
Readiness for change of school principals in the implementation of the *Merdeka Mengajar* platform

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Abstract

The principal's readiness for change is crucial in supporting schools to produce superior students. However, observations at several schools indicate that principals often show limited physical and non-physical development in their institutions. Implementing leadership policies related to innovation, creativity, and technology has been suboptimal, and there is a lack of genuine planning for organizational improvement. This research employed a qualitative descriptive method with data collected through interviews. Findings revealed that implementing the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform at Gugus III SD Negeri Kuranji reflected a superficial understanding without in-depth learning, resulting in minimal impact on organizational progress. Challenges included inadequate principal competence in using the platform, low motivation due to approaching retirement, and insufficient time to learn because of professional and personal duties. Consequently, the lack of readiness for change hinders teacher development, limits innovation in teaching, and reduces the effectiveness of reporting and evidence-based practices.

Keywords

Merdeka Mengajar platform, readiness for change, school principals

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Introduction

Education is an important sector affected by disruption or massive global change. The term 'disruption' initially appeared in the economic, business, and industrial sectors in the late 20th century and was finally used in the education sector in the 21st century (Lubis, 2019). Disruption in the education sector is also a consequence of the emergence of these four things. The industrial revolution was marked by the widespread use of digital technology and the development of artificial intelligence. In addition, as in economics, business, and industry, the impact of disruption to education is also related to Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity (VUCA) (Lemoine et al., 2017). These four aspects are also challenges faced by the education sector. Furthermore, this disruption impacts the education system and management from the central to the lowest levels of education units (Bozkurt et al., 2020; Maringe & Chiramba, 2022).

Readiness for change is a psychological state interpreted as an attitude, belief, and intention to make changes (Weiner, 2020). The changes made are helpful for an organization to stay alive and run according to the demands of each organization (Nayal et al., 2002). They can contribute to the effectiveness of implementing organizational changes (Armenakis et al., 2000). The readiness to change in individuals can significantly reduce resistance to change. On the other hand, low levels of individual readiness in the change process are the main factors causing change implementation failure. Low readiness will make employees view change as undesirable and needing to be avoided, even refusing to participate in the change implementation planning process (Allaoui & Benmoussa, 2020). Referring to this, organizations need to ensure that everyone has the need and readiness to change, and as a first step, this is through a readiness to change assessment (Armenakis et al., 2000). In this case, educational institution leaders need to assess readiness for change before introducing it to identify the gap between the initiative regarding the change they propose and employees' expectations.

The results of the researchers' observations during several visits to schools showed several things that were not in line with the concept of readiness for change, namely (a) after being in the position of principal, no significant development or change is seen in either physical or non-physical aspects in the school he leads; (b) the principal's less-than-optimal movement is especially evident in policy ideas, innovation, information technology, and creativity; (c) the principal outlines no visible plan for organizational improvement, nor does it indicate how to work together; (d) reasoning; and (e) critical and creative. Changes in organizations or educational institutions impact the specific areas that have been altered and the other related components. These components greatly affect employee changes. As a result of these changes, employees must change from their original state to a new state. Employees who are not ready to change will find it more challenging to achieve success in change (Hameed et al., 2019). Therefore, it is necessary to be prepared to face change (readiness for change).

Readiness for change encompasses an individual's belief in the leader's commitment to successfully implementing changes, their self-efficacy (confidence in their abilities), and their perceived personal benefit (Runa, 2023). In line with that, readiness for change can be

interpreted as a psychological state that is interpreted as an attitude, belief, and intention to face change (Weiner, 2020). Readiness for change is achieved by preparing all human resources to accept change because, in essence, humans become objects and subjects of change. Human change begins by changing the mindset that tends to maintain the status quo so that human resources realize and understand the importance of change and are willing to change (Martin, 2017).

Armenakis et al. (2000) concluded that readiness for change contributes to the effectiveness of implementing change. From several definitions of readiness for change according to experts, it can be concluded that it is an individual's attitude, belief, and intention to make changes.

The formation of these beliefs, attitudes, and intentions is the result of five perceptions or beliefs, namely:

- a. Change is necessary because there is a difference/gap between the current condition and what is desired/should be (discrepancy). This perception raises awareness of the need for change. This increases the acceptance of the change plan and the motivation to act according to one's involvement.
- b. The change is appropriate. This perception can foster confidence that they are doing something right and certain, and increase self-confidence in their abilities.
- c. Organizations and the individuals within them can face the change (efficacy). Belief in this will increase motivation and make one more willing to give more effort than expected, thus increasing the effectiveness of the change effort.
- d. There is inadequate support from organizational leaders (principal support). This perception confirms the commitment from the leadership, which reduces the sense of uncertainty due to change and increases commitment to achieving the goals of change.
- e. Change will provide benefits/advantages (valence). Readiness for change is the degree to which employees hold positive views about the need for organizational change (change acceptance) and the degree to which employees believe such change will benefit them and the organization.

One of the efforts to optimize project activities in each school is to shape the nation's character to achieve the student profile. Pancasila is by instilling an entrepreneurial spirit. Arif (2022) explained that the formation of attitudes or characters of everyone, especially students, as the nation's next generation, needs to be instilled as early as possible. According to Eccles and Roeser (2015), education plays a role as a guide to all natural forces in students so that students can achieve success both individually and in the community. Students have an important role in society as revolutionaries. Since students have the spirit, ability, and competitiveness that are considered capable of developing and building the balance of the Indonesian economy, entrepreneurship on the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform can provide experience and learning about how to have a reliable entrepreneurial character. According to the driving school curriculum, which focuses on the arts and the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform, students' innovation and creativity should be nurtured to transform their ideas into products that can be produced and marketed in the community. Students learn to determine the various types of businesses that will be worked on and prepare a budget plan. Makhmudova (2022) explained that art and culture are creative, active, and innovative processes of the soul and mind, and they can find something different, new, and valuable for many people.

Based on an interview with the principal of SMA Negeri 13 Pekanbaru on March 1, 2023, regarding face-to-face learning after the Covid-19 pandemic, it affects students' interest and motivation to carry out the face-to-face learning process. The factors that cause low interest and motivation of students to carry out face-to-face learning are that they are accustomed to learning delivered through the network (online). Students are dependent on gadgets and influenced by the time of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly impacted students' interests, aspirations, and learning outcomes, making them less motivated to attend school to participate in the face-to-face learning process. Referring to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (2022), the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform is one of the co-curricular activities whose theme is Arts and Culture. The arts and culture theme fosters students' appreciation for the arts, enhances their interests and ideals, improves their learning outcomes, and boosts their motivation to return to school.

Methodology

This research adopted a qualitative descriptive approach to explore and analyze the readiness for change in implementing the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform within the context of elementary schools, particularly in Gugus III SD Negeri Kuranji. The qualitative descriptive method was chosen because it allows researchers to capture detailed perspectives, experiences, and practices from principals, teachers, and students regarding implementing *the Merdeka Mengajar* Platform. According to [Bazen et al. \(2021\)](#), qualitative methods are appropriate for examining social phenomena in a natural setting and allow the researcher to obtain in-depth insights into behaviors, attitudes, and perceptions. [Chasokela \(2025\)](#) also emphasized that qualitative research seeks to explore, understand, and interpret a phenomenon by engaging directly with participants in their context.

The main data sources for this research were both primary and secondary. Primary data were gathered through interviews, observations, and documentation during the field visits. Interviews were semi-structured to allow flexibility in probing deeper into issues that arose during the conversations. The informants included the school principal, teachers, and Gugus III SD Negeri Kuranji students. Teachers provided perspectives on the challenges and opportunities of implementing the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform, while students reflected on their learning experiences and changes in their motivation and creativity. The principal's responses were critical in understanding leadership readiness for change and how it shaped the school's approach to adopting *the Merdeka Mengajar* Platform.

Observation was another important method employed in this research. The researcher observed classroom practices, student participation in arts and cultural projects, and interactions between teachers and students. Observations were documented systematically to capture the reality of implementation and identify gaps between policy expectations and practices. For example, the researcher noted students' enthusiasm when engaged in creative projects and the reluctance of some principals to engage fully in the change process.

Documentation analysis included examining school reports, archives, curriculum guidelines, and official documents related to the *implementation of the Merdeka Mengajar* Platform. This allowed the researcher to triangulate findings from interviews and observations and

validate information from different sources. Documentation also offered information about the level of administrative readiness, including how principals and teachers reported their activities on the platform.

The research followed several steps in data collection. First, preliminary visits were made to the schools to establish rapport with participants and explain the study's objectives. After obtaining consent, the researcher scheduled interviews with key informants. Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes and was recorded for accuracy. Notes were also taken to capture nonverbal cues and contextual information. Observations were carried out during project-based learning activities, particularly those related to arts and cultural themes aligned with the Pancasila Student Profile.

Data analysis followed a descriptive and thematic approach. After transcription of the interviews, the data were coded manually to identify recurring themes, patterns, and categories. Thematic analysis helped to group the data into meaningful clusters, such as leadership readiness, teacher motivation, student creativity, and challenges in implementation. [Miles and Huberman's \(1994\)](#) qualitative analysis framework, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, was applied in analyzing the collected data. This iterative process allowed the researcher to continuously refine emerging themes and ensure that the findings accurately represented the participants' experiences.

Several strategies were employed to ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the research. Triangulation was achieved using multiple data collection techniques (interviews, observation, and documentation). Member checking was also conducted by sharing the interview summaries with participants to confirm the accuracy of the data. Prolonged engagement with the research site enabled the researcher to build trust and gain more profound insight into the school culture. An audit trail was maintained to document all research procedures, decisions, and data sources, ensuring transparency in the research process.

Ethical considerations were prioritized throughout the research. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing their identities. The researcher also ensured that participation was voluntary and that informants had the right to withdraw at any research stage. The study was conducted with sensitivity to the school context, ensuring minimal disruption to teaching and learning activities.

Findings

Leadership readiness for change

Leadership readiness is a critical determinant of whether the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform can be successfully implemented in schools. The findings reveal that principals in Gugus III SD Negeri Kuranji demonstrated varied readiness levels, but the level remained low overall. Many principals acknowledged the importance of the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform but struggled to translate this acknowledgement into concrete actions. A recurrent issue observed was the limited digital literacy among school leaders. Some principals admitted to being unfamiliar with operating the platform, depending heavily on teachers or administrative staff for assistance. This dependency weakened their role as leaders of change. Instead of being role models in

adopting *the Merdeka Mengajar* Platform, principals were often seen as passive participants who relied on others to carry out essential tasks.

Another aspect of leadership readiness relates to motivation and professional commitment. Several principals interviewed were close to retirement, influencing their motivation to embrace innovations. They considered the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform a temporary initiative that might not directly benefit them, resulting in limited effort in mastering its functions. This lack of motivation trickled down to the teachers, who often felt unsupported. In addition, principals did not consistently provide strategic direction or monitoring mechanisms for *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform usage, leaving teachers to manage the implementation independently. This hands-off approach created uncertainty among staff and made establishing a culture of innovation within the school difficult.

Observations in the field confirmed that principals often delegated the responsibility of *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform usage to teachers without equipping them with adequate support. This led to inconsistent implementation across classrooms and schools. The gap between policy expectations and leadership actions created frustration among teachers and limited the platform's potential. In essence, leadership readiness was identified as one of the weakest links in the chain of change management, highlighting the urgent need for capacity building among principals. Effective leadership is vital for inspiring confidence, reducing resistance, and ensuring that innovation like *the Merdeka Mengajar* Platform becomes a sustained practice rather than a short-term project.

Teacher motivation and competence

Teachers were more active in *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform implementation than principals, and their motivation varied significantly. Many teachers demonstrated enthusiasm, especially younger ones with stronger digital literacy skills. They embraced the platform as a resource for integrating creative, project-based learning into the curriculum. Teachers reported that the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform provided valuable content for arts and culture themes, which helped them design learning activities aligned with the Pancasila Student Profile. This alignment encouraged teachers to create meaningful experiences for students, where they could combine academic learning with creativity and entrepreneurship.

However, the research also uncovered disparities among teachers. Some senior teachers expressed resistance to using the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform because of their limited digital skills and the perceived complexity of the platform. They considered it an additional burden on top of their existing workload. Interviews revealed frustration about the reporting features, which were seen as time-consuming and not user-friendly. Teachers with limited technological skills struggled to complete the reports accurately, causing delays and lowering their overall motivation. Sometimes, these teachers relied on colleagues or students to help them navigate the platform, creating embarrassment and reduced confidence.

At the same time, several teachers showed remarkable adaptability by seeking peer support or attending informal training sessions organized by colleagues. This collaborative spirit enhanced motivation and competence in some schools, though it was not widespread. Younger teachers often became informal mentors, guiding their senior colleagues through digital reporting and platform usage challenges. This created a positive dynamic in schools

where collaboration was encouraged, but was lacking in other contexts. The findings suggest that teacher readiness for change is moderate but uneven, depending on individual competence, attitudes, and available support. Improving teacher readiness will require structured professional development, ongoing technical assistance, and incentives to fully encourage teachers to integrate the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform into their teaching practices.

Student engagement and creativity

Students emerged as the most enthusiastic participants in implementing the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform. Their engagement in arts and cultural projects was consistently high, and they were willing to explore creativity beyond the traditional classroom environment. For instance, students eagerly participated in projects such as preparing traditional Pekanbaru foods and recycling used goods into sellable items. These activities developed practical skills and boosted their confidence, teamwork, and entrepreneurial spirit. By engaging in such projects, students felt that their learning had direct relevance to real life, which made education more meaningful and inspiring.

Interviews with students revealed they particularly valued the hands-on learning approach encouraged by the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform. They expressed pride in showcasing their projects during exhibitions, and many reported increased motivations to attend school because of these engaging activities. Compared to their passive learning experiences during online classes in the COVID-19 pandemic, the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform projects offered them meaningful participation and visible results. Observations showed that students collaborated effectively in groups, divided tasks, and solved problems. This collaborative environment nurtured essential 21st century skills, including communication, critical thinking, and innovation.

In addition, the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform projects allowed students to connect their learning to real-life contexts. By working with local MSMEs and home industries, students gained exposure to entrepreneurial practices and community engagement. This experiential learning reinforced their creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. Students began to see themselves as learners and as contributors to their community. Overall, student readiness for change was significantly higher than that of principals and teachers, positioning students as key drivers of successful *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform implementation. Their enthusiasm demonstrates the potential of the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform to cultivate innovation and creativity as core elements of education in the *Merdeka* Curriculum.

Challenges in implementation

Despite positive student outcomes, several challenges hindered the full implementation of the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform. A significant challenge was the lack of structured planning and coordination at the school leadership level. Principals did not always provide clear strategies for integrating the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform into daily teaching, which resulted in uneven adoption. Teachers often operated without adequate guidance, relying on their initiative rather than a collective school vision. This lack of direction weakened consistency across classrooms and contributed to varying levels of success.

Technological barriers were another significant obstacle. Not all teachers and students had access to adequate digital devices or stable internet connections, especially in rural areas. This digital divide created inequities in the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform usage quality. Teachers with limited access to technology could not fully use the platform's features, reducing the potential benefits. In addition, some teachers reported insufficient training on navigating the system, leading to errors in reporting and difficulties in uploading evidence of learning outcomes.

Time constraints also emerged as a challenge. Teachers struggled to balance regular curriculum requirements with *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform activities. Administrative responsibilities often pressured them, leaving limited time to effectively plan and execute project-based learning. Furthermore, parents' lack of awareness about the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform reduced their support for students' activities at home. For instance, some parents did not understand the importance of creative projects and discouraged their children from spending too much time on them. These challenges suggest that, while the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform presents significant opportunities, structural, technical, and social obstacles must be addressed to ensure its long-term success and sustainability.

Opportunities for improvement

The findings also revealed several opportunities to enhance readiness for change and improve the implementation of the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform. Strengthening leadership training for principals is an urgent need. Equipping school leaders with digital literacy skills and change management strategies would empower them to provide teachers with more explicit guidance and support. Capacity-building programs should be mandatory and continuous, ensuring principals remain engaged regardless of their career stage. This is especially important for principals approaching retirement, who may feel less motivated to learn new systems.

Professional development should be prioritized for teachers, particularly in digital literacy and innovative pedagogy. Tailored training that addresses teachers' diverse needs would help bridge the gap between those who are proficient and those who struggle with technology. Peer mentoring and collaborative learning groups could also provide sustainable support networks within schools. Encouraging teachers to share best practices would promote a culture of continuous improvement and collective readiness for change.

Students' positive response to the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform should be leveraged by offering them more opportunities for creative expression and real-world application of their projects. Schools could enhance their partnerships with local industries, artisans, and cultural organizations to expand the reach of experiential learning. These collaborations would enhance the quality of projects and increase community involvement. The findings indicate that readiness for change can be strengthened by targeting key stakeholders: empowering principals, supporting teachers, and amplifying student enthusiasm. The *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform can evolve from a policy initiative into a sustainable educational innovation, fostering school creativity and entrepreneurship by addressing these areas.

Overall Readiness for Change

When synthesizing the findings across principals, teachers, and students, it becomes clear that readiness for change in implementing the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform is unevenly distributed. Students consistently demonstrated the highest readiness through motivation, creativity, and active participation. Their engagement highlights the potential of the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform to transform learning into a more meaningful and practical experience. Teachers showed moderate readiness, with enthusiasm tempered by disparities in digital competence and workload challenges. While some teachers thrived, others struggled, resulting in inconsistent classroom practices.

In contrast, principals demonstrated the lowest readiness, which poses a significant risk to the sustainability of the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform. Leadership gaps in digital literacy and motivation undermine the potential for coordinated and effective implementation. Without strong leadership, the responsibility falls disproportionately on teachers, creating stress and inconsistencies in practice. This imbalance highlights the importance of strengthening leadership readiness as a foundation for school-wide change.

Comparing these findings to existing literature reveals similar patterns in other educational contexts. [Armenakis et al. \(2000\)](#) and [Weiner \(2020\)](#) emphasized that readiness for change requires alignment across all levels of an organization. Change efforts often falter when leadership, staff, and participants hold differing readiness levels. The current research confirms this by showing how principals' lack of involvement undermined students' enthusiasm and teachers' moderate readiness. This suggests that future efforts should prioritize leadership engagement as the first step toward systemic improvement.

The research underscores the need for comprehensive strategies to build readiness at all levels. Ensuring principal engagement, supporting teacher competence, and sustaining student enthusiasm will be critical to realizing the full benefits of the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform. Readiness for change is not static but can be nurtured through ongoing training, motivation, and collaboration, ensuring that schools can adapt effectively to educational innovations in the future.

Discussion

Readiness for change that a person has can see business opportunities, gather resources to make decisions, and generate profits to improve welfare. According to [Weisberg \(2016\)](#), art and culture are a person's thoughts when producing innovations in an innovative, creative way in the real world. Meanwhile, [Nudin et al. \(2024\)](#) explained that readiness for change is someone who has a spirit of readiness for change and who applies the art and culture in their life. [Badawi \(2024\)](#) explained epistemologically that entrepreneurship is one of a person's abilities to think creatively and behave innovatively, which is the basis, resource, driving force, goal, strategy, and tips in facing life's challenges. Readiness for change is not only for planning but, more importantly, for doing and realizing the plans in his mind in actions oriented towards success. Based on several opinions above, readiness for change requires creativity, such as having a new mindset and innovation to act to create something new.

The *Merdeka Mengajar* platform proposed by the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Technology provides the broadest possible opportunities for students to learn non-formally with a flexible learning flow that involves the surrounding environment. Students not only receive information through the learning process, but they can also learn about the academic world, which can help students in the learning process at the elementary school level.

The learning process in elementary schools must guide and develop aspects of student life, one of which is through the role of the soul of art and culture in realizing the *Pancasila* Student Profile. The *Pancasila* student profile provides various activities and knowledge outside the academic field. By embracing a readiness for change, schools can select the themes that will be applied to students.

The implementation of strengthening the *Pancasila* student profile with the theme of arts and culture at Gugus III SD Negeri Kuranji consists of the project introduction stage for students until the final stage of the product exhibition. In the initial stage, an introduction is made to the implementation process of the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform for Elementary School Teachers in Gugus III. Kuranji uses diagnostic assessments, which are assessments of the *Merdeka* curriculum carried out specifically to identify or know the characteristics of students, understand the strengths or weaknesses of students when learning something, and obtain results that will later be used as a basis for follow-up, and learn how learning can be designed according to the competencies and conditions of students.

After the teacher gets information about the students' competencies, the teacher continues by providing material about the competencies possessed by the students. It begins with providing information about developing a creative economy for students. A creative economy is the ability to produce/manufacture a valuable item with a high selling price. The teacher directs students to develop their creativity according to their talents and interests, and even in the future, it will become a promising business opportunity for students.

Students can have some opportunities at SD Gugus III Kuranji to develop the creative economy, including the home industry of traditional food processing and turning used goods into high-value goods. The materials given to students are adjusted to their talents and characteristics. Students interested in Pekanbaru traditional food, a characteristic of Pekanbaru souvenirs, are provided with material about Pekanbaru traditional food. Starting from the introduction of types and raw materials of Pekanbaru traditional food, after students recognize the types and raw materials, they are trained on how to process raw materials into food that is ready to be marketed. Likewise, students interested in the opportunities for utilizing used goods are also provided with material to support the development of these creative ideas. At this stage, the school also involves MSME/home industry, which is engaged in traditional food and product-making skills from various goods used in the environment of Gugus III SD Negeri Kuranji.

At this stage, students are allowed to interview MSME/home industry. This stage is a stage of providing supplies to students after being given the material. Students will be given formative one up to formative two as evaluation material. In the formative stage 1, students list classifications of traditional food and products from used goods. Individually, students work on LKPD, and in Formative 2, students list interview questions for MSME/home industries about how the process of making traditional food works. Besides that, students can learn how to make it to sales and what obstacles are experienced by MSME/home industries.

In the next stage, namely the practical stage, students will go directly to the field and adapt and learn to establish communication and conduct surveys of companies or MSMEs/home industries that have been recommended. Students will conduct interviews that have been prepared in Formative 2. After this stage, students start producing traditional foods prepared in groups. Besides producing, students learn how to package attractively and durably in this experimental stage, so that consumers are motivated to buy.

Students perform three formative assessments at this stage, assessing the product-making process and the product itself in traditional Pekanbaru food. After producing, an evaluation is given to market the finished product through a learning outcomes exhibition. At this stage, the teacher will show appreciation to students and, most importantly, criticism and suggestions to students for the perfection of the products that students have produced. The final stage is making a business plan, sales, and sales recording. Then, the teacher continued evaluating and reflecting on the project and conducted a summative assessment. This type of special summative research is an assessment conducted at the end of the semester.

Based on the learning process from the initial to the final stage, students' enthusiasm for the learning process is very high. Students' artistic and cultural souls, such as creativity, innovation, or new ideas, can grow. They were very enthusiastic from the initial stage of introducing the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform to the exhibition of their learning outcomes. This *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform benefits students, as they are taught learning outside of school and do real projects.

The *Merdeka Mengajar* platform trains students' abilities and creativity, and can also reveal the values hidden within them. With the emergence of ambition, innovation, and discipline, students can develop and dare to face obstacles in the real business world, namely in the learning outcomes exhibition held at Gugus III SD Negeri Kuranji.

Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, schools implementing the *Merdeka* curriculum can provide opportunities for students to develop their artistic and cultural spirit through the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform, a strengthening project. Readiness for change in implementing the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform for Gugus III SD Negeri Kuranji principals: what happened was merely understanding what it was, without any serious effort to study it, and ultimately not maximizing its use. Obstacles and opportunities for the readiness for change process in the implementation of the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform occurred due to 1) the competence and skills of the principals being inadequate to open the platform, 2) the motivation of the principals also being very lacking, because they considered themselves to be about to retire, and 3) time to practice and learn also not being enough, because they were busy with the duties of the principal and family. The impact of a lack of readiness for change due to a lack of understanding in implementing the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform would be that individuals would be unable to develop themselves properly and report their performance effectively. This would result in inadequate teaching reporting, presented poorly and uninspiringly, without sufficient evidence of work.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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