



From Regulation to Classroom: Curriculum Policy Transformation in Madrasah Islamic Religious Education, 2013-2025

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ABSTRAK

Antara tahun 2014 dan 2025, Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia menerbitkan lima keputusan penting yang mengatur Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) di madrasah, yang terakhir adalah KMA 1503/2025. Literatur yang ada saat ini cenderung membahas keputusan-keputusan tersebut secara terpisah, serta menganggap lemahnya implementasi sebagai masalah kurangnya pelatihan, anggaran, atau fasilitas. Artikel ini mengkaji rangkaian keputusan selama dua belas tahun tersebut sebagai objek analisis. Dengan mengacu pada keputusan menteri, pedoman pelaksanaan, dan studi empiris mengenai praktik di madrasah, artikel ini menelaah rangkaian keputusan tersebut melalui dua kerangka kerja yang bergerak ke arah yang berbeda: empat variabel implementasi Edwards, yang banyak digunakan dalam literatur Indonesia, serta gagasan Braun, Ball, dan Maguire mengenai pelaksanaan kebijakan sebagai karya interpretatif yang terikat konteks. Analisis ini mengidentifikasi lima fase dan berpendapat bahwa kesenjangan yang terus-menerus antara kebijakan dan ruang kelas bukanlah semata-mata soal sumber daya. Guru dan kepala madrasah tidak sekadar menerima kebijakan; mereka menerjemahkannya, dan dalam proses penerjemahan tersebut, mereka melakukannya dalam kondisi material dan profesional yang jarang dianggap relevan secara analitis oleh Kementerian. Setiap fase mengulang tiga masalah: kapasitas guru yang bias dan kelebihan beban kerja akibat status mereka sebagai pegawai rentan, stratifikasi infrastruktur antara madrasah yang memiliki sumber daya memadai dan madrasah di daerah pinggiran, serta budaya komunikasi satu arah. Siklus revisi yang semakin pendek, hanya dua tahun dari KMA 450/2024 ke KMA 1503/2025, menjadi tanda kementerian yang reaktif terhadap gejala, bukan terhadap kondisi yang memproduksinya.

ABSTRACT

Between 2014 and 2025, the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia published five major decisions regulating Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in madrasah, ending with KMA 1503/2025. The literature, as it exists, tends to discuss these decisions separately, and to treat weak implementation as a matter of inadequate training, budget, or facilities. This article considers the twelve-year series as an object of analysis. This article, drawing on ministerial decrees, implementation guidelines and empirical study of madrasah practices, reads the series through two frameworks moving in different directions: Edwards' four implementation variables, widely used in Indonesian literature, and Braun, Ball and Maguire's idea of policy enactment as a context-bound interpretive work. The analysis identifies five phases and argues that the persistent gap between policy and the classroom is not so much a question of resources. The guru and the madrasah head do not receive the policy; they translate it, and in translating it they do so in material and professional conditions that are rarely considered analytically relevant by the Ministry. Every phase repeats three problems: the capacity of biased and overworked teachers due to the status of vulnerable employees, the stratification of infrastructure between well-resourced and peripheral madrasas, and a one-way communication culture. The increasingly shorter revision cycle just two years from KMA 450/2024 to KMA 1503/2025 is a sign that the ministry is reacting to symptoms rather than to the underlying causes.

KATA KUNCI

Kebijakan Kurikulum; Pendidikan Agama Islam; Madrasah; Enactment Kebijakan; Kurikulum Merdeka.

KEYWORDS

Curriculum Policy; Islamic Religious Education; Madrasah; Policy Enactment; Merdeka Curriculum.

A. Introduction

Change of curriculum in a madrasah occurs simultaneously at three levels. There are the macro level of national regulation, the meso level of the madrasah as an institution with its own history and finances, and the micro level of what a teacher actually does at eight in the morning with thirty-two students and a photocopied worksheet. Policy attention is focused on the former almost exclusively.¹ If the third level is not ready, investment in the first two produces documents, not graduates. The reverse is also true; without a coherent regulatory vision, madrasah drift into pedagogical stagnation and lose whatever competitive standing their graduates had.²

Indonesia has acted swiftly. The country has experienced the 2013 Curriculum, pandemic interruption and Merdeka Curriculum in about a decade, with madrasah expected to keep up each time. With each transition came a promise of better quality. But the empirical record is not so generous. Sumarni's survey of Madrasah Aliyah in West Java found that although most teachers understood the purpose of the 2013 Curriculum, the reform never reached the classroom due to textbook shortages, thin training provision and the near-absence of monitoring by the ministry.³ This is not a phenomenon unique to madrasah. In their analysis of the 2013 Curriculum as a whole, Puad and Ashton read the mandated formative assessment as an example of policy borrowing driven by external pressure on Indonesia's PISA standing, and traced the resulting incoherence directly to teachers who were asked to enact two incompatible logics at once.⁴

Madrasah are not only religious schools. The authority for general schools is the Ministry of Education; the Ministry of Religious Affairs is their authority, so any decision on a national curriculum only reaches a madrasah classroom after a second act of institutional translation. This arrangement, Kosim and colleagues trace to the post-independence settlement, and describe the long movement in Indonesian policy from domestication of Islamic education towards accommodation of it.⁵ This has led to formal parity, with madrasah graduates possessing recognized qualifications and madrasah curricula satisfying national standards. It has also created a structural lag. The curriculum announced in Jakarta for general schools needs a separate ministerial decree, a separate set of implementation guidelines, and a separate training apparatus before it reaches a Madrasah Tsanawiyah in a district town. Each of

¹ Ulil Amri Syafri et al., "Analisis SWOT Madrasah Aliyah dalam Meningkatkan Lulusan di Tingkat Nasional Menyambut Peradaban Unggul Tahun 2045," *Ta'dibuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 12, no. 1 (2023): 62–74, <https://doi.org/10.32832/tadibuna.v12i1.8846>.

² Ilham Rahman Hakim, Shifaun Unnajah, and Ahmad Syaeful Rahman, "Adaptive Strategies of Madrasah in Implementing the National Curriculum and Madrasah Operational Curriculum," *Edukasi: Journal of Educational Research* 4, no. 3 (2024): 19–36.

³ Sumarni, "Evaluation of the Implementation of 2013 Curriculum in Madrasah," *EDUKASI: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Agama dan Keagamaan* 15, no. 3 (2017): 387–404.

⁴ Lalu Mohammad Abid Zainul Puad and Karen Ashton, "A Critical Analysis of Indonesia's 2013 National Curriculum: Tensions between Global and Local Concerns," *The Curriculum Journal* 34, no. 3 (2022): 521–35, <https://doi.org/10.1002/curj.194>.

⁵ Mohammad Kosim et al., "The Dynamics of Islamic Education Policies in Indonesia," *Cogent Education* 10, no. 1 (2023): 2172930, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2172930>.

those steps is an opportunity for the policy to take a different form. In analyses it is a mistake to regard madrasah as a delayed version of general school reform.

The complication occurred after the Ministry of Religious Affairs published KMA 183/2019 on the PAI and Arabic curriculum. This was a response to the perception that the PAI was not producing the religious dispositions they claimed to. The decree defines PAI as a vehicle for wasathiyah character, based on four competencies: a disposition to learn, critical thinking, creativity, and the ability to cooperate across difference.⁶ What the decree did not clarify was whether PAI teachers could translate any of this into teaching. That question is not documentary. It is a question of people.

We do not wish to suggest that previous work has not contributed a great deal. Sumarni presented the macro picture of the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum in West Java, and the constraints of resources.⁷ The case study of Arwani at MA NU Tengguli Jepara records the failure in a granular way; lesson plans were not based on scientific inquiry, instruction never took the required approach and assessment was left in its pre-reform form.⁸ Andryani and Huriyah study the Sidoarjo district office and find a transition from structural to integrative management of madrasah curriculum.⁹ Qoyyimah's comparison between public and Islamic private school teachers in East Java is even more pointed: the same reform, giving the same nominal autonomy, resulted in different professional outcomes according to the employment conditions under which teachers operated.¹⁰

These studies share one limitation. Most only examine one curriculum change episode, typically the 2013 Curriculum or the Merdeka Curriculum. None track the policy trajectory for the full 2013-2025 period and few link macro regulation with micro enactment in the same analysis. This article starts there at that gap.

The contribution is two fold. First, the article reconstructs chronologically and critically the sequence of PAI curriculum regulation in madrasah over a period of twelve years, taking the sequence rather than any single decree as its object. Secondly, it reads that sequence through a deliberately doubled lens. Indonesian policy scholarship defaults to the Edwards's implementation model with its four variables of communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure.¹¹ It is useful, and limited: it treats implementers as recipients whose compliance can be engineered. Braun, Ball and Maguire start their work on policy enactment from an opposite premise: that schools do not so much

⁶ Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, Keputusan Menteri Agama Nomor 183 Tahun 2019 tentang Kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam dan Bahasa Arab pada Madrasah (Jakarta: Direktorat KSKK Madrasah, 2019).

⁷ Sumarni, "Evaluation of the Implementation," 391–95.

⁸ Muhammad Arwani, Implementasi Kurikulum 2013 pada Rumpun Mata Pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam di Madrasah Aliyah Nahdlatul Ulama Tengguli Bangsri Jepara, *undergraduate thesis, Universitas Negeri Semarang*, 2018.

⁹ Anastasya Dwi Andryani and Lilik Huriyah, "Policy Implementation of the Head of Madrasah Education Section of the Sidoarjo Regency Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Madrasah Curriculum Development in Sidoarjo," *Jurnal Pengabdian Nusantara* 3, no. 1 (2025): 15–21, <https://doi.org/10.32832/jpn.v3i1.77>.

¹⁰ Uswatun Qoyyimah, "Policy Implementation within the Frame of School-Based Curriculum: A Comparison of Public School and Islamic Private School Teachers in East Java, Indonesia," *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 48, no. 4 (2018): 571–89, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2017.1334536>.

¹¹ George C. Edwards III, *Implementing Public Policy* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1980), 9–12.

implement policy as they interpret and translate it, and that the interpretation is shaped by situated, professional, material and external conditions.¹² Reading the Indonesian record through both frameworks reveals something neither of them shows alone.

The article draws on Tyler's objectives-based model for curriculum theory proper.¹³ Tempered by Taba's grassroots approach¹⁴ and Eisner's attention to the aesthetic and the hidden curriculum.¹⁵ So that the analysis does not collapse into technocratic rationalism. Sabki and Hardaker's discussion of the madrasah as a pedagogical tradition in its own right, based on the inseparability of knowledge and the sacred, provides a corrective to the assumption that Western curriculum theory can be applied to Islamic schooling without remainder.¹⁶

The periodisation employed here is an analytical construct of the authors, based on changes in policy orientation, regulatory substance and implementation direction. This is not a government sponsored rating. The main argument of the article is that the transformation of madrasah PAI curriculum has been non-linear, influenced by the interaction between regulatory ambition, human capacity, and a still ordinary bureaucratic organizational culture at the Ministry. The success of a reform depends much less on the quality of the decree than on the ability of a madrasah to creatively adapt it to conditions which the decree never foresaw.

B. Theoretical Framework

Edwards notes that four variables determine whether a policy has its desired effect. Communication is whether implementers understand what is being asked, consistently and without distortion. Resources include personnel, budget, and facilities. Disposition is the willingness and commitment of implementers. The bureaucratic structure is concerned with the procedures and the distribution of authority through which the policy passes.¹⁷ It is widely used in Indonesian education policy analysis, and explains a good deal, especially about the mechanics of failure.

It is worth naming its assumption. The Edwards implementers are channels. The policy is a one-piece, and improve the four variables. This image is dismissed by Braun, Ball and Maguire. In the teachers' account, policy is not something that is received, but something that is enacted, which is to say that it is read through their existing values and knowledge, weighed against all else that is already demanded of them, and produces something that is neither the policy as written nor its simple negation.

¹² Annette Braun et al., "Taking Context Seriously: Towards Explaining Policy Enactments in the Secondary School," *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* 32, no. 4 (2011): 585–96, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01596306.2011.601555>.

¹³ Ralph W. Tyler, *Basic Principles of Curriculum and Instruction* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), 1–5.

¹⁴ Hilda Taba, *Curriculum Development: Theory and Practice* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1962), 9–11.

¹⁵ Elliot W. Eisner, *The Educational Imagination: On the Design and Evaluation of School Programs*, 3rd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002), 87–97.

¹⁶ A'ishah Ahmad Sabki and Glenn Hardaker, "The Madrasah Concept of Islamic Pedagogy," *Educational Review* 65, no. 3 (2012): 342–56, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2012.668873>.

¹⁷ Edwards, *Implementing Public Policy*, 10.

Four contextual dimensions shape what emerges: situated context meaning locale, institutional history, and student intake; professional context meaning teacher values, commitments, and how policy is managed internally; material context meaning staffing, budget, buildings, and technology; and external context meaning the quality of district support and the pressures arriving from the wider policy environment.¹⁸

The two frameworks are not so much rivals as different instruments. Edwards is diagnostic and prescriptive: It tells a ministry what to fix” Enactment theory is an explanation: it explains why two madrasah, with the same decree and similar budgets, are producing different classrooms. Used together they support a claim that neither alone can make, that Indonesian curriculum policy for madrasah has been designed according to Edwards's assumptions while the conditions on the ground are those enactment theory describes. The Ministry has been working on the wrong model.

If you combine them , you have to decide which does what . In this article, Edwards provides the audit categories. For each phase, the analysis asks what the decree said, what resources it was accompanied by, what disposition implementers brought, and what bureaucratic route it traveled. That gives a defensible account of where each reform lost force. Then enactment theory takes up what the audit leaves behind. The four contextual dimensions offer the language for describing where two madrasahs with similar resource profiles and similar training produced dissimilar classrooms. The residual is not a question of resources. The order matters: running the enactment theory first would result in a description of local variation with no account of what the centre did; running Edwards alone would attribute all variation to shortfalls that the Ministry could in principle fund. Neither says what the Indonesian record shows.

This is especially important in Islamic education. Madrasah pedagogy, Sabki and Hardaker argue, is based on a conception of knowledge as inseparable from the sacred. This is not a decorative difference from secular schooling, but a different account of what teaching is for.¹⁹ The curriculum reform that places PAI among many subjects to be delivered through project-based learning and measured through authentic assessment is asking madrasah teachers to hold two epistemologies at once. A few of them do. It is suggested by the literature that many do not and the failure is read administratively and not epistemologically.

Tyler's four questions on curriculum theory, on purposes, experiences, organisation and evaluation, give the sequence of Indonesian reforms their recognisable shape.²⁰ What the Merdeka Curriculum claims to want is described by Taba's insistence that curriculum development starts with teachers diagnosing learner needs, rather than with central authorities defining objectives.²¹ Eisner's accidental focus on what schools teach gives the vocabulary that KMA 183/2019 was aiming for when it

¹⁸ Braun et al., "Taking Context Seriously," 588–92.

¹⁹ Sabki and Hardaker, "The Madrasah Concept," 345–47.

²⁰ Tyler, *Basic Principles*, 1.

²¹ Taba, *Curriculum Development*, 12.

made moderation an embedded value rather than a subject.²² Maghfiroh, Khasanah and Qodriyah have argued for synthesising the three in Indonesian PAI and the argument stands.²³ But the synthesis is useful only if read with an account of enactment. Otherwise it's what curriculum designers are doing and that's it.

C. Sources and Method of Analysis

It is a document-based policy study, qualitative and interpretive, without primary field work.²⁴ The corpus is split into two parts.

There's the regulatory one. The ministerial decrees on PAI curriculum in madrasah during the period include: KMA 165/2014, KMA 183/2019, KMA 347/2022, KMA 450/2024, and KMA 1503/2025, including their implementation annexes. These were selected because each represents a change in the substance or governing logic of PAI curriculum, not a routine administrative adjustment.

The second is academic. This is a collection of peer-reviewed studies on madrasah and PAI implementation published between 2015 and 2025, found through Scopus, Google Scholar, and the Garuda national index using combinations of the terms madrasah, Islamic religious education, curriculum policy, Kurikulum Merdeka, and religious moderation. We included studies that reported empirical data on curriculum implementation in an Indonesian madrasah or school, or contributed theory used in the analysis. We excluded studies that presented only conceptual commentary without empirical grounding or theoretical development.

The analysis was done in three passes. The first explained what each decree changed from the previous one. The second was to read the empirical literature against each decree to establish what was reported to have taken place in madrasah during that period. The third read both against the two implementation frames. This is stated rather than filled by inference when the empirical literature is thin, and it is notably thin for KMA 1503/2025.

Two immediate limitations arise. Document analysis does not tell us what teachers do, but what researchers say they do. The Indonesian literature on madrasah implementation is full of small single-site case studies that do not aggregate well. Thus, claims in the article are about the policy trajectory and its structural conditions rather than measured classroom outcomes.

²² Eisner, *The Educational Imagination*, 87.

²³ Ani Maghfiroh, Khoirul Khasanah, and Lailatul Qodriyah, "Relevansi Teori Pengembangan Kurikulum Tyler, Taba, dan Eisner dalam Penguatan Kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam Abad 21," *Inteligensi: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan* 8, no. 2 (2025): 367–77, <https://doi.org/10.33366/ilg.v8i2.7909>.

²⁴ John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2018), 65–110.

D. Madrasah PAI Curriculum Policy: Five Phases

1. Phase I (2014-2018) Cost and standards harmonization

The Ministry of Religious Affairs piloted the 2013 Curriculum for PAI and Arabic language in 2014 through KMA 165/2014, almost simultaneously with the roll-out by the Ministry of Education in general schools.²⁵ The significance was structural rather than pedagogical: for the first time, madrasah and general schools were measured by a common standard. The madrasah's demands changed rapidly from content adjustment to changes in teaching methods such as scientific inquiry, authentic assessment, and character education.²⁶

Sumarni found that the burden was on the workload of teachers' PAI. They had to write inquiry-based lesson plans, re-engineer assessment and run student-centered classrooms and while most got the point, the technical and managerial demands beat them.²⁷ Best way to see variance in the survey data. The strong resource base madrasahs continued scientific learning, the small and peripheral madrasahs continued lecture based instruction.²⁸ The same was found by Sitawati and Mawardi in the institution of SMK Muhammadiyah Salaman in a modern setting, that the planning was based on the readiness of the teachers to prepare ICT-based media and not all teachers were comfortable with the technology. Their evaluation data showed that teachers found it hard to assess skills and attitudes authentically and students said they were overloaded.²⁹

Aisyah's research at MTsN Jabung Talun Blitar notes five categories of problems, namely variation in student ability, missing equipment such as projectors and sound systems, difficulty writing inquiry-based lesson plans, the complexity of authentic assessment of attitudinal competences, and limited knowledge of instructional media.³⁰ Four of these five categories of Braun et al.'s are material or professional context. The first is about students. The diagnosis in the Ministry at the time was that teachers needed more training.

Implementation also relied on madrasah committees and supervisors. Sumarni's data reveal that 2013 Curriculum implementation in PAI was half-hearted without consistent supervisory monitoring.³¹ In each province there is a supervisory structure of the Ministry. It is not a case of lacking institutions, but not doing the same thing in those institutions. The implications for Phase I

²⁵ Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, Keputusan Menteri Agama Nomor 165 Tahun 2014 tentang Pedoman Kurikulum Madrasah 2013 Mata Pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam dan Bahasa Arab (Jakarta: Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2014).

²⁶ Asmuri, Okfrida Hidayati, and Anisa Fitri, "Kebijakan Pendidikan Islam di Madrasah," *Ainara Journal* 6, no. 1 (2025): 32–42, <https://doi.org/10.54371/ainj.v6i1.742>.

²⁷ Sumarni, "Evaluation of the Implementation," 396.

²⁸ Gus Pahrudin and Dinda Dona Pratiwi, *Pendekatan Saintifik dalam Implementasi Kurikulum 2013 dan Dampaknya terhadap Kualitas Proses dan Hasil Pembelajaran* (Bandar Lampung: Pustaka Ali Imron, 2019), 69.

²⁹ Anita Diyah Sitawati and Imam Mawardi, "Problem Solving Implementasi Kurikulum 2013 Mata Pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam," *Proceeding of the URECOL* (2021): 64–74.

³⁰ Siti Aisyah, "Problematika Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) dalam Mengimplementasikan Kurikulum 2013 di MTsN Jabung Talun Blitar," *undergraduate thesis, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim, 2015*: 166–72.

³¹ Sumarni, "Evaluation of the Implementation," 399.

are simple: transformative regulation requires an enabling ecosystem at the governance level, especially human capacity and information infrastructure. Otherwise, decrees pile up in madrasah filing cabinets.

From the other end of the period, the same pattern is found in Susilowati's later study on Merdeka Belajar implementation: policy works where the madrasah ecosystem can adapt organically.³² Curriculum change turns out to be a cultural process, not a regulatory process, which is inconvenient for a ministry that can issue decrees but cannot issue culture.

2. Phase II (2019-2021) Embedded Value of Moderation

KMA 183/2019 changed the focus to religious moderation at all levels of madrasah PAI. The decree was based on the premise that the PAI had not become the foundation of students' thinking and actions, and that the graduates of the madrasah did not display the character which the curriculum claimed to produce. The solution was to embed moderation as a hidden curriculum across all the PAI subjects rather than as a separate subject.³³

The design was okay. Rahmadi and Hamdan describe how moderation content was embedded in sub-topics in the PAI subject cluster, so that students experienced the message several times and in various contexts.³⁴ This is subtler than a subject in itself, which tends to create resistance in the field. Mulyana's analysis of PAI textbooks and their implementation in the classroom confirms that the textual integration did happen; whether it changed how teachers taught is another question his data only partly answer.³⁵ At the higher education level, Mukhibat et al. found that a moderation curriculum required sustained development and evaluation cycles, not just a single design moment, which is exactly what madrasah did not receive.³⁶

The problem created by embedding had not been foreseen in the decree. Something spread out over all subjects, nobody's business. Standalone subjects create resistance, but they also create accountability: someone teaches them, someone assesses them and a gap in provision is visible. Nor does an embedded value yield one. This is reflected directly in Mukhibat and colleagues' finding that a moderation curriculum is not a single act of design but requires iterative cycles of development and evaluation.³⁷ The madrasah that received a design act in 2019 was Five years later, when the curriculum had changed twice, the evaluation apparatus that would have shown

³² Evi Susilowati, "Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar pada Mata Pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam," *Al-Miskawiah: Journal of Science Education* 1, no. 1 (2022): 115–32, <https://doi.org/10.56436/mijose.v1i1.85>.

³³ Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, Keputusan Menteri Agama Nomor 183 Tahun 2019, ch. 2.

³⁴ Rahmadi and Hamdan, "Religious Moderation in the Context of Islamic Education: A Multidisciplinary Perspective and Its Application in Islamic Educational Institutions in Indonesia," *Khazanah: Jurnal Studi Islam dan Humaniora* 21, no. 1 (2023): 59–82, <https://doi.org/10.18592/khazanah.v21i1.8487>.

³⁵ R. Mulyana, "Religious Moderation in Islamic Religious Education Textbook and Implementation in Indonesia," *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 79, no. 1 (2023): 1–8, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i1.8592>.

³⁶ M. Mukhibat et al., "Development and Evaluation of Religious Moderation Education Curriculum at Higher Education in Indonesia," *Cogent Education* 11, no. 1 (2024): 2302308, <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2024.2302308>.

³⁷ Mukhibat et al., "Development and Evaluation," 6–9.

whether embedding worked only arrived with the assessment provisions of KMA 450/2024. This is a recurring feature of the sequence, not a peculiarity of Phase II: policy substance travels faster than the instruments that would tell anyone whether it landed.

Philosophically, the decree is consistent with *wasathiyah* as a Qur'anic disposition, which combines firmness in principle with flexibility toward difference.³⁸ Abdul Rauf and Mujahid make the obvious but necessary point that without a collective commitment from teachers, schools, communities and government, internalisation remains shallow and erodes under the pressure of social media.³⁹

Here the obstacles were structural and cultural. Structural deficiency in staff and facilities adequate to teach PAI in a moderate register was observed in many madrasahs. Culturally, a few teachers and managers saw moderation discourse as a Western import that diluted doctrine. Sirojuddin and Hairunnisa argue that *tawasuth*, *i'tidal*, *tasamuh*, and *shura* cannot be internalized through curriculum documents alone, but need a school culture that supports open disagreement.⁴⁰ Raihani's earlier study of multicultural education in *pesantren* reaches a compatible conclusion that value-based curriculum content interacts with institutional ethos in ways that can either amplify or neutralize it.⁴¹

Phase delivered real gains. Policy managers at the ministry started seeing PAI as character transformation and not doctrinal transmission. Teachers and parents bought into the idea that moderation is based in Islamic tradition, not Western liberalism. Islamic educational institutions began dialogue with the Ministry and mass organisations. The Ministry's moderation working group developed modules and guides. There is also honest record of a wide gap between the policy document and the classroom, and this is where the next phase begins.

3. Phase III (2022-2023): Merdeka Curriculum in Madrasah

KMA 347/2022 included guidelines for the Merdeka Curriculum implementation in madrasah, adapted from the Ministry of Education's Merdeka Belajar framework, and phased introduction from the 2022/2023 school year.⁴² Apriatni et al. emphasize that the decree extends the Merdeka Curriculum to the madrasah ecosystem and introduces one unique element, the *Rahmatan lil Alamin* Student Profile, which is combined with the Pancasila Student Profile in the P5-PPRA project

³⁸ Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, Keputusan Menteri Agama Nomor 183 Tahun 2019, ch. 2.

³⁹ Abdul Rauf and Ahd. Mujahid, "Moderasi Beragama dalam Kurikulum PAI: Analisis Konseptual terhadap Tantangan Radikalisme di Sekolah Menengah," *PESHUM: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial dan Humaniora* 5, no. 1 (2025): 1325–36, <https://doi.org/10.56799/peshum.v5i1.13824>.

⁴⁰ Ahmad Sirojuddin and Hairunnisa, "Integrasi Nilai Moderasi Beragama dalam Pengembangan Kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam: Tinjauan Prosedural dan Filosofis," *Tajdid: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman dan Kemanusiaan* 9, no. 1 (2019): 288–303.

⁴¹ Raihani, "Report on Multicultural Education in Pesantren," *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education* 42, no. 4 (2012): 585–605, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2012.672255>.

⁴² Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, Keputusan Menteri Agama Nomor 347 Tahun 2022 tentang Pedoman Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka pada Madrasah (Jakarta: Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2022), 1–60.

format.⁴³ This is the first point in the sequence where madrasahs were not just following a general-school policy, but were asserting a curricular identity of their own.

The educational philosophy of Ki Hadjar Dewantara adopted by the Ministry of Education for the Merdeka Curriculum with PPRA as the marker of Islamic educational identity was the basis of the madrasah implementation.⁴⁴ Habibah and Nurhidin describe the pairing as aimed at producing students with a national and Islamic character, the latter being inclusive and universal.⁴⁵ The two elements are complementary, not overlapping: Pancasila anchors the commitment to the Indonesian nation, PPRA to Islamic values that cross ethnic and sectarian lines.

Three issues arose. Principals and curriculum deputies had to read the regulation and translate it into operational documents and Siregar and colleagues found PAI teachers struggling with teaching modules because module structure varies across year levels and needs constant adaptation.⁴⁶ The administrative load increased dramatically and teachers responded by retreating into the known practice. Decades of habitual lecturing were not easily replaced by differentiated, student-centred instruction on demand. Likewise, Himmah and Fadriati confirm a similar pattern to the teachers of PAI at SMPN 3 Sawahlunto, that after the training of the Merdeka Curriculum through the Platform Merdeka Mengajar, teachers were still unable to analyse learning outcomes or formulate learning objectives.⁴⁷

Mubarok and colleagues warn that policy stalls happen in the absence of effective policy communication, adequate resources, a positive disposition of the implementer, and an adaptive bureaucratic structure. There is one-way ministerial communication from centre to region and no forum for substantive feedback from the madrasahs.⁴⁸ Edwards's model fits well with the madrasah situation. The hierarchical structure of the Ministry constrains adaptive response to local variation, and constrained mentoring budgets and the lack of horizontal forums between madrasah leave institutions without a way to learn from each other.

⁴³ Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, Keputusan Menteri Agama Nomor 347 Tahun 2022 tentang Pedoman Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka pada Madrasah (Jakarta: Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2022), 1–60.

⁴⁴ A. Herpiana, Ali Halidin, and Mujahidin, "Konsep Pendidikan Karakter Ki Hadjar Dewantara dalam Implementasi P5RA pada Madrasah Ibtidaiyah di Kabupaten Bone," *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran Indonesia* 5, no. 2 (2025): 1107–21, <https://doi.org/10.53299/jppi.v5i2.1542>.

⁴⁵ Maimunatun Habibah and Edi Nurhidin, "Profil Pelajar dalam Kurikulum Merdeka Madrasah di Era VUCA," *Jurnal Intelektual: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Studi Keislaman* 13, no. 2 (2023): 211–30, <https://doi.org/10.33367/ji.v13i2.4061>.

⁴⁶ Mualfi Fahrul Fanani, Nafisa Ega Nuzula, and Arri Fadli Gunawan, "Analysis of the Readiness of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Implementing the Independent Curriculum in Middle Schools," *JISIP (Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Pendidikan)* 10, no. 3 (2024): 1854.

⁴⁷ Uzmah Himmah and Fadriati, "Analisis Problematika Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam dalam Penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka di Sekolah Menengah Pertama," *Jurnal Basicedu* 7, no. 6 (2023): 3931–38, <https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v7i6.6445>.

⁴⁸ Syahrul Mubarok et al., "Policy Implementation Analysis: Exploration of George Edward III, Marilee S. Grindle, and Mazmanian and Sabatier Theories in the Policy Analysis Triangle Framework," *Journal of Public Administration Studies* 5, no. 1 (2020): 33–38, <https://doi.org/10.21776/ub.jpas.2020.005.01.7>.

Against this, the phase opened up genuine pedagogical possibility. Project-based learning allows PAI teachers room to link Islamic values to contemporary issues such as the environment, social inclusion and digital literacy. Wardana and Astutik argued that the success of implementation relies on the professional capacity of teachers, which is supported by intensive training, infrastructure development, and cooperation with teacher communities.⁴⁹ The constraint is professionalism, and the opening is professionalism.

4. Phase IV (2024): Identity Consolidation and Assessment

KMA 347/2022 KMA 450/2024 Refined It revised administrative provisions but its substance was in asserting madrasah educational identity through the Rahmatan lil Alamin Student Profile, project-based learning, authentic assessment and wider latitude for madrasah to construct operational curriculum suited to their students and local context.⁵⁰ Wahyuni, Nasir, and Bashith show that KMA 450/2024 replaces the previous one with a wider learning evaluation orientation, integrating diagnostic, formative and summative assessments through observation, performance tasks, portfolios and projects in the P5-PPRA framework.⁵¹

The shifting is a pedagogy shifting toward the student, toward contextual experience. Hasnida et al. revealed that student engagement, critical thinking, collaboration and problem-solving in PAI project-based learning in the Merdeka Curriculum were higher.⁵² Fariansyah and El-Yunusi say that authentic assessment in Islamic education supports character formation and the internalisation of Islamic values as well as competence development.⁵³

Amendment to decree four. PPRA is established as the primary identity marker for madrasah education and integrated in all learning. Project-based learning translates into cross-subject collaboration for twenty-first century competencies. Modernisation of the assessment is achieved by the implementation of diagnostic, formative and summative tools in the form of observation, project tasks, performance assessment, tests and portfolios. Madrasah also get more leeway to develop operational curricula that are adapted to the regional character, student needs and local potential.⁵⁴ Each of these places increased demands on teacher capacity, madrasah leadership, digital infrastructure and ongoing mentoring.

⁴⁹ Mochammad Naufal Adzin Wardana and Anita Puji Astutik, "Pentingnya Profesionalitas Guru Agama Islam dalam Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka," *Education and Learning Journal* 6, no. 1 (2025): 10, <https://doi.org/10.33096/eljour.v6i1.1269>.

⁵⁰ Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, Keputusan Menteri Agama Nomor 450 Tahun 2024 tentang Pedoman Implementasi Kurikulum pada Raudhatul Athfal, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, Madrasah Tsanawiyah, Madrasah Aliyah, dan Madrasah Aliyah Kejuruan (Jakarta: Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Islam, 2024).

⁵¹ Hilda Wahyuni, Muhammad Nasir, and Abdul Bashith, "Assessment of Learning Evaluation Strategies in Compliance with KMA No. 450/2024: Case Study of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah," *Bidayatuna: Jurnal Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* 7, no. 2 (2024): 95–108.

⁵² Hasnida et al., "A Systematic Literature Review on Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in Islamic Religious Education within the Independent Curriculum," *Journal of Educational Studies* 4, no. 1 (2026): 91–100.

⁵³ Nazarudin Feri Fariansyah and Muhammad Yusron Maulana El-Yunusi, "Authentic Assessment in Islamic Education: A Study of Models, Instruments, and Implementation Factors," *Journal of Social Science Studies* 3, no. 2 (2023): 335–42.

⁵⁴ Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, Keputusan Menteri Agama Nomor 450 Tahun 2024, annex 1.

KMA 450 has only recently been implemented and so little empirical evidence is available. The early word is cautiously optimistic. Sufriansyah, Qadri, and Rizaldi state that the PAI teachers at MAN 2 Langkat Tanjung Pura responded to KMA 347 through internal training, module development based on the regulations, and pedagogical innovation such as problem-based learning, project-based learning, and religiously themed storytelling.⁵⁵ Constraints also cast a shadow on the phase: infrastructure constraints and senior teachers unfamiliar with digital tools.

What Phase IV shows us is that the Ministry now sees curriculum policy as a cycle, not an event. The decision to revise KMA 347/2022 into KMA 450/2024 less than two years shows two things at once. The Ministry is responsive to the field assessment. And the madrasah ecosystem turned out to be more complicated than the original regulation had anticipated.

5. Phase V (2025): Consolidating Implementation

KMA 1503/2025 is a consolidation phase, succeeding KMA 450/2024. It does not bring in a new curricular paradigm. It clarifies the structure of the curriculum, enhances learning and assessment, develops the Madrasah Operational Curriculum (KOM), and incorporates mechanisms for mentoring, monitoring, and evaluation, to make implementation provisions more systematic for the Merdeka Curriculum in madrasah.⁵⁶ The policy orientation has shifted from regulating writing to improving the quality of implementation at the institutional level.

This is policy consolidation: outcomes of reform are less dependent on quality of regulation and more dependent on what happens in the field.⁵⁷ The main instruments are teacher capacity building, implementation mentoring and refinement of learning and assessment. The success of the Merdeka Curriculum in madrasah, according to Tjalla and colleagues, is heavily dependent on teacher readiness, principal leadership, and the continuity of mentoring programmes.⁵⁸ Muthrofin and Hakim argue that the problems of implementation in madrasah usually are not due to the weakness of the policy substance, but rather to the weakness of human resources, mentoring, and the organizational capacity to transform the policy into teaching.⁵⁹

See Edwards, KMA 1503/2025 strengthens all four variables. Communication is better, implementation advice is clearer. Resources are addressed by emphasizing teacher competence and ongoing mentoring. Disposition is addressed by promoting innovative teaching which is

⁵⁵ Muamar Al Qadri, Sufriansyah, and Muhammad Rizaldi, "PAI Teacher's Strategy in Implementing KMA No. 347 of 2022 at MAN 2 Langkat Tanjung Pura," *At-Turots: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 2 (2025): 1249–58.

⁵⁶ Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, Keputusan Menteri Agama Nomor 1503 Tahun 2025 tentang Perubahan atas Keputusan Menteri Agama Nomor 450 Tahun 2024 tentang Pedoman Implementasi Kurikulum pada Raudhatul Athfal, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, Madrasah Tsanawiyah, Madrasah Aliyah, dan Madrasah Aliyah Kejuruan (Jakarta: Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2025).

⁵⁷ Edwards, *Implementing Public Policy*, 147–52.

⁵⁸ Awaluddin Tjalla et al., "Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka di Madrasah: Pendidikan yang Memerdekakan," *JiIP: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan* 7, no. 3 (2024): 2382–91

⁵⁹ Khoirul Muthrofin and Luqman Hakim, "Analisis Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka di Sekolah dan Madrasah," *EduTe: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Teologi Islam* 1, no. 1 (2025).

contextual and student-centred. Clarify bureaucratic structure Coordination and monitoring mechanisms between the Ministry, provincial offices, district offices and institutions.⁶⁰

Consolidation is the right word for what the sector needs, though it is worth being precise as to what it would have to contain. At the very least: a moratorium on paradigm-level change long enough for one cohort to complete a phase of schooling under a single curriculum; mentoring that extends beyond the launch period into the second and third years, when the difficulties actually arise; and an evaluation instrument able to differentiate madrasah that have adopted a practice from madrasah that have documented it. The latter is indicated by Muthrofin and Hakim who conclude that the source of implementation problems is the policy substance, not the limitations in human resources, mentoring and institutional capacity.⁶¹ Mentoring and monitoring are addressed in KMA 1503/2025. That is quite different from whether the provisions are funded at a level that makes them operative.⁶² The decree does not answer that.

If we read through the enactment theory the picture is less reassuring. The strengthening of the four variables assumes the problem is transmission. If madrasah are translating rather than receiving, then clearer guidance changes what they translate, but not the conditions under which they translate it. Qoyyimah's discovery that the same reform resulted in different professional outcomes in public and Islamic private schools in East Java, which she attributed to differences in job security and institutional support rather than understanding of the policy, suggests something that no amount of clearer guidance can fix.⁶³ KMA 1503/2025 is a better policy than its predecessors. It's still policy based on the assumption that madrasah are end points.

E. Recurring Constraints of Implementation

1. Teachers' Capacity and Precarious Employment

In all phases considered, the key variable is teacher capacity. It is a documented reality in madrasah that teachers cannot write inquiry-based lesson plans, cannot analyze learning outcome and cannot design differentiated instruction. The effect increases. A teacher unable to make the transition from one curriculum to another gets further and further behind with every successive shift. Graduate quality deteriorates by degrees rather than by collapse.

Capacity is not a solitary concept. Teachers are unevenly distributed among large cities and remote districts, state and private madrasah, and large and small institutions. Honorary teachers on minimal pay dominate the employment status and it is unreasonable to expect full professional dedication from people meeting household costs. Limited access to quality training and current learning resources. The most common problems found in madrasah are the mismatch of teacher

⁶⁰ Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, Keputusan Menteri Agama Nomor 1503 Tahun 2025, arts. 3–5.

⁶¹ Muthrofin and Hakim, "Analisis Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka."

⁶² Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, Keputusan Menteri Agama Nomor 1503 Tahun 2025, arts. 6–8.

⁶³ Qoyyimah, "Policy Implementation," 583–85.

qualifications, a shallow understanding of instructional tools and a lack of creativity in producing learning media, as stated by Nurhayati et al.⁶⁴

This is where Qoyyimah's comparative finding does its work. In theory, curriculum reform that provides greater autonomy can reprofessionalise teachers. In practice it reprofessionalised some and deprofessionalised others, and the difference reflected workforce environment rather than understanding of policy.⁶⁵ It is an opportunity to give a secure, well supported teacher autonomy. It is another unfunded mandate handed to an honorary teacher on a fraction of a living wage across two institutions.

The way training is designed makes things worse. The dominant model in Indonesian madrasah is the workshop: a two or three day event, at district level, timed to a policy launch, evaluated by attendance. It conveys information about a syllabus. It does not build the capacity to write a teaching module. It certainly does not build the capacity to diagnose what a particular group of students needs. The argument by Mukhibat et al. that curriculum work requires iterative development and evaluation cycles is equally true for the teachers who are expected to deliver it.⁶⁶ Similarly, Nurhayati et al. come to the same conclusion in reverse, where the difficulties of madrasah teachers are clustered around the production of instructional materials rather than around the understanding of policy.⁶⁷ A teacher who has been told four times and supported zero times, having attended four launch workshops over four curricula.

Parker and Raihani's study of community participation in madrasah governance provides a clue as to why the Ministry has not made this central. They found that decision-making was concentrated in the hands of principals, teachers and founders, with parents largely absent from governance. Teacher participation in governance was increasing but from a low base.⁶⁸ Employment precarity will not become a curriculum problem in a system where those closest to implementation have the least say in institutional decisions. It becomes a personnel problem, in another directorate.

Therefore, short ceremonial top-down training cannot improve professionalism. What is needed is mentoring that is based on the real difficulties faced by teachers, that is continuous, uses peer learning between teachers and is supported by digital delivery so that teachers in remote districts can access it. Wardana and Astutik say the most important factor is the collaboration among

⁶⁴ Pipih Nurhayati, Mario Emilzoli, and Dzikra Fu'adiyah, "Peningkatan Keterampilan Penyusunan Modul Ajar dan Modul Proyek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila Kurikulum Merdeka pada Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah," *Jurnal Masyarakat Mandiri* 6, no. 5 (2022): 1–9.

⁶⁵ Qoyyimah, "Policy Implementation," 580–83.

⁶⁶ Mukhibat et al., "Development and Evaluation," 11–13.

⁶⁷ Nurhayati, Emilzoli, and Fu'adiyah, "Peningkatan Keterampilan Penyusunan Modul Ajar," 4–6.

⁶⁸ Lyn Parker and R. Raihani, "Democratizing Indonesia through Education? Community Participation in Islamic Schooling," *Educational Management Administration and Leadership* 39, no. 6 (2011): 712–32, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143211416389>.

government, schools and teacher communities.⁶⁹ That partnership is cheap in relation to its payoffs, and rare in relation to its utility.

2. Infrastructure Segmentation

The infrastructure, in particular the digital infrastructure and the availability of teaching modules, has remained the same for decades. Wedi, Mardiana and Umiarso show that the digital transformation of PAI in madrasah still has a huge infrastructure gap so that the learning management systems and flipped classroom models are not evenly distributed.⁷⁰ In their multi-case study of three Madrasah Aliyah in East Java, they found positive initiatives and the quality was mostly dependent on principal leadership and resource availability.

The layer of effect. Madrasahs with proper facilities are successfully implementing the Merdeka Curriculum whereas those without are falling further behind. The digital gap between madrasah and general schools is growing, so that a policy to equalise quality has the opposite effect. And the readiness for a digitally mediated economy becomes a function of the geography and socioeconomic status of the community served by a madrasah. Ramadayanti, Karimah and Mukmin (2021) said that the digital transformation of PAI needs content curation and digital ethics to maintain the authenticity of Islamic values, so that infrastructure is not enough without teacher digital literacy.⁷¹

Here we may recall the framing of Sabki and Hardaker. If madrasah pedagogy is premised on the inseparability of knowledge and the sacred, then digitalizing PAI is not a neutral upgrade of delivery.⁷² It changes the relations between teacher, text and student that are thought constitutive of the tradition. What madrasahs that take up technology in a thoughtful way are doing is something more demanding than putting in projectors, and the policy language of infrastructure provision does not capture that.

The Ministry cannot do infrastructure by itself. Apriyani et al. propose a digital transformation management strategy based on continuous professional development, contextualizing the integration of Islamic values into digital learning, collaborative learning networks, and the development of digital Islamic learning platforms.⁷³ The approach is holistic in that it deals with value and network dimensions as well as technical dimensions. In practice, it would collaborate

⁶⁹ Wardana and Astutik, "Pentingnya Profesionalitas Guru," 10.

⁷⁰ Agus Wedi, Dina Mardiana, and Umiarso, "Digital Transformation Model of Islamic Religious Education in the AI Era: A Case Study of Madrasah Aliyah in East Java, Indonesia," *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* 24, no. 8 (2025): 842–63, <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.24.8.37>.

⁷¹ Agus Wedi, Dina Mardiana, and Umiarso, "Digital Transformation Model of Islamic Religious Education in the AI Era: A Case Study of Madrasah Aliyah in East Java, Indonesia," *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* 24, no. 8 (2025): 842–63, <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.24.8.37>.

⁷² Sabki and Hardaker, "The Madrasah Concept," 350–52.

⁷³ Hikma Apriyani et al., "Strategi Manajemen Guru PAI dalam Menghadapi Transformasi Digital: Tantangan dan Sistem Pendidikan Islam di Indonesia," *DIMAR: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 6, no. 2 (2025): 183–87, <https://doi.org/10.58577/dimar.v6i2.395>.

with universities, technology communities and the private sector to make mentoring less costly and more scalable.

3. One-way communication and the institutional culture

The third constraint is an organizational one. According to Hakim, Unnajjah and Rahman, the implementation of curriculum in madrasah requires adaptive strategies that can blend national policy with the conditions, needs and character of each institution, which requires institutional readiness, effective leadership and stakeholder alignment.⁷⁴ Therefore, success is not defined by the issuance of regulation but rather by the ability of the madrasah to understand, adapt and sustain the implementation in local context.

The Ministry's practice has been one-way control, with policy formulated at the center and then delivered through ritual training with no opportunity for open dialogue. Rizqi and collaborators characterize the regulation of Islamic education as a product of negotiation between political actors, social interests and community needs, and not simply a bureaucratic output.⁷⁵ The shelving of negotiation by the Ministry causes policy to lose legitimacy in the field and to be half-heartedly responded to by implementers.

Laila et al. present an argument against it. During the madrasah at Pondok Pesantren Al-Mawaddah Ponorogo, the leadership of the pesantren, teachers and policy makers collaborated to implement more contextual and more sustainable curriculum change.⁷⁶ The study by Nisa and Al Ghifari at MAN 1 Kendari confirms the general pattern, that the authority of the minister has not been flexible enough to provide space for madrasah with different local contexts to adapt.⁷⁷ Pohl's earlier observation on the pesantren tradition still holds: Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia have historically functioned as civil society actors with their own capacity for institutional judgement, not as delivery units of the state.⁷⁸ Policy that treats them as the latter loses the resource the former represents.

This will take time to deal with. "The Ministry needs a culture of open dialogue with madrasah as a point of implementation. Bureaucratic structure should be reformed for adaptability, not mechanically to transmit central instruction. And every big policy needs intensive mentoring over years, not a short training round at launch. Susilowati also suggested the same direction, namely

⁷⁴ Hakim, Unnajjah, and Rahman, "Adaptive Strategies of Madrasah," 26–30.

⁷⁵ Rezza Miftachu Rizqi et al., "Kebijakan Pendidikan Islam dan Kebutuhan Sosial," *PIJAR: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pengajaran* 3, no. 3 (2025): 263–74, <https://doi.org/10.58540/pijar.v3i3.956>.

⁷⁶ ST. Noer Farida Laila et al., "Curriculum Changes in Indonesia: Implementation and Its Challenges in Religious Institutions," *Journal of Educational Research and Practice* 3, no. 1 (2025): 16–31, <https://doi.org/10.70376/jerp.v3i1.266>.

⁷⁷ Ainy Khairun Nisa and Mujahid Al Ghifari, "Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka pada Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab di Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 1 Kendari," *Al Mi'yar: Jurnal Ilmiah Pembelajaran Bahasa Arab dan Kebahasaaraban* 6, no. 2 (2023): 627–46.

⁷⁸ Florian Pohl, "Islamic Education and Civil Society: Reflections on the Pesantren Tradition in Contemporary Indonesia," *Comparative Education Review* 50, no. 3 (2006): 389–409, <https://doi.org/10.1086/503882>.

continuous evaluation and adjustment in the implementation of education policy.⁷⁹ If the Ministry is willing to be a learning organisation itself, then the curriculum transformation in madrasah PAI will be successful.

F. Discussion: Reading the Sequence

When you put the five phases side-by-side, you see a pattern that you don't see in any one phase. Thinking in the curriculum shifts from the technocratic to the humanistic. The 2013 Curriculum was Tylerian and centralised, with tightly specified objectives and uniform national standards. The Merdeka Curriculum is an approximate Taba-Eisner synthesis, allowing institutions to diagnose learner needs in context. KMA 450/2024 closer to Eisner Still, that *rahmatan lil alamin* is a value orientation threaded through experience, not delivered as content. It's a coherent and defensible arc to read on the design level.

The arc has a problem in terms of enactment. With each step toward teacher autonomy, the bar was raised on what teachers had to be able to do, but there was no corresponding increase in what teachers were able to do. Tyler's model requires a teacher to state objectives. Taba's calls for a teacher to diagnose the need, design the experience, and evaluate the outcome. That's a much tougher job, and Indonesian madrasahs disproportionately assigned it to honorary teachers with little training and no reliable mentoring. Puad and Ashton's finding that Indonesian teachers viewed classroom-based assessment as summative and were not open to student-involving methods is not a failure of understanding.⁸⁰ This is what happens when a policy imports a practice but does not import the institutional preconditions for that practice.

One might ask how much of this is madrasah-specific. Puad and Ashton studied the 2013 Curriculum at the national level and found that they too faced the same incoherence between borrowed assessment practice and local institutional logic.⁸¹ The difference between public and Islamic private schools, Qoyyimah found, was more like the employment environment than the type of school.⁸² Based on that evidence, the madrasah case is a sub-type of an Indonesian systemic problem, not a separate phenomenon. It is compounded by two features: Qoyyimah's recognition of employment precarity as more decisive is more broadly dispersed, given the composition of the workforce, which is more heavily weighted toward honorary teachers in private institutions. The competency framework that the national curriculum imposes is the other account of knowledge that Madrasahs are required to maintain simultaneously with the tradition that Sabki and Hardaker discuss.⁸³ None of the five decrees examined

⁷⁹ Susilowati, "Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar," 128–30.

⁸⁰ Lalu Mohammad Abid Zainul Puad and Karen Ashton, "Teachers' Views on Classroom-Based Assessment: An Exploratory Study at an Islamic Boarding School in Indonesia," *Asia Pacific Journal of Education* 41, no. 2 (2021): 253–65, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02188791.2020.1761775>.

⁸¹ Puad and Ashton, "A Critical Analysis," 528–31.

⁸² Qoyyimah, "Policy Implementation," 585–87.

⁸³ Sabki and Hardaker, "The Madrasah Concept," 348–50.

here address these features. Thus, Parker and Raihani's finding that those closest to madrasah teaching have least say in madrasah governance suggests why: the people who could report these conditions have no standing to do so.⁸⁴

This is where the doubled framework comes into play. Edwards's diagnosis of Phase III and Phase V is correct; communication was one-way, resources were inadequate, disposition among senior teachers was resistant, and the bureaucratic structure was hierarchical and slow. The following prescription is to fix all four simultaneously. However, Braun and colleagues' account suggests that even a ministry that fixed all four would still face divergent outcomes, because situated, professional, material and external contexts differ between a well-endowed state madrasah in Surabaya and a private madrasah in a peripheral district, and those differences are not policy variables.⁸⁵

The implication for policy is not despair but a shift in target. When enactment is the ministry's mechanism, it no longer asks how to faithfully transmit policy but what conditions allow for good translation. That reframing puts different things in view. Employment security is a variable in the curriculum. Madrasah horizontal networks turn into infrastructure. Not having a feedback channel is a design flaw, not an administrative inconvenience.

The finding of curriculum change frequency is a finding itself. Five major decrees in eleven years, with less than two years between the last two, means an adaptation cost that compounds. Every transition involves regulation of derivatives, module development, teacher training and redesign of assessment. Kosim and colleagues' more extensive history of Indonesian Islamic education policy shows a real development from domestication to accommodation during the post-independence period.⁸⁶ But swift revision is not always better policy. Siregar's description of pesantren-based institutions which accommodate national policy without surrendering identity, tradition and institutional character suggests that gradual change allows for adaptation while rapid change requires compliance.⁸⁷

A ministry that allows madrasah space to consolidate before the next change would be trading regulatory velocity for pedagogical effect. Based on the evidence collected here, that is a good trade.

G. Conclusion

The transformation of the curriculum of PAI madrasah from 2013 to 2025 was not a series of event regulations but a single extended process with five distinguishable phases. In 2013, the Curriculum for PAI and Arabic was piloted in 2014 to bring madrasah standards in line with those of general schools, at considerable technical and managerial cost. KMA 183/2019 introduced religious moderation as a counter to radicalisation and character issues. With KMA 347/2022, the Merdeka Curriculum was

⁸⁴ Parker and Raihani, "Democratizing Indonesia through Education?," 724–28.

⁸⁵ Braun et al., "Taking Context Seriously," 593–95.

⁸⁶ Kosim et al., "The Dynamics of Islamic Education Policies," 8–11.

⁸⁷ Yusra Dewi Siregar, "The Transformation of Pesantren Education from the New Order to the Reform Era in Terms of Curriculum, Methods, and Islamic Educational Identity," *Fitrah: Journal of Islamic Education* 7, no. 1 (2026): 16–34.

introduced to the madrasah, and the Rahmatan lil Alamin Student Profile was added as an identifier of Islamic educational identity. KMA 450/2024 intensified the transition from structural to value-based policy via PPRA, project-based learning and authentic assessment. KMA 1503/2025 institutionalized implementation through refinement of guidance, mentoring, monitoring and evaluation without changing curricular paradigm.

All five still have three constraints. Teacher capacity is limited and worsened by precarious employment. madrasah are stratified in ways which widen not close the gap And the communication culture of the Ministry of course is one way. These interlock. That is why none succumbs to an intervention in isolation.

The article is a contribution of analysis, not description. Alone, Edwards reads the sequence of familiar advice to strengthen communication, resources, disposition and structure. Looking at it through enactment theory gives rise to another claim, that madrasahs do not receive curriculum policy, they translate it, and the quality of translation depends on conditions the Ministry has treated as outside the curriculum problem. Variable curriculum. Teacher employment status. Horizontal forums between institutions are also absent. So is the fact that those who do the translation have no channel to report what the translation costs.

There are five recommendations that follow. The Ministry should slow the pace of curriculum change and focus on consolidating existing policy rather than introducing new regulation. It should establish a national digital mentoring platform for PAI teachers that provides sustained support, not short-term training. It should allow madrasah sufficient freedom to devise context-based curricula, while upholding standards of national quality. It should view conditions of employment for teachers as part of curriculum policy, not separate from it. And it needs to set up a working feedback channel whereby the madrasah can report on the conditions of implementation to the Centre, because without one the Ministry will continue to revise decrees in response to symptoms it can see rather than causes it cannot.

The main limitation of this study is that it is based on documents and published literature and does not include primary field data. Future research should do longitudinal case studies of madrasah that have gone through all five phases, to see how the dynamics of implementation really play out over time. There is also a need for quantitative work at the national scale on the relationship between curriculum transformation and PAI learning outcomes, graduate quality and student religious character, which does not presently exist in a form that would settle the questions raised here.

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