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Evaluation of The Implementation of The Independent Teaching Platform (PMM) Class VIII Social Studies Education Subjects at SMP Negeri Pontianak Selatan

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Abstract

Evaluation of educational programs is very important to determine the success of program implementation and determine future improvements. Platform Merdeka Mengajar (PMM) provides opportunities for all teachers in Indonesia to continue learning and developing their competencies, whenever and wherever teachers are. This study aims to examine and analyze in depth the use of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform for the social studies learning process in grade VIII Junior High School in South Pontianak District. This type of research uses the Mixed Methods Explanatory Design sequential explanatory. A combination of quantitative research with a qualitative approach. Data collection techniques through expert-validated questionnaires, observations, interviews and documentation studies. The results of the study found that the benefits of PMM felt by 85.71% of social studies teachers of SMP Negeri se Kecamatan Pontianak Selatan were to obtain inspiration, reference and understanding in preparing for the social studies learning process. Teachers are motivated to continue learning, teaching and creating through the built environment at PMM. So, the results of this evaluation are expected to be the basis for further improvement and development in an effort to improve the effectiveness of the PMM program in the future.

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INTRODUCTION

In an effort to improve the quality of education in Indonesia, the government has launched various initiatives and programs, one of which is the Merdeka Learning Platform (Lisvian Sari et al. 2022). The platform is designed to create a more innovative, relevant, and fun learning environment. The main goal of PMM is to provide greater flexibility and autonomy to educational units, teachers, and students in the learning process (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan 2021). In addition,

through PMM, it is hoped that it can provide freedom for educational units to develop curriculum and learning methods that are in accordance with the characteristics of students and regional needs (Setiariny 2023). PMM is also equipped with several main features that can facilitate teachers and students in the learning process, including question bank features, teaching modules, teacher self-development platforms, and learning communities (Marisana, Iskandar, and Kurniawan 2023). PMM exists based on the need to update the education system, where the previous curriculum was considered too rigid and did not accommodate the diverse needs of students. Also, the rapid development of digital technology requires changes in learning methods. Therefore, PMM exists as an effort by the government to create a more relevant, flexible, and student-centered education system, so that it can produce qualified graduates who are ready to face future challenges. More specifically, PMM wants to overcome the gap between urban and rural education, students with different abilities, and industry needs, namely PMM seeks to connect the world of education with the world of work, so that school graduates are ready to face the real challenges of the world of work (Ketaren, A., Rahman, F., Meliala, H. P., Tarigan, N., & Simanjuntak 2022).

According to Timotheou (Timotheou et al. 2023), "Digital platforms help teachers in planning and preparing learning materials more efficiently". However, the application of new technologies in education often requires in-depth evaluation to ensure their effectiveness and efficiency. However, it is necessary to know the extent to which this platform has achieved its goals, especially in the subject of Social Sciences (IPS) for grade VIII students in Junior High School (SMP). Teachers are a key factor in the successful implementation of educational technology (Aziz 2018; Silaswati 2022). Evaluation of the use of the Independent Learning Platform by social studies teachers can provide an overview of the adaptations, skills, and challenges faced by teachers in integrating technology into learning. Learning effectiveness is an important indicator in assessing the success of an educational platform (Anggraeny, Nurlaili, and Mufidah 2020; Marisana et al. 2023). This evaluation aims to measure the extent to which the use of the Merdeka Learning Platform can improve the quality of learning and teacher competence in social studies lessons.

The educational condition at SMP Negeri Pontianak Selatan in the use of the Independent Teaching Platform (PMM), especially by social studies teachers, shows interesting dynamics, reflecting challenges and opportunities in the application of educational technology. Since the introduction of PMM, teachers in schools have begun to explore the various features that the platform offers, such as access to digital teaching materials, flexible lesson plan creation, and the use of innovative evaluation tools. However, not all teachers can optimize the full use of PMM. Some teachers still face difficulties in adapting to this new technology, either due to limited digital skills, inadequate infrastructure, or resistance to changes in established teaching methods. On the other hand, teachers who are more familiar with technology tend to integrate PMM in the learning process more quickly, taking advantage of the flexibility and autonomy provided to create more creative and effective learning.

Febry, dkk (Rahmadani 2023) researched "The Utilization of the Independent Teaching Platform (PMM) to Improve Teacher Competence in Vocational High Schools" explained that the use of PMM significantly improves teacher competence, where teachers can share experiences and best practices, and get access to the latest learning materials. This research was conducted on vocational school teachers, assuming that improving teacher competence through PMM not only has a positive impact on learning, but also helps overcome challenges that arise during

implementation. The conclusion is that the use of PMM can be an integral aspect in improving the quality of education in schools, especially at the vocational level. So that the use of teacher competencies raises the understanding and skills of teachers in vocational schools. Therefore, it is still necessary to study more deeply about the use of the Independent Learning Platform by social studies teachers in grade VIII in junior high schools, especially SMP Negeri Pontianak Selatan, to conduct an assessment for the impact of the use of this platform on teacher performance. Also, identify the challenges and obstacles faced by teachers in using the Merdeka Learning Platform, and provide recommendations for increasing the use of technology in social studies learning. By conducting this evaluation, it is hoped that a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of the Merdeka Learning Platform in improving teacher performance and social studies learning quality in grade VIII of South Pontianak State Junior High School, as well as identifying areas that need improvement for the successful implementation of technology in education.

METHODS

This study uses a mix method research method with a sequential explanatory design. This design was chosen because it allows to collect quantitative data first to identify general patterns, then continue with qualitative data to explain the quantitative findings in more depth (Kelle 2022; Leavy 2022). This research consists of 4 stages, namely: (1) Quantitative data collection: the distribution of questionnaires to measure the frequency of PMM use in learning, teacher-student interaction, and student activities. Also, analyze teaching modules, learning materials, and student portfolios to see the extent to which PMM is integrated in the learning process. The instruments used have gone through validity and reliability tests. (2) Quantitative data analysis: calculating the average and frequency to describe the data obtained. (3) Qualitative data collection: conducted in-depth interviews with several junior high school teachers in grade VIII of social studies subjects in South Pontianak sub-district who were selected purposively to dig deeper into the experiences, challenges, and expectations of teachers related to PMM. (4) Qualitative data analysis: identify the main themes from the interview results about the process of using PMM for social studies learning. And compare the results of quantitative analysis with the results of qualitative analysis to get a more comprehensive understanding.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The Independent Learning Platform (PMM) is an educational platform that aims to improve the quality of learning in Indonesia. Based on the results of the study, it was obtained that most of the respondents had downloaded and installed the Merdeka Teaching application or Platform, which can be seen in Table 1. next:

Table I. Respondents Who Have Already Installed an Application or PMM

Questionnaire Filling Time	Respondents	Schools Where to Teach	Install the App
10/4/2024 7.30.58	A	SMP Negeri 2 Pontianak	Already
10/4/2024 8.14.14	B	SMP Negeri 2 Pontianak	Already
11/4/2024 9.38.22	C	SMP Negeri 3 Pontianak	Already
11/4/2024 10.22.16	D	SMP Negeri 3 Pontianak	Already

12/4/2024 10.58.41	E	SMP Negeri 10 Pontianak	Already
12/4/2024 10.33.13	F	SMP Negeri 10 Pontianak	Already
13/4/2024 10.34.20	G	SMP Negeri 11 Pontianak	Already
13/4/2024 9.10.22	H	SMP Negeri 11 Pontianak	Already
14/4/2024 10.11.58	I	SMP Negeri 23 Pontianak	Not yet
14/4/2024 10.10.37	J	SMP Negeri 23 Pontianak	Already
15/4/2024 9.40.25	K	SMP Negeri 6 Pontianak	Already
15/4/2024 8.05.26	L	SMP Negeri 6 Pontianak	Already
16/4/2024 21.08.05	M	SMP Negeri 22 Pontianak	Already
16/4/2024 9.13.17	N	SMP Negeri 22 Pontianak	Not yet
Total who have installed the application			12
Percentage of people who have installed the application			85,71 %
Percentage of people who have not installed the application			14,29 %

Based on the diagram, it is known that 85.71% of respondents have installed the independent teaching application and take advantage of various available features. Only 14.29% still haven't installed. The obstacles faced by respondents in downloading and installing the Merdeka Mengajar Platform application are due to inadequate device storage. However, in general, the Merdeka Teaching Platform Application is easy to install. Next, the topics that have been completed by respondents in the Independent Teaching Platform can be seen in Table 2. next:

Table 2. Respondents Who Have Completed The Topic Of "Self-Training" At PMM

Number of "Self-Training" Topics Completed	Respondents	Percentage
0	3	21,43%
1	2	14,28%
2	1	7,14%
3	3	21,43%
> 4	5	35,71%
Sum	14	

From the diagram above, it can be seen that 35.71% have completed more than four topics in PMM, 21.43% have completed 3 topics, 7.14% have only completed 2 topics, 14.28% have only completed 1 topic, while 21.43% have not completed a single topic. The Independent Teaching Platform provides a variety of independent training topics, including Independent Learning, Independent Curriculum, Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project, Junior High School Learning Planning, Junior High School Assessment and Learning Adjustment to the Needs and Characteristics of Junior High School Students. Each topic is equipped with Modules, Videos, exercises that improve the teacher's understanding and skills. The real actions that you have completed on the Merdeka Teaching Platform can be described as follows:

Table 3. Respondents Who Have Completed Real Actions At PMM

Real Action Work	Respondents	Percentage
0	6	42,85%
1	2	14,28%
2	2	14,28%
3	3	21,43%
> 4	1	7,14%
Sum	14	

From the diagram above, it can be seen that 42.85% have not completed a single real action in PMM, 14.28% have only completed 2 real actions, 14.28% have completed 3 real actions, 21.43% have completed more than 4 real actions, while 7.14% have only completed one real action. The real action in the independent teaching application is the closing activity before ending one topic of independent training. Concrete action is also a form of testing teachers' understanding and the application of knowledge learned in independent training. Furthermore, the PMM features that are often accessed by respondents are in the following table:

Table 4. PMM Features That Are Frequently Accessed By Respondents

No	Feature	Respondents	Percentage
1	Inspirational Videos	11	78,57%
2	Self-Training	11	78,57%
3	Proof of Work	9	64,28%
4	Learning Community	9	64,28%
5	Student Assessment	8	57,14%
6	Teaching Tools	10	71,43%

From table 4 above, it is known that inspirational videos and self-training are the most accessed features by junior high school social studies teachers in South Pontianak District. Then followed by teaching tool features, proof of work, community and student assessment. As explained by Mrs. Khairunisa, S.Pd as a social studies teacher in grade VIII at SMP Negeri 10 Pontianak, namely "the presence of PMM is very beneficial for teachers, where there are features that support the self-development of educators. I really like the access to the wide range of trainings and courses provided by PMM, so it can help in the development of teaching skills and update knowledge of the latest educational practices". Therefore, the use of PPM has various positive impacts, including on teachers' teaching practices, both in terms of planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning. The following are the results of the evaluation of teacher performance through the following table:

Table 5. Evaluation Results In Learning Planning

Component Domain	Value	Interpretation
Summary of Learning Outcomes	97%	Excellent
Formulation of Learning Objectives	97%	Excellent
Teaching Materials	95%	Excellent
Learning Steps	75%	Good
Media and Learning Resources	95%	Excellent
Average results	91,8%	Excellent

In the professional competence of teachers, learning planning performance is one of the things that supports teachers before starting learning. Learning planning is a process indicator that can be objectively used as one of the indicators to measure teacher performance. Learning planning includes goals, objectives, methods, use of media and processes. From the overall results, the teacher's performance in planning has a very good percentage. This is also supported by the use of the "Teaching Tool" feature so that it can make it easier for teachers, especially social studies teachers, to plan lessons.

At the implementation stage, teaching and learning activities are guided by the preparation of the teaching that is made. The following are the results of data collection conducted by the researcher in table 6.

Table 6. Teacher Performance On Learning Implementation

Component Domain	Value	Interpretation
Preliminary Activities	85%	Excellent
Teacher's Attitude	75%	Good
Learning Mastery	77%	Good
Managing Class Interactions	75%	Good
Method Relatedness	75%	Good
Doing Reflection	80%	Good
Average results	77,83%	Good

Based on the results of the evaluation of learning implementation instruments related to teacher performance, the teacher presented well with a percentage of 77.83%.

Learning outcome assessment is an activity or method aimed at finding out whether or not the learning objectives have been achieved and also the learning process that has been carried out. At this stage, a teacher is required to have the ability to determine the approach and methods of evaluation, the preparation of evaluation tools, the processing and use of evaluation results. The following is a table of teacher performance components in the evaluation of student learning outcomes.

Table 7. Teacher Performance Related To Learning Evaluation

Component Domain	Value	Interpretation
Teachers design evaluation tools to measure students' progress and learning success	95%	Excellent
Teachers use a variety of assessment strategies and methods to monitor students' progress and learning outcomes	95%	Excellent
Teachers use various assessment results to provide feedback for students on their learning progress and materials for the preparation of the next teaching module	87%	Good
Management of assessment results	85%	Good
Average results	90,5%	Excellent

Based on the results of teacher data, the first evaluation component is that teachers design evaluation tools to measure the progress and learning success of students who get a percentage of 90.5% of the teacher's performance is considered very good. The use of PMM has encouraged the

emergence of various innovative practices and strategies in teaching, especially in teachers' efforts to create more engaging and effective learning. This is supported by the statement of Mr. Aminudin as a social studies teacher in grade VIII at SMP Negeri 3 Pontianak that "since using PMM, as a social studies teacher I have started to use project-based learning methods more often. Where students are given projects that require them to apply the social studies concepts they have learned. Of course, I got this innovation after accessing several features in PMM, including accessing inspirational videos, infographics, and interactive modules to provide the context and resources students need to complete projects." Thus, these innovative practices and strategies show how PMM not only functions as a tool, but also as a trigger for transformation in teaching that makes the teaching and learning process more dynamic, relevant, and based on the needs and context of students.

Discussion

From the results of this study, it can be concluded that PMM provides tools that can help teachers to reflect on teaching practices and participate in learning communities, so this shows that PMM successfully supports teachers' professional development and is in line with professional development theory which emphasizes the importance of continuous reflection and support in improving teacher competence (Zhou 2022). As such, platforms such as Coursera or Teachers Pay Teachers have been recognized as able to have a positive impact on teachers' professional development through access to online courses and communities (Trung 2024). PMM itself shows similar benefits, so this platform can be considered successful, although in the future process there are still several things that must be considered in future improvements.

The use of the Merdeka Mengajar (PMM) Platform by teachers at SMP Negeri Pontianak Selatan, like the implementation of other educational technologies, is not free from various challenges and limitations that can affect the effectiveness of this platform in supporting learning. One of the main challenges faced by teachers is the limited technology infrastructure, such as unstable internet connections or inadequate hardware (computers, laptops, or tablets). These limitations can hinder access to PMM and reduce the effectiveness of its use. In addition, teachers also experience technical problems such as slow platforms, bugs, or difficulty in accessing certain features. This can cause frustration and reduce teacher motivation to use PMM optimally. These technical problems can limit teacher access to various PMM features, reduce the time that can be spent developing teaching materials or participating in professional training. This can have a negative impact on the effectiveness of learning and assessments given to students. Therefore, to overcome this, it is hoped that the government and schools can work together to improve school facilities, including improving internet access in schools through government programs or partnerships with technology companies can be a long-term solution and providing a responsive technical support team and easy-to-understand technical training materials will help teachers overcome technical problems more quickly. Also, developing a lighter version of PMM that can be accessed with slower internet connections or devices with lower specifications could be a solution to increase accessibility.

Challenges and limitations in the use of PMM, such as technical issues, accessibility, time constraints, and curriculum constraints, can affect the overall impact of these platforms in supporting teaching and learning (Rahayu, Nurjati, and Khabib 2022). However, with the right solutions, such as infrastructure improvements, adequate training, and more flexible policies, these

challenges can be overcome. Thus, teachers can make optimal use of PMM, improve the quality of teaching, and have a greater positive impact on student learning.

This research shows that PMM still needs improvement and adjustment in various aspects, ranging from content development, improved training and technical support, to more flexible policies. Based on the results of interviews with several teachers, it was concluded that teachers wanted a more relevant attitude to the local context of students, indicating the need for more contextual content development. PMM developers can work with teachers and subject matter experts to create modules that are suitable for the local social, cultural, and economic environment, so that students feel that learning is more meaningful. School administrators, policymakers, and platform developers can leverage these insights to make changes that can improve the effectiveness of PMM in supporting better teaching and learning in schools, particularly in social studies subjects. With the right steps, PMM has great potential to become a very effective tool in improving the quality of education in Indonesia.

CONCLUSIONS

This study examines the impact of the use of PMM on teacher performance. Also, identify the challenges and obstacles faced by teachers in using the Merdeka Learning Platform, and provide recommendations for increasing the use of technology in social studies learning. The results of this study illustrate that teacher performance is better after PMM, where PMM has features and resources designed to facilitate more effective, creative, and student-centered teaching. By utilizing PMM optimally, teachers can become more competent, innovative, and efficient in teaching, which will ultimately have a positive impact on student learning. To increase the effectiveness of the use of PMM by teachers, it is necessary to improve PMM in the future, including reducing technical difficulties such as lag or errors on the platform will increase the comfort of teachers in using PMM. System enhancements to ensure stability and consistent access speeds are essential, especially in areas with limited technological infrastructure. Also, for further research on PMM, further studies can be carried out related to teacher professional development including the improvement of skills, pedagogical knowledge, and innovation in teaching. By focusing on the long-term impact, variation in implementation, and factors that influence success, researchers can help ensure that PMM continues to contribute positively to the quality of education in Indonesia.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest related to the authorship or publication of this article. There are no financial, personal, or institutional relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Metro Lingga: Conceptualization, Methodology, Data Collection, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original Draft. **Anik Widiastuti:** Validation, Writing – Review & Editing, Supervision. **Taat Wulandari:** Supervision, Project Administration, Writing – Review & Editing. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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