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STRENGTHENING INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION THROUGH SCHOOL COMMITTEE AND TEACHER SYNERGY: A CASE STUDY AT MTS AR-RAHMAN MEROMBOK

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Abstract. The successful implementation of the Independent Curriculum in Indonesian schools and madrasahs critically depends on the collaborative engagement of all educational stakeholders. Within this framework, school committees hold a strategic position, functioning as facilitators, advocates, supervisors, and intermediaries who contribute to ensuring the availability of essential facilities and fostering a conducive learning environment. This study investigates the strategic role of the school committee in supporting teacher preparedness for the implementation of the Independent Curriculum at MTs Ar-Rahman Merombok, Manggarai Barat. Framed within a qualitative research paradigm, data were collected through in-depth interviews, systematic observations, and document analysis to ensure methodological rigor and contextual relevance. The findings indicate that the school exhibits considerable institutional readiness for the curriculum transition, evidenced by robust committee involvement and a high degree of teacher comprehension regarding curricular objectives, competencies, and pedagogical frameworks. However, significant challenges remain, particularly concerning the adequacy of educational resources and teacher competence in conducting outcome-based assessments both of which are central to the curriculum's success. These results highlight the critical importance of sustained stakeholder collaboration, capacity-building initiatives, and strategic resource allocation to ensure effective and enduring educational reform. This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on participatory governance in education and underscores the pivotal function of school committees in driving systemic transformation within Indonesia's evolving educational landscape.

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INTRODUCTION

The improvement of education quality in Indonesia is not solely determined by curriculum innovation, but greatly depends on the effectiveness of its implementation at the educational unit level. The Merdeka Curriculum, as an educational reform policy launched by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, upholds the principles of learning flexibility, differentiated learning processes, and the strengthening of the Pancasila Student Profile. The success of the implementation of this curriculum does not only depend on the readiness of teachers but is also greatly influenced by the structural support from educational stakeholders, especially school committees, which play a crucial role in participatory education governance. The school committee contributes to ensuring the quality of education through oversight functions, support for facilities and infrastructure, as well as a consultative role for teachers and principals (Ismail et al., 2023; Maula & Noviyanti, 2024; Nasar, 2025).

As a representation of the community, the school committee holds a strategic position in bridging the interests between the school and the local community. This role goes beyond financial functions, encompassing oversight of school policy direction and the empowerment of educational institutions (Herwan et al., 2018; Ma'sum & Biantoro, 2025). In the local context, community-based collaboration has proven to enhance the effectiveness of educational policies (Edjah et al., 2025). Meanwhile, teacher readiness is a key element in the implementation of the

Merdeka Curriculum, which includes understanding learning outcomes, the ability to manage flexible learning, and competence in conducting formative assessments (Andina et al., 2023; Syamsuddin, 2018).

Several previous studies have examined the role of school committees in improving the quality of education in general (Ismail et al., 2023; Maula & Noviyanti, 2024) as well as in explaining the factors that influence teacher motivation and performance in the organizational environment. However, there has not been much research that explicitly examines the relationship between the strategic role of school committees and teacher readiness in the context of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, particularly in madrasah environments in peripheral areas such as Manggarai Barat. This gap is important to fill in order to strengthen the understanding of collaborative education governance models within the framework of national curriculum reform.

The school committee is an independent entity formed as a manifestation of community participation in strengthening the quality of educational services at the educational unit level. This institution plays a central role in supporting the creation of transparent, accountable, and collaborative education governance (Guntoro et al., 2025; Ismail et al., 2023) identify four main functions of the school committee: as an advisor in formulating education policies, as a supporter in providing facilities and infrastructure, as a supervisor of school program implementation, and as a mediator between the school and the community. These four functions form the institutional foundation that enables schools to create an adaptive and quality-oriented learning environment.

Research by Maula & Noviyanti (2023) emphasizes the importance of empowering school committees as a concrete strategy for improving the quality of education. In that context, empowered committees are capable of performing program planning functions, resource mobilization, and financial oversight in an accountable and participatory manner. Meanwhile, a study by (Ma'sum & Biantoro, 2025) shows that school committees play an active role in improving the quality of educational facilities, especially in the Merdeka Belajar era.

Research by Herwan et al. (2018) highlight the contribution of school committees in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. The school committee not only plays a role in physical aspects but also in supporting teachers, participating in program evaluations, and facilitating the enhancement of the school's managerial capacity. The emphasis on this capacity-building function is also supported by Nasar (2025) which shows that the effectiveness of school management is greatly influenced by the quality of collaboration between the principal and the committee, particularly in decision-making based on deliberation and local needs.

Overall, these findings collectively affirm that school committees do not merely function as symbols of community participation, but rather as strategic actors in educational governance. Within the framework of the Merdeka Curriculum policy, which emphasizes flexibility, innovation, and multi-party collaboration, strengthening the role of school committees becomes increasingly crucial. Their contributions have a direct impact on the success of implementing national education policies, especially in the context of madrasas or schools in 3T areas (frontier, outermost, and least developed), where local institutional support is crucial for the sustainability of educational reforms.

The Merdeka Curriculum is presented as a strategic response to the dynamics of national educational needs that demand a more adaptive, contextual, and student potential-oriented learning approach. This initiative represents a paradigm shift from content-based teaching to competency-based learning, where flexibility in learning and teacher autonomy become the main foundations. In addition, this curriculum is designed to strengthen students' character through the internalization of the values of the Pancasila Student Profile, which serves as the ideological framework of national education. However, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in educational units faces implementation challenges that encompass institutional aspects, human resource readiness, and learning environment support.

Research by Manurung & Nasution (2025) emphasize the importance of the managerial performance of the school committee in supporting the effectiveness of curriculum

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implementation, particularly through the functions of planning, execution, and evaluation of educational programs. Afriani & Hendripides (2023) show that teacher readiness is still moderate, with obstacles including understanding the philosophy of the curriculum and limitations in developing teaching modules. On the other hand, Maharani & Purba (2025) highlight the role of transformational leadership of school principals in promoting collaboration, continuous training, and a conducive learning environment. These three studies reinforce the argument that the success of curriculum reform is highly determined by the synergistic integration of leadership, teacher readiness, and participatory institutional functions.

This research aims to evaluate the synergy between the school committee and teachers in supporting the readiness for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at MTs Ar-Rahman Merombok, Manggarai Barat. This research provides empirical contributions to the development of an effective collaborative institutional model in supporting the transformation of a participatory-based curriculum. By combining perspectives of participatory governance and pedagogical readiness, this study presents an integrated approach to understanding the key factors in the successful implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in madrasahs. The findings of this study are expected to serve as a basis for policymakers in formulating strategies to strengthen institutional collaboration at the educational unit level.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a descriptive qualitative case study approach to evaluate the readiness of MTs Ar-Rahman Merombok in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum for the 2024/2025 academic year, with a focus on the synergy between the school committee and teachers. The research subjects include the head of the madrasa, the deputy head of the madrasa in charge of the curriculum, subject teachers, and the school committee members. The head of the madrasa, the deputy head of the madrasa in charge of the curriculum, and the school committee are designated as the main informants due to their strategic roles in policy planning, strengthening participatory governance, and institutional decision-making. Meanwhile, subject teachers serve as supporting informants given their direct involvement in the implementation of learning based on the Merdeka Curriculum.

This research specifically examines the forms of institutional collaboration in supporting the readiness for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, which includes understanding the curriculum structure, readiness of teaching materials, availability of learning facilities and infrastructure, as well as teachers' competence in applying formative assessments. Data collection methods consist of non-participatory observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Observations were carried out systematically to record real-time activities and contextual settings at the madrasah without researcher intervention. In-depth interviews were conducted with various institutional actors, including the head of the madrasa, teachers, and committee members, to gather rich, detailed data on readiness and inter-institutional collaboration. Documentation involved analysis of institutional documents such as lesson plans (RPP), school programs, and planning reports related to the Merdeka Curriculum.

The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which includes three main steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction was conducted to focus on relevant findings aligned with the research objectives. The presentation of data was carried out in narrative form, thematic matrices, and tables to clarify key categories and patterns. Conclusions were drawn inductively, allowing emerging insights to develop throughout the research process.To ensure the credibility and comprehensiveness of findings, this study applied technique and source triangulation. Triangulation of techniques was done by cross-checking data from observations, interviews, and document analysis, while source triangulation involved verifying information across different informants and document types.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

School Committee in the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum

The research findings based on interviews, observations, and document analysis show that the involvement of the madrasah committee at MTs Ar-Rahman Merombok in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum remains limited and not yet strategic. Interview data from Informant A (Head of Madrasah) and Informant B (Committee Chair) confirmed that the committee has only participated in administrative duties and small-scale logistical support, without taking part in academic planning or curriculum evaluation processes. Informant B explicitly stated, "We usually help during school events or facility support, but have not been involved in lesson planning or assessing education quality."

Observations of planning meetings and teacher working group (KKG) sessions validated this, as committee members were not present and did not contribute to pedagogical discussions. Documentation review, including the 2023/2024 School Work Plan and meeting minutes (Doc/MTs/002/2024), also revealed no committee involvement or recorded input in educational planning. The triangulation of interview, observation, and documentation consistently supports the conclusion that the committee's engagement is largely symbolic and lacking in substance. This situation aligns with the findings of Manurung et al. (2025), who stress that for curriculum implementation to be effective, school committees must engage in planning, execution, and evaluation. At MTs Ar-Rahman Merombok, these functions remain underutilized. The committee's limited understanding of the Merdeka Curriculum content and the absence of a structured coordination mechanism further hinder its effectiveness.

This institutional gap is compounded by findings from classroom observations and teacher interviews indicating that the school's readiness in infrastructure and resource support is also limited. Digital infrastructure is unstable, thematic learning spaces are minimal, and library materials to support independent learning are lacking. This was echoed in documentation, such as the school's asset report and observations of classroom conditions. In terms of teacher readiness, interviews with Informants C and D (Teachers) and lesson observations revealed challenges in understanding and applying curriculum philosophy, particularly in designing contextual and differentiated learning. This reflects Afriani & Hendripides (2023), who found that many teachers struggle to implement Merdeka Curriculum principles without structured support. These limitations are exacerbated by the lack of support from the committee in organizing teacher development programs or capacity-building efforts.

The leadership role of the madrasah principal also emerged as a critical factor. Informant A reported efforts to initiate forums for communication between the committee, teachers, and school leadership. However, these forums were not held regularly or based on formal structures, and observations confirmed that discussions remained informal without systematic follow-up. This weakens the development of institutional synergy necessary for sustainable reform. On a broader scale, Edjah et al. (2025) emphasize the importance of contextualized policy-making involving cross-sectoral actors. Ideally, the committee would serve as a bridge between community needs and school programs, aligning local input with national curriculum reforms. However, in practice, this role has not materialized meaningfully at MTs Ar-Rahman Merombok.

In summary, the findings reveal a gap between the intended participatory governance framework of the Merdeka Curriculum and its actual implementation. To address this, the function of the school committee must be transformed from a ceremonial role into that of a strategic institutional partner. Strengthening teacher competence through collaborative programs, establishing formal communication structures, and ensuring adequate infrastructure are essential. Without institutional synergy built through continuous communication and mutual support, the goals of the Merdeka Curriculum are unlikely to be fully realized in community-based education settings like MTs Ar-Rahman Merombok.

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School/Madrasa Committee as an Advisory Agency

The function of the madrasah committee as an advisory body in decision-making at the educational unit level is strategic but has not been implemented optimally at MTs Ar-Rahman Merombok. Based on interview data from Informant A (Head of Madrasah) and Informant B (Committee Chair), the committee's involvement in the preparation of strategic documents such as the Madrasah Revenue and Expenditure Budget Plan (RKAM), curriculum implementation plans, and quality improvement initiatives remains minimal. Their participation is largely administrative and ceremonial, without engagement in actual deliberative processes. Informant B admitted that most committee members lack an understanding of managerial and educational policy matters, which limits their ability to contribute meaningfully in decision-making forums.

This was confirmed through observation of school meetings where the committee's presence was recorded but no active input was observed. Furthermore, document analysis including meeting agendas, RKAM drafts, and school development plans showed no record of advisory recommendations from the committee. The triangulation of interview, observation, and documentation data reinforces the conclusion that the advisory role of the committee remains passive and underutilized.

This condition is in line with the findings of Pujianti et al. (2025) who state that effective policy implementation in schools requires committee participation from the initial planning stages. The committee is uniquely positioned to represent local aspirations and align them with school programs. Similarly, Supit et al. (2025) highlights that community involvement, especially through madrasah committees, is essential in realizing the objectives of the Merdeka Curriculum.

Lasminah (2021) emphasizes the role of school leadership in facilitating consultative spaces that enable committee members to participate actively in educational governance. This aligns with Guntoro et al. (2025) who argues that the committee's involvement in advisory roles strengthens accountability and transparency within the school system. However, at MTs Ar-Rahman Merombok, such facilitation has not been institutionalized and no formal mechanisms exist to support the committee's substantive contribution to policy formulation and evaluation.

To optimize the committee's advisory function, systematic interventions are needed. These may include capacity-building programs to enhance policy literacy, technical assistance in planning and evaluation, and the formal integration of committee roles into the school's governance structure. These measures would allow the committee to serve not only as a symbolic representation of community participation but also as a vital actor in inclusive, transparent, and responsive educational policy processes, especially in the context of Merdeka Curriculum implementation.

The Role of the School Committee as a Supporting Agency

School and madrasah committees are strategic elements in supporting the success of educational programs at the unit level. This supporting function includes contributions to the provision of facilities and infrastructure, funding for learning activities, and non-academic assistance that sustains the implementation of the curriculum. Interview data from Informant C (Madrasah Treasurer) at MTs Ar-Rahman Merombok revealed that the committee plays an active role in providing learning facilities, including the procurement of computers, desks, and chairs for students, as well as contributing to the payment of honorariums for non-civil servant teachers. Informant B (Committee Chair) added that most of the funds are sourced from community contributions paid in installments and managed with transparent accountability.

This was supported by observations and documentation that showed the committee filling funding gaps in school operations. The committee's contributions were used to finance teacher training, contextual learning projects, and physical improvements to school facilities. Despite the unequal distribution of contributions among students, the committee's presence has significantly contributed to maintaining the continuity of basic education services in areas with limited resources. The triangulation of interview, observation, and documentation confirms that the committee plays a substantial role as a support system for curriculum implementation.

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This supporting role aligns with the model described by Saman et al. (2024), who emphasize the potential for collaboration between village governments and school committees as a community-based education funding solution. In the case of MTs Ar-Rahman Merombok, this model is relevant, particularly considering the socioeconomic condition of the community, which is predominantly low-income (Puš, 2023). In a participatory education system, the school committee serves as a channel for public interest, not only by contributing resources but also by monitoring implementation.

Nevertheless, this support must be balanced with accountability principles. Rohman et al. (2023) caution against the potential misuse of committee-managed funds in the absence of a clear reporting mechanism. Therefore, involving school principals and teachers in the joint financial management process is essential to ensure integrity and transparency.

Beyond financial matters, empowering the committee can positively impact the quality of educational services. Halik et al. (2019) suggest that committees must be involved not only in financing but also in planning, executing, and evaluating school programs. This is reinforced by Tahili et al. (2022), who propose a model of strategic collaboration between committees, teachers, and other stakeholders to develop context-based educational policies.

Furthermore, the committee's participation has a positive influence on students' learning behavior. According to Suryandai et al. (2022), the synergy between teachers, parents, and school committees contributes to the improvement of students' academic competence and character. In the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, which demands active and inclusive collaboration, strengthening the committee's role as a supporting agency should be continuously encouraged to ensure quality and sustainability in educational delivery

The Role of the School Committee as a Controlling Agency

The madrasah committee plays an important role as a controlling element in the implementation of educational programs, particularly in ensuring the creation of transparent and accountable governance. This supervisory function includes active involvement in policy evaluation, monitoring budget usage, and providing input on financial reports and the performance of educational units. Field findings at MTs Ar-Rahman Merombok indicate that the madrasah committee directly participates in the verification and evaluation process of the Madrasah Revenue and Expenditure Budget Plan document, including the utilization of operational funds allocated to support the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.

Interviews with Informant A (Head of Madrasah) and Informant C (Madrasah Treasurer) confirm that the committee has access to financial reports and is involved in internal evaluation meetings. This involvement indicates a shift in the role of the committee from a ceremonial body to a more substantive oversight institution. The committee chair noted that their core function is to maintain integrity in school policy and ensure that community contributions are utilized properly. Observational data from evaluation meetings and review of financial documents support this claim. Triangulation across methods validates that the supervisory role of the committee has been implemented meaningfully.

These findings are in line with Rohman et al. (2023), who emphasize that religious values embedded in local culture foster a collective control mechanism in school governance. Community religiosity supports participatory oversight, especially in the management of education funding. Puš (2023) also links such practices to educational democracy, where the public has both the right and responsibility to monitor the quality and transparency of schools.

Additionally, the effectiveness of this oversight depends on a clear and functional relationship between the madrasah leadership and the committee. Saman et al. (2024) argue that collaborative frameworks are needed to institutionalize this relationship, including improving committee competence in financial literacy and regulation. Lasminah (2021) adds that principal leadership that is open to participation ensures the successful operation of control functions. This is echoed by Halik et al. (2019), who argue that supervision by the committee strengthens public trust and helps sustain curriculum reforms like the Merdeka Curriculum, which demands collaborative accountability.

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Furthermore, the madrasah committee serves as a mediator linking the school, parents, and community to promote participatory and responsive educational governance. This mediating function is especially relevant in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, which requires stakeholder involvement based on local needs. At MTs Ar-Rahman Merombok, the committee actively conveys community aspirations to the school and communicates school policies to external stakeholders.

Interview data from Informant A shows that the committee helps gather community input, which is then discussed in strategic forums with parents. Observations at the start of the academic year confirmed that the school holds joint forums with the committee and parents. In these sessions, the committee reports on its activities and facilitates discussions on learning, budgeting, and curriculum updates. Documentation from forum minutes further verifies this mediating function. Triangulation confirms that the committee effectively bridges two-way communication.

These findings are in line with Maryati (2022) further emphasizes that committees that mediate actively increase public trust and engagement. At MTs Ar-Rahman Merombok, this is reflected in the voluntary contributions for infrastructure development. Halik et al. (2019) also stress that the mediating function extends beyond communication to include collaborative policy development and evaluation. However, challenges remain, such as limited parental participation and low policy literacy among some committee members. Therefore, strengthening the committee's communication and strategic facilitation capacity is crucial.

In conclusion, the committee at MTs Ar-Rahman Merombok has taken on substantial roles both as a supervisory and mediating body. These roles enhance the legitimacy of madrasah governance and are key to ensuring the effective implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, which relies on inclusive, transparent, and community-rooted practices.

Teacher Readiness as a Pillar of the Implementation of the Independent Curriculum

Within the framework of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, teacher capacity plays a critical role in determining the success of educational transformation at the school level. At MTs Ar-Rahman Merombok, the pedagogical and technological readiness of teachers exhibits varied dynamics. Based on interviews with Informant A (Head of Madrasah) and several subject teachers, it was found that most educators possess a basic understanding of the curriculum structure. They are familiar with key elements such as learning outcomes, the development of Learning Objective Pathways (ATP), and the creation of contextual teaching modules.

Classroom observations revealed a distinction between teachers who have received Merdeka Curriculum training and those who have not. Trained teachers displayed a high degree of adaptability in their instructional design. Their lessons were student-centered, promoting active participation, creativity, and learner independence, consistent with the principles of differentiated instruction. In contrast, teachers without intensive training maintained conventional practices characterized by lecture-based delivery and cognitive-focused assessments. This contrast highlights a gap in professional readiness among educators.

Analysis of lesson planning documents supports these observations. Most teachers have developed one-page lesson plans (RPP) aligned with the simplified format promoted by the Ministry of Education. However, variations remain in terms of depth of content, incorporation of active learning methods, and application of authentic assessment strategies. Furthermore, the limited use of educational technology reflects the digital literacy challenges still faced by some educators. This was evident in both observation data and the review of teaching tools.

Triangulation of interview data, classroom observations, and documentation reveals a consistent pattern. While conceptual understanding of the curriculum exists, implementation quality is uneven due to disparities in training access and institutional support. These findings align with Aziz et al. (2024), who argue that teacher readiness is shaped not only by knowledge of the curriculum but also by the quality of professional development and the presence of supporting systems. Maharani et al. (2025) also stress the importance of school leadership in fostering teacher professionalism through structured academic supervision and ongoing capacity building.

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In the digital domain, Sari & Rugaiyah (2024) emphasize that integrating educational technology is essential to support learning outcomes in the Merdeka Curriculum. Fuad et al. (2024) further underscore that a strong foundation in curriculum principles must inform the instructional design and learning process to ensure pedagogical effectiveness.

Therefore, efforts to strengthen teacher readiness at MTs Ar-Rahman Merombok must be comprehensive. This includes targeted thematic training, structured mentoring, collaborative supervision mechanisms, and improved access to digital infrastructure. These combined interventions are vital to ensuring equitable and effective implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum across the institution.

Teacher's Understanding of Learning Outcomes in the Context of Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum

Learning outcomes are essential indicators for designing a learning process aimed at the holistic development of students. These outcomes include knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that students are expected to achieve at each stage of learning and are aligned with specific learning objectives as defined in the Merdeka Curriculum framework (Saman et al., 2024). At MTs Ar-Rahman Merombok, teacher understanding of learning outcomes (Capaian Pembelajaran or CP) has shown notable progress, significantly supporting curriculum implementation.

Interview data from several subject teachers indicate that instructional planning is carried out independently and systematically using a contextual approach. Teachers begin lessons with structured opening activities such as prayers, attendance checks, topic introductions, and connecting new material with students' prior knowledge and daily experiences. These practices demonstrate pedagogical awareness and an intention to create learning experiences that are meaningful and relevant to students' lives.

Observation data further confirm that learning objectives are formulated in alignment with core competencies and CP components outlined in the Merdeka Curriculum. Teachers apply differentiated instructional strategies and media selection based on student learning styles and needs. Analysis of lesson planning documents shows comprehensive elements including specific learning indicators, formative assessments, and character education integration, all of which reflect a strong internalization of CP in teaching practices.

Triangulation of interviews, classroom observations, and planning documentation confirms that teachers at MTs Ar-Rahman Merombok have integrated CP into their instructional design processes. This aligns with the findings of Fuad et al. (2024), who state that a clear understanding of CP formulation is critical to achieving pedagogical readiness in the Merdeka Curriculum. In addition, Sumartono (2025) emphasizes that strong pedagogical competence in aligning teaching approaches with CP ensures coherence between curriculum planning and implementation.

These findings demonstrate that teachers at MTs Ar-Rahman Merombok have reached a substantive level of readiness in embedding learning outcomes into instructional design. This serves as a solid foundation for the sustainability of educational reform in the madrasah, particularly in delivering learning that is meaningful, contextual, and aligned with the goals of the Merdeka Curriculum

Formulation of Learning Objectives by Teachers in the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum

The formulation of learning objectives is a critical stage in instructional planning, serving as a roadmap for achieving student competencies. At MTs Ar-Rahman Merombok, teachers have demonstrated a good level of competence in integrating the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum into the formulation of learning objectives. Interview data from several subject teachers indicate that the formulation process is based on standardized instructional tools and aligned with the structure and learning outcomes defined in the national curriculum framework.

Observation data support these findings. Teachers systematically design core learning activities through concrete and operational steps and include adaptive strategies to accommodate diverse student needs. Rather than using a one-size-fits-all model, teachers apply

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multiple instructional strategies to allow for effective differentiation. During the lesson, teachers clearly identify and articulate key competency elements, describing expected learning outcomes in a specific and measurable way.

The formulation of learning objectives is thus not seen as an administrative requirement, but as a reflection of pedagogical depth. Teachers construct learning components that are contextual, relevant, and directed toward the holistic development of students' potential. This alignment ensures that the objectives are consistent with the Pancasila student profile and grounded in student-centered learning principles.

Triangulation of interviews, classroom observations, and lesson plan documentation confirms a consistent and reflective practice in learning objective formulation. These findings are supported by Fuad et al. (2024), who emphasize the importance of teachers' understanding of the structural and functional dimensions of learning objectives as foundational to Merdeka Curriculum implementation. Sumartono (2025) adds that pedagogical competence in this area directly contributes to classroom effectiveness. In addition, Maylawati (2025) highlights the role of the head of the madrasah as a learning leader who influences teacher performance, particularly in improving lesson planning and implementation quality.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the teachers at MTs Ar-Rahman Merombok have reached a substantial level of readiness in formulating learning objectives that reflect the principles of the Merdeka Curriculum. This readiness is a valuable asset in building adaptive, inclusive, and 21st-century skills-oriented learning environments.

Teacher Collaboration in the Development of Learning Objectives Pathways (LOP)

Collaboration among teachers is a crucial factor in ensuring effective lesson planning within the Merdeka Curriculum framework. At MTs Ar-Rahman Merombok, interview data indicate that subject teachers engage in active collaboration to develop systematic, logical, and contextually grounded Learning Objective Pathways (LOP). These collaborative efforts include the co-design of learning steps, exchange of pedagogical strategies, shared use of instructional resources, and collective reflection to align plans with curriculum-based learning outcomes.

Observational data and analysis of instructional documents confirm that teachers possess a solid conceptual understanding of the LOP as a competency-based learning map. The LOP documents show coherent integration of learning objectives, instructional strategies, and assessment instruments, all tailored to students' individual characteristics and learning needs. The formulated learning indicators are specific and measurable, serving as the foundation for contextualized and adaptive instructional activities.

The triangulation of interview, observation, and documentation data confirms that collaborative lesson planning is being practiced with depth and consistency. These findings align with Robingatin et al. (2025), who identify teachers as key change agents in the Merdeka Curriculum, especially in developing LOPs. Yafie et al. (2024) also highlight that collaborative culture and supportive school leadership are essential for building teachers' instructional planning capacity. Leadership that enables dialogue and fosters collaborative spaces accelerates curriculum internalization at the school level.

Further supporting this, Maylawati (2025) explains that teachers' ability to implement the new curriculum depends significantly on institutional supports, including training, supervision, and access to teaching facilities. Rejaan et al. (2025) adds that the success of the Merdeka Curriculum lies not only in its structural design but also in the professional commitment of educators, organizational cohesion, and transformational leadership.

Based on these findings, the collaborative practices evident at MTs Ar-Rahman Merombok demonstrate both structural and cultural readiness for effective implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. This cross-actor collaboration serves as a foundational pillar in ensuring that LOPs are not only administratively compliant but also pedagogically sound and responsive to students' real learning needs.

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Obstacles to the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at MTs Ar-Rahman Merombok

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at MTs Ar-Rahman Merombok faces several structural and technical challenges that hinder its optimal application. Interview data from teachers reveal a lack of consistent socialization and technical guidance from supervising bodies such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the District Education Office. This issue is particularly prominent in the context of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5). Teachers expressed limited understanding of the core philosophy and operational mechanisms of the project, leading to confusion in aligning it with regular teaching activities. This problem is compounded by the limited face-to-face instructional time, especially in religious subjects with dense content.

Observations further indicate that access to supporting literature and digital learning tools remains low among teachers. Technological limitations, such as unstable internet connections and inadequate devices, have constrained efforts to implement digital learning strategies. In addition, many teachers exhibit low digital literacy, making it difficult to integrate modern pedagogical methods into classroom practice. Suryati (2023) emphasizes that the success of the Merdeka Curriculum in leveraging technology depends heavily on both access to digital resources and teacher competence in utilizing those tools. Robingatin et al. (2025) also support this by identifying teachers as key transformational actors who require institutional backing to fulfill their roles effectively.

Compounding these internal barriers are external socio-economic challenges. Most parents in the madrasah's community work as farmers or daily laborers, which limits their financial capacity to support educational initiatives. As a result, the school committee struggles to fulfill its supporting roles, both in terms of fundraising and engagement in curriculum-related activities. These findings echo the perspectives of Irmawan et al. (2024) and Supit et al. (2025), who emphasize the importance of collaborative partnerships between schools and communities. However, at MTs Ar-Rahman Merombok, such synergy remains limited due to both resource constraints and low participatory literacy in educational policy.

Triangulation of interviews, observations, and documentation highlights a systemic gap between policy expectations and practical implementation at the school level. To address these gaps, a multi-stakeholder approach is essential. Continuous teacher development programs, investment in digital infrastructure, and empowerment initiatives for the school committee and local community must be prioritized. These steps are critical for cultivating an inclusive and adaptive education ecosystem that supports the vision of the Merdeka Curriculum and meets the demands of 21st-century education reform.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This research concludes that MTs Ar-Rahman Merombok, as a madrasah managed by the community through the support of foundations and school committees, has shown significant efforts in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. Although its implementation has not yet been fully optimal, the research results indicate that the madrasah committee plays an important role in supporting teacher readiness through four main institutional functions: as a deliberative body, supporter, overseer, and mediator. These roles collectively contribute to the formation of an institutional environment that encourages collaboration between schools, parents, and the community in supporting the curriculum reform agenda. The support of the madrasah committee for teacher readiness is evident from their involvement in facilitating understanding of learning outcomes, formulating learning objectives, structuring the flow of learning objectives, and planning learning activities based on the Merdeka Curriculum. The collaboration formed between the head of the madrasah, teachers, committee, and community becomes an important foundation in building participatory and adaptive educational practices in response to national policy changes. However, this research has limitations in terms of geographical coverage and the depth of analysis regarding the internal capacity of the committee. Therefore, further studies are recommended to specifically explore the structural and functional readiness

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of madrasah committees in supporting the development and sustainable implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. Research of this kind is important to enrich the understanding of institutional synergy within a community-based educational ecosystem.

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