

English Teachers' Perception on Teaching Module Guidance in Merdeka Curriculum at SMK Nurut Taqwa Songgon

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluates English teachers' perceptions of the teaching module within the Merdeka Curriculum at SMK Nurut Taqwa Songgon. The aim of this research is to assess the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of the teaching module in supporting instructional practices and student learning outcomes. The methodology employed included distributing questionnaires and conducting interviews with six English teachers to gather data on the core components of the module and the appendix. The findings reveal that teachers hold a positive perception of the core components of the teaching module, with favorable assessments regarding the structure, relevance, and understanding of the material. However, there is variation in views on the appendix, with some teachers feeling that the additional information provided is less useful or relevant. These findings support Rogers' innovation adoption theory, which emphasizes the importance of positive perceptions for the effectiveness of new curricula. The study concludes that the teaching module within the Merdeka Curriculum is generally well-received by teachers, but further evaluation and development are needed to enhance the relevance and usefulness of the appendix in supporting the learning process.

Keywords: Teachers' Perception, Teaching Module, Merdeka Curriculum.

INTRODUCTION

In the evolving landscape of educational reform, the implementation of innovative curricula such as Indonesia's Merdeka Curriculum represents a significant shift towards more flexible and localized educational practices. This research investigates the intersection of perception and curriculum reform, focusing specifically on how perceptions of the Merdeka Curriculum influence teaching practices and educational outcomes. The introduction provides a comprehensive overview of the concepts underpinning this research, contextualizes the study within current educational reforms, and outlines the objectives and contributions of the study.

Perception, as defined by Robbins and Judge (2013), involves the organization, reception, and interpretation of sensory information to make sense of one's environment. It is a crucial cognitive function that shapes individuals' attitudes and responses towards various stimuli, including educational processes. In the context of education, perceptions can significantly impact how students and teachers engage with and interpret teaching methods and curricula. Understanding the nuances of perception encompassing cognitive, affective, and conative components (Allport, in Ainun, 2018).

Provides insight into how educational reforms are received and implemented at the ground level. The Merdeka Curriculum, introduced in 2022, represents a shift towards a more flexible and student-centered approach to education in Indonesia. As outlined in the Decree of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia Number 56/M/2022, the curriculum emphasizes local adaptation, student agency, and a reduction in content overload. This framework aims to foster independence in thinking and a more personalized learning experience for students (Muin, Abdul, et al., 2022). The Merdeka Curriculum's guidelines provide a foundation for schools to design relevant and meaningful learning experiences that align with local needs and individual student potential.

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum involves a detailed process of adapting existing teaching modules to fit the new framework. According to Maulida (2022), teaching modules are crucial tools for structuring instructional activities and ensuring alignment with curriculum standards. The core components of these modules including learning objectives, meaningful understanding, and assessment strategies are designed to support effective teaching and learning within the Merdeka framework.

This study aims to explore how perceptions of the Merdeka Curriculum, particularly its teaching modules, impact the educational experience at SMK Nurut Taqwa Songgon. By examining previous research on curriculum implementation and teacher perceptions (Pertiwi & Pusparini, 2021; Triskia, 2023; Sumito, 2023), this study seeks to identify the challenges and opportunities presented by the new curriculum. It will provide a comprehensive understanding of how teachers' perceptions of the teaching modules influence their instructional practices and the overall effectiveness of the Merdeka Curriculum.

The research contributes to the existing literature by offering insights into the specific perceptions of English teachers regarding the Merdeka Curriculum at a vocational high school level. This focus aims to reveal the practical implications of the curriculum reform and provide recommendations for improving its implementation. By addressing the gap in understanding how the Merdeka Curriculum is perceived and enacted in practice, this study supports ongoing efforts to refine and enhance educational practices in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a descriptive quantitative research methodology to examine English teachers' perceptions of the teaching module within the Merdeka Curriculum at SMK Nurut Taqwa. The research design involves a survey approach aimed at capturing and analyzing the teachers' views on lesson planning under the new curriculum framework. This approach is chosen for its effectiveness in providing a clear picture of trends and attitudes by generalizing from a sample to the broader population (Creswell, 2009; Arikunto, 2010).

The research is conducted at SMK Nurut Taqwa, located in Cemoro Village, Balak District, Banyuwangi Regency. The choice of this location is driven by the school's implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and its status as a well-regarded vocational high school with a B (good) accreditation in the region. This setting

provides a relevant context for investigating how the curriculum impacts lesson planning from the perspective of educators.

The study focuses on five English teachers at SMK Nurut Taqwa, who represent the target population. These respondents are selected to provide insights into their perceptions regarding the curriculum’s teaching modules. Data collection involves two primary methods: questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire, distributed via Google Forms and WhatsApp, consists of 18 items designed to gauge teachers' perceptions across three indicators: general information, core components, and appendices. Responses are rated on a Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree, to quantify attitudes and opinions (Sugiyono, 2017).

In addition to the questionnaire, semi-structured interviews are conducted to delve deeper into the teachers' perceptions. This method allows for a more nuanced exploration of individual views and experiences. Interviews are recorded, transcribed, and analyzed to supplement the quantitative data and provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

Data analysis utilizes descriptive statistics to interpret the questionnaire results and identify patterns in the teachers' responses. The Likert scale data is processed to determine the percentage distribution across different categories of perception. This quantitative analysis is complemented by qualitative insights from the interviews, enhancing the overall analysis of how the Merdeka Curriculum affects lesson planning practices.

RESULT AND DISSCUSION

The findings of the research cover the results gained from questionnaire and interview.

1. Research Findings

This study explores the perceptions of English teachers at SMK Nurut Taqwa Songgon regarding the learning modules within the Merdeka Curriculum. Data was collected from six respondents through questionnaires and interviews. The findings reveal both positive and negative perceptions of several aspects of the learning modules, including both the core material and the supplementary components.

A. Perception of Core Learning Module Components

Table 1 presents the results of the questionnaire on teachers’ perceptions of the core components of the learning modules. Most teachers expressed positive responses regarding the structure and relevance of the core materials, although there were some critical notes concerning difficulties in understanding the material.

Table 1. Questionnaire Results on Teachers’ Perception of Core Learning Module Components (Positive and Negative Statements)

Statement	Srongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Positive				

The core material is presented in a structured and easy-to-understand manner	2	2	2	0
The core material is relevant to the learning objectives	2	4	0	0
The core material helps students understand the topic well	3	3	0	0
Negative				
The core material is too difficult	0	2	3	1
The core material does not align with students' local context	0	0	4	2

From the table above, it is evident that 50% of respondents believe the material is well-presented, while 33% stated that the core material was too difficult to comprehend. While the majority of respondents agreed that the material is relevant to the learning objectives, two teachers felt that the material does not align with the students' local context.

B. Perception of Supplementary Learning Module Components

Teachers' perceptions of the supplementary components of the learning modules were also varied. Most teachers rated the supplementary components as beneficial in supporting students' understanding of the core materials, but some respondents indicated that the supplementary materials were not always relevant or even confusing.

Table 2. Questionnaire Results on Teachers' Perception of Supplementary Learning Module Components (Positive and Negative Statements)

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Positive				
The supplementary materials provide useful additional information	3	3	0	0
The supplementary materials support the understanding of the core material	4	2	0	0
Negative				
The supplementary materials are too long and irrelevant	0	1	4	1
The information in the supplementary materials is confusing and hard to understand	0	0	3	3

A total of 100% of teachers agreed that the supplementary materials provide additional information that supports understanding of the core material, but one

teacher felt that the supplementary materials were too long, and one other felt they were irrelevant. A total of 50% of respondents strongly disagreed with the statement that the supplementary materials were confusing.

C. Perception of Module Presentation and Visualization

During the interviews, teachers also provided feedback on the visual presentation of the learning modules. Most felt that the visual elements in the modules were engaging enough, but some criticized the lack of variety in images supporting contextual learning.

Table 3. Teachers' Perceptions of Visual Presentation in the Learning Modules (Positive and Negative Statements)

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Positive				
The visual presentation in the modules is engaging and aids understanding	2	3	1	0
The visuals in the modules are relevant to the learning material	2	3	1	0
Negative				
The images and visuals in the modules do not adequately support learning	0	1	4	1
The visual presentation is monotonous and lacks variety	0	2	3	1

A total of 83% of teachers felt that the visual presentation in the modules was engaging and helped students' understanding, though 33% believed the images in the modules did not effectively support the learning process, and 16% thought the visual presentation was monotonous.

The results of this study indicate that the perceptions of English teachers regarding the learning modules in the *Merdeka* Curriculum at SMK Nurut Taqwa Songgon are generally positive, although there are some critiques that need to be addressed. Positive perceptions from teachers include the structure and relevance of the core material and the supplementary materials, which support student learning. Most teachers agreed that the modules help students understand the material more deeply. This is in line with Bruner's (1960) theory of learning, which emphasizes the importance of structuring material to help students build concepts.

However, some teachers pointed out that the core material was too difficult for students to grasp, especially in the local context. This criticism aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the Zone of Proximal Development, where learning materials must be adapted to the students' capabilities for effective learning.

Another critique relates to the supplementary materials and visualization of the modules. Although most teachers agreed that the supplementary materials helped deepen understanding, some felt that these materials were too long or irrelevant. Research by Schunk (2012) also highlights that appropriate visualization can enhance

conceptual understanding, but monotonous presentations can reduce learning effectiveness.

Overall, the findings suggest that the learning modules within the *Merdeka* Curriculum at SMK Nurut Taqwa Songgon are well-received, but further adjustments are needed to enhance their suitability for the local context and make the material easier for students to understand. The development of these modules should also consider more varied visual presentations to make the learning process more engaging and relevant.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to assess the perceptions of English teachers at SMK Nurut Taqwa Songgon regarding the *Merdeka* Curriculum's learning modules. The results indicate an overall positive reception of the core components and supplementary materials of the modules. Teachers generally found the core material well-structured, relevant, and effective in supporting student understanding. Similarly, the supplementary materials were largely viewed as valuable, providing additional information that aids comprehension.

However, there were some critiques. A portion of teachers felt that the core material was sometimes too complex or not adequately aligned with local contexts. Additionally, concerns were raised about the supplementary materials being excessive or confusing, and some teachers noted that the visual elements of the modules could be more varied and engaging.

In summary, while the Merdeka Curriculum's learning modules are largely appreciated for their structure and content relevance, there is room for improvement. Adjustments should be made to ensure the material is more accessible and better tailored to students' needs. Enhancing the visual presentation and refining the supplementary materials could further support effective teaching and learning outcomes.

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