



# Learning Practices and Problems in Elementary Schools Based on The 2013 Curriculum and The Merdeka Curriculum

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**Abstract.** The 2013 Curriculum (C-13) and the Merdeka Curriculum (MC) have met the demands of globalization. In practice, there were obstacles, so it is necessary to identify the implementation and problems of learning practices in elementary schools. It was qualitative research. The data collection techniques used documentation, observation, and interviews method. The validity of the data was assessed using the triangulation technique, and the data were analyzed both in qualitatively and interactively. The results of the research showed that: 1) The curriculum applied in elementary schools in Pacitan are both of MC and C-13 in 2022/2023 academic year. MC has been applied in low and high classes, namely grades 1 and 4, while C-13 has been applied to grades 2, 3, 5 and 6; 2) Teachers in the Pacitan area generally use a scientific learning approach for C-13, problem-based learning, project-based learning, discovery learning, and inquiry approach for MC implementers; 3) Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and literacy lessons have not been fulfilled the Minimum Completeness Criteria (MCC). This was caused by internal factors: 1) the lack of student interest in learning mathematics and literacy; 4) The affective aspects that have not fulfilled the target for elementary school students include self-confidence, interest in learning, discipline, motivation, and independence. This was caused by internal student factors and factors from the environment and family; 5) Psychomotor aspects that need to be improved include reading skills, critical thinking, speaking, problem solving, cooperation, creative thinking, and writing. The causal factors were influenced by the impact of the pandemic.

**Keywords:** Practice, Problems, 2013 Curriculum, Merdeka Curriculum.

## 1 Introduction

The study of teaching practice in elementary schools must always be linked to basic education because elementary schools are part of the basic education system. Basic education is 9 years of education which lasts for 6 (six) years in Elementary School and 3 years in Junior High School or similar educational units. By the National Education System Law (2003), every citizen aged seven to fifteen years is obliged to attend basic

education. Elementary School is a unit or unit of social institution that is given a mandate by the community through the implementation of the first part of the basic education level [1].

In general, the new paradigm of basic education practice focuses more on learning than on the teaching process, prioritizing the role of the teacher, in which the teacher deliberately and systematically manages various learning resources and media in their environment to ensure the success of children's learning. However, the Covid-19 pandemic has changed many aspects of life, including education. Several educational policies have changed in order to maintain the achievement of goals and the continuity of the educational process, such as in aspects of implementing the curriculum in educational units. One of the impacts of implementing learning adaptation during and after the pandemic is at the basic education level.

Basic education in Elementary School has problems, both before, during, and after the pandemic. This is because education is a social problem with a relatively high level of problem symptoms, judging by the established educational standards. In accordance with its characteristics, that Elementary School is a period of significant growth and development in cognitive, emotional, as well as physical aspects. Schools have an important role in providing space for students to develop in the aspects of creativity, taste, initiative, and work based on Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, as well as socio-cultural factors that contain humanist values.

One of the elements that feel the direct and indirect impact of education in Elementary School is the teacher. Teachers are at the forefront of efforts to create a superior generation through the implementation of education and learning. Based on the presence of teachers, there is a potential gap between theory and practice, between rules and implementation, and between expectations and reality in the field. This is because there are several variables or factors that can cause problems in the field beyond the control of the teacher or management.

There are several problems experienced by elementary school children, namely: difficulty absorbing subject matter, difficulty in socializing, laziness to study, and laziness to do assignments. Meanwhile, several problems were identified during the online learning period as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic. Based on the research concluded that problems in online learning are experienced by teachers, students, as well as parents [2], [3], [4]. This results in a decrease in student learning motivation [5] and affects learning practices with a thematic approach [6].

Reporting from nasional.sindonews.com, referring to information from the Ministry of Education and Culture, there are 60% of teachers are still limited in managing technology in the early stages of implementing an merdeka curriculum. This means that only few teachers can master the Merdeka curriculum without problems. These problems were experienced by teachers and students in the period before, in the middle, and after the adaptation or post-pandemic period, and now they have changed to adapting curriculum implementation. The school curriculum is the core of the implementation of education and will affect all educational activities. The curriculum requires a strong historical sociological philosophical basis or foundation supported by appropriate

learning theory. This means that the teacher's knowledge and experience are the determining factors that support the success of the program. In addition, it needs infrastructure support as well as financing.

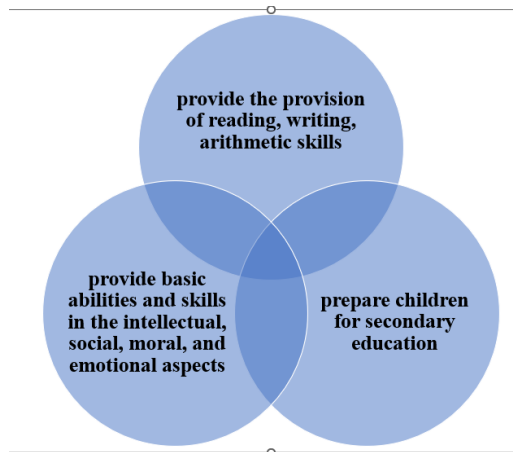
Considering the existing problems, schools and teachers then have a role to improve the quality of learning through efforts to improve management in schools or classes based on the curriculum used. Alternative improvement efforts can be made after the object of the problem is known, whether it is related to the implementation of learning strategies/ methods /models/ approaches/ techniques, or related to learning outcomes on the student's side, such as cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Thus, it is necessary to identify or diagnose the implementation and problems of learning practices in elementary schools in implementing the 2013 curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum.

Several relevant studies related to the problems of learning practice in C-13 have been described previously, and many have been found. However, its relation to the problematic implementation of C-13 and the MC (Merdeka Curriculum) in Elementary School (SD) has not been found much. There are several studies that analyze the implementation of MC in elementary schools, including research analysis of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum oriented towards the embodiment of the Pancasila Student Profile at SD Guruminda 244 Bandung City [7], regarding the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum (MC) in learning mathematics [8], and regarding the implementation of science learning with an merdeka curriculum in elementary schools [9]. An analysis of the implementation of MC (Merdeka Curriculum) in elementary schools, some of which are literature studies, such as about measuring the correlativity of independent learning with the national education system [10] and the meaning of independent learning and strengthening the role of teachers in elementary schools [11]. This means that there is a difference in the focus of this study.

### **1.1 The Purpose and Meaning of Education in Elementary School**

Education is not meant as a process that imposes the will of adults (teachers) on students, on the contrary as a vehicle to form, condition, and optimize children's growth and development. Specifically, education in elementary schools is a process to develop the most basic abilities of each student to be active through encouragement and an atmosphere that provides convenience (conductive) for optimal self-development.

This means that education in primary school is not only aimed at providing basic skills (literacy in reading, writing, and arithmetic) but also preparing students' intellectual capacities, and social and personal skills more optimally so that students can learn to actively develop themselves, both as individuals and as individuals. role as an element of society, citizen, and also God's creature.



**Fig. 1.** Basic Education Objectives

## 1.2 The 2013 Curriculum Review

There are several characteristics of learning use the 2013 Curriculum as a reference [12]. Firstly, the 2013 curriculum uses an integrative scientific and thematic approach. A scientific approach is an approach to learning through scientific processes, namely observing, asking, trying, reasoning, and communicating. While the thematic-integrative approach means that learning is made per theme concerning the characteristics of students and implemented in an integrated manner between one theme and another or between one subject and another. Secondly, graduate competencies from the 2013 Curriculum relate to attitude (affective), knowledge (cognitive), and skills (psychomotor) competencies. This competency determination refers to the theory of the taxonomy of educational objectives which is widely known by educational experts. Attitude assessment competence is obtained through the activities of "accepting, implementing, appreciating, living, and practicing". Thirdly, knowledge assessment competence is obtained through the activities of "remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, creating". Skill assessment competence is obtained through the activities of "observing, asking, trying, reasoning, presenting, and creating". Fourthly, in the 2013 Curriculum, the learning assessment process is carried out using an authentic assessment approach. Authentic assessment is a complete assessment, which includes the readiness of students, processes, and learning outcomes.

## 1.3 Overview of the Merdeka Curriculum

The Merdeka curriculum is a refinement of the 2013 curriculum which was first delivered by the Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Makarim in 2019. The Merdeka learning curriculum was born as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic which caused various obstacles and obstacles during learning where this curriculum was a step or additional strategy for recovering learning in 2022-2024. This was originally intended to

make it easier for teachers and education units to manage learning. The concept of an merdeka curriculum is independence and independence for educational units in determining the best method for themselves so that it can be utilized during the process of teaching and learning activities [13]. This curriculum emphasizes various intra-curricular learning where the content or learning content will be more optimal so that students can deepen concepts and strengthen the competencies learned. The Merdeka Curriculum policy contains 4 main policies, including the National Standard-Based Examination which is returned to policies in each respective school, the National Examination changes to a Minimum Competency Assessment, changes to the policy for preparing Learning Implementation Plans (RPP) which initially contained thirteen components divided into three components, and regulations regarding Admission of New Zoning Students oriented proportionally [14].

In addition, there are some differences in the merdeka learning curriculum with the previous curriculum at the elementary level with the combination of Science and Social Sciences subjects into one subject, namely Natural and Social Sciences. Meanwhile, English changed from a main subject to an elective subject. At the junior high school level, the application of ICT subjects which were originally elective subjects became compulsory subjects. High school level no longer contains specialization. Meanwhile, at the Vocational High School (SMK) level, the learning model is made simpler, containing 70% vocational subjects and 30% general subjects. In addition, both Senior High School and Vocational High School students are required to produce a product in the form of a scientific essay. Finally, at the tertiary level, the merdeka learning curriculum provides opportunities for students to develop their talents and interests without being constrained by the majors or study programs taken during college. This can be done through internships, research, entrepreneurship, student exchanges, Community Service Program, and other relevant and merdeka projects.

The Merdeka Curriculum has not been practiced in the field for a long time, so several teachers and program implementers are still in the trial and simulation stages to get the best formula. It means that to prepare for the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum teachers need to attend workshops on curriculum [15].

## 2 Method

The researcher uses a qualitative descriptive method that aims to understand the phenomena experienced by the research subjects as a whole through the use of words and language. A qualitative research methods include logic, ethnography, discourse analysis, case studies, open interviews, participant observation, counseling, therapy, down-to-earth theory, biographies, comparative methods, introspection, argumentation, panel discussions, literary criticism, research history, and others [16].

This research was conducted in a certain natural context and used natural methods that were different from other approaches [17]. Qualitative research methods are used to find and understand individual or group meanings related to social or human problems [18].

Some of the characteristics of this qualitative research include: (1) the researcher becomes the main tool in research; (2) Researchers collect research data through participant observation, literature study, and face-to-face interviews with participants; and interviews, rather than relying on just one data source.

Data collection was carried out through task-based test methods and interviews. The main data of this research is in the form of answers or results of the subject's work, which can be in the form of symbols or written words. The data was then triangulated through interviews using a qualitative approach. In this study, all facts, whether obtained orally or in writing from researched human sources and other related documents, will be reviewed and briefly presented to answer research questions. In other words, the data obtained will be described or re-explained and analyzed in more depth.

## 2.1 Participants

The research was carried out in the period November-December 2022 followed by January-June 2023. The research subjects were school principals, teachers, and student representatives from Elementary School (SD) and Ibtidaiyah Madrasa (MI) in the Pacitan area in the 2022/2023 academic year. Samples were selected by purposive sampling from all potential subjects. The determination of data sources (informants) in this study is based on the willingness or permission of the school (principal and teachers) to be the research sample.

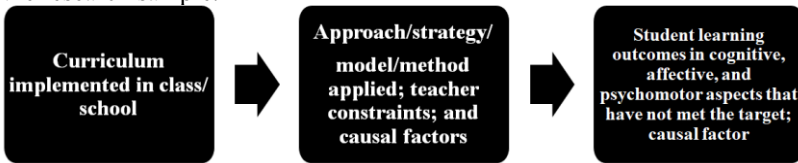


Fig. 2. Research Object

## 2.2 Instrument

This study used the main techniques, namely observation and interviews using auxiliary instruments, observation sheets, and interview sheets for school principals, teachers, also students as follows.

**Table 1.** Research Instrument Grid

Observation Aspect	Interview Aspects
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Curriculum Implementation                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Implemented Curriculum Document</i></li> <li>• <i>Availability of learning devices</i></li> <li>• <i>Readiness of the classroom and learning environment</i></li> <li>• <i>Student readiness</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Learning Steps                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Opening; Orientation</i></li> <li>• <i>Appreciation, otivation</i></li> <li>• <i>Giving trigger questions</i></li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p><b>Core activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The use of learning methods/approaches/strategies</i></li> <li>• <i>The use of learning media</i></li> <li>• <i>The use of learning resources</i></li> <li>• <i>Conditioning students' active learning</i></li> <li>• <i>Conditioning student cooperation (collaborative)</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Closing Activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Reflection; Implementation of assessments and evaluations</i></li> <li>• <i>Teacher follow-up on student learning outcomes</i></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approaches/ strategies/ methods/ learning models applied in the classroom, teacher constraints, and causal factors</li> <li>2. Student learning achievements in cognitive aspects that do not meet the Minimum Completeness Criteria/target, and the causal factors                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Mastery of mathematical material; Mastery of science material; Mastery of citizenship education material; Mastery of social studies material; Language; etc</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Student learning achievements in the affective aspect that have not met the learning achievement targets, and the causal factors                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>student attitudes; motivation; Interest to learn; confidence; discipline, others</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>4. Student learning achievements in psychomotor aspects that do not meet learning outcomes, and the causal factors                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Communication/speaking skills; problem solving skills; collaboration skills; creative critical thinking skills; writing skills; reading skills</i></li> </ul> </li> </ol>

Observational aspects are preparation phase and learning syntax. Question aspects consist of approaches/ strategies/ methods/ learning models applied in the classroom, teacher constraints, and causal factors, student learning outcomes in cognitive aspects that have not met the Minimum Completeness Criteria (MCC), and the causal factors, student learning outcomes in affective aspects that have not met the MCC/ target, and the causal factors, and student learning outcomes in psychomotor aspects that have not met the MCC/ target, and the causal factors. The interviews conducted in this study used a semi-structured interview approach. Semi-structured interviews are a type of interview that uses interview guidelines that have been compiled systematically and completely to collect data, but researchers still have the flexibility to adjust the questions according to conditions in the field [19]. The interview guide used contains outlines of the problems that will be asked of the respondents.

### 2.3 Data Analysis

The data analysis technique used in this study is a descriptive narrative based on the Miles and Huberman model (2014). Data analysis is carried out interactively and continuously until completion, which is marked by reaching a data saturation point. This data saturation indicates that no new data or information appears. Analysis activities involve data reduction, data visualization, and drawing or verifying conclusions. To ensure the validity of the data, verification is carried out based on the level of trust, transferability, dependability, and certainty. The reliability or validity of the data is

tested in several ways, such as expanding observations, increasing persistence, and cross-checking [19].

Expansion of observations is carried out by researchers to verify the correctness of the data provided. This is done by conducting broader and in-depth observations to obtain data certainty. Increased persistence means researchers make observations more carefully and continuously. Thus, the data and sequence of events can be recorded systematically and deterministically. Furthermore, cross-checking was carried out to verify data from different sources using different methods and at different times. In this study, cross-checking was carried out to increase data validity through cross-checking data sources, checking techniques, and data collection time. By using cross-checking techniques, data validity can be improved to ensure the accuracy and reliability of research results

### **3 Result and Discussion**

#### **3.1 Result**

##### **3.1.1. Elementary School Profile The Applied curriculum**

As initial data, there are 418 elementary schools in Pacitan district, spread across 12 sub-districts, there are 10 schools with private status (2%) and 98% are public schools. There are 5 sub-districts as research locations out of 12 sub-districts in Pacitan district or 42%, namely Pacitan, Tulakan, Kebonagung, Ngadirojo, and Punung sub-districts. The number of schools is 62. Random selection of 5 districts with the highest distribution of schools.

##### **3.1.2. The Applied curriculum**

The results of the research sample observation show that there are 91.9 or 92% of elementary schools in the Pacitan area that have implemented the 2013 curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum. There are still 8% of schools still using the 2013 curriculum (C-13) considering the readiness of the schools that have not complied. The Merdeka curriculum is implemented for grades I and IV in 2022/2023 academic year.

The results of observations are relevant to the results of interviews with class teachers. Implementation of the curriculum is prepared with the availability of devices in the learning process. The C-13 implementer prepares learning tools by the existing lesson plan (RPP) and uses textbooks such as textbooks and also the LKS book to assist in the learning process. The Merdeka Curriculum implementer prepares teaching modules. Schools in general prepare classrooms according to existing conditions. The classrooms have been neatly arranged in a position facing each other between students and before starting learning students always clean the classroom to provide comfort in the learning process.

##### **3.1.3. Approaches, strategies, methods, learning models applied**

Various learning strategies are applied by teachers, both in implementing the 2013 curriculum and the Merdeka curriculum. The results of data collection showed that



69.4% of teachers chose to apply a scientific approach (Fig. 3). This corresponds to the characteristics of the implementation of C-13. Furthermore, elementary school teachers in Pacitan also apply learning models such as the cooperative learning model, project-based learning, problem based learning, also a contextual learning model. The lecture method varies, with question and answer and discussion also applied by the teacher.

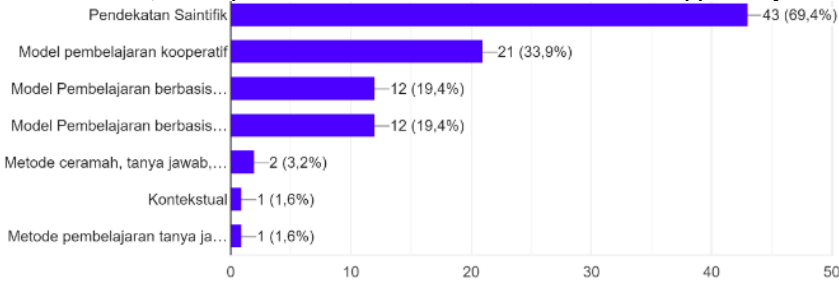


Fig. 3. Various learning strategies



Fig. 4. Cooperative Class Setting

To carry out approaches, strategies, methods, and learning models teachers use a scientific approach. The teacher introduces herself directly to the children to be closer to their learning environment. Each teacher will have various methods of carrying out his learning according to the abilities of the students, considering that each student in each class has a different method.

The results of observations are relevant to the results of interviews with class teachers. Based on the results of interviews with teachers, several teachers in learning still use the lecture method directly to students, then carry out a question and answer system as a trigger for student activity. After that, a group discussion system is also carried out and repetition of material is carried out to students if they cannot understand the material that has been explained by the class teacher.

The problems faced by teachers include: a) Students tend to be less confident so they are less active in learning, b) Students find it difficult in mathematics lessons which tend to count from multiplication to division, c) Students are less motivated in learning so learning is difficult conveyed, d) It is difficult to understand the material explained by the teacher, especially in mathematics.

It was further found according to the results of the interviews that several factors that can influence teacher difficulties in learning practices are: 1) family or parental factors which are the background in a child's education, 2) the transitional factor during the pandemic which was originally only online so that students could not adjust with the materials provided by the class teacher, which initially only took place online and switched to face-to-face learning, 3) study time at home was not maximized because students, when they came home from school, tended to play cellphones more, and 4) strategies implemented done by the teacher has not been able to make students more enthusiastic in learning. Then the teacher also has not used learning media that is easy for children to understand.

### 3.1.4. Cognitive learning outcomes

Each student is of course given a load of material according to the applied curriculum. Referring to the 3 aspects of the educational dimension, there are cognitive aspects in terms of subject-based learning outcomes that have not met the achievement targets in elementary schools in the Pacitan area. The 2013 curriculum has the characteristics of providing competence in learning outcomes through thematic learning, where there are subject achievements in it. According to the results of data processing, mathematics is still a subject whose achievements are not optimal, followed by Science or Science, Social Studies, Indonesian, and Civics. These five subject areas are still an obstacle for students to master, both referring to C-13 and MC.

The results of student interviews showed that they tended to be less able to understand math (77.4%), social studies (17.7%), language (14.5%), and natural sciences (Fig. 5), namely from how to understand and memorize formulas for math lessons and the presence of foreign languages, which is not understood or rarely heard by students in science learning, but in science learning students can still be helped by the learning media provided by the teacher.

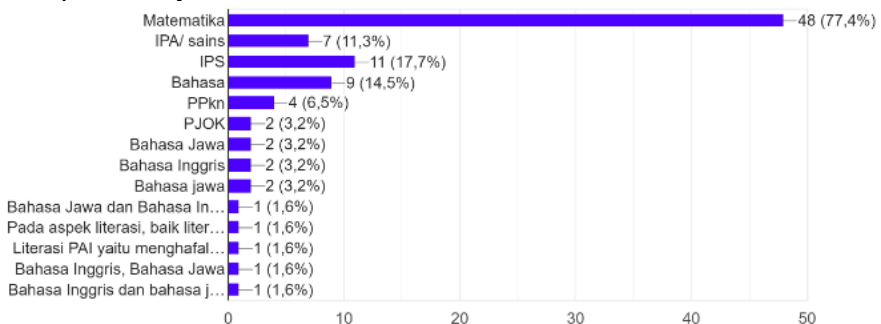


Fig. 5. Cognitive aspect student learning outcomes

There are several factors causing students to experience learning difficulties. The biggest factor is the student factor (98.4%), followed by teacher factors, environmental factors, and the availability of infrastructure. The results of the observations are following the interviews. When interviewing students, they tended to be less able to under-

stand how to divide math lessons. Students often also experience problems in understanding foreign languages in science subjects. However, students were quite helped by the use of learning media provided by the teachers. Learning media tend to be fun and easy to understand.

The results of interviews with class teachers show that students in Pacitan are relatively able to follow and master learning except in mathematics. In mathematics lessons, students are still very difficult to calculate. Students have difficulty learning mathematics from the material provided (from 9 new chapters to 6 chapters). Students have difficulty when calculating starting from multiplication arithmetic operations to division. Thus, the teacher often repeats it to his students until he understands, but this takes up to several meetings in each material that is experiencing difficulties. Some students still have difficulty in math material because students tend to have difficulty calculating, starting from multiplication to dividing, the influencing factors are. The transition factor during the pandemic was initially only online so that students could not adjust to the materials provided by their class teachers, which initially only took place online and then switched to face-to-face learning. In addition, study time at home is not maximized because students when they come home from school tend to prefer to play handphone.

### 3.1.5. Affective aspect learning outcomes

Student learning achievements in the affective dimension also show that there are no optimal achievements. The student's self-confidence factor is still lacking (56.5%) followed by low student interest in learning (50%). Students also show indicators of a lack of discipline, motivation, and independence (Fig. 6).

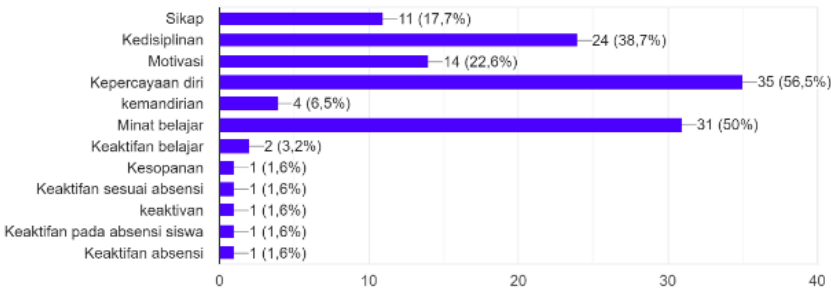


Fig. 6. Affective aspect student learning outcomes

Student learning outcomes in the affective dimension which are less than optimal according to research findings are caused by internal factors (students: 90.3%), and external (parents or family: 58%, environment: 56.5%, and teachers: 30.6%). The results of the interviews added information that the average self-confidence of students in Pacitan was not as expected because students did not dare to be confident about the work they were doing on their own. Only a few students have good self-confidence. While the low activity in learning becomes especially in learning mathematics because the average student still has difficulty understanding multiplication and division. Only some students can actively answer when the teacher asks questions.

### 3.1.6. Psychomotor aspect learning outcomes

According to the results of research data processing, there are 50% of elementary school students in the Pacitan area still lack literacy skills (reading) by 50%, followed by critical thinking skills (43.5%), speaking or communication skills (41.9%), writing skills (35.5%), problem-solving (33.9%), and collaboration skills (11.3%) as follows.

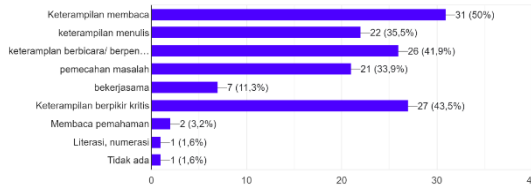


Figure 7 Psychomotor aspect student learning outcomes

Referring to the existing findings, some factors cause the lack of achievement in the aspect of skills or skills, namely 96.8% student factor (internal). The rest is influenced by external factors, namely teacher factors (37.1%), parental factors (35.5%), and environmental factors (27.4%).

## 3.2 Discussion

Elementary schools in Pacitan apply 2 curricula, namely the Merdeka Curriculum for grades 1 and 4 and the C-13 for students in grades II II IV, and VI. The C-13 has four aspects of assessment, namely aspects of knowledge, aspects of skills, and aspects of attitude which aim to make students become young generations who are faithful, creative, productive, innovative, effective, and able to play a good role in society, obedient to the regulations of the nation and state, as well as following the current era of civilization [11]. The Merdeka curriculum is a curriculum whose learning methods focus on essential material, character development, and student competencies. The characteristics possessed by this curriculum are project-based learning for the development of soft skills and character according to the Pancasila Student Profile, the second focuses on essential material so that there is sufficient and in-depth time for basic competencies such as literacy and numeracy, the third is flexibility where the teacher conducts learning according to the ability of students to make adjustments to the context and local content.

Elementary school teachers in the Pacitan area implementing C-13 generally use a scientific learning approach (through practice and following a scientific process to reach conclusions on a problem) and use various methods such as lectures, discussion, question and answer methods, and group work. Although only using the lecture method, the teacher creates an interactive atmosphere by provoking discussion through questions to students. Students are expected to be active in the discussion session. The teacher gives motivation to students to dare to answer and not be afraid of being wrong. This was proven during the research conducted. If motivation continues to be given, students will get used to it and become bolder. Some of the strategies implemented for

the class implementing the Merdeka Curriculum are Problem-Based Learning, Project Based Learning, discovery learning, and inquiry [22].

The implementation of the 2 curricula in elementary schools is not without obstacles. In the cognitive aspect, several subjects do not meet the MCC such as mathematics, language, science, social studies, civics, and literacy. This problem is caused by several factors, namely internal factors of students and external factors of students. Student factors such as the lack of student interest in learning mathematics and literacy. This is because they still do not understand the basics of the material and the importance or results of mastering the material being conveyed. When students do not understand the purpose of the material provided, their interest in learning the material is also low. The external factor that causes it is the lack of attention from parents at home. This factor is one of the things that must be considered because it is a determinant of the success of students when studying at school. Students receive less attention from parents because some students have been handed over to tutors or asked to study on their own. After all, parents are busy with their work.

The affective aspects of elementary schools students in Pacitan who have not reached the target are self-confidence, interest in learning, discipline, motivation, and independence. Low self-confidence in students can lead to their inactivity unless they get encouragement from the teacher. In addition, the lack of mastery of the material can also affect students' self-confidence, so they are afraid to express opinions. They may think that they are not capable and that the answers they give will be wrong if asked by the teacher. In terms of interest, not all subjects are in demand by students. There are even students who have low academic scores but have good non-academic achievements. Logically, if students' interest has disappeared, the learning process will also lose enthusiasm, which in turn causes a lack of understanding of the material. In addition to the causal factors from internal students, there are causes from outside students, namely factors from the family environment.

The psychomotor aspects that are lacking are reading skills, critical thinking skills, speaking skills, problem-solving, cooperation, creative critical thinking, and writing. MCC's achievement in terms of psychomotor is still in the process of recovery. The causal factors are still influenced by the pandemic that occurred in 2020/2021 [2], [3]. Another cause is that there is still an egocentric nature in students, namely judging something according to their views and being indifferent to the justification of others.

In general, the implementation of the 2013 curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum has met the demands of the progress of globalization also supporting creative freedom and learning [23]. Students have enough time to explore concepts and strengthen competencies [24]. However, in practice, obstacles are encountered in practice, including because teachers' knowledge and experience in implementing the 2013 curriculum does not support curriculum planning, they do not understand the concept of the scientific approach, especially teaching methods [25].

There is a new aspect that needs attention in the Free Learning Curriculum, namely the project to strengthen the profile of Pancasila students. This research implies that teachers are expected to be able to use the 21st-century learning model in implementing the Merdeka Learning Curriculum at school [26]. The implementation of Merdeka Learning has a specific impact on strengthening the role of elementary school teachers.

Teachers play a role in curriculum development and learning processes. The teacher's role following the demands of the curriculum includes three things, namely as a teacher, mentor, and educator [27]. Teachers need to be someone who works sincerely, adhering to the principle of self-development sustainably. The practice of Merdeka Curriculum at the elementary school level shows that there are obstacles due to the impact of online learning so each school requires the readiness of human resources from the teacher's side. Teachers need to be given ongoing training or workshops [15] and regular meetings with the Teacher Working Group (KKG) to discuss and share experiences [28]. Teachers need knowledge and experience in choosing effective classroom management strategies according to the objectives of teaching and learning activities. This is because learning in different classes does not always fit one strategy.

On the student side, students still have to be given motivation and a trigger to be able to find a solution to the problems they face. Teachers need to try to give trigger questions before learning activities begin. This is done so that they are used to thinking critically. After that students are given a problem to find the right answer or solution. This is done individually or in groups to train teamwork as well. Creative thinking is trained by being given the task of making a work of value or having use.

## 4 Conclusion

In Pacitan's elementary schools, two different curricula are implemented: the Merdeka Curriculum and the 2013 Curriculum (C-13). The Merdeka Curriculum is used in grades 1 and 4, while C-13 is used in grades 2, 3, 5, and 6. C-13 aims to develop students who are creative, innovative, and possess a balance of soft and hard skills. The Merdeka Curriculum focuses on nurturing students' talents and interests. Teachers in Pacitan employ a scientific learning approach when implementing the 2013 Curriculum. They utilize various methods such as lectures, discussions, scientific exploration, group work, question and answer methods, as well as learning strategies like PBL (Problem-Based Learning), discovery learning, and inquiry. There are several cognitive challenges in the learning process in Pacitan, spanning subjects like mathematics, science, social studies, civic education, and literacy. Literacy issues are often due to students' lack of interest in reading and insufficient parental support at home. Both internal and external factors influence students' academic performance. Regarding the affective aspect, there has been a decline in students' self-confidence, interest in learning, discipline, motivation, and independence. Students are still recovering from the impact of the pandemic and the use of the emergency curriculum. Internal factors within students and family environments contribute to the affective aspects of students' learning. Improvements are needed in the psychomotor aspects of learning, which include skills like reading, critical thinking, speaking, problem-solving, cooperation, creative thinking, and writing. Factors such as the pandemic's impact and the lack of information mastery affect students' ability to think critically and creatively. Literacy plays a pivotal role in developing students' critical and creative thinking skills.

For the effective implementation of the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum in Elementary Schools, it's recommended to understand the goals and fundamental

principles of both curricula to select appropriate strategies, to choose strategies that promote active student participation, like cooperative learning models, project-based learning, or problem-based learning, to consider students' characteristics, abilities, interests, learning styles, and backgrounds when selecting strategies, to pay attention to the local context and use approaches that align with local values, culture, and wisdom, particularly in the Merdeka Curriculum, to use a thematic approach to integrate various subjects around a specific theme or topic, to employ relevant learning technologies and media, such as multimedia, simulations, educational games, or digital platforms, to encourage collaboration and interaction among students through cooperative learning models, group discussions, or team-based learning, and to focus on developing 21st-century skills like collaboration, communication, creativity, problem-solving, and digital literacy.

This research has limitations in exploring problematic learning practices based on curriculum use in elementary schools in the Pacitan district for the 2022/2023 school year so there will be differences in data at different locations and times.

## Authors' Contributions

The authors acknowledge their roles in the paper as follows: U. Tisngati and Mulyadi conceived and designed the study; U. Tisngati and Martini collected the data; U. Tisngati and Mulyadi analyzed and interpreted the results; U. Tisngati and Martini prepared the initial manuscript draft. All authors subsequently reviewed the findings and gave their approval for the final version of the manuscript.

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