



Credit System for Senior High School Student: An Experiment to Meet with the Various Student Learning Pace

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Abstrak

Implementasi sistem kredit semester (SKS) di Indonesia bukan hal baru, terutama bagi perguruan tinggi, namun bagi sekolah—terutama sekolah menengah atas (SMA) adalah hal baru yang cukup menantang, karena memang fokus pada melayani secara holistik kebutuhan belajar tiap siswa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggambarkan implementasi dan problem yang dihadapi dalam penerapan kebijakan SKS tersebut di SMA Negeri 1 Salatiga sebagai salah satu contoh penerapan. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa secara umum pelaksanaan SKS di SMA N 1 Salatiga dapat berjalan dengan baik sesuai dengan kebijakan dan panduan dari Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan. Namun pada dasarnya terdapat beberapa kendala yang berasal dari guru dan siswa yang belum sepenuhnya konsep dasar dari kebijakan SKS tersebut. Misal, banyak siswa seangkatan ingin lulus Bersama-sama yang mana hal ini berlawanan dengan orientasi dari kebijakan SKS untuk memfasilitasi tiap siswa untuk dapat belajar dan lulus sesuai dengan kecepatan belajar masing-masing.

Abstract

The implementation of credit system is not something new in Indonesian education system, especially for higher education, but its implementation in senior high school is something new and challenging, because it focuses on the holistic learning service of each student. This research aims to describe the implementation of credit system in senior high school in Salatiga as a sample of the study and its problem faced by the management of the school. By conducting qualitative approach, it can be concluded that the implementation of credit system in public senior high school 1 Salatiga is working very well according to its compliance with the policy and manual from the Ministry of Education and Culture. But there are several obstacle come from the teachers and students who do not really comprehend yet the basic concept of the credit system policy, for instance most of the student want to graduate on the same time in which it is contradict with the orientation of the credit system to facilitate each student to learn and graduate according to their own learning pace.

INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of Indonesian education needs to be addressed thoughtfully. The equitable learning opportunity is one of the implementations of democracy, which highlights equity education for both normal students and students with special needs. Providing equal educational opportunities essentially creates an environment where all children get the same chance to realize their potential optimally (Tomasevski, 2004). This means that education should be adjusted to learners' talent and competency. As a result, those having outstanding talents and intelligence require special educational services (Armstrong, 2009; Phillips, 2010). Meanwhile, the principle of equity in the administration of education provides an opportunity for students to develop following their interests and talents as well as the pace of learning.

Indonesia has long been implemented the educational package system which enables all learners to use the same way to finish their learning program. It implies that clever learners are forced to follow other students with standard learning pace, and vice versa (Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan, 2010). This kind of system is considered less democratic particularly for students' potential development which includes competence, talent, and interest.

Each student must receive a mass education of individuals instead of individual education of the mass to develop as his/her respective potential. Moreover, this is confirmed in Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System Article 12 paragraph (1) that students are entitled to receive educational services by their talents, interests, and abilities as well as completing educational programs under their respective learning pace (Pemerintah Republik Indonesia, 2003).

Thus, the educational services to actualize learners' potential could be achieved through the implementation of the credit system as stipulated further in Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005 on National Education Standards. In Article 11 paragraph (2) it is stated that "The learning load for senior high school, madrasah 'alimah, senior high school for special education, vocational school, madrasah 'alimah vocational, or other forms of equivalent education in the standard category can be stated in semester credit units"; Paragraph (3) "Learning load for senior high school, madrasah 'alimah, senior high school for special education, vocational school,

madrasah 'alimah vocational, or other forms of equivalent in the formal education category is independently expressed in semester credit units" (Pemerintah Republik Indonesia, 2015).

The semester credit system as elucidated in the Regulation of the Ministry of National Education No. 22 of 2006 concerning the content standard for primary and secondary education units. It is stated in the regulation that the semester credit system is a system of education administration in which learners decide their learning loads followed in each semester (Kementerian Pendidikan Nasional, 2006). A load of every subject is stated in the semester credit unit which one unit comprises an hour of face-to-face learning, an hour of structured assignment, and an hour of non-structured independent activity.

The semester credit system allows the administration of various and flexible education services adjusted to students' competence, talent, and interest. The application of the system is expected to accommodate students' diverse potential which leads to the faster accomplishment of learning than the period set by the education unit. Similar to this, Zuraida dan Suyanto (2016) explained that the implementation of the semester credit system could accelerate the period of learning-two years the fastest.

Such a system is not something new in Indonesian education system as it has been applied at the university level. However, the implementation of the system in high school and the university is pretty much different as high schools prioritizes students with unique competence, talent, and interest to take the system. Hence, schools have to provide an intact service facility in the form of an intact learning unit for each subject, while the time to finish the unit depends on the students' competence, talent, and interest. The intact learning unit in the semester credit system means a service diversification for three different learning paces; fast, normal, and slow learning to finish the learning objectives according to the allocated time (Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan, 2010; Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2014).

Several studies concerning the implementation of the semester credit system showed various results. Muhlis (2017), for example, implied that the semester credit system is effective as a flexible learning service in the selection of subject and learning period, which enables students to decide their learning strategy. Similar research was also carried out by Rostika and Zul-

karnain (2016) indicating that the application of the 2013 curriculum with semester credit system impacted the students' freedom to finish their study so that no pressure is felt.

In addition to learners, the semester credit system also influences teachers and schools. As confirmed by Sa'diyah (2012), teachers must be independent and well-prepared for running the system. Moreover, Ikasari et al. (2013) said that school readiness is the key factor for the success of the system. In line with this, Wijaya, Sulton, and Susilaningsih (2019) found that schools need both internal and external supports to run the system. Other than that, the determination of independent learning activity has to be planned well and followed by learning assistance. Some obstacles may arise but several studies reveal that schools can manage it well (Hardini & Sulasmono, 2016; Wahid, 2016).

Public senior highschool (SMA Negeri) 1 Salatiga is a school that has applied the semester credit system since the academic year of 2012/2013 based on the Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005 article 10 paragraph (3) stating that the learning loads for senior high school, madrasah 'alimah, senior high school for special education, vocational school, madrasah 'alimah vocational or other forms of equivalent in the formal education path of the independent category is stated in semester credit unit. The provision indicates that "the independent category schools" "must" apply the semester credit system, while "the standard category schools" implement a package system and "can" apply the semester credit system.

An initial interview by the researchers with the Vice Principal of Curriculum Affairs revealed that one of the factors underlying the implementation of the semester credit system is the intention to improve the quality of international standard education. The system is expected to serve the needs of heterogeneous potential possessed by students in one class. Although it is not a new thing, the application of the semester credit system in SMA Negeri 1 Salatiga remains to require adaptation for all elements starting from the teaching staff, students, Vice Principal of Curriculum Affairs, and Principal.

The changing of the system will be another big task for teachers as it brings a lot of adaptation in terms of either the preparation of learning tools, learning processes, or evaluation activities for each subject. Hardini and Sulasmono (2016) have done this topic in SMA Negeri 1

Salatiga which produced a description of their implementation and evaluation. Even so, there is one thing that needs to be deepened and sharpened again, that is the problems arising concerning the implementation of the semester credit system. Knowing the obstacles is essential as it will lead to the proper solutions. Based on these considerations, the researchers through this article try to describe the implementation of the semester credit system in SMA Negeri 1 Salatiga along with the constraints and root-causes analysis.

METHOD

This research employed the qualitative method which, according to Sukmadinata (2012, p. 60) is a method to describe and analyze a phenomenon, event, social activity, behavior, belief, perception, and either individual's/group of people's thoughts. The qualitative methods were used to obtain a profound illustration of the administration of the semester credit system in SMA Negeri 1 Salatiga along with its constraints and root-cause analysis. Data were collected through interviews, observation, and documentation. The informants of this study include the vice principal of curriculum affairs, guidance and counseling coordinators, academic supervisors, subject teachers, and students.

The data were validated using technique and source triangulation. The data were analyzed employing the miles and Huberman technique. The data analysis comprises several stages which include data collection, reduction, presentation, and verification/conclusion.

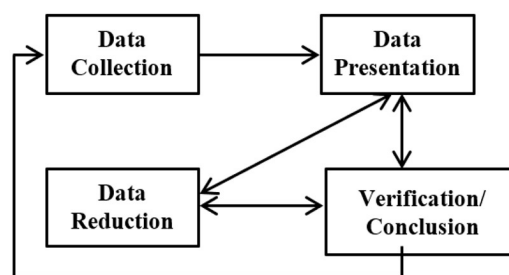


Figure 1 The Stages of Data Analysis (*Interactive Model*) (adapted from Sugiyono, 2014, p. 92)

The research was carried out from 22 July to 27 August 2019. The research subject was all of the students of SMA Negeri 1 Salatiga who applied the semester credit system in the academic year of 2012/2013. Nevertheless, the researchers focused on the third semester (3-year program) and fourth semester (2-year program) since the-

re is no fifth semester for the two-year program while the first semester is considered to be in the adaptation phase to the system.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Based on the field research results, the following explains about (1) the planning, consisting of the implementation, socialization, operating procedure, and curriculum development team; (2) the implementation, including the curriculum structure and learning loads, minimum mastery criteria, learning process, evaluation, and administration; and (3) the arising obstacles along with the solutions.

A. The Planning of Credit System in Public Senior High School 1 Salatiga

Planning is the fundamental phase that has to be prepared well by schools as the reference of program implementation, aiming the accomplishment of the intended objectives. In this phase, the researchers discuss the implementation, socialization, operating procedure, and curriculum development team.

Referring to the interview done by the researchers, the program implementation policy in SMA Negeri 1 Salatiga is initiated by the spirit to create high-quality education. Concerning the policy, the vice-principal of curriculum affairs stated,

[...] we wished to be an international school, so, implementing the semester credit system was a must as it became one of the requirements. Yet after the RSBI (*Rintisan Sekolah Bertaraf Internasional* or International-Standard School Pilot Project) was dissolved, the system keeps running up to the time being ... (W.WK.30/07/2019)

The implementation of the semester credit system is inseparable from the legal basis as explained in Law No. 20 of 2003 on National Education System article 5 paragraph 4 stating that civilians having peculiar intelligence and talent are rightful to obtain distinctive education. The exclusive attention is aimed at developing students' potential wholly and optimally, which require directed and systematic strategy. This is strengthened by the interview results with the vice principal of curriculum affairs as follows,

The basis of the credit system is the law of National Education System, and the current

legal basis is the Regulation of The Minister of Education and Culture No. 158 of 2014. W.WK.30/07/2019)

The Regulation of The Minister of Education and Culture No. 158 of 2014 concerning the administration of semester credit system in primary and secondary education article 5 states that each educational unit with A-accreditation by the Board of National Accreditation for Schools/*Madrasah* could apply the semester credit system. Therefore, the implementation of this system in SMA Negeri 1 Salatiga has a clear legal basis.

What has been done by SMA Negeri 1 Salatiga is a common step taken by many public schools; orienting to obey the government's policy. It is a non-compulsory yet schools tend to try to apply the regulation. Although in some cases, there is no urgency for this policy to be applied. An example of this phenomenon is the full-day school regulation (Apriyani, Fatimah, & Wicaksono, 2018; Risnita & Asvio, 2019).

In supporting the semester credit system, SMA Negeri 1 Salatiga has done massive socialization. Based on the observation and interview, socialization is targetted to the internal staffs including subject teachers, academic supervisors, guidance and counseling teachers, administration staff, and students. There are two stages of socialization; (1) in the early of the system enactment; and (2) annual socialization.

Referring to the informants' statements, the annual socialization is done in the form of In-House Training (IHT). IHT is a compulsory event carried out before starting the new academic year followed by subject teachers, academic supervisors, guidance, and counseling teachers. Differently, the socialization for students is done during the Student Orientation Program in the first year. This is in line with Budi (in Rostika & Zulkarnain, 2016, p. 194) who explained that one of the school's efforts to prepare teachers is to invite experts in IHT. Theoretically, this IHT can also be said as a kind of service within the school to increase teacher professionalism on an ongoing basis, and certainly not only related to the semester credit system at school, but generally at increasing the capacity of teachers to master the materials and teach well (see ie Amadi, 2013; Harju & Niemi, 2020; Heyward, Cholifah, & Nuraini, 2018).

Further, the school stated that the internal school socialization indicated that the school had prepared the system implementation

carefully so that it could run well up to now. In addition to introducing the semester credit system, socialization also aims to equalize the perceptions of all internal schools staff. That way, all internal parties can carry out their duties and functions following the objectives of the system

The Directorate of High School Development has prepared guidelines for implementing the semester credit system in general by the Government Regulation Number 19 of 2005 and the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 158 of 2014 on the Implementation of the Semester Credit System in Primary and Secondary Education. However, the school argued that the guideline does not fit within the situation, characteristics, and context of the school. For that reason, they modified the guideline based on the school characteristics. This is in line with the vice principal of curriculum affairs' statement.

The guideline is made by the Directorate General of High School Development, but in the implementation, we make modifications here and there to adjust it to the school situation. Because we know the existing condition of the school is, the central government gives a leeway to implement the semester credit system by the school conditions. (W.WK.30 / 07/2019)

This vivid guidance is expected to support the system so that it runs well to achieve the intended objectives.

Due to the encouragement from the government for the school to implement the credit system, SMAN 1 Salatiga established a solid team to prepare and manage the implementation of the policy called the Curriculum Development Team. According to informan of the research, this team has much responsibility in developing a contextual curriculum it also responsible for the ongoing semester credit system implementation process, management, and control. Indeed the semester credit system is an integral part of the curriculum that cannot be separated.

In the Decree issued by the Principal of SMA Negeri 1 Salatiga No. 800/630 regarding the formation of the Curriculum Development Team of SMA Negeri 1 Salatiga 2019/2020 (DOK. 30/07/2019) shows that it has structured school curriculum development team which consists of school committees, supervisors, school principal, vice principals, and several appointed teachers with a total of 24 people. The curriculum development team is responsible for preparing,

implementing, monitoring, and evaluating the school curriculum carried out annually.

B. The Implementation of Credit System in Public Senior High School 1 Salatiga

The curriculum used in SMA Negeri 1 Salatiga is the 2013 curriculum with the Semester Credit System, which keeps following the policy issued by the Directorate General of Primary and Secondary Education. The learning load in the Semester Credit System at SMA Negeri 1 Salatiga is described in the form of *Unit Kegiatan Belajar Mandiri (UKBM)/Self Learning Activity Unit* that must be taken by each student (Direktorat Pembinaan Sekolah Menengah Atas, 2017).

There are two programs offered by SMA Negeri 1 Salatiga, the 2-year program, and the 3-year program. Both programs have to carry out 6-semester learning with no exception. Indeed, the 2-year plan is faster than the later one. This is under the principle of semester credit system implementation issued by the Directorate of High School Development (2017, p. 14) which states that,

Educational programs must fully use the 2013 Curriculum Structure along with relevant supporting tools and the taking of subjects by students is done flexibly, individually, or in small groups. All required subjects must be taken by students. Therefore, each of them has an opportunity of study in the same high school for 6 semesters.

The learning achievement is determined through the Minimum Mastery Criteria, which is made by the *Musyawah Guru Mata Pelajaran (MGMP)/Subject Teachers' Consultations* through an annual meeting to discuss and decided several problems and programs. The determination of minimum mastery criteria in each subject is determined based on the average of minimum mastery criteria on each UKBM assessed from the difficulty level. In the semester credit system, each student has to achieve the individual completeness of the overall competency of the subject. Therefore, for competencies that have not been completed, remedial learning will be given until reaching minimum mastery criteria before continuing to the next subject and competency.

The interviewee revealed that the most essential thing in the semester credit system is the individual learning service which has to be facilitated through classroom learning. The school



Figure 2 Learning Activities in the Normal Learning Pace Group in MIPA1 Semester 4 of Public Senior High School 1 Salatiga



Figure 3 Learning Activities in Fast Learner Groups in MIPA 1 Semester 4 of Public Senior High School 1 Salatiga

must provide the intact learning service, which in the case of SMA Negeri 1 Salatiga, is in the form of classical-individual meeting-a face-to-face group learning (fast, normal, slow) in a heterogeneous class. The observation of the learning process done in math and natural science class (MIPA) 1 semester 4 on the Physics course showed that 29 students are joining the meeting.

In the MIPA 1 class Semester 4, there is no slow learning group as the students were selected finely from all classes in SMA Negeri 1 Salatiga on the MIPA specialization program.

In the learning activities of the two groups of students, the teacher alternately provides learning service facilities for both groups systematically and orderly. At this point, we can see that the teacher gives services according to the potential of each students, where the students who are already capable and ready to continue to the next UKBM are then given individual or in group extra facilities. On the other hand, the students who are not ready are also treated to better understand UKBM materials. In other words, the learning services for normal and fast learners are given impartial service based on their competence.

Furthermore, the learners could make an assessment based on the readiness of their potential to comprehend the studied materials. Learning with the semester credit system enables the slow learners to keep up with the fast learners' work as the activities have been set according to their respective potential. Thus, when the students can join the mastery learning, then they could follow the next UKBM without waiting for others to achieve the mastery criteria.

Hinge on the observation and interview, SMA Negeri 1 Salatiga's assessment is based on the mastery learning in which the students have to grasp the Core Competence of each subject.

The student who has not been able to pass the core competence could join the remedial. In addition to mastery learning, the other form of evaluation is the final semester examination.

The semester credit system adopts the authentic assessment, in line with the 2013 curriculum, which emphasizes three aspects: (1) attitude; (2) knowledge; (3) skill. These aspects focus on optimizing the potential of each student in anticipating the learning period. This parallel with Kurniasih & Sani (2014, p. 48) who said that authentic assessment is a comprehensive assessment carried out to assess the input, process, and output of learning which includes the aspect of attitude, knowledge, and skills. The aspect of attitude is evaluated through observation, self-assessment, and peer-assessment. On the other hand, assessing the student knowledge capacity is done through written and oral examinations, while the skills can be evaluated using such exams, project appraisals, and portfolio assessment.

Overall, the implementation of the semester credit system in SMA Negeri 1 Salatiga is almost all in line with the provisions contained in Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 158 of 2014 on the implementation of the Semester Credit System in Primary and Secondary Education. If referring to several policies and guidance developed by the government, the implementation of the semester credit system in SMA Negeri 1 Salatiga can be fairly said to have met the criteria, proven by the conformity of the established principle with the implementation of the semester credit system in SMA Negeri 1 Salatiga which is described as follows.

Firstly, SMA Negeri 1 Salatiga has been administered the semester credit system accordingly with the established regulation, that focuses on treating each student as a unique

individual based on his/her talent, interest, competence, learning style, and the needs of a supportive educational ecosystem

Secondly, the teachers have developed the attitudes, knowledge, and skills of students through face-to-face and structured independent learning. Thirdly, SMA Negeri 1 Salatiga has provided facilities for the students to achieve optimal learning completeness in the form of classical learning services. Fourthly, SMA Negeri 1 Salatiga uses the semester credit system to measure students' mastery learning levels.

Fifthly, learning materials used in teaching and learning activities include the main learning package in the form of "*self-learning activity unit*" and other supporting learning materials such as textbooks and internet sources. Sixthly, SMA Negeri 1 Salatiga has complied with the principles of the implementation of the semester credit system, which is an educational program that fully uses the 2013 curriculum structure with less than 6 semesters. Seventhly, SMA Negeri 1 Salatiga has organized learning services that are in line with the principles of the implementation of the semester credit system, namely organizing classical learning to serve the students' varied needs.

C. Problems and Solutions Regarding the Credit System Implementation in Public Senior High School 1 Salatiga

Constraints are a common thing that often occurs in every program and activity implementation. Previous studies conducted by Hardini and Sulasmono (2016) also discussed some of the obstacles to implementing the semester credit system in SMA Negeri 1 Salatiga. Based on the field observation, the researchers also identified several obstacles encountered. These problems are mostly internal, especially related to Human Resources (HR) (teachers and students) in the learning process. Overall, the problems arise are minor as the system has been run accordingly.

Teacher's unavailability in facilitating the students as mandated by the regulation of semester credit system has become one of the problems. This was conveyed in the interview with the vice principal of curriculum affairs as follows,

[...] I could say that generally, there is no serious obstacle. Nevertheless, teachers sometimes take the easy way out so that there may be minor flaws here and there. (W.WK.30/07/2019)

This may be considered as a non-serious problem, but actually it has deviated the basic principle of the credit system, i.e. facilitating each student to achieve their learning achievement based on their own pace of learning. If this fundamental principle is not fulfilled, then the learning program at the school is no more than dividing the learning programs into two paths; a 3-year program and a 2-year program. Hence, the school claimed to have made efforts to overcome the problem, namely in the form of In-House Training (IHT) and Monitoring and Evaluation which are carried out at least once a year to make improvements to the system implementation.

Another obstacle comes from the students. Based on the findings and analysis, several problems were unveiled. Firstly, the students who taking the 3-year program wish to follow the UKBM with their friends in the same class continuously. It seems that the sense of student togetherness is quite strong. They think that they should go to school and graduate together with all of their mates. This phenomenon shows that the students do not fully understand the nature of the semester credit system which should facilitate their diverse learning speeds that those who learn quickly can graduate 2 years and 3 years for those who are rather slow learners. This situation eventually becomes an obstacle as it hinders the teachers to be vividly aware of each student's potential, as a result, the teachers could not give them the proper services, even though the system is expected to escalate educational services (Direktorat Pembinaan Sekolah Menengah Atas, 2017; Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2014).

Secondly, the learners of the 2-year program are found to be facing difficulties in quickly comprehending the materials. It could not be denied that the learning loads are sometimes too arduous for them as they must complete 6 semesters of learning period only in 2 academic years. For that reason, the students are indirectly demanded to grasp materials swiftly. As a result, the school offers a transfer option, i.e. the students could move the 3-year program if they think it is too hard.

The solution becomes a way out to prevent the students from both psychological and intellectual pressure, which became the main complaint of the previous acceleration class program which was then replaced by this credit system policy. If looking at the implementation of the semester credit system in SMA Negeri 1

Salatiga, then there is barely any difference with the previous acceleration class program where it becomes a special path for "smart-talented" students to graduate faster, usually also 2 years. The observation also showed that psychological pressure arises in the 2-year program so that the transfer option is given.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Semester Credit System at SMA Negeri 1 Salatiga has been going well, according to the understanding of the school management. In this case, the school considers that there is no significant obstacle in the planning process until the overall implementation as it has been following the policies and guidelines developed by the government. The internal factor is the main problems, primarily the teachers' capacity in managing the classroom learning service, the 3-year program students' lack of awareness of the essence of the semester credit system, and the difficulties faced by the students of the 2-year program in understanding massive materials so that they are burdened by the learning loads.

Things that must be emphasized in the semester credit system implementation rest on the facilities of diverse learning abilities. Therefore, this is the service that needs to be managed properly for students to learn following their respective speeds. In the future, it would be better when this flexibility is actually in line with the motto "Merdeka Belajar" from the Ministry of Education and Culture. Perhaps, the students can graduate not only in 2 years the fastest, but 1.5 or even 1 year. It could also be 2.5 years. Of course, it needs supporting university regulation to make it easier for the students to enroll in a university in the middle of the school year. If the school year starts in August-September, then February-March must also be opened for new students, especially those from the semester credit system at the high school level.

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