

THE IMPACT OF INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM TRAINING AND THE INDEPENDENT TEACHING PLATFORM ON TEACHER PERFORMANCE THROUGH TEACHER COMPETENCE AT STATE VOCATIONAL SCHOOL 2 BENER MERIAH

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effect of the Independent Curriculum training and the use of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform on teacher performance through teacher competency as a mediating variable at SMK Negeri 2 Bener Meriah. Changes in national education policy encourage teachers to adapt to more flexible and student-centered learning approaches. The Independent Curriculum training and features within the Independent Teaching Platform, such as self-paced training, teaching tools, and inspirational videos, are expected to improve teachers' pedagogical and professional competencies. This study used a quantitative approach with path analysis techniques. The study population was all teachers at SMK Negeri 2 Bener Meriah, with samples taken proportionally. The results showed that the Independent Curriculum training and the use of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform had a positive and significant effect on teacher competency, and teacher competency significantly influenced teacher performance. In addition, teacher competency also played a mediating role in strengthening the relationship between training and teacher performance. These findings emphasize the importance of continuous training and the use of educational technology to support teacher professionalism in the Independent Curriculum era.

Keywords: *Independent Curriculum, Independent Teaching Platform, Teacher Competence, Teacher Performance*

INTRODUCTION

Education is the primary foundation for developing superior and competitive human resources. To address the challenges of globalization and rapid technological development, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia launched the Independent Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka) as a form of national education transformation. This curriculum emphasizes student-centered learning, learning differentiation, and character building through a project to strengthen the Pancasila student profile (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). The implementation of the Independent Curriculum in schools requires teachers to be prepared to design and implement flexible, adaptive, and contextual learning. Therefore, training in the Independent Curriculum is key to improving teachers' understanding and skills in implementing the curriculum effectively. Systematic and ongoing training has been proven to improve teacher competency, both pedagogically and professionally (Novianti & Amalia, 2023).

As part of the Merdeka Curriculum supporting ecosystem, the government also provides the Merdeka Mengajar (PMM) Platform, which serves as a self-learning platform for teachers. This platform offers various features, such as self-paced training, teaching tools, and videos of good practices, to assist teachers in their professional development (Putri & Nurhidayat, 2023). Optimal utilization of the PMM has been shown to encourage increased teacher reflective skills and enrich classroom learning practices (Wulandari et al., 2023). However, the effectiveness of the Independent Curriculum training and the use of the Independent Teaching Platform is highly dependent on teacher competency. Teacher competency, which encompasses pedagogical, professional, social, and personality competencies (Minister of National Education Regulation No. 16 of 2007), is the foundation for determining the quality of teacher performance in schools. Teachers with high competency tend to demonstrate better

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performance in planning, implementing, and evaluating learning (Sari & Pratama, 2021). At SMK Negeri 2 Bener Meriah, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum (Independent Curriculum) still faces various challenges, ranging from limited training, inadequate utilization of digital platforms, and significant variations in competency among teachers. Therefore, in-depth research is needed to assess the impact of the Merdeka Curriculum training and the Merdeka Mengajar platform on teacher performance, with teacher competency as an intervening variable. This research is expected to provide a real contribution to the development of teacher training and mentoring policies, as well as provide input in designing strategies to improve teacher performance based on technology and field needs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

Teacher Performance

Sudjana (2022) teacher performance is the teacher's ability to plan, implement, and evaluate the learning process in the classroom, as well as carry out other professional tasks optimally.

Teacher Performance Indicators

Sudjana (2022) identified several teacher performance indicators, namely:

- 1) Learning Planning
Teachers' ability to design learning implementation plans (RPP) that are appropriate to the curriculum and student needs.
- 2) Implementation of Learning
The effectiveness of teachers in delivering material, using appropriate methods, and managing the class in a conducive manner.
- 3) Learning Evaluation
Teachers' ability to assess student learning outcomes through various objective and relevant evaluation techniques
- 4) Professional Development
Teacher participation in self-development activities, such as training, seminars, and workshops to improve their competence.
- 5) Interpersonal Relationships
The quality of teacher interaction and communication with students, colleagues, and parents.

Teacher Competence

Mulyasa (2021) states that teacher competency is a set of knowledge, skills, and behaviors that teachers must possess, internalize, and master in carrying out their professional duties. This competency includes the ability to design learning, implement the learning process, evaluate learning outcomes, and develop professionalism continuously. "Teacher competency is a combination of intellectual, emotional, and social abilities integrated in the implementation of professional duties."

Teacher Competency Indicators

Teacher Competency Indicators according to Mulyasa

1. Pedagogical Competence
Teachers' ability to manage student-centered learning.
2. Personality Competence
Reflects the teacher's personal attitude and integrity as an educator.
3. Social Competence
The ability of teachers to interact effectively in educational and community environments.
4. Professional Competence
Refers to mastery of teaching materials and the ability to organize learning content.

Independent Teaching Platform

Understanding the Independent Teaching Platform

Putri & Nurhidayat (2023) stated that the Merdeka Mengajar Platform is a technology-based digital media that provides access to teachers to develop their professional competencies through training, teaching tools, and inspiring videos of good practices from other teachers.

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Independent Teaching Platform Indicators

1. Utilization of Self-Training Features
The Merdeka Mengajar platform provides self-paced training in the form of short modules that teachers can access at any time.
2. Utilization of Teaching Tools
Teaching tools are ready-to-use teaching materials such as modules, lesson plans, and worksheets available in PMM.
3. Utilization of Inspirational Videos & Good Practice Communities
PMM also provides videos of good practices from other teachers as well as a community discussion forum for fellow teachers.

Conceptual Framework

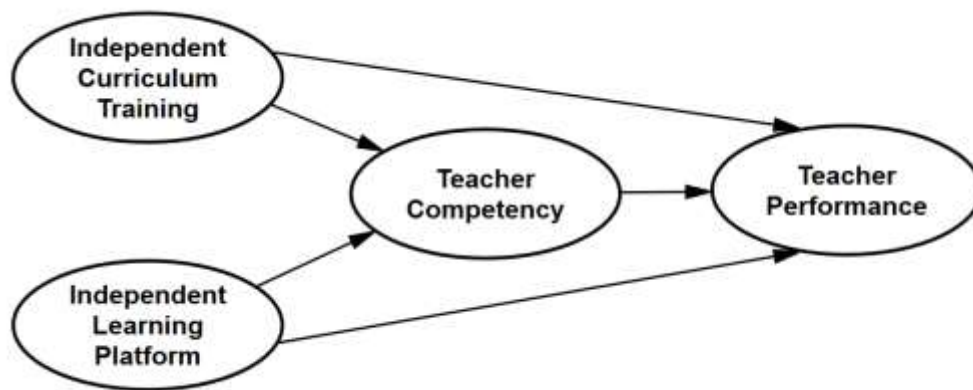


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Research Hypothesis

- H1: Independent curriculum training has a positive and significant impact on teacher performance in State Vocational School 2 Bener Meriah.
- H2: Independent curriculum training has a positive and significant effect on teacher competency at SMK Negeri 2 Bener Meriah.
- H3: The Merdeka Teaching platform has a positive and significant impact on teacher performance at SMK Negeri 2 Bener Meriah.
- H4: The independent teaching platform has a positive and significant influence on teacher competence in State Vocational School 2 Bener Meriah.
- H5: Teacher competence has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance at State Vocational School 2 Bener Meriah.
- H6: Independent curriculum training has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance through teacher competency at SMK Negeri 2 Bener Meriah.
- H7: The independent teaching platform has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance through teacher competency at SMK Negeri 2 Bener Meriah.

RESEARCH METHOD

Types of research

The type of research used by the researcher was quantitative. This quantitative research was conducted to create a study that aimed to adapt a research and to analyze the analysis of academic supervision and organizational culture on teacher performance, with job satisfaction as an intervening variable at SMP Negeri 1 Pintu Rime Gayo, Bener Meriah Regency.

Research Location and Research Time

The research location was SMK Negeri 2 Bener Meriah, located in West Lampahan, Timang Gajah District, Bener Meriah Regency, Aceh. The research period was 3 months, from May to July 2025.

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Population and Sample

In this study, the population was 72 people, consisting of 65 civil servants and 7 PPPK teachers. The sample used in this study was a saturated sample because the entire population was used as a sample. because the number is relatively small and allows for research as a whole.

Research Data Sources

The data sources used in this study are primary data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Outer Model Analysis

Outer Model Analysis musePLS Algorithm, produce:

Validity Test

Table 1. ValuesOuter Loadings

	Independent Curriculum Training	Independent Teaching Platform	Teacher Competency	Teacher Performance
X1.1	0.842			
X1.2	0.823			
X1.3	0.851			
X1.4	0.875			
X1.5	0.838			
X1.6	0.912			
X1.7	0.874			
X2.1		0.859		
X2.2		0.796		
X2.3		0.860		
X2.4		0.854		
X2.5		0.800		
X2.6		0.819		
Y.1				0.786
Y.2				0.799
Y.3				0.830
Y.4				0.787
Y.5				0.829
Z.1			0.822	
Z.2			0.889	
Z.3			0.863	
Z.4			0.859	
Z.5			0.835	

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

Based on the values in Table 1 above, it shows the results of testing the outer model through the loading factor value /Based on outer loadings, all indicators in each variable have a loading value of ≥ 0.70 . This indicates that each indicator is able to represent the construct being measured validly and robustly. Therefore, it can be concluded that all items in the questionnaire have met the convergent validity criteria and can be used in further analysis. For more details on the above values, see the following figure.

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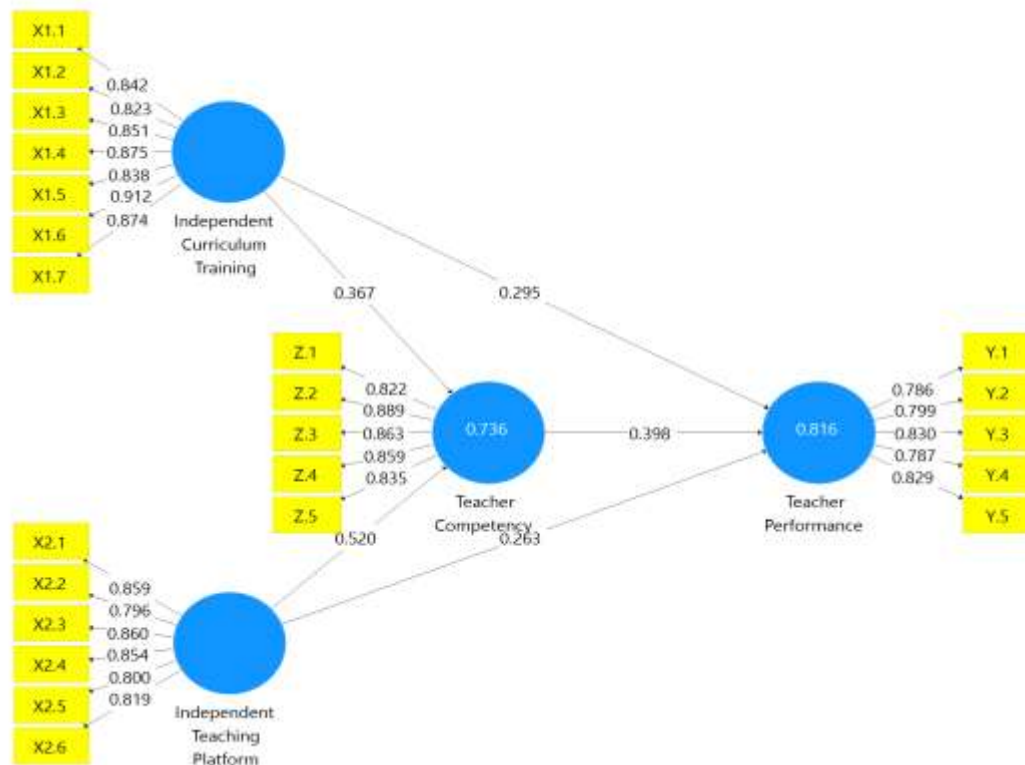


Figure 1. Outer Loadings

In this study there is an equation and the equation consists of two substructures for substructure 1:

$$Z = \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + e_1$$

$$Z = 0.367X_1 + 0.520X_2 + e_1$$

For substructure 2:

$$Y = \beta_2 X_1 + \beta_3 X_2 + \beta_3 Z + e_2$$

$$Y = 0.295X_1 + 0.263X_2 + 0.398Z + e_2$$

Reliability Test

Table 2. Construct Reliability and Validity Test

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Independent Curriculum Training	0.941	0.943	0.952	0.739
Independent Teaching Platform	0.911	0.913	0.931	0.692
Teacher Competency	0.907	0.909	0.931	0.729
Teacher Performance	0.865	0.868	0.903	0.650

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

Table 2 above shows that the reliability test results show that the Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values for all constructs are above 0.70. This indicates that all indicators have high internal consistency and can be relied upon to measure their respective constructs. Therefore, the research instrument is deemed reliable and suitable for use in testing the structural model.

Coefficient of Determination (R²)

Evaluating a model with PLS begins by examining the R-square for each dependent latent variable. The table below shows the results of R-square estimation using SmartPLS.

Table 3. R Square Results

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Teacher Competency	0.736	0.732
Teacher Performance	0.816	0.812

Source: Smart PLS, 2025

Table 3 shows the R-square value for both dependent variables. For the teacher competency variable, the R-square value is 0.736, meaning that the influence of the independent curriculum training and the independent teaching platform is 0.736, or 73.6%, with the remainder being on other variables outside the model. The R-square value for teacher performance is 0.816, meaning that the independent curriculum training, the independent teaching platform, and teacher competency are 0.816, or 81.6%, with the remainder being on other variables outside the model.

Structural Model Testing (Inner Model)

Hypothesis Testing

Direct Influence Between Variables

The direct influence between variables can be seen in the path coefficients. The data processing results show the direct influence values, as shown in the following table.

Table 4. Path Coefficients (Direct Effect)

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
Independent Curriculum Training -> Teacher Performance	0.295	3,008	0.003	Accepted
Independent Curriculum Training -> Teacher Competency	0.367	2,817	0.005	Accepted
Independent Teaching Platform -> Teacher Performance	0.263	2,525	0.012	Accepted
Independent Teaching Platform -> Teacher Competency	0.520	3,925	0,000	Accepted
Teacher Competency -> Teacher Performance	0.398	3,796	0,000	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

In the results of Table 4 there are direct influence values which will be explained as follows:

1. Independent curriculum training has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance, with a t-statistic value of 3.008 above 1.96 and a significance value of 0.003 below 0.05. This means that independent curriculum training has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance because the significance value is below 0.05. The results of this study are in line with previous research which stated that work climate has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance (Samili et al., 2023).
2. Independent curriculum training has a positive and significant effect on teacher competence with a t-statistic value of 2.817, above 1.96, and a significance level of 0.005, below 0.05, indicating that independent curriculum training has a positive and significant effect on teacher competence, as the significance value is below 0.05. This finding aligns with previous research, which found that independent curriculum training has a positive and significant effect on teacher competence (Utomo & Kusumawati et al., 2024).
3. The independent teaching platform has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance with a t-statistic value of 2.525, above 1.96, and a significance level of 0.012, below 0.05, indicate that the Merdeka Teaching platform has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance, as the significance value is below

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- 0.05. The results of this study are inconsistent with previous research, which found that organizational culture has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance (Sudarsih, 2023).
4. The independent teaching platform has a positive and significant influence on teacher competence with a t-statistic value of 3.925 above 1.96 and a significance level of 0.000 below 0.05, indicating that the Merdeka Teaching platform has a positive and significant effect on teacher competence, as the significance value is below 0.05. This study's findings align with research conducted by Putri et al. (2024) which found that the Merdeka Teaching platform has a positive and significant effect on teacher competence.
 5. Teacher competence has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance with a t-statistic value of 3.796 above 1.96 and a significance level of 0.000 below 0.05, indicating that teacher competence has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance because the significance value is below 0.05. The results of this study are consistent with previous research which stated that teacher competence has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance (Haryono et al., 2020).

Indirect Influence Between Variables

The indirect influence between variables can be seen in the specific indirect effects values. The data processing results show the indirect effect values, as shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Specific Indirect Effects

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
Independent Curriculum Training -> Teacher Competency -> Teacher Performance	0.146	2,199	0.028	Accepted
Independent Teaching Platform -> Teacher Competency -> Teacher Performance	0.207	2,660	0.008	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS, 2025

In table 5 there is an indirect influence between variables which will be explained as follows:

1. Independent curriculum training has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance through teacher competency with a t-statistic value of 2.199 and a significance value of 0.028 means that teacher competence acts as an intervening variable between independent curriculum training and teacher performance.
2. The independent teaching platform has a positive and significant effect on teacher performance through teacher competency with a t-statistic value of 2.660 and a significance value of 0.008 means that teacher competence acts as an intervening variable between the independent teaching platform and teacher performance.

CONCLUSION

1. The independent curriculum training had a positive and significant impact on teacher performance at SMK Negeri 2 Bener Meriah.
2. The independent curriculum training had a positive and significant impact on teacher competency at SMK Negeri 2 Bener Meriah.
3. The Merdeka Teaching platform has a positive and significant impact on teacher performance at SMK Negeri 2 Bener Meriah.
4. The independent teaching platform has a positive and significant impact on teacher competency at State Vocational School 2 Bener Meriah.
5. Teacher competence has a positive and significant influence on teacher performance at SMK Negeri 2 Bener Meriah.
6. Independent curriculum training has a positive and significant impact on teacher performance through teacher competency at SMK Negeri 2 Bener Meriah.
7. The Merdeka Teaching platform has a positive and significant impact on teacher performance through teacher competency at SMK Negeri 2 Bener Meriah.

SUGGESTION

1. In the independent curriculum training variable, the indicator with the lowest score was the statement "There are pre-tests and post-tests to measure competency improvement." Suggestions include using valid and reliable pre-test and post-test instruments, aligned directly with the intended competency indicators (pedagogical, professional, social, and personality), so that the measurement results accurately reflect teacher competency improvement.
2. The independent teaching platform with the statement "Utilization of Independent Training to improve teacher competency". Encourage teachers to keep a reflective journal after completing each independent training module, so they can evaluate their understanding and plan the application of the training material in their teaching practice.
3. For the teacher competency variable, the statement "I understand the learning characteristics of each student in my class" is used. Conduct a diagnostic assessment or learning style mapping at the beginning of the semester to obtain objective data on each student's needs, interests, and learning styles.
4. Teacher performance with the statement "In-depth mastery of teaching materials." Participate in learning communities or professional discussion forums among teachers to deepen their understanding of teaching materials by sharing experiences, learning resources, and relevant teaching practices.

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