Indonesian secondary history literacy skills level: a case study of public and private high schools in Sukoharjo Regency, Central Java

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Abstract This study aims to understand the historical literacy level of tenth-grade high school students before the implementation of the Kurikulum Merdeka. The research questions posed were: (1) what is the historical literacy level of Tenth Grade Senior High School students? Furthermore, (2) What are the factors behind the history literacy level of Tenth Grade High School students? The research subjects were Tenth Grade students and teachers from 19 high schools in Sukoharjo Regency, Central Java, Indonesia. The method used is an online historical literacy test for students using multiple-choice questions. Focus Group Discussions with teachers are used to understand the factors behind students' historical literacy competence. The test results show that the historical literacy level of high school students is deficient, so they will experience many difficulties in participating in learning using the Kurikulum Merdeka. The reason is that teachers and textbooks thoroughly explain historical material, so the student's task is just memorizing it. Another factor is the influence of Orientalists that narrates national history about foreign activities in Indonesia. All factors made Indonesian history becomes a rote lesson that could be more interesting and challenging for students.

Keywords: high school, Kurikulum Merdeka, historical learning, historical literacy.

1. Introduction

In the 2022/2023 academic year, Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi (Kemendikbudristek/the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology) implemented a new curriculum to replace the 2013 curriculum. The new curriculum, called Kurikulum Merdeka (the Independent Curriculum), allows students to choose a way of learning that suits each individual's talents and interests. In addition to freedom, another characteristic that characterizes the Kurikulum Merdeka is the emphasis on developing students' information, literacy, and numeracy abilities. In this context, information literacy is defined as understanding, utilizing, considering, and interacting with written texts (Pratiwi 2021). On the other hand, numerical literacy is the ability to use mathematical knowledge to explain and solve problems and make decisions in everyday life (Astuti 2018).

Big attention to literacy skills is closely related to Indonesia's position, which has consistently ranked low in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests in the last twenty years. In 2012, Indonesia was rated 64th out of 65 nations with an average score of 375 (OECD 2014). Three years later, by obtaining an average score of 403, Indonesia's position increased to 62 out of 70 countries in 2015 (OECD 2018). However, in the next PISA test, Indonesia's average score dropped to 371 in 2018 and was ranked 74th out of 79 competing countries (Avvisati, Echazarra et al 2019). From this perspective, Indonesia's education is far behind the Southeast Asian countries participating in PISA. With an average literacy score of 393, Indonesia is 2 points behind Thailand (Avvisati, Echazarra et al 2019). Indonesia's literacy rating is also lower than Malaysia’s 415 (Avvisati, Echazarra et al 2019). Indonesia is far behind Vietnam's literacy, with an average score of 505 (Avvisati, Echazarra et al 2019).

According to a World Bank review of PISA results, 55% of Indonesian pupils are functionally illiterate, which means they can read but cannot comprehend what they read (UNICEF, UNDP et al 2021, UNICEF and UNESCO 2021). Another finding is that workability and productivity will be impacted by literacy levels. Data from the World Bank show that between 2011 and 2016, 3,600 USD worth of new jobs were created in Indonesia. Thailand promised 1.5 times as many new positions as Indonesia (USD 5,300), and Malaysia offered four times as many (USD 14,800). It's odd how Vietnam rated in terms of literacy. Vietnam can achieve a higher literacy score of 550 despite having a lower GDP than Indonesia (World_Bank's_Jakarta_office 2018).

The condition of Indonesian education was even more worrying when the Covid-19 pandemic arrived in early March 2020 and quickly spread to most regions. The learning process quickly changes to online based on the internet network. The
facilities and skills of the teacher and students are still being prepared, so it is estimated that the effectiveness of the process and the results will be far below class learning. Learning loss is a threat that will further worsen the quality of education. The Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Makarim, explained that distance learning would result in a loss of one year of study time (Purba 2021). Covid-19 has also increased student dropout rates (Cerelia et al 2021).

The Covid-19 pandemic has also impacted the broader and more intensive internet use in society, including by students. Low literacy levels and no proper preparation in digital communication skills have made Indonesian netizens widely known as uncivilized. Microsoft created a Digital Civility Index (DCI) poll to measure politeness among netizens, or people who use the internet, in four areas: maintaining morality, respecting other people's differences, waiting before commenting, and voicing various deviations that harm others. Indonesian netizens got the worst score out of 32 countries in the 2020 poll (Indrawan 2020). Indonesian internet users are known to be the cruelest because they often lie, spread false information, ridicule, bully, discriminate, and use hate speech (Ikhsan 2021).

Under pressure from the large number of victims who died due to Covid-19, the prediction of learning loss, and the low morality of the young generation in interacting using digital devices, Kemendikbudristek made various breakthroughs to reduce the negative impact of the pandemic on education. This breakthrough includes the implementation of the Kurikulum Darurat (Emergency Curriculum), Kurikulum Prototipe (the Prototype Curriculum), and the Kurikulum Merdeka (Zulfikri 2022). The Kurikulum Darurat implemented in the new 2020/2021 school year was the first constructive response to the impact of Covid-19, which forced learning to be carried out online (Arini et al 2021). From the perspective of curricular objectives, the curriculum simplifies Kurikulum 2013 (the 2013 curriculum), focusing on mastering information literacy and numeracy skills (Nugroho and Narawaty 2022). Students perceive implementing the Kurikulum Darurat results positively (Rosmana et al 2022). Zulfikri (2022) explains that implementing the Kurikulum Darurat can reduce learning loss by 73% for information literacy and 86% for numeracy literacy.

The satisfactory results of implementing the Kurikulum Darurat prompted the Kemendikbudristek to develop it more fully. This curriculum improvement is named the Kurikulum Prototipe and will be implemented in 2021, especially in pilot project schools called Sekolah Penggerak (Activator Schools) (Caesaria 2022). It is planned that the Kurikulum Prototipe will be perfected based on the results of trials and will become the national curriculum in 2024. In 2022 the Kurikulum Prototipe will change its name to the Kurikulum Merdeka and can be applied by all schools without selection (Putra 2022). The Kemendikbudristek gave schools the freedom to apply the Kurikulum 2013 (the Kurikulum Darurat, or the Kurikulum Merdeka).

The term literacy has begun to gain the attention of Indonesian education since the Kemendikbudristek launched the Gerakan Literasi Sekolah (GLS/ School Literacy Movement) in 2015 (Sutrianto et al 2016). The movement is in the form of giving students 30 minutes to read before entering class. The main weakness of GLS is that there are no teacher assistance, guidance, and literacy skills targets to be achieved. As a result, students read anything just a killing time.

The PISA 2018 score, which was very low, made it clear that the GLS was ineffective in increasing literacy skills and provided education stakeholders with an understanding that literacy is not just reading. This new awareness and understanding made attention and research on literacy begin to develop. The investigation began to focus on literacy in history subjects. A study by Hastuti, Zafri, Basri (2019) develops literacy for character building through reading biographies of Indonesian historical figures. Research on historical literacy grew when the Covid-19 pandemic occurred in Indonesia in early 2020. Kurniawati et al (2021) initiate historical literacy to develop historical thinking skills by testing historical films with related primary sources. In subsequent times, research is developing towards action research intending to increase information literacy in history subjects. Students are given the task of identifying problems from historical texts as a basis for students to find solutions. Students are then guided to seek, find, utilize, communicate, and draw conclusions (Yulianti and Winarti 2021). Rizaldi & Qodariyah (2021) conducted the same study by guiding students to compare the content of history textbooks with related narrations from other books.

Studies on literacy in history learning have shown positive developments since 2018. The question then arises is how far has students' literacy skills increased. This question concerns the plan to implement the Kurikulum Merdeka in 2022, which aims to improve information and mathematics literacies. This research focused on students' readiness to study history lesson, so it was directed to describe the historical literacy level of high school students. The results of this study will be a valuable resource for teachers to find effective methods for improving students' historical literacy skills.

2. Literature Review

Information literacy skills which are the main study in history lessons are the ability to understand, use, contemplate, and communicate reflectively with written texts, to achieve self-goals, develop the knowledge and potential of readers so that they can participate actively in society (Farishah, Muhith et al 2020). Literacy skills include identifying the meaning of words in the context of reading, transcoding information from diagrams/graphs, interpreting metaphors, finding main ideas and sentences, drawing conclusions, identifying writing techniques used by authors, and finding answers to questions (Bojovic 2010).

At a deeper level, literacy skills are not limited to obtaining the grammatical meaning of a text but also as a medium of communication in society. Literacy does not only analyze the language of the text from its constituent elements (such as
sentences, phrases, and words). However, it is directed at language or language functions in the context of social interaction (Perry 2012). From this viewpoint, the text is seen as a subjective expression of the author with all the surrounding context, including the interests of power (Wodak and Meyer 2006). Thus, scrutiny is conducted to find contextual meaning to capture assumptions, ideology, and messages discussed and conveyed by readings/texts (Crawford 2001).

Each level of education has different goals for prioritizing literacy skills. The SD level will have a different focus of attention from SMP and SMA. Schneider et al (1994) provide a clearer picture of the various literacy skills that need to be mastered by students at the junior high school level, namely:

a. Understanding
   1) Reading for literal meaning.
   2) Use chapter and section titles, topic sentences, and summary sentences to select the main ideas.
   3) Distinguish between main ideas and additional/explanatory ideas.
   4) Choose sections related to the topic being studied.
   5) Interpret what is read by concluding.
   6) Detect cause and effect relationships.
   7) Distinguish between fact and opinion; recognize propaganda.
   8) Recognize author bias.
   9) Use picture clues and picture captions to aid understanding.
   10) Using literature to enrich meaning.
   11) Reading for many purposes: critical and analytical, to predict outcomes, to answer questions, to form opinions, to find facts.
   12) Read various printed materials: books, magazines, newspapers, directories, schedules, and journals.

b. Vocabulary
   1) Use context clues to get the meaning.
   2) Use appropriate sources to get the meaning of important terms and vocabulary: glossaries, dictionaries, texts, and glossaries.
   3) Recognize and understand a growing number of social studies terms.

In the Kurikulum Merdeka, the minimum information literacy competencies that students must master are set as follows (Wijaya and Dewayani 2021):

a. Finding Information
   1) Accessing and searching for information in texts: Finding explicit information (who, when, where, why, how) in literary or informational texts, which continues to increase according to the level.
   2) Finding and selecting relevant information: Identifying effective keywords to find relevant sources of information in literary or informational texts that continue to increase according to the level.

b. Understanding
   1) Understanding the text literally: Analyzing changes in the intrinsic elements (events/characters/settings/conflicts/storylines) in literary texts, which continue to increase according to the level.
   2) Making inferences, making connections, and predictions in both singular and plural texts:
      a) Summarize the feelings of the characters and other intrinsic elements, such as the story’s setting and the events in the story, based on detailed information in the literary text, which continues to increase according to the level.
      b) Compile inferences (conclusions) and predictions based on supporting elements (graphs, pictures, tables, etc.) accompanied by supporting evidence in literary texts or information texts, which continue to increase according to the level.
      c) Comparing the main things (e.g., characters or other intrinsic elements) in literary texts that continue to increase according to the level.

   c. Evaluating and reflecting
      1) Assessing the presentation format in the text:
         a) Assess the author’s purpose in using diction and vocabulary in literary texts according to their level.
         b) Assess the suitability of color selection, layout, and other visual support (graphics, tables, etc.) in conveying specific messages/topics in literary or informational texts that continue to increase according to the level.
         c) Assess the intrinsic elements (characterization, storyline, setting) and the authenticity of the depiction of society in literary texts according to their level.

      2) Reflecting on the contents of the discourse for making decisions, making choices, and linking the contents of the text to personal experience: Justifying the opinions of others based on the contents of literary texts or informational texts according to the level.

In line with the concept of information literacy, historical literacy is the ability to find historical sources, understand sources and historiography, and evaluate and reflect on sources and historiography. Various views on historical thinking skills
(Wineburg 2001; Ercikan and Seixas 2015) and historical consciousness (Rüsen 2004) as abilities that students in history lessons must master are systematized by Maposa and Wassermann (2009) into five dimensions (Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Dimension/benchmark of historical literacy</th>
<th>Sub-dimension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Events, Narratives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Conceptual understanding</td>
<td>Time, Causation and consequence, Motivation, Significance, Moral judgments, Change and continuity, Empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Source work (Historical method)</td>
<td>Sourcing, Corroboration, Contextualization, Analysis, Evaluation, Explanation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Historical consciousness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Historical language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 3. Methodology

This study used nine public and ten private high schools in Sukoharjo Regency, Central Java Province. The students used as research subjects were in tenth Grade with the consideration that they were the first to carry out learning using the *Kurikulum Merdeka*. The number of participants who took the historical literacy test was 755, with details of 623 students from public high schools and 132 from private high schools.

Historical literacy test questions measured students' ability to understand historical readings. The questions are arranged in multiple-choice form with one correct answer. The preparation of the historical literacy test refers to the literacy test conducted by PISA (OECD 2021). Taking into account that the literacy level of Indonesian students is deficient, the questions prepared cover levels 1 to 4, namely:

1. Students can find a piece of information stated explicitly and prominently in the text, recognize its main ideas, recognize the relationship between the information in the text, and relate the contents to their daily experiences.
2. Students can read to find one or more pieces of information and draw conclusions. Another task at this level is finding the main ideas in the text, understanding relationships, or interpreting meaning in text passages. Students also make text comparisons with prior knowledge.
3. Students can understand written and implied problems in texts with moderate complexity, such as finding information, connecting different parts of a text, and connecting them with similar prior experiences and knowledge. Tasks at this level require students to find and recognize relationships between information, integrate several parts of a text to identify main ideas, and interpret the meaning of words or phrases. They are required to compare, contrast, and categorize. The required information needs to be more prominent, and much of the information needs to be more consistent.
4. Students face difficult reading, such as finding hidden information behind the text, interpreting the meaning of linguistic nuances, and evaluating texts critically. Completing test questions at this level requires students to find and organize several pieces of embedded information, so they need to interpret the meaning of a part of the text by paying attention to the text as a whole. At this level, students must also think reflectively using formal knowledge to develop hypotheses or critically evaluate a text. Students must demonstrate an accurate understanding of long or complex texts.

A Focus Group Discussion with Tenth Grade history teachers was used to interpret and find the background of the results of the historical literacy test. The discussion focused on finding the conditions behind students' literacy skills. Questions included teacher learning, students' responsibilities in learning history, and teachers' perceptions of information and historical literacy.

### 5. Results

The test results showed that the Sukoharjo District High School students' historical literacy skills were deficient, as seen in Table 2.
The results of the t-test show that the sig (2-tailed) value at SMA Negeri in Sukoharjo is 0.02<0.05 with a t-test of 3.03>t table 1.964. Meanwhile, private high schools obtained a sig(2-tailed) value of 0.04<0.05 with a t-count of 2.826>1.656. Therefore, there is a significant difference between the historical literacy abilities of public and private high school students in the Sukoharjo district.

The question that then arises is why is the historical literacy ability of most high school students in Sukoharjo Regency deficient. This question is the main problem faced by history teachers in the Focus Group Discussion. From the developed responses, the paradigm of history learning adopted by teachers is still traditional. They view that historical narratives contained in textbooks and used as teaching materials talk about events that occurred in the past. From this point of view, the demand for learning history is to understand historical narratives as events that actually happened in the past. Students must memorize historical narratives in detail, like what, when, where, how, and who are the characters from historical stories.

The view that historical narratives represent events that occurred in the past is explained by Munslow (1997) when discussing reconstruction and construction. Teachers believe that historians with competence and professionalism can find substantial evidence about events that occurred in the past to be then compiled into historical stories that have high accuracy and truth and are value-free (Forber and Griffith 2011; Yang et al 2014). They view the stories in history textbooks as a picture that is the same as events in the past (Oppong and Quan-Baffour 2014). Therefore, teachers require students to memorize stories in history textbooks to understand events that occurred in the past well.

On the other hand, construction is a historical narrative that seeks to explain historical events. According to Munslow (1997), the development of historical narratives from reconstruction to construction is due to the demand to explain massive social changes in post-industrial society. In this context, the Annales school of thought was born, which uses a social science approach to explaining historical events (Burke 1990; Tendler 2013). From this point of view, historians compile historical narratives in the form of stories of past events and their underlying causes to provide an in-depth understanding of the various causes that have grown over a long period. In order to be able to provide an in-depth explanation, historians use social sciences as an auxiliary science of history (Burke 1993).

The development of historical research methodology influenced history learning from the 1975 National Curriculum (McGregor 2008). Discussions about the background of events are explained in depth in history textbooks from political, social, and economic perspectives (Notosusanto and Basri 1981). This pattern of discussion continues in history textbooks that were published later (Purwanta 2012), even today (National Curriculum 2022). The strong influence of the Annales school on the development of historical research in Indonesia cannot be separated from the significant role of Sartono Kartodirdjo, a prominent Indonesian national historian who propagated the social sciences approach (Kartodirdjo 1992).

The problem is that history teachers are academically not trained to conduct historical research. They have no experience conducting social science research and must understand how historians work, especially regarding interpretation and historiography (Hasan 2011). As a result, teachers only explain historical events written in textbooks as rote and cannot train students to master historical thinking skills (Wineburg 2001; Seixas and Peck 2004). Therefore, students only memorize the results of historian analysis written in textbooks and need help understanding their train of thought (Saidillah 2018).

Being trapped in history lessons on memorization makes students not interested in exploring it. They view the learning process as dominated by the teacher with stories about past events that have nothing to do with the student’s daily lives. Moreover, teachers’ media does not adapt to technological developments, so learning is often boring (Rahmawati, Hadi et al 2023). In almost all schools in Indonesia, history is a less interesting subject. As a result, students’ motivation to study history needs to be deeper (Oktaivani 2011).

Table 2 Digital Literacy of Private High School Students in Sukoharjo Regency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VALUE</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Poor</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>755</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows that only 1% or eight students got excellent, 4% Good, and 11% Fair. On the other hand, 4% of students scored Poor, and 20% were Very Poor. Sadly, 60% of students fail or need to be literate in historical literacy. They can read historical texts but are unable to understand them.

Compared between public (sample 623 students) and private (sample 132 students) high schools, it can be seen that the historical literacy skills of private high school students are lower than those of public schools. None got Excellent. Only 2% got a Good score, and 9% was a Fair. The rest were students who needed special assistance; 5% scored Poor 20% were Very Poor, and 64% were included in the Failed category. On the other hand, the historical literacy scores of public high school students are 1% Excellent, 4% Good, 11% Fair, 4% Poor 20% Very Poor, and 60% Failed.
The second problem that emerged in the Focus Group Discussion was the still strong legacy of historical narratives from the Orientalists. Borrowing Said’s criticism (Said 1979; Said 1994), orientalism is a form of cultural colonization by the West against the East. Orientalist studies place the eastern world as lamentably alien who is exotic, irrational, low attitude, lazy, static, and uncivilized (Said 1979). The dominance of their works in the academic world has made Eastern intellectuals accept those views as truth. From this point of view, the study of the Orientalists becomes an ideological weapon that multiplies the pressure and suffering of the Eastern world as ex-colonial countries (White 2008).

In Indonesia, Orientalists have a strong influence on historical studies. Their view that the Indonesian nation could not develop itself without foreign assistance led to speculation about the arrival of Indian influence and the forcing of Hinduism as an ethnic religion to become a propagating religion (Coedès 1975). The history textbooks explain the theory of the influx of Indian culture, namely Brahmins, Khatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras, although historians have criticized this narrative. The deconstruction of the narrative of the Indianization of Indonesian culture gave rise to a view of the Backflow that places Indonesian society as an active historical actor in cultural interaction (Bosch 1961; Michael 2003).

The views of the Orientalists also influenced the historical narratives of modern Indonesia. Dutch colonialism and imperialism are narrated more positively. Even when explaining Dutch imperialism in the 20th century, historians see it as an attempt to make Indonesia a Dutch culture. Kartodirdjo (Kartodirdjo 2014) explained that the Dutch colonial government was no longer oriented toward seeking economic benefits but towards spreading Western culture. This perspective makes historians place the pioneers of the Indonesian national movement as intellectuals who have absorbed Dutch culture, so they think, speak, and act like Westerners (Andoni 2014). Historians who are influenced by and become agents of the Orientalists are called Modern Professional Historians (Sutherland 2008) because they want Indonesia to change itself to become modern like industrial countries in the West (Purwanta 2018).

The view of the Modern Professional Historian influences narratives in textbooks, both old publications written by Notosusanto and Basri (1992) and new ones written by Sardiman and Lestariningsih (2017). The authors of history textbooks explained that Indonesia’s national movement was the result of the Ethical Policy. The policy of the Dutch colonial government developed education for the natives, thus giving birth to intellectuals who pioneered the national movement.

Historical narratives with an Orientalist perspective make students feel that the history taught is about foreign nations in Indonesia, not narratives about their past (Nordholt 2004). Students cannot find historical narratives that can make them proud to have an identity as part of the Indonesian nation and inspire them to live their lives here and now. This condition is concerning because Indonesia’s younger generation will be swayed by the criss-crossing of discourses on social media. Borrowing Heidegger’s view (Heidegger 1996), the young generation of Indonesia is trapped in the condition of dasein. They will also be easily infiltrated by transnational ideologies that want to turn Indonesia into an Islamic state (Wahid 2009). Around 25% of the younger generation have been exposed to radical Islamic movements that wanted to establish a caliphate in Indonesia (Azzam and Dianti 2017; Akbar 2018).

5. Discussion

Memorizing historical narratives is the lowest level of cognitive ability in Bloom’s taxonomy (Hyder and Bhamani 2016). The inability of students to understand historical texts is evidence of the teacher’s lack of success in learning basic literacy. Hogan (2017) explains that history teachers view learning basic literacy as the responsibility of the language teacher. On the other hand, the history teacher is responsible for explaining events and their context in the textbooks. The problem is that language teachers need to understand the characteristics of historical narratives and use popular texts in their lessons.

One of the characteristics of historical narratives is that they are diachronic (Widdersheim 2018), namely explaining a phenomenon in space and time. Therefore, to gain a comprehensive understanding, the reader must understand the context and phenomena that occurred before the event, which is the main topic of a historical narrative. In order to understand the Dutch colonial policy in the early 20th century in Indonesia, the reader needs knowledge about the development of Western private companies in the late 19th century and their interests. In line with that, Wineburg’s (1991) study of history lecturers and students’ understanding of the US revolution also shows readers’ importance in understanding a historical text through a comparative test with other related texts or intertextual study. Based on these academic characteristics, only history teachers can take responsibility for developing students’ abilities in historical literacy.

The main problem in learning historical literacy is the ability of the teacher. Kurniawati et al (2022) study found that teachers need a greater understanding of historical literacy. Almost the same problem also occurs in South Africa. Schoeman’s research (2014) shows that history teachers and textbook authors tend to explain the cause-and-effect analysis of historical events so that students only memorize activities. Teachers in Vietnam and Malaysia (Abdullah et al 2019) also teach by telling stories and explaining historical events, making getting students’ full attention difficult. One of the breakthroughs in developing students’ imagination and their interest in history, stories, and teacher explanations are using information technology (Huong et al 2021).

Learning history that emphasizes explanations by teachers and textbooks need to be updated and adapted to scientific developments in History Education. From this viewpoint, teachers, as the most important figures in the process of learning
history, must guide students to achieve the goals of history education. Almost all historical education experts suggest that the primary skills students must master are the ability to think like historians and historical consciousness (Purwanta 2019). By understanding how the historians works, students will realize that the results of the reconstruction and construction of historians do not represent the events studied. Lee (2005) asserts that historical reconstruction is an impossibility. A historical narrative is more of a representation of the professionalism and interests of historians. Even White (2008) explains that winners often use historical narratives as ideological weapons to attack political opponents.

Various methods of learning historical literacy have been developed. These three methods of historical literacy learning are excellent to be applied to secondary schools in Indonesia. The first is the reading Like a Historian method developed by Wineburg et al. (2013). History teachers widely practice this method, which improves student reading skills, such as sourcing, contextualizing, corroborating, and close reading (Collis et al. 2016). The second is the development of history essay writing skills using the annotating written sources model implemented by Leticia (2016). The third is the project of Shanahan et al. (2016), who tested the READI (Reading, Evidence, and Argumentation in Disciplinary Instruction) learning method using various historical sources. The result is that the method can develop the ability of teachers and students to comprehend and construct evidence-based arguments in history. Students are actively involved in reading, writing, and reasoning practices, so learning history does not only memorize names, places, and events (Shanahan et al. 2016).

6. Conclusion

The implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* in history lessons has serious obstacles because teachers and students need to be academically prepared. They are used to using the paradigm that history lessons are filled with memorizing events, names, places, and years. The development methodology of history with social science approaches has yet to be able to change the paradigm of learning history. Likewise, when the development of history education at the international level has made historical thinking skills the primary goal, learning history in Indonesia still needs to move from rote memorization.

Reform of History Education in Indonesia must be carried out immediately so that the implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* can be successful. Training and professional development for history teachers must be given intensively, especially in learning methods that allow for the development of students' historical literacy.

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Ethical considerations

Not applicable.

Conflict of Interest

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