

Challenges Faced by Teachers in Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum Assessment Model

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Abstrak

Kurikulum Merdeka merupakan kebijakan pendidikan yang mengubah sistem pembelajaran dan penilaian di sekolah dengan menekankan proses, kompetensi, dan penguatan karakter peserta didik. Guru dituntut melaksanakan asesmen diagnostik, formatif, dan sumatif, namun masih menghadapi berbagai tantangan seperti keterbatasan pemahaman, pelatihan, waktu, administrasi, serta kesulitan menilai aspek nonkognitif. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis peran guru dalam penilaian Kurikulum Merdeka, tantangan yang dihadapi, serta upaya mengatasinya menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif melalui studi pustaka. Data diperoleh dari jurnal, artikel ilmiah, dan literatur relevan, kemudian dianalisis untuk melihat implementasi penilaian dalam Kurikulum Merdeka. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa pelaksanaan penilaian masih menghadapi kendala sehingga diperlukan pelatihan berkelanjutan, penyederhanaan administrasi, pemanfaatan teknologi, serta dukungan sekolah dan pemerintah agar asesmen lebih optimal. Dengan demikian, peran guru sangat penting dalam memastikan penilaian Kurikulum Merdeka berjalan efektif dan mampu mendukung perkembangan kompetensi serta karakter peserta didik secara menyeluruh di lingkungan sekolah yang terus diperkuat melalui kebijakan dan pendampingan yang berkelanjutan dari pemerintah.

Kata kunci: kurikulum merdeka, penilaian, guru.

Abstract

Kurikulum Merdeka is an education policy that transforms learning and assessment in schools by emphasizing learning processes, competencies, and character development. Teachers are required to implement diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments but still face challenges such as limited understanding, training, time constraints, administrative burdens, and difficulty assessing non-cognitive aspects. This study aims to analyze teachers' role in assessment under Kurikulum Merdeka, the challenges encountered, and efforts to address them using a descriptive qualitative literature study approach. Data were collected from journals, scientific articles, and relevant literature, then analyzed to examine assessment implementation. Results show that implementation still faces obstacles; therefore continuous training, simplified administration, technology use, and support from schools and government are needed to optimize assessment practices. Thus, teachers play a crucial role in ensuring effective assessment that supports student competency and character development through continuous improvement, collaboration, and educational policy support in school environments implementation and practice process.

Keywords: merdeka curriculum, assessment, teachers.

INTRODUCTION

The Merdeka Curriculum is one of the educational policies implemented by the government to improve the quality of learning in Indonesia. This curriculum

gives teachers the freedom to design lessons according to the needs and characteristics of their students. Through the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, learning is expected to focus

not only on mastering the subject matter but also on developing students' competencies and character. However, the changes brought about by this curriculum also require teachers to be prepared to implement various aspects of learning, including the assessment system.

In its implementation, teachers play a crucial role as they are responsible for designing, conducting, and evaluating assessments. Teachers are not only expected to assess students' knowledge but also their skills and attitudes. Furthermore, assessment results are expected to serve as the basis for determining subsequent learning steps so that the learning process can proceed more effectively. However, these various changes also present unique challenges for teachers, particularly for those who are still adapting to the new assessment system.

Several studies indicate that many teachers still struggle to understand and implement the assessment model of the Merdeka Curriculum. One of the most common challenges is a lack of understanding regarding authentic assessment, as well as the limited training teachers have received. In addition, teachers also find it difficult to continuously observe and document student progress, as this requires a significant amount of time and meticulous attention to detail. As a result, the

assessment process has not yet been implemented optimally. (Deti et al., 2024)

Given these issues, it is important to discuss the challenges teachers face in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum's assessment model. Through this discussion, we hope to identify the various obstacles teachers encounter in the assessment process, as well as the measures that can be taken to support the implementation of assessment so that it runs more effectively and aligns with the objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum. (Fathurohman et al., 2022).

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research method using a literature review approach. The qualitative method was chosen because this study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the various challenges teachers face in implementing the assessment model under the Merdeka Curriculum, based on relevant scholarly sources. Assessment in the Merdeka Curriculum still faces various obstacles, such as teachers' lack of understanding in developing assessment instruments and using assessment results in learning (R. Rahmadani, 2025).

The literature review approach involved collecting data from various scientific journals, educational articles, and official documents related to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. This study did not involve

field observations but instead focused on the analysis of previously published secondary data. The literature review can be used to describe the various challenges teachers face in implementing portfolio assessment under the Merdeka Curriculum (Setianingsih & Silvia, 2024)

The data collected was then analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis techniques. The analysis was conducted by grouping information based on specific themes, such as teachers' difficulties in developing diagnostic assessments, time constraints, and a lack of training related to the implementation of assessment. Many teachers still face difficulties in designing assessment instruments and utilizing technology in the learning assessment process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Assessment in the Merdeka Curriculum

A. Theoretical Foundations of Assessment in the Merdeka Curriculum

Assessment is a key component of the educational process because it is used to track students' progress and learning outcomes. In education, assessment is not merely understood as the assignment of grades, but also as a systematic process of gathering information to determine whether learning objectives have been met. Through assessment, teachers can understand students' abilities, needs, and

progress throughout the learning process (Nirwana, 2024).

In the Merdeka Curriculum, assessment is based on a student-centered learning approach. Assessment does not focus solely on final outcomes but also takes into account the overall learning process of students. Assessment in the Merdeka Curriculum is designed to support learning that is more flexible, adaptive, and tailored to students' needs. Additionally, assessment is used as a tool to help students maximize their potential in terms of knowledge, attitude, and skills.

The Merdeka Curriculum also emphasizes the importance of continuous assessment. Teachers are expected to provide ongoing feedback to students so that the learning process can be improved and adapted to the students' needs. Thus, assessment is no longer merely a tool for determining grades but also an integral part of the learning process itself.

B. The Purpose of Assessment in the Merdeka Curriculum

Assessment in the Merdeka Curriculum serves several important purposes in the educational process. One of the primary goals of assessment is to gain a comprehensive understanding of students' learning progress. Teachers can determine students' level of understanding of the material being studied while also observing the

development of their skills throughout the learning process.

In addition, assessment aims to provide feedback to students and teachers. Through assessment results, students can identify their strengths and weaknesses so they can improve their learning methods. Meanwhile, teachers can use assessment results as a basis for refining teaching strategies and methods to better align with students' needs.

Another objective is to measure the achievement of learning objectives. Assessment helps teachers determine whether the expected competencies have been met or not. If students are still facing learning difficulties, teachers can provide additional support or supplementary instruction to ensure students achieve the learning objectives effectively.

Furthermore, assessment also aims to support the development of students' potential. The Merdeka Curriculum strives to create learning that is not only focused on academic achievement but also develops character, creativity, critical thinking skills, and students' practical skills in daily life.

The Role of Teachers in Assessment

In the learning process, teachers play a crucial role in the assessment process. Teachers are not only responsible for delivering instructional content but also act as learning evaluators tasked with

monitoring students' progress and learning achievements. As evaluators, teachers conduct assessments to gather information about students' abilities, understanding, attitudes, and skills throughout the learning process. These assessments are used to determine whether learning objectives have been met (Raja & Naibaho, n.d.).

In the Merdeka Curriculum, the teacher's role as an evaluator becomes increasingly important because learning is student-centered. Teachers must be able to understand the characteristics, needs, and potential of each student so that the assessments conducted align with the students' individual circumstances. Assessment is no longer solely focused on final numerical results but also takes into account the students' developmental progress throughout the learning process. Therefore, teachers need to conduct ongoing assessments to provide feedback that helps students improve their skills.

Teachers must also assess students' learning processes and outcomes comprehensively. Process assessment is conducted to observe how students engage in learning, such as their participation in discussions, ability to collaborate, discipline, responsibility, and how they understand the taught material. Meanwhile, learning outcome assessment aims to determine students' level of achievement against the established learning objectives. In practice, teachers

assess three main aspects: students' attitudes, knowledge, and skills.

Assessment of attitudes is carried out through observation, journals, and self-assessment to determine students' behavior and character during the learning process. Knowledge assessment is conducted through written tests, oral tests, assignments, or discussions to measure students' understanding of the learning material. Meanwhile, skills assessment is carried out through practical activities, projects, presentations, and portfolios that demonstrate students' ability to apply the knowledge they have learned.

In addition, teachers are also required to be creative and objective in carrying out assessments. Teacher creativity is needed so that assessment does not become monotonous and can fully explore students' potential. In the Merdeka Curriculum, teachers can use various forms of assessment such as projects, presentations, group discussions, reflection journals, and real-life practice-based learning. With varied assessment methods, students can become more active and motivated in learning.

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In addition, teachers are also required to be creative and objective in conducting assessments. Teachers' creativity is necessary so that assessments are not monotonous and can maximize students' potential. In the Merdeka Curriculum, teachers can use various forms of assessment, such as projects, presentations, group discussions, reflective journals, and real-world practice-based learning. With varied assessments, students can be more active and motivated in their learning.

In addition to creativity, teachers must also be objective in providing assessments. Objectivity means that teachers provide assessments fairly, honestly, and in accordance with students' abilities without being influenced by personal factors. Teachers must use clear assessment criteria so that the results of the assessment are accountable. An objective attitude is crucial for fostering trust and a sense of fairness among all students in the learning process.

Challenges Faced by Teachers in Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum Assessment

Constant changes to the curriculum often leave teachers confused about how to teach or assess students. This is consistent with research conducted (Mere & Guru, 2024). Over the past five years, Indonesia's education system has transitioned from the 2013 Curriculum to the Merdeka Curriculum, which will be implemented nationwide in 2024. This transition aims to align education with contemporary developments and the needs of students. However, the rapid pace of these changes has also presented various challenges for teachers, who are the primary implementers of the curriculum in schools.

The Merdeka Curriculum essentially grants teachers and students greater freedom in the learning process. Teachers are expected to be more creative in delivering content to make learning enjoyable and student-centered. Additionally, this curriculum encourages students to develop strong literacy skills through various texts and learning modules. However, these demands require teachers to design instructional modules, learning resources, and assessment systems that are more complex than before. This situation often consumes a significant amount of teachers' time, as they also have administrative duties and other responsibilities at school (Suryaningsih, 2020).

Schools face challenges not only in terms of teaching staff but also in other

areas, such as a lack of clear information regarding implementation on the ground. The location or geography of a school also plays a role in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. Schools in remote areas with limited internet access and those in rural areas have not yet been able to implement the Merdeka Curriculum because they have only recently adopted the 2013 Curriculum (Wantiana, 2023). Based on the field observations described, there are already two key challenges in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum itself, aside from assessment aspects. The Merdeka Curriculum appears to be a learning framework that seems to have been rushed through the approval process and was not accompanied by widespread outreach until its official national launch in 2024. These range from a lack of outreach to the addition of new job responsibilities for educators, which have disrupted the quality of teaching and learning activities. Specifically, some of the difficulties faced by educators, as well as other aspects related to the assessment of the Merdeka Curriculum, include:

a. Lack of Teacher Understanding

One of the main challenges in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum assessment is teachers' lack of understanding of its concepts and implementation. According to research (Afnanda et al., 2023) explains that many teachers still face difficulties in

developing instructional materials and implementing assessments in accordance with the Merdeka Curriculum. Teachers are also considered to lack innovation in developing teaching methods that meet students' needs. The success of teachers is the success of education itself. If teachers do not yet understand the curriculum system being implemented, the learning process will be disrupted, which will impact students' learning outcomes. Under the Merdeka Curriculum, teachers must conduct various forms of assessment, such as diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments. Although some teachers do not face difficulties in implementing them, many are still unsure about determining the type of assessment that aligns with the learning objectives.

Teachers also face difficulties in applying the teaching materials. This is consistent with the research (Alfiany et al., 2024), It is noted that the wide variety of assessment methods makes it difficult for teachers to determine the appropriate tools to use. In addition, teachers also face challenges in developing teaching materials and learning modules due to limited references and a lack of training on the development of teaching materials for the Merdeka Curriculum. This is also supported by research (Afnanda et al., 2023). which states that most teachers still use the available teaching materials without further developing them. This is

due to a lack of training and guidance regarding the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. Some teachers are also still accustomed to using the teaching methods of the 2013 Curriculum and are therefore not yet able to fully implement the Merdeka Curriculum. Therefore, more in-depth training is needed so that teachers can understand the learning and assessment systems within the Merdeka Curriculum.

b. Complex Assessment Administration

As noted in the previous discussion, the creation of teaching modules and instructional materials alone increases the administrative burden on educators; the same is true for assessment under the Merdeka curriculum. From the research (Lubis et al., 2025) It is evident that teachers face difficulties in balancing administrative demands—such as completing complex assessment instruments and reporting diverse assessment results—with the delivery of effective instruction in the classroom. Under the Merdeka Curriculum, teachers are not only expected to teach but also to create assessment rubrics, conduct formative and summative assessments, and document student progress through narrative descriptions. The significant volume of administrative tasks causes teachers to spend more time and energy on administrative work than on improving the quality of instruction. In many cases,

the administrative burden has the potential to reduce teachers' focus on teaching and learning activities because their time is already consumed by the heavy administrative workload.

The study also identifies several factors contributing to the high administrative burden on teachers, including the large number of assessment formats that must be created, a lack of technical training on authentic assessment, insufficient technological support, and high documentation demands from both schools and education authorities. This finding is also consistent with research (Hilmayati et al., 2026), which states that authentic assessment has not yet been implemented optimally because teachers still struggle to understand the concept and develop appropriate assessment instruments. Another factor influencing the implementation of authentic assessment is educators' perceptions of the concept and urgency of such assessment. Perception refers to educators' perspectives, understanding, and attitudes toward an educational policy. Educators with positive understanding and perceptions view authentic assessment as a vital need for student development, leading them to consistently implement authentic assessment policies despite various challenges. Conversely, a less positive perspective causes educators to view authentic assessment as an additional

burden. The main challenges faced by educators in authentic assessment include time constraints, high administrative demands, large class sizes, and a lack of adequate technical training related to authentic assessment.

c. Difficulty in Assessing Non-Cognitive Aspects

In the Merdeka Curriculum, assessment focuses not only on students' cognitive abilities but also encompasses non-cognitive aspects such as attitude, character, creativity, collaboration, and social skills. Assessing non-cognitive aspects presents a unique challenge for teachers because they are more abstract and difficult to measure objectively.

Based on research (Azis, 2015), It has been explained that the affective aspect plays a crucial role in learning because it relates to students' attitudes, motivation, emotions, and behavior. However, in practice, assessment still focuses more on the cognitive aspect than on the affective aspect. This indicates that teachers still face difficulties in assessing students' character development and attitudes. These difficulties are influenced by the differences in each student's personality. Creativity, cooperation, and social skills cannot be assessed through a single learning activity alone. Teachers must conduct continuous observations to ensure assessment results align with students' actual conditions. However, time constraints and large class

sizes make it difficult for teachers to conduct in-depth observations of all students.

Furthermore, non-cognitive assessments are often influenced by teacher subjectivity. Aspects such as character and creativity are measured differently depending on each teacher's perspective. Consequently, assessment results are sometimes inconsistent and difficult to use as objective measures. Therefore, clearer assessment guidelines and adequate training are needed so that teachers can conduct non-cognitive assessments effectively and fairly.

d. Facilities and Technology

Resources and technology are key factors in ensuring the successful implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. This curriculum requires teachers to utilize technology in both instruction and assessment, such as digital media and learning platforms. However, not all schools have adequate facilities to support this implementation.

According to research (A. P. Rahmadani et al., 2024), It was explained that limited facilities and infrastructure pose obstacles to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. Some schools still lack the technological devices, internet connectivity, and learning materials needed to support digital assessments and project-based learning. These conditions have prevented the Merdeka Curriculum from being

implemented optimally. Beyond school facilities, teachers' ability to use technology also poses a challenge. Some teachers, particularly senior teachers, still struggle with digital learning tools. Yet, the Merdeka Curriculum requires teachers to leverage technology to enhance the quality of instruction and assessment.

A similar point is highlighted in the study (Vannisa et al., 2024), Teachers' technological skills are crucial for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. However, rapid curriculum changes mean that some teachers require additional time and training to adapt to advancements in educational technology. Furthermore, schools in remote areas face limited internet access, making it difficult to implement digital learning and assessment. These conditions have led to disparities in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum between urban schools and schools in rural areas. Therefore, equitable access to technological facilities and ongoing training for teachers are necessary to ensure that assessments can be conducted effectively.

e. Differences in Student Ability

Under the Merdeka Curriculum, teachers are required to implement differentiated instruction by tailoring their approach to students' abilities, interests, characteristics, and learning styles. The goal of differentiated assessment is to ensure that all students

can learn in a way that meets their individual needs. However, differences in students' abilities present a challenge for teachers in determining the most appropriate teaching methods and forms of assessment.

Based on research (Nadia et al., 2024), It is explained that differentiated instruction is carried out by grouping students based on the results of cognitive and non-cognitive diagnostic assessments. However, teachers still face difficulties in mapping students' abilities because each student has different ability levels in each subject. These difficulties arise because students' abilities within a single class are not always the same across all subjects. It is this variation in ability that requires teachers to adapt their teaching methods and assessment formats so that all students can effectively participate in the learning process.

Additionally, teachers must conduct diagnostic assessments before beginning instruction to determine students' comprehension levels and characteristics. This process naturally requires time, attention, and deeper observation from teachers. In practice, teachers are not only expected to understand students' academic abilities but also to understand each student's learning styles, interests, and characteristics so that assessments align with students' needs. In the study (Nadia et al., 2024), It was explained that some

students still struggle to understand the instructional material provided. This situation requires teachers to readjust their teaching and assessment strategies so that students with lower abilities can still grasp the material being taught. Nevertheless, differentiated instruction also has a positive impact on the learning process. Students feel more supported because the teaching methods used are tailored to their individual abilities and learning styles. Therefore, even though differentiated assessment poses a challenge for teachers, its implementation serves a valuable purpose in helping students learn according to their individual abilities and needs.

The Impact of These Challenges

The various challenges in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum's assessment system certainly impact both the learning process and the assessment results produced by educators. These challenges range from a lack of teacher understanding, administrative complexities, difficulties in assessing non-cognitive aspects, and limitations in resources and technology, to differences in student abilities—all of which prevent the assessment process from functioning optimally in line with the Merdeka Curriculum's own objectives. One of the most visible impacts is the suboptimal assessment process. The multitude of assessment forms that teachers must

conduct often prevents the assessment process from running optimally. Teachers are required to conduct diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments, as well as project-based and character assessments of students, all simultaneously. This situation causes the assessment process to sometimes focus solely on completing administrative tasks rather than on a comprehensive understanding of student development.

In addition, the challenges in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum's assessment system also place a heavier workload on teachers. The numerous administrative tasks, the development of teaching modules, the creation of assessment instruments, and the documentation of learning outcomes make teachers feel overwhelmed in carrying out their duties. This increased workload not only affects the quality of learning but also impacts teachers' psychological well-being, leading to stress, fatigue, and burnout. These conditions can certainly affect teachers' effectiveness in conducting the learning process in the classroom. Another consequence is less accurate assessment results. Assessments of non-cognitive aspects such as character, creativity, and collaboration are often influenced by teachers' subjectivity because there are no truly objective measures. Furthermore, the large number of students and time constraints make it difficult for teachers

to conduct in-depth observations of each student's progress. Variations in student abilities within a single class also require teachers to adapt different assessment methods, resulting in assessment outcomes that sometimes fail to fully and objectively reflect students' abilities. These various impacts demonstrate that the challenges in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum's assessment system affect not only teachers as educators but also the quality of the learning process and student assessment outcomes.

Efforts or Solutions

Various challenges in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum's assessment system have impacted both the learning process and student assessment outcomes. Teachers' lack of understanding, administrative complexities, difficulties in assessing non-cognitive aspects, limited resources and technology, and variations in student abilities have resulted in the assessment process not yet functioning optimally in line with the Merdeka Curriculum's objectives. One of the most noticeable impacts is the suboptimal assessment process. The multitude of assessment types that must be conducted such as diagnostic, formative, summative, project-based, and character assessments makes it difficult for teachers to carry out comprehensive assessments within limited time frames. Consequently, the assessment process often focuses more on

completing administrative tasks than on deeply understanding students' progress. Furthermore, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum's assessment system has increased teachers' workload. Teachers are not only responsible for teaching but must also develop instructional modules, create assessment instruments, and document students' learning outcomes. The heavy administrative burden leads to teacher burnout, stress, and burnout in the classroom. These conditions inevitably affect the effectiveness of classroom learning and the quality of interaction between teachers and students. Another consequence is less accurate assessment results. The evaluation of non-cognitive aspects such as character, creativity, and cooperation is often influenced by teacher subjectivity because there are no truly objective measures in place. Additionally, large class sizes and time constraints make it difficult for teachers to conduct in-depth observations of each student. Variations in student ability within a single class also require teachers to adapt different assessment methods, meaning that assessment results do not fully reflect students' abilities in an objective and comprehensive manner.

From these various impacts, it is evident that the challenges of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum's assessment system affect not only teachers but also the quality of the

learning process and students' learning outcomes. Therefore, various efforts are needed to ensure that the assessment process runs more effectively and aligns with the objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum. One of the most important efforts is regular teacher training. Teachers need training on assessment design, differentiated instruction, the use of technology, and authentic assessment so they can gain a deeper understanding of the Merdeka Curriculum system. Teacher readiness is a key factor in success curriculum implementation, as teachers are the primary implementers of learning in schools. Through ongoing training, teachers are expected to be able to adapt to curriculum changes and developments in education. Streamlining administrative tasks is also a key solution for reducing teachers' workloads. Until now, teachers have had to complete various administrative tasks, such as developing teaching modules, assessment instruments, and learning outcome reports. An overly complex administrative burden makes it difficult for teachers to balance their time between teaching activities and administrative duties. Therefore, a simpler and more efficient administrative system is needed so that teachers can focus more on the learning process and the development of students in the classroom (Wantiana & Mellisa, 2023).

In addition, the use of technology can assist teachers in implementing assessments under the Merdeka Curriculum. Technology can be used to create digital assessments, process grades, generate learning outcome reports, and provide more engaging and interactive learning materials. The use of technology also supports digital-based learning to make the learning process more effective and in line with the times. However, the use of technology must be supported by adequate facilities, such as internet connectivity and digital learning devices, to ensure its optimal implementation (Lampung et al., 2023). In addition, support from schools and the government is essential to ensure that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum assessment system is as effective as possible. Schools need to provide adequate learning facilities and create a learning environment that supports the implementation of the curriculum. The government also needs to provide outreach, guidance, and training equitably to all educators to prevent disparities in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum between schools in urban areas and remote regions. Such support is crucial so that teachers can conduct instruction and assessment optimally in accordance with the objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum. (Fathurohman et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

The implementation of assessment in the Merdeka Curriculum still faces various challenges experienced by educators. The biggest challenges faced by teachers include a lack of understanding of the Merdeka Curriculum's assessment system, administrative complexities, difficulties in assessing non-cognitive aspects, limited resources and technology, and differences in students' abilities during the learning process. Teacher readiness is a critical factor in the successful implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum's assessment system. Teachers are expected to understand differentiated instruction, utilize various forms of assessment, and leverage technology in both teaching and assessment. Therefore, enhancing teachers' competencies through training and mentoring is essential to ensure they can adapt to the evolving curriculum changes.

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