EMPOWERING EDUCATIONAL AUTONOMY TO IMPLEMENT *KURIKULUM MERDEKA* IN MADRASAH

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the pivotal role of education management in the implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* (KM) within Madrasah institutions. Grounded in Terry's management functions theory, the research discerns both the facilitating factors and obstacles encountered during the curriculum implementation. Employing qualitative methodologies, including interviews with madrasah heads, teachers, and students, alongside curriculum document analysis, the study unfolds crucial insights. The findings underscore the indispensable nature of effective education management across the phases of planning, execution, and evaluation of the KM Supportive elements encompass stakeholder engagement, provision of adequate facilities, and the adoption of flexible learning methodologies. Conversely, significant challenges emerge, such as the imperative for enhanced comprehension of KM and the necessity for gradual readiness in its implementation. This research extends its contribution by delineating actionable strategies to surmount these obstacles, thereby furnishing guidance for madrasahs and other educational institutions in navigating KM implementation. These insights hold promise for enhancing the efficacy of curriculum deployment at the madrasah level, while also paving the way for further exploration within the Indonesian educational landscape.

Keywords: Education System, Islamic Education, *Kurikulum Merdeka*, Pesantren, Religious Moderation

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a pivotal role in nurturing students' character and knowledge. In Indonesia, education is guided by the new curriculum that has been launched and recognized as *Kurikulum Merdeka* (KM). The curriculum is expected to act at the at the forefront of enhancing national educational quality. The curriculum, recognized as a cornerstone within the educational framework, serves as a fundamental guide, shaping learning content, processes, objectives, and assessment methods. Scholarly sources underscore the critical role of the curriculum in shaping educational outcomes and facilitating effective learning experiences (Coşkun Yaşar & Aslan, 2021; Fariz, 2022; Soviany et al., 2022). In response to evolving societal needs, Indonesian educational landscape is witnessing ongoing advancements in curriculum, exemplified by initiatives like KM, strategically designed to address contemporary educational challenges (Fauzan et al., 2023).

Madrasah, operating under the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) in Indonesia, have embraced the adoption of KM, signifying their pivotal role in national education and character development. These institutions, spanning educational levels such as Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs), and Madrasah Aliyah (MA), are integral components of the Indonesian educational system. They play a crucial role in cultivating students who embody a synthesis of Islamic principles and general knowledge, thus contributing significantly to the nation's advancement. Scholarly literature underscores the pivotal role of madrasahs in shaping students' character, fostering dignity, and promoting holistic development (Arifin et al., 2023). As bastions of education that intertwine Islamic values with contemporary knowledge,

madrasahs are poised to fulfill their vital role in advancing the nation's progress and societal well-being.

The gradual implementation of KM in madrasahs, contingent upon their readiness, reflects ongoing efforts within the Indonesian educational landscape. As of 2022, a significant number of both public and private madrasah in Indonesia have embarked on the adoption of KM, as outlined in the decree issued by MORA (Khoeron, 2023). In Garut Regency, a subset of madrasahs has begun the transition to KM, albeit on a limited scale, highlighting the need for further understanding and practical application of the curriculum's principles (Aisyah et al., 2023; Swandari & Jemani, 2023; Zarkasi et al., 2022). The ongoing process of implementing KM in madrasahs underscores the complexities involved in curriculum reform and the imperative for comprehensive understanding and practical adaptation at the local level. Education should indeed adapt to the following demands and developments. Realizing that education must continue to evolve, researchers assume there must be a pattern in education management in the madrasah environment. However, the problem faced is that changes to the curriculum are a challenge for all education people to be ready to learn and understand the points of these changes.

The imperative for madrasahs to familiarize themselves with KM and effectively implement it is a recurring theme in previous research (Musthofa & Agus, 2022; Zarkasi et al., 2022). However, current adoption rates still require substantial growth to achieve widespread implementation. One of the primary challenges hindering this progress is the uneven distribution of resources and limited access to information within madrasahs, which impede a comprehensive understanding and application of the KM (Yusrina et al., 2023). KM is expected to tackle problems such as learning loss and disruptions to education (Mulyana & Maylawati, 2024), and it emerges as a viable solution for educational problems in the country (Aliyyah et al., 2023; Putri et al., 2023). Furthermore, the digital era necessitates curriculum adaptability, with technology playing an integral role in the learning process, thus rendering the curriculum particularly suitable for addressing contemporary educational needs (Aliyyah et al., 2023; Amara Hanieka & Arifiansyah, 2023; Andrian et al., 2022). In light of these findings, addressing the challenges surrounding the adoption and implementation of the curriculum in madrasahs is essential.

Previous research underscores the managerial aspect of madrasahs, particularly in curriculum implementation, including KM. Research studies emphasize the significance of integrating managerial principles into curriculum development within madrasahs (Abdul Aziz et al. 2021); Hidayatulloh et al. 2022; Ridlo, 2023). The ongoing transformation of Islamic education curricula necessitates effective management strategies to navigate changes successfully (Akrim et al., 2022). Standard quality management practices have been recommended for enhancing academic processes within madrasahs, including curriculum management, highlighting the importance of managerial approaches in educational settings (Gunawan et al., 2023). Given the diverse contexts and challenges faced by educational institutions like madrasahs, understanding and revealing the managerial patterns underlying the implementation of KM is crucial for fostering effective educational management practices.

The implementation of KM in madrasahs across different regions, including Garut Regency in Indonesia, presents varied challenges and benefits. Previous studies have highlighted the benefits of the curriculum, including its capacity to provide autonomy in learning and responsiveness to student needs (Wasehudin et al., 2023). Additionally, the curriculum has been noted for fostering a relaxed and conducive learning environment (Ridlo, 2023). Studies have also underscored the enhancement of service learning facilitated by environmental volunteers within the framework of the curriculum (Sumarmi et al., 2022). Furthermore, the curriculum

has been associated with improvements in problem-solving skills among students, indicating its efficacy in promoting critical thinking and analytical abilities (Dwikoranto et al., 2023).

In various learning subjects and madrasah contexts, KM has demonstrated successful implementation, offering engaging and challenging lessons to students (Wardiyah et al., 2023; Purwanta, 2023). Moreover, the curriculum has been lauded for its role in improving communication skills, critical thinking abilities, and overall student enthusiasm for learning (Mahmud et al., 2023). Research also suggests that KM facilitates easy comprehension of learning materials, contributing to enhanced learning outcomes (Ratni et al., 2023). Thus, despite the diverse challenges encountered, the implementation of KM in madrasahs offers benefits, ranging from enhanced student engagement to the development of essential skills crucial for academic success and personal growth.

Despite the diverse challenges faced by madrasahs across different regions, there is a notable gap in understanding the effective management strategies for implementing the KM. Previous studies highlight the importance of collaborative efforts involving educational institutions, parents, government agencies, and schools to optimize KM management (Limiansi et al., 2023). However, these studies lack a comprehensive analysis of the specific factors influencing the success of KM implementation and the best practices applicable to the unique context of Indonesian madrasahs. The present study has filled this gap by providing detailed insights into the management of KM implementation in Indonesian madrasah institutions, thereby identifying effective strategies and best practices to enhance educational outcomes. This research offers a novel contribution by addressing the underexplored area of KM management in madrasahs, paving the way for more informed and effective educational practices.

METHOD

A qualitative approach offers a comprehensive method to explore the intricacies of education management within madrasahs, particularly in optimizing the implementation of the KM. Leveraging insights from scholars such as Flick (2018), Maxwell & Reybold (2015), and Merriam & Tisdell (2015), this approach is advantageous in unraveling the "what," "why," and "how" aspects of KM within madrasah settings. The research focuses on madrasahs in Garut Regency, West Java, strategically selecting participants based on their relevance to the research topic, accounting for variations in madrasah type, level, and role. Emphasizing direct involvement in KM development and implementation, the selection prioritizes madrasah heads, teachers, and students, ensuring a diverse range of perspectives from both public and private madrasahs across different educational levels (MI, MTs, and MA).

The investigation into the role of education management in the development and implementation of KM in madrasahs utilizes both primary and secondary data collection methods. Primary data collection involves structured interviews with key stakeholders, including madrasah heads, teachers, and students, to gather diverse perspectives on education management and KM implementation. Secondary data collection supplements primary insights through the analysis of various documents such as rules, curriculum documents, evaluation reports, and curriculum development records from relevant madrasahs. Following data reduction, a meticulous analysis identifies emerging themes or patterns within the data, with researchers developing comprehensive explanations by connecting findings to existing theories or formulating new theoretical frameworks. Direct quotes extracted from the data bolster the findings, providing tangible evidence and enhancing clarity. This systematic thematic analysis contributes to advancing knowledge within the research field and fosters a deeper understanding of the phenomena under investigation. Figure 1 draws the activities taken in this research.
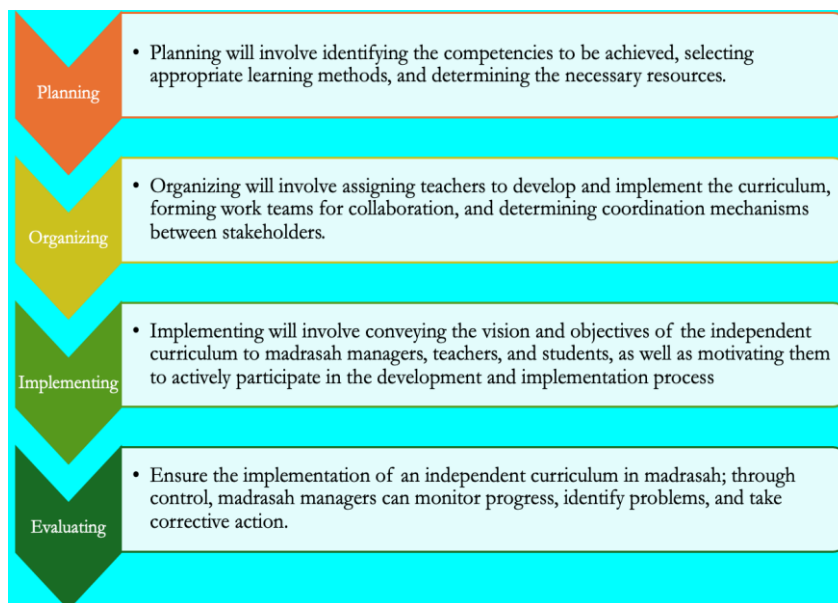
Figure 1 Research Activities

The research employs an education management framework to ensure the quality of education by drawing on principles such as Total Quality Management (TQM), Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME), and accreditation-specific quality management frameworks, as evidenced by studies from Sofyani et al. (2023), Jasti et al. (2022), Peschl et al. (2023), Ramakrishna & Sakkthivel (2021), and Elembilassery & Chakraborty (2021). It integrates four essential management elements—planning, organizing, directing, and controlling—supported by Marsakha et al. (2021) and Patriah et al. (2022). Planning involves setting goals and strategies, organizing covers task allocation and establishing structures, directing focuses on motivation and leadership, and controlling includes supervision and evaluation to ensure continuous improvement. By adopting these management functions, madrasah managers can effectively develop and implement the Kurikulum Merdeka (KM), optimizing curriculum development processes and achieving educational objectives. This structured approach provides insights into optimizing educational processes and realizing desired outcomes in madrasahs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Curriculum Development in Madrasah

Curriculum development, a multifaceted process crucial for enhancing the quality of education, encompasses various stages from formulation to evaluation (S, personal communications in May 2023) in Madrasas in Garut Regency. They were found to initiate curriculum development by establishing clear and measurable goals, ensuring accountability and effectiveness. The development of the madrasa curriculum in Garut Regency is driven by considerations of student needs, community expectations, and government standards to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. The interviewed person in this study highlights that the primary aim of developing the madrasa curriculum in Garut Regency is to furnish students with integrated and practical education, equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary to address community needs (A, Personal communication in May 2023). This approach underscores the importance of aligning the curriculum with the expectations of the local community, ensuring that it addresses the real-world challenges and opportunities encountered by students. Furthermore, the curriculum development process in Garut Regency incorporates adherence to government standards, ensuring that educational objectives are in line with broader educational policies and requirements. By considering the diverse needs of students, the

expectations of the community, and the standards set by the government, the madrasa curriculum in Garut Regency aims to deliver education that is both relevant and effective in preparing students for their future roles and responsibilities (A, Personal communication in May 2023). Incorporating these considerations into the curriculum development process underscores the commitment of Garut Regency's madrasas to providing education that meets the needs of students, fulfills community expectations, and aligns with government standards, thereby enhancing its overall relevance and effectiveness.

Dvořák (2023) further emphasizes that curriculum development involves setting specific and measurable learning objectives aligned with needs analysis, guiding the design process effectively. Additionally, Dvořák (2023) notes that the subsequent phase entails crafting learning experiences that align with the established objectives, including content selection, teaching methods, and assessment strategies. This iterative process, as outlined by Dvořák, involves needs analysis, goal formulation, structure and content development, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement. Such findings underscore the importance of effective curriculum management, highlighted by Sabrina et al. (2022), which necessitates collaboration among various stakeholders. Asnawan (2018) further discusses the diverse approaches, such as material-oriented and goal-based approaches, that can be employed in curriculum development to meet specific educational objectives. By incorporating these various stages, strategies, and collaborative efforts, curriculum development serves as a cornerstone for enhancing the quality of education, ensuring alignment with educational goals, and fostering continuous improvement.

The development of madrasah curriculum in in this study adopts a reconstructive approach that emphasizes adaptability to contemporary societal needs and changes. It was found that curriculum development in these madrasahs prioritizes the integration of social context and community needs, thereby fostering relevant and meaningful learning experiences. This process involves strategic planning, conceptual understanding, organization of knowledge, stakeholder involvement, needs analysis, selection of effective learning methods, implementation, and ongoing evaluation. The overarching goal is to design a curriculum that is adaptable, relevant, and responsive to the evolving needs of students and society in Garut Regency (A, personal communication in May 2023).

Contemporary curriculum development frameworks, as advocated by Amzat (2022) and Hadžiomerović & Sijamhodžić-Nadarević (2022), support the reconstructive approach, emphasizing the importance of aligning education with the dynamic social, economic, and cultural landscape. However, challenges arise in the implementation of this approach, particularly regarding the incorporation of character education within the KM in madrasas, as highlighted by Emilzoli et al. (2021), Muzayaroh (2021), Nasir (2020), and Rohmad et al. (2023). Despite this, Islamic education in Indonesia, according to Mulyana (2023), underscores the significance of character education, which should ideally be an integral component of madrasa curriculum. Therefore, adopting a reconstructive approach in curriculum development is crucial for ensuring that the curriculum remains relevant, adaptive, and aligned with the evolving needs of students and society, while still upholding the important principles of character education in MA in Garut Regency. It goes without saying that the teachers are in the front line of curriculum development to demonstrate their professional development (Ümran Y, et al., 2024)

Changes in the curriculum adaptation skills of teachers as a result of professional development support: A Turkish case study,

Teaching and Teacher Education,

Volume 137,

2024,

Planning KM in Madrasah

The planning stage, as the initial phase of management in curriculum development, plays a pivotal role in orchestrating decisions and assembling specialized teams. In the context of madrasah curriculum planning in Garut Regency, the process commences with the issuance of a decision, designating specialized teams such as the Madrasah Development Team and the Curriculum Development Team to oversee the planning process. This planning stage encompasses the preparation of KOM (Kurikulum Operasional Madrasah/madrasah operational curriculum) serving as the primary guideline for curriculum development initiatives. To ensure the timely execution of curriculum plans, the KOM is formulated prior to the commencement of the new school year (K, personal communication, July 2023). Each madrasah established TPM (tim pengembang madrasah/madrasah development team) and TPK (tim pengembang kurikulum/curriculum development team) entrusted with the responsibility of planning the learning curriculum. KOM functions as a comprehensive document, meticulously outlining all facets of the KM, carefully crafted by the appointed team before the commencement of the academic year. Through meticulous planning facilitated by TPM and TPK in the creation of a comprehensive KOM, madrasas could effectively establish the groundwork for successful curriculum implementation, ensuring alignment with educational objectives and timely execution (F, personal communication, July 2023).

Planning KM in madrasas, based on research findings, prioritized the cultivation of critical thinking skills, creativity, and independence among students. During the planning stage, meticulous attention is given to formulating learning objectives that align with the principles of an KM, with a focus on fostering character development and understanding independent concepts. However, despite the emphasis on planning the Merdeka curriculum, this study reveals that not all schools in Garut Regency have implemented this curriculum. Currently, only a selected few madrasas have received permission to trial the implementation of KM, indicating a limited adoption of the KM in the region. Through a concentrated curriculum planning approach, madrasas aspire to nurture students' critical thinking, creativity, and independence (F, personal communication, July 2023). While KM planning in madrasas underscores the importance of cultivating essential skills and characteristics in students, the widespread implementation of the KM in Garut Regency remains confined to a few pilot project madrasas, indicating the need for broader adoption and implementation strategies.

The planning process for education management in madrasas followed several essential steps to ensure the effective implementation of the KM. Firstly, the establishment of a TPM and TPK initiated the planning process in Garut Regency Madrasah. These teams collaborated to design the curriculum framework, fostering a collaborative approach towards implementing KM. Secondly, the preparation of the KOM served as a crucial step in the planning process. This document provided a clear and measurable basis for defining learning objectives and determining the scope of material to be taught, laying the foundation for structured planning. Lastly, the implementation preparation meeting marked the final stage of planning activities, typically conducted at the beginning of the school year. During this meeting, the designated team devised plans to ensure that all stakeholders comprehend the direction and objectives of KM. Detailed steps were outlined to prepare teachers, students, and necessary infrastructure for the forthcoming curriculum implementation. By following these systematic planning steps, madrasah in Garut Regency aim to ensure the successful implementation of KM, emphasizing collaboration, clarity of objectives, and meticulous preparation to achieve educational goals effectively (F, personal communication, July 2023).

Effective communication and coordination between the madrasa development team and the curriculum development team were pivotal factors in planning KM in madrasah. Curriculum planning necessitates robust communication channels among team members to establish a shared vision and develop a comprehensive curriculum that meets the madrasah's needs.

Coordination within the team is essential to harmonize efforts and align strategies, ensuring cohesive progress in the curriculum development process. The involvement of the madrasah head is indispensable, as they serve as an authority figure and primary overseer of the evaluation process, ensuring alignment with the madrasah's vision and mission. By prioritizing effective communication and coordination within the development team and recognizing the crucial role of the principal, KM planning can proceed seamlessly, guaranteeing alignment with institutional goals and facilitating successful implementation. Through effective communication, coordination, and the active involvement of the madrasah head, the planning of the KM in madrasas can proceed smoothly, fostering coherence with institutional objectives and ensuring successful implementation.

The organizing stage of curriculum development in Madrasah entailed the allocation of tasks among various teams and the establishment of an effective learning schedule. Task allocation is deemed crucial during this stage, involving the distribution of responsibilities among entities such TPM and TPK, MGMP (musyawarah guru mata pelajaran/subject teacher deliberation), committee, supervisors, and the madrasah education section at MORA. Each team was assigned specific tasks corresponding to different phases of the curriculum development process, ensuring a systematic approach to implementation. Moreover, organizing encompasses the preparation of a comprehensive learning schedule, both inside and outside the classroom, to bolster the implementation of KM in Madrasah. Through meticulous task allocation and the establishment of an efficient learning schedule, the organizing stage of curriculum development facilitates the seamless implementation of KM in Madrasas, fostering coherence and alignment with educational goals (F, personal communication, July, 2023).

Curriculum organization, as observed in the study, encompassed various approaches such as subject-centered, correlated, fused, core, and student-centered curricula, aligning with findings by Yaşar & Aslan (2021) and Anwar (2018). These approaches reflect the diverse strategies employed in curriculum development to meet the multifaceted needs of students and ensure alignment with educational objectives. The findings highlight the importance of organizational efforts in facilitating curriculum implementation and coherence, underscoring the significance of effective task allocation and learning scheduling. Such insights contribute to the broader discourse on curriculum development, emphasizing the need for systematic organization and alignment with educational goals to achieve successful curriculum implementation in educational settings.

Implementing KM in Madrasah

The implementation of KM in Garut Regency is currently limited to a select few madrassahs, each adopting the curriculum at varying schedules. To gain insights into the adoption status and challenges of KM, researchers conducted interviews with both implementing and non-implementing madrassahs. The authorization to implement KM is determined based on directives from the director general, with some madrassahs scheduled for adoption in 2022 and others in 2023. Initially, KM was piloted in specific classes at different educational levels: elementary classes at the MI level, grade 7 at MTs level, and class X at the MA level. Despite the limited implementation, all teachers participated in training and technical supervision to ensure preparedness for the eventual rollout of KM across all classes. While KM is currently only implemented in selected classes as a pilot initiative, ongoing comprehensive training and supervision of teachers reflect a concerted effort to enhance educational standards in Garut Regency, paving the way for its eventual implementation across all levels (F, personal communication July, 2023).

Technical supervision plays a crucial role in supporting teachers in implementing KM in Madrasah, particularly following the distribution of student report cards. After the distribution of student report cards, all teachers engaged in technical supervision sessions, which aimed to

provide support and guidance for effectively implementing the curriculum. To motivate teachers, the Madrasah administration assigned clear tasks, such as developing teaching modules, to facilitate the implementation of KM. Special emphasis was placed on promoting co-curricular activities, including P5 (projek penguatan profil pelajar pancasila/project for strengthening pancasila student profiles) (P5) and PPRA (Profil Pelajar Rahmatan lil Alamin/ Rahmatan lil Alamin Student Profile) , within the framework of KM, with dedicated attention and mentoring provided to students participating in these activities. Additionally, the Madrasah encouraged the integration of technology in learning, allowing students to utilize cell phones as learning tools within KM structure. Through technical supervision, task assignments, promotion of co-curricular activities, and integration of technology, the Madrasah aimed to support teachers and enhance the implementation of KM, thereby fostering a dynamic and inclusive learning environment for students. By employing various strategies such as technical supervision and the promotion of co-curricular activities, the Madrasah demonstrated its commitment to supporting teachers and enriching the implementation of KM, ultimately creating a vibrant and inclusive learning atmosphere for students (F, personal communication Juli, 2023).

Adjusting learning constructs, hours, and projects such as P5 and PPRA are vital components in the implementation of KM in madrasah. Learning constructs, hours, and projects within KM are tailored to align with its objectives, ensuring a comprehensive educational experience for students. The P5 project, mandated by the Decree of the Minister of Education and Culture and Technology No. 262/M/2022, focuses on strengthening student competence and character based on the profile of Pancasila students, as outlined in graduate competency standards. The profile of Pancasila students encompasses dimensions such as faith, noble character, global diversity appreciation, self-sufficiency, cooperation, critical thinking, and creativity, reflecting holistic educational goals. The implementation of the P5 project replaces the character education internalization approach present in the previous curriculum (2013 curriculum), emphasizing a more project-based and competency-driven approach to character development. By adapting learning structures, hours, and projects like P5, madrasahs can effectively implement KM, fostering the holistic development of students in accordance with educational standards and objectives. Through the adaptation of learning constructs, hours, and projects like P5 and PPRA, madrasahs can successfully implement KM, thereby promoting the holistic development of students and aligning with educational standards and objectives. (W, personal communication Juli, 2023).

The implementation of the P5 and PPRA project enhances the educational experience by promoting noble values and religious moderation among students. Guided by the Directorate of KSKK of the MORA, the program of P5 PPRA is a project-based learning initiative aimed at nurturing students' mindsets, attitudes, and behaviors in accordance with the universal values of Pancasila. One of the primary objectives of P5 PPRA is to cultivate high tolerance among students, fostering unity and global peace as outlined in RPJMN (rencana pembanguna jangka menengah nasional/national medium-term development plan) of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (2020-2024).

The RPJMN underscores the significance of religious moderation values in strengthening Indonesia's identity as a plural and multicultural nation, aligning with efforts to embrace diversity in culture, language, beliefs, society, and political ideologies. MORA actively advocates for and disseminates the concept of religious moderation, aiming to bolster Indonesia's diversity and unity through various educational initiatives like P5 PPRA. Through the implementation of the P5 PPRA project, madrasahs play a crucial role in fostering noble values and religious moderation among students, contributing to national efforts to reinforce Indonesia's identity as a diverse and unified nation. By participating in initiatives like P5 PPRA, madrasahs contribute significantly to the cultivation of noble values and religious moderation among students, aligning

with broader national endeavors to strengthen Indonesia's identity as a diverse and unified nation (W, personal communication July, 2023).

The integration of religious moderation values into the curriculum is a fundamental aspect of educational institutions under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, including madrasah. MORA mandates the inclusion of religious moderation values in the curriculum of all educational institutions within its jurisdiction, ensuring a comprehensive approach to education. Strengthening PPRA, Students project serves as a dedicated initiative to imbue madrasah students with the values of religious moderation, aligning with broader educational objectives. By incorporating religious moderation values into the curriculum, including through initiatives like the Strengthening PPRA Students project, madrasahs play a crucial role in nurturing students who embody tolerance, unity, and peace.

Research studies highlight the importance of integrating managerial principles into madrasah curriculum development (Abdul Aziz et al., 2021; Hidayatulloh et al., 2022; Ridlo, 2023). Effective management strategies are crucial for navigating the ongoing transformation of Islamic education curricula (Akrim et al., 2022). Quality management practices enhance academic processes within madrasahs, including curriculum management (Gunawan et al., 2023). In Garut Regency, KM implementation is limited to a few madrasahs, each adopting the curriculum on varying schedules. Researchers interviewed both implementing and non-implementing madrasahs to understand adoption status and challenges. Directed by the director general, some madrasahs began adopting KM in 2022, others in 2023, initially piloted in specific classes at different educational levels (MI, MTs, MA). Despite limited implementation, comprehensive training and technical supervision of teachers prepare for a full rollout. Technical supervision, task assignments, and promoting co-curricular activities like P5 and PPRA support teachers, fostering a dynamic and inclusive learning environment for students. Teachers in madrasah should be trained and developed in terms of their self-efficacy to contribute to curriculum reform and development (Hui-Ling Wendy Pan, et al., 2024)

Evaluating KM in Madrasah

The evaluation process in madrasah, overseen by TPM and TPK, plays a crucial role in assessing both the curriculum and the performance of teachers and students. Under the guidance of the madrasah head, who bears responsibility for overseeing implementation and ensuring effectiveness, the evaluation process was conducted to assess various aspects of the educational process. Typically conducted at the end of each semester, the evaluation scrutinizes elements such as the curriculum's alignment with educational goals, the efficacy of teaching methods, and the achievement of learning objectives by students. Furthermore, in addition to evaluating the curriculum, the performance of teachers and students was also assessed to measure their contributions to the learning process and identify areas for improvement. Through a comprehensive evaluation process led by TPM and TPK, and supported by the guidance of the madrasah head, madrasah can continuously enhance educational quality by addressing any identified shortcomings and fostering a conducive learning environment for both teachers and students. The evaluation process in madrasahs serves as a cornerstone for continuous improvement, enabling institutions to address deficiencies, optimize educational practices, and create an environment conducive to holistic student development (W, personal communication July, 2023).

Evaluation serves as a crucial element in KM management, facilitating a systematic process to assess the effectiveness of curriculum implementation. Within KM management, the evaluation process entails the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data or information to measure the efficacy of curriculum implementation. The objectives of evaluation within KM framework encompass various aspects, including the effectiveness of learning methods, student competency attainment, sustainability of the learning process, and achievement of curriculum

objectives. Through comprehensive evaluation, educational stakeholders gain valuable insights into both the strengths and weaknesses of curriculum implementation, empowering them to make informed decisions to enhance the quality and effectiveness of education delivery. By prioritizing systematic evaluation processes, KM management aims to continually improve educational outcomes, promote student success, and fulfill the objectives of the KM (Zarkasi et al., 2022; Wardiyah et al., 2023).

Supporting Factors and Challenges in Implementing KM

Various factors are pivotal in supporting the implementation of KM in madrasah, including stakeholder engagement, facilities, infrastructure, and flexibility in learning approaches. The active involvement of stakeholders, encompassing teachers, parents, students, and school administration, is crucial for the successful implementation of KM in Madrasah Garut. This involvement fosters a positive atmosphere and cooperation conducive to curriculum success. Collaboration among stakeholders, facilitated by effective communication and a shared understanding of the curriculum's goals and values, is integral to aligning efforts towards successful curriculum implementation. Additionally, capacity-building initiatives, such as training sessions and workshops, empower teachers with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively execute the principles and methodologies of KM.

Adequate facilities and infrastructure, including comfortable classrooms and well-equipped libraries, significantly contribute to creating an optimal learning environment that supports student engagement and academic success. Moreover, flexibility in learning and assessment methods allows teachers to tailor their approaches to accommodate diverse student needs, ensuring an inclusive and adaptive learning experience. By fostering stakeholder engagement, providing necessary resources and infrastructure, and embracing flexibility in teaching methodologies, madrasahs can effectively support the implementation of KM. Ultimately, these efforts enhance the quality of education and promote student success, aligning with the broader goals of educational advancement and societal development.

The management of a new curriculum presents significant challenges for madrasah, particularly regarding planning, implementation, and teacher adaptation. Planning for the implementation of KM demands meticulous preparation, encompassing guidance, execution, and evaluation processes to ensure effective execution and alignment with educational objectives. Equipping teachers with the requisite knowledge and skills to independently implement the curriculum poses a key challenge, necessitating innovative approaches to curriculum development and instructional design. While technical supervision and training are vital components, teachers must also engage in independent learning to fully grasp the nuances of KM and its application in the classroom. The availability of abundant learning resources aids teachers in understanding and implementing the curriculum, offering valuable support in navigating the complexities of curriculum management. Addressing the challenges associated with managing a new curriculum, particularly regarding teacher readiness and curriculum adaptation, is imperative for the successful implementation KM in madrasahs, ultimately enhancing educational quality and student outcomes.

The implementation of the KM in madrasahs encounters various challenges, including limited resources, mindset changes among teachers, and adapting to student diversity. Limited resources, such as insufficient funds and inadequate physical facilities, pose significant obstacles to implementing KM, hindering effective curriculum delivery and innovation in learning materials provision. Mindset change among teachers is crucial for successful curriculum implementation, as some educators may struggle to adapt to the paradigm shift inherent in KM. Support and guidance are necessary to help teachers embrace contextual, skills-based learning approaches. Transitioning from traditional evaluation methods to competency-focused assessments requires clear training and strategies to effectively measure student progress across

cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Student diversity presents another challenge, as each student possesses unique learning needs. Accommodating this diversity demands careful planning and tailored instructional strategies to ensure inclusivity and effective learning outcomes for all students.

The gradual implementation of KM in madrasahs, particularly in Garut Regency, reveals critical factors for success, including stakeholder engagement, adequate facilities, infrastructure, and flexible learning approaches (Khoeron, 2023; Aisyah et al., 2023; Swandari & Jemani, 2023; Zarkasi et al., 2022). Active involvement of teachers, parents, students, and administrators fosters cooperation and a positive atmosphere essential for curriculum success. Training and workshops empower teachers with the necessary skills for effective curriculum implementation. Adequate facilities and flexible teaching methods cater to diverse student needs, promoting an inclusive learning environment. However, challenges such as limited resources, mindset shifts among teachers, and accommodating student diversity require careful planning and innovative approaches. Addressing these issues is crucial for enhancing educational quality and achieving broader educational goals.

Strategies to Implement KM in Madrasah

The successful implementation of KM in madrasah relies on various strategies, including teacher capacity building, utilization of information technology, and collaboration and partnership initiatives. Teacher capacity building is essential for effective curriculum implementation, achieved through regular training sessions and mentoring programs. These initiatives equip educators with a comprehensive understanding of KM principles, methodologies, and assessment techniques, empowering them to navigate and implement KM approach in the classroom (Karman et al., 2024). Integrating information technology into curriculum delivery enhances the learning environment and supports innovative teaching methodologies. Madrasah utilize online platforms, educational applications, and digital resources to supplement traditional instruction, enrich students' learning experiences, and promote technology-driven learning modalities. Collaboration and partnership initiatives foster a supportive ecosystem for curriculum implementation, involving stakeholders such as government agencies, NGOs, and community organizations. By working together, these entities contribute resources, expertise, and support networks to enhance curriculum delivery and address challenges effectively.

Collaboration and partnership initiatives are integral to the successful implementation of KM in madrasahs, fostering synergy and resource sharing among stakeholders. Collaborative efforts with external stakeholders, such as MORA and other madrasah, contribute to synergy and resource sharing. Partnering with institutions experienced in implementing KM expands access to educational resources and enriches students' learning experiences. This collaborative approach enables the delivery of contextualized and relevant learning opportunities tailored to the needs of madrasah students (Fitriani, 2023; Suryani, 2022). By leveraging the expertise and resources of external partners, madrasahs can enhance the effectiveness of curriculum implementation and ensure its alignment with educational objectives. Employing strategies such as teacher capacity building, utilization of information technology, and collaboration and partnership initiatives further strengthens the implementation of KM. These strategies empower educators, enhance instructional practices, and foster a supportive ecosystem for curriculum delivery. Through collaboration and partnership initiatives, madrasahs can effectively implement KM, promoting quality education and fostering student success in alignment with educational goals (Khoeron, 2023; Aisyah et al., 2023; Swandari & Jemani, 2023; Zarkasi et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

The implementation of KM in madrasahs presents both challenges and opportunities. While KM offers innovative and contextually relevant education, its execution faces hurdles such as limited resources, the need for mindset shifts among teachers, and accommodating student diversity. However, effective strategies such as comprehensive teacher capacity building through training and mentoring, leveraging information technology to enhance learning experiences, and fostering collaboration with external stakeholders can help navigate the implementation process. Continuous evaluation and refinement are essential for curriculum management, enabling madrasahs to adapt to evolving needs, refine instructional practices, and ensure alignment with educational objectives. By adopting these strategies and prioritizing ongoing assessment, madrasahs can overcome obstacles, optimize the effectiveness of KM, and provide quality education, thereby fostering holistic student development and preparing learners for future challenges. The findings contribute valuable insights to the discourse on curriculum development and management in madrasahs, emphasizing the importance of addressing challenges, implementing effective strategies, and prioritizing continuous improvement.

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