

ENGLISH TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF ELT IN MERDEKA CURRICULUM AT SMKN DARUL ULUM MUNCAR ACADEMIC YEAR 2022/2023

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Abstract

In 2020 Indonesia experienced the Covid-19 pandemic, resulting in a worsening learning crisis. The government issued an emergency curriculum policy. After running for one school year, the government found that using the emergency curriculum got better results than the previous curriculum. Moreover, in February 2022, the government began to apply the Merdeka curriculum. This research aims to find out and provide information about English teachers' perceptions of the Merdeka curriculum at SMKN Darul Ulum Muncar for the 2022/2023 academic year. The researcher focuses on teaching modules and the Strengthening Pancasila Student Profile Project (P5) in the Merdeka curriculum. For data collection, researchers use quantitative methods. Then for the research model with a survey model, researchers distributed questionnaires to nine English teachers at SMKN Darul Ulum Muncar. Moreover, this study found that English teachers' perception of the Merdeka curriculum at SMKN Darul Ulum Muncar was very good. The overall average score of teachers indicates this is 79, which is included in the interval range score of $72 < X$, which means it is categorized as very good. In more detail, four teachers have good perceptions, and five other teachers have very good perceptions. This research provides valuable insights into how the Merdeka curriculum is received by English teachers at SMKN Darul Ulum Muncar, depicting a positive response to the curriculum change.

Keywords: Perception, ELT, Merdeka Curriculum

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INTRODUCTION

According to Nafrin and Hudaidah (2021) citing Notoadmojo (2012)¹, the term "education" has its etymological roots in the Latin word "Eductum." "Eductum" comprises two components: "E," denoting inner growth from small to large, and "Duco," signifying development. Thus, etymologically, education signifies a process of individual development from within.

According to Sujana from Widya², the function of education is to eliminate all sources of people's suffering arising from ignorance and backwardness. The function of national education is to cultivate abilities, shape character, and advance the civilization of an honorable nation, thereby nurturing the nation's life. Furthermore, the purpose of the National Education Goal, as stipulated by Tap MPRS No. XXVI/MPRS/1966 regarding religion, education, and culture, is that *tujuan pendidikan adalah untuk membentuk manusia Pancasila sejati berdasarkan pembukaan UUD 1945*. That means the function of education is to create the true pancasila human, according to the opening of the 1945 Constitution. Furthermore, in Law No. 2 of 1989, it is reaffirmed that "*Pendidikan Nasional bertujuan mencerdaskan kehidupan bangsa dan mengembangkan manusia Indonesia seutuhnya, yaitu manusia yang beriman dan bertaqwa terhadap Tuhan Yang Maha Esa dan berbudi pekerti luhur, memiliki pengetahuan dan keterampilan, kesehatan jasmani dan rohani, kepribadian yang mantap dan mandiri, rasa tanggung jawab kemasyarakatan kebangsaan*" that means national education aims to educate the nation's life and develop the whole Indonesian people, namely people who have faith and devotion to God Almighty, noble character, knowledge and skills, physical and spiritual health, a steady and independent personality, and a sense of community and national responsibility.

In the perception of national education policy as can be seen in the National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003 states that: *kurikulum adalah seperangkat rencana dan pengaturan mengenai tujuan, isi, dan bahan pelajaran serta cara yang digunakan sebagai pedoman penyelenggaraan kegiatan pembelajaran untuk mencapai tujuan pendidikan tertentu*. That means a curriculum is a set of plans and arrangements regarding the objectives, content, learning

¹ Nafrin, Irinna Aulia, and Hudaidah Hudaidah. (2021) Perkembangan pendidikan Indonesia di masa pandemi COVID-19. *Edukatif: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan* 3.2 (2021): 456-462.

² Widya, A. (2019). Fungsi dan tujuan pendidikan Indonesia. *Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar* 4.1 (2019): 29-39.

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materials, and methods used as guidelines for implementing learning to achieve specific educational goals.

In Indonesia, spanning from 1945 to 2013, the curriculum underwent eleven revisions, as noted by Insani³. These changes encompassed various iterations: the 1947 curriculum, the 1954 curriculum, the 1968 curriculum, the 1973 curriculum (Development School Pioneer Project), the 1975 curriculum, the 1984 curriculum, the 1994 curriculum, the 1997 curriculum (curriculum revision 1994), the 2004 curriculum (Competency-Based Curriculum), the 2006 curriculum (Education Unit Level Curriculum), and the 2013 curriculum. The government instigated these modifications with the intention of enhancing the quality of education in Indonesia. However, despite these efforts, the learning crisis persisted, and the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 further exacerbated the situation. The pandemic led to the closure of schools and the adoption of online learning methods. Anggraena et al.⁴ emphasized that this shift deepened the learning gap. Notably, a survey conducted by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) revealed disparities in the utilization of learning platforms between schools in frontier, outermost, and disadvantaged areas (known as 3T areas).

The independent learning curriculum, as delineated by Maulida⁵, was predominantly developed by PT Cikal and received the endorsement of the Minister of Education. The educational department has undertaken a comprehensive effort to adapt the learning process constrained by the pandemic. The government has introduced optional elements for implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in schools, which encompass: (1) the freedom of learning; (2) the freedom of sharing; and (3) the freedom of change. The concept of freedom of learning is rooted in enhancing the innovation and learning quality of both educators and students independently. The Merdeka Curriculum is founded on four principles: (1) the National Standardized School Examination (USBN) has evolved into an assessment exam, evaluating student competence through written tests or more comprehensive assessments such as assignments; (2) national Examinations (UN) have transitioned into minimum competency

³ Insani, F. D. (2019). Sejarah perkembangan kurikulum di Indonesia sejak awal kemerdekaan hingga saat ini. *As-Salam: Jurnal Studi Hukum Islam & Pendidikan*, 8(1), 43-64.

⁴ Anggraena, Y., Felicia, N., Eprijum, D., Pratiwi, I., Utama, B., Alhapip, L., & Widiawati, D. (2022). Kajian akademik kurikulum untuk pemulihan pembelajaran. *Jurnal Pendidikan*, 27(2), 176-192.

⁵ Maulida, U. (2022). Pengembangan Modul Ajar Berbasis Kurikulum Merdeka. *Tarbawi: Jurnal Pemikiran dan Pendidikan Islam*, 5(2), 130-138.

assessments and character surveys. This initiative is intended to encourage teachers and schools to enhance learning quality, while selection tests for subsequent academic levels cannot be used as reference points; (3) minimum competency assessments are geared towards evaluating literacy, numeracy, and character. The Learning Implementation Plan (RPP), unlike the previous curriculum where the RPP adhered to a specific format, is now endowed with flexibility; (4) the Merdeka Curriculum empowers teachers to freely select, devise, utilize, and evolve the RPP format. The RPP encompasses three essential components: learning objectives, learning activities, and assessment. Notably, the RPP is now renowned as teaching modules.

There are eight different types of education in Indonesia, according to Rembangsupu, Budiman, Bidin, Puspita, and Rangkuti⁶, who cite Article 1 Paragraph 9 of Law No. 20 of 2003. These include general education, vocational education, academic education, professional education, vocational education, religious education, special education, and official education.

Several studies have been conducted to examine educators' perceptions of the "Merdeka Belajar" Curriculum across various educational contexts. Firstly, Pertiwi and Pusparini⁷ employed a qualitative descriptive approach to investigate the viewpoints of vocational high school English teachers towards the curriculum. While many teachers endorsed the curriculum's concept of independent learning, some encountered challenges in its execution, particularly in simplifying the Lesson Plan (RPP). Secondly, Perdana⁸ utilized a quantitative descriptive method to explore the perceptions of physical education teachers concerning the Merdeka Curriculum in elementary schools. The study revealed that teachers generally held a favorable perception of the curriculum, with survey results indicating a high level of acceptance. Notably, the research emphasized the obstacles faced by physical education teachers in embracing independent learning. Thirdly, Anggila⁹ applied a qualitative descriptive approach to investigate social studies teachers' perspectives on the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in a junior high school.

⁶ Rembangsupu, A., Budiman, K., Bidin, Puspita, & Rangkuti, M. Y. (2022). Studi Yuridis Tentang Jenis Dan Jalur Pendidikan Di Indonesia. *AL-AFKAR: Journal for Islamic Studies*, 17(2), 91–100.

⁷ Pertiwi, Anita Kusuma, and Ririn Pusparini. Vocational High School English Teachers' Perspectives On "Merdeka Belajar" Curriculum. *Edukatif: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan* 3.5 (2021): 1982-1992.

⁸ Perdana, M. Y. (2021). *Persepsi Guru Pendidikan Jasmani, Olahraga Dan Kesehatan Terhadap Merdeka Belajar Di Sekolah Dasar Se-Kapanewon Tepus (Tesis)*. Yogyakarta: Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta.

⁹ Anggila, W. (2022). Persepsi Guru Bidang Studi IPS dalam Pelaksanaan Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar di SMP Negeri Sekecamatan Tanjung Kemuning Kabupaten Kaur 12. *Jurnal Basicedu*, Volume 6 Nomor 3 Tahun 2022 Halaman 5295-5301

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The study underscored the significance of curriculum socialization for effective implementation, highlighting its role in attaining curriculum objectives. In comparison, the current researcher's study centers on English teachers' perceptions of the Merdeka Curriculum, specifically delving into teaching modules and the Strengthening Pancasila Student Profile Project (P5) at SMKN Darul Ulum Muncar. This study employs a quantitative method utilizing a survey model to collect data from nine English teachers, thus showcasing their positive perceptions of the curriculum.

The researcher selected SMKN Darul Ulum Muncar as the research site due to its distinctive attributes. This institution was chosen because it is recognized as a Center of Excellence for Vocational High Schools in Banyuwangi, a designation it achieved in 2020. The decision to focus on SMKN Darul Ulum Muncar stems from its successful implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. This choice was made in alignment with the research's objective to investigate English teachers' perceptions within the context of this curriculum.

In this study, the researcher aims to investigate English teachers' perceptions of the Merdeka Curriculum and determine whether they perceive it as more effective compared to the 2013 curriculum. The rationale for conducting research on teachers' perceptions of the Merdeka Curriculum lies in the fact that teachers are primary stakeholders who possess a deep familiarity with English Language Teaching (ELT) and instructional methods. They are attuned to shifts in teaching patterns and can provide valuable insights into the curriculum's efficacy. As stated by Muhadi, Giyoto, and Untari¹⁰, stakeholders consist of three kinds: primer stakeholders (government), secondary stakeholders (principals, educators, and education staff, students, administrative staff, foundations, and school committees), and tertiary stakeholders (partner communities providing employment opportunities or the society of users of graduates of educational institutions). Furthermore, the researcher chose teachers' perceptions of the Merdeka Curriculum as the subject of her research.

The research is titled "English Teachers' Perception of ELT in Merdeka Curriculum." The study underscores the importance of understanding teachers' views, given their crucial role in education. Teachers not only play a central part in imparting knowledge but also hold valuable

¹⁰ Muhadi, I., Giyoto, & Untari, L. (2021). Tata Kelola Stakeholder dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan Pada Madrasah Tsanawiyah. *Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi Islam*, 11(2), 256-265.

insights. Being the first to experience curriculum changes, their understanding of teaching approaches greatly influences effective education. Moreover, the research holds implications for curriculum developers and educational stakeholders. By examining how teachers apply the Merdeka Curriculum, the study offers practical insights into its effects. This knowledge can significantly benefit those involved in curriculum development and education by providing clear insights into how teachers' engagement with the Merdeka Curriculum directly impacts teaching and learning.

METHOD

This study is a quantitative research. According to Creswell¹¹, the quantitative method is a method of processing research data that, in the process, closely collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and writing the data or the result of research. In quantitative descriptive research, conclusions are drawn from observable phenomena by using numbers to describe, investigate, and explain something that has been learned in its current state. Furthermore, this research did not test the hypothesis. According to Dr. H. Abdullah K.¹², descriptive research does not require administration or control over treatment if it is not intended to test a particular hypothesis as in explanatory research but only describes or affirms a concept or symptom or answers questions as they are about a variable, symptom, or condition, in the sense of only looking for information that can be used in decision-making. The scope taken by the author is a survey.

This research focused on teachers' perceptions of English Language Teaching (ELT) in the Merdeka Curriculum. In this teaching case, the researcher examined teachers' perceptions of implementing teaching tools in the Merdeka curriculum. The researcher conducted this study at SMKN Darul Ulum Muncar in the academic year 2022-2023 on March 2, 2023. Moreover, the research subject is nine SMKN Darul Ulum Muncar English teachers.

In collecting the data, the researcher first visited the SMKN Darul Ulum Muncar and asked the principal for permission to conduct research there, then afterward asked permission from the English teachers concerned about whether or not they wanted to be the object of the study. Moreover, secondly, after English teachers were willing to be the research respondents, the researcher distributed the questionnaire link to one of the English teachers, and the teacher sent it

¹¹ Creswell, John W. (2014). *Research design*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage publications

¹² Abdullah K., H. (2018). *Beberapa Metodologi Dalam Penelitian Pendidikan dan Manajemen*. Gunadarma Ilmu, 3(2), 1-9.

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to the English teachers' WhatsApp group. Then the researcher waited for all of the English teachers to complete the questionnaire. To analyze the data, the researcher used intervals to give levels to the perceptions of English teachers at Darul Ulum Muncar Vocational High School using the following formula (Azwar, 2013: 148 in Perdana, 2021)¹³:

Table 1. The Perception Level

Range	Category
$Mi + 1,5SDi < X$	Very good
$Mi + 0,5SDi < X \leq Mi + 1,5SDi$	Good
$Mi - 0,5SDi < X \leq Mi + 0,5SDi$	Good enough
$Mi - 1,5SDi < X \leq Mi - 0,5SDi$	Bad
$X \leq Mi - 1,5SDi$	Very bad

Description:

X = average score

Mi = ideal mean

Sdi = ideal standard deviation

To calculate the magnitude of the ideal mean (Mi), use the formula Ideal Mean (Mi) = $1/2$ (ideal maximum + ideal minimum), and to calculate the standard deviation (SDi), use the formula Ideal Standard Deviation (SDi) = $1/6$ (ideal maximal – ideal minimum). Furthermore, to convert an existing result into a percentage form using a formula by Jaya and Warti (2022)¹⁴, as follows:

$$\frac{f}{N} \times 100\%$$

Description:

P = Percentage

f = Frequency

N = number all of the frequency

100% = Constant Number

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After carrying out the research by spreading the questionnaire, the researcher first has done the instrument's validity and reliability test. The basis for making decisions on the validity

¹³ Perdana, M. Y. (2021). *Persepsi Guru Pendidikan Jasmani, Olahraga Dan Kesehatan Terhadap Merdeka Belajar di Sekolah Dasar Se-Kapanewon Tepus (Tesis)*. Yogyakarta: Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta.

¹⁴ Jaya, Askar, and Rini Warti. (2022). *STATISTIK PENDIDIKAN: Teori dan Aplikasi SPSS*. Penerbit NEM.

test, according to Janna and Herianto (2021)¹⁵, is the test criteria, namely, if the significance level of the item < 0.05 , the measuring instrument used is valid. The result of validity testing can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Pearson correlation product moment

		Correlations																			TOT AL_ NIL AI
		S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S1 0	S1 1	S1 2	S1 3	S1 4	S1 5	S1 6	S1 7	S1 8	S1 9	S2 0
TOT AL_ NIL AI	Pearson Correlat ion	.86 3**	.86 3**	.79 2*	.22 4	.86 3**	.86 3**	.67 0*	.52 1	.86 9**	.92 5**	.86 3**	.80 9**	.86 3**	.86 1**	.92 5**	.86 1**	.92 8**	.92 5**	.86 1**	.86 1**
	Sig. (2- tailed)	.00 3	.00 3	.01 1	.56 3	.00 3	.00 3	.04 8	.15 0	.00 2	.00 0	.00 3	.00 8	.00 3	.00 3	.00 0	.00 3	.00 0	.00 0	.00 3	.00 3
	N	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9

**, Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*, Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The table above is the Correlation Product Moment table. This table helps us know the significant value (2-tailed) used to measure a research instrument's validity. From the table above, the researcher can conclude that the first questionnaire question is valid because of the sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.003, less than 0.05; the second is valid because of sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.003, less than 0.05; the third is valid because of sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.011, less than 0.05; the fourth is invalid because of sig. (2-tailed) is 0.563, more than 0.05; the fifth is valid because of sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.003, less than 0.05; the sixth is valid because of sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.003, less than 0.05; the seventh is valid because of sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.048, less than 0.05; the eighth is invalid because of sig. (2-tailed) is 0.150, more than 0.05; the ninth is valid because of sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.002, less than 0.05; the tenth is valid because of sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.000, less than 0.05; the eleventh is valid because of sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.003, less than 0.05; the twelfth is valid because of sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.008, less than 0.05; the thirteenth is valid because of sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.003, less than 0.05; the fourteenth is valid because of sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.003, less than 0.05; the fifteenth is valid because of sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.000, less than 0.05; the sixteenth is valid because of sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.003, less than 0.05; the seventeenth is valid because of sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.000, less than 0.05; the eighteenth is valid because of sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.000, less than 0.05; the nineteenth is valid

¹⁵ Janna, N. M., & Herianto, H. (2021). Konsep uji validitas dan reliabilitas dengan menggunakan SPSS. *Jurnal Edukasi*, 10(2), 147-162.

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because of the sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.003, less than 0.05; the twentieth is valid because of sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.003, which is less than 0.05. Furthermore, it can be concluded that out of twenty questions, there are eighteen valid questions, and the other two are invalid. Moreover, after testing the validity, the researcher did the reliability testing. The result of reliability testing can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. The Result of Cronbach Alpha Calculation

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.976	18

The table above is Cronbach's alpha table. This table is used to determine the reliability of a research instrument. From the table above, According to Janna and Herianto (2021), the basis for making decisions for the reliability test is $r_{\text{count}} > r_{\text{table } 5\%}$. Because the subjects in this research are nine people, the r_{table} of 5% is 0.666. Furthermore, from the table above, it can be concluded that the researcher's data is reliable because the value of the r_{count} in column Cronbach's alpha is 0.976, which is higher than 0.666 ($r_{\text{table } 5\%}$). The researcher confirmed that the research data was valid and reliable.

After the analysis carried out by the researcher, from the calculation of each question, it can be seen that the minimum ideal personal score is 9, the ideal maximum score is 45, the ideal mean is 27, and the ideal standard deviation is 6. Then make a table of the interval range of the problem as follows:

Table 4. Interval range in question

No.	Range	Category
1.	$36 < X$	Very good
2.	$30 < X \leq 36$	Good
3.	$24 < X \leq 30$	Good enough
4.	$18 < X \leq 24$	Bad
5.	$X \leq 18$	Very bad

Table 5. The Total Score of Every Question

Question	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	S11	S12	S13	S14	S15	S16	S17	S18	S19	S20
Sum	41	41	38	35	41	41	35	35	38	40	41	38	41	39	40	39	38	40	39	39

Tables 4 and 5 show the interval range in the question table and the total score of every question table. The interval range in the question table determines the score category obtained in

each question. Furthermore, the total score of every question is listed in the table below. In the first question the score is 41 which when implemented in the column of the interval range that has been made gets the first category which is very good, in the second question gets a very good category because the score is 41, in the third question gets a very good category because the score is 38, in the fourth question got a good category because the score was 35, in the fifth question got a very good category because the score was 41, in the sixth question got a very good category because the score was 41, in the seventh question got a good category because the score was 35, in the eighth question got a good category because the score was 35, in the ninth question got a very good category because the score was 38, in the tenth question got a very good category because the score was 40, in the eleventh question got a very good category because the score was 41, in the twelfth question got a very good category because the score was 38, in the thirteenth question got a very good category because the score was 41, in the fourteenth question got a very good category because the score was 39, in the fifteenth question got a very good category because the score was 40, In the sixteenth question, it gets a very good category because the score is 39; in the seventeenth question, it gets a very good category because the score is 38; in the eighteenth question, it gets a very good category because the score is 40; in the nineteenth question, it gets a very good category because the score is 39; and in the twentieth question, it gets a very good category because the score is 39.

Moreover, Table 5 shows that the average answer to questions about teaching modules contained in questions one to ten is 38.5, categorized into range number 1, which is $36 < X$, categorized as very good. Then the average answer to the question about P5 contained in questions eleven to twelve is 39, which is categorized into range 1, which is $36 < X$ which is categorized as very good.

Because of the twenty questions the researcher has spread, there are two invalid questions, namely four and eight. Then for calculating the overall frequency, the researcher will only use from eighteen questions. The number of answer frequencies sums each person's total answer values processed. Then the researcher found that the ideal minimum score was 18 and the ideal maximum score was 90. While the minimum score obtained is 67, and the maximum score obtained is 90. The overall mean is 79, while the ideal mean (M_i) is 54. The standard deviation obtained is 9. From the results that have been obtained, it can be known the value of the category range as follows:

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Table 6. Interval Range in the Whole Score

Range	Category
$72 < X$	Very good
$60 < X \leq 72$	Good
$48 < X \leq 60$	Good enough
$36 < X \leq 48$	Bad
$X \leq 36$	Very bad

Table 6 is the interval range in the total score. The table is used to know the score category obtained in the total score. Furthermore, from the table, it can be known that the first teacher with a score of 72, or if presented with 80%, is categorized as having a very good perception of the Merdeka Curriculum. The second teacher with a score of 71, or if presented with 79%, is categorized as having a good perception of the Merdeka Curriculum. The third teacher with a score of 90 or, if presented to 100%, is categorized as having a very good perception of the Merdeka Curriculum. The fourth teacher with a score of 88 or, if presented to 98%, is categorized as having a very good perception of the Merdeka Curriculum. The fifth teacher with a score of 83 or, if presented with 92%, is categorized as having a very good perception of the Merdeka Curriculum. The sixth teacher with a score of 67 or, if presented with 74%, is categorized as having a good perception of the Merdeka Curriculum. The seventh teacher with a score of 70, or if presented with 78%, is categorized as having a good perception of the Merdeka Curriculum. The eighth teacher with a score of 90, or if presented to 100%, is categorized as having a very good perception of the Merdeka Curriculum. The ninth teacher, with a score of 78 or presented with 87%, is categorized as having a very good perception of the Merdeka Curriculum. Four teachers have a good perception of the Merdeka Curriculum, and the other five have a very good perception of it.

CONCLUSION

English teachers' perceptions of teaching modules in the Merdeka Curriculum get an average of 38, categorized as very good. Because the value of 38 is included in the first range, which is $36 < X$. which can be detailed, there are seven questions with excellent categories, namely questions number one, two, three, five, six, nine, and ten. In contrast, the other three questions are good categories. Then the perception of English teachers towards P5 in the Merdeka Curriculum gets an average of 39, categorized as very good. Because the value of 39 is included in the first range, which is $36 < X$. which can be detailed ten questions about P5, found at numbers eleven to twenty, all of which are categorized very well. A whole calculation gets a

very good category. This good category, indicated by an average score of 79, is included in the score interval of $72 < X$, where the interval category is very well categorized. In detail, it shows that four teachers have good perceptions, and the other five have very good perceptions.

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