

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the research results aimed at analyzing the difficulties faced by English teacher in implementing the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in the English learning process in SMP Negeri 4 Lahewa. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method, which allows the researcher to describe in detail and deeply the phenomena being studied based on data obtained from the field.

The data in this study were collected through three instruments, namely interviews, questionnaires, and documentation. Interviews were conducted to extract information directly from English teacher about their experiences, understanding, and the challenges they faced during the implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. The questionnaire is used as a supplement to measure the extent of teacher understanding of the components of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* and the obstacles they encounter. Meanwhile, documentation is used to support the obtained data, such as lesson plans and teaching modules.

This research focuses on English teacher who teach in SMP Negeri 4 Lahewa and with a total of 24 students in the eighth grade, because they are the direct implementers of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in the classroom. Through a qualitative approach, the data collected not only depicts the facts on the ground, but also includes the views, perceptions, and experiences of the teachers. By combining the results of in-depth interviews, distribution of the questionnaire, and review supporting documents, Researchers strive to provide a comprehensive picture of the realities faced by teacher in the process of teaching English based on the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. It is hoped that this can contribute to the development of more effective strategies in supporting teacher to implement the curriculum.

The way teacher implement the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in teaching English at SMP Negeri 4 Lahewa is by using flexible teaching modules that align with the learning outcomes (CP) set by the government. By actively involving students

through project-based learning, problem-based learning, and differentiated instruction. Providing students with the freedom to explore their interests and talents in learning english, conducting diagnostic assessments at the beginning of the lessons to determine students' initial abilities and adjust learning to the local context and students' needs. However, this implementation is not yet fully maximized because teacher are still in the process of adapting to the new *Kurikulum Merdeka* approaches and tools.

The difficulties faced by teacher in implementing the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in english learning at SMP Negeri 4 Lahewa include several challenges, such as a lack of understanding among teacher regarding the concept of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, including the principles of differentiated learning and formative assessment, limited training or technical guidance, leading to confusion in preparing appropriate teaching modules, minimal facilities and learning media, especially to support project-based or digital learning, limited planning time, making it challenging for teacher to prepare learning that meets students' needs, diverse student ability levels, which overwhelm teacher in implementing fair and equitable learning, and a lack of collaboration among teacher or learning communities in developing teaching materials.

The difficulties faced by english teacher in implementing the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in the teaching and learning process at SMP Negeri 4 Lahewa in a more in-depth manner include the planning of lessons, such as teacher experiencing difficulties in compiling teaching modules that contain CP (Learning Outcomes), TP (Learning Objectives), and ATP (Learning Objective Pathways) because not all teacher are skilled at accessing or understanding the new curriculum documents. Therefore, the implementation of english language learning at SMP Negeri 4 Lahewa allows students to be more communicative and interactive. Moreover, students with a strong mother tongue background (regional language) also influence active participation in english. Teacher are also still not accustomed to using formative assessments and learning reflections as part of the learning process, which puts pressure on them to adapt quickly, while there are no sufficiently practical and detailed guidelines available. As a result, many students are less

enthusiastic about learning english, especially if the methods used are less engaging or not contextual.

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Interview Results

The stage for data collection is interviews. At this stage, the researcher conducted interviews with English teacher at SMP Negeri 4 Lahewa about the implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in English learning. The researcher conducted direct interviews at the school with English teacher. Data collection for this interview was conducted on April 10, 2025. To learn more about the results of the interview, it is recorded in the following table.

Table 4.1 Interview for Teacher

No	Questions	Respons
1	What is your understanding of the main concepts and principles in the <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> ?	According to my understanding, the main concept and also the principle in the implementation of the <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> is to require students and also expect learners to develop and discover their potential at this time. On the other hand, educators are also required to keep up with the times, where there are currently so many technological developments in the form of any media that supports the learning process and creates an

		effective and efficient educational environment, this means that this <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> frees students but in the context that they are not confined to a single subject, They must be productive and hopefully they can create their own job opportunities.
2	What are the main challenges you face when implementing the <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> in English teaching?	Regarding the challenges, there are quite a few challenges when we play the role of an English teacher and try to implement the <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> among them, the first one, namely the lack of availability of learning media, especially in our school, where we use technology but are limited in terms of resources, And then why we also have to rely on media, because the implementation of this <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> needs to be made more interesting so that students are engaged in the learning we create. That's why we depend on media, but since media in our schools are not readily available, especially the handbooks are still incomplete, we are forced to use it manually. The next challenge is that many students at SMP Negeri 4 Lahewa are

		surprised by the implementation of the <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i>. Previously, they followed the 2013 Curriculum, so this change makes it difficult for them to discover their potential and talents. This is especially true in English language learning, which may be due to a lack of a strong foundation or the influence of their peers. Furthermore, the challenge is the lack of socialization and attention from both school supervisors and related parties because perhaps if I may say, due to their individual busyness, we are only given theory or materials without any socialization on how to implement it in the field, which often leads us as educators or teaching staff to clash with the existing theory. Another challenge is the issue of time or learning hours. At SMP Negeri 4 Lahewa, previously in the 2013 Curriculum, students received 5 hours of English lessons per week. However, with the implementation of the <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i>, the learning hours were reduced and supplemented with P5 learning. As a result, the available time for learning English has
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		decreased, making it difficult to achieve the indicators, competency standards, and material objectives. The next challenge in the <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> is the preparation of teaching materials or modules. Resource limitations require us to search for materials online, as the available textbooks are very limited. This takes a lot of time in the process of creating teaching modules.
3	Are there difficulties in adjusting your teaching methods to the <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> approach? If so, could you please explain further?	As I mentioned earlier, there are many challenges faced in the field, especially for English teachers in adapting methods and implementing the <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i>. One difficulty that often arises is the availability of media. Although we have designed learning materials, the media needed is often unavailable due to resource limitations. For example, in the <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i>, I use 'word to word' media displayed on the wall. Students can choose words according to the quiz I have created, making them more interested. However, due to media limitations, I am forced to use my personal computer or laptop.

4	What is the availability of teaching materials or learning resources to support the implementation of the <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> in this school?	In our school, the availability of resources to support the implementation of the <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> is still inadequate. Although we have planned to purchase new curriculum books, these books are still unavailable, so we are still using old books. Our school does have some technological tools, but not all of them. As a result, even though students are supposed to have free access to materials, this cannot be done effectively due to the lack of available resources and adequate tools.
5	Do students have difficulty understanding the material taught with the <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> approach?	Many students in this school face difficulties in English because not all primary schools implement the subject. As a result, when they enter middle school, they are taken aback by the changes. Although students are interested in the implementation of the <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i>, especially in productive activities like P5, they often struggle when asked to observe, communicate, or perform in front of the class. This is due to a lack of confidence, leading them to rely on one or two friends. The

		unavailability of adequate media also contributes to the low interest and confidence of students.
6	In your opinion, do the facilities and infrastructure at school influence the implementation of the <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> ? If so, what is the impact?	The lack of facilities and infrastructure in a school greatly affects the implementation of this <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> . In this school, the limited facilities and resources become one of the obstacles to the efficient implementation of the <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> . As a result, it impacts the teaching and learning process, which can only be carried out manually.
7	How does the socio-economic background of students affect the process of learning English in the <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> ?	The students' economic background does not significantly affect the learning process in this <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> . Because students are already able to use technology like cell phones, this makes it easier for them to adapt to the implementation of the <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> .
8	Is there any training or guidance provided to teachers to support the implementation of the <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> ? If so, do you think the training is effective enough?	Yes, there is, but it is still not fully available or can be said to be very limited. As a result, the teachers are only trying to follow the training online, making the implementation of this <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> less effective.

9	What is the attitude of fellow teachers towards the implementation of the <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> ? Is there any resistance or difficulty in adapting to this new curriculum?	The attitude of fellow teachers has welcomed the implementation of this <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> well, but teachers are still struggling to adapt in creating unique learning media and how to ensure that students are interested in following the learning process.
10	To what extent is the support from the school (principal, fellow teachers, and education staff) in helping teachers overcome difficulties in implementing the <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> ?	The support they have provided so far is like training but not very effective. The school is also planning to allocate some costs for creating teaching modules to ensure the success of this <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> implementation, and the funds are allocated from the BOS funding.
11	What strategies do you use to overcome difficulties in implementing the <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> ?	Always providing motivation, helping them to be confident in communicating in English and creating a classroom atmosphere as enjoyable as possible so that students have interest and enthusiasm in learning English.
12	How do you adjust your teaching methods to remain effective despite facing limitations in facilities or resources?	I continue to encourage students to learn to communicate in English, to seek materials from other sources and create a framework, then print it out to share with the students in order to address the difficulties

		they face in using media, so that students develop an interest in learning English.
13	Do you use technology or digital media to support English teaching with the <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> ? If so, what is its impact on learning?	I usually use tablet media, its influence on learning is somewhat alleviated because students are able to understand the material quickly and enthusiastically.
14	How do you guide students to be more independent and active in the learning process according to the concept of the <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> ?	My way as an English teacher is usually to educate them personally both inside and outside the classroom, while still providing motivation to the students.
15	According to you, what can the school or government do to help teachers implement the <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> more effectively?	There must be good cooperation between the government and the school to provide special guidance or training for the teachers, including resources and the availability of technological tools at school to help the effective implementation of this <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> .

Based on the interview results presented in table 4.1 conducted by the researcher with the English teacher in SMP Negeri 4 Lahewa, It can be said that teacher have a good understanding of the main concepts and principles in the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Teacher understand that this curriculum emphasizes the development of students' individual potential and encourages educators to adapt to the times, especially in the aspect of technology. However, teacher face various challenges in implementing the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, the main challenges faced include limited learning media, the unavailability of complete printed books related to the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, so the K13 books are still being used, The lack of training provided by the relevant agencies, along with the very limited time, makes the implementation of activities appear rushed.

In adjusting teaching methods, teacher also face difficulties due to limited resources. The desired method cannot be executed optimally due to limitations of supporting tools. The limited availability of teaching materials means that the learning process is often done manually. Here the teacher also revealed that students are having difficulty understanding the material due to their limited basic skills in English from the previous level. low self-esteem, as well as difficulties in communication. On the other hand, the students' socioeconomic background is not too much of an obstacle, but it is part of the issue.

Related also to training, The teacher stated that despite the training provided, its implementation is still very limited and not effective. Training is conducted more online and does not delve deeply into practical aspects. Fellow teacher generally welcome this *Kurikulum Merdeka* positively, However, they are still struggling to adapt, especially in creating innovative and engaging learning media for students. Support from the school has been provided in the form of budget planning from the BOS fund to support the creation of teaching modules. However, its implementation has not been fully realized yet.

To overcome those obstacles, Teacher have several strategies, such as providing motivation to students, creating a fun learning environment, and guiding

students personally to help them become more confident in communicating in English. In addition, The teacher searches for materials from various sources and prints them to share with the students so they can continue to learn optimally despite limited facilities. As in the case of technology usage, Teacher utilize digital media such as tablets in the learning process. The use of this technology has a positive impact as it helps students understand the material more quickly and increases their enthusiasm for learning. Teacher also guide students to be more independent and active, both inside and outside the classroom, and continue to provide motivation so that they become bolder and more confident. Finally, the teacher conveyed that support from the school and government is greatly needed, especially in the form of continuous training, provision of resources, and the procurement of adequate technology tools. The collaboration between the government and schools is deemed very important to successfully implement the *Kurikulum Merdeka* optimally and effectively.

Therefore, the researchers can conclude that the implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in SMP Negeri 4 Lahewa still facing various challenges, both in terms of facilities, the availability of teaching materials, and the readiness of teacher to design and implement learning in accordance with the principles of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Nevertheless, the teacher has demonstrated commitment and various adaptive efforts in overcoming existing limitations, including utilizing simple technology and motivational strategies for the students. This indicates that support from various parties, especially from schools and the government, is crucial for the *Kurikulum Merdeka* to be implemented more effectively and to have a positive impact on the learning process, particularly in the English language subject.

4.1.2 Questionnaire Results

In addition to interviews, data in this study were also obtained through the distribution of questionnaires to English teacher in SMP Negeri 4 Lahewa. This questionnaire is designed to explore the understanding, experiences, and challenges faced by teacher in implementing the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in English language learning. The distribution of the questionnaire aims to complement the interview

data and obtain a more objective picture of the challenges faced by teacher in implementing this *Kurikulum Merdeka*. The questionnaire used in this research was designed based on field observations to ensure its relevance and accuracy. This research has been conducted over a period of one month, starting from March 18 and ending on April 17. The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 4 Lahewa, located in the village of Balefadorotuhu, Lahewa district, North Nias regency. The questionnaire form used by the researchers is based on observations made in the field. The following are the results of the questionnaire conducted by the researcher.

Table 4.2 Questionnaire for Teacher

No	QUESTIONNAIRE	SS	S	TS	STS
1	I understand the basic concept of the <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> .		✓		
2	I am having difficulty in developing teaching modules based on the <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> .		✓		
3	The lack of learning facilities is the main obstacle for me.		✓		
4	I am already accustomed to using project-based methods (Project-Based Learning).		✓		
5	The facilities and infrastructure at my school support the implementation of the <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> .			✓	
6	I have difficulty adjusting teaching materials to the diverse abilities of students.		✓		
7	I am able to assess students' learning outcomes according to the <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> approach.			✓	

8	I feel the need for further training on the <i>Kurikulum Merdeka</i> .		✓		
9	I feel stressed/pressured because of the limitations of facilities and curriculum demands.		✓		
10	I keep trying to find creative ways to ensure that learning continues despite limited resources.		✓		

Based on the survey results presented in table 4.2, it can be seen that teacher have a good understanding of the basic concepts of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. However, in practice, there are still several significant obstacles. One of the main challenges faced is the difficulty in developing teaching modules that align with the *Kurikulum Merdeka* approach, especially in adjusting the material to meet the diverse needs and abilities of students. In addition, the limitations of learning facilities in schools also pose a significant obstacle that is felt by teacher. The inadequate condition of facilities and infrastructure has made it difficult for teacher to optimize the learning process according to the principles of this new curriculum. Despite facing various limitations, the teacher still show a positive attitude and strive to find creative ways to ensure that the teaching and learning activities continue to run well. Teacher have also become accustomed to applying project-based learning methods, which are one of the main approaches in the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. However, the aspect of assessing students' learning outcomes is still considered quite difficult to align with this curriculum approach, thus adding a burden to its implementation. Not only technically, this challenge also has a psychological impact, where teachers feel stressed due to the pressure from limited facilities and high curriculum demands.

Overall, it can be said that the results of this questionnaire indicate that teacher greatly need further training in order to better understand and master the implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* comprehensively. Despite facing many obstacles, the enthusiasm and commitment of teacher in developing the learning

process remain evident, indicating a positive potential for improvement and adaptation in the future if adequate support can be provided.

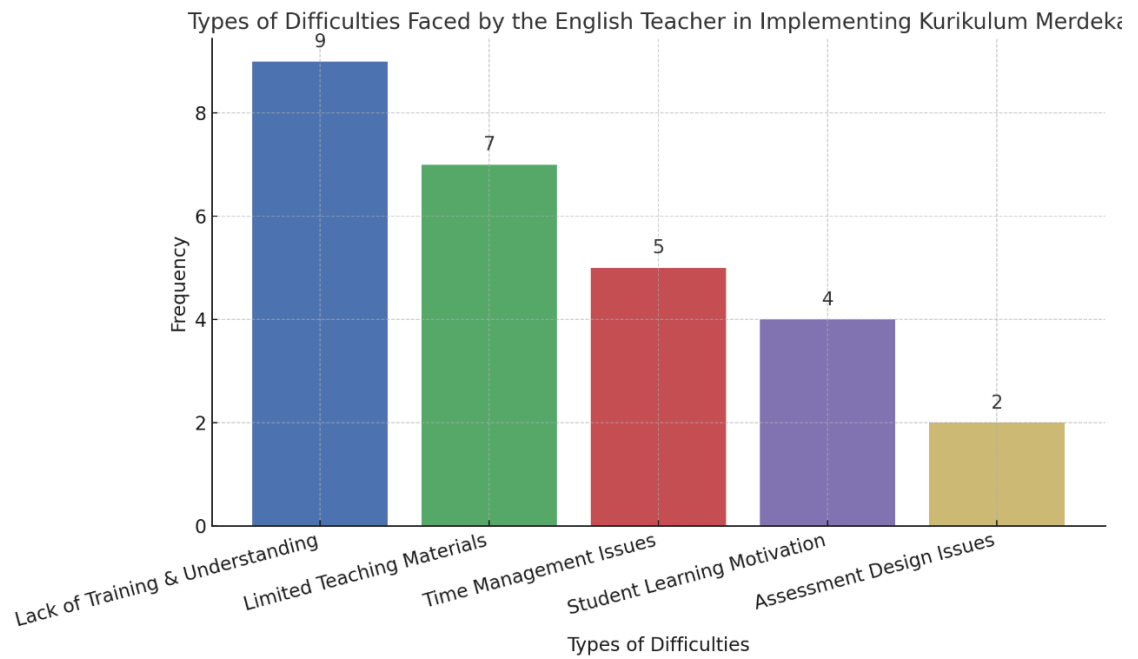
Therefore, the researchers conclude that based on the analyzed questionnaire results, it can be concluded that English teacher in SMP Negeri 4 Lahewa has had an initial understanding of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* and is accustomed to applying several methods that align with that curriculum, such as project-based learning. However, various obstacles are still found in its implementation, especially in the preparation of teaching modules and the adjustment of materials to the diverse abilities of students. The limitations of facilities and infrastructure are also a major obstacle that impacts teacher work stress. Nevertheless, teacher continue to show enthusiasm for innovating and adapting, as well as recognizing the importance of further training in order to implement the *Kurikulum Merdeka* more effectively.

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Description and Interpretation of Research Results

Based on the results of the research above, The researchers then processed data on the research results to address the problem statement about teacher issues and to understand the difficulties in implementing the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in English learning at SMP Negeri 4 Lahewa.

Research Result Diagram



4.2.2 The Research Findings Versus to The Latest Related Research

The first research was conducted by Syahrida Awaliyah, Yuli Tiarina (2024) "An Analysis of English Teachers' Difficulties and Strategies in Implementing Merdeka Curriculum on the Seventh Grade at SMPN 1 Panyabungan Selatan". This research reveals that teacher face difficulties in understanding new concepts of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, limitations in infrastructure, as well as differences in focus in assessing students. The comparison between similarities and differences is as follows. The similarity lies in the use of qualitative descriptive methods to explore the challenges faced by teacher in implementing the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. In addition to similarities, there are also differences between the studies, which lie in the integration of qualitative data from interviews and questionnaires, that provides a comprehensive overview of the conditions on the ground. On the other hand, the limitations in the available resources pose a challenge in research. Therefore, although this research provides valuable insights, there is room for further development, especially in terms of the application of technology and more varied learning methods.

The second previous research is Septrida Fitra, Yuli Tiarina (2023) "An Analysis of English Teachers' Challenges in Implementing Merdeka Curriculum at SMAN 3 Solok Selatan" The research indicates that it identifies five main challenges faced by teachers, including designing lesson plans, using media, and classroom management. The comparison between similarities and differences is as follows. The similarity lies in the approach to data collection through interviews and questionnaires. Meanwhile, the difference in the research of Fitra and Tiarina lies in the more specific focus on the practical challenges faced by teachers in the field. Meanwhile, the difference in my research is in involving more instruments such as questionnaires that provide additional data in a specific context, which may not fully reflect the challenges faced by teacher in other schools. Therefore,

although both studies have similar methods, their focus and context provide different insights into the challenges of implementing the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in Indonesia.

4.2.3 The Finding Versus Theory

Based on the research conducted by the researcher titled “An Analysis of English Teacher’s Difficulties in Implementing *Kurikulum Merdeka* In English Teaching Learning Process at SMP Negeri 4 Lahewa” this research will be compared with the theory by Yuli Tiarina (2024) which shows that teacher experience various difficulties in the implementation of that curriculum. Among the most striking difficulties is the understanding of new terms, such as core basic competencies, as well as learning objectives. Although educational theory emphasizes the importance of this understanding to achieve optimal learning outcomes, many teacher find it challenging to articulate and apply these concepts in their daily practice. This indicates a gap between theoretical expectations and reality on the ground.

In this case, teacher also face challenges in adapting assessment methods that differ from the previous curriculum. Educational theory suggests that assessment should reflect the character development and non-academic abilities of students; however, in practice, teachers often find themselves trapped in more traditional assessment methods. This inconsistency causes frustration among teachers, who feel unprepared to change their assessment approaches. This emphasizes that merely providing theoretical training is not enough; practical support and adequate resources are also important to help teacher adapt.

Meanwhile, issues with infrastructure and inadequate facilities also pose a significant barrier to the implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Educational theory shows that a good learning environment is very important to support the teaching-learning process, but many teacher report a lack of access to books and other necessary resources. In this case, the findings of this research highlight the need for collaboration between the government, schools, and the community to

provide the necessary support for educational theory to be effectively applied. By understanding and addressing this gap, it is hoped that the implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* can proceed more smoothly and effectively.

In addition, the strategies employed by teacher to address these difficulties also demonstrate a mismatch between theory and practice. Many teacher use digital applications such as YouTube and TikTok to seek inspiration and teaching materials, reflecting their adaptation to existing limitations. Although the use of technology in education aligns with theories that support interactive and technology-based learning, reliance on these unofficial sources can pose its own challenges. This indicates that although teacher strive to innovate, they still require guidance and more structured resources to ensure that the methods they use are not only creative but also aligned with the curriculum objectives. Thus, it is important for stakeholders to provide better training and broader access to quality educational resources.

4.2.4 Implications of Research Findings

Based on the research conducted at SMP Negeri 4 Lahewa, it shows that there are many important things that need to be considered by the relevant parties working to improve the performance of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, especially in English language learning.

1. Implications for Teachers

The findings indicate that teachers have a fairly good understanding of the concepts of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. However, in practice, teachers still face many obstacles, especially related to limited facilities, the preparation of teaching modules, and difficulties in adapting teaching methods to student conditions. Therefore, teachers need to continuously develop their competencies, especially in designing engaging and adaptive learning media. Teachers should also be actively involved in advanced training to be better prepared to implement the curriculum to the fullest.

2. Implications for Schools

Schools play an important role in supporting the smooth implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Findings indicate that although there are some forms of support such as funding from the BOS fund, this is not sufficient to meet the challenges on the ground. Therefore, schools need to provide more adequate facilities, such as teaching materials, technological tools, and learning spaces that support this curriculum approach. In addition, schools are also expected to organize discussion forums or internal training that can help teachers share solutions and teaching strategies with each other.

3. Implications for the Government

The Ministry of Education and related agencies need to pay more serious attention to the implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in areas with limited facilities and infrastructure. Based on research findings, the training provided is still limited and not effective. Therefore, there is a need for a continuous training program that is not only theoretical but also practical. The government also needs to accelerate the distribution of learning facilities and digital resources to schools so that the goals of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* can be achieved evenly across Indonesia.

4. Implications for Future Researchers

With the involvement of more teachers and schools from various backgrounds, this research can serve as a reference for future researchers who wish to explore further about the effectiveness of the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. Additionally, future researchers can investigate the creative learning approaches used by teachers when facing limitations. The results of this research can be shared as best practices with other teachers.

4.2.5 Limitations of the research findings

The researchers found many deficiencies in the research and procedures while conducting this investigation. Since this is the researchers' first study, there was no previous experience, which resulted in several difficulties arising from a lack of understanding and misunderstanding of specific terms and concepts. These issues highlight important factors that future researchers must pay attention to when refining their work. Here are some limitations that were noted:

- a) The researchers acknowledge that there are still many shortcomings in the research methods, writing, and data analysis conducted.
- b) The researchers have limited knowledge in processing qualitative data analysis and difficulties in finding appropriate reference materials related to the challenges teachers face in implementing the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in English language learning.