

## Integrating Positive Discipline and Digital Learning to Improve the Effectiveness of the Indonesian Education Curriculum

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**Abstract: Integrating Positive Discipline and Digital Learning to Improve the Effectiveness of the Indonesian Education Curriculum.** **Objectives:** This study analysis the effectiveness of implementing a positive discipline approach and digital learning interactions in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum at SMA Negeri 1 Kendari. **Methods:** Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the research was conducted in the even semester of the 2023/2024 academic year involving 74 educators. Data collection was done through observation, questionnaires, and documentation, with analysis using the Miles and Huberman model. **Findings:** The results showed that 70% of teachers successfully implemented positive reinforcement effectively, while in digital learning, 85% of teachers successfully implemented the think-pair-share method. The integration of these two approaches creates a more comprehensive learning environment and supports the development of 21st century competencies. The Merdeka Mengajar platform plays an important role as a supporting infrastructure that facilitates the implementation of both approaches. However, the study also identified challenges such as consistency of implementation and the need to develop teachers' digital competencies. **Conclusion:** The findings present important insights for the development of educational practices in the digital era and the effective implementation of Merdeka Curriculum.

**Keywords:** positive discipline, digital learning, merdeka curriculum.

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### ■ INTRODUCTION

The Merdeka Curriculum represents a significant transformation in Indonesia's education system, driven by the need to adapt to the digital era and globalization. This curriculum aims to enhance the flexibility and quality of education by integrating digital technology and adopting a more adaptive learning approach (Saa, 2024). The Merdeka Curriculum allows teachers to design learning programs tailored to students' needs, promoting critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and digital literacy (Saa, 2024). The

Merdeka Curriculum has the potential to improve educational quality by making learning more relevant and responsive to contemporary demands (Wasehudin et al., 2023). The Merdeka Curriculum emphasizes the development of student character through the Pancasila Student Profile (P3), which includes values such as nationalism, religion, leadership, politeness, honesty, cooperation, and anti-corruption (Rusilowati et al., 2024; Solehuddin et al., 2024). Successful implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum heavily relies on teacher preparedness.

Teachers need a profound understanding of the curriculum, the ability to integrate it with existing conditions, and support from the school environment and community (Syofyan et al., 2024).

The Merdeka Mengajar Platform is a digital initiative designed to support the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum in Indonesia. This platform aims to assist teachers in planning, implementing, and evaluating learning processes, aligning with the broader goals of the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum to enhance educational quality through innovative and flexible approaches. The Merdeka Belajar Curriculum emphasizes a learning environment that fosters positive discipline. This approach encourages students to develop self-regulation and mutual respect, which are crucial for a conducive learning atmosphere (Adrianus Sihombing et al., 2021; Supianto et al., 2024). The Merdeka Belajar Curriculum in Indonesia is designed to allow teachers to develop innovative learning methods tailored to student needs, aligning well with the concept of positive discipline. This curriculum emphasizes flexibility, autonomy, and responsiveness to student interests and characteristics, which are key components of positive discipline. The Merdeka Belajar Curriculum grants teachers the freedom to design learning programs that cater to the diverse needs of students, promoting a more personalized and student-centered approach to education. This flexibility is empowering for implementing positive discipline, which focuses on understanding and addressing individual student needs and behaviors (Dewi & Sumarni, 2024; Saa, 2024; Wasehudin et al., 2023).

The Merdeka Mengajar (PMM) platform exists as a technology solution to accommodate the needs of teachers in implementing the independent curriculum effectively. The Merdeka Mengajar Platform is designed to enhance educators' teaching abilities and improve students' learning experiences by providing a flexible and

innovative academic environment. This platform aligns with the broader Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) initiative, which aims to foster creativity, innovation, and problem-solving skills among students and educators (Muslihati et al., 2023; Suhud et al., 2023). The Merdeka Curriculum, part of the platform, allows teachers to design learning programs tailored to student needs, promoting adaptability and responsiveness to technological advancements. The Merdeka Belajar Platform has significantly contributed to character education by promoting the Pancasila Learner Profile and encouraging the development of value education for both teachers and students.

In addition, the Program on the PMM platform empowers the potential practical application in various school contexts, demonstrating efficacy in improving educators' understanding of curriculum implementation and innovative teaching methodologies (Putra et al., 2023). The Teaching Campus initiative under PMM has effectively improved literacy and numeracy skills, particularly for underserved students, highlighting the Program's adaptability to different educational needs (Lie et al., 2022). The integration of technology in teaching is important for addressing the increasingly complex demands of pedagogical competence. This integration helps teachers provide both theoretical and practical knowledge that aligns with technological advancements. Some research reports that technology facilitates teaching and learning by motivating students and developing their communication skills, imagination, and critical thinking (Akram et al., 2022; Artois, 2018). Furthermore, Technology integration enhances instructional practices, making the learning process more exciting and interactive, thereby keeping learners motivated (Felcida & Parameswaran, 2024). A meta-analysis of studies comparing digital platforms with traditional classrooms found a small but positive effect on learning outcomes. Improved learning outcomes

can contribute to a more positive and disciplined learning environment as students are more engaged and motivated (Alshammary & Alhalafawy, 2023). Then, Digital platforms promote the development of 21st-century skills such as empathy, cooperation, persistence, and self-control. These skills are integral to positive discipline as students manage their behavior and interactions more effectively (McNaughton et al., 2018). This activity helps learners form the character of learner responsibility which can be expected to support the positive discipline process (Quispe Llamoca, 2021).

Therefore, digital platforms emphasize multimodality in curriculum delivery and enhance the learning experience to make learning interactive. This multimodal approach can fulfill the learning styles of different learners; thus, presenting a variety of multimodal can help students remain disciplined and focus on the expected learning outcomes (Zhao et al., 2010). The application of positive discipline in the context of digital learning has brought a new dimension to classroom management. Sobri et al. (2019) explained that one form of independent learning in the application of positive discipline is to construct a class agreement that involves the active participation of students. This agreement includes teacher expectations of students and the reverse, creating a more cooperative and constructive learning environment. *Positive discipline* is a non-punishment approach that creates a supportive and respectful learning environment. It helps students develop self-regulation, self-confidence, and respect for others (Demýröz, 2017; Kayalar et al., 2019; Rombot et al., 2015). Several papers have reported that the positive discipline approach has been found to promote a positive and sustainable learning environment, minimize problem behaviors, and promote efficiency in education. This approach involves a graduated system whereby students are encouraged to recognize their negative

behaviors, understand the consequences, take responsibility, and thus acquire significant life skills (Demýröz, 2017). In addition, positive discipline was found to enhance self-regulation and interpersonal skills among learners and enable learners to work independently and harmoniously with peers (Rombot et al., 2015).

Based on the details described, the researcher is interested in studying the Effectiveness of Implementing a Positive Discipline Approach and Digital Learning Interactions in Implementing the Independent Curriculum, especially at SMA Negeri 1 Kendari. The urgency of this study is faced with several needs, namely (1) the lack of studies that explain positive discipline, especially interaction in the independent curriculum; (2) the lack of empirical evidence related to the effectiveness of the independent learning platform in positive discipline; (3) the lack of references that explain what is likely to draw or support the integration of positive discipline on digital platforms. Based on this, this study aims to examine the effectiveness of applying a positive discipline approach and digital learning interactions in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. The main focus of the research was directed at analyzing the impact of the integration of the two approaches on the quality of learning and the achievement of educational goals. The problem formulations in this study include: (1) How does the effectiveness of applying a positive discipline approach in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum through the Merdeka Mengajar Platform? (2) How far does digital learning interaction support the achievement of learning objectives in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum? (3) What factors affect the successful integration of positive discipline approaches and digital learning interactions in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum? The study was expected to provide significant benefits for various education stakeholders. For teachers, the

research results can be a reference in optimizing the application of positive discipline and the use of digital technology in learning.

## ■ METHOD

### Participant

The research was conducted in the even semester of the 2023/2024 academic year at SMA Negeri 1 Kendari, with an implementation period from January to June 2024. The location selection was based on the consideration that SMA Negeri 1 Kendari is a school with much interest in Kendari and surrounding communities and has implemented the Merdeka Curriculum program. In this school, there are 74 educators with different teaching professions, where there are 20 teachers who apply these indicators to various subjects in grades X and XI.

### Reserach Design, Procedure & Instrument

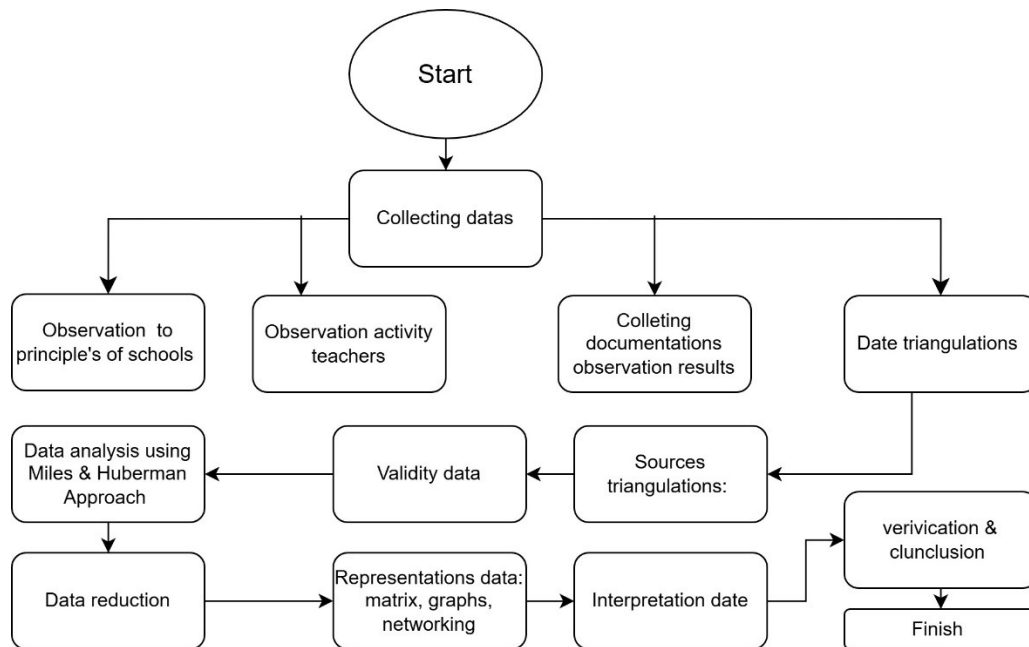
The study used a qualitative descriptive approach focused on exploring and describing social situations thoroughly, broadly, and deeply. According to Bogdan and Taylor, as cited by Lexy.J. Moleong, a qualitative approach was a research procedure that produced descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from research subjects and observable behavior. This research focuses on social phenomena giving a voice to the feelings and perceptions of participants, based on the idea that knowledge is generated from social settings and understanding social knowledge is a legitimate scientific process.

Data collection techniques in this study used three main methods. First, the observation technique was conducted by the head of SMA Negeri 1 Kendari, where researchers took observation data on teacher learning practices that had been documented based on classroom observation sheets. Second, the questionnaire provides questions referring to the lattice of learning implementation instruments to teachers to determine the implementation of learning

practices. The questionnaire instrument was developed by referencing various sources and then modified according to the study's target needs. The final version was organized into three main sections: (1) implementation of positive discipline in classroom management (Table 1); (2) effectiveness of digital learning method implementation; and (3) teachers' level of success in facilitating digital discussions. The components of the implementation of positive discipline in classroom management include reflection on classroom dynamics, positive reinforcement of student behaviors, and willingness to listen to students' views. The components of the effectiveness of digital learning method implementation refer to the dominant teaching methods frequently used at SMA Negeri 1 Kendari, such as Think-Pair-Share, Group Discussions, and Case Study Analysis. Meanwhile, the components of teachers' level of success in facilitating digital discussions consist of motivating students to express opinions, asking questions that trigger discussions, and guiding the discussion. All components were designed into a questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale. The instrument's feasibility was assessed through internal validation involving experts in the relevant field. This validation process evaluated aspects such as clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the questionnaire items. It included an analysis of the content, construction, and language used to ensure that the instrument accurately and consistently measures the intended aspects (Martín Martínez & Vela Llauradó, 2020). Next the steps Third related about the documentation technique includes collecting data from classroom observations of teacher learning practices that the school principal has documented.

### Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study adopted the Miles and Huberman model, which includes three stages. The first stage was data reduction, which



**Figure 1.** Reserach procedure

refers to selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming raw data obtained from field notes. Second steps, data reduction was an integral part of the analysis that sharpened, selected, focused, discarded, and organized the data to describe and verify the conclusions. Then, interview and observation support in this activity. Some study report that analyze qualitative interview data, demonstrating the iterative process of refining categories through reduction (Curtis et al., 2000). Combining interviews, observations, and documentation to ensure the reliability and depth of findings. For instance, a study exploring the mental health recovery process used interviews alongside observations to visualize relationships between factors (McCauley et al., 2017). The three stage was data presentation, where a set of information was organized to help understand things and allow further analysis or action based on that understanding. In all three stages, the main component is data triangulation, which is a method used to ensure the validity and credibility

of data in research. In this document, data is verified through source triangulation, a technique that examines the credibility of data by comparing information obtained from various parties. This process involves collecting data from multiple sources, such as subordinates being led, superiors assigning tasks, and colleagues within collaborative groups. After the data is collected, the results are compared to ensure consistency across different sources. The goal is to obtain data that reflects not only one party's perspective but also various relevant viewpoints. In this study, triangulation is used to validate data related to the implementation of a positive discipline approach and digital learning interactions in schools. Data is examined from different parties, including teachers, school principals, and supporting documents, to ensure that the analysis results accurately reflect real conditions in the field. Several sources report that methodological triangulation is pivotal in validating findings by corroborating data across multiple sources. For example, focus groups and in-depth interviews

can be used in tandem to verify findings (Johnson, 1997; Noble & Heale, 2019) (Johnson, 1997; Noble & Heale, 2019).

The data presentation model includes various matrices, graphs, networks, and charts designed to assemble information in a structured and directly accessed manner. To ensure data validity, this research used a triangulation technique, a credibility test, to check data from various sources at various times. Source triangulation was done by testing the credibility of data by checking data obtained from several sources, such as from subordinates being led, superiors assigning, and coworkers in a collaborative group. Testing the validity of this data was important to determine the degree of trust in the research results so that it could draw solid conclusions from various points of view. The research instrument was developed by taking into account the context of the Merdeka Mengajar platform, where the principal takes into account several important aspects such as conformity with the principles of Merdeka Belajar, implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile, development of teacher competence, utilization of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and suitability.

To support the results of the descriptive analysis, further testing was carried out using correlation analysis using smartpls software. The components tested were how the relationship

between Reflection on classroom dynamics and Willingness to listen to the students' views towards Positive reinforcement of student behavior.

## ■ RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Description of Positive Discipline

The positive discipline implementation at SMA Negeri 1 Kendari shows a systematic pattern to establish a conducive learning environment through a classroom management approach centered on students' psychological well-being. The implementation of positive discipline in this school includes three main components: classroom management and teacher psychological support, reflection on class dynamics as instruments of agreement formation, and the application of positive reinforcement in encouraging students' adaptive behavior. In classroom management and psychological support, teachers use an approach that focuses on establishing a structured learning atmosphere while considering students' psychological aspects. Observations show that effective classroom management was achieved by organizing the physical environment and creating a supportive psychological climate. This is reflected in the observation data showing that 70% of teachers managed to apply positive reinforcement effectively in students' learning practices.

**Table 1.** Table of implementation of positive discipline in classroom management

Behavioral Focus	Category	Total Students	Percentage (%)
Reflection on classroom dynamics	Not yet conducted	0	0%
	Conducted but not yet effective	5	50%
	Implemented and effective	5	50%
Positive reinforcement of student behaviors	Conducted but not yet effective	3	30%
	Implemented and effective	7	70%
Willingness to listen to the students' views	Conducted but not yet effective	9	90%
	Implemented and effective	1	10%

In the case of reflecting on classroom dynamics, the study shows that 50% of teachers have successfully implemented reflective practice as an integral part of setting up classroom agreements. This process involves active dialogue between teachers and students in setting learning expectations and expected behaviors. However, the data reveals that 90% of teachers still needed help optimizing their willingness to listen to students' views despite having implemented the practice. The implementation of positive

reinforcement as a behavioral strategy has shown encouraging results, with 70% of teachers successfully implementing this approach effectively. The strategy includes specific praise, recognition of student achievement, and consistent verbal and non-verbal reinforcement. Observations show that this approach is correlated with increased student motivation and involvement in the learning process. These results are in line with the correlation analysis using smartpls software as presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Relationship between indicators

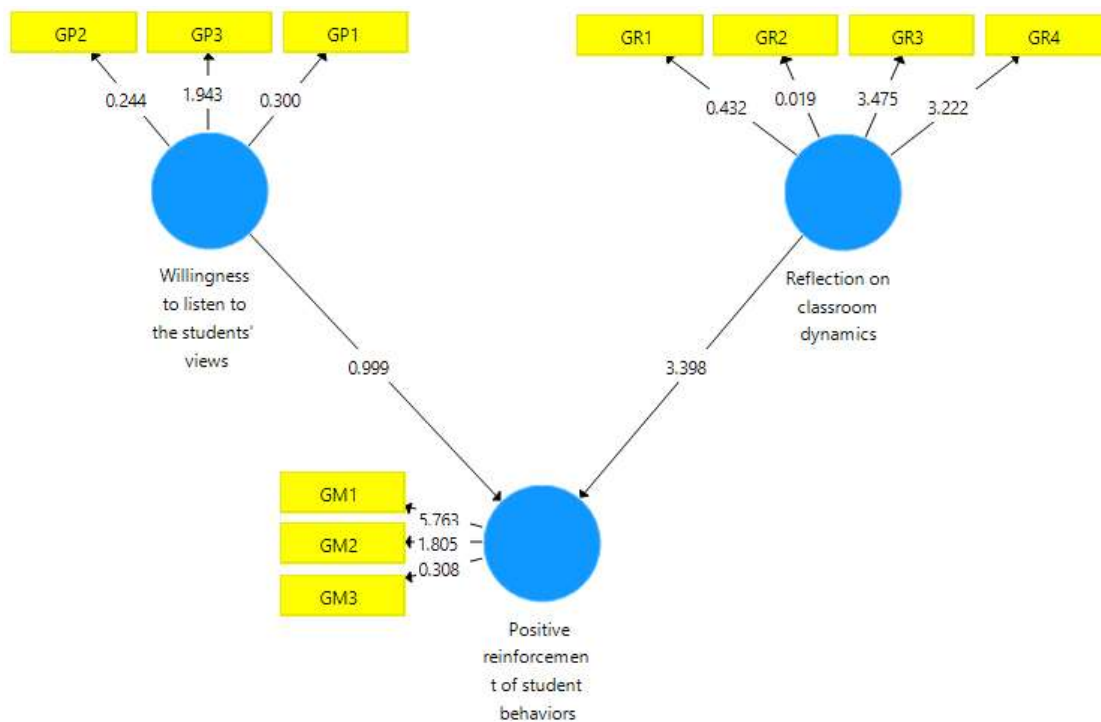
Relationship between indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	T-test	P -Values
Reflection on classroom dynamics -> Positive reinforcement of student behaviours	0.828	0.230	3.398	0.001
Willingness to listen to the students' views -> Positive reinforcement of student behaviours	-0.102	0.290	0.999	0.318

Based on the results of the correlation test in Table 2, there are two relationships tested between the indicators. First, the relationship between reflection on classroom dynamics and positive reinforcement of student behaviors shows an average value of 0.828, which reflects a strong positive relationship. The standard deviation value of 0.230 indicates a relatively low level of data spread, while the T-test value of 3.398 indicates a statistically significant relationship. This is reinforced by the P value of 0.001, which is smaller than 0.05, so it can be concluded that reflection on classroom dynamics has a real impact on reinforcing positive student behavior. On the other hand, the relationship between willingness to listen to the students' views and positive reinforcement of student behaviors shows an average value of -0.102, which reflects a very weak negative relationship. The standard deviation value of 0.290 shows a slightly higher data spread than the first relationship. The T-test

value of 0.999 indicates no statistically significant relationship, with a *P-value* of 0.318, which is greater than 0.05. Thus, the willingness to listen to students' views does not have a significant influence on reinforcing students' positive behavior. The following presents the relationship of the path diagram from the results of the analysis.

The results of the analysis in Figure 1 show that Willingness to Listen to the Students' Views is positively influenced by indicators GP2 (0.244), GP3 (1.943), and GP1 (0.300), with GP3 having the most significant contribution. This construct directly influences Positive Reinforcement of Student Behaviors with a path coefficient of 0.999, indicating a strong relationship. Furthermore, Reflection on Classroom Dynamics is influenced by indicators GR1 (0.432), GR2 (0.019), GR3 (3.475), and GR4 (3.222), with GR3 and GR4 providing dominant contributions. This construct has a significant influence on Positive Reinforcement of Student Behaviors with





**Figure 1.** Output of smartpls analysis results between indicators

a coefficient of 3.398. In the Positive Reinforcement of Student Behaviors construct, indicators GM1 (5.763), GM2 (1.805), and GM3 (0.308) contribute, with GM1 showing the greatest influence. Overall, this model shows that Reflection on Classroom Dynamics has a greater influence than Willingness to Listen to the Students' Views in encouraging the reinforcement of positive student behavior, with indicators GR3 and GP3 being key factors.

### Effectiveness of Positive Discipline Approach

The analysis of the effectiveness of the positive discipline approach shows varying results based on various measurement parameters. The results indicate that the successful implementation of positive discipline depends on teachers' consistency and the quality of its application. The data revealed that teachers implementing this approach in a systematic and structured manner achieved higher success in shaping students' positive behaviors. Based on observations, the

effectiveness of the positive discipline approach was reflected in students' increased awareness of their responsibilities. A comparative analysis of effectiveness (Table 1) showed that 50% of teachers had achieved an optimal level of effectiveness in implementing classroom dynamics reflection, and 70% were successful in implementing positive reinforcement. However, only 10% of teachers were rated effective in the aspect of willingness to listen to students' views, indicating an area that requires further development. From date, Only 10% of teachers were assessed as effective in their willingness to listen to students' views, indicating an area that requires further development. Although teachers have made efforts to listen, the communication process and follow-up actions may not be optimal. Several factors could contribute to this issue, including a lack of active communication skills, where teachers may listen passively without providing meaningful responses or concrete follow-up on students' views. Additionally, limited classroom time often prevents teachers from giving



full attention to students' aspirations, causing these views to be heard only superficially. The absence of a clear feedback system could also be a reason, as students may feel that their opinions do not lead to any changes or tangible actions. Furthermore, a perception gap between teachers and students may result in differing views on listening effectiveness. Teachers may feel they have done their best, while students perceive otherwise.

Interviews with teachers have revealed various challenges in implementing the positive discipline approach. The challenges identified included difficulties in maintaining consistency of implementation, time limitations for in-depth reflection, and challenges in balancing the needs of individual students with the dynamics of the class as a whole. Teachers reported that these approaches have impacted the learning climate and student engagement. Interview results have revealed that teachers who successfully integrated the positive discipline approach into their learning practices observed significant improvements in the following aspects: students' level of participation in learning, the quality of interaction between students, and student's ability to manage themselves. The teachers highlighted the

importance of creating relationships with students as the foundation for the success of this approach. Further analysis indicated that the effectiveness of the positive discipline approach correlated with teachers' ability to adapt the strategy to the specific context and needs of their class. Teachers who show flexibility in implementation while maintaining the basic principles of positive discipline tend to achieve better results in shaping students' positive behavior and creating a constructive learning environment.

### **Application of Digital Learning Interaction**

The implementation of digital learning at SMA Negeri 1 Kendari has demonstrated a systematic pattern of integrating technology with effective pedagogical approaches through the Merdeka Mengajar Platform. In implementation, teachers develop various interactive learning strategies, including the think-pair-share method, collaborative group discussions, and in-depth case study analysis. Observation data revealed that out of 20 teachers observed, 17 teachers (85%) successfully implemented the think-pair-share method effectively, and 9 teachers (45%) showed success in facilitating productive group discussions.

**Table 3.** Effectiveness of digital learning method implementation

<b>Interactive Activities</b>	<b>Not yet Effective</b>	<b>Done but not yet effective</b>	<b>Done and effective</b>
Think-pair-share	0	3	17
Group discussions	0	11	9
Case Study Analysis	0	2	18

The use of open-ended questions as a pedagogical strategy showed encouraging results, as 58% of teachers successfully used this technique to stimulate students' critical thinking processes. This method effectively elicited active participation and encouraged students to improve their analytical ability. Observations show that

teachers who successfully integrate open-ended questions into digital learning achieve higher student engagement levels than conventional approaches. Merdeka Mengajar platform has provided digital infrastructure support for the implementation of these various interactive learning strategies, enabling teachers to design and

implement learning activities that are more dynamic and responsive to students' needs. Based on Table 2, the Group Discussions method shows a lower percentage of effectiveness compared to other methods. This is evident from only 9 activities being rated as "Done and effective," while 11 others fall into the category of "Done but not yet effective." This low effectiveness is likely due to several factors. One of them is the low level of participation, where not all participants actively contribute to the discussion and tend to rely on certain individuals. Additionally, the lack of effective facilitation can cause discussions to become unfocused and fail to achieve desired goals. Limited collaboration and communication skills among participants also affect the effectiveness of group discussions. In the context of digital learning, technical barriers such as unstable internet connections or platforms that inadequately support interaction can be additional hindrances. Moreover, the mismatch between the discussion method and the learning material can play a role, as highly complex or abstract content may require a different, more effective approach. Meanwhile, the Think-Pair-Share and Case Study Analysis methods appear more effective, with "Done and effective" counts

of 17 and 18, respectively, indicating that these methods are more successful in achieving learning objectives. To enhance the effectiveness of group discussions, the role of a facilitator capable of guiding the discussion properly is essential, along with training in collaboration and communication skills for participants. Additionally, the use of more interactive digital collaboration tools and selecting methods that align well with the learning material can further improve outcomes.

### Effectiveness of Digital Learning Interaction

Analysis of the effectiveness of digital learning shows that it improves the quality of learning interactions and the achievement of educational goals. Observation data shows that 60% of students improved active engagement in learning that utilizes digital platforms. This improvement was particularly evident in discussion participation, argumentation quality, and group collaboration skills. Classroom observations revealed that students who were engaged in interactive digital learning demonstrated improved critical thinking skills, evident in the quality of questions and responses they raised.

**Table 4.** Teacher's level of success in facilitating digital discussions

Behavioral focus	Not yet Effective	Done but not yet effective	Done and effective
Motivate students to have an opinion	0	8	12
Ask questions that trigger discussion	0	11	9
Guiding the discussion	0	2	18

Interviews with teachers expressed various perspectives on the effectiveness of digital learning. Teachers shared that the use of digital technologies requires more comprehensive preparation and the development of new skills in virtual classroom management. The main

challenges identified include: time management in digital learning, the balance between virtual and face-to-face interactions, and the need to continuously develop digital competencies. That said, teachers recognize that digital platforms have enabled all of them to create learning

experiences that are richer and more suited to the needs of digital natives. Table 4 report several aspects that remain low concerning the Teacher's Level of Success in Facilitating Digital Discussions, likely due to teachers' limited skills in digital discussion methods. Many teachers are still unfamiliar with using appropriate techniques to motivate students or pose questions that can spark active discussions. This is particularly evident in the category "Ask questions that trigger discussion," where 11 teachers have attempted but were not yet effective. Additionally, the lack of specific training and preparation for teachers in utilizing digital discussion platforms also affects the results. Another contributing factor is students' low participation in discussions, which could stem from a lack of motivation or understanding of the discussed material. Furthermore, adapting to the digital environment presents its own challenges. Both teachers and students may still feel uncomfortable using digital media as a discussion tool, limiting the effectiveness of their efforts. Moreover, the quality of questions and discussion materials prepared by teachers might not be engaging or relevant enough to encourage active student involvement. This is reflected in the number of teachers who were "done but not yet effective" in triggering discussions. However, higher effectiveness is observed in the aspect of "Guiding the discussion," with 18 teachers performing effectively. This indicates that teachers tend to focus more on directing the flow of the discussion rather than encouraging students to express their opinions actively.

### **Effectiveness of Combined Positive Discipline and Digital Interaction Approaches**

The integration of positive discipline approaches with digital learning shows strong synergy in supporting the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum. Analysis shows that the combination of these two approaches creates a more comprehensive learning environment, where

students' social-emotional and cognitive aspects can develop in a balanced environment. Observational data revealed that classes that implemented both approaches in an integrated setting showed improvements in several key indicators: the level of student participation, the quality of learning interactions, and the achievement of learning outcomes. A comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of this integrated approach yielded several important findings. (1) positive discipline applied in the context of digital learning creates a more constructive and supportive learning atmosphere. (2) digital interactions managed using the principles of positive discipline result in higher levels of student engagement and more profound, meaningful learning experiences. Both approaches effectively supported Merdeka Curriculum objectives, particularly in developing 21st-century competencies such as digital skills, critical thinking, and collaboration. Result of interview from teacher with several question about implemntation PMM integration postive Discipline report that :

**1. Interviewer:** *What are the main challenges in implementing a positive discipline approach?*

**Subject Teacher:** *The main challenges include inconsistency in implementation, limited time for in-depth reflection, and difficulty balancing individual student needs with classroom dynamics.*

**2. Interviewer:** *What digital methods are most effective to use?*

**Subject Teacher:** *The think-pair-share method is predominantly used. This method enhances student engagement and encourages critical thinking and collaboration in group discussions.*

**3. Interviewer:** *What are the main challenges in implementing digital learning?*

**Subject Teacher:** *Teachers face challenges in time management, difficulty in integrating technology optimally, and the need for more in-depth digital competency training.*

**4. Interviewer:** How does the integration of a positive discipline approach and digital learning support the Independent Curriculum?

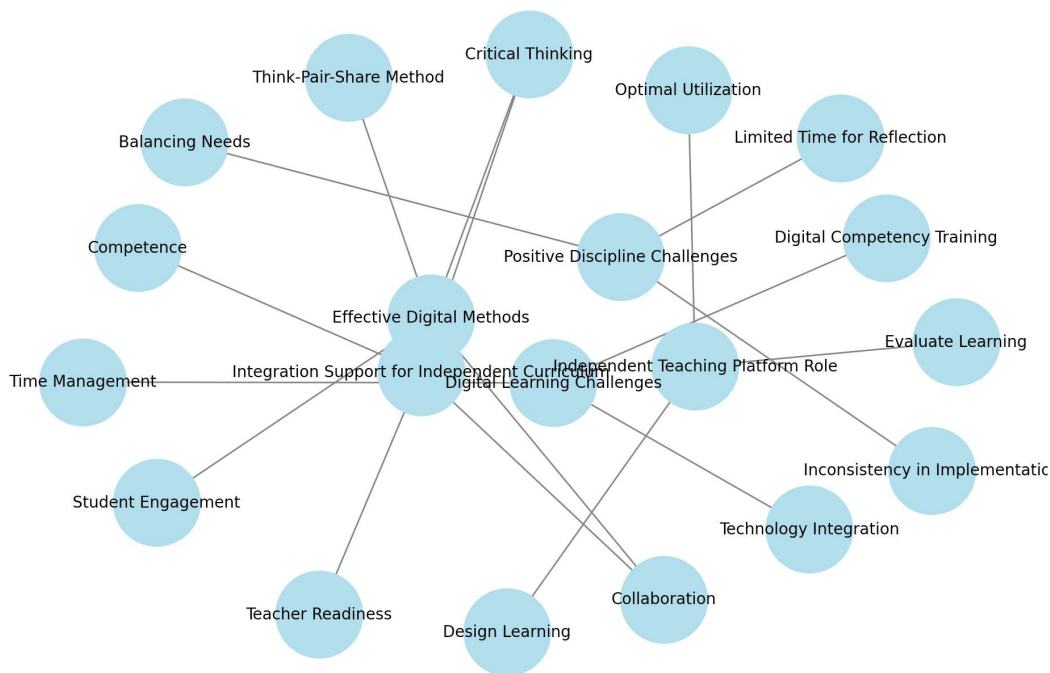
**Subject Teacher:** This integration creates a learning environment that supports the development of 21st-century skills such as critical thinking and collaboration. However, its success depends on teachers' readiness and competence in managing the learning process.

**5. Interviewer:** How significant is the role of the Independent Teaching Platform in supporting learning?

**Subject Teacher:** The Independent Teaching Platform serves as a key infrastructure that helps teachers design and evaluate learning. However, some fellow teachers still need time to utilize the platform's features optimally.

Based on the interviews, it can be said that implementing the positive discipline approach and digital learning faces several significant challenges, such as inconsistent implementation, limited time

for in-depth reflection, and the difficulty of balancing individual student needs with classroom dynamics. In digital learning, other challenges faced include time management, optimization of technology integration, and the need for more in-depth digital competency training. The most effective digital method used is the think-pair-share method, which has been shown to increase student engagement and encourage critical thinking and collaboration in group discussions. In addition, integrating the positive discipline approach with digital learning can support the Merdeka Curriculum by creating a learning environment that facilitates the development of 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking and collaboration. However, the success of this integration is highly dependent on the readiness and competence of teachers in managing the learning process. The Merdeka Mengajar platform also plays an important role as the central infrastructure to help teachers design and evaluate learning. However, some teachers still need time to utilize the platform's features optimally.



**Figure 2.** Mapping keywords from observation results

Based on the mapping results, Figure 2 shows that implementing positive discipline challenges is closely related to several important aspects of learning. One of the main elements is the relationship with developing students' critical thinking because positive discipline encourages students to understand the consequences of their actions and think critically in making decisions. In addition, collaboration between teachers and students is important in creating a supportive learning environment where each individual feels valued. Learning evaluation also plays an important role in measuring the effectiveness of this method, ensuring that the positive discipline approach not only changes student behavior but also improves student learning outcomes. However, one of the challenges is the limited time for reflection for students and teachers, which should be used to understand and improve the learning process. In addition, technology integration is one of the supporting aspects of implementing positive discipline. Technology can facilitate communication, monitoring, and provision of relevant learning materials. However, the success of this method is also greatly influenced by the readiness of teachers to understand the principles of positive discipline and apply them appropriately. Teachers must be trained to motivate students while creating a conducive learning atmosphere.

The research findings report that the successful implementation of this integrated approach depends heavily on teachers' readiness and competence in managing learning. Teachers who demonstrate a deep understanding of the principles of positive discipline and possess adequate digital skills tend to be more successful in creating meaningful learning experiences. It confirms the importance of continuous professional development for teachers in both aspects to support the effective implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. From the results of the research that has been conducted concerning

the effectiveness of applying a positive discipline approach and digital learning interactions in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, several important aspects are found that need to be discussed comprehensively. The study found that successful implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum depends heavily on two main components: positive discipline and effective interactive learning activities. In applying positive discipline, the study identified three fundamental competencies that a teacher must control. First, learning the ability to reflect on class dynamics as an effort to implement class agreements shows 60% of teachers have implemented it but not effectively, while 40% of teachers have implemented it effectively. This finding indicates the need to improve teacher competence in improving this aspect, as stated by (Hidayat, 2021) who confirms that the application of positive discipline requires adequate pedagogical competence to make its implementation directed and optimal, enabling teachers to facilitate students in building a common perspective on a system of norms and rules that is carried out with full awareness. Another study states that pedagogical competence requires a combination of abilities, knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable teachers to work effectively in an educational environment. These competencies include intellectual, communicative, and operational skills needed to teach and manage classes (Tudor, 2016; Turlybekov et al., 2024).

Then, the second important aspect is teachers' competence in providing positive reinforcement for learners' behavior in accordance with the class agreement. The data shows 56.67% of teachers achieved the rating "done but not yet effective" and 43.33% "done and effective". It is in line with the perspective of Semiawan (2021) emphasizing positive discipline as an approach to raise awareness and empower children to be independent, not through threats or the lure of rewards. In the dimension of

interactive learning activities, research reveals three main components that are the focus of attention. Based on Kanza, Lesmono (2023), learner activeness is a very important component in learning, and cooperation between teachers and learners is essential in achieving learning objectives. Research shows 40% of teachers are good at facilitating learning activities that give all learners a role, although it still needs improvement in effectiveness. In relation to the ability to ask questions that stimulate discussion and critical thinking, the data shows 52% of teachers have done this effectively. Emmanuela (2023) confirms discussion methods raising questions can facilitate students in solving problems together, an indicator of students' activeness in learning. In the aspect of facilitating interactive, critical, and inclusive group discussions, 65% of teachers have carried out effectively, and 35% still need to improve their effectiveness. Suroya (2019) emphasizes the importance of interactive activities as an educational interaction between teachers and students aimed at increasing the spirit of learning, in turn affecting student success and success. The implementation of the Merdeka Teaching Platform (PMM) in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum provides facilities that help teachers direct the management of classroom activities on agreed performance indicators. Sitaasih (2020) found that academic supervision can improve teacher competence in the learning process, which is shown through improving the quality of learning interactions and implementing positive discipline.

Based on the findings, the effectiveness of applying a positive discipline approach and digital learning interactions in implementing Merdeka Curriculum still requires continuous development. The success of this implementation depends on improving teacher competence in managing classroom dynamics, providing positive reinforcement, and facilitating interactive learning that encourages active participation of students. It requires comprehensive system support, including the optimal utilization of Merdeka

Mengajar Platform and the implementation of effective academic supervision. Furthermore, further analysis of the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum through positive discipline and interactive learning approaches reveals several important findings that need to be considered in the context of educational development. Effective learning implementation depends not only on teachers' technical ability to manage the classroom, but also on a deep understanding of the principles of learner-centered learning.

This statement was reinforced with the observation for teachers who managed to implement the positive discipline approach effectively tended to have a better understanding of learners' characteristics and were able to create a learning environment that supported their social-emotional development. In the context of interactive digital learning, it was found that successful implementation readiness of technological infrastructure and teachers' adaptability to changes in learning methods. Merdeka Mengajar platform has provided various features that support interactive learning, however, its utilization is still not optimal in several aspects. The results of the study reveal that teachers who are able to integrate digital technology with a positive discipline approach achieve better learning outcomes, especially in terms of learner engagement and achievement of learning objectives. Another important aspect revealed in the research is the importance of collaboration between stakeholders in supporting the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum. The active involvement of school principals in providing supervision and support to teachers has a significant impact on the success of implementation. A structured continuous professional development program is proven to help teachers improve their competencies, especially in terms of implementing positive discipline and interactive learning.

A further exploration finds that the successful implementation of Merdeka

Curriculum cannot be separated from the aspects of continuous evaluation and assessment. An effective monitoring and evaluation system enables schools to identify areas that require improvement and take appropriate corrective action. Data shows schools that have a structured and regular evaluation system tend to be more successful in implementing positive discipline and interactive learning approaches. White & Maher (2024) reported that structured classroom observations assist in teacher self-reflection, feedback, and collaboration, which are critical for continuous instructional improvement. Meanwhile, positive evaluation systems can legitimize high-stakes evaluations and normalize continuous improvement, fostering a culture of compliance and professional growth among teachers (Holloway, 2019). On the other hand, In the context of teacher professional development, research reveals the importance of providing ongoing support in the form of training, mentoring and communities of practice. Teachers who actively engaged in professional development activities showed improvements in the ability to manage their classrooms and facilitate interactive learning. It is reflected in the increasing quality of learning interactions and the level of learner.

Another important aspect exposed was the strategic role of digital technology in supporting the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. The Merdeka Mengajar platform not only functions as a learning tool, but also as a medium for building a broader professional learning community. Teachers who actively utilize this platform show an increase in creativity and innovation in designing meaningful learning. Research has shown that the successful implementation of Merdeka Curriculum influenced school culture that supports innovation and change. Schools that successfully develop a positive and collaborative learning culture show higher success rates in implementing positive discipline and interactive learning approaches. It is reflected in the motivation of teachers and students in participating in the learning process.

## ■ CONCLUSION

This study generates comprehensive conclusions regarding the effectiveness of applying a positive discipline approach and digital learning interactions in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum at SMA Negeri 1 Kendari. The study results show that the integration of the two approaches creates a more effective learning environment and supports the achievement of Merdeka Curriculum goals. In the aspect of positive discipline, 70% of teachers succeeded in effectively implementing positive reinforcement, although only 10% were considered adequate in the element of willingness to listen to students' views. Meanwhile, the implementation of digital learning showed encouraging results, with 85% of teachers successfully implementing the think-pair-share method and 90% being effective in providing digital discussion guidance. The integration of these two approaches has been proven to improve students' active participation, the quality of learning interactions, and the achievement of learning outcomes. However, the study identified some challenges, such as consistency of implementation, time management, and the need to develop teachers' digital competencies. Implementation success largely depends on teachers' readiness and competence in managing learning, which emphasizes the importance of continuous professional development. Merdeka Mengajar platform has been proven to be an adequate supporting infrastructure in integrating the two approaches. These findings provide important implications for the development of educational practices in the digital era, specifically in the context of effective and continuous implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.

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