

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter, the researcher presents about theoretical description and previous study.

#### A. Definition of Curriculum

The concept of curriculum is derived from the Latin word "Curriculae," signifying the course that runners must traverse<sup>20</sup>. Hamalik further characterizes the curriculum as a specified period of educational instruction that students need to complete to earn an educational certificate. Additionally, Sukiman cites Caswell and Campbell, who define curriculum as encompassing all the experiences children undergo under the guidance of teachers<sup>21</sup>.

John Dewey, a notable American philosopher and educator, formulated impactful theories regarding education and curriculum. He emphasized that education should be based on real-life experiences and aim to foster critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Below are some fundamental aspects of Dewey's curriculum theory :<sup>22</sup>

- a. Learning by doing : Dewey highlighted that students learn most effectively through active involvement and practical experiences. He argued that education should move beyond passive information intake, focusing instead on interacting with and shaping one's environment to build understanding.
- b. Integration of subjects : Dewey supported an integrated curriculum over a compartmentalized approach. He believed that subjects should be interconnected rather than taught separately, mirroring how knowledge is utilized in real-world contexts.
- c. Child-centered education : Dewey's approach was primarily student-centered. He contended that the curriculum should be designed around the students' interests and needs, motivating them to explore, inquire, and follow their curiosities.

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<sup>20</sup> Hamalik, O. (2014). *Kurikulum dan Pembelajaran*. Bumi Aksara.

<sup>21</sup> Sukiman. (2015). *Pengembangan Kurikulum Perguruan Tinggi*. Rosdakarya.

<sup>22</sup> Dewey, J. (1988). Experience and education. In J. A. Boydston (Ed.), *John Dewey: The later works 1925-1953: Vol 13, 1938-1939* (pp. 1-62). Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press.

- d. Social interaction : Dewey viewed education as fundamentally social. He emphasized the significance of group work and collaboration, proposing that students learn from one another through discussions and collective problem-solving activities.
- e. Democracy and education : Dewey regarded education as a tool to advance democratic values. He believed schools should operate as small-scale democratic communities where students can engage in democratic processes and cultivate social responsibility.
- f. Critical thinking and reflective thought : Dewey's curriculum focused on fostering critical thinking skills. He aimed for students to think reflectively, challenge assumptions, and solve problems using inquiry-based learning.
- g. Experiential learning : Dewey championed experiential learning, encouraging students to participate in projects, experiments, and activities directly connected to their lives and communities. This method aimed to make education more relevant and practical.
- h. Continuous growth : Dewey regarded education as an ongoing process throughout life. He believed the curriculum should emphasize continuous growth and development, adjusting to students' evolving needs as they move through various life stages.

In essence, Dewey's curriculum theory was groundbreaking in its era, redirecting attention from conventional rote learning and inflexible frameworks to a more dynamic, interactive, and student-centric educational approach. His concepts have left a lasting imprint on educational theory and practice, shaping modern teaching methods and the structure of present-day curricula.

Furthermore, Hilda Taba, as referenced in Fadlilah, characterizes the curriculum as a blueprint for learning. Consequently, a comprehensive understanding of the learning process and individual development plays a pivotal role in shaping the curriculum<sup>23</sup>. This suggests that the curriculum functions as a learning plan, incorporating diverse guidelines and outcomes. In

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<sup>23</sup> Fadlilah, M. (2014). Implementasi Kurikulum 2013 dalam Pembelajaran SD/MI, SMP/MTS dan SMA. Ar Ruzz Media.

essence, the curriculum serves as the cornerstone of education, offering guidance for educational components to attain predetermined objectives. This includes (a) all intentional learning activities within the school's purview, (b) the complete student experience guided by the school, (c) a comprehensive series of learning encounters designed for students to acquire general skills and knowledge across diverse learning environments, and (d) all experiences students encounter throughout their lives<sup>24</sup>. Based on this definition, it can be deduced that the curriculum is a systematic plan comprising various learning experiences provided to students, facilitating the achievement of their educational goals in terms of skills and knowledge.

Drawing from the previously mentioned definitions, one can infer that the curriculum serves as an educational framework or tool. It encompasses teaching materials and programmed learning experiences that are systematically designed and planned according to relevant norms. This educational program is employed as a guide during the learning process for both educators and students, with the aim of attaining maximum educational objectives.

### **1. Curriculum function**

The curriculum in education has a very important and strategic function and position. This is because the curriculum will bring and shape education as expected. As a vehicle and medium for internalization, the curriculum functions as a tool for understanding, appreciating and at the same time practicing knowledge and life values. According to Soetopo and Seomanto, the function of the curriculum is to achieve educational goals. The curriculum in an educational unit (school) is a tool or effort to achieve educational goals desired by a particular school which are considered quite appropriate and crucial to achieve. One of the steps that must be taken is to review the objectives that have been used by the school concerned.

#### **a. The Function of the Curriculum for Students**

The existence of the curriculum as a learning organization is a preparation for students. Education must be oriented to the interests of students, and they need to be given knowledge to live in their time.

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<sup>24</sup> Marsh, C. J. (2004). *Key Concept for Understanding Curriculum*. Routledge Falmer.

b. Function of the Curriculum for Educators or Teachers

Teachers are professional educators who have implicitly volunteered themselves to shoulder some of the educational responsibilities that rest on the shoulders of parents. Parents who send their children to school have delegated some of the responsibility for their children's education to teachers or educators. This is a form of parents' hope that their children will find good, competent and qualified teachers.

c. Function of the Curriculum for School Principals

The principal is an administrator and supervisor who has responsibility for the curriculum. The function of the curriculum for school principals is as a guide in carrying out supervision functions, namely improving learning situations.

d. Function of Curriculum for Parents

For parents, the curriculum functions as a form of parental participation in helping the school's efforts to advance their children. The assistance in question can take the form of direct consultations with schools or teachers regarding problems concerning their children<sup>25</sup>.

## 2. Curriculum benefits

Essentially, the curriculum serves as a guide for the teaching and learning process to effectively achieve national education goals. Based on the definition of curriculum, several advantages can be identified.

a. Benefits of Curriculum for Teachers

The curriculum functions as a tool for planning, executing, and assessing the outcomes of learning endeavors. It offers guidance to teaching personnel, enhancing their comprehension of their duties and responsibilities. Furthermore, the curriculum stimulates creativity among teaching staff during the teaching and learning process, ultimately contributing to improved teaching practices..

b. Benefits of Curriculum for Schools

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<sup>25</sup> Tarpan Suparman, *Kurikulum Dan Pembelajaran* (Jawa Tengah: CV. Sarnu Untung, 2020), 14.

The curriculum serves as a catalyst for schools to effectively deliver education within their specific educational units. It creates possibilities for schools to tailor the curriculum to their unique requirements and functions as a tool to strive towards achieving educational program objectives.

c. Benefits of Curriculum for Society

The curriculum serves as a reference or benchmark for parents in overseeing their children's learning journey. It enables community involvement in the enhancement and refinement of educational programs through constructive criticism and suggestions<sup>26</sup>. (Joko,2022)

### 3. Curriculum Components

In the curriculum there are 4 (four) components that make up the curriculum. The curriculum component elements are as follows:

a. Goal Component

The curriculum is a learning system that is used to achieve goals because the success or failure of the learning system is measured by the number of goals achieved. Based on Minister of National Education Regulation no. 22 of 2007, the aim of basic education is to lay the foundation of intelligence, knowledge, personality, noble morals and *Merdeka* living skills as well as continuing further education.

b. Content Components (Teaching Part)

The curriculum in the content component is something that is given to students for learning activities to achieve goals.

c. Strategy Components

Strategies in learning are reflected in the methods used in learning, conducting assessments, implementing guidance and organizing activities both general and specific in nature. Implementation strategies are teaching, assessment, guidance and counselling on school activities. Achieving the

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<sup>26</sup> Joko Widodo, Indrianto Setyo Basori, and Erwiin Harri Kurniawan, *Penyusunan Kurikulum Oprasional Sekolah (KOS) Di Sekolah Penggerak* (Malang: Ahlimedia Press, 2022), 7.

goal requires good implementation in delivering students to that goal, which is the benchmark for the learning program.

d. Evaluation Component

The curriculum component in evaluation is data that is useful for checking the level of achievement of the objectives of a curriculum both in the process and in student learning outcomes. Curriculum evaluation has an important role in determining decisions on developing a curriculum model so that it can be decided whether the curriculum can continue to be used, revised or replaced<sup>27</sup>.

## **B. The Definition “*merdeka*” Curriculum**

The *Merdeka* Curriculum, initiated by Minister Nadiem Makarim, serves as an evaluation and improvement of the 2013 Curriculum, formerly known as the Prototype Curriculum. This initiative aims to nurture a more competent generation in various fields. According to Hamdani, the *Merdeka* Curriculum emphasizes diverse learning practices that encourage independent thinking<sup>28</sup>. The concept allows for individual determination and is characterized by freedom for schools, teachers, and students to engage in independent, creative, and responsible learning within a pleasant atmosphere, as described by Baderan & Indrajit<sup>29</sup>.

*Merdeka Belajar*, a program initiated by the Minister of Education and Culture, Mr. Nadiem Makarim, aims to create an enjoyable learning environment. As described by Syukri in Saleh, *Merdeka Belajar* represents an educational process designed to foster a pleasant atmosphere for students, teachers, parents, and all stakeholders. The primary goal of *Merdeka Belajar* is to unlock the full potential of both teachers and students, improving the quality of education by granting teachers the freedom to choose how they deliver the

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<sup>27</sup> Ifrianti, Syofnidah, ‘Implementasi Metode Bermain Dalam Meningkatkan Hasil Belajar IPS Di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah’, Terampil: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran Dasar, 2.2 (2015), 150–69

<sup>28</sup> Hamdani. (2022). Implementasi Pengembangan Kurikulum Merdeka di SMP. In Pengembangan Kurikulum Merdeka (1st ed.). CV. Literasi Nusantara Abadi.

<sup>29</sup> Baderan, J. K., & Indrajit, R. E. (2020). Design Thinking: Membangun Generasi Emas dengan Konsep Konsep Merdeka Belajar. Andi Offset.

curriculum and employ teaching methods that align with their students' competencies.

As stated by Hariawan Birawa in Saleh, *Merdeka Belajar* is founded on the aspiration that educational outcomes yield higher quality and cultivate students who possess not only proficient memorization skills but also sharp analytical thinking capabilities and a comprehensive understanding of learning to enhance self-improvement<sup>30</sup>. *Merdeka Belajar* concept aims to restore education to its fundamental principles, providing schools with the autonomy to comprehend the core competencies of the curriculum for their evaluation<sup>31</sup>.

Kusumaryono stated that the *Merdeka Belajar* coined by the Minister of Education and Culture Nadiem Makarim can be drawn from several points, namely as follows :

1. "Freedom to Learn" is the answer to that problem faced by teachers in educational practice.
2. Teachers experience a lightened professional workload as they are granted the liberty to evaluate student learning using diverse assessment tools, freedom from cumbersome administrative procedures, and relief from the pressures of intimidation, criminalization, or politicization in their roles.
3. Examining the challenges encountered by teachers in school-related learning tasks involves addressing issues such as accepting new students (input), managing teacher administration in preparation for teaching, including lesson plans and the learning process, as well as evaluation challenges like USBN-UN (output).
4. Teachers, playing a pivotal role in molding the nation's future through the educational process, must prioritize the creation of a more joyful learning environment in the classroom. This can be achieved through educational policies that benefit both teachers and students.

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<sup>30</sup> Saleh, M. (2020). *Merdeka Belajar di Tengah Pandemi Covid 19*. Prosiding Semnas Hardiknas, 1.

<sup>31</sup> Kusumaryono, R. S. (2020). *Merdeka Belajar*. <https://gtk.kemendikbud.go.id/read-news/merdeka-belajar>.

5. The notion of "Merdeka Belajar" as expressed by Nadiem Makarim during the National Teachers' Day (HGN) event, was perceived not merely as a conceptual idea but as an imminent policy to be put into action. The essence of the *Merdeka* learning concept lies in its proposition to restructure the national education system, adapting it to the evolving needs and advancements of the nation. This restructuring aims to revive the fundamental purpose of education, which is to humanize individuals and provide liberating education<sup>32</sup>.

The curriculum has a big influence on what teachers teach, as well as on how the material is taught. Therefore, a well-designed curriculum will encourage and make it easier for teachers to teach better.

The Merdeka curriculum aims to develop children's interests and talents from an early age by focusing on core material, character building, and student competence. This curriculum has been piloted in 2,500 *sekolah penggerak*. It was introduced not only to these driving schools but also to other schools. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2022, 143,265 schools are using the Merdeka curriculum. This number is expected to increase as the Merdeka curriculum is implemented at the kindergarten, elementary, middle, and high school levels for the 2022-2023 school year.

The implementation is guided by the Decree of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology Number 56 of 2022, which outlines the guidelines for curriculum implementation in the context of learning recovery, to be implemented in stages according to the provisions:

- a. The first year is carried out for students aged 5 (five) to 6 (six) years in early childhood education, as well as students in class I, class IV, class VII, and class ;
- b. The second year is implemented for students aged 4 (four) to 6 (six) years in early childhood education, as well as students in class I, class II, class IV, class V, class VII, class X, and class XI at the primary and secondary education levels; And

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<sup>32</sup> Muhammad Yamin and Syahrir, 'Pembangunan Pendidikan Merdeka Belajar (Telaah Metode Pembelajaran)', *Jurnal Ilmiah Mandala Education*, 6 No. 1 (2020), <https://doi.org/10.36312/jime.v6i1.1121>.



- c. The third year is implemented for students aged 3 (three) to 6 (six) years in early childhood education, as well as students in class I, class II, class III, class IV, class V, class VI, class VII, class VIII, class IX, class X, class XI and class XII at the primary and secondary education levels<sup>33</sup>.

In implementing the independent pathway independent curriculum, there are three options, namely:

- 1) *Mandiri belajar*, The *Merdeka* learning alternative grants autonomy to educational institutions to incorporate specific components and principles of the *Merdeka* curriculum without altering the existing curriculum in Early Childhood Education (PAUD) units, grades 1, 4, 7, and 10.
- 2) *Mandiri berubah*, The *Merdeka* choice is modified to afford autonomy to educational institutions in the implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum by utilizing the provided teaching tools in Early Childhood Education (PAUD) units, grades 1, 4, 7, and 10.
- 3) *Mandiri berbagi*, The *Merdeka* sharing option allows educational units the freedom to implement the *Merdeka* Curriculum by creating diverse teaching tools independently in Early Childhood Education (PAUD) units, grades 1, 4, 7, and 10<sup>34</sup>.

Schools can implement one of three options The *Merdeka* Curriculum suits each individual's readiness.

### 1. The objective *Merdeka* curriculum

In accordance with Decree Number 56 of 2022 by the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, education in Indonesia experienced setbacks and lagged behind during the Covid-19 era. The *Merdeka* Curriculum policy has been introduced as a remedy to address the challenges faced by the previous education system. The primary goal of the *Merdeka* Curriculum is to tackle the deficiencies in the previous educational approach. This curriculum aims to guide the development of students'

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<sup>33</sup> Keputusan Kemendikbudristek Nomor 56'. 'Keputusan Kemendikbudristek Nomor 56', [https://jdih.kemdikbud.go.id/sjdih/siperpu/dokumen/salinan/salinan\\_20220215\\_093900\\_S\\_alinanKepmendikbudristekNo.56ttgPedomanPenerapanKurikulum.pdf](https://jdih.kemdikbud.go.id/sjdih/siperpu/dokumen/salinan/salinan_20220215_093900_S_alinanKepmendikbudristekNo.56ttgPedomanPenerapanKurikulum.pdf).

<sup>34</sup> Arifa. Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Dan Tantangannya', Bidang Kesejahteraan Rakyat: Info Singkat, 14.9 (2022), 25–30, [https://berkas.dpr.go.id/puslit/files/info\\_singkat/InfoSingkat-XIV-9-I-P3DI-Mei-2022-1953.pdf](https://berkas.dpr.go.id/puslit/files/info_singkat/InfoSingkat-XIV-9-I-P3DI-Mei-2022-1953.pdf).

potential and competencies. It is designed to enhance the learning process, making it both relevant and interactive. This approach is intended to spark students' interest and enable them to explore issues within their environment.

Derived from the *Merdeka Belajar* initiative, individuals involved in education in Indonesia are dedicated to fostering Merdeka thinking. This independence in thinking is geared towards achieving enhanced educational objectives and advancing the nation's culture and character. The goals of the *Merdeka Belajar* program are prioritized with the aim of establishing an education system that contributes positively to the well-being of the nation and the state <sup>35</sup>.

Certainly, the aim of *Merdeka Belajar* is to elevate the learning encounter. It is becoming a crucial avenue in education to achieve goals and aspirations that encourage welfare, equilibrium, and ingenuity in both teaching and learning procedures <sup>36</sup>. The *Merdeka Belajar* initiative acts as a substitute to cultivate inventive thinking and facilitate an unrestrained creative process through diverse activities.

## 2. Implementation of learning in the *merdeka* curriculum

Referring to the directives outlined by the BSKAP of the Ministry of Education and Culture regarding the phases of executing the *Merdeka* Curriculum in educational institutions, the curriculum implementation involves planning, implementing, and evaluation, outlined as follows:

### a. Planning

The planning stage entails formulating written goals that align with the vision and mission of the educational unit. This involves multiple steps, including creating the Learning Objective Flow, Teaching Modules, and utilizing and improving instructional tools.

### b. Implementation

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<sup>35</sup> Asfiati. (2020). Visualisasi dan Virtualisasi Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam Versi Program Merdeka Belajar dalam Tiga Era (Revolusi Industri 5.0, Era Pandemi Covid-19, dan Era New Normal). Kencana.

<sup>36</sup> Christianna, A. (2019). "Merdeka Belajar" Melalui Berkesenian (rupa). <http://repository.petra.ac.id/18609/>.

The implementation phase involves incorporating the planned elements into the actual execution, providing diverse guidance and motivation to ensure each participant optimally fulfills their roles, duties, and responsibilities. Specific provisions include the implementation of the Pancasila student profiles, a student-focused learning approach, integration of assessments into the learning process, and tailoring the instruction to match student learning stages.

c. Evaluation

The evaluation phase entails assessing something according to specific criteria to generate the necessary dataset or information set, as outlined by Aisyah (2022)<sup>37</sup>.

In the *Merdeka* Curriculum, the emphasis on learning highlights the significance of formulating teaching strategies aligned with the various stages of student learning achievement, commonly referred to as Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL).

This approach involves presenting diverse learning materials tailored to individual student comprehension levels. The objective of this differentiation is to ensure that each student attains the intended learning objectives. As per Kemendikbud<sup>38</sup>, the subsequent illustration outlines the cycle of learning implementation:

- 1) In the initial phase of learning, instructors conduct assessments to gauge the preparedness of each student to engage with the designed material.
- 2) Drawing insights from the assessment outcomes, educators adapt or make adjustments to their plans for certain students.
- 3) Utilize diverse formative assessment methods throughout the learning process to monitor progress.

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<sup>37</sup> Aisyah, N. (2022). Tahapan Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka, Tiap Jenjang Juga Ada Ketentuan Sendiri. Detikedu. <https://www.detik.com/edu/sekolah/d-6218114/tahapan-implementasi-kurikulum-merdeka-tiap-jenjang-juga-ada-ketentuan-sendiri>

<sup>38</sup> Kemendikbud. (2022). Panduan Pembelajaran dan Asesmen. Badan Standar, Kurikulum, dan Asesmen Pendidikan Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi Republik Indonesia.

- 4) Perform a concluding evaluation at the conclusion of the learning period to assess the achievement of learning objectives. This assessment can function as an initial review for the following lesson.

### **C. The difficulties in implementing *merdeka* curriculum**

The research primarily focuses on the teaching and learning process, examining the challenges schools face in implementing the curriculum. A significant hindrance arises from an inadequate comprehension, which hampers the organization of learning activities. Despite previous training, teachers frequently find themselves unsure whether their implementation aligns with curriculum expectations. This uncertainty is unsurprising given the longstanding absence of autonomy for teachers, who have historically operated within stringent guidelines for over seven decades. Besides, the limited face-to-face learning (PTMT) exacerbates challenges, particularly in underdeveloped regions. Teachers struggle to conduct meaningful learning experiences beyond traditional classrooms due to minimal time allowances and heightened concerns surrounding COVID-19. Consequently, teachers perceive the learning process as suboptimal.<sup>39</sup>

Conversely, in economically disadvantaged regions, insufficient infrastructure remains a significant barrier. Teachers encounter difficulties in delivering various modules due to the lack of electricity and internet connectivity. Additionally, the limited availability of safe classrooms persists as a hindrance to learning in underprivileged areas. Both in disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged regions, some educators anticipate substantial support from expert trainers to gain a comprehensive understanding of the curriculum. This assistance is crucial for facilitating knowledge and experience sharing among teachers to design student-centric curricula effectively. Moreover, schools require teaching aids and parental support to streamline the implementation of learning activities.

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<sup>39</sup> Anindito Aditomo, panduan pembelajaran dan assessmen. Badan Standar, Kurikulum, dan Asesmen Pendidikan Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi.2022

In addition, the factors can inhibit the curriculum change and implementation are : <sup>40</sup>

1. Knowledge and planning

Principals play a pivotal role in interpreting educational policies, particularly those related to curriculum, underscoring their indispensable knowledge. When preparing for curriculum changes, principals must assess the required human, financial, and physical resources essential for successful implementation. Inadequate alignment of implementation plans with the specific context of schools frequently results in unsuccessful curriculum reforms. Principals are responsible for coordinating school activities to ensure that teaching and learning practices align with the school's vision. Possessing appropriate knowledge, skills, and attitudes is crucial for fostering educational innovation and enhancing the effectiveness of curriculum management.

2. Lack of vision

Lacking a clear vision, efforts toward transformation can turn into a series of confusing, incongruent, and time-consuming initiatives. The most significant mistake that leaders make during the implementation of curriculum changes is rushing in without first formulating a vision of how the process will proceed and designing a comprehensive implementation plan with the expected results. The functionality of a school depends on the existence of a vision, which must be communicated effectively to all stakeholders to maintain overall focus.

3. Teachers attitudes

The success of the curriculum teachers encounter daily greatly depends on their ability to comprehend curriculum changes. Teachers hold significant influence in translating curriculum policies into practical applications, as they possess the capacity to interpret and adapt meanings in various ways. This necessitates teachers to possess the necessary knowledge, skills, positive mindset, and enthusiasm for teaching. While

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<sup>40</sup> Mandukwini, Nompumelelo. Challenges Towards Curriculum Implementation In High Schools In Mount Fletcher District, Eastern Cape. Master education : university of south Africa. 2016. Pg.44

some educators may willingly embrace new innovations, others may resist change, particularly when it involves adjusting deeply ingrained personal values and beliefs shaped by past experiences and practices.

#### **D. Definition of strategy in implementing *merdeka* curriculum**

The word strategy comes from the Latin “strategia”, which means the art of using plans to achieve goals. In general, strategy can be interpreted as a tool, plan, or strategy used to complete a task. According to Wina Sanjaya, the term military strategy was first used in the military world to mean a way of using all military forces to win a battle. In the learning concept, strategy and approach are interconnected in the delivery of material within the scope of learning.<sup>41</sup>

Strategy is a holistic systemic approach related to ideas, planning and implementation of an activity in a specific time period. In a good strategy, there is team work synergy, the concept of identification of supporting factors is in accordance with the principles of logical implementation of ideas, efficiency in managing funds, and there is a strategy to achieve efficient goals.<sup>42</sup>

In other words, strategy can be defined as a method that educators or instructors choose and use contextually, in accordance with the characteristics of learning participants, environmental conditions and school conditions as well as the specific learning objectives that are formulated. Strategy can also be interpreted as a way to achieve a goal, one of which is implementing learning to achieve several objectives of providing material at various levels.

#### **E. Previous Studies**

While conducting research, researchers encountered several previous studies such as in theses or journals, especially those that explored the implementation, benefits and challenges of the Independent Curriculum. Even though there are existing studies, they generally provide a broad picture and do not discuss them in depth and specifically, thus creating difficulties in comprehensively understanding the implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum

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<sup>41</sup> Irwan M, Nasution P. *Mobile Learning Pada Sekolah Dasar*. J Perpust Dan Inf. 2016;10(01):1–14.

<sup>42</sup> Fandi Tjiptono, *Strategi Pemasaran*, Cet. Ke-II (Yogyakarta: Andi, 2000), hlm 17.

regarding challenges and strategies. While research on the *Merdeka* Curriculum has been conducted, it primarily focuses on other domains. Therefore, this research was undertaken by the researcher to offer a clear and focused insight into the implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum within various schools in the city of Kediri. The literature review conducted by the researcher yielded several research titles related to the subject matter addressed in this study.

The initial relevant study was conducted by Fieka Nurul Arifa (2022) under the title "Implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum and Its Challenges." The primary objective of this study was to assess the implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum and identify challenges associated with it. The research findings indicated that the *Merdeka* Curriculum is introduced as an additional option for educational recovery post the COVID-19 pandemic, emphasizing the need for collaborative efforts among all stakeholders to ensure meaningful outcomes. The study also highlighted challenges related to the readiness of educators' competencies, skills, and mindset, along with issues concerning facilities and infrastructure readiness in implementing the *Merdeka* Curriculum<sup>43</sup>.

The second research study focused on investigating the impact of school management on the implementation of the *Merdeka* Curriculum. The researchers conducted interviews with principals and distributed questionnaires to teachers, curriculum development teams, and school management. The findings revealed that school management significantly influences readiness for curriculum changes. This implies that the more thorough and sustained the preparation by school administration, the higher the likelihood of successful and improved quality implementation of the curriculum<sup>44</sup>.

Kasman & Lubis (2022) conducted a study titled "Designs of Teachers' Performance Evaluation Instruments in Implementing the New Learning Paradigm of the *Merdeka* Curriculum," which focuses on developing an assessment tool to gauge teachers' effectiveness in adopting the new learning approach introduced by the *Merdeka* Curriculum. The research employs a

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<sup>43</sup> Fieka Nurul Arifa. (2022). Implementation of Independent Curriculum and Its Challenges. 14(56).

<sup>44</sup> Fathurrahman, Fathurrahman, Bambang Syamsul Arifin, Abdul Muhyi .and Miftahul Huda , 2022. "The Influence of School Management on The Implementation of The *Merdeka* Belajar ".Curriculum*AL-TANZIM: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 6, no. 4 (September): 1274–86. <https://doi.org/10.33650/al-tanzim.v6i4.3461>.

qualitative methodology and incorporates a literature review. Data analysis follows the Miles and Huberman interactive model, encompassing data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions/verification. The study findings highlight that teacher learning planning, implementation, and assessment are integral to designing performance evaluation instruments for the Merdeka Curriculum's new learning paradigm. Evaluating lesson planning is based on the comprehensiveness of components within the Modul Ajar created by teachers<sup>45</sup>.

The fourth take from Sugiri & Priatmoko focus their research on primary school teachers. They took the authentic assessment perspective applied in *Kurikulum Merdeka* as the focus. They found that teachers were able to carry out the authentic assessment as well. Even though they ever had one in the previous curriculum (Curriculum 2013), it needs to be more integrated as an evaluation tool in the *Kurikulum Merdeka*<sup>46</sup>.

The final relevant study, conducted by Prakoso and titled "Teacher's Perception On *Merdeka Belajar* Policy," aims to investigate teachers' perceptions of the *Merdeka Belajar* policy. This study employs a mixed research design, utilizing thematic content analysis to gain insights into teachers' perceptions of the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* policy in schools. The researcher also assessed teachers' readiness to use a portfolio instrument, which is part of the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar*. The study involved 30 teachers who received open-ended questionnaires, participated in focus group discussions (FGD), and completed a portfolio assessment questionnaire. The findings indicate that teachers in Indonesia view the *Merdeka Belajar* policy as an effective alternative for providing instruction to students, aligning with the available resources at their schools. Teachers see it as a mechanism for implementing the learning process based on local wisdom and optimizing school

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<sup>45</sup> Kasman, K., & Lubis, S. K. (2022). Teachers' Performance Evaluation Instrument Designs in the Implementation of the New Learning Paradigm of the Merdeka Curriculum. *Jurnal Kependidikan: Jurnal Hasil Penelitian Dan Kajian Kepustakaan Di Bidang Pendidikan, Pengajaran Dan Pembelajaran*, 8(3), 760. <https://doi.org/10.33394/jk.v8i3.5674>.

<sup>46</sup> Sugiri, Wiku Aji, and Sigit Priatmoko. "Perspektif Asesmen Autentik Sebagai Alat Evaluasi Dalam Merdeka Belajar." *At-Thullab: Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* 4. <https://doi.org/10.30736/atl.v4i1.119>. no. 1 (2020): 53-61.



resources. The conceptual understanding of *Merdeka Belajar* among teachers centers around the freedom to teach, express learning, and create a comfortable environment for both students and teachers to share and learn. However, teachers express the need for structured socialization, clear guidance, freedom based on their abilities and personalities, as well as technical and substantive training to effectively implement the policy. Conceptually, *Merdeka Belajar* is perceived as a planned educational implementation that grants teachers the freedom and actualization to execute the national curriculum in accordance with the resources available at their schools<sup>47</sup>.

With regard to the explanations above, previous studies focused on the implementation of the Independent Curriculum by taking the views of teachers. school readiness and management, human resources during COVID-19. challenges faced by institutions, collaboration between parties involved (school principals, teachers, local government, or stakeholders). Researchers feel it is important to fill this gap by finding out more specific perspectives from English study teachers through their narratives, especially in public and private institutions that have high and low accreditation. Therein lies the novelty of this research. Knowing their experiences implementing the *Merdeka* Curriculum in EFL classes and interpreting their life stories can provide broader knowledge about English subjects in the *Merdeka* Curriculum. This can also provide feedback to teachers and stakeholders of public and private schools that have high and low accreditation about how the *Merdeka* Curriculum is received by teachers who play a very important role in implementing the *Merdeka* Curriculum.

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<sup>47</sup> Prakoso, Bagus Hary, Zulmi Ramdani, and Bilqisthi Rahmah. 2021. "Indonesian Journal of Educational Assessment teacher's perception on merdeka belajar policy." *Indonesian Journal of Educational Assessment*, 130–37. <http://ijeajournal.kemdikbud.go.id>.