

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the writer discusses; background of the study, limitation of the problem, formulation of the problem, the objective of the study, and significances of the study.

#### **A. Background of Study**

One effort that can improve the quality of life of the community is the educational process. This is because education allows the community to develop its capacity in a directed manner. In an effort to improve the quality of education in Indonesia, the government made various changes to the curriculum to adapt to the times and answer various problems that occur naturally in the field of education. Curriculum is an educational program held by the government with the aim of preparing young people to contribute and become useful members of society after graduation.

According to Maba and Mantra (2018) as an educational program, the curriculum is always rooted in national culture based on past and present life and based on predictions of future life. In implementing the curriculum, it must be in accordance with what has been planned so that students appear as planned in the learning objectives in order to achieve the goals and objectives of the curriculum. Marisa (2021) argues that the curriculum is the key to educational success, so the government must design it in accordance with the times, at this time the need for an age-appropriate curriculum is urgently needed because currently the times have

entered the 5.0 era which answers the challenges caused by the industrial revolution in the 4.0 era to be able to compete in a global world.

Curriculum is an essential tool for the success of an education. Without a proper and appropriate curriculum, it will be difficult to achieve the desired educational goals and objectives. In the history of education, Indonesia has several times held changes and improvements of curriculum whose purpose is certainly to adjust it with the development and progress of the times for achieving maximum results.

Currently, after the inauguration of Nadiem Makariem on 23 October 2019 as Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Mendikbudristek), there has been a change in the curriculum to become an Merdeka Belajar curriculum. According to Saputra and Hadi (2022) the Merdeka Belajar curriculum is a form of improving the 2013 curriculum, of course getting various responses from teachers, students and parents of students. Each agreed and some disagreed with the changes in the curriculum which they felt were too fast to replace the 2013 curriculum.

Although curriculum is an essential element in determining the education quality, there are other factors that we should consider like teachers' professionalism, supports of society and environment, as well as media (Sariono, 2013). Darsih (2014) added that It is impossible to achieve high quality education by solely depending on a good curriculum without the support of those other factors. In fact, there are still many schools in Indonesia that are not adequate both in terms of facilities provided at school and the quality of the teachers. This can be

challenging to implement the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum to every school in this country.

In addition, the readiness of teachers in dealing with curriculum changes is also very necessary to be considered. This is because large numbers of teachers are not ready to accept the new implementation of curriculum yet. The implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum obviously becomes a new challenge for teachers to be able to face and implement it in teaching and learning activities.

In teaching, teacher perception is something that cannot be ignored to achieve appropriate learning goals. The teachers should be able to master what the Merdeka Belajar curriculum is and how the systems run as well, this is very important because then the teachers can apply and provide a good assessment to students in accordance with the existing curriculum. Teachers have to know objectives, contents, teaching methods and techniques and evaluation approaches well and apply them in learning-teaching processes in order to manage the requirements of current curriculum. No matter how well the developed curriculum is, it will not achieve its objectives unless teachers who put curriculum into practice fulfill their tasks efficiently (Gurol, 2004). In other words, teachers as curriculum implementers have to train on implemented curriculum's principles, implementation approaches, objectives, evaluation and technical competencies (Erturk, 1994; Tasdemir, 2003 cited in Konokman, 2017). In contrast, the perception of the teachers is crucial to be considered in order to achieve those particular terms in teaching-learning process.

The advantages of the Merdeka Curriculum explained by the Ministry of Education and Culture (2021b) focus on essential material and develop student competence in its phases so that students can learn more deeply, meaningfully and fun, no rush. Learning is far more relevant and interactive through project activities providing wider opportunities for students to actively explore actual issues such as environmental, health, and other issues to support character development and competency profiles of Pancasila Students. According to him, the Merdeka curriculum carries the concept of "Freedom to Learn" which is different from the 2013 curriculum Sherly et al., (2020) means giving freedom to schools, teachers and students to be free to innovate, learn independent and creative, where this freedom starts from the teacher as the driving force.

Based on the results of observations by the writer in December 26, 2022, at the home Kemelak of one of the teacher who teaches at SMP IT Fathona Baturaja OKU and SMP IT Tuncen Baturaja, stated that Merdeka Belajar Curriculum focuses on essential material and character development of the Pancasila Student Profile. Implementation of Merdeka Belajar Curriculum can be adjusted to the needs and level of readiness of each school. The difference is administrative documents. Curriculum 13 uses lesson plans while Merdeka Belajar Curriculum uses teaching MODULES. The learning system is the same, it's just that the class applies Pancasila values. With reference to learning objectives, learning objectives, and learning outcomes, it is proof that SMP IT Fathona Baturaja OKU and SMP IT Tuncen Baturaja has implemented Merdeka Belajar Curriculum.

SMP IT Fathona OKU is known as one of the most advanced school in Ogan Komering Ulu that has implemented Merdeka Belajar curriculum since the first time it launched, the researcher is curious to investigate there in order to find out and understand the teachers perception about the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum.

In fact, many previous studies have been done in various regions, but none in Ogan Komering Ulu especially in Baturaja Timur. That is why the researcher is very curious to explore more about this. A number of studies have been identified to examine the teachers perceptions of the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum. However not in implementing it in the classroom. They still found many obstacles and difficulties in applying the new learning revolution. Based on initial observations made by the writer at SMP IT Fathona Baturaja OKU and SMP IT Tuncen Baturaja that the existence of an Merdeka Belajar curriculum provides opportunities for students, especially for teachers, to have the freedom to innovate, the freedom to study independently and creatively in order to achieve the expected goals.

Based on the background of the researchers above, it couldmbe concluded that the title of this research is “**Teachers Perception of the Implementation of Merdeka Curriculum at SMP IT Fathona Baturaja OKU and SMP IT Tunas Cendikia Baturaja**”

## **B. Problem of Study**

### **1. Limitation of the Study**

In Indonesia, the education curriculum has always undergone changes starting from the Lesson Plan 1947, the Curriculum Plan for Education 1964, the curriculum 1975, the Curriculum 1984, the curriculum 1994, the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) 2004, the Education Unit Level Curriculum (SBC) 2006, the 2013 curriculum, and the recently inaugurated curriculum, namely the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. In this study, the researcher only focused on Merdeka Belajar Curriculum and Teachers Perception the Implementation Merdeka Curriculum at SMP IT Fathona Baturaja OKU and SMP IT Tuncen Baturaja.

### **2. Formulation of the Study**

Based on the research background, the formulation of the problem in this study was what was teachers perception of merdeka curriculum implementation at SMP IT Fathona Baturaja OKU and SMP IT Tuncen Baturaja?

## **C. The Objective of the Study**

Based on the formulation of the problem above, the purpose of this research was to find out how teachers perception of Merdeka curriculum implementation at SMP IT Fathona Baturaja OKU and SMP IT Tuncen Baturaja.

## **D. The Significances of the Study**

This research could be useful for teachers, researchers. students, and other researchers. As we can see as follow:

### **1. For the Researcher**

This research was useful so that researchers can find out the teacher's opinion about the implementation of Merdeka Belajar curriculum and what the impact of Merdeka Belajar on the learning process.

## **2. For the Students**

This research could help students to find out what is Merdeka Belajar curriculum and what the benefit of Merdeka Belajar curriculum.

## **3. For the Teachers**

Through this research teachers could share about their perception about Merdeka Belajar curriculum and teachers can use this research as a evaluate education in Indonesia.

## **4. For TEFL**

It is hoped this study could be a reference for prospective educators to develop research on foreign language teaching skills, especially in English, and can add to the knowledge of readers in improving their ability to convey English learning in a clear and interesting way.