



Elementary school Physical Education, Sports, and Health teachers' understanding of the implementation of Kurikulum Merdeka

Rifki Hidayat¹, Sri Widaningsih², Henry Asmara³

^{1,2,3} Sekolah Tinggi Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Pasundan, Cimahi, Indonesia

u2smuslim@gmail.com¹, wsrik.bun79@gmail.com², h.azmara@gmail.com³

ABSTRACT

Kurikulum Merdeka has been mandated for implementation in all schools; however, its application continues to face various challenges, particularly related to teachers' understanding, especially within the madrasah context. This study aims to describe the cognitive understanding of Physical Education, Sports, and Health (Pendidikan Jasmani, Olahraga, dan Kesehatan or PJOK) teachers in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah regarding the Kurikulum Merdeka. The research was conducted at a Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Paseh District, Bandung Regency, employing a qualitative case study approach. Six PJOK teachers were selected as research participants through purposive sampling. Data were collected through observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation, and analyzed descriptively. The findings indicate that teachers' cognitive understanding of the Kurikulum Merdeka in PJOK varies, encompassing abilities to explain, interpret, summarize, classify, and compare learning concepts in accordance with curriculum principles. Some teachers demonstrate adequate competence in interpreting learning outcomes and adapting learning activities to students' needs, whereas others experience difficulties with lesson planning and accessing professional development. This study highlights the importance of continuous professional development and the strengthening of teacher discussion forums, such as PJOK Teacher Working Groups, to support more effective implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka in madrasah settings.

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ABSTRAK

Implementasi kurikulum merdeka perlu ada di semua sekolah. Namun dalam proses implementasinya masih banyak tantangan, salah satunya adalah terkait pemahaman guru terhadap proses implementasi dengan baik di lapangan, khususnya di lingkungan madrasah. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan pemahaman guru Pendidikan Jasmani, Olahraga, dan Kesehatan (PJOK) Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) dalam pelaksanaan Kurikulum Merdeka, khususnya dalam ranah kognitif. Penelitian dilakukan di MI Kecamatan Paseh, Kabupaten Bandung dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dan metode studi kasus. Subjek penelitian ini adalah enam guru PJOK yang dipilih melalui teknik purposif sampling. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi observasi, wawancara semi-terstruktur, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pemahaman guru PJOK dalam ranah kognitif Kurikulum Merdeka sangat bervariasi, termasuk kemampuan menjelaskan, menafsirkan, meringkas, mengklasifikasikan, dan membandingkan konsep pembelajaran PJOK belum sesuai dengan prinsip-prinsip Kurikulum Merdeka. Beberapa guru mampu memaknai capaian pembelajaran dengan baik dan menyesuaikan kegiatan pembelajaran sesuai dengan kebutuhan murid, namun masih ada guru yang belum bisa penyusunan rencana pembelajaran dan adanya keterbatasan pelatihan guru PJOK. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan pentingnya pelatihan berkelanjutan dan pembentukan forum diskusi seperti Kelompok Kerja Guru khusus PJOK agar implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka berjalan lebih optimal.

Kata Kunci: madrasah ibtidaiyah; Kurikulum Merdeka; PJOK; pemahaman guru

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INTRODUCTION

Education in Indonesia plays an important role in producing a quality next generation, with the obligation of basic education for 9 years, as provided for in Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 20 of 2003, which aims to ensure that every child has equal opportunities to access education. However, the success of education depends not only on the time spent but also on the quality of educators, facilities, and the curriculum employed. Therefore, improving the quality of educators is essential to producing intelligent individuals with good character. To achieve this, collaboration among the government, the community, and educational institutions is needed to improve and innovate the education system. With continued efforts, Indonesia can produce a generation ready to address global challenges and contribute to the nation's progress. The curriculum regulates all educational activities and, in its implementation, is designed with teaching materials tailored to the needs. This is also emphasized in Law Number 2 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which states that the curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements for the objectives, content, learning materials, and methods used as guidelines for implementing learning activities to achieve educational goals. Today, education is primarily oriented toward solving existing problems, with a primary emphasis on mastering technology and its underlying aspects, which are central to the 21st century. (Ikhsan & Febrianta, 2023)

To improve the quality of education in Indonesia, the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) introduced the Kurikulum Merdeka as a significant initiative to enhance the education system. The Kurikulum Merdeka is designed to address various problems in Indonesian education, such as a lack of flexibility in teaching methods, limitations in developing students' potential, and other challenges that have arisen over time. This curriculum aims to give educators greater freedom to compile learning materials that better suit students' needs and characteristics, enabling learning to run more effectively and be more relevant. With a more open and competency-based approach, the Kurikulum Merdeka is expected to create an education system that is more adaptive and dynamic, thereby improving the quality of education across Indonesia (Sari et al., 2024).

The Kurikulum Merdeka is now implemented in almost all schools, with the success of implementation depending on teachers' roles as the primary implementers. As the party with the authority, obligations, and duties outlined in this curriculum, teachers play a key role in its successful implementation. Teachers function as movers or facilitators who possess abilities in both psychological and psychomotor aspects, and can create a conducive learning environment. In addition, teachers are expected to continually improve their teaching methods to become more effective and better aligned with evolving educational needs. The Kurikulum Merdeka has been implemented across various levels of education, from elementary and junior high schools to high schools and higher education, to ensure that all levels benefit from this more flexible, competency-based approach (Zamhari et al., 2023).

The diverse levels of understanding and readiness among teachers indicate that the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka continues to face various challenges, including teachers' competencies, facilities and infrastructure, and the support provided. One of the main problems is the lack of relevant training for Physical Education, Sports, and Health (Pendidikan Jasmani, Olahraga, dan Kesehatan or PJOK) teachers at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, which hinders their ability to adapt to the new approaches and methods required by the Kurikulum Merdeka. Additionally, the absence of a dedicated Teacher Working Group (KKG) for PJOK teachers constitutes another significant obstacle. Without such a discussion forum, teachers struggle to share experiences, expand their knowledge, and improve the skills that support the effective implementation of the curriculum. Therefore, a more in-depth study is needed on the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka, particularly regarding PJOK teachers' understanding at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Paseh District, Bandung Regency. This study aims to identify the obstacles

encountered and provide strategic recommendations to enhance the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka, thereby improving the quality of PJOK learning at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level. An in-depth understanding of the concepts, objectives, and approaches of the Kurikulum Merdeka, and of the teacher's level of understanding, will always refer to Bloom's Taxonomy, which details the levels of thinking. Based on the above background, the researcher aims to investigate PJOK Madrasah Ibtidaiyah teachers' understanding of curriculum implementation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Bloom's Taxonomic Theory in the Cognitive Realm

Bloom's taxonomy is a widely used framework in education to classify Learning Objectives (LO). This taxonomy was first developed by Benjamin S. Bloom in 1956, and later revised by Anderson and Krathwohl in 2001. This revision aligns the taxonomy's categories more closely with modern teaching and learning practices, specifically the Cognitive Realm in Bloom's Revised Taxonomy.

In the revised version, the cognitive realm consists of six levels of thought processes arranged hierarchically from the simplest to the most complex, namely:

1. Remembering: The ability to access and repeat information that has been obtained through the previous learning process;
2. Understanding: The ability to grasp meaning, interpret, and explain information that has been obtained through the learning process;
3. Applying: The ability to use knowledge or information that has been learned in a different context or situation than before;
4. Analyzing: The ability to break down information into smaller pieces to understand the relationship between parts and their overall structure;
5. Evaluating: The ability to assess and make decisions based on established criteria and standards;
6. Creating: The ability to integrate different elements or ideas to create an original new structure, pattern, or product.

Kurikulum Merdeka

Kurikulum Merdeka is presented to provide freedom and flexibility in learning, allowing each student to develop according to their potential and interests. The curriculum is designed to create a space for students to be more actively engaged in the learning process, foster creativity, and acquire knowledge relevant to their lives. Kurikulum Merdeka emphasizes experiential and real-world learning, facilitating holistic, inclusive, and character-based education (Yulianti et al., 2022).

According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia, the Kurikulum Merdeka aims to provide educators and students with the freedom to choose teaching materials that suit their respective needs and characteristics. In this curriculum, learning is no longer focused on covering dense material but rather on developing students' competencies across various aspects of life, such as critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and problem-solving (Ndari et al., 2023).

One of the key aspects of the Kurikulum Merdeka is the encouragement of differentiated learning, which entails tailoring instruction to students' individual needs, interests, and abilities. Through this approach, each student can learn at their own pace and in their preferred learning style, enabling them to reach their full potential. (Albani & Mu'arifin, 2023). In the process, learning becomes more interactive and engaging by using various approaches, methods, and media that suit students' characteristics (Ali et al., 2025; Indartiwi et al., 2020).

Principles of the Kurikulum Merdeka

Kurikulum Merdeka is a response to the demands of an increasingly dynamic and complex era, particularly in addressing the challenges of the 21st century. This curriculum is designed to prioritize a student-centered approach and to encourage a flexible, relevant, and engaging learning process. The main principles of the Kurikulum Merdeka serve as the foundation for designing, implementing, and evaluating learning processes that are adaptive to students' needs and contextualized to the educational unit's environment (Amelia, 2023).

Some of the principles of the Kurikulum Merdeka are (Juditya et al., 2022; Setiawan et al., 2024).

1. Student-centered is a key principle that places each student as a unique learning subject;
2. Emphasizing the importance of contextual and relevant learning;
3. Flexibility in learning. Where the existing approach in learning is not rigid and uniform, teachers can be more creative and innovative in managing the learning process, so that they can present a more effective and enjoyable learning experience;
4. The approach is holistic and integrative;
5. Competency-oriented;
6. Emphasizing the importance of cooperation and collaboration in the education ecosystem. The spirit of cooperation is a fundamental value in creating an inclusive, supportive learning environment and encouraging active participation from all parties.

Objectives of the Kurikulum Merdeka

Kurikulum Merdeka is an integral part of the transformation of national education, aiming to create a learning system that is responsive to contemporary developments and firmly rooted in national values. This curriculum is designed not only to improve academic achievement but also to develop students as lifelong learners with global competence and to uphold the values of Pancasila. This goal serves as the foundation for implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka in educational institutions (Fitra, 2023).

One of the fundamental goals of the Kurikulum Merdeka is to holistically develop students' competencies. Therefore, instruction is designed to foster independent learning and lifelong learning skills, enabling students to continue developing throughout their lives (Margolis, 2020).

Another goal is to reduce the non-essential learning load, not excessive in memorization, as well as to allow learners to understand and apply knowledge in a more in-depth and contextual way (Handayani et al., 2024). Overall, the Kurikulum Merdeka constitutes a comprehensive effort to develop a responsive, inclusive, and transformative education system. Through these goals, this curriculum aims to cultivate a generation of learners who are intelligent, independent, characterful, and prepared to address global challenges without compromising their national identity.

Characteristics of the Kurikulum Merdeka

The implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka has brought significant changes in the learning approach in various subjects, including PJOK. As an integral part of holistic education, PJOK learning in the Kurikulum Merdeka is directed not only to improve students' physical fitness but also to foster character, social skills, and mental readiness aligned with the values of the Pancasila Student Profile. This curriculum provides PJOK teachers with great freedom and flexibility to design adaptive, contextual, and meaningful learning experiences (Fahrozi et al., 2024).

The main characteristic of the Kurikulum Merdeka is differentiated learning, where PJOK teachers are required to adjust learning activities and methods based on students' abilities, needs, and interests. (Dinata et al., 2023). The following characteristic is the strengthening of character and the internalization of the Pancasila Student Profile. Through physical activities and sports, students are invited to develop values such as sportsmanship, responsibility, cooperation, discipline, and empathy. In addition, the learning must be contextual and experience-based (Susilawati et al., 2024).

Another highlighted characteristic is flexibility in assessment and evaluation. PJOK teachers are given the freedom to determine appropriate assessment forms, not limited to cognitive evaluation but also encompassing affective and psychomotor assessments. This is explained in Nurlina's book "*Teori belajar dan Pembelajaran*", which allows teachers to assess learning processes and outcomes more comprehensively and authentically, for example, through practical observation, student self-reflection, and physical activity-based project assignments.

Finally, PJOK learning is directed to improve social skills and collaboration. Through group activities, team games, and cooperation in physical projects, students are trained to communicate effectively, resolve conflicts, and build healthy relationships with peers. These values are essential in forming a harmonious and socially competent personality (Nugraha et al., 2024).

Learning Outcomes of the Kurikulum Merdeka

The learning outcomes in PJOK subjects within the Kurikulum Merdeka are designed to foster students' holistic development—physically, emotionally, socially, and cognitively—through engaging, challenging, and meaningful physical activities. This achievement not only emphasizes movement skills but also encourages character development, healthy lifestyles, and critical thinking through daily physical activity (Ningrum et al., 2022; Zamawi & Utomo, 2025). The importance of engaging in simple physical activity with confidence, recognizing the benefits of physical activity for health, and demonstrating sportsmanship, cooperation, and responsibility while playing. An introduction to healthy living habits is also an important component of this phase (Kusumawati et al., 2022).

In its implementation, PJOK's learning outcomes in the Kurikulum Merdeka are based on principles that emphasize an activity-based approach. Learning is participatory, with hands-on practice that enables students to learn through experience. This approach is also student-centered, accommodating each student's needs, interests, and abilities, thereby requiring teachers to implement differentiated learning strategies. In addition, the principle of holistic development underpins PJOK learning, in which all aspects of a student's self are developed in a balanced manner—not only physically but also socially, emotionally, and characteristically. (Tuerah & Tuerah, 2023).

Implementation

The implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka in the PJOK subject at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah provides a more flexible, context-based approach to learning. This means that the Kurikulum Merdeka provides ample space for teachers to design and implement learning that is relevant, in-depth, and aligned with students' needs and the local educational unit's conditions.

One crucial aspect of implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka is explained in the book "*Manajemen Pendidikan*" by Sari et al., which states that flexible and differentiated learning, in which students are trained to demonstrate sportsmanship, discipline, and responsibility in real-world situations, supports the development of strong character. The learning approach in the Kurikulum Merdeka is also process- and outcome-oriented. The outcome process is carried out through a cognitive assessment that includes understanding the concepts of fitness and health; a psychomotor assessment that includes physical

skills; and an affective assessment that includes attitudes such as sportsmanship, cooperation, and discipline. This assessment approach allows teachers to monitor student development more thoroughly and fairly (Almutairi et al., 2020).

The use of technology is also part of the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka in PJOK. Teachers can use a variety of fitness apps, learning videos, and digital platforms to enhance learning effectiveness. This approach not only enhances the quality of PJOK's learning but also fosters the development of students who are healthy, intelligent, characterful, and well-equipped to face the challenges of the 21st century.

METHODS

The researcher employs a qualitative case study approach. The population is 9 PJOK Madrasah Ibtidaiyah teachers in Paseh District. The researcher used purposive sampling, with the inclusion criterion being PJOK Madrasah Ibtidaiyah teachers, and the head of the madrasah recommended the study. Research: sample up to 6 PJOK Madrasah Ibtidaiyah teachers. This research is located at 6 Ibtidaiyah Madrasah in Paseh District, Banundang Regency, West Java. The data collection techniques in this study include observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation involves directly examining the learning process. In-depth interviews are the dominant method of data collection. Furthermore, the documentation study was conducted through interviews. The data analysis technique employs Miles and Huberman's interactive model, namely, through the data collection, data reduction, and verification processes. Data reduction involves selecting data relevant to the research objective. The data are then presented as several indicators of understanding within the cognitive domain of the Bloom taxonomy. Conclusions are drawn by paying attention to data accuracy, ensuring the study's results are accurate.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This study produced findings on the level of understanding among PJOK Madrasah Ibtidaiyah teachers regarding the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka in Paseh District, Bandung Regency. The data was collected through in-depth interviews with six PJOK teachers who have been implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka for more than a year. The analysis of the interview results was conducted using five cognitive dimensions of the Revised Bloom Taxonomy: explaining, interpreting, summarizing, classifying, and comparing.

Explaining Ability

Most of the teachers demonstrated strong ability to explain the basic concepts of the Kurikulum Merdeka. They understand that this curriculum provides teachers with the flexibility to adapt instruction to students' conditions and the madrasah environment. Teacher A stated:

"The Kurikulum Merdeka provides flexibility to teachers, so we can adapt learning to the abilities and conditions of students in madrasah,"

The statement shows that teachers understand the meaning of learning flexibility. However, the other two teachers still interpret flexibility as just a freedom of method without paying attention to the structure of learning outcomes. This suggests that a conceptual understanding already exists. However, it still

needs to be strengthened in its grasp of the philosophical meaning of the Kurikulum Merdeka, which is based on independence and differentiated learning.

Interpreting Ability

The ability to interpret CP varies between teachers. Three teachers systematically related CP to the Learning Objectives (LO) and the Learning Objectives Flow (LOF). Teacher D said:

"LO is like a learning direction. We have lowered it to the learning goal so that the steps are clearer,"

However, some teachers still equate LO with Basic Competency (BC) in the Kurikulum 2013. Teacher E says:

"If LO is similar to BC in the past, it is just that the language is shorter and simpler,"

These findings indicate that some teachers do not comprehend the fundamental distinction between LO and BD. In the Kurikulum Merdeka, LO functions as a cross-phase competency orientation rather than merely a material indicator. Therefore, training and mentoring are needed to enable teachers to interpret LO comprehensively in accordance with student-centered learning goals.

Summarizing Ability

Only two of the six teachers were able to summarize the LO content into the key points used in preparing the teaching modules. Teacher B states:

"I usually make the LO summary in the teaching module so that it is not too long and easier to apply,"

The other four teachers still have difficulty simplifying LO due to limited experience and are not accustomed to analyzing the content of curriculum documents. They tend to copy LO in their entirety without identifying the core competencies. This indicates a gap in teachers' curriculum literacy. Through continuous training, this summarizing ability can be developed, enabling teachers to become more skilled at interpreting learning documents.

Classifying Ability

Teachers' ability to group learning elements remains heterogeneous. The three teachers distinguished among knowledge, motor skills, and sportsmanship as the bases for preparing learning activities. Teacher F says:

"I divide LO into movement aspects, attitude aspects, and knowledge aspects so that it is easy to determine learning activities,"

However, some other teachers still consider the teaching module to be equivalent to the lesson plan in the Kurikulum 2013. They do not yet understand the difference in structure, function, and philosophy between the two devices. This condition indicates that teachers' ability to classify curriculum elements remains inadequate, thereby hindering the systematic and competency-oriented planning of learning.

Comparing Ability

All teachers can compare the Kurikulum Merdeka with the Kurikulum 2013. They stated that the Kurikulum Merdeka is simpler and provides greater freedom in learning preparation, although it requires adaptation. Teacher C said:

"If in the past the lesson plans and syllabus were long and had to be the same, now it is simpler and can be adjusted to the conditions of students,"

This statement shows an understanding of the structural and practical differences between the two curricula. However, some teachers do not understand more profound philosophical differences, such as the role of teachers as facilitators and the importance of formative assessments in competency-based learning.

Overall, PJOK Madrasah Ibtidaiyah teachers' understanding of the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka is quite good. They have been able to explain basic concepts, interpret LO functionally, and compare curriculum structures. However, the ability to summarize and classify learning elements remains a challenge. The main obstacles identified include limited training, the absence of discussion forums (KKG for PJOK), and inadequate learning-support facilities within the madrasah environment.

Discussion

The results of this study show that PJOK teachers' understanding of the Kurikulum Merdeka remains diverse across cognitive dimensions. Based on Bloom's Taxonomy, revised by Anderson & Krathwohl, the realm of understanding encompasses mental processes.

Explained

Teachers' ability to explain the concepts and materials in implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka gives considerable confidence that the process can be understood by teachers, despite the various shortcomings arising from field obstacles.

The ability to explain is the teacher's competence in conveying learning materials clearly, systematically, and interestingly, so that students can understand the concepts and objectives of learning well. In the context of the Kurikulum Merdeka, this ability not only focuses on delivering information but also on facilitating students' understanding, reflection, and exploration.

The role of teachers in implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka is that of facilitators and drivers of meaningful learning. The ability to explain is a key supporting factor of the Kurikulum Merdeka, which is based on the principle of student-centered learning. Teachers are required to have the ability:

1. Explain core concepts in language that is easy for students to understand;
2. Relate the material to the real-life context and profile of Pancasila students;
3. Using adaptive communication strategies according to students' character;
4. Provide exploratory directions, not just one-way instructions.

Some examples of the application of PJOK teacher understanding in the field illustrate the concept of traditional games by presenting videos or live demonstrations (Akbar et al., 2025).

1. Linking physical activities with the value of cooperation and sportsmanship;
2. Invite students to explore the rules and variations of the game independently. Provide a reflective explanation of the meaning of cooperation and body health.

From the explanations above, the teacher's ability to explain the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka is not merely about speaking in front of the class, but about inspiring, facilitating, and enlivening the meaning of learning. Teachers are not just information centers, but companions who help students find and understand knowledge independently and contextually, furthermore, teachers' comprehension skills must be able to bring significant changes to existing education, this is in accordance with the results of previous research which states that teacher understanding is an excellent opportunity for innovation, collaboration, and a significant improvement in the quality of education (Durahman et al, 2023).

Interpreting

Interpreting is teachers' ability to understand, analyze, and interpret information or learning concepts in depth, and to adapt these insights into learning practices that suit students' needs and contexts (Ahadiyah et al., 2024). In the context of the Kurikulum Merdeka, interpreting skills entail that teachers not only adhere to rigid guidelines but also adapt the content, objectives, and learning methods to students' characteristics and the learning environment. Teachers are encouraged to interpret the curriculum creatively and reflectively, thereby enabling the achievement of learning goals in a relevant and contextual manner. Some of the things that teachers must interpret in the Kurikulum Merdeka include:

1. Translating learning outcomes into concrete learning activities;
2. Interpreting the needs and potential of students, so that learning becomes meaningful;
3. Adapt learning assessments and strategies to real-world situations in the classroom;
4. Interpreting the values of Pancasila student profiles in every learning activity.

Some examples of the application of PJOK teachers' interpretive skills in the field include:

1. Teachers interpret the learning outcomes of PJOK about cooperation and sportsmanship, then develop regional traditional game activities that contain the value of cooperation;
2. Teachers interpret the results of formative assessments (e.g., students are less active in the game) to adjust subsequent learning strategies, such as forming small groups to get all students involved;
3. Teachers interpret the values of the Pancasila Student Profile, such as "working together" and "having faith, piety, and noble character", in every physical activity.

Teachers' ability to interpret the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka is crucial for understanding the curriculum's content in depth and for applying it flexibly, contextually, and meaningfully. Teachers are not only curriculum implementers but also wise and creative interpreters who can adapt learning to students' individual characteristics and the values of Pancasila, as reflected in their student profiles (Mulyadi, 2022).

Summing Up

It is the teacher's skill in distilling the essence of a learning material and then presenting it again in a concise, easy-to-understand form for students. In the context of PJOK learning, this ability is essential so that teachers can:

1. Simplifying the concept of movement, game rules, fitness principles, or character values into points that are easy for students to digest;
2. Make a summary of the results of activities, learning reflections, or assessment results that help students understand the learning outcomes;
3. Help students create their own summaries as part of the reflection and metacognition process.

The ability to summarize also helps students simplify learning materials and experiences, facilitate reflection, and advance their learning, differentiating students' ability levels, and enhancing communication with students and stakeholders (Baihaqi & Mu'arifin, 2025).

Classifying

Classifying is a teacher's skill in grouping information, movements, activities, or learning concepts according to specific criteria (e.g., goals, difficulty level, motor/cognitive/affective aspects). In PJOK, classification helps simplify the material and select activities that align with students' characteristics and the goals of the Kurikulum Merdeka (Sudrajat et al., 2023). Classifying skills can provide their own skills for PJOK teachers in (Irvansyah et al., 2023; Mayangsari et al., 2024; Muhadi et al., 2024):

1. Design a meaningful learning experience, where teachers can classify competencies (movement skills, tactics, and character values) so that activities become relevant to participants in an I do not know and contextual;
2. Learning differentiation, by qualifying students' abilities and needs, teachers can make learning variations;
3. Simplifying the assessment process, where teachers can design detailed assessment rubrics or indicators.

The ability to classify for PJOK teachers helps them structure learning, focus on learning outcomes, and, of course, apply the principles of the Kurikulum Merdeka, which emphasize flexible, personalized, and authentic-based assessment.

Compare

It is the teacher's skill in distinguishing similarities and differences among two or more things—for example, among movement activities, learning models, sports techniques, or the condition of students—and then using that understanding to choose or design more appropriate learning activities. In the context of PJOK teachers and the Kurikulum Merdeka this ability helps teachers to (Sucipto et al., 2024):

1. Comparing the old learning model with the Kurikulum Merdeka;
2. Compare the level of proficiency or characteristics of students;
3. Compare different movement techniques or sports activities to choose the one that best suits the LO;
4. Compare learning outcomes between groups of students to modify future learning.

The implementation of the ability to compare in the Kurikulum Merdeka for PJOK teachers plays a crucial role in adapting and innovating, differentiating and personalizing learning, reflecting on learning, and choosing appropriate techniques and strategies. Teachers who can carry out this process fully will have a strong conceptual and procedural understanding of the curriculum. These findings align with prior research suggesting that the success of the Kurikulum Merdeka depends on teachers' readiness to understand the philosophy and structure of competency-based learning. In the context of PJOK, a deep understanding is necessary for teachers to tailor physical activities to the Pancasila Student Profile's values, such as sportsmanship, cooperation, and independence (Ikhsan & Febrianta, 2023).

Another study found that PJOK teachers play an essential role in translating the flexibility of the Kurikulum Merdeka into a contextual learning experience (Fahrozi et al., 2024). However, in contrast to the study, the current findings indicate that some teachers in madrasahs continue to struggle to interpret and summarize LO independently. This indicates a gap in understanding between teachers who actively participate in training and those who have not received intensive support.

These results also differ from those of other studies, which show that primary school teachers in large cities have a better understanding of LO due to greater access to learning resources and a broader professional community. (Susilawati et al., 2024). In the context of madrasahs in these regions, limited access to training and digital resources is the primary barrier. Thus, the new findings from this study confirm the importance of a context-based approach to madrasahs and teacher empowerment through KKG as effective implementation strategies for the Kurikulum Merdeka.

In addition, these results strengthen the theory of curriculum implementation by emphasizing that curriculum change depends not only on policy documents but also on teachers' capacity and commitment as agents of change (Umami & Wahyudi, 2025). PJOK teachers in this study demonstrated a high level of commitment, despite limitations, indicating significant potential for improvement through collaborative mentoring and training.

From an implementation perspective, the emphasis is on a holistic, collaborative approach to education. This is relevant to research findings that highlight the need for a professional forum, such as the PJOK Teacher Working Group (Kelompok Kerja Guru or KKG), to enable teachers to share best practices and to enhance their ability to reflect on the curriculum.

Overall, the findings of this study identify new findings in the form of: 1) variations in LO understanding between madrasah teachers and teachers in public schools; 2) the direct relationship between curriculum literacy and pedagogic readiness; and 3) the need for a reflection-based continuous training model. With strengthened training, collaborative reflection, and institutional support, the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka in PJOK learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah can run more optimally and sustainably.

CONCLUSION

Based on research on PJOK Madrasah Ibtidaiyah teachers' understanding of the Kurikulum Merdeka, it was concluded that teachers' understanding falls within the relatively good category, with variations across the cognitive dimensions of the Revised Bloom Taxonomy. Teachers can explain the main principles of the Kurikulum Merdeka, translate the learning outcomes into LO, and compare the structure of the Kurikulum Merdeka with the Kurikulum 2013 conceptually. However, teachers' ability to summarize and classify learning elements remains a challenge that requires improvement through professional training and mentoring. This study also shows that the level of curriculum literacy, training experience, and institutional support from madrasahs significantly influence teachers' understanding of the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka. Teachers with more intensive training experience demonstrate a more mature conceptual and applied understanding than those without training opportunities. The primary rationale for implementing this curriculum is its flexibility in learning. In contrast, the main obstacles lie in the limitations of professional discussion forums such as KKG PJOK and in the availability of learning facilities.

Based on the research and analysis conducted, the following recommendations are proposed: improving curriculum literacy through training, mentoring, and self-reflection activities to enable them to interpret LO and organize them into teaching modules tailored to student characteristics. Teachers also need to utilize the flexibility of the Kurikulum Merdeka to develop innovative learning models that instill the values outlined in the Pancasila Student Profile. Further research will employ a quantitative or mixed-methods approach to examine the relationship between teachers' subject-matter understanding and the effectiveness of PJOK learning within the Kurikulum Merdeka. Further research could develop competency-based teacher-training models and collaborative reflection to ensure more systematic and sustainable implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka in madrasahs. Overall, this study emphasizes the importance of increasing PJOK teachers' capacity to understand and implement the Kurikulum Merdeka

contextually, so that physical learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah is not only oriented toward movement skills but also toward strengthening students' character, national values, and collaborative spirit.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

This article is based on research in the field that is free from various interests and conflicts. This article is also data-free and free from plagiarism because of the results of the author's research in the field.

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