



**PROBLEMS AND INHIBITING FACTORS FACED BY TEACHERS IN IMPLEMENTATION KURIKULUM MERDEKA AT SMPN 1 PANGKALAN KURAS KABUPATEN PELALAWAN**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This research aims to know and find out the problems faced by teachers in implementing Kurikulum Merdeka at SMPN 1 Pangkalan Kuras and to determine the inhibiting factors for the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka at SMPN 1 Pangkalan Kuras. This research uses a type of quantitative research. The sample of this study was 53 teachers. Research data was collected by questionnaire. Through the research results, it was found that there are problems and inhibiting factors faced by teachers in implementing the kurikulum merdeka at SMPN 1 Pangkalan Kuras, Pelalawan Regency. The problems faced include: (1) improving numeracy literacy; (2) realizing the achievement of a Pancasila student profile; (3) developing student character; (4) implementing learning through project work; and problem (5) implementing learning that focuses on essential knowledge and according to its stages. The factors that make that happen are: (1) the lack of socialization of the new curriculum; (2) the lack of teacher awareness in adapting to changes in the education system; and (3) the lack of teacher understanding of the curriculum.*

**Keywords:** *Problems Faced by Teachers, Inhibiting Factors Faced by Teachers, Implementation Kurikulum Merdeka*

**PERMASALAHAN DAN FAKTOR PENGHAMBAT YANG DIHADAPI GURU DALAM IMPLEMENTASI KURIKULUM MERDEKA DI SMPN 1 PANGKALAN KURAS KABUPATEN PELALAWAN**

**ABSTRAK**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui dan menemukan permasalahan yang dihadapi guru dalam mengimplementasikan Kurikulum Merdeka di SMPN 1 Pangkalan Kuras dan untuk mengetahui faktor penghambat implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka di SMPN 1 Pangkalan Kuras. Penelitian ini menggunakan jenis penelitian kuantitatif. Sampel penelitian ini adalah 53 orang guru. Data penelitian dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner. Melalui hasil penelitian, ditemukan adanya permasalahan dan faktor penghambat yang dihadapi oleh guru dalam mengimplementasikan kurikulum merdeka di SMPN 1 Pangkalan Kuras Kabupaten Pelalawan. Permasalahan yang dihadapi antara lain: (1) meningkatkan literasi numerasi; (2) mewujudkan tercapainya profil siswa yang Pancasila; (3) mengembangkan karakter siswa; (4) melaksanakan pembelajaran melalui kerja proyek; dan masalah (5) melaksanakan pembelajaran yang berfokus pada pengetahuan esensial dan sesuai dengan tahapannya. Faktor-faktor yang menyebabkan hal tersebut terjadi adalah: (1) kurangnya sosialisasi kurikulum baru; (2) kurangnya kesadaran guru dalam beradaptasi dengan perubahan sistem pendidikan; dan (3) kurangnya pemahaman guru terhadap kurikulum.

**Kata Kunci :** *Masalah yang Dihadapi Guru, Faktor Penghambat yang Dihadapi Guru, Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka*

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**INTRODUCTION**

Education is a vital aspect of a nation's development and serves as a key driver of individual. Through education, people can improve their quality of life, social mobility, and economic. The Indonesian government has long recognized the importance of quality education for national. Reforms have been introduced to address issues in learning systems, teaching methods, and curriculum. These efforts aim to prepare citizens to be competitive in the global.



One of the most significant reforms in Indonesia is the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka or Merdeka Curriculum. This curriculum was introduced to promote student-centered learning and to enhance character education in the national. According to Marthana Yusa, et al. (2023), Kurikulum Merdeka emphasizes differentiated instruction, project-based learning, and flexible teaching. These principles demand a shift from conventional methods to more innovative and holistic. Teachers are expected to adapt quickly to these major instructional.

The core idea of Kurikulum Merdeka is to empower both teachers and students in the learning. Students are encouraged to explore learning according to their interests, talents, and developmental. Teachers, on the other hand, are no longer simply conveyors of content but facilitators of learning. Asmahasanah et al. (2023) argue that this requires teachers to become more creative, adaptive, and technologically. However, not all teachers are adequately prepared for such professional.

Kurikulum Merdeka also aims to reduce the burden of overly rigid content by offering flexibility in curriculum. The government provides general guidelines, but schools and teachers are given autonomy in implementing instructional. This autonomy, however, is often misunderstood or leads to confusion among teachers, particularly those with limited. Many teachers are unclear about what to prioritize and how to evaluate student. This uncertainty creates stress and affects instructional.

In areas like Pangkalan Kuras, where SMPN 1 Pangkalan Kuras is located, challenges in curriculum implementation are more. Teachers in these areas often face resource shortages, insufficient training, and minimal access to digital. Labib et al. (2024) noted that such limitations lead to superficial implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka in many public. Without adequate support and infrastructure, teachers cannot deliver lessons effectively or consistently with curriculum. This affects both teacher motivation and student.

Many teachers report struggling to understand the technical aspects of Kurikulum Merdeka and how to adapt it to their teaching. Although the government offers workshops and training, they are often brief, inconsistent, and lack follow-up mentoring for practical. Wardana (2024) highlights that many teachers feel overwhelmed by expectations and often return to old teaching. They are confused about how to integrate project-based learning and how to assess learning. This results in poor curriculum fidelity and ineffective.

The assessment system under Kurikulum Merdeka also presents a challenge for most classroom. The shift from standardized tests to formative and performance-based assessments requires deep understanding and instructional. Teachers are expected to develop rubrics and tools for authentic assessments, which many find difficult to. According to Awaliyah & Tiarina (2023), most teachers revert to traditional testing due to a lack of confidence in applying modern. This undermines the goals of educational.

Moreover, the use of digital tools and platforms is essential in delivering lessons aligned with kurikulum. Teachers are expected to integrate technology into their instruction and facilitate online or blended. Unfortunately, at SMPN 1 Pangkalan Kuras, not all teachers are digitally literate, and access to technology is very. Students often do not have devices, and internet connection is unstable or. These conditions obstruct digital learning and curriculum.

Collaboration among teachers is crucial for sharing strategies and solving implementation. However, in many schools, collaboration is limited due to time constraints, lack of leadership support, and professional. Teachers have to work individually, which leads to burnout and fragmented. As a result, curriculum planning is not always well-aligned or properly. This situation weakens the sense of community among teaching.

Communication between policymakers and teachers is another major implementation. Teachers often receive curriculum updates without sufficient explanation or involvement in the planning. As reported by Marthana Yusa, et al. (2023), this top-down approach leads to a disconnect between policy



and classroom. Teachers are left interpreting broad guidelines without contextual or practical. Consequently, they feel excluded from decision-making.

Teachers also face administrative burdens that interfere with curriculum implementation. They are required to complete various reports, plans, and evaluations that consume instructional. These bureaucratic tasks limit time for lesson planning and student engagement in. Labib et al. (2024) assert that such administrative workload contributes to fatigue and teacher. This impacts the quality of education provided.

Lack of instructional materials tailored to Kurikulum Merdeka is also a recurring. Teachers often have to develop their own resources due to the unavailability of government-issued books or. This process is time-consuming and not all teachers have the skills to create suitable. Awaliyah & Tiarina (2023) suggest that the absence of quality teaching materials results in learning inconsistencies across. This inequality affects students' educational.

At SMPN 1 Pangkalan Kuras, the situation mirrors the national pattern of implementation. Teachers are committed to student success but feel limited by resources, training, and administrative. They try to implement the curriculum but face multiple obstacles in the daily. This disconnect must be overcome to improve teacher competence in implementing the kurikulum merdeka.

Given all these challenges, it is crucial to conduct research that captures the lived experiences of teachers in implementing kurikulum. Their insights can inform policy adjustments and improve support systems for classroom. This research will identify key barriers and strategies used by teachers at SMPN 1 Pangkalan. The findings will contribute to the broader effort of educational reform and teacher. Understanding real conditions is essential for creating lasting. The objectives of this study are as follows: (1) this study to know and find out the Problems Faced by Teachers in Implementing Kurikulum Merdeka at SMPN 1 Pangkalan Kuras; (2) to determine the inhibiting factors for the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka at SMPN 1 Pangkalan Kuras.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Definition of Kurikulum Merdeka

According to BSNP, or the National Education Standards Agency, the definition of an independent learning curriculum is a learning curriculum that refers to an approach to talents and interests. Here, students (both students and students) can choose any subject they want to study according to their talents and interests (Saputra et al., 2023).

The Kurikulum Merdeka is launched by the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, Nadiem Makarim, as a form of evaluation of the 2013 Curriculum improvement. Previously, this curriculum was also referred to as the Prototype Curriculum which is one part of the government's efforts to produce a more competent next generation in various fields.

Merdeka Belajar is one of the programs initiated by the Minister of Education and Culture, Mr. Nadiem Makarim, who wants to create a fun learning atmosphere. According to Syukri (cited in Rika Widianita, 2023), Merdeka Belajar means an educational process that must create a pleasant atmosphere for students, teachers, parents, and everyone. The purpose of Merdeka Belajar is to explore the greatest potential of teachers and students and improve the quality of learning by giving teachers the freedom to choose how to deliver the curriculum or teaching methods that are in accordance with the competencies of their students (Kemendikbud, 2019).

According to Hariawan Birawa (cited in Rika Widianita, 2023), Merdeka Belajar depends on the desire that educational outcomes provide better quality and produce students who are not only good at memorizing but also have sharp analytical thinking skills and a comprehensive understanding of learning to improve themselves. The concept of Merdeka Belajar is to return education to the essence of the law to give schools independence to understand the basic competencies of the curriculum as



their assessment (Kusmaryono, 2020).

In addition, Hamdani (2022) said the Kurikulum Merdeka is a curriculum with diverse learning. The Kurikulum Merdeka is applied to practice independence in thinking. The concept is determined by each individual in it. (Baderan & Indrajit, 2020) state that the concept of the Kurikulum Merdeka is a form of freedom for school, teachers, and students to think and innovate in independent, creative, and responsible learning in a pleasant atmosphere (Hamdani, 2022).

According to the Ministry of Education and Culture in Sintia (cited in Rika Widianita, 2023), Merdeka Belajar is to give freedom and autonomy to educational institutions and be free from bureaucratization. The core of Merdeka Belajar is that schools, teachers, and students have the freedom to innovate and the freedom to learn independently and creatively (Kemendikbud, 2019). Merdeka Belajar focuses on the freedom to learn independently and creatively. Teachers are also expected to be the driving force to take actions that lead to the best for students.

Currently, the learning system is still based on teachers, so it often causes boredom. In addition, the Indonesian education system still relies on ranking, which creates a gap between smart students and regular students. It doesn't stop there; sometimes parents also feel burdened if their child doesn't get a ranking. This is very bad if applied to the world of education because children actually have their own intelligence, or what is called multiple intelligence.

#### **Problems Face By Teachers in Implementation Kurikulum Merdeka**

Mentioned in Putri & Riastini (2023), that the problems faced by teachers in implementing the kurikulum merdeka can be seen from the following:

1. Develop comprehensive learning outcome
2. Carrying out learning that focuses on essential knowledge and is appropriate to the phase
3. Carrying out learning through project work
4. Developing student character
5. Realizing the achievement of the Pancasila Student Profile
6. Improving numeracy literacy
7. Prepare a learning environment that is safe, comfortable, inclusive and fun
8. Reflect on learning

#### **Inhibiting Factors Face By Teachers in Implementation Kurikulum Merdeka**

The inhibiting factors faced by teachers in implementing the kurikulum merdeka include the following:

1. The teacher's lack of understanding of the curriculum
2. The factor is the lack of a socialization process for the new curriculum
3. The factor is the lack of teacher awareness in adapting to changes in the education system
4. Factors of low teacher motivation (Putri & Riastini, 2023)

The problems and factors causing the problems faced by teachers in implementing the Kurikulum merdeka at SMPN 1 Pangkalan Kuras in this study will be assessed based on the aspects above. Because these aspects have been validated and the results of the research have been studied. So that the statements of these aspects can be directly used as research instruments for this study.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research uses a type of quantitative research, because the data from this research is in the form of questionnaire data. Where the data will be in the form of numbers and analyzed in statistical form. As said by Sugiyono (2007), that quantitative research is a research method used to examine certain populations and samples, collect data with research instruments, and analyze data statistically.

This research is located at SMPN 1 Pangkalan Kuras, precisely in Muhibah Hamlet, Sorek Satu



Village, Pangkalan Kuras District, Pelalawan Regency, Riau Province. The population used is only subject teachers, namely 52 teachers. The number of samples is not much or not more than one hundred populations, so that the entire population is used as a research sample or using a saturated sample. The research data was collected with a research questionnaire. While analyzing the data with descriptive statistical analysis, namely providing a picture based on the average score and percentage. The average score categories are as follows.

**Table 1.** Scoring Intervals and Categories

No.	Scoring Intervals	Categories
1	4,2 – 5	Very High
2	3,4 – 4,1	High
3	2,6 – 3,3	Moderate
4	1,8 – 2,5	Less
5	1 – 1,7	Very Less

Source : Processed Research Data Based on the Maximum and Minimum Scores for Each Item of the Research Questionnaire Statement

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Problems Faced by Teachers in Implementing Kurikulum Merdeka at SMPN 1 Pangkalan Kuras

The problems faced by teachers in implementing the kurikulum merdeka are limited to: (1) develop comprehensive learning outcome; (2) carrying out learning that focuses on essential knowledge and is appropriate to the phase; (3) carrying out learning through project work; (4) developing student character; (5) realizing the achievement of the Pancasila Student Profile; (6) improving numeracy literacy; (7) prepare a learning environment that is safe, comfortable, inclusive and fun; dan (8) reflect on learning. Through these eight indicators, a recapitulation of the mean score and percentage is obtained as follows.

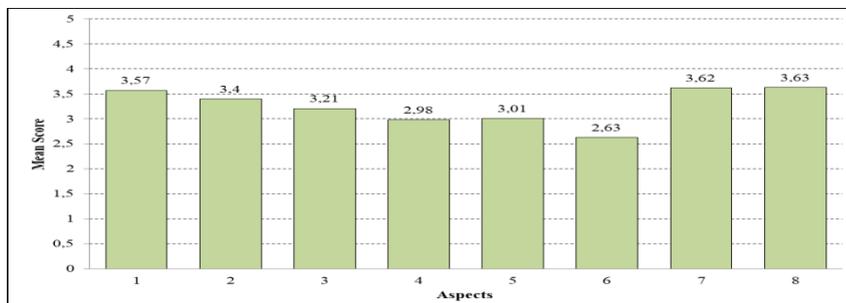
**Table 2.** Recapitulation of Answers related to Problems Faced by Teachers in Implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka at SMPN 1 Pangkalan Kuras

No.	Aspects	Mean Score	Percentage
1	Develop comprehensive learning outcome	3,57	13,70%
2	Carrying out learning that focuses on essential knowledge and is appropriate to the phase	3,40	13,05%
3	Carrying out learning through project work	3,21	12,32%
4	Developing student character	2,98	11,44%
5	Realizing the achievement of the pancasila student profile	3,01	11,55%
6	Improving numeracy literacy	2,63	10,10%
7	Prepare a learning environment that is safe, comfortable, inclusive and fun	3,62	13,90%
8	Reflect on learning	3,63	13,93%
Overall		3,26	100%

Through the mean score, the aspects that obtained the lowest mean score were Improving numeracy literacy and Developing student character, followed by Realizing the achievement of the Pancasila student profile. The overall mean score average is 3.26 or with a moderate category. This means that on average, teachers still face problems related to these aspects in implementing the kurikulum merdeka at SMPN 1 Pangkalan Kuras. More details can also be seen in the form of the



following figure.



**Figure 1.** Recapitulation of Questionnaire Answers related to Problems Faced by Teachers in Implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka

Through this picture, we can sort the problems faced by teachers in implementing the independent curriculum, starting from the most common problem, namely: (1) improving numeracy literacy; (2) developing student character; (3) realizing the achievement of the pancasila student profile; (4) carrying out learning through project work; (5) carrying out learning that focuses on essential knowledge and is appropriate to the phase; (6) develop comprehensive learning outcome; (7) prepare a learning environment that is safe, comfortable, inclusive and fun; and (8) reflect on learning.

Overall, it can be said that the obstacles experienced by teachers in implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka are because teachers must master numeracy literacy, besides providing teaching material, teachers must also play a role in developing student character. Teachers must also realize the achievement of a Pancasila student profile even though they are not Pancasila subject teachers. Teachers must also implement project-based learning, and of course not all subject teachers implement project-based learning, so many teachers have difficulty in implementing this learning. Likewise, learning that focuses on essential knowledge, where the material focuses on literacy and numeracy, is certainly not easy for all teachers who have not previously implemented this teaching focus.

### **Inhibiting Factors for the Implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka at SMPN 1 Pangkalan Kuras**

The inhibiting factors faced by teachers in implementing the kurikulum merdeka are limited to: (1) the factor of teachers' lack of understanding of the curriculum; (2) the factor of the lack of a new curriculum socialization process; (3) the factor of teachers' lack of awareness in adapting to changes in the education system; and (4) the factor of low teacher motivation. Through these four aspects, a recapitulation of the average score and percentage is obtained as shown in the following table.

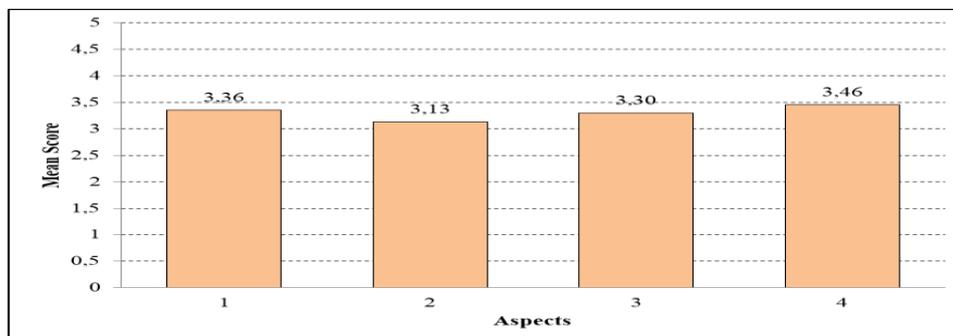
**Table 3.** Recapitulation of Answers related to Inhibiting Factors for the Implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka at SMPN 1 Pangkalan Kuras

No.	Aspects	Mean Score	Percentage
1	the factor of teachers' lack of understanding of the curriculum	3,36	25,36%
2	the factor of the lack of a new curriculum socialization process	3,13	23,62%
3	the factor of teachers' lack of awareness in adapting to changes in the education system	3,30	24,91%
4	the factor of low teacher motivation	3,46	26,11%
	Overall	3,38	100%

As shown in Table 3, it is known that the average score obtained is 3.38 or in the moderate category. This means that these four factors are the main factors that cause teachers to face problems in



implementing the kurikulum merdeka at SMPN 1 Pangkalan Kuras. More details can be seen in the following figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Recapitulation of Questionnaire Answers related to Inhibiting Factors for the Implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka at SMPN 1 Pangkalan Kuras

Through these four aspects, it is known that the factor of low teacher motivation, followed by factor of teachers' lack of understanding of the curriculum is the highest factor that inhibits teachers in implementing the independent curriculum, followed by the factor of teachers' lack of awareness in adapting to changes in the education system, and the factor of the lack of a new curriculum socialization process.

Through the picture, it can also be said that the main factor that hinders teachers in implementing the kurikulum merdeka is the low motivation of teachers. Of course, high motivation can increase the teacher's willingness to learn and understand the kurikulum merdeka, so that the problems he faces are resolved because the teacher is patient and diligent in studying the kurikulum merdeka. However, this did not happen, so teachers continue to face problems in implementing the kurikulum merdeka. This factor affects other factors, such as the teacher's understanding of the independent curriculum being lacking, the teacher's lack of ability to adapt to the curriculum. In addition, there is a lack of optimal socialization of the kurikulum merdeka, so that teachers are less motivated to implement the curriculum.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Through the results of the research and the previous discussion, it is concluded that there are problems and inhibiting factors faced by teachers in implementing the kurikulum merdeka at SMPN 1 Pangkalan Kuras, Pelalawan Regency. Through these conclusions, the author would like to make the following suggestions: (1) the Principal should collaborate with the Teacher Training Center to increase teachers' understanding of the implementation of the kurikulum merdeka, and make some teachers who already understand the kurikulum merdeka as tutors for other teachers; (2) teachers should attend various trainings related to the kurikulum merdeka, and actively ask their colleagues who have been able to implement the kurikulum merdeka well; and (3) the Education Office should often conduct socialization and various trainings for teachers related to the kurikulum merdeka, especially related to numeracy literacy; related to how to create a Pancasila student profile; how to develop student character; how to implement learning through project work; and related to learning that focuses on essential knowledge.

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