

Resilience of Madrasah Aliyah Teachers Amid Curriculum Transformation: A Reflective Study from the Merdeka Curriculum to the Love-Based Curriculum

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the form of resilience of Islamic Senior High School or Madrasah Aliyah (MA) teachers in Pati Regency in facing the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, identify the challenges faced in the curriculum adaptation process, and examine the potential of the Love-Based Curriculum as an alternative approach in the context of madrasah education. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study method. Data collection techniques include in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Data analysis is conducted using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which involves data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusion. The results of the study indicate that teachers' resilience is influenced by internal factors such as self-directed learning initiatives and religious motivation, as well as external factors such as institutional support and training. Public madrasahs have higher readiness compared to private madrasahs because they are supported by established human resources and systems. However, some private madrasahs demonstrate strong resilience through local culture and religious values that have been built over time. Additionally, reflections on the Love-Based Curriculum indicate that an approach based on compassion and empathy is beginning to be integrated by some madrasahs as a response to the need for more humanistic learning. This study recommends the importance of strengthening systematic support, inter-institutional collaboration, and training to support the sustainability of curriculum transformation.

Keywords: love-based curriculum, merdeka curriculum, teacher resilience

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INTRODUCTION

Curriculum change is a necessity that always occurs in Indonesia to adapt to various global challenges and the dynamics of the times (Ahid & Sufirmsyah, 2022). One of the main challenges in the process of implementing the new curriculum is the readiness and resilience of teachers (Aulia & Andini, 2024). Many teachers feel overwhelmed by the many technical administrative changes, the lack of in-depth training, and the demands of differentiated learning that are still new to most teachers (Helna et al., 2025). This is where the concept of teacher resilience becomes important.

Resilience is defined as the ability to survive, adapt and develop positively in the face of pressure and change in teaching practice (Dewi & Kuswandono, 2025)

Not yet finished with the readiness of the Merdeka Curriculum with all its learning programs and mechanisms, teachers are now required to adapt again to a new curriculum that emphasizes the internalization of humanity and civilization values, namely Love-Based Curriculum. In the current era, students are faced with a variety of global issues and challenges related to humanity, in the form of conflict, violence, deprivation of human rights that have hit many countries in the world. For this reason, students in the digital era are expected to not only have cognitive intelligence, but also include social and emotional domains. This is supported by the results of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) survey which states that 15-year-old students have less empathy and responsibility than 10-year-old students. The survey results also concluded that students with high social and emotional skills tend to have psychological well-being, better academic performance, have high levels of motivation, and experience lower levels of anxiety (OECD, 2023)

Madrasah Aliyah as an educational institution with Islamic characteristics faces its own challenges in implementing the new curriculum. On the one hand, madrasahs are required to carry out national policies with all their technical demands. However, on the other hand, madrasah also has a transformative mission in maintaining Islamic values and religious character (Kurniawan et al., 2024). Geographical conditions, human resource readiness, and access to technology in various Madrasah Aliyah in Pati regency show variations in readiness to face this transformation.

In reflection of this condition, the need arises for a curriculum that is not only technical-instructional in nature, but also touches the humanity and spirituality of education (Syafrian, 2025; Syaripudin et al., 2025). The Love-Based Curriculum is a reflective idea that presents education in a more humanist and meaningful way. The curriculum emphasizes the correlation between concepts, deep understanding, and character building and human relations.

The above statement is in line with *prior research* which found that the Love-Based Curriculum not only revolutionizes the learning approach in madrasahs, but also strengthens the function of education as a means of forming a holistic, humanist and harmonious personality. Madrasahs are expected to be a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment for students' social, emotional, and spiritual development through the integration of love values that have positive implications for the life of the state and society (Ifendi, 2025).

In addition to the role and strategy of teachers, the successful implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum is supported by several parties, namely *stakeholders* and parents. Training programs for teachers also play an important role in improving the quality of value-based teaching. The Love-Based Curriculum at MI Nururrahmah shows positive results in shaping student character, although there are some challenges in its implementation (Nada & Listiana, 2025). A major challenge of implementing the Love-Based Curriculum is the lack of official modules and training for educators, which causes limited integration of these values (Syaripudin et al., 2025). This shows that although the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum offers a solution, it does not mean that it is completely free of challenges. Challenges will still accompany it as in the previous curriculum, namely the Merdeka Curriculum and the 2013 curriculum.

Reviewing the evaluation of the readiness to implement the Merdeka Curriculum two years back, it was found that several things need to be prepared for the

implementation of the new curriculum and ensure the success of the curriculum. Teachers need to understand the concepts, principles, and objectives, and have the skills to design and implement appropriate learning. Mastery of information and communication technology is also an important part. Digital transformation significantly improves student learning outcomes, with teacher resilience playing a crucial mediating role. Teachers who are proficient in using digital tools significantly increase student engagement and academic achievement (Abid et al., 2024). Another urgent thing is the ability to conduct comprehensive assessments, develop lesson plans according to the Merdeka Belajar format, and maintain a commitment to continuous professional development (Arofaturrohman & Muhibbin, 2023)

Based on the *prior research* above, curriculum changes from the 2013 Curriculum to the Merdeka Curriculum are always accompanied by implementation challenges in the field. In this context, teacher resilience includes the ability to survive, adapt and grow amidst pressure and limitations is key (Chen, 2024). Resilience is one of the main challenges for teachers in carrying out learning activities in the midst of various problems faced (Wang et al., 2024). Supporting factors for teacher resilience include full support from *stakeholders* and parents. Thus, reflection on the dynamics of the implementation of the previous curriculum shows that the success of the Love-Based Curriculum in the future requires not only system support, but also the resilience and commitment of teachers in carrying out value-based education consistently, even in conditions that are not yet ideal.

Previous studies have not specifically discussed the reflection of the previous curriculum on the new curriculum, in this context, the love-based curriculum. However, reflection on the implementation of the previous curriculum can be a reference for the new curriculum to be successfully implemented in the field, especially given the various obstacles. This research specifically examines teacher resilience in facing curriculum changes as a critical reflection for the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum. The novelty lies in placing teacher resilience as a key factor in the success of a value-based curriculum, as well as presenting empirical reflections on teachers' experiences in addressing the challenges of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum as a foothold for developing the Love Based-Curriculum.

Against this background, this study aims to describe the resilience of Madrasah Aliyah teachers in Pati Regency in facing the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, identify the main challenges they face in the adaptation process, and reflect on the potential of the love-based curriculum as an alternative approach that is more humanist and meaningful in the context of madrasah education.

METHOD

This research uses case study approach with qualitative descriptive analysis technique (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Field research is a study whose data sources and research processes use specific research locations, in this context in Madrasah Aliyah Pati Regency. The data sources in the research are primary data sources and secondary data sources. Primary data includes teachers, madrasah principals, curriculum representatives, and all stakeholders in eight Madrasah Aliyah in Pati Regency. Secondary data comes from documents that support the research by using purposive sampling.

In an effort to obtain relevant data, researchers use observation, interview and documentation techniques (Sugiyono, 2022). The observation technique is carried out

by researchers who will make direct observations related to the research focus. Meanwhile, the interview technique was used to collect data through several research informants, namely principal of the madrasah, vice principal of the madrasah, teachers and *stakeholders* in the Pati Regency Aliyah madrasah. Furthermore, documentation in this study is in the form of activity documents related to the implementation of the curriculum. Documentation is a search for data in the form of notes, transcripts, books, newspapers, magazines, agendas and so on (Samsu, 2017).

Tabel 1. Informants Code

No.	School	Posistion	Code
1	MAN 1 Pati	Vice Principal	ALN
2	MAN 2 Pati	Vice Principal	S
3	MA Sunan Prawoto	Teacher	A
4	MA Tarbiyatul Banin	Teacher	AY
5	MA Manahijul Huda	Teacher	M; AM; AA; NK
6	MA Miftahul Huda	Teacher	R
7	MA Salafiyah	Teacher	ZLK
8	MA Raudlatut Tholibin	Vice Principal	SK

To ensure that the data obtained is credible, researchers carry out triangulation as a means of testing the validity of the data, both triangulation of sources, techniques, and time. Data analysis technique is the process of systematically searching and compiling data obtained from observations, interviews, documentation, and other materials, so that it can be easily understood, and the findings can be informed to others (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). In this context, researchers analyze data found in the field with pre-existing theories. While in the data analysis process, the Miles and Huberman version of the analysis approach is used which is based on operational stages which include data collection, data reduction, data assessment, then data verification (Sugiyono, 2022). However, the disadvantage of this method is that it cannot reach all Madrasah Aliyah in Pati Regency. Therefore, it is limited to only a few public and private schools that are the subjects of this study, especially those that have settled and begun implementation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Resilience of Madrasah Aliyah Teachers in Pati Regency in Facing the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum

In Madrasah Aliyah in Pati regency, many teachers stated that this Merdeka Curriculum was implemented because it would only be implemented in the 2023/2024 school year and there had not been full socialization in the madrasah to provide an understanding of the concept of an independent learning curriculum to all elements of the madrasah, including the madrasah head, teachers, education personnel, and students. The concept of implementing an Merdeka Curriculum in madrasah aliyah in Pati regency will only be implemented starting in the 2023/2024 school year because it will only be implemented simultaneously in the 2023 school year based on instructions from the Ministry of Religious Affairs (AK, 2023).

Based on the results of interviews with several private Madrasah Aliyah teachers in Pati regency, some of the teachers think that the implementation of this Merdeka Curriculum tends to be forced because teachers have not been equipped with various trainings, workshops, webinars, seminars or workshops related to the Merdeka

Curriculum even though it has been widely conveyed that there will be the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum (AM, 2023; MA, 2023; NK, 2023). However, this statement is different from the piloting Madrasah Aliyah, namely MAN 1 Pati and MAN 2 Pati. Both MAs have implemented the Merdeka Curriculum in the previous year and have organized varied P5RA activities. This is certainly inseparable from the full support of stakeholders, both in the form of infrastructure, training, and cooperation with related parties.

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum starts from class X and there are no majors and specializations at Aliyah such as class X-MIPA, class-IPS or class X-MAK. So that this also affects the curriculum or the implementation of the teaching curriculum structure and the duration of teaching hours and this Merdeka Curriculum tends to be more flexible and simpler. This teacher human resource factor really determines whether or not a curriculum is implemented successfully.

MAN 1 Pati

MAN 1 Pati is one of the MAs in Pati regency that has implemented the Merdeka Curriculum in the 2022/2023 academic year in addition to MAN 2 Pati. MAN 1 Pati is certainly not difficult to implement the Merdeka Curriculum, because human resources, funding sources and infrastructure facilities have all been supported. On the other hand, before the Merdeka Curriculum regulation was implemented, MAN 1 Pati had organized academic activities that were identical to the Merdeka Curriculum. Based on the Vice Principal for Curriculum, MAN 1 Pati implements the Merdeka Curriculum for classes X and XI and the 2013 Curriculum for class XII. The implemented Merdeka Curriculum refers to KMA Number 114 of 2014 and KMA Number 347 of 2021. There are several programs that have been implemented as characteristics of the Merdeka Curriculum and the implementation of P5 and PPRA (Documentation of MAN 1 Pati, 2023).

MAN 2 Pati

MAN 2 Pati has implemented the Merdeka Curriculum in the 2022/2023 academic year. Pro-active human resources at MAN 2 Pati certainly have no obstacles in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, because human resources, funding sources and infrastructure facilities have all supported it as a state madrasa from the Ministry of Religious Affairs. On the other hand, before the Merdeka Curriculum regulation was implemented, MAN 2 Pati had also organized academic activities that were identical to the Merdeka Curriculum. The Deputy Head of Curriculum stated that MAN 2 Pati is currently implementing a dual-curriculum system, with the Merdeka Curriculum applied to grades X and XI, while grade XII continues to use the 2013 Curriculum. The adoption of the Merdeka Curriculum is based on KMA Number 114 of 2014 and KMA Number 347 of 2021. In line with this policy, several programs have been introduced as key components of the Merdeka Curriculum, including P5 and PPRA initiative (S, 2023).

MA Sunan Prawoto Kayen

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at MA Sunan Prawoto MA began in the 2023/2024 academic year and was only implemented in Class X. While classes XI and XII are still using the 2013 curriculum. From the narrative of the Deputy Head of Curriculum MA Sunan Prawoto, the presence of the Merdeka Curriculum was welcomed by the entire madrasah academic community. The various responses that

emerged indicated that the madrasah was accustomed to carrying out events relevant to SMI. For this reason, in the future, the *Gelar Karya* event only needs to be adjusted, both in forming the committee, event readiness and the theme carried (AT, 2023)

Regarding the implementation of P5 and PPRA, MA Sunan Prawoto has actually been implementing it for a long time and at the same time it has become a characteristic of the madrasa. P5 and PPRA activities have been integrated into learning activities directly or through Village Religious Organization events. In learning activities, before the start of the activity begins with the recitation of the holy verses of the Qur'an. In addition, many P5RA values are also integrated in each subject by the teacher. As for the Village Religious Organization event, as at the beginning of the new school year 2023-2024 all male students were involved in the *Mudarosah Akbar* event organized by Jam'iyah Mudarosah Akbar Al-Mubarak. The participation of MA Sunan Prawoto students in the event is a reflection that MA Sunan Prawoto fully supports the development of students' religious character and preserves local customs / culture and the new P5RA core activities will be carried out at the end of the semester.

MA Tarbiyatul Banin Winong Pati

Like other private MAs, MA Tarbiyatul Banin also just implemented the Merdeka curriculum in the 2023/2024 school year starting from class X. At MA Tarbiyatul Banin, the values of P5 and PPRA have become a tradition that is always preserved. In addition to being implemented in learning and pre-learning activities, MA Tarbiyatul Banin students have also been accustomed to applying religious characters and prioritizing the interests of the Community, especially in the month of Ramadan. In the context of PAI itself, the above activities have included two dimensions of rahmatan lil 'alamin values, namely *ta'addub* and *tathawwur wa ibtikar* which are implemented in two sub-values, namely social piety and cultured and environmental care. For this reason, the activities that have been implemented can be a foothold for implementing P5RA events in the future. If in the previous curriculum students were rarely involved in making works, then in IKM students can feel meaningful learning while working and not forgetting to hold on to religious character values (AY, 2023).

MA Manahijul Huda

The Merdeka Curriculum at Madrasah Aliyah manahijul Huda Ngagel was implemented starting in the 2023/2024 school year. But so far, based on the data we get from manahijul, the curriculum structure has used the Merdeka Curriculum as prepared by the curriculum development team at MA manahijul Huda. Before the start of the new school year teachers have prepared themselves independently to actively participate in seminars, workshops, training and workshops and so on online in addition to self-study based on the instructions of the Ministry of Religious Affairs KMA No. 347 of 2022, although with limited understanding in the implementation pattern. On the other hand, many teachers argue that although there are instructions and changes in the curriculum implemented, many teachers believe that this does not affect the teaching and learning process. The process of learning activities continues as it should but also slowly even while trying to adapt, adjusting the learning pattern of the Merdeka Curriculum. If teachers want to learn and innovate whatever the term curriculum is in essence the same, what distinguishes is the planning process, implementation and how the evaluation system is (M, 2023).

Character strengthening, habituation and learning projects produced actually in the 2013 curriculum have been well implemented. Such as strengthening religious character, mutual cooperation, diversity, independence, critical and creative reasoning has been implemented. There have been many habituation programs that have been implemented such as reciting asmaul husna, praying dzuhur in congregation, active learning in groups and completing tasks independently, being able to think critically and creatively, but the habituation program and character strengthening are not clearly stated in the teaching module, which in the 2013 curriculum yesterday was contained in the lesson plan in the learning process. As for the learning projects produced, what is expected in the Merdeka Curriculum has actually also been implemented in real action, such as sustainable living, how to manage waste properly, clean living efforts, democracy, for example in the election of IPMA directly, the practice is also involved in the right to vote and how the flow or process is in voting. Local wisdom, in Madrasah aliyah Manahijul Huda also in every year there is a haul commemoration the foundation still upholds the culture preserved by the local community together with the madrasah and students in commemorating the haul of mbh KH. Abdurrahman, elders or ancestors of the area and so on (Observation, 2023).

MA Miftahul Huda Tayu (MMH)

Based on the information obtained by researchers, related to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. Many MMH Tayu teachers are more enthusiastic and responsive to this Merdeka Curriculum, because MMH is the only madrasah that is brave and ready to implement an Merdeka Curriculum in 2022. When they are asked how the process of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum is going, they are more likely to say "just ready" in the implementation process, but teachers here must be proactive in wanting to learn independently, autodidactically, a lot of learning online following seminars, workshops, training and workshops, a lot of learning by downloading regulations for implementing the Merdeka Curriculum at the Ministry of Education and Culture and at the Ministry of Religious Affairs, They actively participated in activities organized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, as well as MGMP activities, learned a lot and understood the various learning platforms, so they struggled wholeheartedly to understand it in the first year along with MAN 1 Pati and MAN 2 Pati who had implemented it in 2022 as a pilot / piloting madrasah from the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The head of the madrasah and the head of curriculum fully support the teaching staff for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum (R, 2023).

From the Table 2, it can be concluded that the high and low resilience of teachers is influenced by various factors, including external factors, belief factors, and ability to act factors. This is in line with Edith H. Grotberg's theory which states that there are three things that form resilience, namely *I Have, I Am, and I Can*. These three things become crucial matters that can affect the level of resilience of a person, especially a teacher (Coronado-Hijón, 2017; Grotberg, 1995)(Coronado-Hijón, 2017; Grotberg, 1995). In the context of efforts to improve individual competence independently (*I Can*), this is relevant to the results of Caroline's study that teacher resilience is a "quality retention" issue (Day & Gu, 2010), namely the retention of committed, engaged, and motivated teachers, regardless of their career stage, continuing to develop themselves professionally and maximizing their ability to provide high-quality teaching (Mansfield et al., 2016). Not only that, external factors, namely support from

educational institutions (*I Have*) in various forms of competency improvement activities supporting curriculum implementation are things that should be prioritized because of their contribution and implications for teacher resilience (Gu et al., 2024).

The Table 2 is a presentation of data regarding the resilience of Madrasah Aliyah teachers in Pati Regency regarding the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.

Table 2. Merdeka Curriculum Implementation and Teacher Resilience

Status	Madrasah	Curriculum Implementation	Teacher Resilience
State	MAN 1 Pati	Institutional readiness; adequate resources; curriculum familiarity	System-based resilience
	MAN 2 Pati	Pilot implementation; program alignment	Institutional support; teacher adaptability
Private	MA Sunan Prawoto	P5RA integration; implementation adjustment	Value-based resilience
	MA Tarbiyatul Banin	Religious and social value institutionalization	Cultural resilience
	MA Manahijul Huda	Self-directed learning; limited system support	Personal resilience
	MMH Tayu	Early adoption; teacher training participation	Personal and leadership resilience

In the context of dynamic curriculum change, teacher resilience plays a crucial role in maintaining learning sustainability and effectiveness. Resilience is closely related to teachers' abilities in stress management, adjusting to new demands, self-efficacy, and professional identity. Resilient teachers tend to have high levels of self-efficacy, strong professional identity, and emotional intelligence that support adaptation to changing education policies (Qin, 2024). Thus, teacher training programs should ideally not only be oriented towards new curriculum material, but also strengthen the socio-emotional aspects of teachers as a buffer in dealing with the dynamics of educational change.

Challenges in the Merdeka Curriculum Adaptation Process

Various challenges arose in the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum starting from the beginning of implementation. Variations in the adaptation of Madrasah Aliyah teachers in Pati Regency are strongly influenced by various factors as described in the previous sub-chapter. The following is an explanation of the research data obtained:

MAN 1 Pati

In connection with the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at MAN 1 Pati, the Deputy Head of Infrastructure is committed to fulfilling all the infrastructure needed to support the learning project. On the other hand, the deputy head of curriculum also mentioned that all programs that have been implemented will be evaluated in order to improve and realize the profile of graduates who are religious, disciplined and

responsible. From the perspective of PAI teachers, all PAI teachers try to improve their competence by participating in various seminars, training and technical guidance as a support for the successful implementation of a better Merdeka Curriculum (Documentation of MAN 1 Pati, 2023).

MAN 2 Pati

MAN 2 Pati as a piloting madrasah or pilot implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum has been implementing the Merdeka Curriculum for 2 years. MAN 2 Pati is the coordinator or supervises other madrasah aliyah in Pati regency, especially the northern region in the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. On Monday Morning Ceremony, September 12, 2023, only MAN 2 PATI students in grades X and XI participated in the madrasah courtyard. This apple is carried out in an orderly and solemn manner. This shows that the Merdeka Curriculum at MAN 2 Pati has been implemented in 2 school years, namely the 2022/2023 school year by grade XI students and in 2023/2024 grade X students. During the mandate in the apple delivered by deputy principal for Curriculum MAN 2 PATI, he explained about the activities of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) and Rahmatan Lil Alamin Students (PPRA) which will be carried out by class X for the next week (S, 2023).

MA Sunan Prawoto Kayen

Various SMI preparations have been carried out by all teachers at MA Sunan Prawoto, including PAI teachers. This is supported by the number of teachers who independently study IKM, both related to learning tools, potential activities that can be implemented through online and offline media. In addition, MA Sunan Prawoto *stakeholders* also provide special provisions for teachers through Merdeka Curriculum Implementation Training activities by bringing in resource persons who are experts in their fields. The hope of the *stakeholders* is that teachers can better understand the Merdeka curriculum and its implementation in Madrasah. MA Sunan Prawoto is also committed to improving infrastructure related to technology in order to bridge teachers and students in implementing the theme of Engineering and Technology, which can later be utilized internally by madrasah and by the wider community (AT, 2023).

MA Tarbiyatul Banin Winong Pati

IKM workshop that has been held before the new school year. The head of MA Tarbiyatul Banin also constantly calls on all teachers to empower themselves independently related to IKM, in addition to being facilitated by the madrasah. The P5RA theme implementation activities that have been carried out are considered successful and are expected to be a foothold for the next main theme implementation events, although there are still many things that still need to be evaluated (Documentation of MA Tarbiyatul Banin, 2023).

MA Manahijul Huda

MA Manahijul Huda Ngagel, in preparing for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in the 2023/2024 school year, also held a seminar/workshop by inviting resource persons from peers who had implemented the Merdeka Curriculum in the 2022/2023 school year. Those responsible are the head of the Madrasah, the head of the curriculum, the head of the curriculum, and the head of student affairs by inviting all the teachers and the resource person, Mr. Abdul Rouf, S.Pd. This seminar is supported by documentary evidence of the implementation of seminars at madrasah aliyah Manahijul

Huda. In the seminar, it conveyed an understanding of the Merdeka Curriculum, the project of strengthening the profile of Pancasila students (P5) and the project of strengthening Rahmatan lil'alamiin students (PPRA) and in the implementation of the seminar the teacher was taught and equipped with the task of how to develop a project of strengthening the profile of Pancasila students and a project of strengthening Rahmatan lil'alamiin students in learning activities (AA, 2023).

Teachers can learn independently, take part in webinars or online seminars on the Merdeka Curriculum before the new school year, actively participate in seminars at the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and appoint representative teachers to actively join MGMP at MAN 2 Pati in preparing for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and preparing time to adapt and prepare learning tools based on the Merdeka Curriculum independently from each teacher for learning tools ranging from learning outcomes to be achieved, Learning Objectives (TP), ATP (Flow of Learning Objectives (ATP) and teaching modules for teachers who teach in class X after a workshop at the madrasah by referring to the Merdeka Curriculum guidebook. The teaching modules that will be compiled by PAI teachers only need to adjust to the components contained in the guidelines for compiling TP, ATP and teaching modules in the Merdeka Curriculum. They admitted that they did not find it difficult (AM, 2023; NK, 2023; Observation, 2023).

MA Miftahul Huda Tayu (MMH)

Madrasah Miftahul Huda Tayu, lead by Mr. Abdul Rouf, in preparing for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, teachers are given time and freedom to study independently to prepare to use the Merdeka Curriculum in their learning, the stress is when they have to instill their P5RA, so when this researcher interviewed one of the MMH Tayu teachers, teachers need their own time in blogging for the implementation of P5RA in what week and at what meeting (R, 2023).

The Teaching Module for him is no different from the lesson plan, it only requires a little effort to change the terms and format. In its implementation in the classroom, he also considers it not difficult, because so far he has implemented student-oriented KBM and has implemented PjBL. P5RA practice is blogging separately from its learning activities.

From the explanation above, the Table 3 is a mapping of some of the obstacles faced by Madrasah Aliyah teachers in Pati Regency in adapting the Merdeka curriculum:

Table 3. Teacher Obstacles in Merdeka Curriculum Implementation

Madrasah Name	Status	Main Constraints
MAN 1 Pati	State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program evaluation is still general, not yet based on reflective data. • PAI teachers are still in the stage of improving their competence independently.
MAN 2 Pati	State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are almost no significant obstacles. • Potential obstacles in the aspect of coordination and guidance of other madrasahs if not accompanied by systematic support.
MA	Sunan Private	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology facilities are not optimal, especially for the

Madrasah Name	Status	Main Constraints
Prawoto		theme "Engineering and Technology". Need to strengthen the use of technology for learning.
MA Tarbiyatul Banin	Private	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the P5RA theme has not been fully completed, still needs evaluation. • Teaching tools are still in the adaptation stage by each teacher.
MA Manahijul Huda	Private	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher readiness relies heavily on self-learning. • There is no strong institutional support system (systematic supervision/training).
MMH Tayu	Private	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P5RA is not yet integrated with learning, conducted separately (blogging). • Teachers have difficulty scheduling and integrating projects into instructional process (KBM).

The various obstacles faced by teachers as described above are in line with Miming's research findings, which state that there are six factors that become obstacles in the adaptation and implementation of the Merdeka curriculum, namely 1) Lack of understanding of the Merdeka Curriculum Concept, 2) Limited Resources and Facilities, 3) Challenges in Adjusting to Student Needs, 4) Difficulties in Assessment. 5) Lack of Support and Training. 6) Challenges in Developing Relevant Learning Plans (Aristiati & Arjuni, 2024). Support from various parties can offer solutions to every challenge faced by teachers (Karlina et al., 2024).

The implementation of Merdeka Curriculum in Madrasah Aliyah in Pati Regency shows differences in readiness between public and private madrasahs. Public madrasahs are generally better prepared because they have the support of facilities, human resources, and institutional experience. Meanwhile, private madrasahs depend more on teacher initiative and madrasah culture.

Teacher resilience should not be understood only as personal resilience, but as a result of the interaction between teachers and their work environment, such as institutional support, policies, and organizational culture. Therefore, the challenges of implementing the Merdeka Curriculum are not sufficiently resolved by only calling on teachers to survive and be ready to adapt to curriculum dynamics. More than that, teachers need strengthening support systems, such as training, learning communities, favorable policies, and visionary and transformative leadership.

The challenges in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum such as separate project activities and limited value integration highlight a gap in operationalizing the principles of the Love-Based Curriculum. While the Merdeka Curriculum allows for flexible and student-centered learning, the foundational values of empathy, care, and character development are not yet fully integrated into classroom practice (Kholidin & Sunhaji, 2025; Syakhrani, 2025).

Reflection on the Potential of Love-Based Curriculum as an Alternative Approach in the Context of Madrasah Education

The change from the Merdeka Curriculum to the Love-Based Curriculum has made teachers adapt again. Reflection on the potential of the Love-Based Curriculum as

an alternative approach in madrasah education shows that madrasahs have a strong foundation in the values of compassion, empathy and human relations, especially in pesantren-based madrasahs such as MA Salafiyah Kajen and MA Raudhatut Tholibin Pakis. These two madrasahs have not only embedded the value of love in the school culture, but have also organized teacher training to start integrating the Love-Based Curriculum approach into learning. At MA Salafiyah Kajen on July 29, 2025, a training on coding and artificial intelligence was held with speakers from Airlangga Publisher (ZLK, 2025). Meanwhile, MA Roudhatut Tholibin has facilitated teachers to attend deep learning curriculum training dated July 06, 2025 organized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Pati Regency, although it has not independently organized training activities in Madrasah (SK, 2025). This shows the awareness of stakeholders to transform affective values into a systemized pedagogical approach.

In more detail, some aspects of the readiness to implement the Love-Based Curriculum in private MAs in Pati regency are presented below:

Table 4. Mapping the Readiness to Implement the Love-Based Curriculum

Aspects	MA Salafiyah	MA Raudlatut Tholibin
Training Attended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love-Based Curriculum Training (from Ministry of Religious Affairs Pati) • Coding and AI Training (in collaboration with Airlangga Publisher) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love-Based Curriculum Training (from Ministry of Religious Affairs Pati)
Concept Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all teachers have understood the philosophical and technical basis of the Love-Based Curriculum. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only two teacher delegates understand the philosophical and technical basis of the Love-Based Curriculum
Integration in Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Started to develop Love Thematic lesson plans and revised teacher communication styles • Started applying the value of love through empathy-based technology projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Started developing Love Thematic lesson plans and revised teachers' communication styles
Institutional Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is support for technological innovation and systemized internal support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are internal initiatives after training, need continuous strengthening
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency in the application of values and limited technical guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent application of values and limited technical guidance

Reviewing the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum that has been held in the previous period in the two madrasahs, as well as reviewing the readiness in implementing the new curriculum, this indicates the strategic and adaptive steps of the two Institutions towards curriculum transformation (Qamariah & Anwar, 2025). From the perspective of the teachers themselves, they gave positive responses and

appreciation related to the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum (ZLK, 2025; SK, 2025). Departing from this fact, the potential for the implementation of the Love-Based Curriculum in Indonesia, especially within the Madrasah Education Institution, will stimulate the enthusiasm of teachers to adapt again even though it is surrounded by various challenges, both technical and administrative.

Departing from the perspective of teachers and stakeholder support above, curriculum implementation should be a matter of reflection for relevant policy makers. Curriculum implementation should be carried out in stages and well-prepared by considering various aspects, such as the availability of human resources, financial resources and infrastructure. The implementation of the socialization and training of the Love-Based Curriculum initiated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs can be increased in terms of the number and capacity of participants as delegates of each madrasah, so that implementation can run optimally.

For Higher Education organizers, the above findings are expected to add recommendations regarding the provision of skills, concrete experiences, and resilience of prospective teachers, in addition to the cognitive and methodological domains. Thus, prospective teachers will also be ready to serve in educational institutions by having four optimal competencies. In addition to equipping prospective teachers, universities can also transfer of knowledge to madrasah teachers by collaborating as a means of implementing Tri Dharma, especially in the context of Community Service (PkM). Contributions can be in the form of facilitating training activities, workshops, mentoring, In House Training (IHT) or becoming a speaker.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of Merdeka Curriculum in Madrasah Aliyah in Pati Regency shows that teacher resilience is strongly influenced by institutional support, personal capacity, and madrasah culture. Public madrasahs such as MAN 1 and MAN 2 Pati show high readiness because they are supported by an established system. In contrast, private madrasahs rely more on individual initiatives and the strength of local values. The main challenges in implementation include limited understanding, facilities and institutional support systems, especially in the integration of the P5 and PPRA projects. Teacher resilience is not sufficiently supported by personal resilience, but requires structural support and transformative policies. In this context, the Love-Based Curriculum approach emerges as an alternative that strengthens the affective side and human relations in learning, by emphasizing the values of compassion and empathy. The initiative of several pesantren-based madrasahs to provide training for teachers related to the Love-Based Curriculum shows that curriculum transformation in madrasahs is not only technical, but also cultural and spiritual. This research is expected to serve as a foothold for future researchers to conduct more in-depth policy analysis and valuation related to the Merdeka Curriculum and the Love-Based Curriculum.

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AN, as the first author, is solely responsible for writing this article. Meanwhile, N as the second author, assisted in completing this article.

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