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Analysis of the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum Policy in Vocational High Schools: A Qualitative Research

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Abstract: The purpose of this research is to get an overview: 1). How is the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum policy at vocational high school Pekanbaru city, 2) What are the obstacles to implementing the Merdeka Curriculum policy at vocational high school Pekanbaru city, and 3) What efforts have been taken to overcome various existing problems. Data collection techniques using active participation observation techniques, interviews and document studies. This study found that: 1) Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum policy at vocational high school Pekanbaru city by implementing an education system in the realm of input, process and output; 2) Obstacles to the implementation of independent learning from vocational high school Pekanbaru city include (1) Fulfillment of industrial competence requires a programmed increase in teacher competency; (2) Changes in dynamic industry competency standards require sustainable curriculum development and fulfillment of adequate infrastructure; (3) Difficulties in facilitating learning effectively according to industrial culture; 3) Efforts to overcome existing obstacles from the implementation of independent learning are: a) Creating a cooperation agreement program between vocational high schools and Industry; (b) Develop learning methods that are able to create a working atmosphere like in a company; (c) Curriculum synchronization with partner industries for curriculum development; (d) Improving teacher competency in the context of meeting industry expectations.

Keywords: merdeka curriculum, education, vocational high school.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is the essence of the law to give schools independence to understand the basic competencies of the curriculum as their assessment. Merdeka Belajar is providing freedom and autonomy to educational institutions and freedom from bureaucratization. The essence of Merdeka Belajar is that schools, teachers and students have the freedom to innovate, are free to learn independently and creatively [3]. Changes to the Merdeka Belajar Policy will occur in the following categories: (1) educational ecosystem; (2) teacher; (3) pedagogy; (4) curriculum; and (5) assessment system [4]. The Merdeka

curriculum is a revolution in Indonesian education that is increasingly high quality. Independence provides a wide range of flexibility in the curriculum.

Independence means that teachers are given the right to incorporate local wisdom and freedom of thought so that the nation's children can think independently and not be colonized by narrow thinking. Merdeka Belajar is implemented to free up the brains and economic opportunities of the nation's future children when they enter the world of work, to free up teachers to be able to determine what is best for their children's level of competence and interests, and to free up educational institutions to innovate and try new things. the new one. Freedom to Learn is freedom to think. Nadiem A. Makarim defines freedom to learn as freedom to innovate, freedom to learn independently and creatively. This means that schools, teachers and students have freedom to learn and prepare lessons. Indonesia becomes fully human. The embodiment of this mandate is the enactment of Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which is the juridical and philosophical basis for implementing the policy of freedom to learn, freedom to think, freedom to innovate, freedom to learn independently and creatively where teachers and students have freedom in study and prepare lessons. Education today has too many bureaucratic burdens that are too complicated.

Merdeka Belajar revitalizes the education system to build key competencies so that learning activities become enjoyable. In the pedagogy category, Merdeka Belajar encourages competency and values-based, curriculum and assessment; as well as an individual needs-based and student-centered approach. In the curriculum category, Merdeka Belajar forms a competency-based curriculum, focusing on soft skills and character development, while in the assessment system category, Merdeka Belajar presents formative assessments and is based on portfolios. The development of vocational high schools is focused on increasing competence as a foundation for building the nation's independence and competitiveness in facing global competition in the future. Various policies implemented by the government (especially the Directorate of Vocational High School Development) together with other stakeholders have produced a number of achievements as a direct impact of these various improvement efforts. The independent learning policy is a learning reform that has an impact on demands for changes in the paradigm of educators in designing the curriculum, developing learning and evaluating it. Freedom to learn makes learning very flexible both in terms of content, strategy and place of learning.

METHODS

In this research, a methodology with a qualitative descriptive approach is used, which has natural characteristics (natural setting) as a source of direct, descriptive data, the process is more important than the results. In this case the research used is analytical descriptive research, which means describing and providing analysis of themes discussed, distribution of instruments to describe descriptively the phenomena that occur in the field. The choice of a descriptive analytical approach with the aim of obtaining and describing "Analysis of the Implementation of the Independent Learning policy in the vocational high school curriculum". This research activity includes collecting data, analyzing data, interpreting data, and ending with a conclusion that refers to analyzing the data.

This research was conducted by a vocational high school in the city of Pekanbaru, Riau Province. The location taken in this research was determined purposively and was carried out at a school institution in the Pekanbaru city area with the consideration that the vocational high school in Pekanbaru City has achieved achievements as an Indonesian Vocational High School Pilot Project, School with Integrity and Industrial Area School and Bonded areas that indicate the application of independent learning.

The following is the research design flow to provide an overview of what the researcher will carry out: (a) Pre-field stage; (b) Field work stage (c) Post Field Stage,

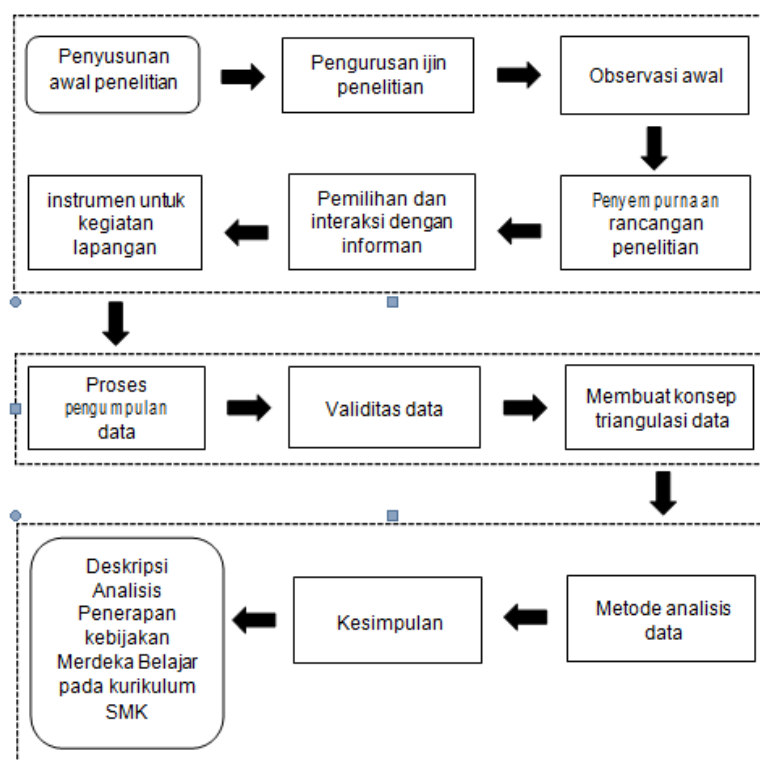


FIGURE 1. *Research Procedure*

The data collection methods in this research are: (a) Observation, carried out for data collection. In this study, researchers conducted observations of vocational high schools in the city of Pekanbaru. The process of observing the implementation of the independence policy in the vocational high school curriculum is carried out on the profile of the vocational high school, the achievements that have been achieved, and the learning environment and infrastructure; Observations in the research were carried out to obtain data about: (1) How the Merdeka Belajar policy is implemented 2) What are the obstacles to implementing the Merdeka Belajar policy 3) What efforts are being taken to overcome various existing problems. This interview began with visiting and staying in touch with the informant. In this observation the researcher has prepared observation guidelines, but the researcher is also more open and notes what is stated by the informant; (b) Documentation, document collection is carried out by researchers to obtain documentary data such as the principal's work program, curriculum document 1, teacher supervision sheet, RPP to see what the school's obstacles and efforts are in implementing the Independent Learning Policy. The reason researchers use this research technique is because qualitative research to collect information involves direct participation.

RESULTS

Based on the results of observations of the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum in the city of Pekanbaru, it is as follows:

Implementation of Independent Learning in Vocational High Schools

The implementation of Merdeka Belajar vocational high school in the city of Pekanbaru begins with PPDB registration for 2022/2023 carried out referring to the technical guidelines of the Riau Province Education Office, the registration stage goes through 3 stages, namely: (1) stage I includes the affirmation route (15%), transfer of

parental duties /guardian (5%) and achievement path for competition results (5%); (2) stage II, zoning pathway (10%) and (3) Stage III, academic achievement pathway (65%).

Conditions of the learning environment/input environment (EI), literacy culture has been implemented for 7 to 10 minutes to read whatever is in front of him, be it newspapers, magazines or whatever form and then discussions are held before starting the lesson, apart from that, the library is modernized by rejuvenating it. collection of manuals or ebooks.

In the learning implementation process, teachers create teaching modules that refer to the results of curriculum synchronization with industry and the results of student competency mapping. The creation of teaching modules containing 3 main components still takes into account student competency needs as a result of synchronizing the curriculum with industry and mapping student competencies to determine indicators of student success in mastering competencies.

As a result of observations on the learning process, researchers obtained the following data: The learning process begins with the teacher by greeting, taking attendance and explaining the learning objectives, linking the learning material with the students' experiences, motivating students for literacy activities, the teacher demonstrating how practical objects work that will be studied, giving students to ask questions about material they don't yet understand, forming practice groups, students practicing with job sheets, students presenting the results of practice in front of the workshop, Teachers making important summaries that appear in learning activities, Knowledge Assessment in the form of written test descriptions, oral tests/question and answer as well as assignments, Skills Assessment in the form of assessing student performance and interactions during practice.

In the output process, student learning outcomes/competency standards are adjusted to the competencies required by industry, assessment indicators are created flexibly, according to students' conditions and abilities and the depth of the competencies studied. Industrial competencies are obtained from the results of curriculum synchronization, the synchronization process maps which competencies are needed by industry, schools follow industrial developments through workshops with industry at the beginning of the school year with other stakeholders. In the output domain, observing the question grid document obtained the following data: The question grid represents the syllabus or material that has been taught proportionally, the essential competencies in basic competencies are explained in detail, the questions use the right operational words, the objective questions use one word operational. Educational Unit Level School Examination (USTSP) is a replacement for USBN, the examination is carried out in the form of written and practical tests (UKK/LSP P1), the written test question grid is completely made by subject teachers with reference to the competency requirements required by industry.

Obstacles to Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum Policy

The obstacles faced by vocational high schools in the city of Pekanbaru in implementing independent learning in the implementation of the learning system are as follows: (1) Fulfilling industrial competency requires increasing teacher competency and learning facilities that are appropriate to the industry; (2) Dynamic changes in industry competency standards require continuous curriculum development; (3) Dynamic industrial development requires a programmed increase in teacher competency and difficulties in facilitating students' learning effectively in accordance with industrial culture; (4) The competencies required by industry vary and change dynamically following the market and fulfilling practical facilities and teacher competencies requires large and lengthy costs and time.

Solutions to the Obstacles Faced

Efforts taken to overcome obstacles in implementing the independent learning policy are as follows: (1) Making cooperation agreements between schools and industry; (2) Developing learning methods with work nuances in accordance with the work nuances in the company; (3) Dialogue for curriculum development; (4) Increasing teacher competency required in the context of meeting industry expectations. Meanwhile, regarding school funding sources for fulfilling practical infrastructure, creating innovations by maximizing school production and service units (UPJ) to fulfill infrastructure that cannot be accommodated from BOS and BPOPP funding sources, as well as a practical means for students to apply entrepreneurship material.

DISCUSSION

The implementation of the Merdeka Vocational High School Curriculum Policy in the city of Pekanbaru has been running optimally in the education ecosystem in the input, process and output processes where teachers receive attention to improve their pedagogical and professional competence through internships/training in industry, flexible curriculum preparation by synchronizing with industry and an independent assessment system in the learning process and learning outcomes. Freedom to learn is also a solution to the burden of complicated educational bureaucracy with four main policies, including replacing USBN with AKM, abolishing National Examination, simplifying teaching modules and more flexible Zoning PPDB. A form of independence is the freedom to innovate in designing learning systems starting from an analysis of industrial competency needs which aims to improve the quality of education and graduates so they can be absorbed into the world of work.

The obstacles faced by vocational high schools in the city of Pekanbaru in implementing independent learning are (1) Fulfilling industrial competency requires a programmed increase in teacher competency; (2) Dynamic changes in industry competency standards require continuous curriculum development; (3) Difficulty facilitating students' learning effectively in accordance with industrial culture; (4) The competencies required by industry are different and change dynamically following the market and fulfilling practical facilities and teacher competencies requires large and lengthy costs and time.

Efforts taken by vocational high schools in the city of Pekanbaru to overcome obstacles in implementing the independent learning policy are (1) Making cooperation agreements between schools and industry; (2) Developing learning methods with work nuances in accordance with the work nuances in the company; (3) Dialogue with industry for curriculum development; (4) Increasing teacher competency required in the context of meeting industry expectations.

CONCLUSION

Implementation of the Independent Vocational High School Curriculum policy in the city of Pekanbaru in the realm of input, process and output. The learning system design developed by vocational high schools in the city of Pekanbaru was developed to increase the freedom of vocational high schools to innovate, learn independently and creatively. Schools, teachers and students have freedom in learning and preparing lessons. Barriers to implementing independent learning include (1) Fulfilling industrial competency requires a programmed increase in teacher competency; (2) Dynamic changes in industry competency standards require sustainable curriculum development and the provision of adequate infrastructure; (3) Difficulty facilitating learning effectively in accordance with industry culture. Efforts made to overcome obstacles arising from the implementation of independent learning are (1) Creating a cooperation agreement program between vocational high schools and industry in the MoU document; (2) Develop learning methods

that are able to create a work atmosphere that suits the company; (3) Synchronize the curriculum with partner industries to prepare the automotive learning curriculum; (4) Increasing teacher competency in the context of fulfilling industrial competency by increasing the ability to understand how new technological equipment works which is equivalent to the technology used in industry.

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