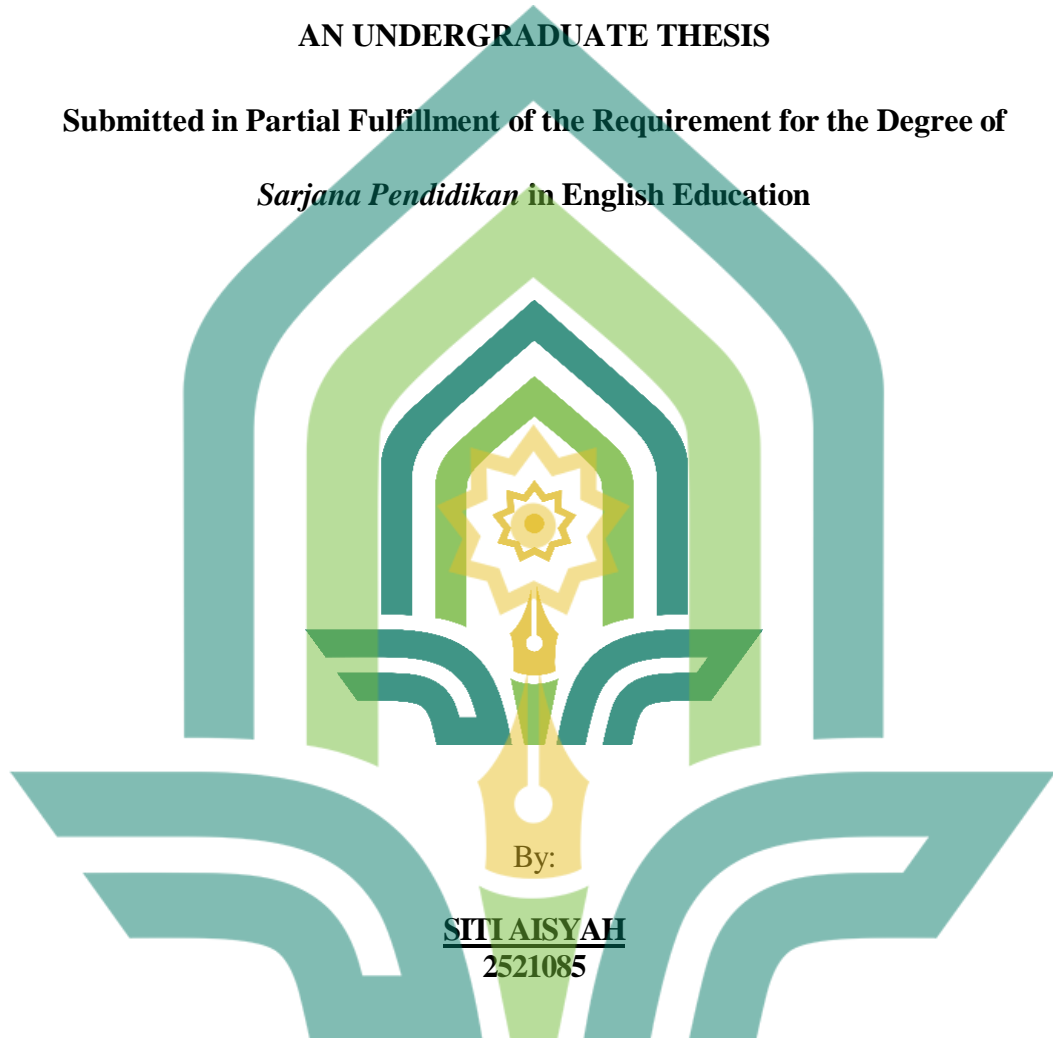


**EXPLORING THE REASONS BEHIND THE ABSENCE OF ENGLISH AT  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**AN UNDERGRADUATE THESIS**

**Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of**

***Sarjana Pendidikan* in English Education**



**ENGLISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

**FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING**

**UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI K.H. ABDURRAHMAN WAHID**

**PEKALONGAN**

**2025**

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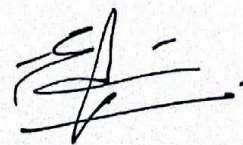
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*Wassalamu 'alaikum Wr.Wb.*

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## MOTTO

*“ Orang lain ga akan bisa paham struggle dan masa sulitnya kita yang mereka ingin tahu hanya bagian success stories. Berjuanglah untuk diri sendiri walaupun ngga ada yang tepuk tangan. Kelak diri kita dimasa depan akan bangga dengan apa yang kita perjuangkan hari ini. ”*

(Fardi Yandi)

*” Tuhanmu lebih mengetahui terhadap apa yang ada dihatimu ”*

(Qs. Al-Isra' : 25)

*” Kau dilahirkan untuk menjadi nyata, bukan untuk menjadi sempurna ”*

(Suga)



## ABSTRAK

Penelitian dengan metode studi kasus kualitatif ini menyelidiki faktor-faktor yang berkontribusi terhadap ketiadaan pengajaran Bahasa Inggris di SD Negeri 07 Kedungwuni dan mengkaji persepsi kepala sekolah terkait situasi ini. Dengan menggunakan Model CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) untuk menganalisis faktor-faktor implementasi dan Teori Penilaian (Appraisal Theory) Martin & White untuk menafsirkan pengalaman subjektif kepala sekolah, penelitian ini menemukan bahwa tidak adanya implementasi Bahasa Inggris disebabkan oleh interaksi kompleks antara kendala input dan proses yang pragmatis serta reaktif. Kekurangan input yang parah, termasuk minimnya guru Bahasa Inggris yang berkualitas, pendanaan, dan materi, membentuk pengambilan keputusan di sekolah. Persepsi kepala sekolah mengungkapkan perpaduan antara Afek (kecemasan terhadap siswa dan rasa ketidakberdayaan akibat keterbatasan sumber daya), Penilaian (penilaian realistik terhadap ketidakmampuan sekolah), dan Apresiasi (penghargaan tinggi terhadap pentingnya Bahasa Inggris secara global). Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa ketiadaan Bahasa Inggris adalah konsekuensi enggan dari kendala yang berat daripada penolakan terhadap nilai mata pelajaran tersebut, menggarisbawahi kebutuhan kritis akan alokasi sumber daya yang ditargetkan dan dukungan kebijakan strategis di lingkungan dengan keterbatasan sumber daya.

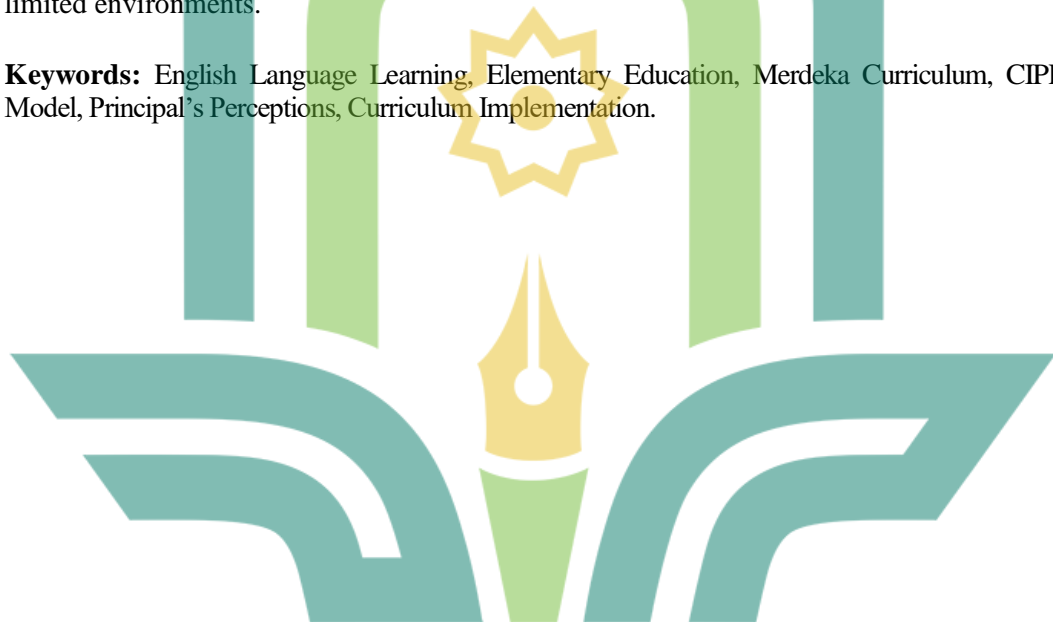
**Kata kunci:** Pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris, Pendidikan Dasar, Kurikulum Merdeka, Model CIPP, Persepsi Kepala Sekolah, Implementasi Kurikulum



## ABSTRACT

This qualitative case study investigates the factors contributing to the absence of English language instruction at SD Negeri 07 Kedungwuni and examines the principal's perceptions regarding this situation. Utilizing the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) Model to analyze implementation factors and Martin & White's Appraisal Theory to interpret the principal's subjective experiences, the study found that the non-implementation of English resulted from a complex interplay of input constraints and a pragmatic, reactive process. Severe input deficiencies, including a lack of qualified teachers, funding, and materials, shaped the school's decision-making. The principal's perceptions revealed a blend of Affect (concern for students and helplessness due to resource limitations), Judgment (a realistic assessment of the school's incapacity), and Appreciation (a strong valuation of English's global importance). This indicates that the absence of English was a reluctant consequence of overwhelming constraints rather than a dismissal of the subject's value, underscoring the critical need for targeted resource allocation and strategic policy support in resource-limited environments.

**Keywords:** English Language Learning, Elementary Education, Merdeka Curriculum, CIPP Model, Principal's Perceptions, Curriculum Implementation.



## PREFACE

Praises and gratefulness are sent to Allah SWT, who has poured His grace and bestowed upon me guidance, health, and patience, enabling the completion of my thesis entitled “Exploring the Reasons Behind the Absence of English at Elementary School” This thesis is submitted to the English Education Department at UIN K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid Pekalongan to fulfill one of the requirements for the Sarjana Pendidikan Degree in the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training.

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I hope that this thesis can contribute to a better understanding of the challenges faced by EFL pre-service teachers and serve as a resource for future research in the field of teacher education.

Pekalongan, 19 January 2025

Siti Aisyah

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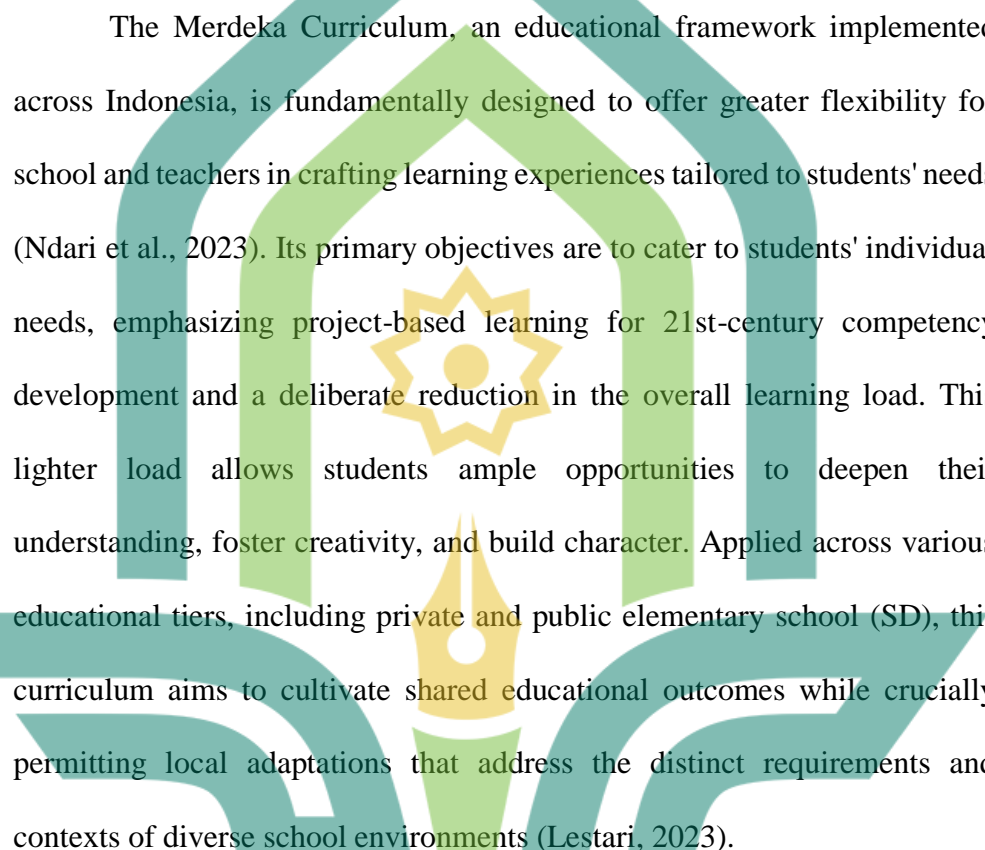


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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study



The Merdeka Curriculum, an educational framework implemented across Indonesia, is fundamentally designed to offer greater flexibility for school and teachers in crafting learning experiences tailored to students' needs (Ndari et al., 2023). Its primary objectives are to cater to students' individual needs, emphasizing project-based learning for 21st-century competency development and a deliberate reduction in the overall learning load. This lighter load allows students ample opportunities to deepen their understanding, foster creativity, and build character. Applied across various educational tiers, including private and public elementary school (SD), this curriculum aims to cultivate shared educational outcomes while crucially permitting local adaptations that address the distinct requirements and contexts of diverse school environments (Lestari, 2023).

The Merdeka Curriculum has garnered praise for its adaptability to contemporary educational demands; its flexible approach is expected to empower students to learn according to their interests, talents, and potential (Mamuaja et al., 2023). Furthermore, its emphasis on cultivating soft skills like collaboration, communication, and creativity directly aligns with the modern workforce's requirements (Mustafiyanti et al., 2023). This framework also grants teachers the autonomy to select the most effective teaching

methods, freeing them from overly rigid guidelines. Nevertheless, despite these advantages, the curriculum has drawn criticism. Many educators report feeling unprepared for its implementation due to inadequate training and support (Yunaini et al., 2022). Additionally, disparities in educational quality across different regions pose significant challenges, as not all schools possess the necessary resources to fully support project-based learning. Critics also express concern that the curriculum might be overly ambitious if applied without thorough evaluation, given Indonesia's diverse educational landscape (Putri Lestari et al., 2023).

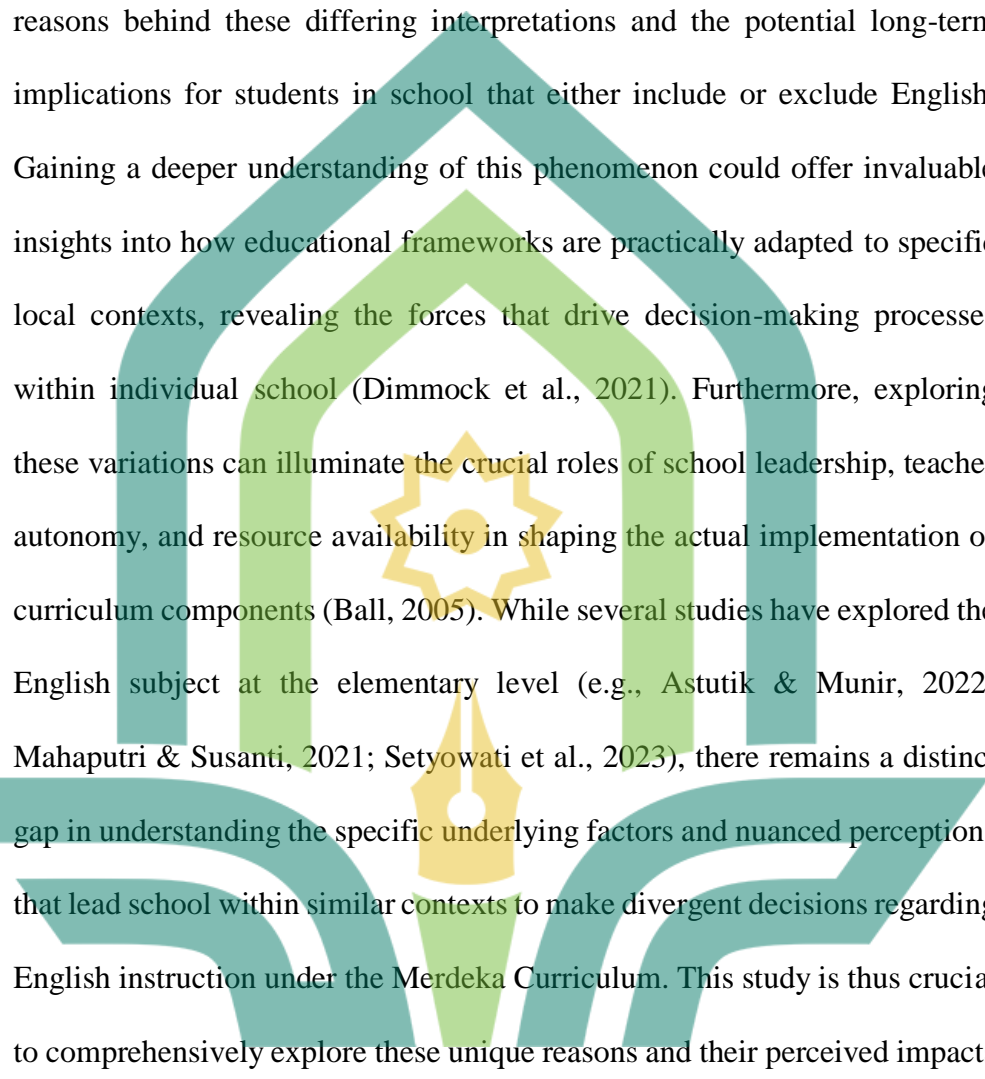
Within the Merdeka Curriculum, English instruction embraces a highly flexible approach, prioritizing practical communication skills and real-world applications (Atiqoh & Asm2024; Irawati et al., 2024). This curriculum empowers schools and teachers to design learning experiences that perfectly align with their students' unique needs and local contexts. It actively promotes project-based learning and interactive activities, all aimed at building students' confidence in using English for global communication. Crucially, English is not designated as a compulsory subject for elementary school (SD) under this framework, though it remains vital in secondary education with an emphasis on critical thinking and creativity (Damayanti et al., 2023). This contrasts sharply with the K-13 (2013 Curriculum), where English was significantly more structured. It was mandatory for secondary school and, at the elementary level, frequently included as an extracurricular subject. The K-13's focus was largely on meeting standardized academic benchmarks, with

a strong emphasis on grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing, often preparing students for national examinations (Kosasih & Apriliyanti, 2020).

Consequently, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum across various school in Indonesia has led to varied responses, particularly concerning the continued inclusion of English as a subject. While some school have chosen to retain English in their curriculum, reflecting past practices from the K-13 (2013 Curriculum) where it was a core component, others have opted to remove it entirely. This decision often leverages the curriculum's inherent flexibility as a basis. This divergence is particularly intriguing when observed among school situated within the same geographical region. The distinct choices made by these school likely stem from a multitude of underlying factors, such as their unique educational priorities, available resources, and the prevailing perceptions of English's importance for their students' future learning and opportunities (Ananda et al., 2023). For institutions that maintain English, this decision may signal a commitment to equipping students for global competitiveness or aligning with community expectations, including those of parents (Wilson & Nurkhamidah, 2023). Conversely, school that have excluded English might be prioritizing other subjects deemed more critical for their local context, or they may simply face practical limitations such as the availability of qualified teachers and adequate training (Wilson & Nurkhamidah, 2023).

This duality of approaches within a single region vividly highlights





the inherent complexity of implementing a flexible educational framework at the ground level. It naturally raises critical questions about the fundamental reasons behind these differing interpretations and the potential long-term implications for students in school that either include or exclude English. Gaining a deeper understanding of this phenomenon could offer invaluable insights into how educational frameworks are practically adapted to specific local contexts, revealing the forces that drive decision-making processes within individual school (Dimmock et al., 2021). Furthermore, exploring these variations can illuminate the crucial roles of school leadership, teacher autonomy, and resource availability in shaping the actual implementation of curriculum components (Ball, 2005). While several studies have explored the English subject at the elementary level (e.g., Astutik & Munir, 2022; Mahaputri & Susanti, 2021; Setyowati et al., 2023), there remains a distinct gap in understanding the specific underlying factors and nuanced perceptions that lead school within similar contexts to make divergent decisions regarding English instruction under the Merdeka Curriculum. This study is thus crucial to comprehensively explore these unique reasons and their perceived impacts at the elementary school level.

This current research, therefore, becomes uniquely timely by specifically addressing the identified gap: exploring the in-depth reasons behind these divergent approaches to English instruction under the Merdeka Curriculum. By focusing on these contrasting perspectives at the elementary school level, this study is poised to offer novel insights into how the same

educational framework is perceived, interpreted, and implemented differently based on a school's unique context and the priorities of its stakeholder. To achieve this, the study strategically employed two complementary theoretical frameworks. Martin & White's (2005) Appraisal Theory served as an analytical lens to unpack the subjective perceptions, attitudes, and judgments of school stakeholder regarding the absence or presence of English in their curriculum. Concurrently, Stufflebeam & Coryn's (CIPP) Model for Evaluation provided a structured approach to evaluate the contextual factors, input considerations, and potential outcomes influencing the school's decision-making process. Through this comprehensive theoretical lens, this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the complex interplay of factors shaping curriculum implementation at the school level, offering valuable insights for local educational practices and future curriculum adaptations.

## **1.2 Formulation of the Problem**

The researcher has developed a set of research questions, outlined below:

1. What are the main factors that contribute to the absence of English as a subject in elementary school?
2. How does school stakeholder perceive the absence of English in the elementary school curriculum?

## **1.3 Aims of the Study**

Based on the research question, the aims of this study are as follows:

1. To identify and analyze the main factors that contribute to the absence of English as a subject in elementary school.
2. To explore how school stakeholder perceives and interpret the absence of English in the elementary school curriculum.

#### **1.4 Limitation of the Study**

This study, employing a qualitative case study approach, has inherent limitations regarding the generalizability of its findings. The research was conducted specifically at SD Negeri 07 Kedungwuni, meaning the results are context-bound and may not be representative of all elementary school in Indonesia, particularly those in different regions or with varying resource levels. Furthermore, while the study provided a deep understanding of the principal's perceptions and the CIPP factors at play, it primarily focused on the perspective of the school leadership. It did not incorporate direct perspectives from English teachers, students, or a broad sample of parents, which could offer additional insights into the challenges and impacts of the absence of English instruction. Lastly, as a qualitative study, the findings are descriptive and interpretative, providing rich detail about the phenomena but not offering statistical measurement of the prevalence or impact of the identified factors.

#### **1.5 Operational Definitions**

1. Merdeka Curriculum

The Merdeka Curriculum is an educational approach implemented in Indonesia starting in 2022. This curriculum offers school greater

flexibility to design and develop curriculum according to the needs and potential of students and the local context of each school and it emphasizes competency-based learning, character development, and an adaptive approach to the changing times (Falah et al., 2023).

## 2. Absence of English at Elementary School

For the purpose of this study, the Absence of English at Elementary School is operationally defined as a situation where English is not included as either a core or compulsory extracurricular subject regularly offered by SD Negeri 07 Kedungwuni during the current academic year. This specific definition is crucial given the current educational landscape in Indonesia, where the Merdeka Curriculum grants school the flexibility to adapt their learning experiences to unique local contexts (Ndari et al., 2023). Under this framework, English is not designated as a compulsory subject at the elementary level (Damayanti et al., 2023), leading to varied implementations across different school.

## 3. School Stakeholder

For the purpose of this study, School Stakeholder specifically refers to the individuals or groups who have a direct and significant interest in, or are directly affected by, the educational decisions and practices within SD Negeri 07 Kedungwuni. In the context of this research, which aims to explore the school's perspective on the absence of English, the primary school stakeholder serving as the key informant is the school principal. The principal is considered a pivotal stakeholder as they hold the authority



to influence and make decisions regarding curriculum implementation, resource allocation, and overall educational priorities at the school level (Dimmock et al., 2021).

## 1.6 Significance of the Study

### 1. Theoretical

This research contributes to the existing body of knowledge by enriching the understanding of curriculum adaptation and implementation at the school level, particularly within flexible educational frameworks like the Merdeka Curriculum. By specifically exploring the factors and perceptions leading to the divergent inclusion of English in elementary school, this study refines theoretical perspectives on how educational changes are interpreted and enacted in diverse local contexts. Furthermore, the integration of Martin & White's (2005) Appraisal Theory offers a novel application of this linguistic framework within the field of educational studies. It provides a robust analytical lens to systematically categorize and understand the subjective perceptions, attitudes, and judgments of school stakeholder regarding curriculum choices. Simultaneously, employing Stufflebeam & Coryn's (CIPP) Model for Evaluation offers a structured approach to analyze the contextual, input, and potential outcome factors influencing curriculum decisions, thus expanding the model's application in understanding curriculum absence rather than just its implementation. This dual theoretical approach provides a more comprehensive framework for

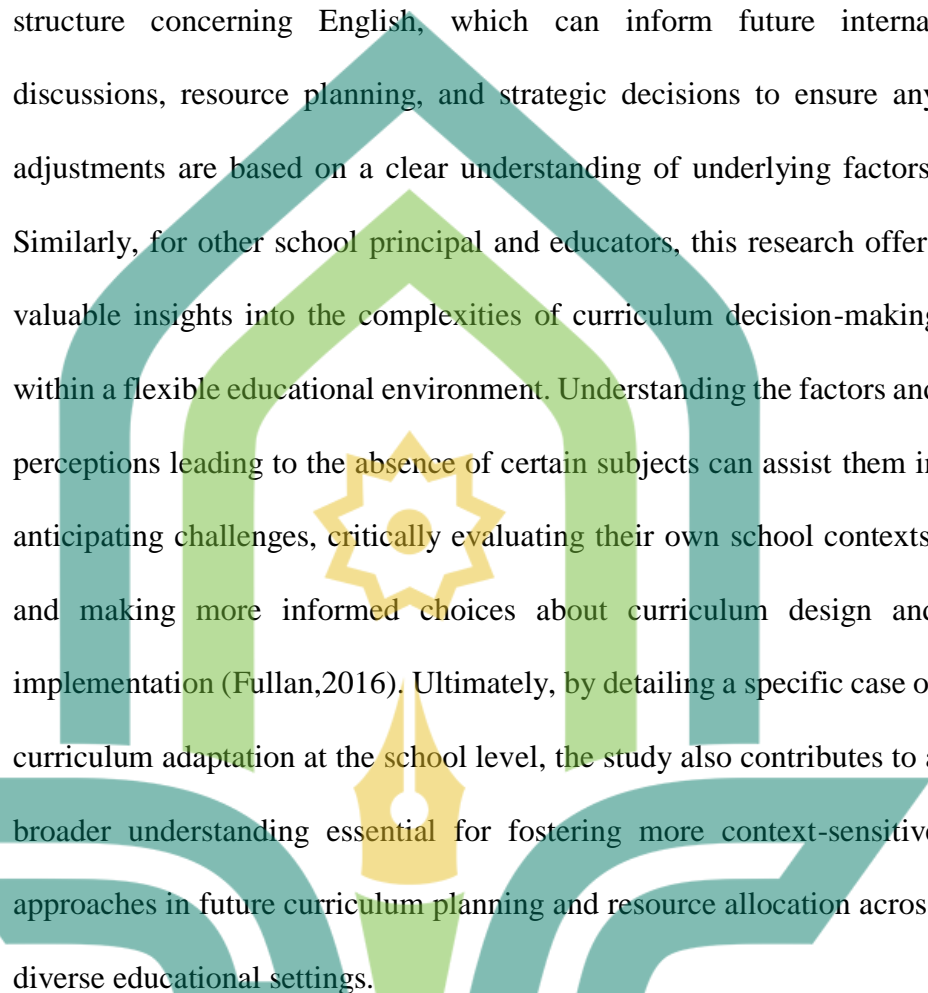
analyzing complex educational phenomena, particularly those involving stakeholder perspectives and evaluative criteria.

## 2. Empirical

Empirically, this study provides in-depth, qualitative data regarding the specific reasons behind the absence of English in a particular elementary school (SD Negeri 07 Kedungwuni) under the Merdeka Curriculum. While existing literature discusses the optional status of English (Damayanti et al., 2023) and general implementation challenges (Yunaini et al., 2022), this research offers a case-specific understanding of the complex interplay of factors—such as school priorities, resource availability, and stakeholder perceptions—that culminate in such a curriculum decision (Ananda et al., 2023; Wilson & Nurkhamidah, 2023). The detailed insights derived from the direct experiences and perspectives of the school principal served as a valuable empirical resource. This unique case study approach illuminates the nuanced realities of curriculum adaptation at the grassroots level, providing tangible evidence of how educational frameworks translate into distinct practices within a single local context. These findings can offer a rich empirical foundation for future comparative studies or broader analyses of curriculum flexibility in elementary education.

## 3. Practical

The practical implications of this study are diverse, offering tangible benefits for various educational practitioners and institutions.



For SD Negeri 07 Kedungwuni, the findings provided school leadership with a systematic analysis of the rationale behind their current curriculum structure concerning English, which can inform future internal discussions, resource planning, and strategic decisions to ensure any adjustments are based on a clear understanding of underlying factors. Similarly, for other school principal and educators, this research offers valuable insights into the complexities of curriculum decision-making within a flexible educational environment. Understanding the factors and perceptions leading to the absence of certain subjects can assist them in anticipating challenges, critically evaluating their own school contexts, and making more informed choices about curriculum design and implementation (Fullan, 2016). Ultimately, by detailing a specific case of curriculum adaptation at the school level, the study also contributes to a broader understanding essential for fostering more context-sensitive approaches in future curriculum planning and resource allocation across diverse educational settings.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 Summary of the Findings

This study investigated the factors contributing to the absence of English language instruction at SD Negeri 07 Kedungwuni and the principal's perceptions regarding this situation. Drawing upon qualitative data, the findings revealed a complex interplay of contextual, input, process, and perceived product factors, all of which collectively underpinned the school's decision not to offer English as a subject. Furthermore, the principal's perceptions provided a nuanced understanding of the challenges faced, reflecting a blend of emotional responses, pragmatic judgments, and an underlying appreciation for the subject's importance.

Regarding the factors contributing to the absence of English, the study found that the contextual flexibility offered by the Merdeka Curriculum was interpreted by the school as an option to forgo English instruction, particularly in light of existing limitations. This interpretation was heavily influenced by critical input deficiencies, including a severe lack of qualified English teachers, inadequate funding for personnel, and insufficient learning resources such as English-based books, computers, and projectors. These resource constraints, in turn, shaped the school's process, leading to a reactive and pragmatic decision-making approach that prioritized operational feasibility over the aspirational goal of implementing English. Consequently, the perceived product factors indicated the school's awareness of potential



negative outcomes, such as a diminished public image and the disadvantage faced by students who might be "left behind" in their future academic pursuits due to a lack of early English exposure.

The principal's perceptions, analyzed through Martin & White's Appraisal Theory, revealed a deep sense of Affect, characterized by genuine concern for students' future preparedness and a feeling of helplessness stemming from resource limitations, yet tempered by an enduring hope for future English provision. Their Judgment of the school's capacity was realistic, assessing it as unprepared to meet the demands of English instruction due to resource deficits, which necessitated an adaptive approach to curriculum implementation. Crucially, the principal maintained a strong Appreciation for English as a vital international language essential for technology and higher education, and they valued the Merdeka Curriculum's flexibility. This indicated that the absence of English was not due to a dismissal of its importance but rather a reluctant outcome driven by overwhelming contextual and input constraints.

## **5.2 Recommendation**

### **5.2.1 Recommendation for School Leadership (Principal and School Management)**

Based on the study's findings regarding the absence of English at SD Negeri 07 Kedungwuni, the following recommendations are presented for various stakeholders:

1. Leverage Merdeka Curriculum's flexibility to gradually integrate

English through informal activities, aligning with existing resources and fostering student interest (Fullan, 2016).

2. Actively seek resources from local authorities or partners, including volunteer tutors, donated materials, or teacher training programs, to address input deficiencies (Leithwood et al., 2008).
3. Encourage existing teachers to integrate basic English into routines and provide access to online learning resources for both teachers and students. Maintain open communication with parents to manage expectations and seek support (Pont, Nusche, & Moorman, 2008).

### **5.2.2 Recommendation for Further Research**

This case study offers in-depth insights, but to broaden understanding, future research should explore:

1. Conduct multi-site studies across various elementary school and regions to generalize findings (Yin, 2018).
2. Include views from English teachers, students, and parents for a more comprehensive understanding (Putri & Widodo, 2021).
3. Utilize mixed-methods or quantitative approaches to assess correlations between resources and English program quality.
4. Investigate school that successfully implement English despite resource constraints to identify effective practices and models.

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