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Unpacking the Impact of the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform on Teacher Performance: A CIPP Model Evaluation

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the implementation of the Platform Merdeka Mengajar (PMM) and its impact on improving teacher performance through the Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) evaluation model. As a flagship initiative of Indonesia's Ministry of Education, PMM provides self-paced training modules, instructional resources, assessment tools, and digital portfolios to support teachers in delivering the Merdeka Curriculum. Employing a qualitative approach, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis involving eight teachers and one principal at a junior secondary school in Indonesia. The findings indicate that PMM is contextually aligned with the evolving needs of educators, particularly in promoting independent learning and responsive teaching. While infrastructure and resources were generally adequate, limited digital fluency and time constraints hindered optimal use. Teachers are actively engaged with the platform, supported by institutional mechanisms like Komunitas Belajar, for collaborative reflection. The evaluation showed improved pedagogical competence, classroom management, and student engagement. Despite some obstacles, PMM demonstrates strong potential as a digital innovation for professional development. This study recommends sustained policy support, user-centered platform improvements, ongoing training, and a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to enhance its effectiveness. The results provide valuable insights for policymakers and school leaders seeking to integrate technology into teacher development systems.

INTRODUCTION

In an era marked by rapid technological advancement and evolving educational paradigms, the teaching profession is experiencing significant transformation. Today's educators are expected not only to master subject content but also to integrate 21st-century competencies into their instruction, including digital literacy, creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking (González-Pérez & Ramírez-Montoya, 2022; Kasperski et al., 2022; Tohani & Aulia, 2022). These heightened demands require continuous professional development and access to high-quality, adaptive learning resources. In response, the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology introduced the *Platform Merdeka Mengajar* (PMM), a digital platform aimed at supporting teachers in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum (Kusuma, 2024; Rahmawati, 2024). The PMM provides tools and resources such

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as self-paced training, teaching modules, assessment instruments, and digital portfolios to enhance teachers' pedagogical practices and instructional autonomy.

Digital platforms like PMM are part of a broader global trend toward leveraging technology for scalable, sustainable, and personalized teacher development. Numerous studies underscore the transformative potential of such platforms. For instance, Ng et al. (2023) emphasize that digital tools can facilitate teacher competency development by offering accessible, flexible, and targeted content. In the Indonesian context, Fadlillah & Kusaeri (2024) found that the PMM significantly aids teachers in lesson planning, especially in adapting to student needs through diagnostic assessments and teaching kits. These features empower educators to differentiate instruction better, thereby improving learning outcomes. Furthermore, Azizah et al. (2025) highlighted that the platform fosters teacher collaboration, reflective practice, and the integration of modern pedagogical strategies into classroom instruction.

Nevertheless, empirical studies also reveal substantial challenges in the implementation of PMM. Alawiah & Setyorini (2023) note that while some educators show improved pedagogical comprehension after using PMM, engagement with the platform remains inconsistent. Factors such as limited digital skills, lack of school-level infrastructure, and insufficient mentoring mechanisms have hampered the platform's widespread adoption. Similarly, Muslimah & Sukartono (2025) observed that many teachers struggle to transition from traditional to technology-supported instructional models, affecting their ability to use PMM's offerings fully. These findings suggest a gap between policy design and classroom-level realities, underscoring the need for a structured evaluation of the platform's effectiveness.

The importance of evaluating educational innovations using robust frameworks has been increasingly recognized in educational research. Among the various models available, the Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) model developed by Stufflebeam stands out as a comprehensive approach to program evaluation. The CIPP model facilitates a multidimensional analysis—examining the relevance of program goals (Context), adequacy of resources and strategies (Input), quality of implementation (Process), and outcomes achieved (Product). This model is particularly effective for evaluating dynamic educational interventions, balancing formative and summative assessments (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). In Indonesia, the CIPP framework has been successfully applied to assess a range of initiatives, including curriculum innovation, zonation systems, and teacher training (Dianto & Fathurrochman, 2024; Dizon, 2023), yet it remains underutilized for digital learning platforms such as PMM.

Moreover, evaluating a technology-based professional development program such as PMM requires attention to both technical and pedagogical dimensions. Teachers' ability to engage with the platform is influenced by its design and functionality, its content's alignment with classroom realities, and the degree of institutional support. Effective professional learning environments connect digital resources with real-time feedback, peer collaboration, and personalized growth trajectories. As highlighted by a relevant study, teacher development programs must be rooted in contextual needs and driven by continuous improvement processes, a perspective well-integrated within the CIPP framework (Khaksar et al., 2023).

Therefore, this study applies the CIPP model to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform's impact on teacher performance. It seeks to answer critical questions about the platform's contextual relevance, resource adequacy, implementation fidelity, and measurable outcomes. Analyzing each model component, the research aims to uncover the strengths and limitations of PMM as a professional development tool. The insights generated from this study are expected to inform future refinement of the platform, guide policy adjustments, and contribute to the discourse on digital innovation in teacher education, particularly within developing country contexts.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative evaluative research design utilizing the Context, Input, Process, and Product (CIPP) model developed by (Stufflebeam & Zhang, 2017). The CIPP model was chosen for its ability to provide a holistic and systematic framework for evaluating educational programs. It allows for comprehensive analysis by examining the program's outcomes, contextual relevance, resource adequacy, implementation fidelity, and effectiveness. This model is well-suited for assessing complex

innovations such as digital teacher development platforms, where multiple interacting variables influence the program's impact.

Participants and Setting

The research involved purposive sampling of participants (Campbell et al., 2020) comprising teachers and administrators from a junior secondary school in Indonesia that had implemented the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform (PMM). The sample included eight subject teachers actively using PMM and one school principal. Selection was based on their active involvement in the platform and ability to provide rich, reflective insights regarding the program's implementation and outcomes. Although the institutional setting is anonymized in this article to enhance generalizability, the school selected had undergone a full academic year of PMM integration.

Data Collection

Data for this study were gathered through three qualitative techniques: semi-structured interviews, direct observations, and document analysis (Miles et al., 2014). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all participants—including eight teachers and one school principal—to gain in-depth insights into their experiences and perceptions regarding using the *Merdeka Mengajar* Platform (PMM). The interview questions were designed to align with the four domains of the CIPP model, ensuring that the data collected was relevant for evaluating contextual alignment, resources, implementation processes, and outcomes. Each interview was conducted face-to-face, lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes, and was audio-recorded with the participants' consent.

Observations were carried out over four weeks and focused on the participants' practical use of PMM in their day-to-day teaching activities. These observations aimed to capture real-time behaviors, instructional decisions, and teacher-student interactions mediated by the platform. Special attention was paid to how teachers accessed learning modules, utilized assessment features, and integrated digital resources into lesson planning and delivery.

Additionally, document analysis was conducted to contextualize the interview and observation data further. It included reviewing teachers' usage logs from the PMM system, self-paced training completion reports, digital lesson plans, and documentation uploaded through the "Proof of My Work" feature. These documents provided objective evidence of participation, engagement levels, and professional development activities over one academic term. These three methods enabled data triangulation to ensure a rich and credible portrayal of the program's implementation.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed a thematic approach, guided explicitly by the four components of the CIPP evaluation model. After transcribing the interviews verbatim, the researchers conducted initial open coding to identify significant statements and emerging patterns. These codes were then organized into broader categories corresponding to context, input, process, and product. For example, codes related to the perceived relevance of PMM to teacher needs were grouped under the "Context" domain, while data concerning the availability and adequacy of digital infrastructure and training were classified under "Input." To analyze the observation notes, the researchers reviewed field journals to identify recurring instructional behaviors and technology-use patterns that reflected implementation fidelity or deviation. These patterns were mapped onto the "Process" domain to understand how the PMM was utilized in practice, beyond stated intentions.

Document data were examined using content analysis techniques to identify tangible indicators of teacher performance and engagement. Artifacts such as digital lesson plans, participation certificates, and performance logs were coded and linked to the "Product" domain. The triangulation of interview, observational, and documentary data strengthened the credibility of the findings and minimized potential researcher bias. Member checking was conducted to enhance trustworthiness by sharing preliminary thematic summaries with participants. Their feedback was incorporated to verify the accuracy of interpretations. This iterative process ensured the themes generated were grounded in the data and reflected the participants' lived experiences.

RESULTS

Context Evaluation

The context evaluation focused on the relevance and necessity of the Platform *Merdeka Mengajar* (PMM) in addressing the professional development needs of teachers at SMP Datok Sulaiman Palopo. The PMM was introduced as a response to the challenges of conventional teaching methods and limited access to modern teaching resources. It promotes creative, flexible, student-centered instruction aligned with the *Merdeka* Curriculum. Pallawa Rukka, the vice principal, emphasized the policy-driven rationale of the program:

> "*This PMM program is based on a government policy aimed at improving teacher performance. Through this platform, teachers can more easily access teaching materials and educational resources. We see this program as highly beneficial in facilitating the development of teacher competencies in the modern era.*"

Similarly, Harmita Sadar, a Bahasa Indonesia teacher, noted:

> "*This program has been very helpful for us, especially in improving our teaching skills... the platform enables us to use more interactive and student-centered learning methods.*"

These insights reflect strong alignment between PMM's objectives and the contextual needs of teachers seeking to modernize instructional strategies.

Input Evaluation

Input evaluation assessed the resources, training, and infrastructural support available to implement PMM effectively. Teachers expressed that the platform provides accessible teaching tools and resources that can be customized to suit individual classroom needs. Ummu Kalsum highlighted this accessibility:

> "*The easy access to teaching tools provided by the PMM platform is one of the key factors that helps teachers enhance their creativity and the quality of their instruction.*"

Eni Sumarni added:

> "*The school's vision aligns with the goals of this program in enhancing teacher competencies and providing flexibility in the learning process.*"

The alignment between PMM and the school's vision illustrates the strategic readiness for platform integration. However, digital literacy disparities and limited time for content preparation were identified as challenges requiring ongoing training and support.

Process Evaluation

The process evaluation examined how the PMM was implemented and utilized by teachers. Regular use of PMM features, such as digital modules and lesson planning tools, became part of teachers' routines. Weekly Komunitas Belajar sessions allowed collaborative reflection and continuous feedback. According to the principal, Muhtarul Hadi:

> "*The implementation of PMM makes it easier for teachers to access knowledge about the Merdeka Curriculum. It helps teachers understand and implement the new curriculum without difficulty.*"

Pallawa Rukka also stated:

> "*The PMM program is a government initiative to meet educational needs... it greatly supports teachers in being creative throughout the teaching and learning process.*"

Despite the overall positive reception, time constraints remained a common issue. Eni Sumarni noted:

> "*The biggest challenge is finding time to prepare materials due to the numerous demands of the curriculum.*"

Still, consistent evaluation meetings and peer collaboration helped mitigate some of these obstacles and fostered professional growth.

Product Evaluation

The product evaluation focused on outcomes related to teacher performance and student engagement. Teachers reported increased confidence and more dynamic classroom experiences. They adapted lessons to student needs better and incorporated active learning strategies. Harmita Sadar expressed:

> "*One of the most notable benefits of PMM is the provision of adaptable teaching tools and modules.*"

Eni Sumarni remarked:

> "*This program helps to optimize the development of students' potential... providing space for teachers to design relevant and contextual teaching materials.*"

Moreover, classroom observations showed improvements in teaching performance across six domains—content understanding, pedagogy, assessment, classroom management, professionalism, and student outcomes—all rated as "Good." It indicates that PMM contributed significantly to instructional quality and learner-centered education. Muhtarul Hadi concluded:

> "*Every Thursday, the school holds a learning community as a forum for teacher evaluation and professional development... it is expected that teachers will not only grow individually but also be able to create teaching innovations that have a positive impact.*"

Structured classroom observations were conducted using a standardized rubric to strengthen the evaluation of the program's outcomes. These observations focused on six key domains relevant to teacher performance and instructional effectiveness. The results are summarized in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Observation Results of Teacher Performance Post-PMM Implementation

Observation Aspect	Evaluation Category
Content Understanding	Good
Pedagogical Competence	Good
Assessment Mechanisms	Good
Classroom Management	Good
Professionalism	Good
Student Learning Outcomes	Good

Source: Classroom observation data, SMP Datok Sulaiman Palopo

These findings demonstrate consistent performance improvements across all observed categories following PMM implementation. Teachers showed greater mastery of curriculum content, applied more effective pedagogical strategies, utilized varied assessment techniques, and demonstrated improved classroom management skills. Furthermore, student participation and learning outcomes improved, aligning with the student-centered learning approach promoted by the Merdeka Curriculum. Supporting this, Harmita Sadar explained:

"*A deeper understanding, which can then be applied in teaching, is one of the most important benefits of PMM.*"

In summary, the results from qualitative feedback and observational data underscore the effectiveness of the PMM in enhancing teaching performance and creating a more dynamic and engaging classroom environment.

DISCUSSION

Context Evaluation

The contextual evaluation of the *Platform Merdeka Mengajar* (PMM) indicates that its implementation was strongly aligned with the school's and teachers' needs for professional development and curriculum adaptation. Teachers and school leaders acknowledged that PMM helped address longstanding challenges related to limited access to instructional materials and conventional teaching models that are less responsive to student diversity and engagement. It is evident in the statement by Pallawa Rukka, who affirmed that the platform supports teacher creativity and instructional flexibility. Such alignment suggests that PMM filled a critical gap in the teaching and learning process within the school's evolving educational environment.

These findings support previous research, which emphasized that digital tools in education must be contextualized and tailored to the specific needs of educators (Alamri et al., 2021; Almuhanna, 2025). The introduction of PMM aligns with the broader pedagogical shift encouraged by the *Merdeka* Curriculum, which promotes flexibility, student-centered learning, and teacher autonomy (Azizah et al., 2025; Sari & Marwiyah, 2025). Relevant studies also found that digital platforms significantly enhance teacher agency when properly integrated into instructional planning and reflective practice (McGarr, 2021; Muslimah & Sukartono, 2025). The teachers' perceived relevance and usability of PMM in this study confirm its contextual responsiveness.

However, contextual relevance alone does not guarantee sustainability. While PMM fits well with institutional goals and individual teaching practices, its long-term success depends on continual adaptation to emerging educational demands and teacher feedback. Periodic updates, user-friendly enhancements, and alignment with local learning cultures will be essential to ensure that the platform remains a dynamic and supportive environment for teacher development. Without these ongoing improvements, there is a risk that contextual relevance may diminish over time, especially in diverse or underserved educational settings.

Input Evaluation

The evaluation of inputs in implementing PMM at SMP Datok Sulaiman Palopo revealed strengths and gaps. On the positive side, the platform was regarded as accessible and resource-rich, offering a range of teaching materials and professional learning modules. Teachers such as Ummu Kalsum appreciated the easy access to instructional resources that supported innovation and creativity in lesson planning. Moreover, school efforts to align PMM with institutional vision and mission statements—displayed prominently across the school—strengthened the sense of coherence and shared purpose in using the platform.

Despite this, challenges emerged around digital readiness and time constraints. Some teachers, particularly those less familiar with digital tools, faced difficulties fully utilizing PMM features. Harmita Sadar and Eni Sumarni noted that while the platform offered substantial learning opportunities, the time required to explore and adapt these resources was often constrained by heavy teaching loads and administrative duties. These findings echo relevant studies, emphasizing that platform success is contingent on content quality, institutional capacity, and teacher digital competence (Fadlillah & Kusaeri, 2024; Ng et al., 2023).

The school implemented weekly Komunitas Belajar to address these issues as a peer learning and support system. This collaborative model provided space for teachers to share strategies, troubleshoot technical challenges, and reflect on their experiences with PMM. Such practices resonate with best practices in teacher professional development, as highlighted by previous research, who advocate for embedded, collaborative, and contextually relevant professional learning (Kusumawati & Umam, 2025; Sahibe et al., 2025). Still, institutional investments in digital infrastructure, routine training, and time

allocation will be essential to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of PMM as a transformative tool (Alawiah & Setyorini, 2023).

Process Evaluation

The process evaluation reveals that the PMM was adopted by teachers and increasingly integrated into instructional planning and delivery. Teachers routinely used features such as lesson modules and self-paced training, and many reported applying insights from the platform in classroom practices. Muhtarul Hadi and Pallawa Rukka highlighted how PMM facilitated curriculum comprehension and encouraged teachers to explore creative instructional strategies, including interactive learning and contextual teaching approaches.

Moreover, the school's commitment to conducting weekly evaluation meetings and collaborative discussions provided a structured mechanism for continuous improvement. These community-based reflections enabled teachers to share progress, voice concerns, and co-construct solutions, thus creating a learning culture within the institution. As supported by relevant studies, such feedback-rich environments are essential for sustaining innovation and professional growth (Gomoll et al., 2022; Rainio & Hofmann, 2021; Vičič Krabonja et al., 2024). This process-based feedback also helped to ensure that PMM implementation did not remain superficial or symbolic but translated into genuine pedagogical change.

However, time management remained a pressing concern. Teachers frequently cited limited time for exploring the platform and preparing customized learning materials. This challenge indicates the need for more integrated scheduling and workload balancing, so digital learning becomes part of a teacher's workflow rather than an added burden. It also highlights the importance of leadership in structuring support systems and setting clear expectations, so operational constraints do not compromise process fidelity.

Product Evaluation

The product evaluation of PMM implementation demonstrates tangible improvements in teacher performance and student engagement. Observational data confirmed enhancements in six core domains, including content mastery, pedagogical ability, and classroom management—all rated as "Good." Teachers like Harmita Sadar and Ernawati Husain noted a shift toward more interactive, student-centered approaches, contributing to higher learner participation and deeper comprehension of materials. These outcomes suggest that PMM has effectively cultivated professional competencies aligned with 21st-century teaching demands.

Furthermore, the documentation of teacher progress through reflection reports and digital portfolios has strengthened professional accountability and growth. Teachers expressed increased confidence and satisfaction, as they could now visualize and track their development. It aligns with relevant research, which found that structured digital documentation promotes reflective practice and reinforces a culture of continuous improvement (Islam, 2024; Zafeer et al., 2023). In addition, establishing *Komunitas Belajar* sessions facilitated collective learning and shared ownership of teaching quality, making professional development a collaborative rather than isolated experience (Gonçalves et al., 2022; Zamiri & Esmaeili, 2024).

Despite these positive outcomes, the full potential of PMM is contingent upon the system's ability to evolve with teacher needs. As Harmita noted, time constraints and differentiated digital skills continue to pose barriers. Addressing these will require sustained support in the form of targeted training, access to ready-to-use materials, and administrative adjustments to reduce workload (Göltl et al., 2024; Korzynski & Protsiuk, 2024; Wilson-Menzfeld et al., 2023). In doing so, schools can ensure that the benefits of PMM are equitably distributed and that the platform remains a long-term catalyst for instructional excellence.

CONCLUSION

This study evaluated the implementation and impact of the *Platform Merdeka Mengajar* (PMM) on teacher performance using the CIPP evaluation model. By addressing four key components—context, input, process, and product—the research successfully answered its guiding questions regarding the platform's relevance, resource sufficiency, implementation fidelity, and educational outcomes. The

findings reveal that PMM aligns well with institutional goals and teachers' professional needs, offering accessible resources, flexible learning pathways, and collaborative opportunities. Improvements were observed across multiple performance domains, including pedagogical competence, classroom management, and student engagement.

The study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on digital professional development platforms by demonstrating the effectiveness of PMM in a real-world educational setting. It highlights how structured evaluations like the CIPP model can offer nuanced insights into educational technology integration's operational and pedagogical aspects, especially in the context of curriculum reform in developing countries. However, the research has certain limitations. It focused on a single junior secondary school, which may limit the generalizability of the findings across diverse educational contexts. Additionally, the qualitative nature of the study, while rich in depth, may benefit from complementary quantitative data in future research to assess measurable gains in teacher performance and student learning outcomes.

Several key recommendations are proposed to ensure the sustainability and broader impact of PMM. First, differentiated professional development is needed to address varying levels of teacher digital literacy and instructional capacity. Second, school leadership should allocate protected time for platform use and collaborative learning to prevent overburdening teachers. Third, PMM must continue to evolve through user-centered design improvements, especially to accommodate teachers in under-resourced areas. Fourth, mechanisms such as *Komunitas Belajar* should be institutionalized as formal peer support and reflective practice platforms. Finally, a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system is essential to track progress and inform adaptive policy decisions. With these strategic adjustments, PMM can become a cornerstone of Indonesia's teacher professionalization agenda.

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