



Analysis of social studies Teacher problems in developing lesson plans of Merdeka curriculum

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Abstract

Implementing the Merdeka curriculum has impacted changes in several documents, including learning tools, one of which is a lesson plan. In its development, there are still many teachers who experience difficulties. This research aims to analyze the problems and causal factors experienced by social studies teachers in preparing RPP for the Merdeka curriculum for junior high schools in Batu City. The research method used in this study is qualitative descriptive, involving as many as 13 teachers, and data was obtained in the form of interviews. The research data was obtained from non-participatory observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The study results show that teacher problems are found, namely the principles of preparing lesson plans, determining initial competencies, determining the profile of Pancasila students, determining learning outcomes, determining learning objectives, determining triggering questions, designing learning activities, and making learning assessments. Then, the factors that cause the problem are that teachers do not understand the changes in the Merdeka curriculum, the components of the lesson plan are different from the previous learning design, the teacher's competence in developing the lesson plan is relatively low, and the mastery of technology is lacking. The results of this study recommend that stakeholders in schools and the Batu City education office improve teachers' understanding

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and competence through training and workshops regarding the development of lesson plans that follow the Merdeka curriculum.

Keywords: *lesson plan development; Merdeka curriculum; social studies lesson plan.*

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INTRODUCTION

Changing the curriculum is a provision that must be carried out to welcome changes in the quality of Human Resources in a country (Permendikbudristek, 2022). In essence, the role of the education system is the main foundation in the world of education. Therefore, it is crucial to transform the education system. The transformation of the education system is a change or concrete step in the world of education that has new characteristics compared to the existing and previous systems (Rahmadhani et al., 2022). One example of transformation in the world of education is the curriculum.

The curriculum is a program to realize the implementation of the education system and as an essential reference in organizing learning at various levels (Prastowo, 2018). The curriculum lies in a reasonably high position and capacity in the process of learning activities, student administrative input, and achievement competencies by teachers. Given the crucial role of the curriculum, the government is taking steps to improve it. The improvement of the curriculum is expected to provide a direction of movement for all elements of education so that the foundation for educational transformation is more competitive, relevant, and up-to-date by the direction of the times (Agustiana & Asshidiqi, 2021). Therefore, the government improved the previous curriculum, namely the 2013 curriculum, to the Merdeka curriculum.

The new strategy carried out by the Merdeka curriculum has several differences. One of these differences is in the learning device. The Merdeka curriculum changes the name of the lesson plan from Rancangan Perangkat Pembelajaran (RPP) into a teaching module. The lesson plan is one of the curriculum documents in the form of a learning plan that contains identity components, learning objectives, learning media, learning steps, and assessments included in learning based on the applicable curriculum (Rahmadhani et al., 2022).

Social studies learning at the junior high school level that uses the Merdeka curriculum as an improvement curriculum requires teachers to adapt again by presenting learning activities that liberate students (Rahimah, 2022). In addition, several other aspects of the Merdeka curriculum exist, such as the operational curriculum of the education level and the dimensions of the Pancasila student profile. Teachers are also expected to collaborate with various parties regarding curriculum and learning needs, such as fellow teachers, student guardians, and the community.

Based on the results of initial observations and interviews conducted by researchers, it is known that problems are still found in the implementation of Merdeka curriculum-based learning. The problem is that many social studies teachers experience difficulties developing

lesson plans. This is in line with Rahimah's (2022) research conducted in Tebing Tinggi Regency, which showed that the ability of teachers to design the lesson plan Merdeka curriculum is still relatively low. The Merdeka curriculum has only been implemented for the last three years, and teachers are less motivated to seek information. Referring to the results of initial observations and previous research, further research needs to be carried out, especially on social studies teachers in junior high schools in Batu City.

Previous research related to teacher problems in developing the lesson plan for the Merdeka curriculum includes: First, the results of research by Erni & Kilawati (2019) explained that teachers have difficulties in compiling learning steps, teachers have difficulties determining methods that follow the characteristics of students and teaching materials, teachers have difficulties in making their media, teachers have difficulty in adjusting teaching materials with Learners.

Second, the research results by Budi et al. (2022) explain the obstacles experienced by teachers when implementing the Merdeka curriculum. The obstacles experienced by teachers are divided into 3 phases: planning, implementation, and evaluation. Obstacles in the planning phase, such as lack of understanding of how to reduce Learning Outcomes into Learning Objectives, heterogeneity of students in the classroom, lack of references to differentiated learning models, limitations of facilities and infrastructure, and limitations of initial knowledge and subject matter. Obstacles in the implementation phase include associating subject matter with relevant knowledge, using opening questions that can stimulate students' thinking, encouraging students to be active in asking questions, and providing feedback that can encourage students to be enthusiastic about learning. Obstacles in the evaluation phase include the paradigm of preliminary assessment that has not been completed, limitations in identifying the learning process, and limitations in understanding formative assessment.

Third, the results of the study by Afista (2020) explained that teachers do not understand the essence of each learning outcome, learning objectives, and learning objectives flow component. In addition, teachers have difficulties determining methods that follow the goals of the Merdeka curriculum and the material to be studied, identifying the condition of students, and conducting diagnostic assessments. Teachers stated that it is not easy to compile questions to get answers as material for learning consideration. In addition, teachers face obstacles in implementing diagnostic assessments due to difficulties in analyzing assessment results quickly and accurately.

Previous research shows several similarities. The difficulty teachers have developed in several lesson plan components. The three previous studies did not analyze the causative factors of the problems they experienced. In this research conducted in Batu City, several other difficulties differed from previous research, namely that social studies teachers experienced difficulties developing lesson plans for the Merdeka curriculum. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyze the problems experienced by social studies teachers and analyze the

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causative factors experienced by social studies teachers in developing lesson plans. This study's results benefit social studies teachers, school stakeholders, and the Batu City education office.

METHOD

The method used in this study is a qualitative approach with a type of descriptive research. Descriptive qualitative is the unity of scientific activities to explore or clarify a phenomenon, phenomenon, or existing social reality (Sugiyono, 2017). The use of descriptive research aims to describe and interpret in detail based on facts in the field related to the problems of social studies teachers in developing the lesson plan Merdeka Curriculum. The research locations in Batu City, East Java, include SMP Negeri 3 Batu, SMP Negeri 6 Batu, SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Batu, SMP Diponegoro Batu, MTsN Batu, and SMP Ma'arif Batu. The selection of schools is based on regional location representatives in each sub-district, public and private schools, and schools under the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Religion. The selection of Junior High Schools in Batu City was based on the results of observations and interviews with Batu City Social Sciences MGMP teachers.

This study involved as many as 13 informants with details of 7 key informants (social studies subject teachers) and six supporting informants (Vice Principal for Curriculum). The purposive technique is used to determine the informant. According to Sugiyono (2017), the determination of informants purposively takes into account certain factors, such as whether the informant concerned has sufficient knowledge and experience regarding the problem being studied, with the specifications, namely that the social studies teacher has implemented the Merdeka curriculum in his learning and uses lesson plan as a learning implementation plan. The research informants are social studies teachers and deputy principal teachers for curriculum.

The data obtained in this research is in the form of interview data. Data was obtained from non-participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, teacher lesson plans, and voice recording documentation. The type of observation used is included in non-participatory observation. The problem seen when observing and preparing lesson plans is determining the right learning objectives by adjusting the characteristics of different students. The interviews used are classified as semi-structured interviews, which use question instruments identified by the researcher and can evolve according to the answers submitted by the informant (Waruwu, 2023). Researchers carry out documentation by studying documents to obtain information about the problem from learning tools, research images, and sound recordings.

The data analysis used in this study using an interactive model Miles et al. (2014) includes data collection, data reduction (summarizing), data presentation (data display), and strengthening within, using information processing theory by Gagné (1965) (see Figure 1). In this research, the test for data validity is the triangulation of data sources by exploring the truth of certain information through various methods and data acquisition sources. The validity of the data was obtained apart from interviews and observations. Researchers used written documents, namely the attachment to the social studies teacher lesson plan.

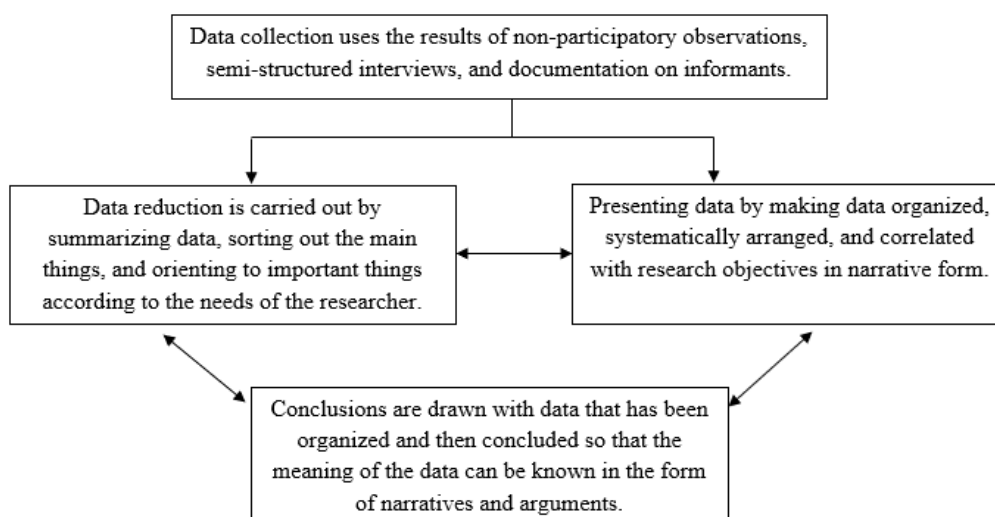


Figure 1. Interactive model data analysis technique (Miles et al., 2014)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Problems Experienced by Social Studies Teachers at Junior High Schools in Batu City in Developing Lesson Plan of Merdeka Curriculum

Teachers' role is vital in students' learning process (Afista, 2020). The teacher is the primary key to successful learning. Learning is successful if teachers can fulfill components considering learning objectives and meaningful learning. On the other hand, the lesson plan of the Merdeka curriculum should ideally be developed by teachers. Students are expected not only to gain knowledge but also to grow in attitudes and skills. However, the facts in the field show that teachers experience problems in developing lesson plans, including regarding the principles that are used as the basis for the preparation of lesson plans, determining initial competencies, determining the dimensions of the Pancasila student profile, choosing learning outcomes, determining learning objectives, determining triggering questions, designing learning activities and making learning assessments or assessments. As for the details:

Table 1. Problems experienced by social studies teachers in developing lesson plans for the Merdeka curriculum

No	Problems Experienced by Social Studies Teachers in Developing Lesson Plan of Merdeka Curriculum.
1.	Principles that are used as the basis for the preparation of lesson plan
2.	Determining initial competencies
3.	Determining the dimensions of the Pancasila student profile
4.	Determining Learning Outcomes
5.	Determining Learning Objectives
6.	Determining the trigger question
7.	Organizing learning activities
8.	Making assessments or assessments

Source: Researcher data processing results (2024)

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The problems expressed by the social studies subject teachers are, first, determining the principles used as the basis for preparing lesson plans. As a result of the interviews, teachers lack a detailed understanding of the selection of lesson plan principles, so teachers use principles that come from their assumptions, namely sustainability. Based on (Permendikbudristek, 2022), the principles that are the reference in developing lesson plans must be prepared with a flexible, clear, and simple content format. Flexible documents are not bound in a particular form and can adapt to the learning context. A clear document is a document that can be easily understood when it is spelled out. A simple document is a document that contains the primary and essential things about the learning process. In line with the results of the research by Maulida (2022), the basic principles are a reference in developing lesson plans teachers apply to students. Therefore, the principles for developing a lesson plan must be based on clear guidelines.

Second, determine the initial competence. Initial competencies contain knowledge and skills students must master before proceeding to the material (Salsabilla & Jannah, 2023). As a result of the interviews, teachers found it difficult to determine the initial competencies because they did not understand the initial knowledge of various students. Considering the different characteristics of students, it is difficult to determine the initial competencies. In line with the statement from Hanifah et al. (2020) that teachers need a physical and mental approach to the learning process to know students' behavior and characteristics. In other words, the approach teachers take is to identify the initial competencies of students.

Third, the dimensions of the Pancasila student profile must be determined. One aspect of the Pancasila student profile is the development of a project-based learning model that emphasizes more on students (student-centered) and assists students in internalizing Pancasila values. The dimension of the Pancasila student profile is determined based on the number of learning hours (JP) per year based on the subjects of each school (Ulandari & Rapita, 2023). The results of the interviews that teachers have conducted find it challenging to determine the dimensions of the Pancasila student profile because, in the dimensions of the lesson plan, five things are needed, namely 1) Conformity with the conditions and needs at school. 2) Dimensional complexity consisting of six dimensions of the Pancasila student profile. Each element and sub-element must be integrated with the curriculum and learning. 3) Environmental factors, namely family, education, association, and life experience of students, will affect the application of the Pancasila student profile dimension, so it is difficult to determine which dimension is dominant. 4) In developing lesson plans, teachers must make project modules following the educational units' readiness level, which involves detailed and strategic planning. 5) Evaluation of students' abilities, namely implementing lesson plans that evaluate students' ability to practice positive Pancasila values in daily activities. Wijayanti (2023) states that teachers have difficulties designing and implementing project-based learning models.

They were fourth, determining Learning Outcomes. Learning Outcomes are a collection of competencies and the scope of material initiated to strengthen the focus on implementing education (Afista, 2020). From the results of the interviews that have been conducted, teachers experience difficulties due to differences in the level of understanding and ability of students to determine learning outcomes that are based on the needs of each individual. Rindayati et al. (2022) added that teachers have difficulty determining learning outcomes due to the diversity of needs and abilities of different students.

Fifth, determine the Learning Objectives. Based on the results of the interviews, it was found that teachers have difficulty determining learning objectives because they do not understand the flow of reducing learning outcomes to learning objectives. In line with the results of research by Pratiwi et al. (2023), it is stated that the problem in determining learning objectives is caused by the diverse abilities and learning styles of students, so it is pretty challenging to formulate learning goals that can meet the needs of all students.

Sixth, determine the trigger question. As a result of interviews with teachers, the problem found when determining the trigger question is that not all students are immediately responsive when given a trigger question, so the teacher must make a straightforward trigger question that is still related to the scope of the material to be taught. In line with the study by Pandu et al. (2023), obstacles in the implementation phase include teachers having difficulty relating subject matter with relevant knowledge and using opening questions that can stimulate students' thinking. In determining the trigger question, it must meet the following criteria: 1) be open (not only require a short answer), 2) relate to the core of the learning topic, 3) raise new questions to students, and 4) discuss conceptual matters (Maulida, 2022). Thus, students must achieve meaningful understanding through a process guided by teachers.

Seventh, determine the learning steps. In determining learning steps, teachers must integrate and include learning objectives, learning methods, learning models, and assessment components to solve a problem to meet a need (Budi et al., 2022). In line with that, the interview results found problems in determining the learning steps, namely the teachers' difficulty adjusting the learning model to the material. The learning model is always different from the previous one, considering that teachers must have a backup learning model for students. In addition, the results of the research by Sulistyosari et al. (2022) stated that the difficulties in compiling the learning steps in the lesson plan are that the teacher lacks understanding of the material to be delivered, the emphasis on the use of creative and innovative learning methods, and also determining the Learning Outcomes to be achieved.

Eighth, making assessments or assessments of learning. As a result of interviews with teachers, it was found that there were problems in making assessments or assessments of learning; namely, teachers did not fully understand the concepts in compiling assessments. In compiling good assessment instruments, teachers must understand various instruments (tests, observations, portfolios). In line with Budiono and Hatip's (2023) statement, teachers have difficulty determining different formative and summative assessment techniques in one

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material adapted to students' learning styles. In the previous curriculum, formative and summative assessments were carried out by teachers to monitor the progress of learning outcomes and identify the need for continuous improvement in student learning outcomes. The Merdeka curriculum now perfects formative and summative assessments to design a learning process following the stages or levels of student performance.

Factors Causing Problems Experienced by Social Studies Teachers in Junior High Schools in Batu City in Developing Lesson Plan of Merdeka Curriculum

Social studies subject teachers always consider all mindsets when solving various factors that cause problems in developing the lesson plan for the Merdeka Curriculum. Based on the information provided by the informants, various factors were found to cause problems felt by social studies teachers in developing the lesson plan Merdeka Curriculum, including teachers not understanding the changes in the lesson plan Merdeka Curriculum, components that are different from previous learning designs, teachers' competence in developing a lesson plan that is still low, and lack of IT mastery. As for the details:

Table 2. Factors causing problems experienced by teachers in developing lesson plans for the Merdeka curriculum

No	Factors Causing Problems in Developing Lesson Plan of Merdeka Curriculum
1.	Educators do not understand the changes in the Merdeka Curriculum
2.	The components of the teaching module are different from the previous learning design
3.	The competence of teachers in developing teaching modules is relatively low
4.	IT Mastery

Source: Researcher Data Processing Results (2024)

First, teachers do not understand the changes in the Merdeka curriculum. The results of interviews with teachers found that teachers at schools were still not ready to accept changes to the Merdeka curriculum. As a result, many of these teachers experienced problems when developing lesson plans and finally still used the previous learning tools. This is in line with the results of research by Yulianti et al. (2022) that, in reality, many teachers still do not understand the meaning of learning the Merdeka curriculum. Teachers are required to be able to adjust to the changes in the Merdeka curriculum. Therefore, teachers are expected to be able to implement changes to the Merdeka curriculum, including in the development of lesson plan tools.

Second, the lesson plan's components differ from the previous learning design. As a result of interviews with teachers, it was found that there were problems in accepting changes in the components of the lesson plan, namely the replacement of various new terms, and at the beginning of the launch, teachers still did not understand and did not dare to compile the lesson plan, but after participating in many workshops, socialization, and training, teachers will begin to learn and understand one by one the components in the lesson plan. Changes to the Merdeka curriculum certainly impact the components of learning tools. Significant changes were found

with previous learning tools. In their research, Rindayati et al. (2022) there are problems felt by prospective teachers in developing the lesson plan Merdeka curriculum, namely, difficulties in describing learning objectives, not being able to describe Learning Outcomes, and not being able to describe the Flow of Learning Objectives. With significant changes to the previous learning tools, teachers experienced these problems.

Third, the competence of teachers in developing less skilled lesson plans. Based on the results of the interviews that have been conducted, it is stated that teachers experience confusion in processing each element of the lesson plan listed in the guide to be selected and compiled according to the needs of students. Based on the opinion of Erni and Kilawati (2019), this is possible because of the uneven training and counseling regarding the development of lesson plans in the Merdeka curriculum, as well as the lack of interest from the teachers to find references and dig up their information about the development of the lesson plan Merdeka curriculum.

Fourth, the mastery of IT that is not skilled by teachers. Based on the results of interviews conducted with junior high school social studies teachers in Batu City, it was found that several teachers were not skilled in mastering IT. These problems include the ability of teachers to find information from the internet and the application of technology in learning, which can be said to be low. These impact learning activities, and teachers use lecture methods rather than technology. In their research, Nirmala et al. (2023) stated that the Merdeka curriculum requires teachers to apply technology in learning per the TPACK (*Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge*) framework. Unfortunately, however, the application of technology in learning is still lacking in practice. This is because teachers lack IT mastery. In the 21st century, technology can positively impact the implementation of learning in schools. Thus, teachers must use technology well to benefit developing students' potential.

Based on the theory of information processing expressed by Gagne (1965), every individual should be able to adapt to always-changing changes. In other words, each person can process new information into their knowledge, including developing the curriculum, which is one skill that teachers must master. Furthermore, Zulfah and Mukhoiyaroh (2022) stated that learning strategies are carried out in information processing theory using a process-oriented way of thinking. Nowadays, many teachers cannot process information correctly due to curriculum changes. The reasons conveyed by the teachers ranged from the lack of training and workshops in learning the Merdeka curriculum to the limited time they had to learn it independently. Therefore, many teachers have experienced difficulties developing the Merdeka curriculum's lesson plan. Based on this condition, it can be concluded that many social studies teachers in Batu City have not processed information about curriculum changes to the maximum.

CONCLUSION

Social studies teachers experience problems in developing the lesson plan Merdeka curriculum, including determining the principles that are used as the basis for the preparation

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of the lesson plan, determining initial competencies, determining the dimensions of the Pancasila student profile, choosing learning outcomes, determining learning objectives, determining trigger questions, designing learning activities, and making learning assessments or assessments. The problems experienced by teachers are due to a lack of actively seeking information in developing lesson plans. In addition, some factors cause the problems experienced by social studies teachers in junior high schools throughout Batu City in developing lesson plans in the Merdeka curriculum, namely, teachers do not understand the changes in the Merdeka curriculum, the components of the lesson plan are different from the previous learning design, the teacher's competence in preparing lesson plans is still not following the guidelines, and their mastery of IT is not yet skilled.

Therefore, social studies teachers in junior high schools throughout Batu City are expected to adapt to the changes that occur, actively coordinate between subject teachers, and be active in finding information and references regarding the development of the Merdeka curriculum lesson plan through official websites and outreach held by related institutions to increase teacher understanding and competency. The results of this study recommend that stakeholders in schools and the Batu City education office improve teachers' understanding and competence through training and workshops. Recommendations for further research that is willing to conduct similar research, it is necessary to carry out a research study related to the problems of social studies teachers in implementing the lesson plan Merdeka curriculum. This aims to expand the scope of research again because the scope of this research only focuses on the problem of developing lesson plans. It is hoped that further research can examine the problems of social studies teachers implementing lesson plans in more depth.

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