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Evaluation of the implementation of the operational curriculum of the education unit (KOSP) of the school mover of Indonesian language subject in grade 7 SMP Negeri 2 Wanggarasi Pohuwato District, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study examines the implementation of the Kurikulum Operasional Satuan Pendidikan (KOSP) for Bahasa Indonesia in Grade 7 at SMP Negeri 2 Wanggarasi, a participant in the Kurikulum Merdeka reform initiative in Indonesia. The study aims to evaluate how KOSP facilitates curriculum alignment, instructional practices, and assessment strategies while identifying challenges and proposing actionable solutions. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis to provide an in-depth understanding of curriculum implementation in a real-world educational context. The findings reveal progress in adopting student-centered and project-based learning methods, fostering critical thinking and creativity among students. However, challenges persist, including limited digital literacy among teachers, inconsistent assessment practices, and insufficient resource alignment with curriculum objectives. The integration of technology and the Pelajar Pancasila profile into instruction was uneven, highlighting the need for enhanced professional development and institutional support. This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on curriculum reform by offering localized insights into the operationalization of the Kurikulum Merdeka. It underscores the importance of teacher readiness, resource accessibility, and collaborative practices in achieving successful implementation. The findings have implications for policymakers and educators and point to future research exploring scalable strategies to address these challenges.

Keywords: School Mover Program Implementation; Indonesian Language Subject Curriculum Evaluation; Student-Centered Learning Practices

1. Introduction

The Indonesian education system has undergone multiple paradigm shifts in recent years, reflecting the need for an adaptive curriculum that addresses contemporary educational challenges. Language education, particularly in Bahasa Indonesia, has become central to achieving essential language, literacy, and cultural competencies among students. It is recognized as a pivotal tool for equipping learners with critical communication skills and cultural understanding, which are vital for personal and national development. The dynamic transformation in global educational practices and the widespread disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have further underscored the urgency for reforms in curriculum frameworks. These challenges have catalyzed the adoption of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* or the Freedom Curriculum, which serves as a cornerstone of Indonesia's educational transformation. This curriculum emerged as a response to longstanding issues in literacy, numeracy, and the character development of students, which were further exacerbated during the pandemic (Putri et al., 2023). The *Kurikulum Merdeka* is a reimagined approach that seeks to align with Indonesia's national educational objectives as outlined in Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System.

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The *Kurikulum Merdeka* has been implemented progressively across various educational institutions since the 2021/2022 academic year. This framework, grounded in the profile of *Pelajar Pancasila* (Pancasila Students), is designed to develop critical thinking, creativity, and moral character among learners through an integrative approach. The operational implementation of the curriculum is facilitated by the development of institutional-specific frameworks known as *Kurikulum Operasional Satuan Pendidikan* (KOSP). However, the success of such innovative practices is contingent on several factors, including the readiness and adaptability of schools, the competence of educators, and the contextual integration of educational policies. Despite its promising framework, the implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* has elicited mixed responses from educators and institutions, highlighting the need for evaluative studies to address its challenges (Sugiarta et al., 2019).

The primary challenge in implementing the *Kurikulum Merdeka* lies in its transition from previous curriculum models, notably the 2013 curriculum. This shift requires educators to redefine their pedagogical approaches, integrate new assessment methods, and incorporate digital tools into their teaching practices. At the same time, students are expected to adapt to differentiated instruction methods and project-based learning, which diverge from the traditional rote-learning methods of the past. Specific to language education, the teaching of Bahasa Indonesia within the *Kurikulum Merdeka* framework must encompass differentiated learning approaches and emphasize the development of receptive and productive language skills. These adjustments necessitate significant investments in teacher training, technological integration, and resource allocation. Without addressing these issues, the potential of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* to transform education and achieve its overarching goals remains limited.

Previous studies have identified broad solutions to address these challenges, such as enhancing teacher professional development programs, refining curriculum guidelines, and fostering collaborative practices among educators. For example, Rizal et al. (2022) highlight the role of the *Program Sekolah Penggerak* (Driving School Program) in empowering educators through targeted training and mentoring initiatives. This program acts as a catalyst for the implementation of *Kurikulum Merdeka* by equipping teachers and school leaders with the necessary skills to adapt and innovate. Additionally, Anggara et al. (2023) emphasize the importance of adopting a phased approach to curriculum implementation, allowing schools to align their practices with their specific contextual needs. Despite these general strategies, the effectiveness of such interventions often varies across institutions, reflecting the diverse educational landscapes within Indonesia.

Specific strategies have been proposed to address the unique challenges posed by the *Kurikulum Merdeka* to Bahasa Indonesia educators. The integration of technology in language learning, such as digital platforms and multimedia tools, has been identified as a critical enabler for enhancing student engagement and improving learning outcomes. Studies by Maryati et al. (2023) and Simarmata et al. (2022) underscore the importance of digital literacy as a fundamental competency for both teachers and students. Furthermore, differentiated instruction methods tailored to individual learning needs have been suggested as an effective means of addressing diverse student competencies in language learning. Such practices are aligned with the principles of *Kurikulum Merdeka*, which emphasize flexibility and personalization in teaching and learning processes.

Despite these advancements, significant gaps remain in the practical implementation of these solutions, particularly at the operational level within schools. For instance, the preparation and development of KOSP documents, which serve as the foundation for implementing the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, often lack consistency and thoroughness. Observations from Pohuwato Regency, particularly at SMP Negeri 2 Wanggarasi, reveal that educators face persistent challenges in integrating the principles of *Kurikulum Merdeka* into their teaching practices. These challenges include limited technological proficiency among teachers, insufficient internalization of *Pelajar Pancasila* values in the classroom, and inadequate alignment of assessment practices with curriculum objectives. Such issues underscore the need for localized solutions that address the specific contexts and needs of schools.

This study seeks to address these gaps by conducting an evaluative analysis of the implementation of the *Kurikulum Operasional Satuan Pendidikan* (KOSP) for Bahasa Indonesia instruction in Grade 7 at SMP Negeri 2 Wanggarasi. The research aims to explore the processes of curriculum design, instructional planning, and assessment practices under the *Kurikulum Merdeka* framework. Furthermore, it investigates the challenges and barriers encountered by educators and proposes actionable strategies to overcome them. This study is expected to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by providing insights into the practical implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in the context of language education, with a specific focus on operational challenges and solutions.

The novelty of this study lies in its localized focus on SMP Negeri 2 Wanggarasi as a representative case study for understanding the broader implications of *Kurikulum Merdeka* implementation. By analyzing the specific context of this school, the study aims to bridge the gap between policy formulation and practical execution, offering valuable

recommendations for stakeholders at both institutional and governmental levels. The scope of the research encompasses the evaluation of KOSP design, instructional strategies, assessment methods, and teacher competencies, with a particular emphasis on the integration of *Pelajar Pancasila* values into language education. Ultimately, this study aspires to inform future curriculum reforms and enhance the overall quality of education in Indonesia.

2. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to evaluate the implementation of the *Kurikulum Operasional Satuan Pendidikan* (KOSP) for Bahasa Indonesia instruction in Grade 7 at SMP Negeri 2 Wanggarasi. The qualitative method is particularly suitable for this research as it aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the processes, challenges, and outcomes associated with curriculum implementation (Creswell, 2014). The descriptive nature of this study allows the researchers to systematically capture the phenomena related to planning, teaching, and assessment practices under the *Kurikulum Merdeka* framework.

The research adopts an evaluative lens, integrating frameworks and indicators aligned with the objectives of the Program Sekolah Penggerak (Driving School Program). It incorporates elements of formative evaluation to assess the effectiveness of instructional planning, teaching methods, and assessment practices. This methodological choice ensures that the findings provide actionable insights for stakeholders, particularly educators and policymakers.

The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Wanggarasi, located in Pohuwato Regency, Gorontalo Province. The school was selected as it is one of the institutions implementing the *Kurikulum Merdeka* as part of the second cohort of the Program Sekolah Penggerak. This specific context allows for the analysis of curriculum implementation in a real-world educational setting.

Participants included educators teaching Bahasa Indonesia to Grade 7 students, school administrators, and stakeholders involved in curriculum development and implementation. The selection of participants was purposive, focusing on individuals directly engaged in the instructional and operational aspects of the KOSP for Bahasa Indonesia. The participants comprised ten educators, including five permanent teachers and five contractual teachers, ensuring a diverse representation of perspectives.

To achieve a comprehensive understanding of the research objectives, multiple data collection methods were employed, including observation, interviews, and document analysis.

- **Observation:** Classroom observations were conducted to examine the instructional practices and the extent to which the principles of *Kurikulum Merdeka* were integrated into Bahasa Indonesia lessons. Observations focused on lesson delivery, the use of instructional materials, and the implementation of differentiated teaching strategies (Anggraena et al., 2021).
- **Interviews:** Semi-structured interviews were conducted with educators, school administrators, and curriculum coordinators to gain insights into the planning, implementation, and assessment processes associated with the KOSP. The interview protocol was designed to elicit detailed responses about the challenges, strategies, and outcomes of the curriculum implementation (Creswell, 2014).
- **Document Analysis:** Key documents, including KOSP manuals, lesson plans, assessment tools, and training materials, were analyzed to understand the alignment between the prescribed curriculum framework and its operationalization at the school level. The document analysis also provided evidence of the school's efforts to integrate the *Pelajar Pancasila* profile into instructional practices.

The data collected were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach, following the six-phase process outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). This method allowed for the systematic identification of patterns and themes related to the research objectives. The analysis was conducted in the following stages:

- **Familiarization:** All collected data were reviewed thoroughly to gain an overall understanding of the content and context. Transcriptions of interviews and field notes from observations were repeatedly read to ensure familiarity with the data.
- **Generating Initial Codes:** Key phrases, concepts, and recurring patterns were coded to organize the data systematically. Coding focused on categories such as curriculum planning, instructional strategies, assessment methods, challenges, and solutions.

- **Searching for Themes:** The initial codes were grouped into broader themes that addressed the research objectives. These themes included instructional planning under KOSP, integration of *Pelajar Pancasila* values, assessment practices, and teacher readiness.
- **Reviewing Themes:** The identified themes were reviewed and refined to ensure they accurately represented the data. Contradictory or inconsistent findings were analyzed in greater depth to identify underlying factors.
- **Defining and Naming Themes:** Clear definitions were developed for each theme, and they were named to reflect their essence. For example, themes such as “Teacher Adaptation to Curriculum Changes” and “Student Engagement in Differentiated Instruction” were defined and elaborated.
- **Producing the Report:** The final stage involved synthesizing the themes into a coherent narrative, highlighting the findings in relation to the research questions. Exemplary quotes from participants and excerpts from documents were used to substantiate the analysis.

Ethical protocols were adhered to throughout the research process to ensure the integrity and credibility of the study. Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participants, and the purpose and scope of the study were clearly explained. Participants were assured of confidentiality, and pseudonyms were used to protect their identities. Ethical approval was obtained from the institutional review board of Universitas Negeri Gorontalo, adhering to standard guidelines for educational research.

To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, the study incorporated triangulation through the use of multiple data sources, including observations, interviews, and document analysis. Member checking was employed to validate the accuracy of the data interpretation, with participants reviewing and confirming the transcriptions and summaries of their interviews (Creswell, 2014). Peer debriefing with academic colleagues was conducted to ensure objectivity and rigor in the analysis process.

While the study provides valuable insights into the implementation of the KOSP for Bahasa Indonesia instruction, it is not without limitations. The research was conducted in a single school, limiting the generalizability of the findings to other contexts. Furthermore, the qualitative nature of the study emphasizes depth over breadth, which may restrict the scope of comparisons across different educational settings. Future research could address these limitations by incorporating a larger sample of schools and employing mixed-methods approaches to enhance the robustness of the findings.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Overview of KOSP Development and Implementation

The implementation of the *Kurikulum Operasional Satuan Pendidikan* (KOSP) in Bahasa Indonesia instruction at SMP Negeri 2 Wanggarasi demonstrates a notable effort to align with the principles of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. The school adopted a phased approach to the KOSP's development, beginning with a comprehensive analysis of its unique institutional context. This included considerations of student demographics, teacher readiness, and available resources. The KOSP formulation emphasized the alignment of instructional objectives with the *Pelajar Pancasila* profile, highlighting the values of critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity. However, the process also revealed challenges in adapting existing practices to the new curriculum framework, particularly in integrating technology and differentiating instruction (Maryati et al., 2023).

3.2. Planning and Preparation for Curriculum Implementation

The planning phase of the KOSP at SMP Negeri 2 Wanggarasi followed a structured approach, emphasizing the development of a vision and mission aligned with national educational goals. Teachers collaborated to outline objectives that reflected the principles of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Key components of the planning process included designing instructional activities, selecting suitable pedagogical strategies, and developing assessment tools. Despite these efforts, the planning stage was hindered by gaps in teacher understanding of the curriculum's core principles. Some educators reported difficulty translating the curriculum's broad objectives into specific lesson plans and instructional activities (Anggraena et al., 2022).

A significant innovation in the planning phase was the introduction of digital tools to support differentiated instruction. However, the integration of these tools was inconsistent, reflecting varying levels of digital literacy among teachers. This finding aligns with Khoirurrijal et al. (2022), who identified teacher readiness as a critical factor influencing the successful implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. At SMP Negeri 2 Wanggarasi, efforts to address this included

professional development workshops and peer mentoring programs, though their impact was limited by time constraints and resource availability.

3.3. Teaching Practices and Classroom Dynamics

The teaching practices observed during the study highlighted a shift towards more interactive and student-centered learning environments. Teachers employed differentiated instruction strategies to cater to diverse student needs, focusing on the development of both receptive and productive language skills. For example, lessons were designed to include activities such as collaborative writing, peer feedback sessions, and multimedia presentations. These practices were consistent with the curriculum's emphasis on experiential and project-based learning.

However, challenges persisted in implementing differentiated instruction effectively. Teachers often struggled to balance the needs of high-achieving students with those requiring additional support. Additionally, the reliance on traditional assessment methods sometimes contradicted the curriculum's focus on formative assessment and holistic evaluation. These findings are consistent with Purnawanto (2023), who highlighted the need for greater teacher training in formative assessment techniques.

The incorporation of digital tools into classroom instruction varied widely. Some teachers used multimedia resources to enhance engagement, while others relied on conventional methods due to limited technological proficiency. The disparity underscores the importance of equipping educators with the skills and resources necessary to leverage technology effectively. Furthermore, while students generally responded positively to the interactive and technology-enhanced learning activities, their engagement levels were influenced by the accessibility and usability of the tools provided.

3.4. Assessment Practices and Student Outcomes

Assessment practices under the KOSP framework emphasized formative evaluation to track student progress and inform instructional adjustments. Teachers were encouraged to use a variety of assessment tools, including quizzes, reflective journals, and project-based tasks. These methods aimed to provide a comprehensive evaluation of student learning, encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains.

Despite these intentions, the study revealed inconsistencies in the application of assessment practices. Some teachers continued to prioritize summative assessments, citing time constraints and familiarity with traditional methods. This approach often limited the opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding through creative and exploratory tasks. Additionally, the integration of *Pelajar Pancasila* values into assessment criteria was inconsistent, with some teachers expressing uncertainty about how to evaluate these competencies effectively.

Student outcomes under the KOSP framework showed promising trends, particularly in terms of engagement and collaboration. Many students demonstrated improved critical thinking and problem-solving skills, as evidenced by their participation in project-based learning activities. However, the development of literacy and language competencies varied, reflecting the need for more targeted support in these areas. These findings align with previous research by Rizal et al. (2022), which emphasized the importance of aligning instructional strategies with specific learning objectives to enhance student outcomes.

3.5. Challenges in Implementing the KOSP

The study identified several challenges that hindered the effective implementation of the KOSP at SMP Negeri 2 Wanggarasi. One of the most significant barriers was the limited digital literacy among educators, which affected their ability to integrate technology into teaching and assessment practices. This finding is consistent with Simarmata et al. (2022), who highlighted the need for professional development programs focused on digital competencies.

Another challenge was the lack of alignment between the curriculum's objectives and existing teaching resources. Teachers reported difficulty accessing high-quality instructional materials that aligned with the *Kurikulum Merdeka* principles. This gap often led to reliance on outdated resources, which limited the effectiveness of instructional activities. Furthermore, the transition to the new curriculum required significant adjustments in teaching practices, which many educators found challenging to implement within the limited timeframes and support structures provided.

Institutional factors also played a role in the challenges encountered. For instance, the school's infrastructure and resource limitations constrained the ability to implement technology-enhanced learning effectively. Additionally, the lack of continuous professional development opportunities for teachers hindered their ability to adapt to the new

curriculum. These findings underscore the importance of systemic support and resource allocation in facilitating curriculum reforms.

3.6. Proposed Solutions and Best Practices

To address the challenges identified, several solutions were proposed and partially implemented during the study. One key strategy was the establishment of peer mentoring programs, where experienced teachers provided guidance and support to their colleagues. This approach helped to build a collaborative learning environment among educators and facilitated the exchange of best practices.

Another solution involved the development of localized instructional materials tailored to the specific needs of students at SMP Negeri 2 Wanggarasi. By involving teachers in the creation of these materials, the school ensured greater alignment with the curriculum's objectives and increased the relevance of learning activities. Additionally, the integration of regular professional development workshops focused on digital literacy and formative assessment techniques proved beneficial in enhancing teacher competencies.

The study also emphasized the importance of fostering a culture of reflective practice among educators. Teachers were encouraged to engage in self-assessment and peer feedback sessions to evaluate the effectiveness of their instructional strategies and identify areas for improvement. This practice aligns with the principles of continuous improvement and professional growth, as highlighted by Anggraena et al. (2022).

3.7. Implications for Future Curriculum Implementation

The findings of this study have several implications for the broader implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. First, the importance of teacher readiness cannot be overstated. Investments in professional development and resource allocation are critical to equipping educators with the skills and tools needed to implement the curriculum effectively. Second, the integration of technology into teaching and assessment practices requires a systematic approach, including infrastructure upgrades and targeted training programs.

Third, the development of localized instructional materials and resources can enhance the relevance and effectiveness of curriculum implementation. Schools should be empowered to customize their instructional strategies and materials to align with their specific contexts and student needs. Finally, the study highlights the importance of fostering a collaborative culture among educators, which can serve as a catalyst for innovation and continuous improvement

4. Conclusion

This study evaluated the implementation of the *Kurikulum Operasional Satuan Pendidikan (KOSP)* for Bahasa Indonesia in Grade 7 at SMP Negeri 2 Wanggarasi, highlighting key achievements and challenges. The findings underscore the potential of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* to foster critical thinking, creativity, and character development in students through its differentiated and student-centered approaches. Teachers demonstrated progress in integrating interactive and project-based learning, aligning with the curriculum's objectives. However, challenges such as limited digital literacy, inconsistent assessment practices, and inadequate alignment of resources with curriculum goals persisted.

The study's primary contribution lies in identifying the critical role of teacher readiness, resource accessibility, and institutional support in successful curriculum implementation. By addressing these factors, schools can bridge the gap between policy and practice. The implications of these findings extend beyond the case study, offering insights for educational policymakers, administrators, and educators in similar contexts.

This research contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing localized evidence on the operationalization of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Future studies could explore longitudinal impacts of the curriculum on student outcomes and investigate scalable strategies for enhancing teacher competencies and resource alignment in diverse educational settings. These directions are vital for ensuring the sustained success of curriculum reforms in Indonesia.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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