



# Policy and Strategy of Madrasah Heads in Implementing Merdeka Curriculum in MIN 3 Sukoharjo

Praptiningsih<sup>1</sup>; Daliman<sup>2</sup>; Nurul Aulia Lilatul Udl-Hiyah<sup>3</sup>;  
Nike Ardiyani<sup>4</sup>

IIM Surakarta<sup>1234</sup>

[praptiningsih@dosen.iimsurakarta.ac.id](mailto:praptiningsih@dosen.iimsurakarta.ac.id), [humasdarulhijroh@gmail.com](mailto:humasdarulhijroh@gmail.com), [aulia88nurul@gmail.com](mailto:aulia88nurul@gmail.com),  
[andriyaninike58@gmail.com](mailto:andriyaninike58@gmail.com)

**Receive: 11/08/2024**

**Accepted: 10/09/2024**

**Published: 01/10/2024**

## Abstrak

Tujuan dalam penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui kebijakan dan strategi kepala madrasah dalam Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka (IKM). Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data observasi, dokumentasi, wawancara, dan analisis data menggunakan triangulasi sumber. Pada uji keabsahan data peneliti menggunakan uji kredibilitas data. Hasil dari penelitian ini adalah kebijakan kepala madrasah dalam menyikapi adanya putusan Kemendikbud tentang diterapkannya Kurikulum Merdeka yaitu kepala madrasah MIN 3 Sukoharjo menerapkan Kurikulum merdeka dengan dua tahap pertama, madrasah masih menggunakan Kurikulum 2013 dengan menerapkan beberapa prinsip Kurikulum Merdeka. Kedua, madrasah melaksanakan Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka (IKM) secara penuh. Strategi yang digunakan dalam Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka (IKM) yaitu pertama belajar mandiri, kedua mengikuti webinar berseri, ketiga belajar melalui komunitas belajar, keempat mengikuti workshop, dan kelima bekerjasama dengan mitra pembangun.

**Kata Kunci: kebijakan, strategi, kurikulum merdeka**

## Abstract

The purpose of this research is to understand the policies and strategies of the madrasah head in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. This research uses a qualitative approach with data collection techniques including observation, documentation, interviews, and data analysis using source triangulation. To test data validity, the researcher uses a credibility test. The results of this research show that the policy of the madrasah head in response to the Ministry of Education's decision regarding the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at MIN 3 Sukoharjo involves two stages. First, the madrasah still uses the 2013 curriculum while applying several principles of the Merdeka Curriculum. Second, the madrasah fully implements the Merdeka Curriculum. The strategies used in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum include self-learning, attending a series of webinars, and learning through communities.

**Keywords: Policy, Strategy, Merdeka Curriculum**

## INTRODUCTION

The success of an education is influenced by the principal. The principal is the highest leader in the educational institution who is responsible for everything related to the smooth running of the school education for the realization of the school's goals. (Jajat Munajat, 2021) According to Kadersih in Saputra (2023), the principal acts as a leader in the school with full responsibility and contributes greatly in improving the quality of the schools it manages. The leadership of the principal is the key to the success of the school. (Jajat Munajat, 2021)

According to Setiyati in Setyawati., et.al (2023) Principal leadership is a key factor in directing school resources to achieve predetermined goals. Principals must be able to understand and implement government policies to improve the quality of education. The principal bears great responsibility in carrying out the organizational functions of the school and encouraging the progress of the school according to the expected objectives. The curriculum is one of the important elements in the world of education that plays a major role in the achievement of educational goals. (Jumadil., et.al: 2023)

The existence of a policy on the implementation of a Free Curriculum for schools by the Ministry of Budristek changes the policy that should be followed by each educational institution. The principal as the holder of the reins in the educational institution has an important role in ensuring the effectiveness of the implementation of the curriculum in his school. The role of the principal in improving the quality and quality of education related to the concept of Merdeka Belajar is by actively participating in the development of the curriculum. This participation aims to enable principals to mobilize educators and staff in their schools to create and develop student-focused learning processes. (Erik Hidayat., et.al:

2023)

Merdeka Curriculum is an educational program launched by the Indonesian government to provide freedom and flexibility to educational units in designing curricula that suit local needs, student characteristics, and global challenges faced. (Wuwur: 2023) Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum with diverse intracurricular learning where the content will be more optimal so that learners have enough time to delve into concepts and strengthen competencies. Teachers have the freedom to choose different teaching tools so that the learning process can be adapted to the needs and interests of students. Projects aimed at strengthening the achievement of the Pancasila Student Profile are developed based on themes that have been set by the government. These projects are not focused on achieving specific learning targets, so are not limited to specific subject matter. (Yulianti, et al; 2022)

The Merdeka Curriculum is an optional (option) curriculum that can be applied by educational units starting from the school year (TA) 2022/2023. The Merdeka Curriculum continues the development direction of the previous curriculum, Curriculum 2013, by giving independence to learners, teachers and educational units to apply according to their characteristics, potential, talents, interests, and aspirations.

The Merdeka Curriculum has become a new face for education units, principals, teachers, students and the general public. The principal in this case becomes decisive in the educational policies that exist in his institution including in determining the curriculum and how to implement it.

MIN 3 Sukoharjo is a school that follows the development of the curriculum in Indonesia including the Merdeka Curriculum. MIN 3 Sukoharjo is a pilot school in Implement Merdeka Curriculum under the auspices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Based on the results of the preliminary observation, that the Merdeka

Curriculum began to be implemented in MIN 3 Sukoharjo in the 1st and 4th grades of the 2022/2023 school year following the policy of the Ministry of Education with less preparedness due to the understanding of the madrasah head, teachers and other school residents who are still less related to the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. MIN 3 Sukoharjo began to adapt to the curriculum because it felt important to do so. According to Wantiana & Mellisa in Erna., et.al (2024), the Merdeka Curriculum still faces various challenges, especially among teachers. Many teachers have difficulty adapting to the changes taking place in the Merdeka Curriculum. This is due to the lack of socialization and training related to the new curriculum, significant changes in the structure of the curriculum, as well as the limitations of learning resources.

Based on these issues, of course, the policies of the principal are very important. Where the principal is the leading controller in his school to adjust the education system according to the current educational developments in Indonesia, including the change of curriculum from Curriculum 2013 to Merdeka Curriculum. Principals, teachers and all school staff should be involved in the adjustment of such Merdeka Curriculum changes. Many efforts can be made by principals, teachers and all school staff in understanding the Merdeka Curriculum such as conducting workshops, webinars, trainings in Merdeka Curriculum Implementation and so on.

Starting from this, researchers conducted research on how the policies and strategies implemented by the head of madrasah in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in MIN 3 Sukoharjo. This study is expected to serve as a reference for education practitioners and reviewers.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach. Qualitative research is an approach

that uncovers specific social situations by accurately describing reality through words, based on techniques for collecting and analyzing relevant data, obtained from natural conditions. (Satori et al; 2020) The goal of quantitative research according to Creswell in Jaelani (2023) is to provide a deeper understanding of research phenomena by collecting numerically measurable data. The study aims to extend the results to a larger population and provide empirical evidence of an objective nature. This approach is used to find out about the principal's policies and strategies in Merdeka Curriculum Implementation at MIN 3 Sukoharjo. The data collection techniques used in this study were observation, documentation, interviews, and source triangulation.

Data analysis in this study is done during the data collection process as well as after the data collection process is completed within a certain period of time. At the time of the interview the researcher already analyzes the answers of the informant (the interviewee) after in the analysis the researcher feels that he has not obtained a satisfactory answer so the researcher asks the question again, until a certain stage or within a certain period it is felt that the researcher has obtained credible data.

In this study, the data analysis technique used is the Miles and Huberman model which consists of four steps: 1) Data collection, 2) Data Reduction, 3) Data Display (Data Presentation), 4) Conclusions Drawing/Verifying, (Drawing conclusions and verifying). (Sugiyono; 2018)

Test the validity of the data in this study using the Data credibility test i.e. by extension of observations, increasing persistence and triangulation of the data.

## DISCUSSION

**Policy of the head of the madrasah in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum**

Quoted from the official website of the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) regarding the Merdeka Curriculum, the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Mendikbudristek) issued Regulation No. 12 of 2024, which governs the curriculum at the Early Childhood Education (PAUD), Elementary Education, and Secondary Education levels. Through this regulation, the Merdeka Curriculum is officially established as the foundational framework and structure for the curriculum in all educational institutions across Indonesia. In response to this decision by the Ministry of Education, the principal of MIN 3 Sukoharjo decided to register the school as one that implements the Merdeka Curriculum under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) and opted to make MIN 3 Sukoharjo a pilot school for the curriculum.

According to an interview with the school principal, MIN 3 Sukoharjo is one of the pilot schools, a decision made by the principal as part of efforts to keep up with current educational developments, particularly the Merdeka Curriculum. The school's understanding of the Merdeka Curriculum is still limited, prompting the school to independently explore how to implement the Merdeka Curriculum before receiving official training from related institutions.

The principal of MIN 3 Sukoharjo explained in the interview that the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at the school is being carried out in stages. The first stage follows the first option as stipulated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The next stage follows the second option, also outlined by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. These options, as quoted from the Ministry of Religious Affairs' website, are as follows: The school continues to use the 2013 curriculum but incorporates several principles of the Merdeka Curriculum, allowing the school to innovate and be creative in developing the operational curriculum in line with its vision, mission, objectives, and targets for implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. The school fully implements the Merdeka Curriculum (IKM), adhering to the Graduate Competency Standards (SKL), Content Standards (SI), and Learning Outcomes (CP) as defined in the Merdeka Curriculum. The school adopts the spirit of the Merdeka Curriculum by innovating

and creating in the development of its operational curriculum, learning processes, assessments, as well as in projects like the Strengthening of the Pancasila Student Profile (P5) and the Profile of Students with Rahmatan lil Alamin (a blessing for the universe). It also incorporates collaborative learning, differentiated instruction, and other pedagogical approaches.

MIN 3 Sukoharjo began implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in 2022, following the phased implementation of the curriculum during the first year of the 2022/2023 academic year. According to the Ministry of Religious Affairs' website, the Merdeka Curriculum is applied at both the primary and secondary education levels, including at RA (Islamic kindergarten), MI (Islamic elementary school), MTs (Islamic middle school), MA (Islamic high school), and MAK (Islamic vocational high school) on a limited basis for pilot schools. The curriculum is implemented at the RA level for students aged 4 to 5 years, MI for grades 1 and 4, MTs for grade 7, and MA/MAK for grade 10. Meanwhile, students in grades 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, and 12 continue to use the 2013 curriculum.

To prepare for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, MIN 3 Sukoharjo studied the Learning Outcomes (CP) and its components, familiarized itself with and applied the regulations, socialized the curriculum to teachers and educational staff, allocated the necessary budget, and organized and conducted training programs, culminating in a showcase of their work. This was conveyed by the principal of MIN 3 Sukoharjo in the interview.

The Learning Outcomes (CP) in the Merdeka Curriculum serve as an alternative means of describing the competencies used to measure student achievement (Deni Hadiansah, 2022).

### **The Principal's Strategy for Implementing the Merdeka Curriculum at MIN 3 Sukoharjo**

Achieving the goals in the "Merdeka Curriculum" requires the role of the school principal in determining specific strategies. According to Priansa in Minsih et al. (2019), the principal is a professional officer within the school organization, responsible for managing all school resources and collaborating with teachers, staff, and other employees to guide students in achieving educational objectives. Strategy helps

principals in managing and enhancing the implementation of "Merdeka Curriculum" in schools. A strategy is a tool to achieve educational goals. As stated on the Ministry of Education and Culture's website, six strategies can be applied by schools in implementing the curriculum: 1) The principal must engage in independent learning through the Merdeka Mengajar platform, 2) Teachers and principals learn the Merdeka Curriculum by attending a series of webinars, 3) Teachers and principals learn the Merdeka Curriculum within learning communities, 4) Teachers and principals learn best practices through recommended sources, 5) Teachers and principals use helpdesk services to obtain further information, and 6) Teachers and principals collaborate with development partners to implement the Merdeka Curriculum.

The strategies applied by the Madrasah Principal in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum (IKM) at MIN 3 Sukoharjo, based on interviews, are:

### **1) Independent Learning**

The introduction of the Merdeka Curriculum is perceived by the school as a curricular change requiring special attention, both in terms of human resources and supporting technology and infrastructure. The parties involved have not yet fully provided comprehensive socialization, training, and assistance since the curriculum was first introduced. The madrasah principal, along with teachers and staff, independently studied the Merdeka Curriculum through social media references, networking with colleagues who are already "guru penggerak" (teaching movement teachers), and relations that can enrich the understanding of the curriculum's implementation.

### **2) Participating in a Series of Webinars**

Webinars are frequently held as an activity to provide understanding, skills, and create specific communities. Series of webinars on the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum are often organized by educational institutions or related organizations, such as the Ministry of Education and Culture or education experts. The school principal and curriculum vice principal stated in an interview that they, along with the school community including teachers, participated in such webinars, organized by various institutions, schools, madrasahs, and even

the Ministry of Religious Affairs. These webinars are aimed at equipping educators with sufficient knowledge to implement the curriculum effectively in their respective institutions, in line with the directives of the Ministry of Education and Culture.

### **3) Learning Through Learning Communities**

According to the Ministry of Education and Culture's website, a learning community is a group of teachers, education personnel, and educators who share the same passion and concern for learning transformation, especially in the context of implementing the Independent Curriculum. In an interview, the principal of MIN 3 Sukoharjo mentioned that their school joined a learning community called Cikal, whose members are from across Indonesia and divided into regions. This community consists of teachers or school principals who are keen to implement the curriculum.

### **4) Attending Workshops with Relevant Experts**

The success of the Merdeka Curriculum's implementation cannot be separated from the active and collaborative role of all stakeholders in educational institutions, including school principals, teachers, curriculum vice principals, and school staff. Knowledge and understanding are essential in supporting the curriculum's implementation. In an interview, the principal of MIN 3 Sukoharjo mandated the school community, including teachers and the curriculum vice principal, to attend workshops on the curriculum facilitated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Baldik (Educational Agency). The workshops were held both online (by the Ministry of Religious Affairs) and offline (by Baldik), known as short training sessions. After attending these workshops, the school gained a better understanding of how to implement the curriculum effectively.

Teachers at MIN 3 Sukoharjo also participated in a workshop on creating learning modules, which was held at MIN 5 Sukoharjo, as mentioned in an interview with a teacher from MIN 3 Sukoharjo. Learning modules contain objectives, learning steps, teaching media, and assessments required for each unit/topic based on the flow of learning objectives (Deni Hardiansah, 2022).

## 5) Utilizing Helpdesk Services to Obtain Further Information

To support the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, the Ministry of Education and Culture provides helpdesk services to facilitate educational institutions in obtaining information regarding the curriculum's implementation. However, MIN 3 Sukoharjo has not fully utilized this service due to previous slow response experiences, prompting the school to seek information from other sources. This was mentioned by the madrasah principal in an interview.

## 6) Collaborating with Development Partners

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum requires support and collaboration from various parties, including local governments, schools, madrasah, teachers, and other education practitioners. Collaborating with different stakeholders helps facilitate the curriculum's implementation. MIN 3 Sukoharjo collaborates with other madrasah to ensure smooth implementation. According to the madrasah principal in an interview, MIN 3 Sukoharjo, being a madrasah under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, has so far collaborated with other madrasahs and schools implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. This collaboration, called "Getok Tular" in the Madrasah Friends program, is a platform for sharing knowledge and administrative practices gained from training/webinars held by certain institutions, which are then disseminated to fellow madrasah within the program.

## CONCLUSION

In response to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology's policy regarding the shift from the 2013 Curriculum to the Merdeka Curriculum, the principal of MIN 3 Sukoharjo adopted a similar approach by gradually implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. First, the madrasah still uses the 2013 Curriculum while applying some principles of the Merdeka Curriculum. Second, the madrasah fully implements the Merdeka Curriculum, meaning that it adopts the Graduate Competency Standards (SKL), Content Standards (SI), and Learning Outcomes (CP) according to the Merdeka Curriculum.

Various efforts have been made to ensure the proper implementation of the Merdeka

Curriculum, such as: 1) registering the school as one that implements the Merdeka Curriculum, 2) establishing the school as a pilot school, 3) deeply understanding the Merdeka Curriculum through various seminars, training, and self-study via the internet, and 4) registering on Belajar ID to gain access to resources that help in understanding the Merdeka Curriculum.

The strategies implemented by the madrasah principal for the Merdeka Curriculum Implementation at MIN 3 Sukoharjo include: 1) self-study through social media references, discussions with peers who are already "driving teachers," and building relationships to enhance knowledge for implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, 2) participating in a series of webinars organized by external institutions, schools, madrasah, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag), 3) learning through the learning community called Cikal in the Solo region, 4) attending workshops with expert speakers organized by Kemenag and Baldik, and 5) collaborating with development partners. This collaboration is limited to other madrasah and schools that are also implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, in a program called Getok Tular within the "madrasah friendship" initiative. Getok Tular serves as a platform for sharing knowledge and administrative resources gained from training or webinars organized by specific institutions, which are then passed on to other participating madrasah.

## REFERENCES

- Hadiansah Deni. (2022). *Kurikulum Merdeka dan Paradigma Pembelajaran baru*. Bandung: Yrama Widya.
- Hidayat, E., Pardosi, A., & Zulkarnaen, I. (2023). Efektivitas Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah Dalam Penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka. *Jurnal Studi Guru Dan Pembelajaran*, 6(1), 9-18.
- Hidayat Sholeh. (2017). *Pengembangan Kurikulum Baru*. Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Jailani, M. S. (2023). Teknik pengumpulan data dan instrumen penelitian ilmiah pendidikan pada pendekatan kualitatif dan kuantitatif. *IHSAN: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 1(2), 1-9.
- Munajat Jajat. (2021). *Manajemen Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah Untuk Pengembangan Profesionalisme Guru*. Yogyakarta: Bintang Madani.

- Minsih, M., Rusnilawati, R., & Mujahid, I. (2019). Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah Dalam Membangun Sekolah Berkualitas Di Sekolah Dasar. *Profesi Pendidikan Dasar*, 6(1), 29-40.
- Mulia, J. R., Nasution, B., Asmendri, A., & Sari, M. (2023). Peranan Kurikulum Dalam Mencapai Tujuan Pendidikan. *El-Idare: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 9(2), 34-40.
- Saputra, A. Y., & Ramadan, Z. H. (2023). Gaya Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah dalam Pelaksanaan Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar. *Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 7(4), 3946-3954.
- Setyawati, E., Patimah, S., Subandi, S., & Makbulloh, D. (2023). Peran Kepala Sekolah Dalam Pengembangan Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar. *El-Idare: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 9(2), 105-111.
- Wuwur, E. S. P. O. (2023). Problematika implementasi kurikulum merdeka di sekolah dasar. *SOKO GURU: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*, 3(1), 1-9.
- Yulianti, M., Anggraini, D. L., Nurfaizah, S., & Pandiangan, A. P. B. (2022). Peran Guru Dalam Mengembangkan Kurikulum Merdeka. *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan dan Sosial*, 1(3), 290-298.
- Zumrotun, E., Widyastuti, E., Utama, S., Sutopo, A., & Murtiyasa, B. (2024). Peran Kurikulum Merdeka dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan di Sekolah Dasar. *Ideguru: Jurnal Karya Ilmiah Guru*, 9(2), 1003-1009.
- <https://pusatinformasi.guru.kemdikbud.go.id>.  
<https://kurikulum.kemdikbud.go.id>.  
<https://ditpsd.kemdikbud.go.id>.  
<https://kemenag.go.id>