

**STUDENTS' AND ENGLISH TEACHERS' PERCEPTION TOWARD THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF MERDEKA BELAJAR CURRICULUM AT 10th GRADE OF
SMK NEGERI 1 MAJENE**

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ABSTRACT

The research problem for this research is how students' and English teachers' perception toward the implementation of Merdeka Belajar curriculum. The purpose of this research is to determine the perception of students and English teachers towards the implementation of Merdeka Belajar among vocational high school. The researchers used mixed method to collect data using a questionnaire and interview instrument. The sample of this research were the tenth-grade students consisting of 30 students and two English teachers of SMK Negeri 1 Majene. The result showed that students' perception toward the Merdeka Belajar was in the undecided category with a total of 64.80% and English teachers' perception toward the implementation of Merdeka Belajar was in the agree category with a total of 79.17%. This indicates that students' perceptions of Merdeka Belajar are undecided, while English teachers' perceptions of Merdeka Belajar are agreed.

Keywords: Perception, Merdeka Belajar Curriculum

INTRODUCTION

Education is a human endeavour to help people reach their full physical and spiritual potential in conformity with societal and cultural norms (Rahman et al., 2022). During the educational process, efforts are made to embed values and conventions and transmit them to the following generation so that they might be developed in real life. Education, according to *Undang-Undang RI No. 20 Tahun 2003* concerning the National Education System, is stated that "Education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the skills needed by themselves, society, nation and state". Students can develop their ability to produce high-quality human resources through a planned, directed, intensive, effective, and efficient educational process.

One of the goals of education is to improve a person's ability to achieve prosperity in life; the curriculum is critical in supporting the learning process so that it can be carried out properly. The Ministry of Education and Culture of the Indonesian government is responsible for developing the curriculum. Education cannot be separated from this term, because the curriculum is an important component in teaching and learning and the process will run in a structured and systematic manner to achieve the desired learning (Subede, 2017). In Indonesia, several curriculum have been implemented: 1947, 1952, 1964 1968,

1975, 1984, 1994, 1997, the Competency-Based Curriculum (2004), School-Based Curriculum (2006), 2013 curriculum, and the latest curriculum is the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum (Rahayu et al., 2022). The *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum for education units for elementary and secondary levels, from elementary to high school or vocational school, is one of the most recent methods of curriculum reform from the Ministry of Education and Culture, research and Technology.

Merdeka Belajar curriculum is a form of evaluation of the 2013 curriculum, which focuses on diverse intra-curricular learning where the content will be more optimal so that students have enough time to explore concepts and strengthen competence. *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum focuses on essential material, character development and student competencies (Jamilah et al., 2023). The characteristics of the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum, namely the existence of *Projek Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (Asiati & Hasanah, 2022). *Projek Profil Pelajar Pancasila* is an integral part of the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum (Kemendikbudristek, 2022).

SMK Negeri 1 Majene is one of the schools implementing *Merdeka Belajar* from several schools in Majene. Based on the initial observations made by the researchers at SMK Negeri 1 Majene, the students are quite hard to changing the way they learn. This is something new for students and teachers to implement. The research focuses on the perceptions of students and English teachers about the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum, which has been socialized for about three years by the Ministry of Education. The perceptions of students and teachers play an important role in supporting the implementation of a new curriculum ready to be implemented at all levels of education. Hopefully, can be used as a reference in other schools and to see the readiness of English teachers and the tenth-grade students in implementing the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum. So, the researchers are interested in conducting a study entitled "Students' and English Teachers' Perception Toward the Implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum at 10th Grade SMK Negeri 1 Majene".

METHOD

This research was a mixed method research which involves the collection and mixing or integration of both quantitative and qualitative data in a study (Creswell, 2017). It means that mixed-method research is a combination of quantitative and qualitative research. Based on the description above, the researchers used mixed method research where the data collection had conduct by using questionnaires and interviewing.

The population of this study were 10th grade students and English teachers at SMK Negeri 1 Majene, which consisted of five majors, namely fashion, beauty, hospitality, culinary, and computer engineering and informatics. The total number of tenth-grade students was 229 students. In selecting the students, the researchers preferred to use Random Sampling Technique. In this case, the researchers would take the sample of 30 students of tenth grade randomly and two English teachers at SMK Negeri 1 Majene.

The data were collected through questionnaire. The students and teachers were given a questionnaire about their perceptions of the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar*. The question items were divided into positive and negative statements. Additionally, the other data collection technique was interview. In this technique, the researchers began the interview by determining the subject or respondent, followed by carrying out the interview face to face between the researchers and the respondents. Questionnaire data analysis using the Likert Scale. The answers to each item of the Likert Scale instrument are divided into positive and negative statements as follows:

Table 1. Likert Scale

POSITIVE STATEMENT		NEGATIVE STATEMENT	
Score	Category	Score	Category
5	Strongly agree	1	Strongly agree
4	Agree	2	Agree
3	Undecided	3	Undecided
2	Disagree	4	Disagree
1	Strongly disagree	5	Strongly disagree

(Sugiyono, 2010)

The interval of the students' and teachers' responses on the questionnaire can be seen in the following table as follows:

Table 2. Category of the Questionnaire Table

Interval score	Category
95-120	Strongly agree
79-94	Agree
62-78	Undecided
46-61	Disagree
30-45	Strongly disagree

(Sugiyono, 2010)

Data collection was carried out consistently based on patterns. Additionally, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification were three important phases in data analysis (Salim & Haidir, 2019). In data reduction, the researchers selected data from interviews and respondents' questionnaires to learn more about the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum. Data presentation were in the form of graphs i.e., tables, diagrams, and so on. Thus, it was easier to understand. The next step in data analysis was to draw conclusions based on the findings and the data verification. Thus, the researchers concluded positive or negative perceptions of the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum by students and teachers.

RESULTS/FINDINGS

a. Results of teacher questionnaire analysis

Item 1: *Konsep Merdeka Belajar tidak baik untuk tumbuh kembang peserta didik* (The concept of *Merdeka Belajar* is not good for the growth and development of students).

Table 3. The result of Item 1

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	0	0%
2	Agree	0	0%
3	Undecided	0	0%
4	Disagree	1	50%
5	Strongly Disagree	1	50%
Frequency		2	100%

Based on Table 3, it can be seen that there were no teacher (0%) who chose strongly agree, agree and were unsure, 1 teacher (50%) chose to disagree, 1 teacher (1%) chose to strongly disagree. It was indicated that all respondents chose "disagree and strongly disagree" or gave a positive perception of the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 2: *Konsep Merdeka Belajar membuat Peserta didik lebih berani* (The concept of *Merdeka Belajar* makes students braver).

Table 4. The result of Item 2

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	0	0%
2	Agree	2	100%
3	Undecided	0	0%
4	Disagree	0	0%
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Frequency		2	100%

Based on Table 4, it can be seen that there were no teacher (0%) who chose to strongly agree, 2 teachers (100%) chose to agree with the item, there was no teacher (0%) who chose to be hesitant, "disagree, and strongly disagree". It is indicated that all respondents chose "agree" or gave a positive perception of the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 3: *Konsep Merdeka Belajar kurang sesuai untuk membentuk karakter Peserta didik* (The concept of *Merdeka Belajar* is not suitable for forming the character of students).

Table 5. The result of Item 3

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	0	0%
2	Agree	0	0%

3	Undecided	0	0%
4	Disagree	1	50%
5	Strongly Disagree	1	50%
Frequency		2	100%

Based on Table 5, it could be seen that there were no teacher (0%) who chose strongly agree, agree and undecided, 1 teacher (50%) chose disagree, 1 teacher (1%) chose strongly disagree. It was indicated that all respondents chose “disagree and strongly disagree” or gave a positive perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 4: *Konsep Merdeka Belajar membuat Peserta didik lebih aktif* (The concept of Merdeka Belajar makes students more active).

Table 6. The result of Item 4

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	0	0%
2	Agree	2	100%
3	Undecided	0	0%
4	Disagree	0	0%
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Frequency		2	100%

Based on Table 6, it could be seen that there were no teacher (0%) who chose strongly agree, 2 teachers (100%) chose agree toward this item, there was no teacher (0%) choosing undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. It was indicated that all respondents chose “agree” or gave a positive perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 5: *Pembelajaran terpusat pada guru* (Teacher-centred learning).

Table 7. The result of Item 5

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	0	0%
2	Agree	0	0%
3	Undecided	0	0%
4	Disagree	1	50%
5	Strongly Disagree	1	50%
Frequency		2	100%

Based on Table 7 above, it could be seen that there were no teacher (0%) who chose strongly agree, agree and undecided, 1 teacher (50%) chose disagree, 1 teacher (1%) chose strongly disagree. It was indicated that all respondents chose “disagree and strongly disagree” or gave a positive perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 6: *Pembelajaran dilakukan di luar kelas/sekolah* (Learning is done outside the classroom/school).

Table 8. The result of Item 6

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	0	0%
2	Agree	2	100%
3	Undecided	0	0%
4	Disagree	0	0%
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Frequency		2	100%

Based on Table 8, it could be seen that there were no teacher (0%) who chose strongly agree, 2 teachers (100%) chose agree toward this item, there was no teacher (0%) choosing undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. It was indicated that all respondents chose “agree” or gave a positive perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 7: *Guru dan peserta didik berkolaborasi menciptakan suasana belajar yang nyaman* (Teachers and students collaborate to create a comfortable learning atmosphere).

Table 9. The result of Item 7

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	1	50%
2	Agree	1	50%
3	Undecided	0	0%
4	Disagree	0	0%
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Frequency		2	100%

Based on Table 9, it could be seen that there were 1 teacher (50%) who chose strongly agree toward this item, 1 teacher (50%) who chose agree toward this item, there was no teacher (0%) who chose undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. It was indicated that all respondents chose “strongly agree and agree” or gave a positive perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 8: *Sumber belajar tidak harus pada buku* (Learning resources do not have to be in books).

Table 10. The result of Item 8

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	1	50%
2	Agree	1	50%
3	Undecided	0	0%
4	Disagree	0	0%
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Frequency		2	100%

Based on Table 10, it could be seen that there were 1 teacher (50%) who chose strongly agree toward this item, 1 teacher (50%) who chose agree toward this item, there was no teacher (0%) who chose undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. It was indicated that all respondents chose “strongly agree and agree” or gave a positive perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 9: *Peserta didik tidak dapat memberi pertanyaan/jawaban sesuai dengan kemampuan sendiri* (Students cannot give questions/answers according to their own abilities).

Table 11. The result of Item 9

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	0	0%
2	Agree	0	0%
3	Undecided	0	0%
4	Disagree	1	50%
5	Strongly Disagree	1	50%
Frequency		2	100%

Based on Table 11, it could be seen that there were no teacher (0%) who chose strongly agree, agree and undecided, 1 teacher (50%) who chose disagree, 1 teacher (1%) who chose strongly disagree. It was indicated that all respondents chose “disagree and strongly disagree” or gave a positive perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 10: *Guru bebas memilih sumber referensi yang sesuai dengan kemauan peserta didik* (Teachers are free to choose reference sources that are in accordance with the wishes of students).

Table 12. The result of Item 10

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	1	50%
2	Agree	1	50%
3	Undecided	0	0%
4	Disagree	0	0%
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Frequency		2	100%

Based on Table 12 above, it could be seen that there were 1 teacher (50%) who chose strongly agree toward this item, 1 teacher (50%) who chose agree toward this item, there was no teacher (0%) who chose undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. It was indicated that all respondents chose “strongly agree and agree” or gave a positive perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 11: *Peserta didik lebih baik diberi pemahaman daripada mencari pemahaman sendiri* (It is better for students to be given an understanding than to seek their own understanding).

Table 13. The result of Item 11

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	0	0%
2	Agree	1	50%
3	Undecided	0	0%
4	Disagree	1	50%
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Frequency		2	100%

Based on Table 13 above, it can be seen that no teacher (0%) chose to strongly agree, 1 teacher (50%) chose to agree with the item, no teacher (0%) chose to be undecided, 1 teacher chose to disagree with this item, no teacher chose to strongly disagree. It was indicated that half of the respondents chose "agree" and half of the respondents chose "disagree" or gave positive and negative perceptions of the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 12: *UN diganti dengan Asesmen Kompetensi Minimum dan Survei Karakter* (National Examination was replaced with Minimum Competency Assessment and Character Survey).

Table 14. The result of Item 12

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	0	0%
2	Agree	2	100%
3	Undecided	0	0%
4	Disagree	0	0%
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Frequency		2	100%

Based on Table 14 above, it could be seen that there were no teacher (0%) who chose strongly agree, 2 teachers (100%) who chose agree toward this item, there was no teacher (0%) who chose undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. It was indicated that all respondents chose "agree" or gave a positive perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 13: *Asesmen Kompetensi Minimum dan Survei Karakter mengganggu psikologi siswa* (Minimum Competency Assessment and Character Survey interfere with student psychology).

Table 15. The result of Item 13

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	0	0%
2	Agree	0	0%

3	Undecided	1	50%
4	Disagree	1	50%
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Frequency		2	100%

Based on the table above it can be seen that there were no teachers (0%) who chose to strongly agree and agree, 1 teacher (50%) chose to be unsure about the items, 1 teacher (50%) chose not to agree, no teacher (0%) vote strongly disagree. It was indicated that half of the respondents chose "undecided" and half of the respondents chose "disagree" or gave a positive perception of the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 14: *Asesmen Kompetensi Minimum dan Survei Karakter sulit untuk diterapkan* (The Minimum Competency Assessment and Character Survey are difficult to implement).

Table 16. The result of Item 14

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	0	0%
2	Agree	0	0%
3	Undecided	1	50%
4	Disagree	1	50%
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Frequency		2	100%

Based on Table 16, it can be seen that there were no teacher (0%) who chose to strongly agree and agree, 1 teacher (50%) chose to be unsure about the items, 1 teacher (50%) chose not to agree, no teacher (0%) vote strongly disagree. It was indicated that half of the respondents chose "undecided" and half of the respondents chose "disagree" or gave a positive perception of the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 15: *USBN dijadikan standard kelulusan* (USBN is used as a graduation standard).

Table 17. The result of Item 15

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	0	0%
2	Agree	1	50%
3	Undecided	0	0%
4	Disagree	1	50%
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Frequency		2	100%

Based on Table 17 above, it can be seen that no teacher (0%) chose to strongly agree, 1 teacher (50%) chose to agree with the item, no teacher (0%) chose to be undecided, 1 teacher chose to disagree with this item, no teacher chose to strongly disagree. It was indicated that half of the respondents chose "agree and half of the teachers chose "disagree" or gave positive and negative perceptions of the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 16: *USBN diserahkan ke sekolah membuat kualitas ujian menurun karena dianggap formalitas dalam pembuatan soal* (USBN was handed over to schools, causing the quality of exams to decline because they were considered a formality in making questions).

Table 18. The result of Item 16

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	0	0%
2	Agree	0	0%
3	Undecided	0	0%
4	Disagree	2	100%
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Frequency		2	100%

Based on Table 18, it could be seen that there were no teacher (0%) who chose strongly agree, agree and undecided, 2 teachers (100%) who chose disagree toward this item, there was no teacher (0%) who chose strongly disagree. It was indicated that all respondents chose “disagree” or gave a positive perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 17: *USBN tidak hanya ujian tulis* (USBN is not just a written exam).

Table 19. The result of Item 17

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	0	0%
2	Agree	2	100%
3	Undecided	0	0%
4	Disagree	0	0%
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Frequency		2	100%

Based on the table above, it could be seen that there were no teacher (0%) who chose strongly agree, 2 teachers (100%) who chose agree toward this item, there was no teacher (0%) who chose undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. It was indicated that all respondents chose “agree” or gave a positive perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 18: *RPP satu lembar meringankan beban administrasi guru* (The one sheet lesson plan eases the teacher's administrative burden).

Table 20. The result of Item 18

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	1	50%
2	Agree	1	50%
3	Undecided	0	0%
4	Disagree	0	0%
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Frequency		2	100%

Based on Table 20, it could be seen that there were 1 teacher (50%) who chose strongly agree toward this item, 1 teacher (50%) who chose agree toward this item, there was no teacher (0%) who chose undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. It was indicated that all respondents chose “strongly agree and agree” or gave a positive perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 19: *RPP satu lembar kurang rinci* (The one sheet lesson plan is less detailed).

Table 21. The result of Item 19

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	0	0%
2	Agree	1	50%
3	Undecided	0	0%
4	Disagree	1	50%
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Frequency		2	100%

Based on the table above, it can be seen that there were no teachers (0%) who chose strongly agree, 1 teacher (50%) chose to agree with this item, no teachers (0%) chose undecided, 1 teacher (50%) chose disagree with this item, no teachers choose strongly disagree. It was indicated that half of the respondents chose "agree and half of the respondents chose "disagree" or gave positive and negative perceptions of the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 20: *Guru diberi kebebasan melakukan langkah pembelajaran* (The teacher is given the freedom to do the learning steps).

Table 22. The result of Item 20

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	1	50%
2	Agree	1	50%
3	Undecided	0	0%
4	Disagree	0	0%
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Frequency		2	100%

Based on Table 22, it could be seen that there were 1 teacher (50%) who chose strongly agree toward this item, 1 teacher (50%) who chose agree toward this item, there was no teacher (0%) who chose undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. It was indicated that all respondents chose “strongly agree and agree” or gave a positive perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 21: *Guru diberi kebebasan melakukan penilaian* (Teachers are given the freedom to make assessments).

Table 23. The result of Item 21

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	1	50%
2	Agree	1	50%
3	Undecided	0	0%
4	Disagree	0	0%
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Frequency		2	100%

Based on Table 23, it could be seen that there were 1 teacher (50%) who chose strongly agree toward this item, 1 teacher (50%) who chose agree toward this item, there was no teacher (0%) who chose undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. It was indicated that all respondents chose “strongly agree and agree” or gave a positive perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 22: *Guru kesulitan melakukan langkah pembelajaran* (The teacher has difficulty carrying out learning steps).

Table 24. The result of Item 22

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	0	0%
2	Agree	0	0%
3	Undecided	0	0%
4	Disagree	2	100%
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Frequency		2	100%

Based on Table 24 above, it could be seen that there were no teachers (0%) chose strongly agree, agree and undecided, 2 teachers (100%) chose disagree toward this item, there is no teachers (0%) chose strongly disagree. It was indicated that all respondents chose “disagree” or gave a positive perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 23: *Guru kesulitan melakukan penilaian* (Teachers have difficulty making assessments).

Table 25. The result of Item 23

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	0	0%
2	Agree	0	0%
3	Undecided	0	0%
4	Disagree	2	100%
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Frequency		2	100%

Based on Table 25 above, it could be seen that there were no teachers (0%) chose strongly agree, agree and undecided, 2 teachers (100%) chose disagree toward this item, there is no

teachers (0%) chose strongly disagree. It was indicated that all respondents chose “disagree” or gave a positive perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 24: *Kurang penyuluhan tentang Merdeka Belajar membuat guru kurang paham terhadap penerapan merdeka belajar* (Lack of counseling about Independent Learning makes teachers less aware of the application of *Merdeka Belajar*).

Table 26. The result of Item 24

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	0	0%
2	Agree	2	100%
3	Undecided	0	0%
4	Disagree	0	0%
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Frequency		2	100%

Based on Table 26 above, it could be seen that no teacher (0%) chose strongly agree, 2 teachers (100%) chose agree toward this item, there were no teachers (0%) chose undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. It was indicated that all respondents chose “agree” or gave a positive perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

b. Results of Student Questionnaire Analysis

Item 1: *Konsep Merdeka Belajar kurang sesuai untuk membentuk karakter Peserta didik* (The concept of *Merdeka Belajar* is not suitable for forming the character of students).

Table 27. The result of Item 1

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	1	3%
2	Agree	9	30%
3	Undecided	9	30%
4	Disagree	10	33%
5	Strongly Disagree	1	3%
Frequency		30	100%

Based on Table 27 above, it could be seen that 1 student (3%) chose strongly agree, 9 students (30%) chose agree, 9 students (30%) chose undecided, 10 students (33%) chose disagree toward this item or the concept of *Merdeka Belajar* was appropriate to shape the character of students, and 1 student (3%) chose strongly disagree. It was indicated that many respondents chose disagree or gave a positive perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 2: *Konsep Merdeka Belajar membuat peserta didik lebih berani* (The concept of *Merdeka Belajar* makes students braver).

Table 28. The result of Item 2

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	7	23%
2	Agree	16	53%
3	Undecided	6	20%
4	Disagree	1	3%
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Frequency		30	100%

Based on Table 28 above, it could be seen that there were 7 students (23%) who chose strongly agree, 16 students (53%) who chose agree toward this item or the concept of *Merdeka Belajar* made students braver, 6 students (20%) who chose undecided, 1 student (3%) who chose disagree and there was no student (0%) who chose strongly disagree. It was indicated that many respondents chose “agree and strongly agree” or gave a positive perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 3: *Konsep Merdeka Belajar membuat peserta didik lebih aktif* (The concept of *Merdeka Belajar* makes students more active).

Table 29. The result of Item 3

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	6	20%
2	Agree	17	57%
3	Undecided	5	17%
4	Disagree	1	3%
5	Strongly Disagree	1	3%
Frequency		30	100%

Based on Table 29 above, it could be seen that there were 6 students (20%) who chose strongly agree, 17 students (57%) who chose agree toward this item or the concept of *Merdeka Belajar* made students active, 5 students (17%) who chose undecided, 1 student (3%) who chose disagree, 1 student (3%) who chose strongly disagree. It was indicated that many respondents chose “agree and strongly agree” or gave a positive perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 4: *Saya mengetahui apa itu Proyek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (I know what the *Proyek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila*).

Table 30. The result of Item 4

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	5	17%
2	Agree	6	20%
3	Undecided	17	57%
4	Disagree	2	7%

5	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Frequency		30	100%

Based on Table 30 above, it can be seen that there were 5 students (17%) who chose to strongly agree, 6 students (20%) who chose to agree, 17 students (57%) who chose to be unsure about this item, 2 students (7%) who chose to disagree, and no student (0%) who chose strongly disagree. This shows that more respondents chose to be undecided, some respondents chose to agree, and only 2 respondents chose to disagree. The respondents gave more positive perceptions of the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 5: *Saya mengetahui tujuan Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (I know the purpose of the *Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila*).

Table 31. The result of Item 5

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	4	13%
2	Agree	10	33%
3	Undecided	12	40%
4	Disagree	4	13%
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Frequency		30	100%

Based on Table 31, it can be seen that there were 4 students (13%) who chose to strongly agree, 10 students (33%) who chose to agree, 12 students (40%) who chose to be unsure about this item, 4 students (13%) who chose to disagree, and no student (0%) who chose to strongly disagree. This shows that almost all respondents chose to agree and undecided, or gave a positive perception of the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 6: *Saya tidak pernah melakukan kegiatan kokurikuler terhadap Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (I have never carried out co-curricular activities for the *Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila*).

Table 32. The result of Item 6

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	3	10%
2	Agree	5	17%
3	Undecided	14	47%
4	Disagree	8	27%
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Frequency		30	100%

Based on Table 32 above, it can be seen that 3 students (10%) chose to strongly agree, 5 students (17%) chose to agree, 14 students (47%) chose to undecided about this item, 8 students (27%) chose to disagree, and no student (0%) chose to strongly disagree. This shows

that more respondents chose to be undecided, 27% of respondents chose to agree and 27% of respondents chose to disagree. So, the respondents gave balanced responses between agree and disagree with the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 7: *Yang saya pelajari di sekolah berhubungan dengan kontekstual dan pengalaman saya* (What I learn in school relates to my context and experience).

Table 33. The result of Item 7

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	4	13%
2	Agree	13	43%
3	Undecided	10	33%
4	Disagree	3	10%
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Frequency		30	100%

Based on Table 33, it can be seen that there were 4 students (13%) who chose to strongly agree, 13 students (43%) who chose to agree with the item, 10 students (33%) who chose to be undecided, 3 students (10%) who chose to disagree, and no student (0%) who chose strongly disagree. This shows that almost half of the respondents chose to agree, and the other half chose to undecided or gave a positive perception of the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 8: *Pembelajaran tidak terpusat pada peserta didik* (Learning is not centered on students).

Table 34. The result of Item 8

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	2	7%
2	Agree	6	20%
3	Undecided	5	17%
4	Disagree	15	50%
5	Strongly Disagree	2	7%
Frequency		30	100%

Based on the table above, it could be seen that there were 2 students (7%) chose strongly agree, 6 students (20%) chose agree, 5 students (17%) chose undecided, 15 students (50%) chose disagree toward this item or learning is centered on students, 2 students (7%) chose strongly disagree. It was indicated that many respondents chose “disagree” or gave a positive perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 9: *Pembelajaran dilakukan di luar kelas atau sekolah* (Learning is done outside the classroom or school).

Table 34. The result of Item 9

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	6	20%
2	Agree	9	30%
3	Undecided	6	20%
4	Disagree	4	13%
5	Strongly Disagree	5	17%
Frequency		30	100%

Based on Table 34, it could be seen that there were 6 students (20%) chose strongly agree, 9 students (30%) chose agree toward this item or Learning is done outside the classroom or school, 6 students (20%) chose undecided, 4 students (13%) chose disagree, 5 students (17%) chose strongly disagree. It was indicated that many respondents chose “agree, strongly agree and undecided” or gave a positive perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 10: *Guru dan peserta didik berkolaborasi menciptakan suasana belajar yang nyaman* (Teachers and students collaborate to create a comfortable learning atmosphere).

Table 35. The result of Item 10

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	16	53%
2	Agree	13	43%
3	Undecided	1	3%
4	Disagree	0	0%
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Frequency		30	100%

Based on Table 35, it could be seen that there were 16 students (53%) who chose strongly agree toward this item or teachers and students collaborate to create a comfortable learning atmosphere, 13 students (43%) who chose agree, 1 student (3%) who chose undecided, there was no student (0%) who chose disagree and there was no student (0%) chose strongly disagree. It was indicated that almost all respondents chose “strongly agree and agree” or gave a positive perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 11: *Sumber belajar tidak harus pada buku* (Learning resources do not have to be in books).

Table 35. The result of Item 11

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	8	27%
2	Agree	10	33%
3	Undecided	4	13%
4	Disagree	7	23%
5	Strongly Disagree	1	3%
Frequency		30	100%

Based on the table above, it could be seen that there were 8 students (27%) who chose strongly agree, 10 students (33%) who chose agree toward this item or learning resources do not have to be in books, 4 students (13%) who chose undecided, 7 students (23%) who chose disagree, 1 student (3%) who chose strongly disagree. It was indicated that half of the respondents chose "agree and strongly agree", the other half chose "disagree, undecided and strongly disagree" or gave a positive and negative perception of the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 12: *Peserta didik tidak bebas memilih sumber referensi yang sesuai dengan kemauannya* (Students are not free to choose reference sources according to their wishes)

Table 36. The result of Item 12

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	6	20%
2	Agree	8	27%
3	Undecided	7	23%
4	Disagree	7	23%
5	Strongly Disagree	2	7%
Frequency		30	100%

Based on Table 36, it can be seen that 6 students (20%) chose to strongly agree, 8 students (27%) chose to agree with the item, 7 students (23%) chose undecided, 7 students (23%) chose not to agree, 2 students (7%) chose to strongly disagree. This shows that 47% of respondents chose to agree, 30% of respondents chose to disagree, and 23% of respondents chose to undecided or gave an almost balanced perception of the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 13: *Kurangnya ajaran tentang Proyek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila membuat peserta didik kurang paham terhadap pelaksanaannya* (The lack of teachings about the *Proyek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila* makes students less aware of its implementation).

Table 37. The result of Item 13

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	3	10%
2	Agree	10	33%
3	Undecided	8	27%
4	Disagree	7	23%
5	Strongly Disagree	2	7%
Frequency		30	100%

Based on Table 37, it can be seen that there were 3 students (10%) who chose to strongly agree, 10 students (33%) who chose to agree with the item, 8 students (27%) who chose to undecided, 7 students (23%) who chose to disagree, 2 students (7%) who chose to strongly disagree. This shows that more respondents chose to agree, or gave a negative perception of the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 14: *Pembelajaran tidak terpusat pada peserta didik membuat peserta tidak berkarakter* (Learning that is not centered on students makes students characterless).

Table 38. The result of Item 14

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	3	10%
2	Agree	8	27%
3	Undecided	7	23%
4	Disagree	11	37%
5	Strongly Disagree	1	3%
Frequency		30	100%

Based on the table above it can be seen that there were 3 students (10%) who chose to strongly agree, 8 students (27%) who chose to agree, 7 students (23%) who chose to be undecided, 11 students (37%) who chose to disagree with the statement, 1 student (3%) who chose strongly disagree. It is indicated that more respondents chose to disagree or give a positive perception of the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 15: *Pembelajaran di luar kelas/sekolah membuat peserta didik lebih susah dikondisikan* (Learning outside the classroom/school makes students more difficult to condition).

Table 39. The result of Item 15

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	3	10%
2	Agree	7	23%
3	Undecided	5	17%
4	Disagree	10	33%
5	Strongly Disagree	5	17%
Frequency		30	100%

Based on Table 39, it can be seen that there were 3 students (10%) who chose strongly agree, 7 students (23%) who chose to agree, 5 students (17%) who chose to undecide, 10 students (33%) who chose to disagree with the statement, 5 students (17%) who chose strongly disagree. It was indicated that almost half of the respondents chose to disagree or give a positive perception of the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 16: *Peserta didik tidak dapat menyesuaikan diri dalam memahami materi* (Students cannot adjust themselves in understanding the material).

Table 40. The result of Item 16

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	5	17%
2	Agree	7	23%
3	Undecided	9	30%
4	Disagree	6	20%

5	Strongly Disagree	3	10%
Frequency		30	100%

Based on Table 40, it can be seen that 5 students (17%) chose to strongly agree, 7 students (23%) chose to agree, 9 students (30%) chose to undecided about this item, 6 students (20%) chose to disagree, 3 students (10%) chose to strongly disagree. This shows that more respondents chose to agree, 30% of respondents chose to undecided and 30% of respondents chose to disagree. So, the answers of undecided and disagree are balanced.

Item 17: *Peserta didik tidak bergairah mencari ide baru sesuai bidang yang ditekuni* (Students are not passionate about looking for new ideas according to the field they are occupied).

Table 41. The result of Item 17

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	6	20%
2	Agree	3	10%
3	Undecided	7	23%
4	Disagree	14	47%
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Frequency		30	100%

Based on Table 41 above, it can be seen that 6 students (20%) chose to strongly agree, 3 students (10%) chose to agree, 7 students (23%) chose to undecided, 14 students (47%) chose to disagree with the statement and no students (0%) chose strongly disagree. It is indicated that many respondents chose to disagree rather than agree or give a positive perception of the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 18: *Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila tidak memberikan kesempatan peserta didik untuk mendalami pelajaran yang diambil* (*Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila* does not give students the opportunity to explore the lessons learned).

Table 42. The result of Item 18

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	3	10%
2	Agree	7	23%
3	Undecided	11	37%
4	Disagree	8	27%
5	Strongly Disagree	1	3%
Frequency		30	100%

Based on the table above, it can be seen that 3 students (10%) chose to strongly agree, 7 students (23%) chose to agree, 11 students (37%) chose to undecided about this item, 8 students (27%) chose to disagree. 1 student (3%) chose to strongly disagree. This shows that more respondents choose “undecided”, 33% of respondents chose to agree, and 30% of

respondents chose to disagree or give positive and negative perceptions of the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 19: *Pembelajaran berbasis proyek yang bertujuan mengembangkan soft skill serta karakter sesuai profil pelajar pancasila* (Project-based learning that aims to develop soft skills and character according to the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*).

Table 43. The result of Item 19

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	7	23%
2	Agree	10	33%
3	Undecided	13	43%
4	Disagree	0	0%
5	Strongly Disagree	0	0%
Frequency		30	100%

Based on the table above, it can be seen that 7 students (23%) chose strongly agree, 10 students (33%) chose agree, 13 students (43%) chose undecided about this item, no student (0%) chose disagree and no student (0%) chose strongly disagree. This shows that half of the respondents chose to agree and some of the respondents chose to undecided, while no respondent chose to disagree. Therefore, the respondents gave a positive perception of the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Item 20: *Membebaskan peserta didik untuk mencapai hasil belajar yang baik di akademik atau non akademik* (Freeing students to achieve good learning outcomes in academic or non-academic).

Table 44. The result of Item 20

No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strongly Agree	10	33%
2	Agree	13	43%
3	Undecided	5	17%
4	Disagree	1	3%
5	Strongly Disagree	1	3%
Frequency		30	100%

Based on Table 44 above, it could be seen that 10 students (33%) chose strongly agree, 13 students (43%) chose agree toward this item, 5 students (17%) chose undecided, 1 student (3%) chose disagree, 1 student (3%) chose strongly disagree. It was indicated that almost half of the respondents chose “agree and strongly agree” or gave a positive perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

Based on interview results, NA gave perception about *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum. It was known by the result of interview as follows:

“Mengenai konsep merdeka belajar sangat setuju karena sebelum guru mengadakan pembelajaran di kelas terhadap siswa-siswa terlebih dahulu guru mengadakan assesmen

terhadap siswa yang akan diajar, jadi guru bisa memahami kemauan dan kemampuan pada setiap peserta didik sehingga guru punya dasar dalam mengelola pembelajaran”.

"Regarding the concept of *Merdeka Belajar*, I really agree because before the teacher conducts classroom learning for students, the teacher first conducts an assessment of the students who will be taught, so the teacher can understand the desires and abilities of each student so that the teacher has a basis for managing learning”.

M gave perception about *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum. It was known by the result of interview as follows:

“Jadi... konsep merdeka belajar untuk kurikulum 2022 2023 yang diterapkan ee mulai tahun kemarin sampai tahun ini adalah sebuah konsep kurikulum dimana kebijakan pendidikan diberikan kepada sekolah dan pemerintah daerah setempat”.

" So... the concept of *Merdeka Belajar* for the 2022 2023 curriculum which was implemented by ee from last year to this year is a curriculum concept where educational policies are given to schools and local regional orders.”

Based on the interview results above, it can be concluded that the first teacher believes that with the concept of Independent Learning, teachers can understand the desires and abilities of each student so that teachers have a basis for managing learning. Meanwhile, the second teacher said that the concept of Independent Learning is a curriculum concept whose policies are given to schools.

NA gave explanation of steps in implementing the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum. It was known by the result of interview as follows:

“Tentunya langkah pertama mengadakan assesmen sebelum mengajar supaya kita ketahui kemampuan dan minat siswa yang akan kita ajar, selanjutnya kita membuat rencana pengajaran, dalam rencana pengajaran itu tentunya berdasarkan dari assesmen yang kita buat dipadukan dengan kurikulum yang ada sehingga didalam pembuatan rpp itu agak maksimal mendekati suatu kemampuan-kemampuan siswa tersebut karena sebelumnya ada assesmen yang kita lakukan, kemudian selanjutnya perangkat-perangkatnya kita harus selesaikan, dan pada akhir daripada pembelajaran tersebut kita adakan evaluasi”.

"Of course, the first step is to carry out an assessment before teaching so that we know the abilities and interests of the students we will teach, then we make a teaching plan. In the teaching plan, of course, it is based on the assessment that we make combined with the existing curriculum so that in making the lesson plan it is almost maximally close to a

students' abilities because previously we carried out an assessment, then we had to complete the tools, and at the end of the learning we held an evaluation”.

M gave explanation of steps in implementing the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum. It was proven by the result of interview as follows:

“Untuk pelaksanaan kurikulum merdeka belajar, langkah-langkah yang telah kami lakukan adalah dengan berkolaborasi dengan guru-guru bahasa inggris dengan berbagi informasi, berbagi ilmu tentang pelaksanaan kurikulum merdeka belajar sehingga kita bisa saling berbagi ide, karena disini kan.... Artinya anak-anaknya juga sama hampir

sama di Sulawesi barat, saya kira masalah-masalah yang dihadapi itu hampir sama lah di sekolah-sekolah lainnya”.

"For the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum, the steps we have taken are collaborating with the English- teachers by sharing information, sharing knowledge about the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum so that we can share ideas with each other, because here... This means that the children are almost the same in West Sulawesi, I think the problems faced are almost the same in other schools”.

Based on the interview result above, it can be concluded that the first teacher believes that the steps in implementing the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum are carrying out an assessment before teaching and then making a lesson plan, while the second teacher said that the steps that had been taken were collaborating with teachers.

DISCUSSION

Based on the research results that have been presented above, it can be seen that there are various perceptions of students and English teachers that are given through the questionnaire and interview process. Based on these results, students are categorized as hesitant about the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar*. This is proven by the results of the questionnaire reaching a percentage of 64.80%, and are categorized as hesitant based on the questionnaire score category on the Likert Scale. Based on these results, teachers are categorized as agreeing to the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar*. This is proven by the results of the questionnaire reaching a percentage of 79.17%, and are categorized as interested based on the questionnaire score category on the Likert Scale. Then the results of the questionnaire are supported by the interview process.

The results of the teacher interviews provide a statement that the teacher agrees and is ready to implement the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum. If the results of the questionnaire do not agree, it means that the teacher's statement is definitely not ready. Therefore, the perception of English teachers regarding the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* provides a positive perception. students have a hesitant perception of the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum. This is almost related to the previous study "Perception of Islamic Religious Education Teachers Regarding the Independent Learning Policy at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Ykui Sekargadung Dukun Gresik", a study that explains the teacher's perception of the implementation of Independent Learning is very good because the implementation of Independent Learning is able to support students in innovating and creating themselves so that they can support their own achievements. The researchers concluded that Independent Learning is a good policy and needs to be tried because it is expected to create a new, pleasant learning atmosphere, (Jamilatussholikhah et al, 2022). It can be concluded that in providing perceptions, each individual can be influenced by internal and external factors. Internal factors that influence perception are factors that come from within a person. While external factors that influence perception are factors that come from outside a person.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion above, it can be concluded that all of students and teachers as respondents in this research had various perceptions toward the

implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum. The researcher concluded that the students were categorized as “undecided” toward the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum from questionnaire result. It was proven by questionnaire result reached percentage 64.80%, and it was categorized as undecided. Additionally, the teachers were categorized as “agree” toward the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum from questionnaire and interview result. It was proven by questionnaire result reached percentage 79.17%, and it was categorized as agree based on score category of the questionnaire in Likert Scale. Then, from the interview result, teachers gave positive perception toward the implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum.

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