

English Teacher's Perception in Utilizing Merdeka Mengajar Platform on English Teaching at SDN 1 Loceret

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform (PMM) supports English teaching within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum. The research focuses on the teacher's perception of two key features of PMM, *Pelatihan Mandiri* (Independent Training) and *Perangkat Ajar* (Teaching Resources), through three components of perception: cognitive, affective, and conative. Employing a qualitative approach and case study method, the research was conducted at SDN 1 Loceret, a *Sekolah Penggerak* in Nganjuk, East Java. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis, and analyzed using the Miles and Huberman (1994) model. Perception was examined using the framework of Baron and Byrne (2006), which includes knowledge, feelings, and actions. The findings indicate that the teacher perceives PMM positively. Cognitively, the teacher demonstrates a strong understanding of the platform's features and their alignment with learning objectives. Affectively, the teacher finds the platform helpful and motivating. Conatively, the teacher actively utilizes PMM and adapts its materials to students' needs. Overall, the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform positively contributes to the planning, implementation, and assessment of English teaching.

Keywords: Teacher perception, Merdeka Mengajar Platform, Independent Training, Teaching Resources, English teaching

INTRODUCTION

The success of education, especially in the teaching process, plays a key role in ensuring that students receive instruction that truly supports their learning needs. For this to happen, teachers must not only have strong subject knowledge but also be skilled in how they teach. According to Fitriani (2022), teaching skills must evolve alongside the demands of the curriculum and technology to ensure effective learning. With the introduction of the Kurikulum Merdeka, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology launched the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM) as a digital support system designed to help teachers implement this new curriculum. The platform offers features such as Pelatihan Mandiri, Perangkat Ajar, and Bukti Karya to assist teachers in planning, delivering, and evaluating learning.

Ideally, PMM is expected to promote teacher autonomy, creativity, and innovation. However, in reality, not all teachers have adopted this platform effectively. According to Kemendikbudristek (2023), despite the platform's wide availability, many teachers have yet to consistently integrate the PMM platform into their teaching practices, highlighting a gap between policy implementation and classroom realities. This indicates a gap between the

expected and actual use of PMM in the field, raising questions about teachers' perceptions and experiences when using the platform, especially for teaching subjects like English that require active, communicative approaches.

Previous studies have addressed various aspects of PMM usage. Nurhayati (2023) examined the link between digital literacy and platform engagement. Putri et al. (2023) explored emotional responses and innovation tendencies in teaching, while Kartikasari et al. (2023) highlighted obstacles in less supported schools. However, few studies have focused on English teachers in primary schools and how they perceive the platform holistically.

This study aims to fill that gap by investigating the perception of an English teacher at SDN 1 Loceret in utilizing the PMM platform, specifically focusing on three components of perception: cognitive (understanding), affective (feeling), and conative (action). By understanding these three aspects, this research seeks to provide a comprehensive picture of how PMM supports English teaching in the context of primary education.

METHOD

This research used a qualitative case study approach. One English teacher from SDN 1 Loceret was selected purposively. The data collection involved in-depth interviews, documentations and classroom observation. The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, covering data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

FINDING

The English teacher at SDN 1 Loceret showed a solid and thoughtful understanding of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM). The two main features, *Pelatihan Mandiri* and *Perangkat Ajar* were clearly recognized in terms of their functions and relevance to the teaching process. *Pelatihan Mandiri* was seen as a flexible space for professional development, while *Perangkat Ajar* was understood as a helpful tool to plan, implement, and assess learning. The teacher was also aware of how PMM supports the principles of Kurikulum Merdeka, particularly in promoting student-centered learning and improving the quality of teaching.

The teacher expressed positive feelings toward the use of PMM in daily teaching activities. There was a strong sense of comfort and enthusiasm when exploring features like *Pelatihan Mandiri* and *Perangkat Ajar*. The platform was considered user-friendly and practical, making it easier to meet classroom needs. Over time, feelings of confidence and motivation increased, especially as the teacher noticed improvements in classroom interaction and teaching outcomes. The opportunity to learn independently through PMM not only strengthened the teacher's professional identity but also brought a sense of satisfaction and personal growth.

PMM became part of the teacher's regular teaching routine, showing clear behavioral commitment. The platform was accessed consistently to find, adapt, and apply lesson materials. Features from *Pelatihan Mandiri* were also put into practice, indicating a strong intention to apply new strategies and methods. This consistent engagement reflected a proactive attitude in improving teaching performance and adapting to digital tools. The teacher showed initiative in exploring PMM regularly, highlighting a genuine drive for professional development and continuous learning.

DISCUSSION

1. Cognitive Perception in utilizing Merdeka Mengajar Platform

The findings reveal a strong cognitive engagement by the teacher in utilizing the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM), particularly through the features of *Pelatihan Mandiri* and *Perangkat Ajar*. This aligns with the cognitive component of perception as proposed by Baron and Byrne (2006), which emphasizes understanding, beliefs, and internalized knowledge. The teacher demonstrated conceptual clarity in aligning learning objectives with the Merdeka Curriculum and effectively using PMM to plan, implement, and assess English lessons.

Through *Pelatihan Mandiri*, the teacher exhibited the ability to comprehend instructional concepts and transform them into classroom strategies. The use of thematic modules with videos and reflection tools allowed for deep learning, as supported by Puspitasari and Zumrotun (2024). In the classroom, the application of methods like Total Physical Response (TPR) reflected not only knowledge acquisition but thoughtful pedagogical reasoning, echoing Latif et al. (2024)'s findings on differentiated learning through PMM.

Similarly, the teacher's use of *Perangkat Ajar* showed high levels of cognitive flexibility. Rather than relying passively on the modules, the teacher selected, edited, and contextualized the content to suit student needs. This practice supports the idea of teacher autonomy and creativity as noted by Sabeliana et al. (2024). In assessment, the adaptation of rubrics demonstrated a nuanced understanding of formative principles and student-level appropriateness, reinforcing Nur'aini et al. (2024)'s emphasis on assessment literacy.

However, these cognitive successes must be viewed within the enabling context of sufficient digital access and infrastructure. As Anggraini (2023) highlighted, schools in low-resource environments often face significant barriers such as unstable internet and limited digital literacy, which can hinder similar levels of cognitive engagement. Therefore, while PMM proves beneficial in enhancing teachers' instructional cognition, its effectiveness remains closely tied to contextual factors such as technological support and training.

In summary, PMM fosters deep cognitive perception among teachers, enhancing curriculum understanding, planning competence, and instructional decision-making. Yet, its full impact can only be realized through equitable access and systemic support across diverse educational contexts.

2. Affective Perspective in Utilizing the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM)

From an affective perspective, the teacher expressed positive emotional responses toward the use of the Pelatihan Mandiri feature. The platform was considered flexible and convenient, allowing learning to happen anytime and anywhere, which fostered comfort and reduced pressure. These emotional benefits contributed to greater motivation and engagement with the platform. This aligns with findings by Latif et al. (2024), who noted that the flexibility of PMM enhances teacher satisfaction and encourages continued participation in self-development.

The Perangkat Ajar feature also elicited positive feelings. It was described as helpful and reassuring in providing structured, ready-to-use learning resources. The teacher felt supported and more confident when using the provided materials, particularly in preparing for classroom activities. These emotional responses reflect what Sabeliana et al. (2024) highlighted—that the platform can increase teachers' emotional security and enthusiasm in lesson delivery. Additionally, Puspitasari and Zumrotun (2024) found that emotional comfort plays a key role in teachers' willingness to adopt digital tools like PMM.

Overall, both features contributed to increased emotional satisfaction, confidence, and motivation. The teacher enjoyed using the platform and found joy in applying new insights to classroom teaching. This emotional connection appeared to strengthen the teacher's sense of professional value and teaching identity. These findings resonate with Safitri (2024) and Istiqomah et al. (2024), who emphasized that emotional engagement with PMM can significantly impact teaching morale and digital adaptation in the classroom.

3. Conative Perspective in utilizing Merdeka Mengajar Platform

From a conative perspective, the teacher demonstrated clear behavioral engagement in utilizing the Pelatihan Mandiri feature. Rather than passively completing modules, the teacher actively applied learned concepts into classroom practices, such as incorporating CP and ATP into their lesson planning. This shows a strong intention to transform knowledge into action, reflecting Baron and Byrne's conative theory (as cited in Myers, 2006), which emphasizes purposeful behavioral responses. Additionally, the teacher's motivation was reinforced by the connection between PMM and formal performance evaluations, encouraging consistent participation. This finding aligns with Puspitasari and Zumrotun (2024), who noted that integration with teacher appraisal systems increases engagement with PMM modules.

In terms of the *Perangkat Ajar* feature, the teacher regularly consulted the platform while preparing lessons and assessments, showing habitual and goal-oriented behavior. However, their engagement was not mechanical; instead, they adapted the materials to suit student readiness and classroom needs. This reflects flexible and reflective action, indicating a mature use of the platform as a pedagogical tool. As Rosyidah et al. (2024) and Elviana et al. (2023) found, teachers often personalize PMM materials creatively, rather than using them rigidly, leading to more meaningful learning experiences.

Nonetheless, not all teaching contexts exhibit such behavioral responses. Kartikasari et al. (2023) found no significant impact of PMM on teacher readiness in some schools, highlighting the influence of contextual factors such as infrastructure and digital access. Despite this, in the present study, the teacher's behavior reflects a combination of intrinsic motivation (professional growth) and extrinsic motivators (institutional expectations). This dual influence supports the view of PMM not only as a teaching aid but as a catalyst for professional accountability and instructional innovation (Sabeliana et al., 2024; Istiqomah et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION AND SUGESTION

This study found that the English teacher at SDN 1 Loceret held a positive perception of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform, viewed through cognitive, affective, and conative aspects. Cognitively, the teacher demonstrated a clear understanding of key features such as *Pelatihan Mandiri* and *Perangkat Ajar*, and effectively used them to plan, deliver, and evaluate lessons in alignment with the Merdeka Curriculum.

From an affective point of view, the teacher responded emotionally well to the platform. Feelings of satisfaction, comfort, and motivation were evident, particularly in how the platform supported both personal confidence and professional well-being through self-directed learning experiences.

Conatively, the teacher showed consistent and purposeful use of the platform in daily teaching practice. Actions reflected a strong commitment to professional development and thoughtful adaptation of teaching materials to classroom needs. Although the study focused on a single case, the findings suggest the platform's potential to support teacher growth in a holistic and meaningful way.

Given the limited scope of this study, which involved only one English teacher at a single primary school, future research is encouraged to explore broader contexts. Studies involving a larger number of teachers across various school settings with different resource levels can offer a more comprehensive view of how the Merdeka Mengajar Platform supports teaching practices.

Further research may also investigate how teachers from different grade levels or subject areas perceive and utilize the platform. Comparing perspectives across these groups could reveal unique challenges or

advantages in its implementation. Moreover, longitudinal studies could examine how teacher perceptions evolve over time with continued use of the platform.

In addition, it would be valuable to assess the impact of the platform on student learning outcomes. While this study focused on teacher perception, future studies could analyze the relationship between the use of PMM and improvements in student engagement, comprehension, or achievement in English or other subjects.

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