



Teacher Performance Management Model Based on the Merdeka Mengajar Platform: A Study of Primary Schools in Blang Cut Pidie District

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to evaluate the teacher performance management methodology based on the Merdeka Mengajar Platform at SDN Blang Cut, Mila Subdistrict, Pidie Regency. This research utilizes a qualitative methodology to thoroughly examine the application of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform throughout the teacher performance management cycle, encompassing planning, implementation, organization, and control. Data were gathered via interviews with the principal and teachers, with observations of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform's usage and examination of documentation. The research findings aim to elucidate the advantages, obstacles, and facilitating and impeding elements within the performance management model derived from the Merdeka Mengajar Platform at SDN Blang Cut. This research identifies the Merdeka Mengajar Platform's potential to enhance performance administration efficiency, facilitate teacher self-reflection, and support ongoing competency development. This research seeks to ascertain the impact of the Principal's Planning, Implementation, Organization, and Control, as informed by the Merdeka Mengajar Platform, on enhancing teacher performance at SDN Blang Cut, Mila Subdistrict, Pidie Regency.

1. Introduction

Improving teacher performance is essential for educational quality and student outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 2021). The Merdeka Belajar initiative in Indonesia signifies a significant transition towards more independent and contextualized education, complemented by the introduction of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (MMP) to enhance teacher development and performance management (Kamarullah et al., 2024). The MMP offers self-paced learning modules, performance evaluations, best-practice materials, and collaborative communities aimed at promoting professional development (Putri et al., 2023). Considering its potential, the successful integration of the MMP into teacher performance management systems remains insufficiently examined (Sudarsih, 2023). Previous studies highlighted that performance management in education should be comprehensive, addressing evaluation with ongoing professional development, mentoring, and reflective practice (Sumarto & McCarthy, 2025).

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In a period of progressive educational reform, the role of teachers has transformed from basic passing on information to include facilitation, mentorship, and reflective practice (Swarts, 2019). An efficient teacher performance management system is crucial for improving instructional quality and student outcomes (Chauhan et al., 2022). The Merdeka Mengajar Platform in Indonesia exemplifies a novel strategy for enhancing teacher efficacy within the Merdeka Belajar framework (Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, 2022). The platform provides a range of features aimed at enhancing educational quality, including tools for creating Learning Implementation Plans (*Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran*) customized to student requirements and local settings (Ramdani et al., 2022). It offers evaluation tools to systematically track and analyze student progress, promoting data-informed instructional decision-making (Bell et al., 2022). The platform also facilitates professional learning communities that allow educators to interact, exchange experiences, and participate in collective problem-solving. The Merdeka Mengajar Portal provides organized training and professional development initiatives to enhance pedagogical and subject expertise (Asad et al., 2021). Through the integration of these elements, the platform demonstrates potential as a holistic system for enhancing teacher professional competencies and elevating educational outcomes in Indonesia (Nuhari et al., 2025).

Improving teacher performance is essential for upgrading the quality of student learning, hence promoting the development of an intelligent, ethical, and morally sound young generation (Kanya et al., 2021). Proficient instructional leadership and teacher efficacy in fundamental management functions—planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling—are crucial for providing high-quality education (Fakhriddin et al., 2025). Evidence indicates that numerous schools encounter difficulties in sustaining strong teacher proficiency in these managerial aspects, hence compromising lesson design, classroom execution, and learning evaluation (Ningsih & Sari, 2024). Targeted professional development, collaborative supervision, and the incorporation of digital platforms like the Merdeka Mengajar Platform can enhance teachers' pedagogical and managerial competencies. Investing in teacher capacity in these domains enables education systems to more effectively promote learning environments that encourage honesty, critical thinking, and virtuous character in students, in accordance with national educational objectives and international quality education standards (Ballová Mikušková et al., 2024).

The Merdeka Mengajar platform is a digital initiative established by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, led by Mr. Nadiem Makarim, to enhance teacher efficacy in facilitating student-centred learning (Kusuma, 2024). Consequently, the Principal and all teacher of SD Negeri Blang Cut, Mila District, Pidie Regency are endeavouring to enhance the quality of education and teacher performance using the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (Nurasiah et al., 2024). Here are several procedures to ascertain the Management Model predicated on the Teaching Merdeka Platform at SDN Blang Cut. Initially, by facilitating socialization and training for administrators and educators regarding the Merdeka Mengajar Platform, Secondly, the principal offers training to educators on utilizing the Merdeka Mengajar Platform for developing lesson plans, providing instructional materials, and evaluating student learning results. Third, promoting the incorporation of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform into the daily educational framework for teachers (Hidayat & Muharizal, 2023). Fourth, offering examples and assistance to educators on utilizing the Merdeka Mengajar Platform for many learning modalities, and fifth, promoting conversations and exchanging best practices among instructors in the application of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (Ardiantoro et al., 2024).

Furthermore, Leveraging Diverse Features of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform to Motivate Educators to Utilize the Resources Offered on the Merdeka Mengajar Platform, including Assessment is employed to evaluate pupils' foundational competencies and track their academic

advancement (Jayanti et al., 2025). The curriculum is utilized to evaluate the national curriculum and design suitable learning strategies. Pedagogy is employed to acquire novel learning tactics and methodologies. Learning Resources: utilized to access diverse high-quality instructional materials and educational media. Community: utilized to engage with the teacher community and exchange exemplary practices (Pratama et al., 2024).

The Merdeka Mengajar Platform at SDN Blang Cut consistently assesses and oversees the teacher performance management model derived from the Merdeka Mengajar Platform, gathers feedback from educators and students regarding the platform's efficacy in enhancing learning quality, and implements modifications and enhancements to the platform's execution based on the forthcoming evaluations and monitoring. Despite the numerous advantages of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform, SDN Blang Cut encounters several problems, including restricted internet connectivity due to its rural location. This may provide a challenge for educators and learners in utilizing the Merdeka Mengajar Platform. Insufficient knowledge regarding digital literacy: Certain teachers may lack the requisite digital literacy skills to effectively utilize the Merdeka Mengajar Platform. Additionally, there is a shortage of technological devices at SD Negeri Blang Cut, hindering the comprehensive implementation of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform.

This study investigates the implementation of a teacher performance management approach utilizing the Merdeka Mengajar Platform in primary schools located in Blang Cut, Pidie District. It purposes to examine the platform's function in promoting principal leadership practices, aiding teacher self-reflection, and enhancing continuous professional development. This research examines the advantages, barriers, and contextual aspects affecting implementation, providing insights for the development of effective, context-sensitive performance management strategies to enhance educational quality in Indonesian primary schools.

2. Methodology

This research employed a qualitative case study methodology to examine the teacher performance management model derived from the Merdeka Mengajar Platform at SD Negeri Blang Cut, Mila Subdistrict, Pidie Regency. The qualitative approach was used to facilitate a comprehensive, contextually shaped understanding of the platform's application throughout the teacher performance management process, involving planning, organizing, executing, and regulating functions.

2.1 Research Setting and Participants

The study was carried out at SD Negeri Blang Cut, selected for its commitment for collaboration and representation of primary schools located within Pidie. The participants comprised the school principal and instructors implementing the Merdeka Mengajar Platform. Purposeful sampling ensured that important respondents with relevant experience would contribute comprehensive, thorough perspectives. (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

2.2 Data Collection Techniques

Data was obtained via comprehensive informal conversations with the principal and teachers to investigate their thoughts and experiences about the platform. Field observations concentrated on the application of the platform in performance planning, classroom observation periods, and feedback mechanisms. The review of documents encompassed school planning materials, teacher performance records, and reports generated by the platform.

2.3 Data Analysis Procedures

The data analysis employed a thematic methodology, including iterative coding and categorization to identify patterns, themes, and relationships among data sources (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Credibility was augmented via triangulation of interviews, observations, and documentation. Member verification with participants was employed to validate the accuracy of interpretations, while comprehensive audit trails recorded the study procedure to ensure dependability and confirmability.

3. Results

The study objectively investigated the application of a teacher performance management strategy utilizing the Merdeka Mengajar Platform at SD Negeri Blang Cut, Pidie District. Utilizing a qualitative research approach, data was obtained through in-depth interviews with the principal and teachers, direct classroom observations of platform integration, and thorough analysis of relevant school documentation. The results indicate that the performance management process operates according to the standard management cycle of Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling (POAC). The planning phase involves collaboratively establishing performance objectives and aligning them with the platform's resources; the organizing phase guarantees the distribution of roles and responsibilities to enhance platform utilization; the actuating phase focuses on active teacher involvement, self-assessment, and skill enhancement facilitated by the platform's functionalities; and the controlling phase involves ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure compliance with performance standards. This study demonstrates the Merdeka Mengajar Platform's capacity to improve administrative efficiency, improve teacher professionalism, and facilitate sustainable improvements in instructional quality within Indonesian primary education.

3.1 Strategic of Principal Planning Utilizing the Merdeka Mengajar Platform to Enhance Teacher Effectiveness

The principal of SD Negeri Blang Cut is crucial in improving teacher performance quality. The Merdeka Mengajar Platform provides school leadership with a data-driven and pedagogically coherent tool to formulate targeted, measurable, and contextually appropriate approaches for enhancing instructional practices within the Merdeka Curriculum framework. The platform functions as a strategic tool for principals to build development plans that are directly connected with the requirements of both students and teachers. It offers extensive information on educator effectiveness and professional development, therefore facilitating more efficient instructional planning. Essential elements of the principal's planning, derived from the platform, include:

a. Teacher Orientation and Communication:

The principal organizes structured orientations to communicate the objectives, characteristics, and educational value of the Merdeka Mengajar platform to all teachers, thereby assuring effective and purposeful utilization.

b. Analysis of Demands and The integration of Objectives:

The principal identifies specific developmental needs to inform specialized professional development plans through the study of teacher performance data and individual feedback.

c. *Establishment of Professional Learning Communities:*

The principal encourages teacher cooperation by establishing school-based learning communities that allow for regular discussions regarding platform tools, curriculum integration, and reflective practice. Guest teachers who have had successful experiences with the platform are invited as well to share lessons learned.

d. *Infrastructure and Access Provisioning:*

The main ensures the provision of necessary digital infrastructure (e.g., Chromebooks, laptops, reliable internet connectivity) to facilitate continuous interaction with the platform.

Interviews with the school principal revealed that SD Negeri Blang Cut has implemented a systematic approach to synchronize teacher performance planning with classroom and school-wide educational objectives. The use of the Merdeka Mengajar platform has markedly improved the quality of instructional planning, broadened access to learning resources, and reinforced the execution of the Kurikulum Merdeka. Systematic monitoring and evaluation cycles are used to assess the efficacy of the proposed tactics and to facilitate continuous teacher development. Insights from teacher interviews indicated that collaborative talks at the start of the academic year, focused on learning objectives and Alur Tujuan Pembelajaran (ATP), have enhanced the coherence of instructional design. Educators align their lesson planning and evaluation methods with learning objectives and modify them according to classroom requirements. Reflection and iterative enhancements are prioritized, alongside ongoing engagement in professional development activities provided by the platform to augment pedagogical expertise and instructional innovation.

3.2 Principal-Led Implementation of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform in Improving Teacher Performance

The principal of SD Negeri Blang Cut has effectively utilized the Merdeka Mengajar Platform as a strategic tool to enhance teacher performance in accordance with the objectives of the Kurikulum Merdeka. The platform functions as an essential conduit for the principal to convey current educational policy information, especially about modern teaching methods incorporated into the platform's resources. It additionally provides novel features and highlights exceptional procedures developed by teachers across country.

According to hearings with the principal of SD Negeri Blang Cut in Mila District, the leadership strategy is defined by clear, systematic, and collaborative planning. The principal highlighted the advantages of Merdeka Mengajar elements that assist in teacher professional development, including enabling interactions with teachers to determine professional growth requirements based on classroom observations and performance assessments. The principal supports teachers in formulating personalized professional development programs that correspond with the school's vision and mission. Educators are thereafter urged to apply the knowledge and skills acquired from these activities in their teaching practices, with continuous assessment of the effects on their performance and the overall quality of education. Interview findings indicate that the principal actively participates in the full change management process, including platform introduction, assessing needs, planning, execution, and evaluation. This indicates the principal's strong understanding and dedication to utilizing the Merdeka Mengajar Platform as a strategic instrument for fostering ongoing quality enhancement in education via teacher professional development.

The efficient implementation of Merdeka Mengajar at SD Negeri Blang Cut has the capacity to provide substantial beneficial effects on teacher performance, as demonstrated by numerous important results. Initially, educators receive enhanced comprehension of the Kurikulum Merdeka,

facilitating increased access to pertinent resources and information for curricular execution. Secondly, the platform facilitates focused competency enhancement via self-directed training modules customized to the requirements of individuals and educational institutions. Third, the dissemination of exemplary practices on the platform fosters more inventive pedagogical methods. Fourth, enhanced collaboration is promoted through learning communities that facilitate the exchange of experiences among educators. The Performance Management component guarantees transparent and objective mechanisms for goal-setting, observation, and feedback. Merdeka Mengajar is a strategic initiative provided by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology to facilitate the sustainable execution of Kurikulum Merdeka and continuous professional development for educators. Its features encompass training resources, professional learning networks, and extensive performance management systems.

The efficacy of principal-led deployment of the platform in enhancing teacher performance at SD Negeri Blang Cut can be assessed through distinct KPIs. These encompass active teacher engagement with platform functionalities such as self-directed training, learning communities, and performance management; enhanced teacher comprehension of Kurikulum Merdeka manifested in lesson planning and classroom execution; documentation of innovative, student-centric pedagogical methods influenced by the platform; fortified collaboration and sharing of exemplary practices among educators; favorable modifications in observed classroom instruction and teacher performance assessments; and improved student learning outcomes, corroborated by affirmative teacher evaluations regarding the platform's contribution to their professional development. Interviews with educators at SD Negeri Blang Cut corroborate these findings. Educators characterized the site as an invaluable resource that promotes contact and collaboration via learning communities, enabling the exchange of experiences, inquiry, and knowledge acquisition among teachers throughout Indonesia. The platform's features for student evaluation and diagnostic analysis facilitate the generation of innovative strategies for enhancing classroom learning suited to individual student requirements. Merdeka Mengajar facilitates differentiated learning practices by endorsing lesson planning that provides diverse assignments tailored to individuals' unique abilities. The interview data reveal that educators at SD Negeri Blang Cut possess a markedly favorable opinion of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform and recognize substantial advantages for their professional growth and instructional efficacy. The platform is considered an efficient and beneficial resource that enables educators to consistently refine their practice and elevate the level of education inside the institution.

Implementation indicators for principal-led planning employing the Merdeka Mengajar Platform can be assessed through various dimensions: educators' comprehensive understanding of the platform's objectives, functionalities, and advantages for professional growth—quantifiable via surveys, focus groups, or participatory observation; discernible enhancements in classroom instructional practices, including the adoption of more innovative, interactive, and student-centered methodologies; and augmented teacher proficiency in planning, executing, and evaluating instruction in accordance with the school's pedagogical framework.

3.3 Principal Leadership and Organizational Planning Using the Merdeka Mengajar Platform to Enhance Teacher Performance

The principal of SD Negeri Blang Cut in Mila District has implemented a systematic approach to organizational planning focused on enhancing teacher performance via the strategic utilization of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform. Socialization and enhancing teacher comprehension of the platform's features for performance management are essential steps in empowering educators and maximizing platform use. This organizational strategy initiates with focused training on the effective utilization

of key features of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform for documenting professional development, lesson planning, and assessment execution. The principal encourages teachers to create detailed Individual Development Plans that explicitly incorporate the platform's resources and tools into their competency development strategies, offering clear guidance to align development goals with the needs of the school and its students. Classroom observation constitutes a critical element of this organizational framework, wherein the principal assesses the extent to which teachers are employing methods or strategies derived from the platform. The observation data and usage metrics from the Merdeka Mengajar Platform enable the principal to identify teachers in need of additional support or targeted interventions. The principal conducts ongoing evaluations to assess whether the platform's utilization is resulting in quantifiable enhancements in teacher performance metrics.

Interviews with the principal indicate that official meetings and structured forums are conducted to present and discuss the platform's features with the entire teaching staff. The focus is on essential functionalities including instructional materials, student assessment tools, professional development modules, and innovative teaching practices provided by Merdeka Mengajar. The principal acknowledged the significance of sustainable and systematic implementation by establishing a dedicated team or appointing coordinators to manage platform-based initiatives. This team structure aims to facilitate effective execution and alignment with common goals for improving teacher performance. Interviews conducted with teachers at SD Negeri Blang Cut revealed evidence supporting the beneficial effects of this organizational approach. Prior to the active promotion of Merdeka Mengajar, lesson plans exhibited inconsistencies and lacked proper structure. The platform's modules, guided discussions, and collaborative adaptation sessions facilitated by the principal enabled teachers, especially early-career educators, to create more targeted, innovative, and student-centered planning that aligns with classroom requirements. The principal's organizational strategy utilizing the Merdeka Mengajar Platform demonstrates a proactive approach to enhancing teacher performance through thorough socialization, systematic capacity-building, and the establishment of supportive implementation teams. The school leadership illustrates a systematic, collaborative, and goal-directed strategy for professional development by prioritizing the effective utilization of the platform's extensive features and creating a structured management framework. This commitment to structured platform integration empowers educators and aligns with collective school objectives for providing high-quality, relevant, and student-centered education in accordance with the Kurikulum Merdeka framework.

3.4 Principal Supervision Using the Merdeka Mengajar Platform to Enhance Teacher Performance

The principal of SD Negeri Blang Cut has taken a strategic, supportive approach to supervising and guiding teachers on the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM) in order to improve their professional performance. The first step in the supervision process is to make sure that all teachers understand that the monitoring activities done through the platform are not meant to be disciplinary or evaluative, but rather progressive. The principal stresses that the goal of supervision is to help teachers grow professionally by leveraging data from the platform in a positive way to establish trust and assist improvement. This involves giving teachers timely and useful feedback on how their use of the platform affects their individual development plans and how they teach in the classroom. There are a number of parts to the principal's method of supervision. First, teachers are encouraged and observed to make sure they use the platform's functions, such as getting teaching materials and making lesson plans, on a regular basis. Second, supervision is observing to see if teachers are using teaching methods they learned from platform resources like motivational films or training modules, especially when it comes to testing and using differentiated instruction. Third, the principal looks at platform activity statistics to see how innovative and high-quality the instructional content provided

by teachers is. They are especially interested in if instructors have been able to leverage the platform's tools to come up with better and more relevant ways to educate. Fourth, the principal finds and praises instructors who use the Merdeka Mengajar Platform in ways that are consistent with their main job duties and help students learn better. The principal's responses to interviews support this proactive and helpful supervisory approach. The

principal always checks to see if the teachers choose platform-based training subjects and materials that are useful for their professional growth and the problems they face in the classroom. The "Bukti Karya" (Evidence of Work) function also encourages teachers to write down and share their best methods, which helps create an environment where people think and learn together. The principal's main purpose is to help teachers keep getting better at their teaching, professional, social, and personal skills in line with national education standards. Interviews with instructors at SD Negeri Blang Cut show that this type of supervision works. Teachers were really motivated to use the Merdeka Mengajar Platform because the principal always encouraged and supported them. They saw this as proof that their superiors cared about their professional growth. Teachers said that the "Bukti Karya" feature not only helped them think about themselves, but it also let them work with other students at their school and outside of it. Many said that their skills had gotten a lot better since they started using the platform in their teaching. This was especially true for their teaching and professional skills. Successful principal-led supervision through the Merdeka Mengajar Platform at SD Negeri Blang Cut can be seen in the following ways: teachers are using the "Student Assessment" feature more often for diagnostic and instructional planning; teachers have a better understanding of key concepts in the Curriculum Merdeka and new teaching methods they can use through the platform; teachers are using a wider range of learning resources available on the platform in their daily lessons; and teachers are more intentionally adapting lessons to meet the needs of all their students. These indications show the effects of a supervisory style based on trust, increasing skills, and using digital technologies for professional advancement in a planned method.

4. Conclusions

This study proves that integrating the Merdeka Mengajar Platform into teacher performance management at SD Negeri Blang Cut, Mila District, Pidie Regency serves as an effective, data-informed approach to enhancing instructional quality and professional competence in Indonesian primary education. The principal effectively integrated the management cycle of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling (POAC) with the platform's features, thereby promoting a systematic and collaborative approach to teacher development. The findings demonstrate that initiatives led by principals, such as targeted planning sessions, structured organizational strategies, supportive supervision, and comprehensive implementation processes, have particularly enhanced teachers' pedagogical planning, classroom practices, and capacity to provide student-centred, differentiated instruction in accordance with the Curriculum Merdeka. The Merdeka Mengajar Platform serves as a transformative professional development system, facilitating continuous teacher learning, fostering collaboration within professional communities, and enabling transparent, evidence-based performance management. Despite challenges including limited internet infrastructure and differing levels of digital literacy among educators, the principal's proactive leadership, coupled with teacher commitment, has optimized the platform's potential. The results indicate that continuous investment in digital infrastructure, persistent training in digital skills, and robust instructional leadership can position the Merdeka Mengajar Platform as a scalable model for improving teacher performance management across various educational settings. This research highlights the essential function of school leadership in the implementation of national education reforms within local school practices. The strategic implementation of the Merdeka Mengajar

Platform at SD Negeri Blang Cut demonstrates that effective, context-sensitive performance management systems can enable teachers to engage in reflective practice, adopt innovative teaching methods, and enhance student learning outcomes. Future initiatives must focus on enhancing leadership capacities and broadening equitable access to digital tools to achieve Indonesia's vision of high-quality, learner-centred education for all.

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