

Evaluation of the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum Using the CIPP Model at Kerinci Public Junior High School No. 36

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Abstract: This study aims to evaluate the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 36 Kerinci using the CIPP evaluation model, consisting of Context, Input, Process, and Product. The study employed a qualitative evaluative approach supported by descriptive questionnaire data. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, questionnaires, and documentation. Six informants were selected purposively, consisting of one principal, one vice principal for curriculum affairs, two teachers, and two students. The findings show that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum was generally in the good category. The strongest aspect was Context, indicating that curriculum implementation was relatively well aligned with school conditions and students' needs, while Input was the weakest aspect, particularly in relation to learning facilities, technology access, and teacher competency. The Process component shows that the available inputs were translated into relatively active and student-centered learning practices, although implementation was not yet fully uniform. The Product findings indicate positive development in student engagement, creativity, independence, cooperation, and character. The main implication is that the school has established a relevant curricular foundation, but the sustainability and quality of implementation depend on strengthening resources and teacher capacity. Thus, CIPP evaluation in this setting should not be viewed as four separate scores but as a connected system in which contextual suitability needs to be followed by adequate inputs, effective processes, and sustainable outcomes.

Keywords: *Curriculum Evaluation, Merdeka Curriculum, CIPP Model, SMP Negeri 36 Kerinci*

A. Introduction

The curriculum is one of the key components of an education system because it provides direction for learning and guides the development of student competencies. Changes in social conditions, technology, and student characteristics require curriculum implementation to remain responsive and relevant (Achmad Junaedi Sitika et al., 2025). The Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes flexibility, student-centered learning, and learning experiences that are adapted to students' characteristics and needs.

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, however, is not determined only by the availability of curriculum documents. Its implementation requires alignment between curriculum objectives, teacher capacity, learning resources, facilities, instructional practices, and student participation. Previous studies indicate that teacher readiness, training, facilities, and technological support remain important challenges in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum (Gifari & Arifin, 2024; Nabila & Nadlir, 2025; Saiman & Kasman, 2025). These findings show that curriculum implementation should be evaluated as a process involving interconnected conditions rather than as a final achievement alone.

The CIPP model provides a suitable framework for this purpose because it evaluates Context, Input, Process, and Product as interconnected dimensions of a program. Context evaluation identifies needs and environmental conditions; Input evaluates the readiness of resources and strategies; Process examines how the program is implemented; and Product assesses the outcomes achieved (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). Previous studies have demonstrated the usefulness of CIPP for evaluating the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum (Gifari & Arifin, 2024).

Nevertheless, previous studies have generally focused on describing the achievement of each CIPP component. There remains a need for school-level evaluation that explains how contextual suitability, resource readiness, implementation practices, and outcomes are related to one another, particularly in schools operating with limited learning resources. Research at individual schools is important because the implementation of the same curriculum policy may produce different conditions according to institutional characteristics, teacher capacity, student needs, and available resources.

This study addresses that gap by evaluating the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 36 Kerinci through the four CIPP components while interpreting their relationships. The novelty of this study lies in the effort to connect the four evaluation dimensions rather than presenting them as independent scores. The study specifically examines how the relatively strong contextual alignment is translated into available inputs, how those inputs shape the implementation process, and how the process contributes to student outcomes. This perspective is particularly relevant for a school where resource limitations remain part of the implementation context.

Based on initial observations in May 2026, SMP Negeri 36 Kerinci had implemented the Merdeka Curriculum in instructional activities and P5 activities. The school had made efforts to develop more flexible and student-centered learning, but limitations in learning technology facilities and uneven teacher readiness remained visible. These conditions make the school a relevant setting for a CIPP-based evaluation.

Therefore, this study aims to evaluate the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 36 Kerinci in terms of Context, Input, Process, and Product. The evaluation is intended not only to determine the level of implementation but also to identify the main strengths, limitations, and priorities for improvement.

B. Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach with an evaluative research design. The evaluation of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum was conducted using the CIPP model (Context, Input, Process, Product) to gain an understanding of the program's alignment with school needs, resource readiness, the delivery of instruction, and the outcomes of curriculum implementation. The CIPP model was chosen because the evaluation focuses not only on the program's final outcomes but also considers the conditions underlying the program, resource readiness, and the implementation process (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017; Gifari & Arifin, 2024).

The study was conducted in May 2026 at SMP Negeri 36 Kerinci, Batang Merangin Subdistrict, Kerinci Regency, Jambi Province. The school is a public junior high school accredited B, with 99 students consisting of 49 male and 50 female students. The research site was selected purposively because the school had implemented the Merdeka Curriculum and provided a relevant setting for evaluating its implementation through the four CIPP components.

The research involved six informants selected purposively based on their direct involvement in or experience with the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. The informants consisted of one principal, one vice principal for curriculum affairs, two teachers, and two students. The principal was selected because of her/his role in school-level curriculum management and decision-making. The vice principal for curriculum affairs was selected because of direct responsibility for curriculum planning and implementation. The two teachers were selected as classroom practitioners who directly implemented the curriculum, while the two students were selected as recipients who experienced the curriculum implementation directly. Purposive selection was used to identify participants who were considered relevant to the research focus and capable of providing information related to the phenomenon being studied.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, questionnaires, and documentation. Interviews were conducted to obtain information concerning curriculum planning, implementation, challenges, teacher readiness, student involvement, and outcomes. Observations focused on school conditions and classroom learning activities, including student-centered learning, differentiated learning, the use of learning media, assessment practices, student engagement, and P5 activities. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended statements using a 1–4 Likert scale and was developed according to the four CIPP components. The questionnaire was used as supporting data to describe respondents' perceptions of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. Documentation included the School-Based Operational Curriculum (KOSP), teaching modules, learning materials, assessment documents, and documentation of P5 activities.

The main research instrument was the researcher, supported by interview guidelines, observation sheets, questionnaires, and documentation guidelines. The evaluation indicators were developed according to the CIPP framework. The context component covered the alignment of the Merdeka Curriculum with students' needs, school conditions, the school's vision and mission, and relevant educational policies. The input

component covered teacher readiness, facilities and infrastructure, learning resources, and school support. The process component covered the implementation of learning, differentiated learning, assessment, student engagement, and P5 activities. The product component covered the outcomes of implementation, including student engagement and the development of creativity, independence, cooperation, and character. These indicators were formulated by adapting the four dimensions of the CIPP evaluation framework (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017).

The credibility of qualitative data was established through source and methodological triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from the principal, vice principal for curriculum affairs, teachers, and students. Methodological triangulation was conducted by comparing findings obtained through interviews, observations, questionnaires, and documentation. Triangulation was used to strengthen the credibility of the findings by examining the consistency of information obtained from different sources and data collection techniques (Miles et al., 2020).

Qualitative data were analyzed interactively through data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Miles et al., 2020). Questionnaire data were analyzed descriptively by calculating the mean score and percentage of achievement for each CIPP component. The quantitative results were subsequently compared and interpreted together with interview, observation, and documentation findings. This integrated analysis enabled the study to examine the relationship among contextual conditions, resource readiness, implementation processes, and the outcomes of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 36 Kerinci.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Survey Results on the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum

The questionnaire was used as supporting data for the qualitative evaluation. It consisted of statements representing the four CIPP components and used a 1–4 Likert scale. The results are presented below.

Based on the results of the questionnaire data analysis, the following findings were obtained:

Evaluation Aspects	Average Score	Percentage	Category
<i>Context</i>	3,21	80,3%	Good
<i>Input</i>	2,78	69,5%	Good
<i>Process</i>	3,02	75,5%	Good
<i>Product</i>	3,15	78,8%	Good
Average Total:	3,04	76,0%	Good

Source: Analysis of research data, 2026.

The interpretation criteria used were: 3.26–4.00 = Excellent; 2.51–3.25 = Good; 1.76–2.50 = Fair; and 1.00–1.75 = Poor.

The overall result of 3.04 or 76.0% indicates that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum was generally in the good category. However, the distribution of scores is more informative than the overall average. Context received the highest score, while Input received the lowest. Process and Product were between these two components. This pattern suggests that the school has a relatively strong understanding of the direction and relevance of the curriculum, but the resources available to translate that understanding into consistent practice remain less adequate.

a. Context Evaluation

The Context component obtained an average score of 3.21 or 80.3%, placing it in the good category and making it the highest-scoring component. The finding indicates that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is relatively aligned with school conditions and students' needs.

Observation and documentation show that curriculum implementation is reflected in school planning documents, including the KOSP and instructional materials. P5 activities are also incorporated into implementation, providing contextual learning experiences. Interview findings indicate that the principal and teachers understand the flexibility of the curriculum and attempt to adapt learning strategies to students' characteristics.

The result is consistent with the role of context evaluation in identifying needs, problems, opportunities, and contextual conditions before assessing implementation (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). It is also consistent with Putri et al. (2024), who emphasize the importance of contextual evaluation in determining whether a program is aligned with institutional needs.

More importantly, the high Context score provides the foundation for interpreting the other components. The school appears to have accepted the direction of the Merdeka Curriculum and considers it relevant to students. However, contextual alignment alone does not guarantee optimal implementation. The lower Input score shows that the main issue is not primarily the relevance of the curriculum, but the ability of the school to provide sufficient resources to realize its objectives.

b. Input Evaluation

The Input component obtained an average score of 2.78 or 69.5%. Although still categorized as good, it was the lowest among the four components. This finding indicates that resource readiness is the main area requiring improvement. Observation results show that the school has basic resources for implementation. Teachers have prepared learning materials and attempted to align instruction with learning outcomes. Nevertheless, interview findings indicate that teacher competence in applying varied instructional strategies and using technology is not yet uniform. Some teachers still need training and guidance.

Facilities and access to digital learning resources are also limitations. These limitations are important because resources and teacher capacity function as enabling conditions for

translating curriculum principles into classroom practices. Similar findings have been reported by Nabila and Nadlir (2025), who identify facilities and teacher training as important inputs in Merdeka Curriculum implementation. Saiman and Kasman (2025) likewise show that limited facilities, training, and mentoring can influence teacher readiness.

The Input finding therefore has a direct relationship with Process. A school may have a suitable curriculum context, but if teacher competencies, facilities, and technology are insufficient, the flexibility expected by the curriculum may not be implemented consistently. Thus, the low Input score explains why Process, although good, did not reach the level of Context.

c. Product Evaluation

The Process component obtained an average score of 3.02 or 75.5%, placing it in the good category. This component requires systematic attention because it represents the stage where curriculum intentions and available resources are translated into actual learning practices.

1) Learning Implementation

Observation and interview findings show that learning has become more flexible and student-centered. Teachers provide opportunities for students to express opinions, participate in activities, collaborate, and complete assignments. This indicates that the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum have begun to be translated into classroom practice.

However, the quality of implementation is not entirely uniform. Differences in teacher readiness and access to learning resources influence the extent to which teachers can develop varied learning experiences. Thus, the Process score should be interpreted in relation to the Input score rather than independently.

2) Differentiated and Student-Centered Learning

Teachers attempt to adapt learning activities to students' abilities and characteristics. This practice is consistent with the curriculum's emphasis on flexibility and student-centered learning. Nevertheless, uneven teacher capacity means that differentiated practices may not yet be implemented with the same level of quality across learning activities.

This finding demonstrates an important CIPP relationship: the Context component shows that the curriculum is considered relevant to student needs, but the Input component determines whether teachers have sufficient capacity and resources to realize that relevance in the classroom.

3) Assessment

Assessment is implemented as part of the learning process and is used to observe student progress. The implementation of assessment supports the movement from a purely content-oriented approach toward a broader view of student learning and development. However, the quality and variation of assessment practices remain dependent on teacher understanding and available resources.

4) Student Engagement

Students are given opportunities to participate actively in learning, express ideas, collaborate, and complete learning tasks. Such practices indicate that the Process component has successfully translated some of the contextual objectives of the curriculum into classroom experiences.

5) P5 Activities

P5 activities provide opportunities for students to work collaboratively and engage in contextual projects. These activities support the development of creativity, responsibility, cooperation, and independence. Project-based learning has also been associated with the development of creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving skills (Ferdí et al., 2025).

Overall, the Process score of 3.02 indicates that implementation is functioning, but not yet optimal. The process is stronger than the available inputs might suggest because teachers are making efforts to adapt their practices. Nevertheless, continued implementation without strengthening the Input component may limit the sustainability and consistency of these practices.

2. Product Evaluation

The Product component obtained an average score of 3.15 or 78.8%, placing it in the good category. The result indicates that the implementation has produced positive changes in students' learning experiences and development. Observation findings show that students participate more actively, express opinions, collaborate, complete assignments, and participate in project-based activities. Interview findings also indicate development in creativity, independence, cooperation, and responsibility. P5 activities provide opportunities for students to practice these competencies through group work, problem solving, and task completion

These findings are consistent with Ferdí et al. (2025), who report that project-based learning can support creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving. The findings also support the view that curriculum outcomes should not be measured only through academic achievement but also through broader student competencies.

Nevertheless, Product did not obtain the highest score. Some students still require guidance to participate independently and complete activities. This indicates that outcomes are influenced by the quality and consistency of the Process, which in turn is influenced by Input readiness.

3. Relationship Among the CIPP Components

The most important finding of this study is the pattern formed across the four CIPP components. The Context score was the highest at 3.21, while Input was the lowest at 2.78. Process reached 3.02 and Product reached 3.15. This pattern shows that the school has relatively strong contextual alignment but faces limitations in translating that alignment into fully supported implementation.

The relationship can be understood as a chain. Context provides the direction and rationale for implementation. Input provides the resources and capacity needed to realize that direction. Process represents the translation of those resources into actual learning practices. Product reflects the outcomes generated by the implementation. This interpretation is consistent with the integrated logic of the CIPP model, which examines programs through their setting, resources, activities, and outcomes rather than relying only on final results (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017).

In this study, the strong Context component indicates that the curriculum is considered relevant to school conditions and student needs. However, the lower Input score indicates that the material and human resources available are not yet fully aligned with implementation demands. The Process score nevertheless remains good because teachers continue to adapt learning practices despite these limitations. This helps explain why Product is also good: even with constrained inputs, teachers' efforts and active student participation generate positive outcomes.

The findings therefore suggest that the main improvement priority is Input. Strengthening teacher competence, facilities, technology access, and learning resources is expected to improve the consistency of Process and, consequently, strengthen Product. The implication is that curriculum improvement should not focus only on changing classroom practices; it must also address the conditions that enable those practices.

4. Summary of CIPP Evaluation Findings

Overall, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 36 Kerinci was categorized as good, with an average score of 3.04 or 76.0%. Context was the strongest component, indicating good alignment between curriculum implementation and school and student needs. Input was the weakest component, highlighting resource readiness as the main challenge. Process was good, indicating that teachers were able to translate curriculum principles into relatively active and student-centered learning despite resource limitations. Product was also good, indicating positive development in student engagement and broader competencies.

The findings provide a more meaningful interpretation when the four components are viewed together. The school has a strong contextual foundation, but that foundation requires stronger inputs to produce more consistent processes. The existing process has already contributed to positive products, but improvements in resources and teacher capacity are needed to make those outcomes more sustainable.

D. Conclusions

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at SMP Negeri 36 Kerinci was generally categorized as good, with an overall score of 3.04 or 76.0%. Context obtained the highest score at 3.21 or 80.3%, indicating that the curriculum is relatively well aligned with school conditions and students' needs. Input obtained the lowest score at 2.78 or 69.5%, indicating that facilities, technology access, learning resources, and teacher competence remain the main areas requiring strengthening.

The Process component obtained a score of 3.02 or 75.5%. The implementation has encouraged more flexible, active, and student-centered learning, including student participation, differentiated learning efforts, assessment, and P5 activities. Product obtained a score of 3.15 or 78.8%, indicating positive development in student engagement, creativity, independence, cooperation, and character.

The central implication of the study is that the quality of Merdeka Curriculum implementation depends on the connection among the four CIPP components. Strong contextual alignment needs to be followed by adequate inputs so that teachers can implement the curriculum consistently and produce stronger student outcomes. Therefore, the priority for SMP Negeri 36 Kerinci is to strengthen teacher competencies through training and mentoring, improve learning facilities and technology access, and expand learning resources. Such improvements are expected to strengthen the implementation process and sustain the positive outcomes already observed.

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