

Utilizing Merdeka Mengajar Platform at SMP Muhammadiyah Bandung

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Abstract

Based on observations in the school in the school year 2022-2023, not all teachers are familiar with the implementation of the independent curriculum and the use of the Merdeka Mengajar platform, but they have to directly implement learning using the independent teaching platform, so the school conducts internal coaching and training for these teachers by inviting supervisory resource persons from the Bandung City Education Office. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method by collecting data through observation, literature review and focus group discussion (FGD). The focus of the research is the use of Merdeka Mengajar Platform by teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 5 Bandung. With the use of Merdeka Mengajar Platform, it is hoped that the quality of learning at SMP Muhammadiyah 5 Bandung will improve in the coming years.

Keywords : Merdeka Mengajar Platform, Learning, Kurikulum Merdeka Implementation

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Abstrak

Berdasarkan pengamatan yang dilakukan di sekolah pada tahun pelajaran 2022-2023 ini belum semua guru paham dengan Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka dan pemanfaatan Platform Merdeka Mengajar, tapi mereka harus langsung melakukan pembelajaran dengan menggunakan platform merdeka mengajar, oleh karena itu sekolah melakukan pembinaan dan pelatihan intern untuk guru-guru tersebut dengan mengundang narasumber pengawas pembina dari Dinas Pendidikan Kota Bandung. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan cara pengumpulan data melalui observasi, studi pustaka, dan Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Fokus penelitian adalah pemanfaatan Platform Merdeka Mengajar oleh guru-guru di SMP Muhammadiyah 5 Bandung. Dengan pemanfaatan Platform Merdeka Mengajar ini diharapkan akan meningkat

mutu pembelajaran di SMP Muhammadiyah 5 Bandug pada tahun-tahun mendatang.

Kata Kunci : Platform Merdeka Mengajar, pembelajaran, Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka.

A. Introduction

For the Indonesian people, education plays a crucial role in developing potential and competence, and in promoting the development of a noble and courteous national character. Therefore, the problems of education are not only related to learning competence, but also to the formation of students' character (Susilawati et al., 2021). With the development of time, changes have also occurred in the education system in Indonesia, where these developments can be seen in the policies and renewal of applicable educational standards, such as the change of curriculum (Priantini et al., 2022).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the already dire educational situation worsened with learning loss and widening learning gaps between regions and socio-economic classes (Kemendikbud RI, 2021). To overcome these problems, systemic changes are needed to improve the quality of teachers and school or madrasah

principals, critical factors in efforts to transform learning.

Through Merdeka Belajar (Freedom to Learn), the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education has formulated two essential tools to restore and support the teaching and learning process, namely the Independent Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka) and the Merdeka Mengajar (Independent Teaching) platform (Ketaren et al., 2022). In addition, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) launched the fifteenth episode of Merdeka Learning to restore learning after the pandemic: Independent Curriculum and Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM). PMM is an educational platform that becomes a driving partner for teachers in the realisation of Pancasila students and supports teachers to teach, learn and work even better (Ketaren et al., 2022). In addition, PMM is a technology that can help teachers to be better prepared,

improve their competence and develop their careers (Merdeka, n.d.).

Technology platforms in education during the pandemic are essential for school learning and management (Prabowo et al., 2022). It is influential in supporting educational policies for educators, staff and students. In this case, one of the most important technology platforms is "Merdeka Mengajar", where the platform is used by teachers in dealing with teaching and learning activities that need to continue even during the COVID-19 pandemic (Surani et al., 2022).

Currently, the PMM can only be accessed by teachers and principals in driving schools; however, the PMM can also be used by schools that implement an independent curriculum even though they are not driving schools. Under the direction of the Ministry of Education and Culture, a questionnaire will be administered to schools across Indonesia to determine which schools fall into the category of Independent Learning (Mandiri Belajar), Independent Change (Mandiri Berubah) or Independent Sharing (Mandiri Berbagi) (Launch of Merdeka

Curriculum and Merdeka Teaching Platform, 2022). For schools that fall under the Independent Learning category, they can access the PMM to understand information about the Independent Curriculum, study it independently and implement it in classroom learning (Grades 1, 4, 7 and 10) even though it is still in the socialisation stage.

In this case, in private schools in Bandung City that are included in category 1, Independent Learning, the use of the PMM automatically is an important thing that must be done by teachers, especially those who teach in the seventh grade. Therefore, all teachers involved in using this platform must have access to download the application and learn all the information about the Independent Curriculum independently.

In this application, teachers get references to develop their teaching practice. The first is the teaching feature with the availability of teaching tools with more than 2,000 references based on the Independent Curriculum and student assessments, which help teachers to carry out diagnostic analysis of literacy and numeracy so that they

can quickly apply learning appropriate to the level of achievement and development of the students. The second feature is learning, where teachers receive high quality training materials and access them independently. In addition to the materials, there are various inspirational videos for self-development with unlimited access. The third feature of PMM is work, as a place to store portfolios as evidence of teachers' work so that they can share inspiration and collaborate (Merdeka, n.d.).

According to observations made in schools during the school year 2022-2023, not all teachers are familiar with the implementation of the Independent Curriculum and the use of the PMM. However, they are required to use it to facilitate learning directly. Therefore, the school invites supervisors from the Bandung City Education Office to provide coaching and internal training for these teachers. In addition, the school sent the principal and many teachers to attend the Merdeka Mengajar Platform workshop held on 29 November 2022 from 7:00 am to 5:00 pm WIB at the BBGP Building, West Java Province, Jl. Diponegoro No.

12 in Bandung City (Figure 1). Through active participation in the training, the teachers were expected to better understand the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, mainly using the PMM for classroom teaching.



Figure A.1. Merdeka Mengajar Platform Workshop Activities (Author's Documentation)

Despite having downloaded the PMM application, not all teachers know how to use it. In fact, from the PMM account activation data issued by the Bandung City Education Office on 13 October 2022, out of the 13 teachers who were targeted as new users, five had logged in, so 38.5% had been activated. Studies conducted by Mainunatun (Habibah, 2022) and also (Wahyudi & Suwandana, 2022) also found that learning accounts were not 100% activated. Nevertheless, according to data from the Ministry of

Education and Culture on the Regional Learning Account Activation Dashboard, as of 24 June 2022, it was recorded that 30,783,603 learning accounts had been published for all levels of education from PAUD, SD, SMP, SMA, SMK, SLB and Equality. For the primary level 7,378,778 learning accounts have been published (Kartini, n.d.). Therefore, the authors are interested in exploring the use of the PMM in this school as there is an uneven understanding of the Independent Curriculum, especially the use of the PMM application introduced by Minister Nadiem Makarim.

B. Research Methodology

This study used a qualitative descriptive method by collecting data through observation, literature review, and focus group discussion (FGD). The focus of the research is the use of PMM by teachers at SMP Muhammadiyah 5 Bandung. The number of research participants was based on teachers who taught in the seventh grade and as research objects, a total of 13 people.

The formulation of the data collection method used in this study was to conduct matriculation based on

the research objectives, as shown in Table B.1.

Table B.1. Formulation of data collection methods

Searched data	Indicator	Data Source	Method of Collecting Data
Utilization of the PMM	PMM Concept	Ministry of Education and Culture website Merdeka Mengajar Pocket Book PMM Pocket Book PMM Document	Documentation Discussion Observation
	Strategy for Utilizing the PMM Utilization	PMM workshops Seventh-grade teachers PMM Application	Documentation Questionnaire Observation Discussion

C. Results and Discussion

The PMM is an application designed to support and facilitate teachers in the implementation of the Independent Curriculum, which has three main functions. The first is teaching, which consists of lesson plans, teaching modules and other teaching tools used for teaching materials. The second is learning. Teachers can receive

independent training, such as training modules, understanding and concrete action. The third is work, where teachers who already understand and can implement the independent curriculum can showcase their work through portfolios and learning videos. Meanwhile, the results of the data analysis carried out are in the form of the following concept maps:

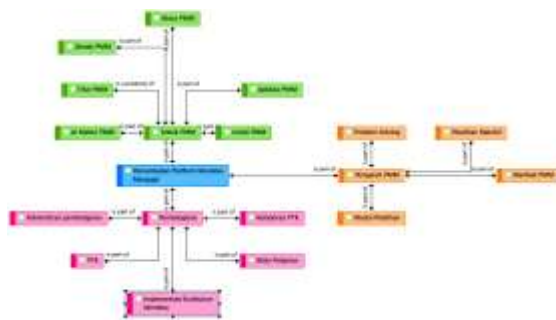


Figure C.1. Concept Map

Based on the research, it can be said that the use of PMM at SMP Muhammadiyah 5 Bandung has novelty in technical use of PMM, learning, and influence or impact of using PMM. Each of these categories has specific indicators. In the learning category, the indicators are subjects, learning management, independent curriculum implementation, and teachers (PTK) working together as described by Dewa Made Okta P (Priantini et al., 2022).

Using the PMM, teachers or PTK can learn the technicalities of using the PMM by installing this application on their respective devices through Google Play or the Play Store (Rohimat & Najarudin, 2022), as shown in Figure 4. In addition, the PMM can be accessed through a web browser via the link <https://guru.kemdikbud.go.id> (Sumandya, 2022). To access the materials, teachers must have an [allearning.id](https://www.allearning.id) account (Merdeka, n.d.) and (Rohimat et al., 2022), which is obtained from the ministry through the school operator.

The teacher can then open a feature that contains material for understanding Freedom to Learn, especially the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, which is adapted to each school's readiness. Next, the teacher studies a number of topics provided and when he/she has finished studying a topic, a green colour appears in the studied features (Figure C.2), as follows:



Figure C.2. Technical Utilization of PMM

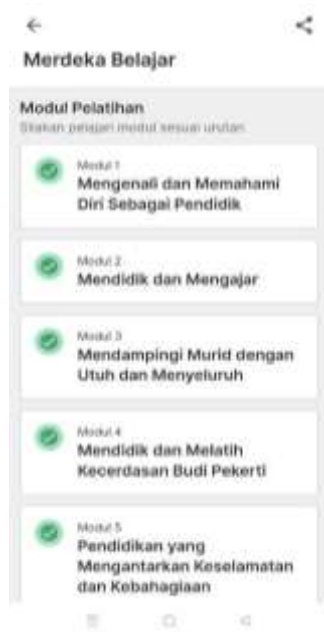


Figure C.3. Example of a Training Module in the PMM Application

As part of the learning process of implementing the Independent Curriculum using the PMM, teachers are assisted in compiling their learning management system in the form of teaching modules, student assessments, teaching materials for all subjects and even learning videos for each level at Level D that are already available

(About Merdeka Curriculum, n.d.). One of the unique aspects of implementing the Independent Curriculum is the existence of project-based learning, which requires collaboration, such as the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5). Teachers can share their teaching experiences and work together across subjects in their teaching and learning activities. The same was expressed by Nur Isnaini Budiarti (Budiarti, 2022).

The implementation of PMM in SMP Muhammadiyah 5 has significantly improved the teachers' competence, especially their IT competence. In fact, one of the teachers claimed that the PMM is not only a digital application, but also provides independent training opportunities, so that teachers can independently access high-quality training materials. In addition, the PMM is an application that allows teachers to teach students according to their abilities, strive to motivate colleagues, and develop competence (Ramdani et al., 2022).

Undoubtedly, this influence or impact has increased teachers' enthusiasm to study learning modules, either through independent training or

through training/workshops run by BBGP/Agency. Some of the benefits felt by the teachers were that it was easier for them to teach according to the abilities of the pupils, as training had been provided to improve competence and to work to inspire fellow teachers. In addition, PMM provides references for teachers to develop their teaching practice under the Independent Curriculum. Teachers and educational staff can then use the features of the teaching tool to create themselves independently, because teachers are provided with quality training materials, and this can help solve problems of learning loss in learning during and after COVID-19. All these are held as a forum for teachers to be creative and deepen their knowledge of the independent curriculum (Sari et al., 20-22). In addition, digital literacy is enhanced as teachers are required to produce learning videos as actual action activities after studying material topics in PMM, which are then re-uploaded in the application to receive a certificate from the Ministry.

Despite the very positive benefits of PMM, its implementation has not been without obstacles. Some teachers

still found it difficult to access the application, as the process of creating a studi.id account was limited by the Basic Education Data process, unstable internet connection, unclear information about PMM, many features to learn, and others. However, this did not discourage the teachers and they continued to learn through PMM with learning communities formed in the schools.

D. Conclusion

The PMM application supports teachers in the use of Independent Curriculum with three main functions. Lesson plans, teaching modules and other teaching tools are the first teaching resource functions. The second is learning, where teachers can receive autonomous instruction in areas such as training modules, comprehension and practical application. Thirdly, teachers who are familiar with and skilled in using the Independent Curriculum can showcase their work through portfolios and educational films. In addition, the school's efforts to further improve teacher preparation can still overcome the challenges it has faced so far. The Merdeka Learning Platform will be used and is expected to improve the

quality of learning at SMP Muhammadiyah 5 Bandung in the coming years.

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