

## An Evaluation Study of the Merdeka Curriculum Lesson Plan in Islamic Elementary School

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### Abstract

Many experts have conducted studies on lesson plans, but research evaluating the Merdeka Curriculum lesson plan using Stake theory is still limited. This study examined teachers' understanding of the Merdeka Curriculum lesson plan, the process of developing it, and the teaching module documents they created. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation at State Islamic Elementary School (MIN) 2 Konawe Selatan. The participants consisted of two teachers and one principal. Data validity was tested using time and technique triangulation. Data analysis techniques followed the Miles and Huberman procedure, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results showed that teachers have a deep understanding of the Merdeka Curriculum. They used the ATM (Observe, Imitate, Modify) approach in creating lesson plans and adapting them to the local context. However, improvements were still needed in the use of technology and learning media. Most of the prepared learning module documents met the established standards, although some components still need improvement. The implications of this study highlight the importance of teacher training and competency development, as well as educational policies that support the use of technology in lesson planning. These findings provide valuable insights for improving the quality of education in Indonesia, particularly in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.

**Keywords:** Lesson Plan, *Merdeka* Curriculum, Stake Evaluation

### Abstrak

*Kajian perencanaan pembelajaran telah banyak dilakukan para pakar, namun penelitian yang mengevaluasi perencanaan pembelajaran Kurikulum Merdeka menggunakan teori Stake masih terbatas. pemahaman guru terhadap perencanaan pembelajaran Kurikulum Merdeka, proses penyusunannya, dan dokumen modul ajar yang mereka buat. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi kepada guru di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri (MIN) 2 Konawe Selatan, yang terdiri dari dua guru dan satu kepala sekolah. Validitas data diuji menggunakan triangulasi waktu dan teknik. Teknik analisis data mengikuti prosedur Miles dan Huberman, yang terdiri atas tiga tahapan: reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru memiliki pemahaman yang mendalam tentang Kurikulum Merdeka. Mereka menggunakan pendekatan TIM (Take, Imitate, Modify) dalam membuat rencana pembelajaran dan menyesuaikannya dengan konteks lokal. Namun, masih diperlukan perbaikan dalam penggunaan teknologi dan media pembelajaran.*

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*Sebagian besar dokumen modul pembelajaran yang disiapkan memenuhi standar yang ditetapkan, meskipun masih ada komponen yang perlu diperbaiki. Implikasi penelitian ini menyoroti pentingnya pelatihan guru dan pengembangan kompetensi, serta kebijakan pendidikan yang mendukung penggunaan teknologi dalam perencanaan pembelajaran. Temuan ini memberikan wawasan berharga untuk meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan di Indonesia, khususnya dalam implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka.*

**Kata Kunci:** *Perencanaan Pembelajaran, Kurikulum Merdeka, Evaluasi Stake*

## INTRODUCTION

In the past two years, the Merdeka Curriculum has become a hot topic among education experts in Indonesia. This is because this curriculum is considered a “new route” to academic success through creative and high-quality education (Taridala et al., 2023). Furthermore, one of the curriculum’s goals is to encourage independent learning (Marlina & Aini, 2023), which further empowers students, while simultaneously improving low literacy and numeracy levels (Hamzah et al., 2022). However, the successful implementation of the curriculum, including its lesson, must be supported by thorough planning (Nurhuda et al., 2023).

The emergence of the Merdeka (Independent) curriculum, with changes to almost all terminology within the curriculum, has created a headache for teachers. The National Examination, for example, was changed to a ‘minimum competency assessment,’ and the National Examination for National Education (USBN) was changed to a ‘character survey’ (Ardianti & Amalia, 2022; Insani, 2019). These terminological changes primarily concern learning administration, specifically lesson planning. Suparman et al. (2020) and Sum and Taran (2020) found that many teachers still lack the understanding and ability to plan engaging lesson or the importance of creating lesson plans. Furthermore, teachers' lack of ability to plan lessons ultimately impacts the quality of children’s learning, making learning less enjoyable and teachers’ assessments incapable of measuring development across all aspects of the child. However, according to Feu et al., one of the primary tasks a teacher must perform is to plan lesson well and thoroughly (Feu et al., 2019).

Research related to lesson plans within the Merdeka Curriculum has developed but remains limited in several aspects, for example, studies on lesson plans have focused on the use of technology and its integration into teaching methods (Backfisch et al., 2020). Backfisch demonstrated that more experienced teachers produce better-quality lesson plans in terms of technology utilization. Meanwhile, Schmid et al. (2021) emphasized the importance of Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) in using technology to design learning, particularly for pre-service STEM teachers. Chizhik and Chizhik (2018) also underscored that pre-service teachers often fail to adequately consider student needs when designing learning activities, despite one case of effective use of assessment data.

Another study by Nurtanto et al. (2021) identified teacher readiness in using different learning tools, and König et al. (2020) stated that declarative pedagogical knowledge is an important predictor of adaptation in teaching. Furthermore, Tsai and Tsai (2019) explored mobile device-based teaching that successfully increased student engagement through active learning. Meanwhile, in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, research by Azhari et al. (2023) demonstrated an effective STEM-based learning module that improved science understanding through a constructivist approach. Finally, Wardani et al. (2023) and Taridala et al. (2023) critiqued curriculum policies with policy and case analyses, emphasizing the curriculum’s goal of strengthening character through the Pancasila Student Profile and its impact on educational quality. Unfortunately, research on lesson plans in the Merdeka curriculum that comprehensively evaluates input, process, and output is still very limited.

To address the existing research gap, this study evaluates teachers' understanding of Merdeka Curriculum lesson plan, the process of developing Merdeka Curriculum lesson plans, and the results of Merdeka Curriculum lesson plan documents. This research design argues that suboptimal lesson plans can be a major obstacle in achieving learning objectives, especially during the transition from the 2013 curriculum to the Merdeka learning curriculum. Teachers, as the spearhead of this curriculum's implementation, often face the dilemma of developing lesson plans that not only meet the formal curriculum but also stimulate students' creativity and independent thinking. Therefore, this research is crucial to comprehensively identify teachers' understanding of lesson plans, as well as their practices in planning lesson within the context of the Merdeka curriculum. This research can certainly contribute both practically and policy-wise. Practically, school principals can understand teachers' fundamental understanding and practices of Merdeka Curriculum lesson plan. In terms of the policy, madrasah principals and madrasah supervisors can use this research as a basis for policy-making to improve teachers' competence in developing Merdeka Curriculum lesson plans.

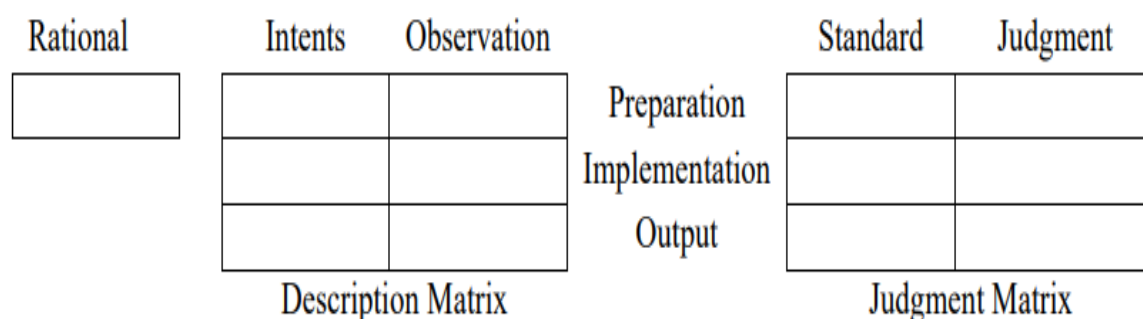
## RESEARCH METHOD

This research is an evaluation study using a qualitative case study approach (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researchers interpreted all collected data and then evaluated the lesson plans by comparing them with the Learning and Assessment Guidelines: Elementary and Secondary Education Merdeka Curriculum issued by the Education Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment Agency of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia (Anggraena et al., 2022). In this study, the researchers explore teachers' understanding of lesson planning, the process of preparing lesson plans, and the results of Merdeka Curriculum lesson plans.

The research participants were two teachers and the principal of MIN 2 (Islamic Elementary School) Konawe Selatan. Data were collected using semi-structured interviews (Brinkmann, 2020), observation, and documentation (Lestari et al., 2024). Semi-structured interviews were used to avoid a formal approach that could discourage participants from answering research questions. Interviews were conducted with all informants who agreed to be interviewed, as evidenced by a consent form (Widodo, 2014). Data analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman technique, which consists of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2018).

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The evaluation model used in this study adopts the Stake Model. This is because the Stake Model provides a very detailed and comprehensive overview of a program from beginning to end. The Stake Model program evaluation emphasizes two aspects: description and assessment, and distinguishes three phases of information: Antecedents, Transactions, and Outcomes. The following are the concepts and stages of the Stake Model evaluation.



**Figure 1.** Stake's Evaluation Concept and Stages

The description matrix describes the objectives (goals, targets, and observations), namely what goals must be achieved and observed in each evaluation element. The assessment matrix is a description and assessment against standards.

### **Preparation Stage**

#### **Evaluation of Understanding the Concept of Merdeka Curriculum Planning**

Interviews with teachers at MIN 2 Konawe Selatan revealed a fairly good understanding of the Merdeka Curriculum. AWS, one of the teachers, stated:

“...as I understand it, the Merdeka Curriculum is a new curriculum that emphasizes the development of student character, and it also gives educators the freedom to choose a variety of teaching materials according to their students' needs” (Interview, 2024).

This statement indicated that teachers perceive the Merdeka Curriculum as an opportunity to innovate in the learning process. In this context, they feel that this curriculum provides more room to adapt teaching to suit students' needs. Similarly, another source stated that: “This curriculum was introduced post-pandemic with the aim of improving the quality of education in Indonesia. And it is indeed emphasized that teachers have the freedom or flexibility to develop learning materials that suit the needs and characteristics of students” (WON, Interview 2024). This means that for teachers at MIN 2 Konawe Selatan, the Merdeka Curriculum is a hopeful path to improve education.

Besides understanding the concept of the Merdeka Curriculum, another aspect teacher needs to understand is the importance of Learning Outcomes (CP). One teacher stated,

“(CP) is learning outcomes, so what I understand by CP is the learning competencies that students must achieve at the end of each phase (AWS, Interview, 2024).”

Similarly, another teacher expressed:

“The learning outcomes in the Merdeka Curriculum are actually similar to those in the previous curriculum. The only change is the name, like in the 2013 curriculum, KI-KD, Core Competency-Basic Competency. CP (Learning Outcomes) is the competency that students must achieve at each stage” (Interview, 2024).

The two statements above from teachers at MIN 2 Konawe Selatan demonstrated their understanding of the term “learning outcomes” in the “Merdeka Curriculum.” Furthermore, teachers are attempting to understand the substance of learning outcomes and relate them to the 2013 curriculum. In addition to understand the term in general, they also appear to understand the components of learning outcomes. AWS informant revealed:

“The components of learning outcomes include subject rationality. Then there are learning objectives, there are characteristics of learning materials, and then there are achievements in each phase of the subject; those are the components.” (Interview, 2024).

The teachers' ability to articulate the components of these learning outcomes demonstrated that teachers at MIN 2 Konawe Selatan truly understand the concept of learning outcomes in the Merdeka Curriculum. This is necessary to further incorporate them into learning objectives. According to informant WON, learning objectives are the details of learning outcomes. WON stated,

“Learning objectives are derived from the CP, which consists of competencies and the scope of the material. So, one CP can have more than one TP” (Interview 2024).

Informant AWS explained in more detail the meaning of the components in learning objectives, namely competencies and the scope of the material. He said:

“The learning objectives in the Merdeka Curriculum consist of two components: competencies and subject matter scope. Competencies are abilities typically defined by Bloom's Taxonomy, which has cognitive levels. Subject matter scope consists of the content and main concepts to be learned within a learning unit” (WON, Interview 2024).

There are some alternatives teachers can use to formulate learning objectives. AWS informants explained that there are three alternatives for formulating learning objectives, as outlined in the following interview text.

“There are three alternatives in formulating TP, formulating TP directly based on learning outcomes, then there is formulating TP by analyzing competencies and scope of material in learning outcomes, then formulating learning objectives across elements of learning outcomes” (AWS, Interview 2024).

The next step is to understand what is meant by a learning objective flow (ATP). According to informants, a learning objective flow (ATP) is a collection of learning objectives within a single phase that are systematically sequenced. This was expressed by informants AWS and WON below.

“ATP is a series of learning objectives that are systematically arranged in each phase. What is each phase?” (AWS, Interview, 2024).

“...so that it's structured more systematically and sequentially. Take for an example, which competencies are to be taught first? They should not be taught something they do not have a solid foundation for, for example, if they're learning geometry, they must first know the angles, their characteristics, which is a cube and which is a cuboid, so they have to be identified first” (WON, Interview, 2024).

In addition to learning outcomes (CP), learning objectives (TP), and learning objective flow (ATP), another aspect that teachers must thoroughly understand and cannot be overlooked in the planning and learning process is assessment. Assessment within the context of the Merdeka Curriculum has slightly different characteristics than the previous curriculum, requiring a thorough understanding. In their explanation, teachers understand that assessment consists of two types: formative and summative. AWS stated:

“Formative assessment is carried out during the learning process where its function is to improve learning, while summative assessment is carried out at the end of learning to determine learning achievement” (AWS, Interview, 2024).

“Formative assessments can be conducted during the learning process or at the end of the course, with the goal of improving the learning process. Summative assessments are conducted only at the end and become part of the student's report card” (WON, Interview, 2024).

## **Implementation Stage**

### **Evaluation of the Lesson Plan Preparation Process (Teaching Module)**

The process of developing lesson plans, in this case teaching modules, begins with understanding the learning outcomes (CP). Teachers ask each other questions and discuss them to understand the learning outcomes at each stage. This is as the teacher explained:

"We are seeking for information on how to plan the lesson in *Merdeka* Curriculum, either by discussing it with fellow teachers or through online training sessions organized by the ministry. From these discussions and training, we teachers can understand how to develop lesson plans." (AWS, Interview, 2024).

From the interview results above, it can be understood that teachers not only share with other teachers, but also try to participate in online training.



**Figure 2.** Teachers Participate in Merdeka Curriculum Training on the Ministry of Religion's PINTAR Application (researcher's personal document)

Once the teacher understands the CP and its scope, the teacher then details the CP in the form of Learning Objectives (TP). In the process, the teacher does not formulate the TP independently, but rather modifies existing TPs in modules available on various online platforms. This teacher admitted:

“I did not start from scratch, because, as I said, the school had provided the facilities. And we do have WhatsApp groups for sharing, so we did not start from scratch. ...to be more efficient, we did not start from scratch. We already had references, we just had to modify them to see what was appropriate. The school had prepared them, and the government also provided a lot of them; we just had to choose. Starting from scratch takes a lot of time, and I don't think it can be done in a day or two” (WON, Interview, 2024).

This was confirmed by another teacher, “Yes, we ATM (Observe-Imitate -Modify), meaning we know if there is a typo or something we can fix, oh, this is not it, so we change it. At least we know the theory. The facilities are there, we just ATM” (AWS, Interview 2024).

The next step is to develop a Learning Objectives Flow (ATP) and plan assessments. At this stage, teachers do not develop these independently, but rather modify the ATP and assessments within the teaching module.

“If it's already in the teaching module, yes, it's all included. If we take references from, for example, those provided by the government, we will definitely adjust them, for example, material on plant propagation, for example, we still choose materials that are feasible for our environmental conditions here, and that the children's conditions are suitable, and the plants are available, yes” (AWS, Interview, 2024).

## **Output Level**

### **Evaluation of Teaching Module**

The lesson plan or teaching modules at MIN 2 Konawe Selatan have met the standards or guidelines issued by the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology.



BAB 1	
MODUL AJAR - 1	
Fase / Semester : C / 1 (Satu)	Kelas : 5 (Lima)
Elemen : Bilangan	Alokasi Waktu : 6 JP (Sesuai Kebutuhan)
<b>Tujuan Pembelajaran:</b> B.1 Menjelaskan dan Menentukan KPK dan FPB, serta menyelesaikan permasalahan tentang KPK dan FPB dalam kehidupan sehari-hari.	
<b>Profil Pelajar Pancasila:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mandiri,</li> <li>• Kreatif,</li> <li>• Bernalar Kritis.</li> </ul>	
<b>Langkah-Langkah Pembelajaran:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peserta didik sudah dapat membedakan jenis-jenis bilangan (bilangan bulat, bilangan cacah, bilangan asli).</li> </ul>	

**Figure 3.** Teaching Module for MIN 2 Konawe Selatan Konawe

There are several points of the Merdeka Curriculum teaching module. The first point is the completeness of the lesson plan/module identity (educational unit, subject, class/semester, main material and time allocation). This section is similar to the 2013 curriculum which includes the educational unit, class/semester, and time allocation.

Second, alignment with the components of the Merdeka Curriculum. There were at least several components in the Lesson Plan (RPP) or Teaching Module in the Merdeka Curriculum, which were not included in the teaching modules prepared by teachers.

In general, most of the elements created by teachers at MIN 2 Konawe Selatan have been included in the teaching modules. However, there is still one element missing, namely learning media. See the following image.

<p>belajarn-dan-Asesmen   Dokumen Ujian Hasil An. NOVIANTI ...   Dokumen Ujian Proposal An. NOVIAN...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refleksi pembelajaran dilakukan pada proses pembelajaran untuk melihat ketercapaian tentang menjelaskan KPK dan FPB.</li> <li>• Peserta didik menyimpulkan pembelajaran bersama dengan guru.</li> <li>• Peserta didik membuat rangkuman pembelajaran.</li> <li>• Bukti pencapaian pembelajaran diambil dari hasil pekerjaan peserta didik dan test formatif.</li> </ul> <p><b>Pembelajaran 3. Menyelesaikan Masalah tentang KPK dan FPB (3 JP)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peserta didik mengamati dan mempelajari dengan bernalar kritis tentang permasalahan sehari-hari yang berhubungan dengan KPK dan FPB pada buku ESPS halaman 6-8.</li> <li>• Peserta didik secara bergotong royong mendiskusikan cara memperoleh hasil dari permasalahan yang berhubungan dengan KPK dan FPB dalam masalah sehari-hari.</li> <li>• Peserta didik membuat pemfaktoran dari faktorisasi prima dua bilangan yang ditentukan.</li> <li>• Peserta didik diberikan materi tentang faktorisasi prima untuk FPB dan KPK.</li> <li>• Peserta didik mengerjakan latihan secara mandiri pada buku ESPS halaman 8.</li> <li>• Peserta didik mengerjakan soal berbasis HOTS pada halaman 8.</li> <li>• Peserta didik dengan bernalar kritis melaksanakan latihan ulangan Bab 1 di buku ESPS halaman 10 – 13.</li> <li>• Peserta didik secara bergotong royong dan kreatif mengerjakan soal AKM pada buku ESPS halaman 14.</li> <li>• Peserta didik secara kreatif mengerjakan praproyek di buku ESPS halaman 15-16.</li> </ul> <p><b>Penilaian Pembelajaran:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Peserta didik diberikan tes tertulis dengan beberapa bentuk soal termasuk HOTS, untuk mengetahui apakah peserta didik dapat memahami FPB dan KPK.</li> <li>2. Peserta didik diberikan tes lisan yang berhubungan dengan penyajian hasil dari FPB dan KPK menggunakan pohon factor. Contoh: a. Coba tuliskan 2 angka yang kamu ketahui, buat pohon faktornya dan tentukan faktorisasi primanya? b. Hitung FPB dan KPK dari kedua bilangan tersebut.</li> <li>3. Peserta didik diberikan pertanyaan secara lisan unjuk kinerja dengan praktik, dan menyajikan dalam</li> </ol>
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**Figure 4.** Teaching Module for MIN 2 Konawe Selatan

The image above showed that the teacher has not yet written down the learning media that will be used in the learning process. This indicates that there is an omission in the teaching module created by the teacher. This could be due to the teacher using ATM (Observe, Imitate, and Modify)

without considering the components that must be included in the teaching module as stipulated by the government.

The findings demonstrated a strong conceptual understanding of the Merdeka Curriculum among teachers at MIN 2 Konawe Selatan. Specifically, teachers articulated the curriculum's essence as providing flexibility and latitude in developing teaching materials tailored to student needs and characteristics. This aligns with the goal of the Merdeka Curriculum policy, which is to improve the flexibility and quality of education through a more adaptive approach to student needs and technological advancements (Saa, 2024). Furthermore, understanding of the components of learning outcomes (CP), learning objectives (TP), and learning objective flow (ATP) has also been well internalized.

Teachers' ability to explain the components of CP and TP, even comparing with the previous curriculum (KI-KD, Core Competency-Basic Competency), demonstrates a high level of declarative pedagogical knowledge, which König et al. (2020) considers an important predictor of successful instructional adaptation. This conceptual clarity acts as a crucial foundation, fulfilling the prerequisites for effective implementation (Alvunger, 2021; Kholid et al., 2023; Tran & O'Connor, 2024). This argument is highly relevant to research by Syofyan et al. (2024), Umar et al. (2023), and Kaluge & Usmi (2024) which emphasize the importance of teachers' competence and preparation. Syofyan even emphasizes the importance of teacher readiness in various dimensions, such as a deep understanding of the Merdeka Curriculum, the capacity to integrate it with current circumstances, and sufficient support from the school and community environment (Syofyan et al., 2024). On the other hand, teacher preparedness is crucial because the Merdeka curriculum emphasizes differentiated learning (Cahyono et al., 2023; Samsudi et al., 2024). This will undoubtedly have a positive and significant impact on student understanding (Ardiawan et al., 2024). Conversely, a lack of strong pedagogical competency will hinder teachers' ability to design effective and differentiated learning using technology (Nguyen & Pham, 2025; Setyowati & Rachmajanti, 2023).

The process of developing teaching modules revealed the widespread adoption of the ATM (Observe, Imitate, Modify) approach. This strategy involves taking existing module templates from various online platforms and training courses and then adapting them locally. This finding aligns with various studies showing that the practice of taking materials and then adapting them locally is a common strategy in lesson plan development. Harris et al. reported that teachers in various countries tend to rely on ready-made materials before modifying them to suit local needs (Harris et al., 2025; Tang et al., 2021). This aligns with the Merdeka Curriculum lesson plan guidelines issued by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (Anggraena et al., 2022). Essentially, the teaching modules provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture can be used without modification. However, there are concerns that they may not be appropriate for student characteristics and madrasah conditions. Therefore, Islamiati et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of developing teaching modules to improve the quality of the learning process and student learning outcomes. This finding reinforces previous research showing that teachers are more likely to modify materials if they feel that the materials do not fully meet local needs or do not suit their students' learning styles (Cai et al., 2023; McNeill et al., 2025).

On the other hand, this ATM approach needs to be balanced with the use of technology to ensure the completeness and quality of teaching modules. Teachers need to be trained in using technology platforms that can help in the development of more efficient and high-quality teaching modules (Elsayary, 2023; Klimova & Palla, 2025). Rafya et al. (2024) and Fernández-Batanero et al. (2022) reported that understanding and implementing technology as part of pedagogical competence is very important for teachers and presents a challenge in itself. Reisoğlu (2022), Setyowati (2023), Edstrand et al. (2023) and Arstorp et al. (2024) added that training on digital competence can improve teachers' knowledge and skills, particularly in the areas of increasing professional engagement, using digital resources, organizing teaching activities, improving assessment, and empowering students.



Therefore, Yusran Khery et al. (2024) and Imran et al. (2021) recommend the need for teacher training to maximize the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.

The teaching module prepared by teachers at MIN 2 Konawe Selatan have met government-set standards (Anggraena et al., 2022). The completeness of the lesson plan/module identity, its alignment with the components of the Merdeka Curriculum, and elements such as learning objectives, learning steps, and assessments have been well-documented. However, several elements remained missing, such as learning media. Weaknesses in documenting learning media indicated that teachers' digital competencies are focused on digital literacy (using technology for training and sharing/modifying files) rather than digital pedagogy (integrating and planning the use of technology in the classroom). Digital pedagogy, however, aims to achieve effective teaching by utilizing digital technology appropriately (Omarsaib, 2025; Tan et al., 2024). Haleem (2022) emphasizes that digital technology serves not only as a provider of knowledge, but also as a partner, a mentor, and an assessor in creating information. The implications of this research highlight the importance of continuous teacher training and competency development, particularly in terms of utilizing technology to improve the quality of lesson planning, which will have a positive impact on improving the quality of education in Indonesia, especially in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. This study emphasizes that digital technology plays a role not only as a provider of knowledge but also as a co-creator, a mentor, and an assessor of information. The implications of this research highlight the importance of continuous teacher training and competency development, particularly in terms of utilizing technology to improve the quality of lesson planning, which will have a positive impact on improving the quality of education in Indonesia, especially in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.

## CONCLUSION

The findings presented indicate that teachers possess a deep and accurate conceptual understanding of the new curriculum and effectively apply the pragmatic ATM (Observe, Imitate, Modify) approach for rapid adaptation of materials, a finding that contradicts common concerns about teacher preparedness during curriculum transitions. However, a critical gap emerged, challenging the model that posits that strong conceptual knowledge guarantees effective planning (König et al., 2020). Despite possessing strong skills in adapting materials, teachers demonstrated clear weaknesses in Digital Pedagogy, characterized by the omission of planned “learning media” from the teaching module. This indicates a failure to strategically integrate and document the use of technology into instructional design, a crucial component for realizing the adaptive goals of the Merdeka Curriculum. The implications are two-pronged. For immediate action, policy must shift from general curriculum training to professional development focused on Digital Pedagogy. The goal is to train teachers not only to find and adapt resources but also to systematically plan and document technology as an essential instructional medium. For further research: the limitations of this qualitative case study (lack of documentation) necessitate further quantitative and longitudinal research.

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