IRJE |Indonesian Research Journal in Education| |Vol. 9| No. 2|Dec|Year 2025|

The evaluation of the *Merdeka* curriculum implementation in elementary schools

FAHMA SUCI[1*], IRSYAD[2], SULASTRI[3], AND HANIF AL KADRI[4]

Abstract

The research aims to determine the extent to which the implementation of the *Merdeka* curriculum in public elementary schools is seen from the aspects of teacher understanding, learning planning, mastery of teaching tools, strategies and approaches, teacher readiness for learning outcome assessment, knowing the challenges and obstacles, and the impacts caused on the learning process and the quality of education (student learning outcomes) in Pasaman, West Pasaman Regency. This research is an evaluation study that utilizes Stake's Countenance model. The research occured at two elementary schools, specifically SDN 30 Pasaman and SDN 21 Pasaman. The results of the research showed that teacher understanding of the implementation of the *Merdeka* curriculum, learning planning, mastery of teaching tools, strategies and approaches, teacher readiness for learning outcome assessment and challenges and obstacles, and the impacts caused on the learning process at SDN 30 Pasaman were by the standards issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture regarding the implementation of the *Merdeka* curriculum. However, at SDN 21 Pasaman, there is still a need to improve teacher competence and the condition of school infrastructure and improve the quality of learning implementation. This need for improvement is due to the significant damage to school infrastructure caused by natural disasters and the teachers' insufficient pedagogical and professional competence.

Keywords

Curriculum evaluation, *Merdeka* curriculum, Stake's countenance evaluation model

Article History

Received 06 February 2025
Accepted 18 June 2025

How to Cite

Suci, F., Irsyad., Sulastri., & Kadri, H. A. (2025). The evaluation of the *Merdeka* curriculum implementation in elementary schools. *Indonesian Research Journal in Education |IRJE|*, 9(2), 722 - 737. https://doi.org/10.22437/irje.v9i02.41627

[1] Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia, Corresponding author: fahmasuci81@gmail.com
[2] Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia
[3] Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia
[4] Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia

Introduction

The *Merdeka* curriculum was developed as a more flexible framework, focusing on essential materials, character development, and student competencies. This curriculum is a breakthrough step to help teachers and principals make the learning process much more relevant, in-depth, and enjoyable so that students can more easily understand it. The *Merdeka* learning curriculum's principle emphasises schools' freedom to determine the curriculum, learning methods, and assessments while still paying attention to national education standards. The emergence of innovation in the implementation of education can increase students' competitiveness at the national and international levels (Barrichello et al., 2023).

The *Merdeka* curriculum introduces several new hopes and nuances, especially enabling students to demonstrate their understanding of the material being taught (Latifa et al., 2023). Implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum at the elementary school level has excellent potential to improve teacher competence and the quality of learning. However, implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum encountered in the field has obstacles or challenges, such as teachers' lack of understanding and readiness to implement the *Merdeka* curriculum. The success of the *Merdeka* learning program is highly dependent on the competence of teachers as the spearhead of education (Nisa et al., 2023).

Evaluation is collecting, describing, interpreting, and presenting information to be used as a basis for making decisions, formulating policies, or formulating further programs (Vedung, 2017). Evaluation in education has four levels: program evaluation, curriculum evaluation, evaluation of the teaching and learning process, and evaluation of learning outcomes (Hendro, 2018). Elementary schools have not implemented the *Merdeka* curriculum optimally. There are many shortcomings in terms of the administration of the learning process. Teachers face challenges when implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum, particularly in preparing lesson plans, conducting scientific learning, and assessing student progress.

Based on what was found in the field, the implementation of the *Merdeka* curriculum is still constrained, and teachers' understanding of the implementation of the *Merdeka* curriculum is still in sufficient category, so it is necessary to evaluate the implementation of the *Merdeka* curriculum in public elementary schools in Pasaman, West Pasaman Regency. This research will reveal the extent of the success of the implementation of the *Merdeka* curriculum, as well as the challenges, obstacles, and impact on learning success.

Literature Review

Curriculum evaluation

Evaluation determines the value, including obtaining information to assess programs, products, procedures, or the potential or objective usefulness of alternative approaches designed to achieve specific goals (Worthern & Sander, 2011). Evaluation is a means to determine what needs improvement and to provide a basis for influencing enhancement. Evaluation involves collecting information to assess a program's usefulness, implementation, success, and quality based on predetermined criteria, which helps make decisions about

programs aimed at improvement (Chen, 2005). Evaluation is also known as a process of determining value and an activity to see whether a program has been achieved or not. According to Borg and Gall (Aka, 2019), evaluation is judging an educational program's benefits, value, or balance. Evaluation activities usually begin with a person's need to decide on policy, management, or political strategy. Evaluation activities are designed to produce data on educational phenomena' value, service, or value.

Curriculum evaluation is a series of systematic actions in collecting information and providing considerations and decisions regarding the value and meaning of the curriculum. Curriculum evaluation plays an important role in determining an education policy and in decision-making in the curriculum. Evaluation is an effort carried out widely and continuously to determine the results of using educational content and processes to achieve predetermined goals (Arofah, 2021). Curriculum evaluation, in general, is carried out as a reminder so that the curriculum remains on track or standards are planned (Latifa et al., 2023).

Evaluation serves as a gauge of the successful implementation of a curriculum. Numerous factors, including teacher factors, teaching methods, curriculum, facilities, and curriculum systems, determine the success of a program (Hendro, 2018). In addition, evaluation aims to determine a program's achievement level based on its objectives, improve the curriculum concept, identify implementation obstacles, and make assessments/considerations based on value/usefulness, which will later be used for decision-making and curriculum improvement.

Merdeka curriculum

The *Merdeka* curriculum provides more space for character development, literacy and numeracy competencies, and students' non-technical abilities (soft skills) (Indrawati, 2024). Muhartono et al. (2023) stated that the *Merdeka* curriculum has various intracurricular teaching and learning activities to maximise the content. Hence, students have enough time to master the design and strengthen their competencies. If you look at the concept of "*Merdeka* Learning," it means that educational institutions can provide opportunities to encourage students to innovate and think creatively. In the context of learning activities, teachers and students contribute to sharing experiences. (Rahmasyah, 2021) Therefore, this concept finds a middle ground and can be accepted by various groups because it remembers the vision and mission of Indonesian education, namely the creation of quality humans who can compete in various fields of life. The *Merdeka* curriculum aims to realize meaningful and practical learning in increasing faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble morals, as well as developing students' creativity, feelings, and intentions as lifelong learners with *Pancasila* characters.

Countenance evaluation model

Countenance evaluation is a type of evaluation that is adequate for assessing learning in a complex manner. The countenance model is an evaluation model with a result component (Arifin, 2022). The evaluation is carried out by comparing data in the field with standards, so a picture shows the actual situation compared to the standard. According to Tompong and

Jailani (2019), the evaluation using the Stake Countenances evaluation model consists of 2 main matrices: the description matrix and the judgment matrix.

Each matrix has three stages to distinguish the data collected. The three stages are antecedent, transaction, and outcomes. An antecedent is a pre-learning condition that is associated with learning outcomes. The transaction is a meeting between students and educators, fellow students, parents, and counsellors in the educational process. Outcomes include measurements of the impact of learning carried out by educators, administrators, counsellors, and others. According to Klassen (2006), attention to individual differences between students must give way to contingencies between background conditions, classroom activities, and scholastic outcomes for curriculum evaluation.

Stake also explains three categories of data:

- An antecedent is any condition before the teaching and learning process that can affect the results. Included in the antecedent are the status or characteristics of students before the lesson, for example, talent, previous achievement scores, psychological profiles, grades, discipline, and attendance, as well as the characteristics of educators (teachers), such as teaching experience, type/level of education, and teacher behaviour.
- Transaction interactions occur between students and teachers, students and students, and students and learning resources. Transactions also include student interactions with curriculum materials and the classroom environment. Time allocation, space arrangement, and communication flow influence these transactions. Transactions are a teaching process.
- Outcomes are the results of the program. The program outcomes include student achievement, attitudes, and motor skills; teacher perceptions of competence; and the influence of administrator actions.

Each matrix is divided into two columns. The description matrix is divided into two columns, namely the intents column and the observations column. The judgment matrix is divided into two columns, namely standards and judgments. Intents in the description matrix are interpreted as the goals and objectives of the program. Observation is the result of observations from the intents category implemented in the field. Standards in the judgment matrix are interpreted as "benchmarks of performance having widespread reference value." Benchmarks for performance possess extensive reference values. The judgment column is developed by interpreting the differences between the observed and the standards. Countenance evaluation is a program evaluation that can assess learning in a complex manner. This evaluation emphasizes the implementation of descriptions and considerations and distinguishes between three stages in the evaluation (Arifin, 2022). This Stake model evaluation provides a complete description and consideration of the *Merdeka* curriculum.

Methodology

The evaluation research focused on implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum using a qualitative case study approach. The evaluation research was conducted using Stake's Countenance model. The primary task involves a description and consideration process, also known as judgment. This research used the Stake's Countenance model for evaluation, which includes three components: Antecedent (Introduction), Transaction (Process), and Outcomes (Results). The research was conducted in public elementary schools in Pasaman by observing

2 (two) elementary schools that had good education quality report card scores in the first position (SDN 30 Pasaman) and poor-quality report card scores in the last position (SDN 21 Pasaman). The instruments used in this research were interview guidelines, observation guidelines, and documentation guidelines. Interviews were conducted to determine the conditions of teachers regarding understanding the *Merdeka* curriculum and related to the condition of students, the condition of teachers, the condition of school facilities and infrastructure, and the condition of learning planning. In addition, observation and documentation were used to find more detailed information about the research topic.

Findings

The research was conducted at public elementary schools in Pasaman, namely SDN 30 Pasaman and SDN 21 Pasaman. SDN 30 Pasaman is in Plasma III Jorong Bukit Nilam Kenagarian Lubuk Landua Aur Kuning, Pasaman, West Pasaman Regency. Meanwhile, SDN 21 Pasaman is in Pinagar Bateh Pulai, Simpang Empat Talu Street. The average guardians of SDN 21 Pasaman students work as farm labourers (around 98%), and only 2% are government employees. This school has also used the *Merdeka* curriculum since 2022, and all classes have used it.

The results of the research findings at SDN 30 Pasaman and SDN 21 Pasaman regarding the evaluation of the implementation of the *Merdeka* curriculum in public elementary schools in Pasaman were carried out by conducting interviews with teachers about the implementation of the *Merdeka* curriculum for students as seen from:

Teachers' understanding of the Merdeka curriculum

Teachers' understanding of the *Merdeka* curriculum was obtained from the results of interviews. The researcher interviewed six teachers, three teachers each at SDN 30 Pasaman and three teachers at SDN 21 Pasaman. The following are the results of the interviews. Participant F, the first-grade teacher of SDN 30 Pasaman,

> "*Saya sudah mampu mengimplementasikan kurikulum merdeka dengan melakukan perumusan CP, TP, ATP, dan modul ajar."* (in Bahasa) ("I have been able to implement the *Merdeka* curriculum by formulating CP, TP, ATP, and teaching modules.") (in English)

Participant K, the second-grade teacher of SDN 30 Pasaman,

> "*Pemahaman saya di kurikulum merdeka tentang pembelajaran interakurikuler dan kokurikuler."* (in Bahasa) ("My understanding of the *Merdeka* curriculum is about inter curricular and co-curricular learning.") (in English)

Participant Z, the principal of SDN 30 Pasaman,

> "*Guru SDN 30 Pasaman sudah melaksanakan Kurikulum merdeka sesuai dengan regulasi yang ada.*" (in Bahasa) ("Teachers of SDN 30 Pasaman have implemented the *Merdeka* curriculum by existing regulations.") (in English)

Participant T, the first-grade teacher of SDN 21 Pasaman,

> "*Saya masih kesulitan dalam memaknai apa yang disebut dengan kurikulum Merdeka."* (in Bahasa) ("I still have difficulty interpreting the *Merdeka* curriculum.") (in English)

Participant Y, one of the teachers at SDN 21 Pasaman,

> "*Pemahaman saya terkait dengan kurikulum merdeka terutama dalam menyusun tujuan pembelajaran sudah mulai memahami, namun masih terkendala dalam perumusan dalam modul ajar."* (in Bahasa) ("My understanding related to the *Merdeka* curriculum, especially in compiling learning objectives, has begun to understand but is still constrained in the formulation of the teaching module.") (in English)

Participant D, the principal of SDN 21 Pasaman,

> "*SDN 21 Pasaman sudah memulai melaksanakan kurikulum merdeka sejak tahun 2022 secara bertahap, namun masih terkendala dengan kurang efektif pengimplementasian kurikulum Merdeka."* (in Bahasa) ("SDN 21 Pasaman started implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum in 2022 in stages but is still constrained by the ineffectiveness of the implementation of the *Merdeka* curriculum.") (in English)

Participant W, the sixth-grade teacher of SDN 21 Pasaman,

> "*Pemahaman saya dengan kurikulum merdeka ini masih kurang sekali karena saya baru tahun ini menggunakan kurikulum Merdeka."* (in Bahasa) ("My understanding of the *Merdeka* curriculum is still lacking because this year I have only used the *Merdeka* curriculum.") (in English)

Learning planning

Teachers of SDN 30 Pasaman have carried out learning planning activities, from mapping the learning achievements to compiling teaching modules. Almost all the 11 teachers of SDN 30 Pasaman have completed the learning planning documents. The learning planning carried out by teachers of SDN 21 Pasaman in compiling learning objectives is guided by the government's learning achievements. After conducting interviews and observations of 14 teachers of SDN 21 Pasaman, it was found that only three people had learning planning documents, starting from mapping learning achievements, compiling learning objectives, learning objective flows and teaching modules.

Teachers' mastery of the Merdeka curriculum devices

From the results of observations by researchers on 11 teachers at SDN 30 Pasaman, most of them have mastered implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum devices. Only three

teachers have mastered the *Merdeka* curriculum devices at SDN 21 Pasaman. However, they have not fully mastered the devices.

Strategies and approaches used in the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum

Based on an interview conducted with the principal of SDN 30 Pasaman,

> " *Strategi dan pendekatan yang digunakan agar pelaksanaan kurikulum merdeka berjalan dengan lancar dengan memberikan sosialisasi tentang kurikulum merdeka, melaksanakan workshop atau pelatihan tentang kurikulum merdeka, menggunakan aplikasi PMM yang telah disiapkan oleh pemerintah sebagai sumber belajar yang dimanfaatkan oleh para pendidik dan peserta didik agar menambah wawasan dari segi pengetahuan."* (in Bahasa) ("The strategies and approaches used so that the implementation of the *Merdeka* curriculum runs smoothly by providing socialization about the *Merdeka* curriculum, conducting workshops or training on the *Merdeka* curriculum, and using the PMM application that the government has prepared as a learning resource utilized by educators and students to increase insight in terms of knowledge.") (in English)

Meanwhile, the results of the researcher's interview with the principal of SDN 21 Pasaman,

> "*Cara yang digunakan dengan melaksanakan sosialisai pada satuan pendidikannya, selanjutnya melaksanaakan pelatihan pada kelompok kerja guru bagaimana tentang imlplementasi kurikulum merdeka, dan mengarahkan guru guru belajar secara mandiri baik dengan menggunakan aplikasi PMM dan website."* (in Bahasa) ("The method used was to carry out socialization in the educational unit, then train in teacher working groups implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum, and direct teachers to learn *Merdeka*ly using the PMM application and website.") (in English)

Teacher readiness for learning outcome assessment in the Merdeka curriculum

The *Merdeka* curriculum's assessment of learning outcomes is almost the same as the 2013 curriculum, where the readiness of teachers at SDN 30 Pasaman for learning outcome assessment in the *Merdeka* curriculum is quite masterful and agile because when the researcher conducted observation activities, it was seen that most of the teachers could know that the assessment in the *Merdeka* curriculum is divided into formative assessment and summative assessment.

Meanwhile, at SDN 21 Pasaman, teacher readiness for assessing learning outcomes in the *Merdeka* curriculum is still lacking because when conducting observations, many teachers were still unable to differentiate the assessment results in the *Merdeka* curriculum, where the *Merdeka* curriculum assessment is divided into two, namely formative assessment and summative assessment.

Challenges and obstacles in implementing the Merdeka curriculum

When the researcher conducted interviews and observations, information was obtained that the implementation of the *Merdeka* curriculum at SDN 30 Pasaman found challenges and obstacles, including the challenges encountered are,

- SDN 30 Pasaman teachers try to follow all learning processes using the implementation instructions for the *Merdeka* curriculum.
- Teachers must create a more holistic evaluation method requiring time and new skills.
- SDN 30 Pasaman teachers cannot show appreciation to students and meet their different needs.

The obstacles experienced are,

- Lack of teacher understanding of the *Pancasila* student profile program.
- Some educators have not mastered information technology, such as accessing websites containing teaching modules for students.
- At the location of SDN 30 Pasaman, there are often disruptions, such as weak signals from the internet network.

At SDN 21 Pasaman, challenges and obstacles were found, such as the challenges encountered are,

- SDN 21 Pasaman teachers have not fully adapted to the change in the old curriculum to the *Merdeka* curriculum.
- SDN 21 Pasaman teachers do not have adequate technological skills to facilitate online or offline learning.
- SDN 21 Pasaman teachers with minimal facilities and infrastructure are trying to access the *Merdeka* curriculum application.

Obstacles experienced, such as

- More than half of the educators do not master information technology, so learning cannot be what the government wants.
- School facilities and infrastructure are minimal; after the earthquake in February 2022, many school facilities were damaged, and even now students are still studying in emergency classrooms.

Impact on the learning process

In the observation activities at the schools studied, the following findings were obtained regarding the impact of implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum on the learning process: At SDN 30 Pasaman, the learning process encountered in the field was more creative with the creativity by teachers in delivering teaching materials/modules. Students at SDN 30 Pasaman were enthusiastic about receiving learning materials with the conditioning of a differentiated learning environment. At SDN 21 Pasaman, the impact of implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum at this school has not been seen, and the learning process is still monotonous. This can be seen from the condition of students receiving learning materials. The results of

interviews with students at SDN 21 Pasaman stated that children did not feel any difference between the *Merdeka* curriculum and the previous curriculum.

Evaluation and assessment process carried out by teachers

The evaluation and assessment process carried out by teachers at SDN 30 Pasaman has used formative and summative assessments. In the implementation of formative assessments, it is carried out during the learning process. Likewise, SDN 21 Pasaman has carried out formative and summative assessment activities. However, it has experienced obstacles due to the lack of training related to assessment in formative and summative activities.

Discussions

The evaluation research on implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum in public elementary schools in Pasaman emphasizes two main things, namely describing and considering. This is obtained through a description of the initial phase (antecedent), the process stage (process), and the results stage (outcomes). The initial describes the implementation of the *Merdeka* curriculum, which includes teacher readiness, teacher understanding of the *Merdeka* curriculum, and learning planning. The process stage (process) is seen in the strategy of educators in implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum, as well as their approach to using learning tools. At the outcome stage (outcomes) of implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum, the school's strategy is to carry out formative and summative evaluation activities. As well as the impact of implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum.

Antecedents (the initial phase), this initial phase (antecedent) describes the implementation of the *Merdeka* curriculum at SDN 30 Pasaman and SDN 21 Pasaman, which includes the condition of students, the condition of teachers, the condition of facilities and infrastructure and the condition of learning planning.

Condition of students, the condition of students at SDN 30 Pasaman and SDN 21 Pasaman is obtained from the condition of students consisting of the readiness and activities of students at SDN 30 Pasaman and the readiness of students at the beginning of learning. All students are in the classroom before the teacher enters the classroom. Students carry out the reading of several short letters that have been determined together. All students have prepared stationery and loaned *Merdeka* curriculum books. At the beginning of the lesson, the student's readiness at SDN 21 Pasaman was already in the classroom before the teacher entered. The implementation of reading several short letters in the Qur'an had been determined together. All students had also prepared stationery and books to receive lessons.

It can be seen in the classroom that there is interaction between students and between students and teachers who carry out learning in the classroom. While at SDN 21 Pasaman, the teacher seems more dominant in the learning process. There is no feedback between the teacher and students; only a few students raise their hands when the teacher asks questions.

Teacher condition, based on the results of observations conducted by researchers at SDN 30 Pasaman, there are several researcher notes after conducting teaching observations: (1) in pedagogical competence, there are still teachers who, in managing student learning, have not implemented effective learning centered on students, as well as a lack of feedback to

students, and (2) there are still teachers who have not fully mastered the subject matter. Based on the observations and interviews, it can be concluded that at SDN 30 Pasaman, teacher competence is appropriate and meets the standards.

When the researchers conducted teaching observations at SDN 21 Pasaman, the teachers' competence did not meet the applicable standards. The pedagogical competence of SDN 21 Pasaman teachers was still not characterized by the characteristics of students, so they could not pay attention to students' learning styles. Teachers still taught as they were. Personality, social, and professional competencies are still largely below standard, so teacher competencies at SDN 21 Pasaman do not meet the standard and still need development. Widana et al. (2020) stated that teachers must have digital skills, innovate, and think creatively. A teacher's skills are communication, leadership, digital literacy, entrepreneurship, collaboration, and problem-solving. Implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum brings changes to all parties and the readiness of all parties. Teachers are required to be mentors and facilitators for students (Jagtap, 2016). Teachers must be able to make students active and independent learners.

Condition of facilities and infrastructure, the condition of the classrooms at SDN 30 Pasaman still does not meet the established standards. Therefore, there needs to be an improvement in the completeness and tidiness of the classrooms. The number of study rooms is only seven classes, while there are 8 (eight) study groups. The lack of facilities and infrastructure causes the learning process to be in the second shift. The library room is in good condition, and library books can be lent to students. The health unit room is still combined with the library room.

The administration room is combined with the principal's; there is a place of worship, a canteen and toilets, and a place to play or exercise. Laboratory space is not yet available. Facilities can be used as tools and equipment to achieve learning goals. These facilities consist of learning materials, learning tools, and equipment. SDN 21 Pasaman, the site of this research, is currently undergoing renovations, particularly in the classrooms. The West Pasaman Regency earthquake in February 2022, which caused damage to many buildings and houses, prompted the renovation. One of the particularly affected is the SDN 21 Pasaman Building.

The infrastructure in SDN 21 Pasaman consists of land, buildings, and rooms. When this research was conducted, there were only six new classrooms, resulting in three study groups being held in the second shift. The library space is available, the health room is severely damaged, the prayer room is still under construction, the canteen is available, and only four toilets are available. However, they are in moderately and severely damaged conditions. Despite its potential to enhance fitness and health, the playground or sports area remains unusable due to its unsuitable shape and size. The narrow playground makes it impossible to carry out sports activities there.

Learning planning conditions, learning planning, namely compiling the steps that will be implemented to achieve the predetermined goals, is essential to be implemented before starting learning. Planning is the initial stage of preparing for learning. Learning planning with the *Merdeka* curriculum begins with formulating learning outcomes into learning objectives. After formulating learning outcomes into learning objectives, teachers arrange them into a learning objective flow. The learning objective flow becomes a guideline for designing teaching modules. Teachers at SDN 30 Pasaman have carried out learning planning preparation

activities, from mapping learning achievements to teaching module preparation. Almost all of the 11 teachers at SDN 30 Pasaman have completed the learning planning preparation documents according to the established standards. At SDN 30 Pasaman, teachers prepare teaching modules as curriculum material, replacing the learning implementation plan. The prepared teaching modules include learning achievements, *Pancasila* student profile, facilities and infrastructure, student targets, and learning models.

SDN 21 Pasaman teachers must guide their learning planning at the teaching objectives preparation stage by the government's learning achievement. The interviews and observations conducted with 14 teachers from SDN 21 Pasaman revealed that only three had learning planning documents that began with mapping learning outcomes, preparing teaching objectives, outlining the flow of learning objectives, and developing teaching modules.

Transaction (process stage), the process stage consists of learning and the implementation of formative assessments.

Learning process, readiness in the learning implementation process includes preliminary, core, and closing activities. Preliminary activities include apperception, motivation, and delivery of competencies and activity plans. Core activities include mastery of learning materials, application of educational strategies, utilisation of learning resources/media, implementation of authentic assessments, involvement of students in learning, and use of correct and appropriate language in learning. Close learning activities by facilitating and guiding students to summarise learning materials, reflect on the process and subject matter and provide oral or written tests.

Based on observations carried out at SDN 30 Pasaman, it was found that teachers there were excellent at implementing the learning process through the *Merdeka* curriculum structure. In the preliminary activities, teachers at SDN 30 Pasaman demonstrated skills in motivating their students before carrying out learning activities. Implementing apperception and class motivation activities started with preparing students physically and psychologically, linking current learning materials with students' experiences or previous learning. Teachers at SDN 30 Pasaman demonstrated their skills in asking challenging questions to motivate, such as "What do students know about the material presented and demonstrating something related to the learning material?" However, at SDN 21 Pasaman, it was found that some teachers had not carried out learning process activities by the *Merdeka* curriculum structure that was enforced, such as not preparing students physically and psychologically or linking current learning materials with students' experiences or previous learning.

In implementing core activities, teachers at SDN 30 Pasaman have adjusted the material to the learning objectives very well, linking other relevant knowledge materials to the development of science, technology and real life. Most teachers have presented the material systematically by paying attention to the delivery of material from easy to difficult and concrete to abstract. Implementing educational learning strategies has been seen as good in implementing learning by the competencies to be achieved. Utilisation of learning resources/media in learning, such as the skills of educators in using various learning resources, using learning media, involving participants in utilising learning resources, using learning media, and producing interesting messages. Teachers at SDN 30 Pasaman have implemented authentic assessments, especially in assessing attitudes, knowledge, and skills. Suitability of techniques and instruments, suitability between forms, techniques, and authentic assessment

instruments, and the availability of scoring guidelines. Teachers, such as the growth of active student participation through teacher interaction and learning resources, carry out student involvement activities in learning at SDN 30 Pasaman. Responding positively to student participation, the teacher is very open to his students' responses and uses correct and appropriate language to learn clearly and fluently.

At SDN 21 Pasaman, the teacher has not demonstrated the ability to use different learning resources, media, and strategies as required and has not followed the guidelines for using these tools in teaching. The implementation of authentic assessment and student involvement in learning is still lacking. Additionally, the teacher fails to employ proper and suitable spoken and written language during the learning process.

Teachers of SDN 30 Pasaman, in implementing closing activities of learning by facilitating and guiding students to summarise the learning materials, reflecting on the learning process and materials, giving oral or written tests, collecting work results as portfolio materials, and following providing directions for the following activities and styling tasks, have been carried out even though not all aspects have been implemented. In contrast to teachers of SDN 21 Pasaman, when closing learning activities were carried out, they had not yet carried out guidance in summarising learning materials, there were no oral or written tests, and they did not collect work results as portfolio materials.

Implementation of a formative assessment, SDN 30 Pasaman has implemented and carried out assessments according to government assessment standards, and assessment procedures are carried out based on student learning outcomes from beginning to end. This school uses all assessments as considerations in determining student achievement. The assessments carried out by SDN 30 Pasaman have met existing standards. Teachers at SDN 30 Pasaman assert that the *Merdeka* curriculum's assessments offer greater flexibility by accommodating students' abilities.

When the researcher conducted observations at SDN 21 Pasaman, teachers at SDN 21 Pasaman had not yet implemented assessment activities by the standards set by the government. When the teacher ended the learning activities in the classroom, he did not implement assessment activities such as asking or requesting students to write down the concepts they had just learned. This happened because some teachers did not yet understand how the *Merdeka* curriculum works regarding formative assessment.

Outcomes (result phase), learning assessment is a tool that can determine the success or failure of learning and show student performance results. Assessment, also known as the term assessment, takes place following the execution of the learning process. Forms of assessment include formative and summative assessments. Formative assessment aims to monitor and improve learning and evaluate the achievement of learning objectives. Formative assessment can be an assessment at the beginning and during learning. The forms of assessment at SDN 30 Pasaman and SDN 21 Pasaman are as follows.

Formative assessment, at the beginning of learning, assessment was conducted to determine the student's readiness to receive teaching materials and achieve the planned learning objectives. The researcher found several implementations of assessments from the results of interviews with the principal of SDN 30 Pasaman related to the readiness of learning assessments, stating that the teachers at SDN 30 Pasaman were excellent at implementing

evaluations. Teachers at SDN 30 Pasaman stated that the assessment was carried out using the flow of learning objectives to be achieved and identifying learning objectives.

The teachers of SDN 21 Pasaman at the time of the research still did not understand how to carry out assessment activities by existing standards, so the assessment results obtained were not quite good because they did not match the criteria for achieving learning objectives. Teachers of SDN 21 Pasaman only made assessments according to the learning objectives to be achieved. Assessment in project-based learning is very confusing for teachers of SDN 21 Pasaman because there are many types of assessments, such as presentations, projects, products, and oral and written.

Summative assessment, a summative assessment is carried out to ensure the achievement of all learning objectives and is carried out at the end of the learning process. Summative assessment is part of the assessment calculation at the end of the semester. Teachers at SDN 30 Pasaman and SDN 21 Pasaman chose to carry out written tests for summative assessments in intracurricular learning, which differs from project learning. Summative project assessments emphasize more practice. After describing each stage of the implementation of the *Merdeka* curriculum and comparing the expectations according to the standards with the implementation conditions at the education unit level, the next step is to look at the gaps between stages vertically.

From the description data of the Stake Countenance model with three stages of Antecedent, Transaction, and Outcomes for SDN 30 Pasaman, the antecedent stage includes several components such as student conditions, teacher conditions, facilities and infrastructure conditions, and learning planning conditions. In the implementation of this preliminary stage, SDN 30 Pasaman has adapted to the changes that have occurred, such as changes in the new curriculum policy that significantly affect the role of teachers and educational challenges requiring teachers to improve their competence in developing learning. The transaction stage (process) contains implementing learning, starting from preliminary activities (apperception and motivation to participants), core activities, closing activities, and formative assessments after closing learning. SDN 30 Pasaman teachers have carried out learning implementation activities by applicable standards.

The outcome stage is related to teacher assessment in assessing student learning outcomes—implementing formative and summative assessments. At SDN 30 Pasaman, the teacher assessment process is conducted using the new learning system. At the antecedent stage at SDN 21 Pasaman, there are teacher competencies with academic qualifications, and there are 2 (two) teachers who are not linear with the PGSD and S1 Education majors. Some teachers have not prepared teaching modules required for the learning planning process. Most of the teachers at SDN 21 Pasaman have not implemented the preparation of learning plans, such as preparing learning objectives starting from learning achievements to preparing teaching modules. SDN 21 Pasaman's facilities, including classrooms, are still in poor condition, necessitating the division of the learning process into two shifts. The earthquake's aftermath has made the library and health room unusable, halting literacy. The place of worship, usually used for character building, serve as a learning classroom. The playground or sports area cannot be used due to the limited land. The canteen is located in a suitable and safe place.

The learning planning process at SDN 21 Pasaman only has 2 (two) teachers who work on and provide learning planning. At the process stage (transaction), all learning implementation activities start with preliminary and core activities; SDN 21 Pasaman teachers generally do not carry out activities according to the established standards. However, in the closing activity, teachers carry out student involvement activities. Formative assessment activities are carried out during the learning process, and summative assessment activities are implemented. At the outcomes phase, the assessment results are carried out by carrying out activities to compare student learning outcomes with the criteria for achieving learning objectives and using value intervals.

In the Stake SDN 30 Pasaman and SDN 21 Pasaman model data description process table, the analysis results between the antecedent, transaction, and outcomes phases in the expected conditions at three stages have their respective standards based on applicable laws and regulations or technical instructions. In actual conditions, there is a gap between the three stages. At SDN 30 Pasaman, there is a gap between the antecedent stage (many facilities are not in accordance) and the transaction stage (almost all activities are by what is desired). Although there is a gap between the antecedent stage (condition of facilities), the learning implementation process is included in the category according to standards. The condition of facilities not up to the standards of Permendikbud no. 22 of 2023 does not affect the learning implementation process, only in the use of learning resources and media in learning that teachers do not implement. The condition of facilities that are not in accordance is only the library room and health room. Student readiness, teacher conditions, facility conditions, and learning planning do not affect the learning implementation process and assessment of results. There is no gap between the transaction and outcome stages. At the results stage, the student's scores met the standards, and during the implementation of ANBK (Computer-Based National Assessment), SDN 30 Pasaman obtained the highest score in Pasaman.

At SDN 21 Pasaman, the actual condition (observed) is a gap between the three stages. The condition of students is the standard, but the condition of teachers, facilities, and learning planning is not. This disparity affects the learning outcomes that are implemented. The gap also occurs at the transaction and outcomes phases. Transactions in this category do not meet the standards for implementing learning and assessment processes. The learning process watched during the observation activity did not meet the category according to the standard. However, the assessment results indicated that the activities followed the standard. The assessment results of students at SDN 21 Pasaman in the ANBK process this year are in the lowest position among elementary schools in Pasaman.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the implementation of the *Merdeka* curriculum in public elementary schools (SDN) in Pasaman, West Pasaman Regency, using the Stake's Countenance model evaluation, is not entirely by the provisions directed by the Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, which applies as a standard. The following conclusions were obtained from the 2 (two) public elementary schools studied: a. Teachers' understanding of the *Merdeka* curriculum's implementation, particularly for students at SDN 30 Pasaman, has enabled them to follow the implementation guidelines; however, teachers at SDN 21 Pasaman continue to struggle with implementing the

Merdeka curriculum. In the learning planning process, teachers at SDN 30 Pasaman have carried out planning according to the guidelines, but many teachers at SDN 221 Pasaman have not been able to plan. Teachers at SDN 30 Pasaman have mastered the *Merdeka* curriculum tools. Only three teachers at SDN 21 Pasaman have mastered the tools, strategies, and teacher readiness needed to implement the *Merdeka* curriculum. In general, teachers at SDN 30 Pasaman have understood and mastered implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum compared to teachers at SDN 21 Pasaman.

The challenges and obstacles faced in implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum at SDN 30 Pasaman include mastering the learning process according to the implementation instructions, creating a more holistic evaluation method that requires skills and time, and addressing the diverse needs of students while ensuring they feel appreciated. At SDN 21 Pasaman, the challenges encountered were teachers who had not fully adapted to the changes from the old curriculum to the *Merdeka* curriculum, and did not have adequate technological skills to facilitate online or offline learning, and SDN 21 Pasaman, with minimal facilities and infrastructure, tried to access the *Merdeka* curriculum application. The obstacles experienced in implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum were mainly a lack of understanding of the *Pancasila* student profile; there were still teachers who had not mastered information technology, internet network disruptions at the school location, and the condition of facilities and infrastructure that were not up to standard, especially at SDN 21 Pasaman. At SDN 30 Pasaman, the impact on the learning process was that teachers and students became more creative, and students showed enthusiasm for receiving learning materials. At SDN 21 Pasaman, there has been no visible change in the learning process. The two elementary schools studied carried out evaluation and assessment processes using formative and summative assessments.

Several suggestions can be submitted according to the results of the research conclusions, as follows:

- Improving teacher conditions, including enhancing academic qualifications and increasing teacher competence in utilizing media and learning resources.
- Improving the condition of facilities in elementary schools in Pasaman and West Pasaman Regency in general.
- Enhance the quality of learning by creating a comprehensive learning plan.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

References

Aka, K. A. (2019, October). Integration Borg & Gall (1983) and Lee & Owen (2004) models as an alternative model of design-based research of interactive multimedia in elementary school. *Journal of Physics, 1318*(1), 12-22.

Arifin, A. (2022). *Evaluasi program pembelajaran pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) melalui model countenance stake di SMPN Kelas VII Kab. Bima tahun 2021(Evaluation of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning program through the countenance stake model at Class VII SMPN Kab. Bima in 2021)* [Doctoral dissertation, UIN Mataram].

Arofah, E. F. (2021). Evaluasi kurikulum pendidikan (Evaluation of educational curriculum). *Jurnal Tawadhu*, *5*(2), 218-229.

Barrichello, A., Morano, R. S., Feldmann, P. R., & Jacomossi, R. R. (2020). The importance of education in the context of innovation and competitiveness of nations. *International Journal of Education Economics and Development*, *11*(2), 204-224.

Chen, H. T. (2005). *Practical program evaluation: Assessing and improving planning, implementation, and effectiveness*. Sage.

Hendro, W. (2018). *Evaluasi pendidikan (Educational evaluation)*. Jakarta: Rineka Cipta.

Indrawati, D. (2024). Implementation of the independent learning curriculum and its implications for improving teacher professionalism in Indonesia. *Proceedings Series of Educational Studies*, *8*(4), 135-147.

Jagtap, P. (2016). Teachers' role as facilitator in learning. *Scholarly Research Journal*, *3*(17), 3903-3905.

Klassen, S. (2006). Contextual assessment in science education: Background, issues, and policy. *Science Education*, *90*(5), 820-851.

Latifa, H., Ratih, K., & Maryadi, M. (2023). Implementing the Merdeka curriculum in English language teaching: A study of teacher learning steps. *Voices of English Language Education Society*, *7*(3), 640-651.

Muhartono, D. S., Wahyuni, S., Umiyati, S., Azhar, A. W., & Puspaningrum, I. I. (2023). Evaluasi pelaksanaan kebijakan kurikulum merdeka belajar dalam rangka peningkatan hasil belajar (Evaluation of the implementation of the independent learning curriculum policy in order to improve learning outcomes). *Publiciana*, *16*(1), 1–12.

Nisa, S., Sri Lena, M., Safitri, S., & Anas, H. (2023). Implementasi guru melaksanakan kurikulum merdeka dalam pembelajaran matematika di SD (Implementation of independent curriculum by teachers in mathematics learning in elementary schools). *Science and Education Journal (SICEDU)*, *2*(2), 266–272.

Tompong, B. N. K. J., & Jailani, J. (2019). An evaluation of mathematics learning program at primary education using countenance stake evaluation model. *Jurnal Penelitian dan Evaluasi Pendidikan*, *23*(2), 156-169.

Vedung, E. (2017). *Public policy and program evaluation*. Routledge.

Widana, I. W., Sumandya, I. W., Sukendra, I. K., & Sudiarsa, I. W. (2020). Analysis of conceptual understanding, digital literacy, motivation, divergent of thinking, and creativity on the teachers skills in preparing hots-based assessments. *Journal of Advance Research in Dynamical & Control Systems*, *12*(8), 459-466.

Worthern, B. R., & Sanders, J. R. (2011). Content specialization and educational evaluation: A necessary marriage. *Journal of Multi Disciplinary Evaluation*, *7*(15), 272-295.

Biographical Notes

FAHMA SUCI is a student at Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia.
IRSYAD is a lecturer at Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia.
SULASTRI is a lecturer at Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia.
HANIF AL KADRI is a lecturer at Universitas Negeri Padang, Padang, Indonesia.