagnostic assessment or test. This diagnostic assessment is needed by the teacher to determine the appropriate learning steps for each student. The used of diagnostic assessment consisting of cognitive and non-cognitive diagnostic assessment that can help teachers develop appropriate lesson plans. Teachers can take the cognitive diagnostic assessment to assess the level of the students' readiness. Meanwhile, non-cognitive diagnostic assessment is used to determine student learning readiness from a non-material perspective. The teacher must ensure that the diagnostic assessment is actually carried out by the students themselves because this will have an impact on the learning treatment for these students. The results of the assessment are not intended to differentiate students, but rather are used to determine the right treatment to achieve optimal student development by designing several learning methods that are adapted to the conditions of each student. In the same line, Richard I. According to Arends (2008: 217), assessment is the process of acquiring data regarding students and classrooms in order to make instructional decisions. Students

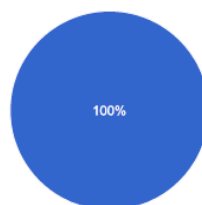
with different learning readiness must receive unequal treatment. This treatment is manifested in determining the learning steps and the expected achievements of each student. This treatment also must be in favor of students. Students with high learning readiness are given more complex treatment than students with low learning readiness.



**Diagram 7.** *The teacher prepares question to determine student learning readiness*

8. The teacher is able to compose question at the end of learning to determine students learning completeness

From the eighth statement, the data showed that 100%. It means that all teachers are strongly agreed that the teacher must be able to compose questions at the end of the lesson to determine the students learning exhaustiveness. It also indicates taht the teachers realize that evaluation in a lesson is needed to determine the level of the students development. The teacher's ability is the real capacity of a teacher to carry out an evaluation from the planning stage to academic decision making (Witheringthon, 2002). In addition, teachers are required to have an ability to compose HOTS (High Order Thinking Skill) questions. It is intended that students have the ability to think critically, logically, and systematically according to the characteristics of the subjects and have higher-order thinking skills. Then, this thinking ability is determined by the Ministry of Education and Culture to measure students' thinking aspects, as stated in the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 22 of 2016 concerning Process Standards for Elementary and Secondary Education that knowledge is obtained through the activity of "remembering, understanding, applying, analyze, evaluate, create" (Wahiddinding, 2018). Therefore, this aspect of learning that is oriented towards higher-order thinking skills must be accommodated by schools as education delivery units in accordance with the Competence Standards for Graduates of Elementary and Secondary Education Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 20 of 2016. HOTS questions are assessments based on real situations in everyday life, where students are expected to be able to apply learning concepts in class to solve problems faced by today's world society. According to Tajudin & Chinnappan (2017) teachers have an important role in improving students' HOTS abilities. The importance of familiarizing students with HOTS questions must also be accompanied by the teacher's ability to develop their pedagogical competence to develop HOTS questions (Ratnawati, 2018). So it can be concluded that in compiling questions at the end of learning to determine student learning exhaustiveness, the teachers must refer to the learning objectives and required to have the ability to compose questions with the HOTS concept.



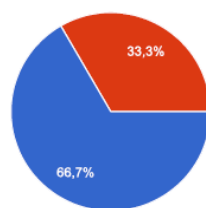
**Diagram 8.** *The teacher is able to compose question at the end of learning to determine students learning completeness*



## The ability to prepare learning media based on Information of Communication technology (ICT)

### 9. Teachers use pictures or videos as media to create meaningful learning

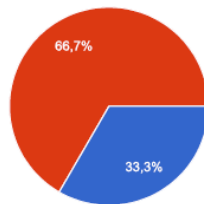
In the ninth statement, the data showed that 66.6% of teachers are strongly agreed and 33.7% agree that using pictures or videos as media can create interesting and meaningful learning. Teachers as lesson planners are required to be able to design lessons by utilizing various types of appropriate media and learning resources so that the learning process takes place effectively and efficiently (Sudarwan, 2010:17). Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is the center of world civilization and progress. Some scientists continue to try to develop knowledge in this field until finally ICT becomes a learning menu at the world education level. The development of ICT requires a change in the paradigm of conventional education which has the characteristics of teacher centered education (teacher center education) on ICT-based education which emphasizes student centered education (student center education) and mastery of ICT (Arifin, 2012: 43). Beside of being an intermediary in teaching and learning interactions, learning media has a role as an effective teaching and learning aid tool. By using learning media in the form of images, videos or audio, it is hoped that students will gain real experience, so that the subject matter delivered can be absorbed easily and better. So it can be concluded that the teacher's ability to design learning by involving digital media needs to be developed so that they can create an effective and innovative learning.



**Diagram 9.** Teachers use pictures or videos as media to create meaningful learning

### 10. The teacher uses Google Form as a media to distributing question to students

In the tenth statement, the data showed that 33.7% of teachers are strongly agreed and 66.6% agree that to distributing question to the students, the teachers using Google form as a media. It indicates that the teachers already used beside that learning processes used technology-based, the assessment also involves technology to make the teachers easier to distribute and analyze student learning outcomes. One of application that supports technology-based assessment is the Google form feature. Google Forms is one of feature which available on Google accounts. Google Forms can be used to create online quizzes, surveys and questions. The method used to submit questions or surveys can be sent by email or by link. Creating a Google form can be done via a computer, laptop or even a smartphone. In addition, The benefits of Google Forms include real-time online distribution and tabulation, real-time collaboration (50 individuals may work on a file simultaneously, and every update is automatically saved and secure), and the ability to safely save crucial files. The difference of learning assessment by using the Google form is in facilities which can be accessed online so that the data collected is easier to analyze. In addition, teachers can carry out online tests using Google form outside of the class, with the flexible working time but still with the specified time setting. So that when students start logging in to the online test questions, at that time the timer is running and they are only given one opportunity to carry out the test automatically. Therefore, by using Google form it can help the teachers in distributing and analyzing the test accurately.



**Diagram 10.** *The teacher uses Google Form as a media to distributing question to students*

## CONCLUSION

Teachers' readiness is important because it affects the success of students in the learning process. There were twelve vocational high school teachers who were to be respondents in this study, they stated that they strongly agreed with all the statements in the questionnaire that had been given. It means that they have readiness to implement the independent curriculum in schools. The reason is for duration of 1 year they have attended several seminars and training of *Merdeka* curriculum. By attending seminars, teachers have a lot of new knowledge about the independent curriculum and by attending training on how to apply this curriculum. The teachers have real experience so that in implementing it in schools they already have sufficient provisions. It is evident from the results of the questionnaire that was given to the teachers that on average they were strongly agree with all statements regarding readiness to implement *Merdeka* curriculum, including; (the teachers' readiness in implementing *Merdeka* Curriculum. The aspects are; the teacher's ability to implement the Merdeka Curriculum, the ability to construct the lesson plan, the ability to apply the lesson plan based on Merdeka Curriculum, to conduct assessment based on Merdeka Curriculum and apply the learning media based on the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)). It indicates that they already have a good understanding of *Merdeka* curriculum, namely with student-centered learning, by understanding the characteristics of each student so that they can carry out differentiated learning and can arrange assessments according to the level and needs of students and have the ability to use technology in the learning process with the aim of supporting teachers who innovate and create learning that is effective, innovative and liberates students. For the next researchers, to determine the respondents it should be more than three respondents which taken from several other schools to make your data more valid.

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