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CHALLENGES FACED BY ISLAMIC EDUCATION TEACHERS IN PREPARING TEACHING MODULES FOR THE INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2023-2024

Abstrak

Studi ini dirancang untuk mengidentifikasi berbagai kendala yang dihadapi oleh Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) dalam menyusun modul pembelajaran berdasarkan kurikulum merdeka dan mencari solusi atas kendala tersebut. Subjek penelitian ini meliputi Guru PAI, modul pembelajaran sebagai data primer, serta buku paket dan peserta didik kelas X sebagai data sekunder. Populasi studi ini mencakup semua Guru PAI di SMK N 1 Jarai yang berjumlah lima orang, dengan sampel penelitian seorang guru yang dipilih melalui teknik purposive sampling. Pendekatan yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif dengan metode pengumpulan data melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Analisis data dilakukan dengan teknik reduksi data, display data, dan verifikasi data. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa kendala utama yang dihadapi oleh guru PAI adalah ketidakmampuan dalam menyusun modul pembelajaran yang sesuai dengan standar Kemendikbudristek.

Kata Kunci: Guru PAI, Modul Ajar, Kurikulum Merdeka

Abstract

This study was designed to identify the various challenges faced by Islamic Education teachers in creating learning modules based on the independent curriculum and to find solutions to these challenges. The subjects of this research include Islamic Education teachers, the learning modules as primary data, and textbooks along with tenth-grade students as secondary data. The study's population consists of all Islamic Education teachers at SMK N 1 Jarai, totaling five individuals, with the research sample being one teacher selected through purposive sampling. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed, utilizing observation, interviews, and documentation for data collection. Data analysis was conducted using data reduction, data display, and data verification techniques. The results of the study reveal that the main challenge faced by Islamic education teachers is their inability to develop learning modules that meet the standards set by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Keywords: Islamic Education Teachers Challenges, Merdeka Curriculum, Teaching Module

INTRODUCTION

The 2013 curriculum has been transitioned to the "Merdeka Curriculum." Yet, many teachers have not fully mastered the previous curriculum, voicing concerns that the current system seems imposing. It is not uncommon for educators to question why the curriculum is frequently changing instead of addressing the professional development of teachers. The government focuses on changing the curriculum but neglects critical aspects like teachers' salaries and the overall quality and standards of education.

As far as I am aware, as of January 2022, the Merdeka Curriculum is an initiative by the Indonesian government to reform the educational curriculum. President Joko Widodo announced this program in July 2020. The Merdeka Curriculum aims to create an education system more aligned with contemporary needs, such as knowledge in science and technology, fostering students' skills and character, and enhancing competitiveness. Critical aspects of the

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Merdeka Curriculum include reducing outdated content and providing more significant emphasis on practical skills, character development, and critical and flexible thinking abilities. It also allows teachers and students the freedom to tailor learning methods to their specific school settings. Additionally, this curriculum emphasizes creativity and innovation in the learning process. Furthermore, the government is making efforts to integrate Information Technology (IT) more effectively into education. As stated by Education Minister Nadiem Makarim, "The Merdeka Curriculum is an endeavor developed by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology to address and alleviate a longstanding crisis." (Eka Putri, 2023: 4).

As outlined in the circular regarding the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in schools across Indonesia by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek), it is in the process of enforcing the provisions in the decision of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology No. 56/M/2022 on guidelines for curriculum implementation as part of the learning recovery plan. This has been amended by Ministerial Decision No. 262/M/2022, which revises the previous Ministerial Decision No. 56/M/2022 concerning the guidelines for curriculum implementation aimed at facilitating learning recovery (Paupedia, 2023).

The current curriculum seems to primarily busy the teachers with extensive administrative tasks required to prepare various components such as Teaching Modules, which include Learning Outcomes, Phases, Learning Objectives, and more. Yet, they often do not fully grasp the complexities of the Merdeka Curriculum, leading to confusion and a tendency to teach using the same concepts from previous curricula. Teachers frequently focus on delivering explanations while students passively listen, without significant improvements in innovation and creativity that could enhance students' skills. Many teachers neglect their primary duties to educate students because they are preoccupied with learning and attending various training sessions to understand the Merdeka Curriculum better and fulfill its administrative requirements.

Another issue teachers face is their understanding of IT (Information Technology), which is crucial in helping them create and prepare teaching modules. Based on this, teachers must be technologically savvy and keep up with current trends to design learning environments that are creative, innovative, and comfortable, meeting the needs of the students so they do not feel bored or overwhelmed by the material presented in class.

For Islamic Education (PAI) teachers, aside from administrative challenges, they also confront the reality of declining morals, manners, and etiquette. This is why the role of PAI teachers is so critical; they manage not only general education but also instill morals and etiquette in students, aligning with the foundational dimensions of faith, purity, and noble character. Another challenge in preparing for the Merdeka Curriculum is understanding the concepts of the teaching modules, as there is still confusion about the structure of Learning Outcomes, Learning Phases, and Teaching Plans. Furthermore, inadequate facilities sometimes hinder the preparation and implementation of these modules. The government should first ensure that infrastructure, especially in remote areas, is adequately provided. In practice, teachers also struggle with determining the right strategies and methods for differentiated learning that suit their students' abilities, as well as with the assessment process, often finding it perplexing.

METHOD

Based on the methodology, this study employs a qualitative research approach. The population of this study comprises all five Islamic Education (PAI) teachers at SMK N 1 Jarai. The sample includes one individual selected through purposive sampling. This research utilizes a descriptive qualitative approach. Data collection methods employed are observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis techniques used include data reduction, data display, and data verification.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Issues Faced by Islamic Education (PAI) Teachers in Preparing Teaching Modules for the Merdeka Curriculum for the Academic Year 2023-2024

Based on the examination at APKG I, teachers indeed face challenges in preparing modules for the Merdeka curriculum. The researcher scored only 72 points. The techniques used by the researcher to address the first problem statement include employing Milles and Huberman's theory, which consists of initial observation and subsequent observation.

Initial Observation

This observation is conducted to review and identify research concepts that the researcher can develop for the thesis. During the observation, the researcher encountered a teacher who taught Islamic Education (PAI) under the Merdeka curriculum. The focus of this observation is on the teacher's ability to prepare lessons and teaching modules. The observed aspects include facilities and resources related to the challenges faced by PAI teachers in conceptualizing and creating teaching tools, specifically the teaching modules for grade X. Regarding the teaching modules, the problems identified include several school instruments, such as 1. Internet-related issues, where although the school facilitates access like WiFi to help teachers access data related to the Merdeka Teaching website prepared by the Ministry of Education and Culture, connectivity issues sometimes arise; 2. Availability of electronic devices such as computers for both teachers and students; 3. Availability of printers.

Additionally, the researcher observes the school environment because, during the information gathering, the researcher aims to assess the adequacy of the educational institution in fostering its students. The researcher finds that the school is adequately equipped in terms of student development, including infrastructure like well-maintained buildings and classrooms and ancillary facilities such as a library.

Subsequent Observation

During the follow-up observation conducted on Wednesday, November 8, 2023, at 11:05 AM WIB at SMK N 1 Jarai, the focus was to monitor and uncover whether the teaching modules prepared by the teachers met the standards set by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek). The subject of this observation was Mrs. Meliana, S.Pd.I, a grade X Islamic Education (PAI) teacher, specifically focusing on the teaching modules she used. In this subsequent observation, the researcher prepared research instruments, namely APKG 1, designed to determine if the teaching modules complied with Kemendikbudristek standards. After comparing the teaching modules with expert opinions regarding the APKG 1 prepared by the researcher, it was found that several aspects did not meet the standards required for a teaching module. Thus, through this observation, the researcher concluded that the teacher under study had not been fully capable of preparing the teaching modules adequately, as critical elements such as learning syntax, keywords, and student numbers were not correctly defined.

Solutions to the Challenges Faced by Islamic Education Teachers in Preparing Teaching Modules for the Merdeka Curriculum for the Academic Year 2023-2024

The school fully supports teachers in understanding the teaching modules for the Merdeka curriculum. It has provided information and resources like the PMM (Merdeka Teaching Platform) set up by Kemendikbudristek, as well as the necessary facilities and training, including in-house training sessions that have been conducted several times. Instead of forming formal programs, teachers have created groups like MGMP (Subject Teacher Association) and others to develop their competencies. The school serves as a facilitator, and the effectiveness of these initiatives ultimately depends on the teachers' willingness to understand and implement the government's programs. Even though the school could provide oversight, progress may be hindered without the teachers' proactive involvement in advancing educational goals in Indonesia.

During the final observation at SMK N 1 Jarai, the researcher focused on the teaching tools to collect the necessary data. It was noted that teachers are required to prepare teaching modules in advance, and the school provides full support in terms of IT facilities such as computers and WiFi, as well as the training necessary to enhance their knowledge about the teaching modules. Modern technology has also made it easier for teachers to access these materials through government-provided platforms like PMM. However, the individual's willingness to participate and advance Indonesia's educational goals is crucial. Despite the school's facilitation, without the teachers' motivation and awareness, these efforts could be in vain.

Based on data collection at SMK N 1 Jarai regarding the solutions to the challenges faced by PAI teachers in preparing Merdeka curriculum teaching modules, the researcher concludes from a combination of observations and interviews:

The school offers opportunities for teachers to participate in training sessions, both internally and through external institutions, to understand the Merdeka curriculum better. Kemendikbudristek has also provided the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM), which allows teachers to access information related to the teaching tools of the Merdeka curriculum, tailored to each school's needs and enhancing their competence and career development. The school supports this with adequate facilities and infrastructure, such as computers and WiFi. It organizes training, seminars, workshops, and in-house training sessions that support teachers' competencies in teaching modules. Teachers can also download guidebooks or manuals themselves, especially now when all the necessary information about the Merdeka curriculum, mainly teaching modules, is readily available on the official Kemendikbudristek website.

SUMMARY

The challenges faced by Islamic Education (PAI) teachers in preparing teaching modules for the Merdeka curriculum include an incomplete ability to create modules that meet Kemendikbudristek standards. The modules often lack essential components such as learning syntax, and some teachers still require assistance from others in their development. Additionally, there is a shortage of valid references or teaching materials that align with proper module preparation guidelines and a lack of awareness among teachers regarding participation in MGMP programs. This leads to insufficient socialization when preparing teaching modules. Furthermore, internet facilities such as WiFi provided by the school sometimes experience disruptions. To address these issues, the school has provided solutions such as ensuring the availability of supportive facilities and infrastructure, offering teachers opportunities to participate in training, workshops, and courses held outside of school, and conducting seminars and in-house training as this curriculum has been implemented at SMK N 1 Jarai. Teachers are also encouraged to be more open to technological advancements and to independently access information, such as using the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM) website.

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