

Students' Perception on the Application of Merdeka Curriculum

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Students' Perception on the Application of Merdeka Curriculum

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Abstract. This research aims to find out the perceptions of Senior high school students and their reasons for applying Merdeka Curriculum in English subjects. In completing this qualitative research, the researcher adopted a phenomenological case study approach. Data was collected by distributing questionnaires to respondents and conducting in-depth interviews with selected students. The data was found by researchers were processed using thematic analysis techniques. This research involved senior high school students from 5 different schools in Medan, North Sumatra, totaling 38 students as respondents. From this study, researchers found five perceptions related to the application of the Merdeka Curriculum in English language subjects, namely a. Merdeka Curriculum provides freedom in learning; b. students are more active and creative, c. concise and simple material; d. energy consumption that is quickly drained or tiring; and e. Merdeka Curriculum is better than Curriculum 2013. In addition, five reasons were found from the students' perceptions, namely a. freedom to choose appropriate learning methods and strategies; b. students do a lot of activities in learning; c. the material in English books is more on points with minimal explanation; d. the assignments given are many and concurrent; and e. The Merdeka Curriculum is more student-centered than the 2013 Curriculum. Furthermore, a detailed explanation related to this will be described in detail in this study.

Keywords: Students' Perception, Merdeka Curriculum, English Subject

1. INTRODUCTION

Curriculum structure in education is actually a tool used to achieve educational goals and objectives. In this section, a curriculum is considered as a list of required outcomes. In the development process in general, observable behavior in education must be clear and specific. In a sense, the objectivity of the actual Curriculum model emphasizes its purpose. With the conclusion drawn that the main focus lies on the product and objectives and is oriented towards the teacher or administration. (Shao wen su, 2012).

Based on the times that will always change, changes in terms of curriculum will actually continue to follow the flow of these developments. This change was made with the main objective to upgrading the learning process and its design through student conditioning. It is therefore important to make changes in the curriculum to find solutions to the problems encountered in the educational process and achieve quality learning outcomes. It is hoped that from this good curriculum a curriculum will be developed that will produce graduates who are promising and will have an impact on the progress of the state and the nation. (Masykur,2019).

In Indonesia, the Curriculum has undergone many changes over time. It is known that there have been 11 curriculum changes since the early days of Indonesian

independence. The changes began in 1947, 1952, 1964, 1968, 1975, 1984, 1994, 2004, 2006, 2013 Curriculum, and ended in the Merdeka Learning Curriculum. Curriculum changes are aimed at improving the quality of the learning process and learning design in response to the requirements of students. Hence, curriculum changes in educational institutions are essential to find ways to solve various educational problems towards quality educational outcomes. It is hoped that based on this good curriculum, a curriculum design will be developed that will produce graduates who are promising and will impact the progress of the state and the nation. (Masykur, 2019)

Departing from the curriculum changes that always experience these changes often experience many obstacles, both the obstacles felt by education stakeholders, teachers, and even more so the students who are the subject of education. Judging from previous research related to this curriculum change, many students experience obstacles or problems when facing a changing curriculum. For example, when the 2006 curriculum was implemented, at that time the implementation of the curriculum emphasized more on the teacher, where the teacher here could and was able to create new ideas and interesting and fun methods of learning that were interesting and fun, so that the involvement of student activeness was very lacking, causing students to not really show their character. In addition, student problems are also felt when the 2013 curriculum is implemented where the learning material is too much and students are required to master everything by getting all the expertise from that field. So from that students become less focused on one area that is really mastered.

Following this, education stakeholders made changes to the curriculum, namely by implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. The Merdeka curriculum is a simplified version of the 2013 curriculum, which had a learning system based on specific projects (Project-Based Learning), making the Merdeka curriculum more flexible and allowing for a focus on essential content and character development (Fahlevi, 2022). This policy is set out in Indonesian Minister of Education, Culture and Research Decree No.56/M/2022 on Curriculum Implementation Guidelines Related to the learning recovery. Curriculum refinement is carried out with the aim of to better align the curriculum with the needs and desires of society.

In addition, this simplified curriculum can be very effective. But the reality is that this curriculum is still almost the same as before, it has its problems. Especially the problems felt by the students. Both in terms of learning materials, project-based

regulations, etc. Therefore, this research was conducted to explore students' perceptions of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.

Previous research has been conducted by Fahira, et al. (2022) where the discussion is related to student perception towards the implementation of Merdeka Belajar in Social Science subject. In addition, Sindi Rista Marliani (2023), whose research is related to the student and teachers' perceptions about implementation of Merdeka Curriculum in Historical subject. Another research is also from Shinta A. And Pujiastuti H.(2023) "Persepsi Siswa terhadap Pembelajaran Matematika Berdiferensiasi dalam Kurikulum Merdeka". Beside that, Wahyuda et. Al.(2023) do the research about perceptions of SMA/MA Negeri students in Tanah Grogot sub-district mostly agree with the implementation of the independent curriculum

Although there are many students' perceptions of the Merdeka curriculum. However, only a few discuss students' perceptions of the Merdeka curriculum in English learning subject. As global competition intensifies and students are required to be able to compete internationally, the goal of this study was to understand students' perceptions of the realization of Merdeka Curriculum applied by government in field of education include in the field English study. From the above background, the researcher conducted a study with the title "Students' Perception On The Application Merdeka Curriculum".

Based on the background that the author has described above, the researcher can identify the problems that arise as follows: (1) The implementation of the curriculum in high school can be said to be heavy in terms of learning, because in class X on history subject all are required to understand all the subjects given. (2) The Merdeka curriculum requires students to work on a large number of projects, which reduces learning time and causes some students to become lazy. (3) The availability of textbooks in the Merdeka curriculum is very small and even though there are students have to buy them. (4) Primary school students are not able to connect the p5 project with the theme of the lesson at all. (5) Student center learning in the Merdeka curriculum is very difficult to apply to elementary school students because they still have to depend on the teacher. (6) Applying the principles of Merdeka Curriculum in mathematics subjects that require students to do critical, logical, and creative thinking is difficult because students lack interest in solving existing problems.

This research is hopefully it can be utilized as a source of reference for further research as additional information about the application of Merdeka Curriculum.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of Students' Perception

Perception is basically a process of cognitive that all people experience by using their senses to perceive the information around them. (Miftah Thoha, 2009). With the meaning that everything that is captured by the human senses which then gives its own impression by humans is said to be perception. This is in line with the opinion of Robbins & Judge (2011), both of which express Perception as an individual process of organizing and interpreting sensory impressions to provide meaning to their environment. Perception is a process by which individuals receive stimuli through their sensory organs or also known as the sensory process, which are organized and interpreted by individuals so that individuals can recognize and understand what they perceive. (Saleh, 2018).

Factors that Influence Perception

In the process of forming perceptions, it shows that a pattern of thinking towards a certain phenomenon arises under the influence of various stimuli received by individuals in their minds. The factors that determine a person's perception, according to Thoha (2011: 154), are (1) External factors: Among the external factors that can affect a person's perception are family, school, community, information from various media, as well as culture and knowledge taken from the environment. (2) Internal factors: It is a factor that comes from within such as motivation to learn, concentration of attention, processing of responses, psychology, genders, attitudes of individuals, values, morality, aspirations, expectations and etc.

Definition of Curriculum

The curriculum is all plans and agreements about content, learning materials, and methods that guide the implementation of teaching and learning activities. Activities that provide learning or educational experiences to students are essentially the curriculum. (Hamalik, 2011). Meanwhile, according to J. Galen Saylor and William M. Alexander in Masykur's book (2019) the curriculum is defined as all things from school efforts that can influence children in learning both indoors, school grounds, and outside the classroom.

Furthermore, Curriculum used in an educational institution is interpreted to be a collection of knowledge taught in the classroom (in this case as a subject) that students must undergo and complete as a way to achieve educational goals and educational competencies that have been determined (Baderiah, 2018 In this sense, the curriculum

becomes a set of actions to be completed by a student to get to the educational goals. A curriculum provides a set of learning plans which students must complete through a series of subjects to obtain predetermined goals.

Definition of Merdeka Curriculum

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Merdeka curriculum is a curriculum with the concept of upholding freedom in education. (Purnawanto A. T., 2022). In this case, the principal is given the freedom to organize the order of his school according to the circumstances in the field. Teachers are also given the freedom to carry out the process of transforming essential and urgent knowledge with the use of appropriate methods and strategies to students by adjusting the situation of their students. Students as the main object in education also have the freedom to maximize their potential in order to obtain maximum educational results.

The Nature of English Subject on Senior High School in the Merdeka Curriculum

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Language plays an important role in the development of scientific, social, and emotional formation of students as well as a support that can produce students in studying various scientific fields of study (Rahmatullah & Ghufron, 2021). It is expected that language learning should be used to help students to know themselves, their culture, and the other people's culture. Besides, it helps learners to be able to convey ideas and emotions, participate in the community, and also find and use the existing analytical and imaginative abilities within them.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study focused on five senior high schools in Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia. The students are from different levels but with learning experience using Merdeka Curriculum in English subjects. These experienced students provided their responses regarding the application of Merdeka Curriculum and the reasons for these perceptions in this study. As informants, their direct experiences and feelings in learning English provide a strong basis for this research.

This research adopts a phenomenological case study, a qualitative approach that describes a phenomenon that occurs based on the point of view and experiences of the individuals who experience it (Neubauer et al., 2019; Tuffour, 2017). The main purpose of this research method is clearly to describe the case phenomenon by exploring the individual's experience using various data sources. In this case, the perspectives of several students are needed to clarify the phenomenon that occurs: implementing the Merdeka

Curriculum in English language learning. The distributing questioners to respondents and conducting in-depth interviews with selected students in-depth provide opportunities for students to respond to the phenomenon of the Merdeka Curriculum in the field of education based on their respective experiences.

As for the techniques used by researchers in analyzing the data that has been collected, namely by using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns in data obtained in research. Brown and Clark further (2006) argue that thematic analysis can be an essentialist or realist way of reporting participants' experiences, meanings and realities; they explain that it can also be a constructivist method of examining how things are done. The influence of various discourses conducted in society. With this method, the data collected in the form of experiences and thoughts that underlie the actions of the participants can be understood in their social context while still focusing on the material and existing reality.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

With data collection techniques using questionnaires and interviews, students who became subjects in this study amounted to 38 people from 5 different senior high schools in Medan. Questionnaires were distributed via gform to 38 students and interviews were conducted with 7 students. The demographics of the participation details are as follows.

Table. 1. Frequency Test Results Based on Participant Gender

Gender	Frequency (number)	Percentages
Female	29	77%
Male	9	23%
Total	38	100%

Table. 2. Frequency Test Results Based on level Grade

Gender	Frequency (number)	Percentages
10	27	71%
11	11	29%
12	0	0
Total	38	100%

1) Freedom of learning in Merdeka Curriculum

The current Merdeka curriculum is actually an educational approach created to free education actors in carrying out education according to the circumstances that

occur in their area. According to Sherly et al (2021), the Merdeka Belajar program was designed by the Ministry of Education and Culture as a reason for returning the national education system to the essence of the Law which frees students, teachers, principals to innovate, free to learn Merdekaly and creatively.

Table 3 Students' Responses on the Freedom of learning in Merdeka Curriculum

Point	Respondents' Answer	Frequency	Percentages
1	Strongly Disagree	1	2,6%
2	Disagree	3	7,9%
3	Neutral	11	28,9%
4	Agree	21	55,3%
5	Strongly Agree	2	5,3%
	Total	38	100%

The researchers asked the students' responses regarding the Merdeka Curriculum system which refers to freedom of learning. This can be seen in the table below.

From the results of the data obtained above, it can be seen that more students answered agree with the number of respondents as many as 21 people (55.3%). So from on the data above, the researcher draws the conclusion that most students agree with the statement that the Merdeka Curriculum frees students in learning according to the students' experience in English class.

The percentage results obtained from the data above can be strengthened by the statements of senior high school students when interviewed directly by researchers regarding their perceptions of the application of the Merdeka Curriculum, especially in English language subjects. Almost all of the answers of these high school students are the same, namely that the Merdeka Curriculum provides freedom of learning, especially for students and teachers.

Student 1 "Yes, with the current curriculum system it is easy to learn English because students are given freedom in learning. Students can use their cellphones. If we don't know the meaning of a word for example, we can immediately look at google translate. Or looking for words that are difficult to understand can search directly on the Internet. It is allowed as long as we understand and know later if the teacher asks."

Student 2 "In my opinion, the current Merdeka curriculum gives students freedom in choosing how to learn, for example, now we are free to use cellphones in class, so if there is an explanation that is not understood we can look it up

directly from the internet. Besides that, it encourages the creativity of a teacher in teaching"

Student 3"The Merdeka curriculum is a curriculum whose learning is centered on students, in my opinion. like Student centered learning method so the focus is more on making students active than teachers."

Student 4"I think the Merdeka curriculum is a more flexible curriculum framework, more focused on essential material and student character development"

Student 5 "A curriculum that liberates students in learning in any form. This means that students can learn Merdekaly and are free to choose how to learn the right way for them to understand the learning. For example, learning through the internet. It also frees teachers to choose appropriate teaching methods."

From the above statements, it can be concluded that students feel the freedom intended in the objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum. The freedom they feel in the Merdeka Curriculum is mostly in terms of learning methods. In this case, it can be said that students have truly felt the concept of education in this Merdeka Curriculum. This is in accordance with the previous statement from Purnawanto (2022) who said that the Merdeka Curriculum actually upholds freedom in learning. Which means that here the Merdeka Curriculum succeeds in creating a situation where students feel free in gaining knowledge.

Table 4 Students' Responses About the Merdeka Curriculum making them more active and creative in learning English

Point	Respondents' Answer	Frequency Active	Frequency creative
1	Strongly Disagree	0	0
2	Disagree	3	1
3	Neutral	21	10
4	Agree	10	22
5	Strongly Agree	4	5
	Total	38	0

Based on the results above, it can be seen that students are much more creative when implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. and many neutral answers regarding student activeness. but it is undeniable that there are almost as many who agree. this is in accordance with the statements of several students interviewed.

Student 1 *"Learning nowadays is more fun, especially in English subjects, sometimes teachers are more creative in teaching while making games too"*

Student 2 *"I think the Merdeka curriculum is a curriculum with active learning. This means that students and teachers make the classroom atmosphere active in their own ways."*

Student 3 *"Yes, I am quite active, sis. but not too active at times. but the important thing is that if the teacher gives assignments or quizzes I do it. sometimes also if the teacher asks questions or invites exchange of ideas or asks for opinions I sometimes try to answer."*

Student 4 *"I'm more active because in every lesson we all have to make groups and then presentations. So whether we want it or not, we are active in explaining and asking questions. Including in English subjects. Then in the current Merdeka curriculum, we are required to be more creative, especially since there is something called project p5. This p5 project we are asked to make crafts with ideas as creative as possible."*

Student 5 *"Yes, the learning was more active because we were asked to make groups. After that, the group presented in front so that made us more active. Actively explaining and actively asking questions in class. We also look for material from various sources such as the internet so we are more active. There was also a project. In the project, we were told to make some kind of craft according to the material. When learning English, we were told to make stickers so we were more active and creative."*

Apart from some students' opinions who agree with the statement that the Merdeka Curriculum makes students more active and creative, there are also students' opinions who disagree with this. These students expressed their opinions regarding their becoming less active in English learning during the Merdeka Curriculum.

Student 6 *"When the Merdeka curriculum was implemented, I became inactive in learning, because I found it increasingly difficult to understand and learn."*

Student 7 *“Personally, I'm not very active, but maybe others are. I'm not because I also don't really like learning English. But I still follow the learning until it's over.”*

From the two student statements above, it can be seen that students feel less active for several reasons. The first student argued that he was less active because he felt that learning English in the Merdeka Curriculum was difficult so that he could not understand the learning which made him passive in class. Meanwhile, the second student has a reason for not liking English learning. Hence, a conclusion can be drawn that the application of Merdeka Curriculum which makes students more active and creative has not been fully equitable or has not been fully felt by students.

Table. 5 Students' Responses About the Merdeka Curriculum Material is easy for students

Point	Respondents' Answer	Frequency	Percentages
1	Strongly Disagree	0	0,0%
2	Disagree	3	7,9%
3	Neutral	20	52,6%
4	Agree	13	34,2%
5	Strongly Agree	2	5,3%
	Total	38	100%

From the data presented above, it shows that some students agree with the statement that the material designed by the Ministry of Education and Culture is considered easy, concise and also simple. Where the most data shows that students are neutral with the statement as many as 20 people (52.6%) respondents.

However, even though it is considered easy by students, because the material is too concise, many students also feel overwhelmed in understanding the material because it is too concise. So according to students they have to find out more about the complete explanation from many other sources. This was expressed by the statements of several students interviewed by researchers.

Student 1 *“For me personally, the English material in the Merdeka curriculum is quite easy, sis. not the hard ones.”*

Student 2 *“For the material, it was a bit tricky. I'd say it's easy if we study seriously and want to find out. Moreover, the material is now more concise so if you are looking for explanations, you can go to the internet or ask the teacher. If you don't find out, the material will be difficult.”*

Student 3 *“The material was short and quite easy to understand, but there is a lack of explanations, so students are a bit overwhelmed looking for explanations via the internet, when we look for answers via the internet sometimes the answers do not match what we learned.”*

Student 4 *“I think the material is easy, concise, and easy to understand.”*

Student 5 *“English language material in the Merdeka curriculum is now less explained so it is a bit difficult to understand if you don't look for more explanations from the internet or ask the teacher. But most of the material is easy anyway.”*

Student 6 *“For the material, it's normal for me. if you say it's difficult, it's not. if you say it's easy, it's not.”*

Student 7 *“As I said earlier, the material is lacking so it is difficult to understand because students are told to find their own examples or materials, then if they don't understand, they can ask the teacher, the teacher will not explain if no student asks.”*

From the statements above, it can be seen that almost all students think that the English material in the current Merdeka Curriculum is very easy, although it is not too easy but at least students can understand it. It's just that from these statements the researcher concluded that the concise and simple material was not really liked by students. Even as expressed by student 7 because the lack of explanation made the material not easy for him. Likewise with other students, where students consider the lack of detailed explanations of the material presented to make them overwhelmed to find and understand the material. So that it forces students to be more active in asking the teacher and looking for answers from other sources, one of which is the internet.

1. Energy Consumption of Merdeka Curriculum

The Merdeka curriculum, which is designed to be as flexible as possible ¹ by the Ministry of Education and Culture, is in fact considered very draining by some students. This happens because the learning system that is always student-centered makes students overwhelmed with the many tasks given simultaneously. The researcher found this from several responses from 38 respondents who filled out the questionnaire. The results can be seen in the table below.

Table. 6 Students' Responses About the Merdeka Curriculum is Exhausting for Students

Point	Respondents' Answer	Frequency	Percentages
1	Strongly Disagree	1	2,6%
2	Disagree	1	2,6%
3	Neutral	16	42,1%
4	Agree	12	31,6%
5	Strongly Agree	8	21,1%
	Total	38	100%

From the data above, it can be seen that more students answered neutral with 16 respondents (42.1%) with the number who agreed and strongly agreed almost equaling the number of neutral ones. So based on this data, the researcher draws the conclusion that almost all students agree with the statement that the Merdeka Curriculum currently implemented is very tiring. This is reinforced by the students' statements after being interviewed by the researcher.

Student 1 "I felt it was tiring but I enjoyed it."

Student 2 "Tired is for sure but because the learning is relaxed, it's fun too."

Student 3 "not at all because learning the Merdeka curriculum is quite exciting because the teacher also has his own uniqueness in teaching so it has a unique attraction to create creative and innovative students in learning."

Student 4 "Of course it's tiring, with so many assignments, presentations, plus finding the materials themselves. so, it's exhausting"

Student 5 "So tired, maybe because in MAN there is UKBM (Unit Kegiatan Belajar Mandiri) that must be done all of them and there are additional tasks from the teacher."

Student 6 "very tiring. So many tasks, especially because there is UMBK that must be done. plus the presentation and the project."

Student 7 "honestly very tired. because every subject has UKBM. UKBM is the same as LKS if the UKBM is finished it must be signed by the respective subject teacher. the signature is in the journal book. so if the journal does not have a complete signature then you cannot take the exam. then the teacher simultaneously gives group assignments and individual assignments."

From some of the students' statements above, it can be seen that students feel exhausted by the Merdeka Curriculum system currently implemented. Where in this case there are many assignments from teachers that must be completed by students, both individual and group assignments. From several statements, it was found that teachers almost equally used discussion group teaching methods and strategies. Where teachers as facilitators only direct students to learn Merdekaly. The rest of the students mostly explain and share knowledge with other students with presentation techniques in front of the class. Here students are charged with finding their own material, which then presents it in front of the class, then working on assignments simultaneously and also working on the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) and completing UKBM (Merdeka Learning Activity units). Although actually seen from some of the statements above, not all students have a problem with this where some students feel normal about it and consider it not too tiring like students 1, 2 and 3. However, some other students feel very burdened and feel very tired with the current learning system such as students 4 to 7.

2. Merdeka Curriculum Vs Curriculum 2013

Before the Merdeka curriculum was introduced to the Indonesian education system, the 2013 Curriculum or often called K13 was the standard or reference for national education at that time. Which is where K13 fully supports student-centered learning. Curriculum 13 is an evolution of the previous curriculum, namely KTSP with the basic concept of developing attitudes, knowledge and skills.

The main difference between Curriculum 13 and the current Merdeka Belajar Curriculum reflects the evolution of Indonesian education. Where K-13 is more structured and takes a competency approach, the Merdeka learning curriculum gives students more freedom and flexibility. This is in accordance with what Sari et. al (2023) stated that the learning approach in the 2013 Curriculum uses a scientific and thematic integrative approach, which graduates students who cover aspects of attitude, knowledge and skills and evaluations that use an authentic assessment. Meanwhile, the Merdeka Curriculum was created to facilitate learning that focuses on essential material and development of students' characters.

From this difference, the researcher wants to get responses from respondents regarding the comparison between the two curriculum, namely the Merdeka

Curriculum and the 2013 Curriculum. Which is where the researcher asks which curriculum is better between the two according to the perceptions of respondents who already have learning experience with these two education systems. This can be seen in the table below.

From the data above, it can be seen that more students answered agree in total with 15 people (34.2%) respondents and with 9 people (23.7%) who strongly agreed. So based on this data, the researcher draws the conclusion that almost all students agree with the statement that the Merdeka Curriculum currently implemented is better than the previous 2013 Curriculum. This is in accordance with the students' statements after being interviewed by researchers.

Student 1 *This curriculum is easier and better than the previous K13. Because students can be more active and creative. If the previous curriculum, K13, mostly took notes so students were more passive."*

Student 2 *"It is better now because the current Merdeka Curriculum Learning is more active than K13. if in K13 you learn Merdekaly with a lot of notes, while in the Merdeka Curriculum there are many projects and presentations in front of the class."*

Student 3 *"It's easier and better now because the learning is easy to understand and students are more active. Previously, students mostly just took notes and there was a lot of material."*

Student 4 *"I think it might be better, but it's enough to get tired. Because it's more student-focused learning. But it's also good because there is P5. It can make us creative and critical thinking children.."*

Student 5 *"It's better now because students are more active and creative."*

Student 6 *"I think the current one is better. Because the material in K13 is more abundant compared to the current Merdeka curriculum which is simpler. then in the Merdeka curriculum there is a project so learning is more exciting."*

Student 7 *"Whether it's good or not depends. Because the Merdeka curriculum focuses on developing students' character and morals, while K13 focuses on students' academic abilities in general. If asked whether the Merdeka curriculum is easy. I think, it isn't. because students must be active if they are not active, sometimes the teacher does not notice us."*

From the results of the interviews obtained above, the researcher concludes that students agree with the current implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. Because seen from the comparison, students stated that they were more active and creative with the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. The students clearly stated that the Merdeka Curriculum currently implemented is in fact better than the 2013 Curriculum in terms of the results of understanding and positive character obtained by students. In addition, the creative learning atmosphere in the Merdeka Curriculum currently makes student learning more enjoyable, especially in English subjects at the senior high school level.

In addition to the students' opinion that the Merdeka Curriculum is better than before, researchers also compared the students' fatigue levels when the two curricula were implemented. From the results of the interviews and questionnaires obtained, most of them were neutral, meaning that there were some students who agreed that the Merdeka Curriculum was more tiring than Curriculum 13 and there were also those who did not agree that Curriculum 13 was more tiring than the Merdeka Curriculum. The respondents' reasons were almost the same. Where those who are pro the Independent Curriculum state that Curriculum 13 makes students too passive and the learning atmosphere is too monotonous. Meanwhile, respondents who are pro Curriculum 13 think that the Merdeka Curriculum is tiring because there are too many assignments given simultaneously and students must be required to be active in learning.

5. CONCLUSION

According to research conducted on 38 students in five different senior high schools regarding their perceptions of the application of Merdeka Curriculum in English subjects, it was quite positive. Where from the results obtained, students have 5 main perceptions on the application of the Merdeka Curriculum in schools. (1) Students feel they have the freedom to determine the way of learning that they think is appropriate and effective. (2) Students feel more active and creative when learning in class. (3) Students think that the content/material presented in the Merdeka Curriculum is now simpler of concise. (4) Students feel that the current curriculum is more draining or more tiring. (5) Students think that the current Merdeka Curriculum is better compared to the 2013 Curriculum. The results found by this researcher only used five high schools in Medan with 38 students

as respondents. With this, it can be said that the results of this study are not generalized as a whole to all schools in Indonesia that have implemented the Merdeka Curriculum, especially in senior high schools both at the provincial and national levels. This is due to the many limitations of researchers in conducting this research. One of them is the small number of respondents. Furthermore, during data collection, the information provided by the respondents in the questionnaire may not reflect the actual opinions of the respondents, as individual respondents may have different ideas, assumptions and perceptions and other factors such as the respondent's honesty while answering the questionnaire also also contribute.

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