

The Effectiveness of the Use of the Independent Teaching Platform to Improve Teacher Competence in the Independent Curriculum in Kindergarten

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ABSTRACT

This research was motivated by observations while it was found that teachers did not understand the Independent Curriculum. The government has provided facilities for the socialization of the Independent Curriculum. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of using the independent teaching platform to improve the competence of kindergarten teachers in the South Bogor District. This research uses a descriptive approach, which has the following characteristics: conducted in a natural context, the research directly interacts with data sources. Data collection techniques with interviews, and filling out questionnaires. The population and sample are kindergarten teachers in South Bogor District. The results of this study show that the Independent Teaching Platform is the right forum to improve the competence, innovation, and creativity of teachers, especially in Kindergarten. This is because the independent teaching platform has provided a variety of features that can help teachers get references, inspiration, and understanding of the independent curriculum. Where the more teachers learn it, the more knowledge and skills they get. Therefore, improving the quality of teachers can be done by maximizing the use of the independent teaching platform. The Independent Teaching Platform is effective in improving teacher competence, it is said to be effective because teachers can easily obtain various up-to-date information about education, by opening applications on their respective smartphones. Teachers can also share information, and inspire each other through inspirational videos. Teachers can give each other positive feedback developing other teachers' works throughout the archipelago.

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Introduction

In the National Education System Law No.20 of 2003, it is stated that education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have religious spiritual strength self-control personality intelligence noble character National education aims to shape the character of the nation such as increasing knowledge, creativity, skills, self-confidence, motivation, and devotion to God Almighty. One of the efforts in that direction, currently, the government, through the Ministry of Education and Culture, has implemented a new curriculum, namely the Merdeka Curriculum. The Merdeka Curriculum is Merdeka Learning. This concept is made so students can explore their respective interests and talents. The Merdeka Curriculum was developed as a curriculum framework that is more flexible, - while focusing on essential material and developing student character and competencies. The main characteristics of this curriculum that support learning recovery are 1) Project-based learning for soft skills and character development according to the Pancasila learner profile. 2) Focus on essential content so that there is sufficient time for in-depth learning of basic competencies such as literacy and numeracy. 3) Flexibility for teachers to conduct differentiated learning according to learners' abilities and make adjustments to the context and local content. (https://kurikulum.kemdikbud.go.id/kurikulum_merdeka/).

To socialize the Merdeka Curriculum to teachers, one them is the creation of the Merdeka Teaching Platform (PMM). Merdeka Mengajar is a technology platform provided to become a driving friend for teachers and principals in teaching, learning, and working. The Merdeka Mengajar platform was built to support the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and assist teachers in getting references, inspiration, and understanding in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. Based on temporary observations, it was found that teachers did not understand the Merdeka Curriculum. The government has provided facilities for socializing the Merdeka Curriculum. Because the Merdeka Curriculum is new, the Merdeka Teaching Platform is a new platform for teachers, and teachers' competence, especially in mastering the Merdeka Curriculum, is still minimal. Another problem is that the Merdeka Mengajar Platform is an independent learning tool for teachers, which means that teachers can access the Merdeka Mengajar Platform anytime and anywhere, still due to various activities as well as a sense of lack of enthusiasm for learning independently, the use of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform has not been optimally accessed by teachers. Therefore, socialization and training are needed for teachers regarding the use of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform as a means of understanding the Merdeka Curriculum. The goal is that teachers can creatively implement the Merdeka Curriculum to support the learning process. Based on the background of this problem, the author is interested in researching "The Effectiveness of Using the Merdeka Mengajar Platform to Improve Teacher Competence in the Merdeka Curriculum in Kindergartens in South Bogor District."

Systematic changes, especially at the school program level, be made to support the teaching and learning process. The curriculum can stimulate student learning, both in the classroom, in the schoolyard, and outside of school. The curriculum determines the achievement of the material taught in the classroom learning process. The curriculum also influences the pace, model, and learning methods used by teachers in the learning process in favor of student needs. The Ministry of Education and Culture has developed an independent research

program as part of efforts to restore learning after a prolonged crisis (Ministry of Education and Culture Research Technology, 2021). The Merdeka Program is a diverse curricular learning program, the content will be more optimal so that students have sufficient time to deepen concepts and strengthen skills (Kemdikbud-Ristekdikti., 2022). Teachers are given the freedom to determine various learning tools or media so that learning can be tailored to student's interests and needs.

Merdeka Mengajar Platform is a technology platform intended for teachers so that they can teach using the Merdeka Curriculum better, and carry out self-development and their careers. The Merdeka platform was built to support the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum so that it can assist teachers in gaining a comprehensive understanding, motivation, reference, and inspiration about the Merdeka Curriculum. This platform is a partner for teachers who are always engaged in teaching, learning, and working (Kemdikbud-Ristekdikti., 2022).

The definition of application according to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) is the application of a system designed to process data using the rules or regulations of the programming language. The Merdeka Mengajar Platform is an educational media in the form of an application that was built to support the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum so that it can assist teachers in getting references, inspiration, and understanding of the Merdeka Curriculum (<https://pusatinformasi.guru.kemdikbud.go.id/hc/id/articles/6090880411673-Apa-Itu-Platform-Merdeka-Mengajar>). The Merdeka Teaching Platform is a teaching platform intended for teachers and principals as a reference in working, developing themselves and creating content in the learning process, to access the features/menus on the Merdeka Teaching Platform, teachers or principals can log in with a Learning Account belajar.id (Kemdikbudristek, 2022). The implementation of the current curriculum is sponsored by a platform that can make it easier for teachers to get references, inspiration, and understanding in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, Merdeka Mengajar Platform is designed to assist the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, this platform can be used as inspiration for teachers and principals in teaching, sharing good practices, learning and inspiring, and innovating work by sharing real actions and evidence of work (Kemdikbudristek, 2022).

The Merdeka Mengajar platform has features that support teachers in developing competencies and the teaching process. These menus include:

1. Independent Curriculum: This contains basic principles and new learning concepts that focus on students, as well as how to apply the Merdeka Curriculum by understanding the profile of Pancasila students and their achievements.

2. Student assessment: This contains a series of diagnostic assessment questions for various phases and subjects, helping you to better understand your students' learning processes and outcomes.

3. Teaching tools: This contains various learning materials to support your teaching activities, such as teaching materials, learning modules, and projects.

4. Self-coaching: This contains briefly organized coaching materials, allowing you to conduct training independently, whenever and wherever you are.

5. Community: This is a place for a wide variety of learning communities across Indonesia that educators can use to share best practices, learning tools, and discussions with other educators.

6. Inspiring videos: This contains inspirational videos designed by the Ministry of Education and experts, serving as a certificate to enhance your competence as an educator.

7. Proof of Work: This is used to document your work, which reflects your performance, competence, and achievements as a teacher or principal.

Teaching and Learning Products include:

1. Student Assessments: This helps teachers to accurately analyze literacy and numeracy diagnostics,- so that teachers can design learning activities that match the learning objectives and learner development process.

2. Teaching Tools: These contain various learning materials, such as teaching materials, learning modules, project modules, or textbooks, to support teaching and learning activities. (Kemdikbud-Ristekdikti., 2022).



Picture 1. Platform Merdeka Mengajar

The Merdeka Mengajar platform provides opportunities for teachers to develop themselves at any time, anywhere according to their competencies (Arnes et al., 2023), because the learning features in the independent teaching platform provide various independent training facilities so that teachers get quality training content (Marisana et al., 2023). Learning content is highly expected by teachers to increase competence in the learning process, PMM can be accessed in the form of web and Android so they can access PMM via computers and smartphones (Susilawati et al., 2021).

Teacher competence can be interpreted as the ability of teachers to carry out their duties and responsibilities by the teacher code of ethics,- and can be interpreted as skills, knowledge, and behavior that must be possessed and mastered by teachers in carrying out their profession (Febriana, 2021). Teacher competence and the ability of teachers to use technology have a positive impact on academic performance and student participation (Jalal Rajeh Hanaysha, Fayez Bassam Shriedeh, 2023). Students who succeed in the learning process are strongly influenced by teacher competence (Sopian, 2016). Increasing teacher competence and professionalism can improve the quality of education (Somantri,

2021). Teacher competence is an accumulation of cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects that appear as responsible behavior carried out by teachers in carrying out their main duties and functions as an educator. In this study, researchers tried to see how the effectiveness of using an independent teaching platform on teacher competence. Based on Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 19 of 2005 concerning National Education Standards Article 28 (Government of Indonesia, 2005), teacher competencies include pedagogical, personality, social, and professional competencies. The following is a description of each of these competencies:

1. Pedagogical Competence

Planning, implementing the teaching-learning process, and conducting assessments are the first three basic competencies that teachers must have to manage learning (Febriana, 2021). Pedagogical competence must be possessed by teachers, which can be interpreted as a teacher's ability to manage students and be able to understand student growth as a whole from various aspects, including moral, emotional, and intellectual. Pedagogical competence consists of the ability to analyze and develop student learning characteristics, be able to continue to innovate be adept at using Computer Information Technology in the learning process, and understand both concepts and theories during the learning process (Somantri, 2021). The pedagogical competencies possessed by teachers include, among others, knowing the educational foundation, understanding and being able to develop diverse student potential, being able to develop a learning curriculum based on student needs and conditions at school, being able to design learning strategies, and being able to use technology in the learning process (Damanik, 2019).

2. Personality Competence

Personality competence is the teacher's ability to show an authoritative, smart, good character so that it can be a role model for students (Susanto, 2016). Students will see teachers as examples and role models for them, so teachers must have a good personality and must provide positive examples in behavior (Marsen, C., Neviyarni, S., & Murni, 2021). Students will feel confident in what the teacher teaches if the teacher has a good mastery of skills and also a good personality, for that a good personality will affect the development of student character (Noor, 2019). Teachers are required to behave positively in order to have a good image, especially in front of students, so that everything said by the teacher will be trusted by students.

3. Social Competence

The next competency that must be possessed by a teacher is social competence, which is the ability of a teacher as a member of society who is able to interact and communicate well with students, peers, student guardians and the general public (Ahmad, 2019). Social competence is a prerequisite and an important element in supporting the duties and functions of teachers,- because teachers are expected to be able to create effective, efficient, and harmonious communication (Mazrur, Surawan, 2022). Teacher social competence is a teacher's capacity to adapt to work demands and communicate effectively and efficiently with students, peers, and community members both in the neighborhood and school environment (Marisana et al., 2023).

4. Professional Competence

Professional competence shows the ability possessed by teachers to understand teaching materials comprehensively, mastering the knowledge contained in the subject curriculum, appropriate materials, and scientific processes and structures (Dudung, 2018). Assessment of teacher competence can be based on five factors, namely: (1) the ability to master the concepts, materials, structures, and scientific mindsets that exist in the subject, (2) the ability to master the basic skill standards of the lessons taught, (3) the ability to develop innovative and fun learning methods and models, (4) the ability to develop sustainable professionalism, and (5) the ability to use technology in learning (Suking, 2020). A teacher's professional competence is a set of skills that must be possessed to successfully carry out his teaching duties (Aulia et al., 2023).

Teacher competencies consisting of pedagogical, personality, social, and professional competencies have been explained comprehensively and integratively, so it is mandatory for teachers to always develop themselves in terms of learning (Susanto, 2016). Teacher competence can be improved through education and training, technical certification tests, academic qualifications, and self-development through learning improvement (Damanik, 2019). This article will review improving teacher competence through bathing training using the Merdeka Mengajar Platform.

Teacher Competence in the Era of Industrial Revolution 4.0. We need the best teachers who understand the changes in the classroom and can utilize technology for learning. Teachers will be more confident and easier to teach using technology, they can turn the classroom into a learning space that attracts students,- and invites students to be creative and innovative (Danik Nuryani, 2020). 4.0 revolution era education is characterized by utilizing technology in learning, known as the cyber system, where this system can be used for learning without space and time constraints continuously Teachers are expected to have high competence to create students who can compete and adapt to the Industrial Revolution 4.0 (LUBIS, 2019). A teacher is expected to be able to deal with student problems in facing revolution 4.0, by developing five competencies, namely educational competence, technology commercialization competence, globalization competence, future strategy competence, and counselor competence (Noor, 2019).

Method

This research is qualitative research with a descriptive approach, which has the following characteristics: conducted in a natural context, research directly interacts with data sources. Data collection techniques with interviews, and filling out questionnaires. The population and Sample are Kindergarten Teachers in the South Bogor District. The research was conducted for 1 week, from May 29, 2024, to June 5, 2024.

Results

Research results come from questionnaire data given to all kindergarten teachers in South Bogor District, as well as interviews conducted involving 37 teachers representing group A and group B teachers. The questionnaire was given in the form of a Google form with the following results:

Apakah Anda telah menggunakan platform "Merdeka Mengajar" untuk mendukung pembelajaran Anda?

37 responses



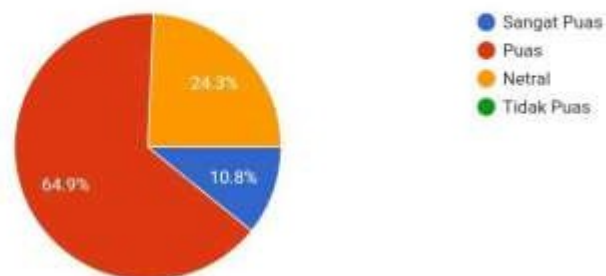
Figure 2: Survey results on the use of Merdeka Mengajar Platform

The questionnaire given to all teachers,- shows that 97.3% of teachers have used the Merdeka Mengajar platform to support learning, and around 2.7% do not use the Merdeka Mengajar platform because they are new teachers and have not been included in the Dapodik list this year, so they have not logged in to the Merdeka Mengajar platform.

Figure 3. Survey regarding the level of satisfaction with the independent teaching platform

Bagaimana tingkat kepuasan Anda terhadap pengalaman menggunakan platform "Merdeka Belajar"?

37 responses



The next question is about satisfaction with the use of the independent teaching platform, 64.9% said they were satisfied with the use of the independent teaching platform, because Merdeka Mengajar Platform is quite easy to access and has many good features, which teachers can learn independently.

Apa fitur dari platform "Merdeka Belajar" yang paling anda manfaatkan dalam proses pembelajaran Anda? (Bisa lebih dari 1 pilihan)

6 responses

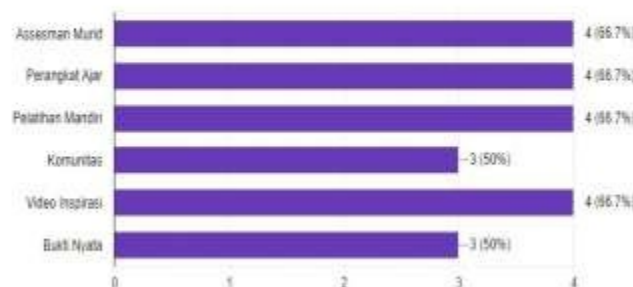


Figure 4. Survey Results on the Most Used Features in the Merdeka Mengajar Platform

From the survey results above, it is clear that the features most frequently used by TKIT Tsabita Bogor teachers are Student Assessment, Teaching Tools, Independent Training, and Inspiration Videos. Student Assessment, Teaching Tools, Independent Training, and Inspiration Videos are often used because in these features teachers get a lot of things about independent learning, many e-modules that can be read, videos that have been curated by the Ministry of Education and Culture that are in accordance with the problems that exist in schools.

The next survey is about developing teacher competencies in the digital era

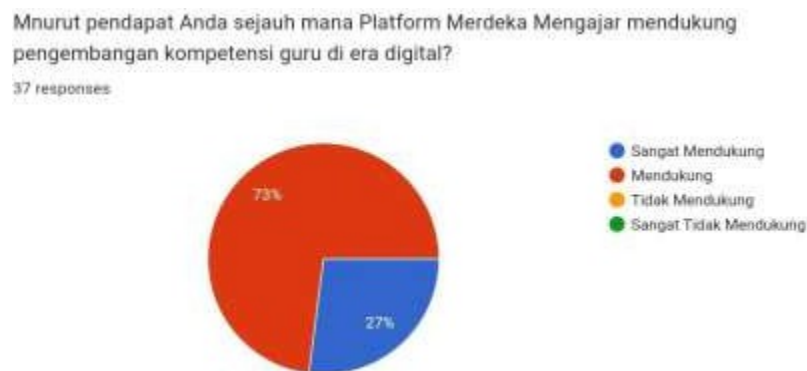


Figure 5. Survey results on teacher competency development

The survey above shows that Merdeka Mengajar Platform supports the development of teacher competencies in the digital era. An interview conducted with one of the teachers stated that, by using the Merdeka Mengajar platform, teachers indirectly learn about technology and have digital literacy, because with the Merdeka Mengajar Platform, teachers can share good practices through inspirational videos and motivate each other to develop self-competence.

The next survey on the effectiveness of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform developing teacher competencies.



Figure 6. Survey results on the effectiveness of PMM in improving teacher competence

From the survey, it can be seen that PMM is effective in improving teacher competence, called effective because teachers can easily obtain various latest information about education, by opening applications on their respective smartphones. Teachers can also share information, and inspire each other through inspirational videos. Teachers can provide positive feedback to each other for the development of the work of other teachers throughout the archipelago.

The impact of this research is that we can know that the Merdeka Mengajar Platform is very effective in improving Teacher competence. Currently, the Teacher Performance Targets have been integrated with the Merdeka Mengajar Platform so it is hoped that teachers can actively participate in the Merdeka Mengajar Platform, not only in independent training. The features on the Merdeka Mengajar Platform are quite diverse, ranging from learning communities where we can share materials, teaching tools, student assessments, inspiring videos, proof of work, and practice ideas to top recommendations that recommend to teachers about new and inspiring things done by other teachers in the archipelago.

Conclusion

Teachers play an important role in determining the progress of education, so teachers must have competence in their fields. Teachers must have four basic competencies, namely pedagogical, personality, social and professional competencies. Teachers who are competent in their field will show the true quality of the teacher. Teachers must be able to manage learning optimally, have broad insight be forward-thinking, master technology, and update their knowledge. The Merdeka Mengajar Platform application is a suitable means to improve teacher performance, competence, and innovation, especially in kindergartens in South Bogor District. The Merdeka Mengajar Platform can assist in reducing the administrative burden for teachers by providing a platform that makes it easy to manage data, schedule, and report on learning activities. Teacher performance assessment is not just an administrative activity, but a special report card for teachers. The Merdeka Mengajar Platform application is now used as an instrument for evaluating teacher performance. Thus, time and energy can be allocated more efficiently to focus on the learning process. Through the Merdeka Mengajar Platform, the performance management process of teachers and principals can also become more transparent and measurable.

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