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THE INFLUENCE OF AGE AND GENDER ON READINESS OF EFL TEACHERS IN IMPLEMENTING MERDEKA CURRICULUM IN BANGKA BELITUNG PROVINCE

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to explore English teachers' readiness to implement Merdeka curriculum which focused on three aspects of readiness: emotive-attitudinal, cognitive, and behavioral. It investigates whether teachers' readiness in implementing Merdeka curriculum varies by age and gender. This study used quantitative research in the form of survey design. The samples of the study were 179 English teachers at senior and vocational high schools in Bangka Belitung Province, Indonesia. The data were collected from 68 items of the questionnaire, consisting of 26 items for emotive-attitudinal dimensions, 28 items for cognitive dimensions, and 14 items for behavioral dimensions. Descriptive statistics

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Yuliana, A., Mwakapemba, J. L., & Widyantoro, A. (2025). The influence of age and gender on readiness of teachers in implementing *Merdeka* curriculum in Bangka Belitung Province. *JEELS*, *12*(1), 81-108. **DOI**: 10.30762/jeels.v12i1.3886

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and MANOVA were computed and analyzed using Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS 26.0. The findings of the study showed that all of the teachers shared a moderate level of readiness in implementing Merdeka curriculum. Teachers' readiness in implementing Merdeka curriculum showed a statistically significant difference among different age groups of teachers. However, there was no significant difference between male and female teachers' readiness. The findings of this study suggest that while English teachers in Bangka Belitung Province exhibit a moderate level of readiness for implementing Merdeka curriculum, their preparedness may require further support, particularly in specific dimensions of readiness. The significant differences in readiness across age groups indicate that younger and older teachers may have varying needs in terms of training and professional development.

Keywords: *age differences, gender differences, Merdeka curriculum, EFL teachers' readiness*

INTRODUCTION

Curriculum plays a crucial role in the educational process. It is designed as an educational design and plays a vital role in all elements of learning activities. The curriculum serves as the lifeblood or heart of the educational process in schools, empowering future students (Tamami, 2016). In Indonesia, the curriculum has changed and developed over the years, from 1947 to 2020. Curriculum adjustments are aimed to enhance the standards of instruction in schools to more effectively align with the demands and expectations of the community as the end users of graduates (Simanjuntak, 2021). Moreover, a good curriculum in the world of education that continues to develop will bring about a positive effect on personality because the curriculum is so important in educational success. Curriculum development constantly employs a variety of philosophies, methods, and methodologies that are tailored to the needs of educational institutions (Ramadani et al., 2021). This indicates that the curriculum

is intended to provide high-quality output and to be relevant to the development or future events. In addition, curriculum development occurs as a result of curriculum revision or reorganization as a consequent of the inadequacy of the existing or previous curriculum in effectively addressing broader issues (Igbokwe, Mezieobi, & Eke, 2014). Curriculum development in Indonesia happens to enhance educational standards by embracing advancements in science and technology (Darwisah, 2020).

In 2020, the Indonesian government introduced a new curriculum for all levels of education. The Republic of Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture introduced a new concept in the educational world, namely "Freedom to Learn (*Merdeka belajar*)" which was built-in as a result of the problems in the educational field, particularly in the context of empowering all humans, resulting in various educational system adjustments (Baro'ah, 2020). The idea of "freedom to learn" is described as offering as many free learning possibilities that are feasible for students to learn in a peaceful environment, pleasant, and relaxed manner based on their innate talents and without becoming subjected to pressure and compulsion (Abidah et al., 2020). Furthermore, the concept of a *Merdeka* curriculum addresses the challenges faced during the learning process by providing educators with support in administration and giving them the freedom to develop and evaluate student learning. It also addresses the various difficulties educators encounter, such as preparing lesson plans (Yamin & Syahrir, 2020). Benu and Marzuki (2024), defined *Merdeka* curriculum as an educational approach that permits students to gain a comprehensive understanding of fundamental concepts and skills through a variety of learning activities integrated into the curriculum. According to Nugraha (2022), *Merdeka* curriculum is a flexible curriculum for combining educational modules to construct curriculum.

Merdeka curriculum serves as the curriculum that government uses to combat learning loss. When compared to Curriculum 2013, *Merdeka* curriculum includes numerous differences. In the official

website of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, the main characteristics of *Merdeka* curriculum are: learning is conducted through a project-oriented methodology to improve interpersonal skills and reinforce the Pancasila Student Profile, the material taught concentrates on the essential's material, learning is conducted flexibly according to the students' abilities. *Merdeka* curriculum emphasizes several important aspects of education in Indonesia, the first of which is the development of national character (Marlina, 2022). *Merdeka* curriculum seeks to cultivate a robust and distinctive national character, ensuring that learners develop a commendable character and are prepared to deal with upcoming challenges. The second is to improve the learning quality. *Merdeka* curriculum provides students with enhanced creative and enjoyable educational experiences, which is supposed to boost students' enthusiasm and motivation to learn. The third is to stay relevant to contemporary trends. *Merdeka* curriculum is structured to evolve alongside advancements, enabling students to keep up with and benefit from emerging technological and scientific developments. Fourth, it serves as a component of the self-directed learning endeavor. *Merdeka* curriculum seeks to offer students more opportunities to learn and develop based on their passions and abilities.

Successful adoption of *Merdeka* curriculum demands substantial effort and active participation from every stakeholder, such as school principals, teachers, administrative staff, students, parents, communities, and government entities, to achieve the curriculum's objectives. Sufficient support and resources are essential to guarantee that students have the opportunity to select and engage in effective and meaningful educational activities (Bungawati, 2022; Fakih Khusni et al., 2022; Ramadina, 2021). Implementation of the true curriculum is not as easy as imagined, because the framework of *Merdeka* curriculum encompasses several key elements, including the coordination methods, the goals intended for instruction, the phases of teaching, learning, assessment, and ultimately the way the

curriculum will prepare students for the future (Thura & Khaing, 2020). Moreover, teachers play a crucial role in the effective implementation of *Merdeka* curriculum within schools. To successfully perform *Merdeka* curriculum and achieve the intended learning objectives, teachers must adequately prepare themselves. This aligns with the statement from Lam et al. (2013) that teachers hold the key to successful curriculum reform implementation. However, integrating the previous curriculum with the current curriculum presents challenges for teachers. Readiness is required to engage with this issue. Readiness is necessary as a supportive factor for individuals to progress and find meaning in their situation (Ramdani et al., 2021). In additional detail, readiness is the ability to respond to something presented, and having readiness makes responding easier (Jannah, Bustaman, & Yahya, 2020).

Furthermore, readiness is an individual's entire condition that prepares the person to react or respond in a particular manner to specific events. Teachers' readiness in the teaching process can alternatively be defined as a teachers' teaching state. This condition might manifest itself in the physical and emotional status of the teacher. According to this, teachers' readiness is a condition of teachers that demonstrates a balance of physical, mental, and experiential maturity. Teachers' readiness must align with the appropriate curriculum to ensure that education effectively produces a well-educated generation (Petko et al., 2018). Teachers must be prepared to deliver the learning process in order to attain objectives in their professional activities. Consequently, before beginning the learning process, a teacher must make several preparations.

In fact, teachers play a vital role in the successful implementation of the curriculum. Meanwhile, the execution of the curriculum according to the design takes some readiness, especially the readiness of the implementers (Amanda & Dewi, 2022). Therefore, it is important to know more about the teachers' readiness in facing the curriculum changes. This study assesses teachers' readiness utilizing a holistic model of learning readiness developed by Maddox

et al. (2000) that is based on the conceptual framework of Bandura's social learning/social cognitive theory. Maddox et al. (2000) divided readiness into three dimensions/domains, which are: emotive-attitudinal, cognitive, and behavioral readiness. Emotive-attitudinal readiness includes emotional readiness as a responsibility to fulfill a job, enthusiasm for the work, willingness to adapt to job as needed, comfort and independence in accomplishing their jobs, and an appreciation for the intrinsic value of the job (Angraeni & Yusuf, 2022; Bachtiar et al., 2022; Neolaka, 2021; Novianti et al., 2020; Maddox et al., 2000). Cognitive readiness is a cognitive skill and critical thinking necessary for effective job performance, self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses, the ability to establish links between the job and practical applications in everyday life, recognition of self-worth and willingness to fulfill job responsibilities, and the capacity to integrate concepts and tools from diverse scientific disciplines. Meanwhile, behavioral readiness includes the willingness to collaborate with colleagues, and the ability to effectively manage time in order to achieve goals aligned with their responsibilities (Angraeni & Yusuf, 2022; Bachtiar et al., 2022; Neolaka, 2021; Novianti et al., 2020; Maddox et al., 2000).

Since *Merdeka* curriculum has become a recent trend in the field of education, many researchers were interested in exploring more about *Merdeka* curriculum, especially in terms of teachers' preparedness for its implementation. Many of the studies focused on the teachers' preparedness to apply *Merdeka* curriculum in terms of general (Jamilah et al., 2023; Ibrahim et al., 2022), mathematics teacher readiness (Apriyani, 2022; Kurnia & Novaliyosi, 2023), elementary schools (Nurzen, 2022; Suardana et al., 2022; Triayomi et al., 2022). These studies were only focused on the readiness term without seeking the factors that may influence the teachers' readiness itself. Therefore, this study is interested in discovering, among other factors, how age and gender influence the readiness of teachers to implement *Merdeka* curriculum based on the recommendation from Dewi (2024),

who recommended to pay more attention to some factors that influence the teachers' readiness.

Variations in teachers' ages may influence their readiness to adapt to new challenges presented by *Merdeka* curriculum. In term of technological readiness, Alazzam et al. (2012) found no significant effects of age on educators' ICT preparedness. However, the study conducted by Wambiri and Ndani (2016) showed different result, which was younger teachers held more favorable beliefs and attitudes regarding the effectiveness of computers compared to their older counterparts. These different results indicate that different condition of teachers may provide different levels of their readiness to change. Thus, this study would examine the differences of teachers' readiness for *Merdeka* curriculum implementation based on teachers' age.

Similar to the age differences, gender may also serve as a significant factor that influences teachers' readiness to implement *Merdeka* curriculum. Many previous studies took teacher gender differences as contextual information about the respondents in predicting the teachers' readiness to engage with new issues in educational field, such as Scherer et al. (2023), who revealed there were differences in teachers' online teaching and learning readiness among different gender of teachers. In a different case, Alazzam et al. (2012) also demonstrated that teacher gender differences had a notable impact on teachers' ICT readiness. Although many previous studies have done the research on teachers' readiness in adapting new issues in education, there have been few studies that attempt to differentiate the level of teachers' readiness based on gender. Therefore, this study would also try to seek the influence of teachers' gender toward their readiness for *Merdeka* curriculum implementation.

METHOD

Research Design

Quantitative research in the form of survey design was utilized in this study. According to Creswell (2018), survey research is

a statistical test that uses a survey to describe attitudes, opinions, and behaviors in order to determine individual perspectives. This research used a survey design in order to portray trends related to some issue, as its main objective of this study was to explore the influence of age and gender differences towards teachers' readiness to implement *Merdeka* curriculum. The survey used was a cross-sectional survey, which was completed in a single point in time.

Population and Sample

The population of this study comprised all English teachers at Senior and Vocational high schools of both public and private school who have implemented *Merdeka* curriculum in Bangka Belitung province, Indonesia. The population includes 298 English teachers, of whom 72 are male and 107 are female while researchers utilized simple random sampling to select the sample for this study, which is a form of probability sampling technique. This kind of sampling technique ensures all individuals within the population have an equal and independent opportunity to be included as part of the research sample (Gay et al., 2012). At the end, 179 English teachers in Bangka Belitung were used as the participants in this study. Furthermore, the researchers categorized the participants based on their age group and gender. The detailed information is presented below.

Table 1. The distribution of participants by age

No	Age Group	Number of Teachers
1	20 – 34 years old	84
2	35 – 49 years old	72
3	50 – 64 years old	23
Total		179

Table 2. The distribution of participants by gender

No	Gender	Number of Teachers
1	Male	72
2	Female	107
Total		179

Data Collection

In this research, questionnaires were used as an instrument to collect the data. The questionnaires were structured as closed-ended questionnaires, allowing respondents to select the option that best reflects their actual circumstances. The researchers distributed the questionnaires through google form. The questionnaires used a Likert scale consists of 4 points; (4) strongly agree, (3) agree, (2) disagree, and (1) strongly disagree. The questionnaires were constructed based on Maddox's et al. (2000) theory. The questionnaire for measuring teachers' readiness consisted of 68 items divided into three sub-dimensions; 26 items for emotive-attitudinal dimension, 28 items for cognitive dimension, and 14 items for behavioral dimension.

Data Analysis

The researchers utilized a variety of quantitative data analysis techniques. First, descriptive statistic was used to present the data obtained from the questionnaires in general in order to explain the English teachers' readiness in implementing *Merdeka* curriculum in terms of emotive-attitudinal readiness, cognitive readiness, and behavioral readiness. The responses from the questionnaire were analyzed by determining the percentage and frequency using Microsoft Excel. Given that this study calculated the frequency and percentage for each item in the questionnaire, the interpretation of the results followed Nurul and Suziyani's (2018) guidelines for percentage score interpretation.

Table 3. Interpretation of percentage score

Percentage Score	Score Interpretation
75% to 100%	High
50% to 74%	Moderate
0% to 49%	Low

Furthermore, MANOVA or Multivariate Analysis of Variance was utilized to detect and compare the differences of teachers' readiness, which were between age and gender of the teachers and their readiness in terms of emotional, cognitive, and behavioral to implement *Merdeka* curriculum. The result of this test was interpreted by referring to the Sig. value. The alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted when the significance value (Sig.) is less than or equal to .05 ($p \leq .05$).

FINDINGS

Demographic Information

The researchers collected two basic background information of the sample. It includes teachers' age and gender. This information would be used as predictor variables in data analysis section. The total sample participated in this research were 179 English teachers from Senior and vocational high school in Bangka Belitung province. The detailed information is elaborated below.

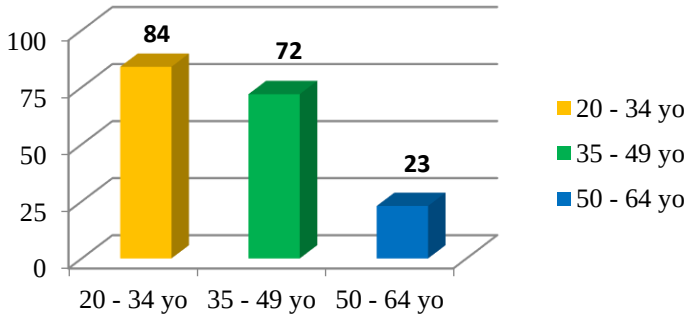


Figure 1. The distribution of teachers by age

Regarding age categories, the researchers divided the participants into three age groups by using interval in basic statistics. The first group consisted of 84 teachers between 20 – 34 years old or 46.90% from the total participants. The second group consisted of 72 (40.20%) teachers in age between 35 – 49 years old. The last group which was the smaller group consisted of 23 teachers between 50 – 64 years old, or took only 12.90% from the total participants. Thus, most

of the participants in this research were in age between 20 – 34 years old.

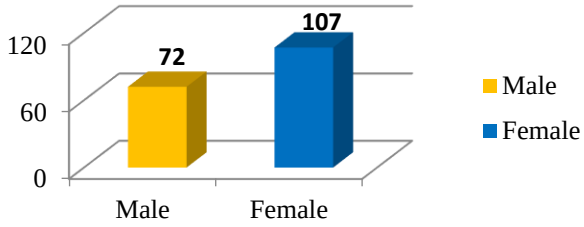


Figure 2. The distribution of teachers by gender

Based on the figure above, it can be seen that there were more female teachers than male teachers. The number of male teachers was 72 (40.20%) of the total participants. Meanwhile, there were 107 female teachers represents 59.80% of the overall number of teachers involved in this research.

Teachers' Readiness in Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum

In order to understand the extent of the teachers' readiness in implementing *Merdeka* curriculum, a survey with 68 questions was given to the participants. The description and distribution of the data are presented below.

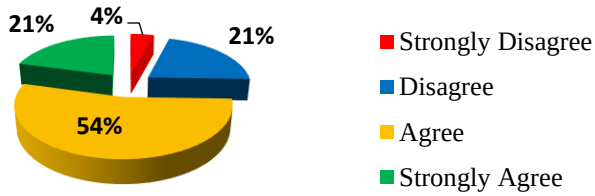


Figure 3. The percentage of teachers' readiness in General

From the figure above, it can be described that the English teachers in senior and vocational high school in Bangka Belitung were fairly ready to implement *Merdeka* curriculum with the total of positive response being 9072 or 73%. Meanwhile, the negative response was just 3100 or 27%. In addition, the highest answer was in

the 'agree' scale which meant that the teachers had always showed almost good readiness in implementing *Merdeka* curriculum. Furthermore, the detailed distribution for each aspect of teachers' readiness is presented below.

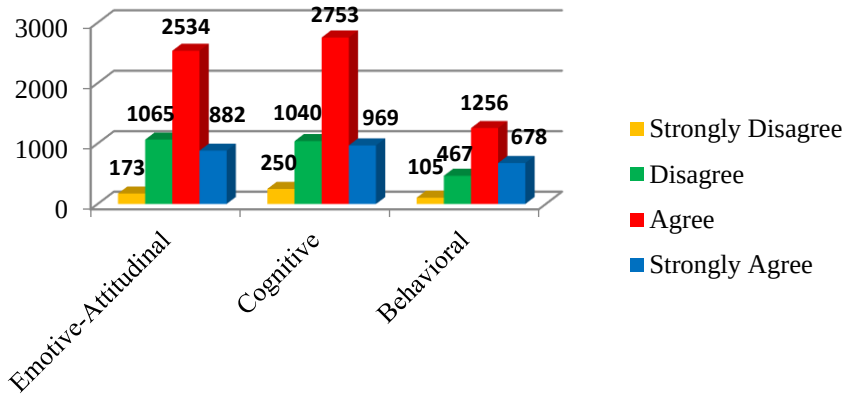


Figure 4. The distribution for each aspect of teachers' readiness

Based on the figure above, the teachers showed that they had the high result in all aspects of readiness. It can be found from the distance of the 'agree' and 'strongly agree' scale with other scales in each aspect. For overall result, the teachers showed that they had the highest readiness in terms of cognitive. They showed the highest result for the item "*In the implementation of Merdeka curriculum, it is in my power to decide how it will be implemented*". Furthermore, the teachers also shared that they "*have sufficient knowledge about the use of teaching aids to facilitate student understanding about the lesson content based on Merdeka curriculum*" and "*have the ability to formulate the learning objectives for my English class based on Merdeka curriculum concepts and rules*". In the aspect of emotive-attitudinal, the teachers showed the highest result in the item "*I am ready to receive feedback from parents, colleagues, school administrators regarding the implementation of Merdeka curriculum in my English class*". Lastly, for behavioral readiness aspect, the teachers shared that they always "*continuously improve themselves in order to improve their students' learning process and to achieve the educational goals*".

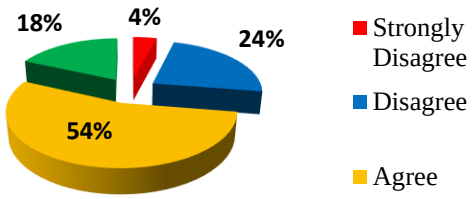


Figure 5. The percentage of teachers' readiness based on age (20 – 34)

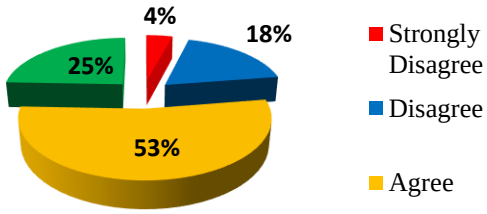


Figure 6. The percentage of teachers' readiness based on Age (35 – 49)

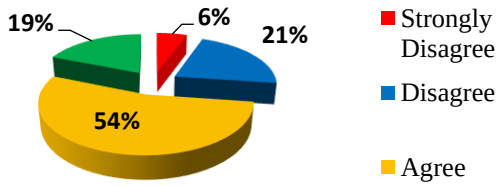


Figure 7. The percentage of teachers' readiness based on Age (50 – 64)

In this research, researchers divided the group of age into three groups. Based on all of age groups, the respondents showed good responses related to their readiness in implementing *Merdeka* Curriculum. It was proven by the data gathered above. The first group showed 72% positive response, the second group showed 78% positive response, and the last group showed 73% positive response. There were some negative response related to the their level of readiness in implementing *Merdeka* Curriculum but all of age group just showed about 20 percent from the total of response.

In addition, to emphasize the data gathered, the data distribution concerning all aspects of teachers' readiness to implement *Merdeka* curriculum was presented in the figures below.

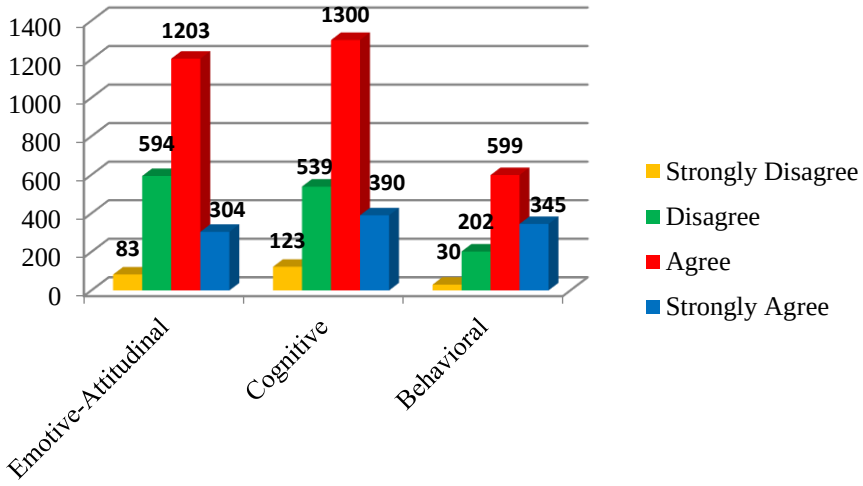


Figure 8. The distribution of each aspect of teachers' readiness based on age (20 - 34)

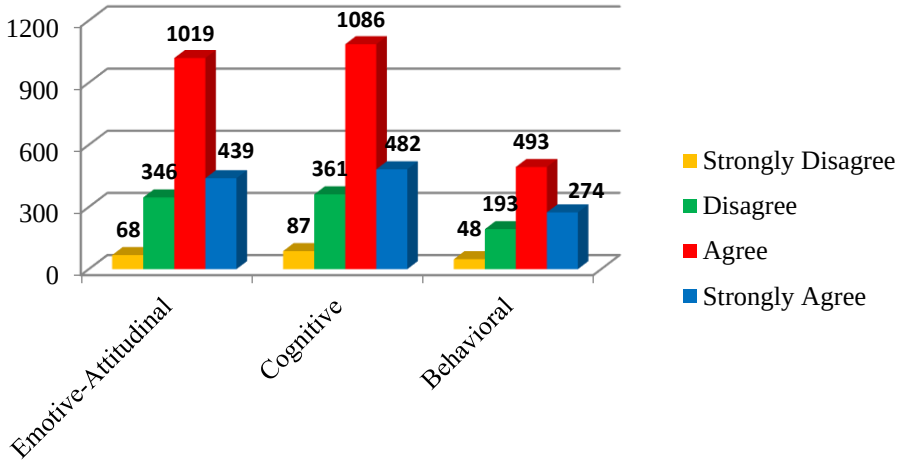


Figure 9. The distribution for each aspect of teachers' readiness based on age (35 - 49)

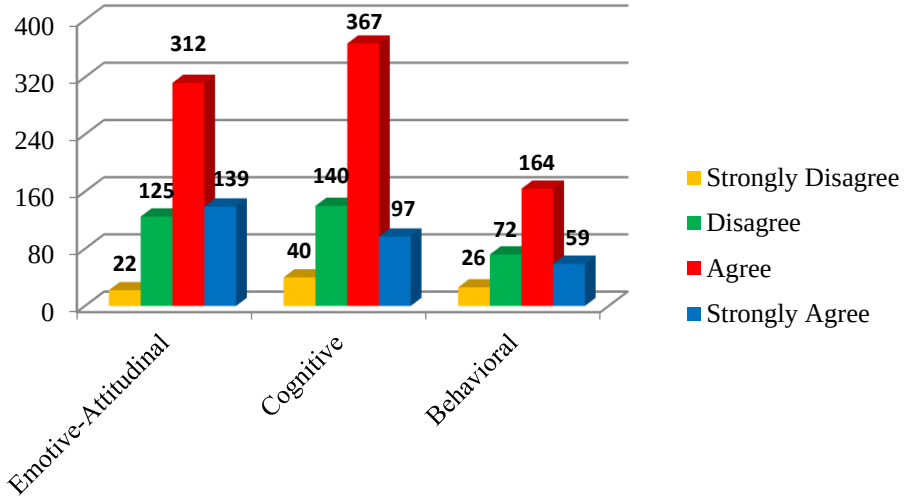


Figure 10. The distribution for each aspect of teachers' readiness based on age (50 - 64)

The data presented in all the figures above indicated that teachers, based on their age groups, demonstrated a high level of readiness in terms of emotive-attitudinal, cognitive, and behavioral aspects. The data in the figure above showed all age groups had the same point of view related to the aspects in readiness; cognitive aspect took the first place in readiness, emotive-attitudinal aspect is the second, and the last is behavioral aspect. Respondents in the age group of 20-34 years old had power *"to decide how it will be implemented in the implementation of Merdeka curriculum"*. The data proved that there were 75 respondents who selected favorable answer and only 9 respondents who selected negative answer.

In line with first group of age, the second group which consists of teachers in the age group of 35-49 years old stated that they were ready *"to receive feedback from parents, colleagues, school administrators regarding the implementation of Merdeka curriculum in their English class"*. However, in behavioral aspect there were some teachers who gave negative response related to their capability *"to create schedules*

for themselves and stick to them". It was proven by 30 teachers who selected negative answer.

Related to behavioral aspect, the oldest group in this research had problem with their colleagues *"for ensuring that students have fun and meaningful learning experiences during the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum"*. 11 teachers from 23 teachers gave negative answer related to this item. However, in emotional aspect, the respondents gave the positive perspective in item *the Merdeka curriculum helps to cultivate students' comprehensive quality and innovative ability to solve problems* and *Merdeka curriculum helps to cultivate students' cooperation ability, sense of responsibility and team spirit.*

Furthermore, the test of MANOVA was conducted to examine whether the teachers' readiness to implement *Merdeka* curriculum differed by different age. Based on the MANOVA test result, the readiness of English teachers for implementing *Merdeka* curriculum shows a statistically significant difference differs by teachers' age. The table shows the sig. value of Wilks' Lambda was .006, which was lower than .05, Wilks' $\Lambda = .901$, $F\ (6,348) = 3.112$, $p < .05$.

Teachers' Readiness based on Gender

The data from 68 questions in the readiness questionnaire was used to analyze teachers' readiness to implement *Merdeka* curriculum based on their gender. The description and distribution of the data are presented below.

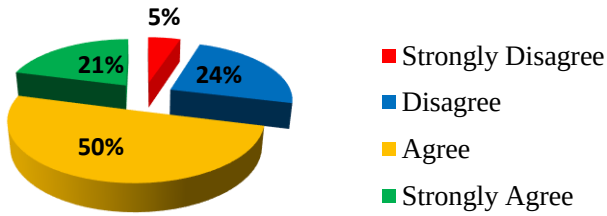


Figure 11. The percentage of male teachers' readiness

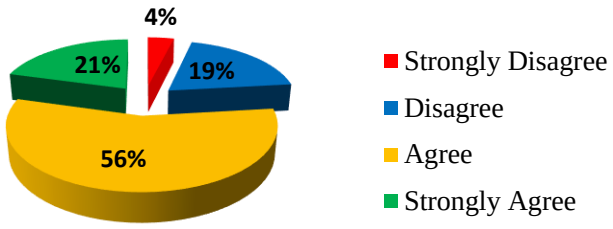


Figure 12. The percentage of female teachers' readiness

The figures above indicate that male teachers demonstrated a moderate level of readiness and female teachers demonstrated a high level of readiness to implement *Merdeka* curriculum with the positive response for male teachers was 3484 or 71% and for female teachers was 5586 or 77%. Meanwhile, the negative response took only 1412 or 29% for male teachers and 1688 or 23% for female teachers. Furthermore, the detailed distribution for each aspect of teachers' readiness based on gender is presented below.

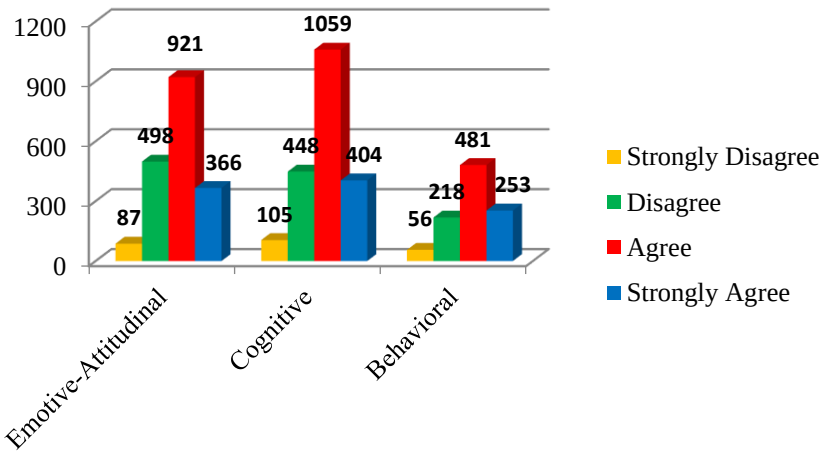


Figure 13. The distribution for each aspect of male teachers' readiness

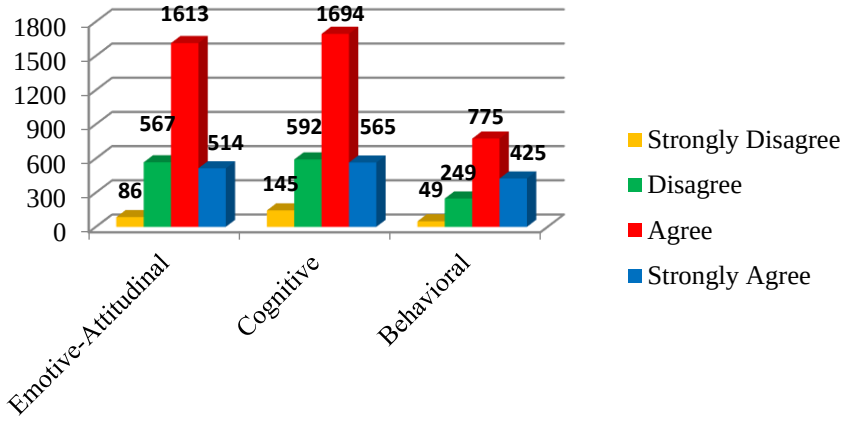


Figure 14. The distribution for each aspect of female teachers' readiness

Based on the figures above, it can be concluded that both male and female teachers showed that they had good readiness all aspects of readiness. It is evidenced by the distance of the 'agree' and 'strongly agree' scale with other scales in each aspect. However, among each aspect, the teachers showed the highest result in cognitive readiness. Some of male teachers (63 responses) were "*have the ability to formulate the learning objectives for my English class based on Merdeka curriculum concepts and rules*". Meanwhile, female teachers showed the highest for the item "*I am ready to receive feedback from parents, colleagues, school administrators regarding the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum in my English class*". In contradictory with cognitive readiness, both male and female teachers showed that they not really had a high level of readiness in term of behavioral readiness. Male teachers showed that they rarely "*continuously improve myself in order to improve my students' learning process and to achieve the educational goals*". Further, female teachers also showed low level of readiness in terms on behavioral readiness in the item "*I am able to create schedules for myself and stick to them*".

Based on MANOVA test result, it is evident that all types of test, including Wilks Lambda, show the same result of sig. value which were higher than .05 (.264 > .05). Therefore, it can be concluded

that the first hypothesis is rejected, indicating that there is no statistically significant difference in the readiness of male and female teachers to implement *Merdeka* curriculum. Thus, both male and female teachers exhibit equivalent readiness to implement *Merdeka* curriculum in term of emotive-attitudinal, cognitive, and behavioral readiness.

DISCUSSION

The main purpose of this research was to explore the teachers' readiness in implementing *Merdeka* curriculum in terms of emotive-attitudinal, cognitive, and behavioral readiness. The results were compared by teachers' demographic-related variables; age and gender. The questionnaire that developed from many resources was used to obtain the data in this research. There were 96 items in total, consists of 26 items for emotive-attitudinal dimensions, 28 items for cognitive dimensions, 14 items for behavioral dimensions. Comparing the three aspects of readiness, cognitive readiness had the highest positive responses, while behavioral readiness was the lowest one. However, the teachers perceived high positive response in all aspects of readiness (73% positive response). It indicates that the teachers had moderate level of readiness in implementing *Merdeka* curriculum. This overall result is in line with the result from Afriani et al. (2023); Suardana et al. (2022); Tricahyati and Zaim (2023), who got the result of teachers' readiness in the fairly good category, even it is still need the improvement. This current study added a new result to the case of teachers' readiness to implement *Merdeka* curriculum, which was in the moderate level.

Taking from cognitive readiness, the teachers believed that they "*have the ability to formulate the learning objectives for their English class based on Merdeka concepts and rules*" and "*ability to make lesson plan with all the Merdeka curriculum aspects*". This result supported the previous study by Amanda and Dewi (2022), who reported that teachers showed good readiness in the aspect of learning planning, including to formulate the learning objectives as the effect of the

improvement of teachers' perceptions toward new curriculum. However, Rizki and Fahkrunisa (2022) reported the different result, they discovered that many teachers have struggled to develop the lesson plan effectively. It indicates that not all teachers shared the same result; different teachers in different area might give the different result. In conclusion, from these different results it can be concluded that the training provided to teachers on how to implement *Merdeka* curriculum has not been evenly distributed.

In contrast with cognitive readiness, there were 103 teachers who felt "*think Merdeka curriculum has increased teachers' workload*" in emotive-attitudinal readiness. This might present teachers' physical and mental state (Bachtiar et al., 2022), indicates that they are not fully prepared to the changing of curriculum. However, this result is contradictory with research by Ibrahim et al. (2022) that revealed even though the teachers experienced several obstacles in implementing *Merdeka* curriculum, it did not make the teachers stop learning and implementing it, even more eager to participate in every training program. Logically, by participating in every training program, it automatically increases the teacher's workload.

Furthermore, MANOVA was utilized to test whether teachers' readiness in implementing *Merdeka* curriculum in terms of emotive-attitudinal, cognitive, and behavioral readiness differed by teachers' age. This study found a statistically significant difference in teachers' readiness to implement *Merdeka* curriculum differ by teachers' age. The sig. value of Wilks' Lambda was .006, which was lower than .05, Wilks' $\Lambda = .901$, $F\ (6,348) = 3.112$, $p < .05$. In this research, there were three age categories, the first is teachers in age 20 – 34 years old, then teachers in age 35 – 49 years old, and the third is 50 – 64 years old. The teachers in all of age groups shared different point of view related to their level of readiness in all aspects of readiness. They also had the same result related each aspect of readiness, cognitive aspect took the first place in readiness, emotive-attitudinal is the second, then followed by behavioral readiness in the last position.

Comparing to all three age categories, teachers in age 20 – 34 years old had higher positive response in all aspects of readiness which were which were emotive-attitudinal, cognitive, and behavioral readiness compared to two other age categories. Further, in-depth analysis was conducted to compare between three aspects of readiness. The result of MANOVA test showed that only emotive-attitudinal readiness (F (2, 176) = 3.067, p < .05) as the aspect of teachers' readiness in implementing *Merdeka* curriculum that showed a statistically significant difference differed by age. Meanwhile, other aspects, cognitive and behavioral readiness have no significant difference in teachers' readiness among different ages (p > .05). This result supported the result from the research done by Adams et al., (2023), who also revealed the significance difference in teachers' attitude toward inclusive education among different age groups. It can be concluded that the readiness of the younger teachers has good level of readiness rather than the older teachers. On the other hand, the study from Alazzam et al. (2012) discovered different result, they did not find a significant effect of teachers' age on their readiness to integrate ICT in the classroom.

In addition, MANOVA was utilized to test whether teachers' readiness in implementing *Merdeka* curriculum in terms of emotive-attitudinal, cognitive, and behavioral readiness differed by teachers' gender. It revealed that both male and female teachers shared the same level of readiness. The result supported the descriptive data showed that both male and female teachers were in the same voice regarding the level of readiness in implementing *Merdeka* curriculum.

Moreover, the result of this research added into a new list of comparison research among teachers' different gender related to the teachers' readiness to implement *Merdeka* curriculum. This result is inconsistent with the research result from Alazzam et al. (2012); they found that demographic-related variables in terms of gender affects the readiness of teachers to use ICT. However, study from Scherer et al. (2023) reported the same result with this research, the findings of their research indicate the presence of gender differences in teachers'

readiness for online teaching and learning (OTL), highlighting a digital gender divide in the readiness construct.

CONCLUSION

This research examined the readiness level of teachers in implementing *Merdeka* curriculum. This research divided the level of readiness into three aspects which were emotive-attitudinal, cognitive, and behavioral. After recognizing the previous section, it was clear that almost all of the teachers shared that they had moderate level of readiness in implementing *Merdeka* curriculum. Reviewing and comparing to all aspects of readiness, the teachers showed the highest level of readiness in cognitive aspect, the second readiness was emotive-attitudinal, and the lowest level of readiness was behavioral aspect. Therefore, the level of readiness of teacher is in moderate level. Additionally, this study added two demographic information which namely age and gender. Reviewing to the previous section, the readiness based on age perspective showed that the highest readiness was coming from the teachers who were in 20-34 years old. The readiness based on age of teachers also gives the significant result. Furthermore, the level of readiness differed by gender perspective between male and female teachers showed the same voices related to their readiness in implementing independent curriculum and non-significant statistically.

The current study has some limitations. This study did not provide specific information about the schools used whether they are from public schools or from private schools. Between private schools and public schools may certainly provide different views regarding the readiness of teachers in implementing *Merdeka* curriculum. Furthermore, this study involved all teachers who were at the secondary school level (senior and vocational high school) but when analyzing the data, the researchers did not differentiate the views of teachers between senior and vocational high school teachers. Lastly, the researchers did not add the new program in *Merdeka* curriculum which is *Guru Penggerak* as demographic variable in this study.

Considering between teachers who participated in this program and those who did not, of course, they have their own views in terms of their readiness in implementing *Merdeka* curriculum. The future research may use in-depth interview to enrich the data result. In addition, it is suggested that future research should add specific comparisons, for example between senior high school and vocational high school teachers, between private schools and public schools. The presence of a teacher mobilizer program should also be considered as one of the determining aspects in teacher readiness in implementing *Merdeka* curriculum.

DECLARATION OF AI AND AI-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES

During the development of this article, the authors used AI such as ChatGPT to get good guidance for the work, especially in the introduction, to ensure a well-structured and logical flow of the work. However, all critical analyses, interpretations, and conclusions presented in this article are pure contributions of the authors.

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