

**THE ABILITY OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHERS AT
JUNIOR HIGHT SCHOOL TAPAKTUAN IN USING THE MERDEKA
MENGAJAR PLATFORM**

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Received 1 November 2024, Accepted 30 April 2025, Published 30 April 2025

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to see the ability of Islamic Religious Education teachers at Tapaktuan Junior High School in using the Merdeka Mengajar Platform. This study uses a quantitative method. This study was located at Tapaktuan Junior High School. The sample in this study were Islamic Religious Education teachers who had a Merdeka Mengajar Platform account. There were 5 Islamic Religious Education teachers who had a Merdeka Mengajar Platform account. The data collection techniques used in this study were questionnaires and observations. The data analysis technique used a percentage formula, then analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results of this study are that most Islamic Religious Education teachers in Tapaktuan are not yet fully able to use the Merdeka Mengajar Platform. These teachers still need to improve their abilities in all the features available on the Merdeka Mengajar Platform. While a small number of Islamic Religious Education

teachers are already able to use the Merdeka Mengajar Platform, they still need to improve their abilities in the Student Assessment and Work Results features.

Keywords: Merdeka Mengajar Platform, Independent Curriculum

Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk melihat kemampuan guru Pendidikan Agama Islam di Sekolah Menengah Pertama Tapatuan dalam menggunakan Platform Merdeka Mengajar. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuantitatif. Penelitian ini berlokasi di Sekolah Menengah Pertama Tapaktuan. Sampel dalam penelitian ini yaitu guru Pendidikan Agama Islam yang memiliki akun Platform Merdeka Mengajar. Terdapat 5 guru Pendidikan Agama Islam yang memiliki akun Platform Merdeka Mengajar. Teknik pengumpulan data yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah angket dan observasi. Teknik analisis data menggunakan rumus persentase, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah sebagian besar guru pendidikan Agama Islam di Tapaktuan belum sepenuhnya mampu menggunakan Platform Merdeka Mengajar. Guru-guru tersebut masih perlu meningkatkan kemampuan pada semua fitur yang ada di Platform Merdeka Mengajar. Sedangkan sebagian kecil guru Pendidikan Agama Islam sudah mampu menggunakan Platform Merdeka Mengajar, Namun masih perlu meningkatkan kemampuan pada fitur Asesmen Siswa dan Hasil Karya.

Kata kunci: Merdeka Belajar, Kurikulum Merdeka

INTRODUCTION

Technology continues to experience significant developments from time to time. By using technology, various jobs can be completed effectively and efficiently. The existence of technology also helps people to be able to connect with other people without limitations of space and time (Vira Syelvia & Yosha Safitri, 2023). The ability to use technology is a skill that must at least be mastered by every individual at this time, including teachers (Andi Sadriani, 2023). Without this ability, technology cannot be used by society. In fact, the inability to use technology will be a very serious problem. This is because almost every line of life is affiliated with technology, including the world of education.

Education has a very crucial role for the sustainability of a country and nation. Because, with education it is expected to create superior generations. According to Arifudin as quoted by Arin that every individual has the potential that can be trained and developed so as to form educated humans both in terms of knowledge, attitude and skills through the education process (Arin, 2023). Education based on law number 20 of 2003 is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have strong spiritual religious strength, self-control, personality, competence, noble morals and skills needed by themselves, society, nation and state. Thus, education is one of the

steps that must be taken by every individual in order to develop potential and play a role in improving human resources in a country (Herry Sumual, 2024).

Curriculum development is one of the indicators of educational success in a country. Quality education must always be evaluated innovatively, dynamically and periodically based on the latest developments in the era and science and technology, competencies needed by society and graduates. The curriculum is an instrument to achieve educational goals and at the same time becomes a guideline for implementing learning at all types and levels of education.

Because the curriculum factor is so important, improvements must be made that are adjusted to the conditions in the environment (Khotibul Umam, 2013). Historically, Indonesia has experienced several curriculum changes since the independence era. The curriculum changes have been made 11 times. And most recently Indonesia uses the 2021 curriculum (Independence Curriculum) (Anis Aprianti, 2023). The rules regarding the curriculum overhaul are based on the results of analysis, evaluation, predictions and various challenges faced both internally and externally which are full of changes (Erin Aprillia, 2023).

The Independent Curriculum is the latest policy regarding the education curriculum in Indonesia. This policy is based on the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology No. 56 of 2022 concerning guidelines for implementing the Independent Curriculum (KEMENDIKBUD, 2022). Through the Independent Learning Curriculum and Strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile and focusing on essential materials, it is hoped that this curriculum can resolve various obstacles in the world of education that are currently occurring and future challenges. This curriculum is also understood as a more flexible, flexible, enjoyable, pressure-free learning design to express one's natural talents, and focus on freedom and creativity (Restu Rahayu, 2022). In addition, the Independent Curriculum orbits a platform that aims to make it easier for teachers to implement the Independent Curriculum. The platform is known as the Independent Teaching Platform (Meuthia & Rira, 2023).

Digitalization and the presence of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform in Indonesia have good and bad impacts. The good impact is that through the use of the Merdeka Mengajar Platform, all teachers in Indonesia can interact, learn from each other and exchange information (Ratna Wulandari, 2023). This allows the quality of learning received by students in various regions in Indonesia at the same level. In addition, digitalization in the world of education allows teachers to carry out distance learning and shift the use of paper to online (Aulia and Leni, 2024). The bad impact is that quite a lot of teachers are not ready to integrate education with technology. (Ratna Wulandari, 2023).

The presence of the Independent Curriculum and the Independent Teaching Platform that colors the world of Indonesian education certainly requires pre-implementation preparation. This goal is useful so that teachers as the spearhead of education in Indonesia understand the concept and can apply it in practice. However, today, many teachers are confused about the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at all levels of education. The rapid development of technology underlies the implementation of this curriculum, even so, the readiness of all elements of education will be tested and especially the educators who will implement this

Independent Learning Curriculum in each of their educational units (Ni Kadek Candra & I Ketut Dedi, 2022). This program must start with the readiness of the teachers first. On the other hand, teacher training is carried out independently through various platforms that can be accessed independently, especially using Merdeka Mengajar Platform. However, this will be a problem for teachers who do not understand information technology. Because, they cannot access various training to prepare themselves to implement the Independent Curriculum.

In the world of education, educators are the main pillars in driving the wheels of education (Faisal, 2021). With the continued penetration of technology into the world of education, an educator must have technological skills and follow developments in education and technology (Hesti Fitriyana, 2021). According to Shulman as quoted by Hesty, there are 3 main aspects that a teacher must master, namely knowledge of the material in learning, pedagogical knowledge and technological knowledge (Hesti Fitriyana, 2021). With this statement, a teacher is not only required to have material and pedagogical knowledge, but is also required to have technological knowledge.

Based on initial observations and interviews conducted by researchers at Junior High School 1 Tapaktuan, regarding the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum through Merdeka Mengajar Platform, there are several problems experienced by teachers in using Merdeka Mengajar Platform, namely not being proficient in logging in/logging out of Merdeka Mengajar Platform using e-mail and passwords that have been specially provided, difficulty accessing various features such as independent training, real action, teaching tools and various other features. Every teacher should be able to use the various features available on the Merdeka Mengajar Platform. So, the use of the Platform runs well. Based on this description, researchers are interested in conducting research on the ability of Islamic Religious Education Teachers at Junior High School Tapaktuan to use the Merdeka Mengajar Platform.

METHOD

This research uses a quantitative method with a field research type (Field Research). Study located at the State Junior High School in Tapaktuan City, South Aceh Regency, which consists of 4 Junior High Schools, namely, Junior High School 1 Tapaktuan, Junior High School 2 Tapaktuan, Junior High School 3 Tapaktuan, and Junior High School 4 Tapaktuan. The sampling technique used in this study is purposive sampling, namely the selection of samples that are adjusted to the objectives of the study. In this case, the researcher chose a sample in the form of Islamic Religious Education Teachers at the State Junior High School of Tapaktuan City. There are 5 teachers who have accounts on the Merdeka Mengajar Platform.

The data collection techniques that researchers used in this study were questionnaires and observation (Sugiono, 2017). To analyze the questionnaire the researcher used descriptive statistics. After the data is collected from the instruments that have been distributed, scoring is then carried out for each instrument item by giving a value of 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 for each item (Sugiyono, 2023)

The scoring for each instrument item is based on the following table:

Strogly Aggre	Agree	Less Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5	4	3	2	1

Then, the data obtained from the questionnaire results will be analyzed using the percentage formula (%) (Sudijono, 2004):

$$P = \frac{f}{n} \times 100$$

Information:

P = Percentage number

f = Frequency whose percentage is being sought

n = Number of cases (number of frequencies/number of individuals)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the era of modern education, teachers' ability to use the Merdeka Mengajar Platform is one of the important competencies that must be possessed. Merdeka Mengajar Platform provides various learning resources, modules, and evaluation materials that support the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in the classroom. Teachers are not only required to understand the learning materials, but also to master educational technology that can enrich the teaching and learning process. By utilizing Merdeka Mengajar Platform optimally, teachers can create a more dynamic, innovative, and appropriate learning experience for students, thus encouraging the achievement of more effective and inclusive educational goals. The following are the results of the study regarding the ability of teachers at Junior Hight School Tapaktuan to use Merdeka Mengajar Platform:

Table 1. Teachers are able to use technology in implementing learning.

No	Alternative Answers	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strogly Aggre	2 persons	40
2	Agree	3 people	60
3	Less Agree	-	-
4	Disagree	-	-
5	Strongly Disagree	-	-
Amount		5 people	100

Based on the table above, it can be seen that 2 people (40%) answered strongly agree, 3 people (60%) answered agree, and no respondents answered less agree, disagree and strongly disagree. It is concluded that Junior Hight School Tapaktuan teachers are able to use technology in implementing learning. The role of technology in education today is very important, technology can be used as a source of learning and also as a learning medium. The benefits of the presence of Information Technology as a learning medium help teachers (educators) in various ways, one of which is by using technology, learning becomes more interesting and

interactive, the use of learning media in the form of photos or videos can attract students' attention compared to oral descriptions. With the use of technology in daily learning activities, it indicates that the teacher has basic technological skills.

Table 2. Teachers are able to access the Merdeka Mengajar Platform

No	Alternative Answers	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strogly Agree	-	-
2	Agree	5 people	-
3	Less Agree	-	-
4	Disagree	-	-
5	Strongly Disagree	-	-
Amount		5 people	100%

Based on the table above, it can be seen that 5 people (100%) answered agree and no respondents answered strongly agree, less agree, disagree and strongly disagree. It can be concluded that Islamic Religious Education teachers at Junior Hight School Tapaktuan stated that they were able to access the Merdeka Mengajar Platform.

Table 3. Teachers often use the Merdeka Mengajar Platform

No	Alternative Answers	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strogly Agree	1 Person	20
2	Agree	4 people	80
3	Less Agree	-	-
4	Disagree	-	-
5	Strongly Disagree	-	-
Amount		5 people	100

From the table above, it can be seen that 1 person (20%) answered strongly agree, 4 people (80%) answered agree and no respondents answered less agree, disagree and strongly disagree. From these results, it can be concluded that Islamic Religious Education teachers at Junior Hight School Tapaktuan stated that they often use the Merdeka Mengajar platform.

Table 4. I need someone else's help to log in/out to the They Teach Platform

No	Alternative Answers	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strogly Agree	-	-
2	Agree	3 people	60
3	Less Agree	-	-
4	Disagree	1	20
5	Strongly Disagree	1	20
Amount		5 people	100

From the table above, it can be seen that 3 people (60%) answered agree, 1 person (20%) answered disagree, 1 person (20%) answered strongly disagree and no respondents answered strongly agree and disagree. From these data, it can be concluded that 3 teachers still need help from others to log in/log out. While 2 teachers do not need help from others to log in/log out. This is in accordance with the researcher's observations, when they want to log in/log out, sometimes teachers forget the email and password that have been provided. Not only that, teachers also need direction to find the menu to enter the Merdeka Mengajar Platform feature. Of course, this does not have to be understood by every teacher who wants to access Merdeka Mengajar Platform. because, to access various features in Merdeka Mengajar Platform teachers are required to log in first.

Table 5. Teachers are able to conduct Student Assessments through the Merdeka Mengajar Platform

No	Alternative Answers	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strogly Aggree	-	-
2	Agree	4 people	80
3	Less Agree	1 person	20
4	Disagree	-	-
5	Strongly Disagree	-	-
Amount		5 people	100%

Based on the table above, it can be seen that 4 people (80%) answered agree, 1 person (20%) answered disagree and no respondents answered strongly agree, disagree and strongly disagree. So it can be concluded that only one teacher is unable to conduct student assessments through the Merdeka Mengajar platform. However, this is different from the results of the researcher's observations, only 1 Islamic Religious Education Teachers was able to access student assessments, the rest had never conducted an assessment through the Merdeka Mengajar Platform. The Student Assessment feature contains a collection of question packages that have been set based on certain phases and subjects, which can help teachers in obtaining results from learning outcomes, and can also be used to determine the overall level of student competency. Assessments can be shared with students both online and offline, if the assessment is carried out online, the scores will appear automatically and the results can be seen on the Merdeka Mengajar Platform. The Student Assessment feature itself functions to see the needs of students, so that teachers can provide learning to students according to the results of the student's assessment.

Table 6. Teachers are able to access teaching tools

No	Alternative Answers	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strogly Aggree	-	-
2	Agree	4	80
3	Less Agree	1	20
4	Disagree	-	-
5	Strongly Disagree	-	-

Amount	5 people	100
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Based on the table above, it can be seen that 4 people (80%) answered agree, 1 person (20%) answered less agree and no respondents answered strongly agree, disagree and strongly disagree. So, it can be concluded that only 1 teacher is unable to access the teaching device. This is in accordance with the researcher's observations, only one teacher still does not understand the teaching device features. The teaching device feature is a fairly important feature for teachers. Because, in this feature there is a teaching module that can be a reference for teachers and contains teaching materials such as books that can be used.

Table 7. Teachers frequently access independent training

No	Alternative Answers	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strogly Agree	-	-
2	Agree	4 people	80
3	Less Agree	1 person	20
4	Disagree	-	-
5	Strongly Disagree	-	-
Amount		5 people	100

Based on the table above, it can be seen that 4 people (80%) answered agree, 1 person (20%) answered less agree and no respondents answered strongly agree, disagree and strongly disagree. So, it can be concluded that 4 teachers stated that they often access independent training and 1 person does not often access it. The independent training feature provides training that can improve teacher competence in educating, where the materials provided can improve teachers' ability to explain related materials that are carried out daily. Therefore, the level of teacher intensity in accessing and implementing independent training interprets that the teacher is serious about understanding the Independent Curriculum.

Table 8. Teachers are able to take real action without the help of others.

No	Alternative Answers	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strogly Agree	-	-
2	Agree	4 people	80
3	Less Agree	1 person	20
4	Disagree	-	-
5	Strongly Disagree	-	-
Amount		5 people	100

Based on the table above, it can be seen that 4 people (80%) answered agree, 1 person (20%) answered less agree and no respondents answered strongly agree, disagree and strongly disagree. So, it can be concluded that 4 teachers stated that they were able to create real actions without the help of others and 1 person was unable to create real actions without the help of others. Based on the results of the researcher's observations, only 2 teachers were able to create

real actions and upload the real actions without the help of others. While the other 3 teachers still need help to upload Merdeka Mengajar Platform . Real action is the last step that must be completed by teachers in a series of independent training on the Merdeka Mengajar Platform. Therefore, teachers are not said to have completed independent training if they have not completed real action.

Table 9. Teachers are able to access the community in the Merdeka Mengajar Platform

No	Alternative Answers	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strogly Aggree	1 person	20
2	Agree	2 persons	40
3	Less Agree	2 persons	40
4	Disagree	-	-
5	Strongly Disagree	-	-
Amount		5 people	100

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that 1 person (20%) answered strongly agree, 2 people (40%) answered agree and 2 people (40%) answered less agree, and no respondents answered disagree and strongly disagree. Based on the data above, it can be concluded that only 3 teachers are able to access the community features on the Merdeka Mengajar Platform. This is in accordance with the observations made by the researcher, 3 teachers are able to access the community in Merdeka Mengajar Platform, while the other 2 teachers have not accessed the feature at all.

Table 10. Teachers Join and Communicate in the Community

No	Alternative Answers	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strogly Aggree	2 persons	40
2	Agree	2 persons	40
3	Less Agree	1 person	20
4	Disagree	-	-
5	Strongly Disagree	-	-
Amount		5 people	100

From the table above, it can be seen that 2 people (40%) answered strongly agree, 2 people (40%) answered agree and 1 person (20%) answered less agree, and no respondents answered disagree and strongly disagree. Based on these data, it can be concluded that only 3 teachers stated that they joined and interacted in the community feature on the Merdeka Teaching platform. This is different from the results of the researcher's observations where only 3 teachers were able to join the community on the Merdeka Mengajar platform. This feature is basically quite important, because with this community, teachers can discuss with fellow teachers from various regions and can participate in webinars organized by the community to improve their knowledge and skills related to the Merdeka Curriculum and the Merdeka Mengajar Platform.

Table 11. I am able to access Inspirational Videos through Merdeka Mengajar Platform

No	Alternative Answers	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strogly Aggree	2 persons	40
2	Agree	3 people	60
3	Less Agree	-	-
4	Disagree	-	-
5	Strongly Disagree	-	-
Amount		5 people	100

From the table above, it can be seen that 2 people (40%) answered strongly agree, 3 people (60%) answered agree and no respondents answered disagree, disagree and strongly disagree. Based on the data above, it can be concluded that, overall, teachers at Junior Hight School Tapaktuan are able to access the Inspiration Video Feature on the Merdeka Mengajar Platform. This is in accordance with the results of the researcher's observations, all teachers are able to access the Inspiration Video feature. This feature is useful for increasing teacher creativity by viewing various existing videos, so that they can be modified according to teacher needs and applied in learning.

Table 12. Teachers use inspirational videos as a reference to increase creativity in teaching.

No	Alternative Answers	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strogly Aggree	2 persons	40
2	Agree	2 persons	40
3	Less Agree	1 person	10
4	Disagree	-	-
5	Strongly Disagree	-	-
Amount		5 people	100

From the table above, it can be seen that 2 people (40%) answered strongly agree, 2 people (40%) answered agree, 1 person (20%) answered less agree and no respondents answered disagree, and strongly disagree. Based on these data, it can be concluded that only 4 teachers stated that they used the videos in the inspiration video feature as a reference to increase creativity. The inspiration video feature contains various videos and the latest information related to the implementation of the independence curriculum. Teachers can take examples from inspiration videos and modify them according to the teacher's needs.

Table 13. Teachers are able to upload proof of work to Merdeka Mengajar Platform

No	Alternative Answers	Frequency	Percentage
1	Strogly Aggree	-	-
2	Agree	4 people	80
3	Less Agree	1 person	20
4	Disagree	-	-
5	Strongly Disagree	-	-

Amount	5 people	100
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From the table above, it can be seen that 4 people (80%) answered agree, 1 person (20%) answered disagree and no respondents answered strongly agree, disagree and strongly disagree. Based on these data, it can be concluded that only 4 teachers stated that they were able to upload evidence of work on the Merdeka Teaching platform. This evidence of work feature contains documentation of teachers' work that can be uploaded on the Merdeka Teaching platform in the form of videos. This aims to inspire each other and exchange ideas between teachers throughout Indonesia.

Table 14. Observation results regarding the ability of Islamic Religious Education teachers at Junior High School Tapaktuan to use Merdeka Mengajar Platform

No.	Things to observe	Respondent				
		R1	R2	R3	R4	R5
1	Login/logout	3	3	1	4	4
2	Student assessment	1	1	1	3	4
3	Teaching tools	2	2	2	4	4
4	Independent Training	3	3	2	4	4
5	Real Action	3	3	2	4	4
6	Community	2	3	2	4	4
7	Inspirational Videos	2	2	2	4	4
8	Proof of Work	2	2	2	3	3
Total		18	19	14	30	31
Average		2.25	2.375	1.75	3.75	3.87

The results of the questionnaire and observations regarding teachers' ability to use Merdeka Mengajar Platform showed significant differences. Based on the questionnaire, the majority of teachers felt quite confident in utilizing Merdeka Mengajar Platform, with most stating that they were accustomed to accessing various features in Merdeka Mengajar Platform. However, the results of observations in the field revealed that although teachers' theoretical understanding was quite good, its application in practice was still less than optimal. Several teachers appeared to have difficulty in maximizing the use of Merdeka Mengajar Platform to access and use these features as they should. The results of further observations conducted on teachers who are less able to use the Merdeka Mengajar Platform show that the cause of teachers' inability to use the Merdeka Mengajar Platform is only in individual abilities. Teachers stated that age is a factor that makes it difficult for teachers to use the Merdeka Belajar Platform.

The assessment scale used in this study has a range of values from 1 to 4, which aims to assess the level of ability or performance of respondents in a measurable and objective manner. This scale starts from 1, which means "Very Poor" and indicates that the respondent's ability or performance is at a very low level and requires significant improvement. A value of 2 means "Poor," where the respondent shows ability or performance that is still below standard but has little potential or effort. A value of 3 represents the category "Good," where the respondent has

reached an adequate level and is in accordance with the expected standards. While a value of 4 indicates "Very Good," illustrating that the respondent has exceeded expectations and shown excellent performance. With this scale, it is hoped that the assessment can be clearer, more measurable, and provide an accurate picture of the quality of the respondent. The table above shows that Most teachers at Junior High School Tapaktuan have not been able to fully access and use the features available in Merdeka Mengajar Platform. While a small number of teachers, each have not been able to use only 1 feature, namely student assessment and proof of work.

CONCLUSION

The results of the questionnaire and observations regarding teachers' ability to use Merdeka Mengajar Platform showed significant differences. Based on the questionnaire, the majority of teachers felt quite confident in utilizing Merdeka Mengajar Platform, with most stating that they were accustomed to accessing various features in Merdeka Mengajar Platform. However, the results of observations in the field revealed that although teachers' theoretical understanding was quite good, its application in practice was still less than optimal. Several teachers appeared to have difficulty in maximizing the use of Merdeka Mengajar Platform to access and use these features as they should. Most teachers at Junior High School Tapaktuan have not been able to fully access and use the features available in Merdeka Mengajar Platform. While a small number of teachers, each have not been able to use only 1 feature, namely student assessment and proof of work.

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