

## Merdeka-Islamic Learning: Analysis of Merdeka Curriculum Implementation in Islamic Religious Education at Elementary Schools

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**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini mengkaji penerapan Kurikulum Merdeka pada mata pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) di tingkat Sekolah Dasar di Indonesia tahun 2026. Menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif melalui analisis dokumen, wawancara, dan observasi kelas di sekolah dasar terpilih, penelitian ini menginvestigasi bagaimana prinsip-prinsip utama Kurikulum Merdeka kemandirian siswa, pembelajaran berdiferensiasi, dan Profil Pelajar Pancasila diintegrasikan dalam pembelajaran PAI. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa meskipun guru menunjukkan kreativitas dan fleksibilitas yang meningkat dalam perancangan pembelajaran, masih terdapat tantangan signifikan, termasuk keterbatasan literasi digital guru PAI, pelatihan yang tidak memadai, serta ketegangan antara konten agama yang terstandarisasi dengan pedagogi adaptif. Penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa integrasi yang berhasil memerlukan pengembangan profesional yang berkelanjutan, bahan ajar yang responsif kontekstual, dan dukungan kelembagaan yang lebih kuat.

**Kata kunci:** Kurikulum Merdeka, Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI), Sekolah Dasar, Pembelajaran Berdiferensiasi, Profil Pelajar Pancasila

**Abstract:** This study examines the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka) in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at the elementary school level in Indonesia in 2026. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach through document analysis, interviews, and classroom observations at selected primary schools, this research investigates how the Merdeka Curriculum's core principles student agency, differentiated learning, and the Pancasila Student Profile are integrated within PAI instruction. The findings reveal that while teachers demonstrate increased creativity and flexibility in lesson design, significant challenges remain, including limited digital literacy among PAI educators, inadequate training, and the tension between standardized religious content and adaptive pedagogy. The study concludes that successful integration requires sustained professional development, contextually responsive teaching materials, and stronger institutional support. This research contributes to the growing discourse on reforming Islamic education within national curriculum policy frameworks.

**Keywords:** Merdeka Curriculum, Islamic Religious Education (PAI), Elementary School, Differentiated Learning, Pancasila Student Profile



## Introduction

The Indonesian education system has undergone a significant transformation with the nationwide rollout of the Merdeka Curriculum (Kurikulum Merdeka), formally introduced by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) as the successor to the 2013 Curriculum (K-13). As of 2026, the Merdeka Curriculum has been fully implemented across primary and secondary schools throughout Indonesia, representing one of the most ambitious curriculum reforms in the nation's post-independence history. The curriculum is anchored in the philosophy of Ki Hajar Dewantara, emphasizing the holistic development of students as autonomous, creative, and morally grounded individuals. Central to this reform is the articulation of the Profil Pelajar Pancasila (Pancasila Student Profile), a set of six core character dimensions: faith and piety, keberbinekaan global (global diversity), bergotong royong (collaboration), kreatif (creativity), bernalar kritis (critical thinking), and mandiri (independence) (Wijaningsih & Purnomo, 2023).

Within this reformed landscape, Islamic Religious Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam/PAI) occupies a uniquely complex position. As both a compulsory subject and a cornerstone of moral and spiritual formation for Indonesia's Muslim-majority student population, PAI is expected to fulfill dual mandates: transmitting classical Islamic knowledge and values while simultaneously adapting to the constructivist, student-centered pedagogical vision of the Merdeka Curriculum. This intersection creates both unprecedented opportunities and formidable challenges for PAI educators at the elementary school level, where foundational religious literacy and character formation are most critically shaped (Isti & Gumilar, 2025).

The Merdeka Curriculum introduces several structural and pedagogical novelties directly relevant to PAI instruction. The replacement of rigid Kompetensi Dasar (Basic Competencies) with more flexible Capaian Pembelajaran (Learning Outcomes) grants teachers greater latitude in sequencing and delivering content. Additionally, the introduction of Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila (P5) interdisciplinary project-based learning units invites PAI to collaborate with other subjects in fostering character development beyond isolated doctrinal instruction. The curriculum's emphasis on differentiated instruction (pembelajaran berdiferensiasi) also demands that PAI teachers recognize and respond to diverse student learning profiles, readiness levels, and backgrounds a paradigm shift from the transmission-focused,

teacher-centered approaches historically dominant in Indonesian Islamic education (Utaminingsih et al., 2023).

Despite the policy momentum behind the Merdeka Curriculum, empirical research on its practical implementation in PAI classrooms particularly at the elementary level remains sparse. Most existing studies have focused on general subject areas such as Mathematics, Bahasa Indonesia, and Natural Science, leaving a notable gap in the literature regarding the unique dynamics of religious subject implementation. Furthermore, the distinctive epistemological and normative character of Islamic education where content is often perceived as divinely prescribed and non-negotiable raises important questions about the extent to which constructivist and student-centered approaches can be applied without compromising doctrinal integrity (Amalia & Achadi, 2023).

Existing studies on Merdeka Curriculum implementation in Islamic Religious Education at elementary schools have predominantly focused on identifying general challenges such as teacher readiness and limited infrastructure, as seen in Wulandari & Yunita's (2023) examination of SD Negeri Karang Jati which found that while implementation has run properly, teachers still require guidance in the process (Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Education Innovation and Social Science, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta) , and the study at SDN Bolo 01 which identified challenges including teachers' limited experience and classroom management issues in PAI (Garuda Kemdikbud) . Syamsurizal, Helmiati, & Hasyim (2025) analyzed the implications of curriculum change policies for PAI quality in elementary schools, concluding that the Merdeka Curriculum has positive potential if supported by teacher readiness (Jurnal Al-Rosikhun, UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang) , while research on differentiated instruction in PAI has been conducted at the junior secondary level by Churairoh et al. (2025) at MTs Al-Azhar Center Baturaja and SMP Negeri 1 OKU, revealing that implementation remains superficial and fragmented (Jurnal Al-Ishlah, STAI Hubbulwathan) . At the senior secondary level, studies have examined P5 project implementation in PAI at SMAN 3 Palangka Raya (Garuda Kemdikbud, 2025) and SMPN 1 Rumbia, Central Lampung (UIN Jurai Siwo Lampung Repository, 2025) , while Mintasih, Sukiman, & Purnama (2024) explored digital technology integration in PAI learning at senior high schools in Gunungkidul (Jurnal Pendidikan Islam, UIN Sunan Kalijaga) , and a broader analysis of teacher professionalism in implementing Merdeka Belajar across Islamic educational units highlighted persistent challenges regarding conceptual understanding and teacher

preparedness (DOAJ) . While these contributions have been valuable in mapping the landscape of curriculum transition, they have largely treated PAI as a monolithic subject, focused predominantly on single-school cases or specific grade levels (primarily junior and senior secondary), and have not sufficiently explored the pedagogical nuances of how Merdeka principles are translated into specific classroom practices across diverse elementary school contexts. This study addresses these gaps by offering a comparative analysis of Merdeka-Islamic Learning across six elementary schools in 2026, examining not only the challenges and readiness factors but also the qualitative spectrum of instructional practices from surface-level "add-on" patterns to genuinely integrated and responsive pedagogy thereby providing a more nuanced understanding of curriculum enactment in Islamic education at the elementary level and contributing a novel analytical framework for evaluating the fidelity and depth of Merdeka Curriculum implementation in religious subjects.

This study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap by conducting a systematic analysis of how the Merdeka Curriculum is being implemented in PAI classrooms at the elementary school level in 2026. Drawing on qualitative data collected from multiple school sites in urban and peri-urban settings, the research examines: (1) the degree to which PAI teachers understand and have internalized the Merdeka Curriculum's philosophical underpinnings; (2) the instructional strategies employed to align PAI content with differentiated learning and P5 project activities; (3) the institutional and structural barriers that impede effective implementation; and (4) the student outcomes and engagement patterns observed in Merdeka-aligned PAI classrooms (Munawir et al., 2024; Pendekatan et al., 2024; Ziyad & Hidayatullah, 2025).

The significance of this study is threefold. First, it contributes empirical data to the policy discourse on curriculum reform in Indonesia, offering evidence-based insights that can inform future iterations of the Merdeka Curriculum framework. Second, it advances scholarly understanding of the interface between Islamic educational tradition and progressive pedagogical reform, a topic of growing relevance across Muslim-majority nations undertaking educational modernization. Third, by centering the elementary school level, the study addresses the formative stage at which religious identity, values, and habits of learning are most durably instilled, making its findings directly relevant to teacher education, in-service training, and curriculum design at both national and regional levels (Munawir et al., 2024; Nadya & Misra, 2025).

The remainder of this article is organized as follows: Section II presents the research methodology; Section III provides the theoretical and contextual background; Section

IV discusses the empirical findings in depth; and Section V offers conclusions and recommendations for practice and policy.

### **Metodology**

This study employs a qualitative descriptive research design to examine Merdeka Curriculum implementation in Islamic Religious Education at six purposively selected elementary schools in 2026. This design is chosen for its appropriateness in describing phenomena as they naturally occur, presenting facts straightforwardly without extensive theoretical interpretation, while still allowing for rich contextual understanding of complex educational practices. The qualitative descriptive approach enables the researcher to stay close to the data and produce comprehensive summaries of participants' experiences and perspectives.

The six schools are purposively selected to represent diversity across public and Islamic-affiliated institutions, urban and peri-urban settings, and varying levels of curriculum readiness based on prior accreditation and self-assessment. Primary participants include PAI subject teachers who have taught under the Merdeka Curriculum for at least one academic year. Secondary participants comprise school principals and curriculum coordinators, while tertiary participants include student focus groups selected based on diverse academic performance levels to capture varied learning experiences.

Data collection integrates four complementary methods to ensure comprehensive coverage of the implementation phenomenon. First, classroom observations are conducted eight times per school using structured protocols to document lesson structures, integration of Merdeka-aligned elements, differentiation practices, teacher-student interaction patterns, and student engagement levels. Second, in-depth semi-structured interviews with teachers, principals, and students explore planning processes (including teaching module development), implementation challenges, leadership support, teacher agency, collaboration practices, and perceived learning outcomes. Third, document analysis examines teaching modules, learning objectives, assessment instruments, and student work samples to assess alignment with Merdeka Curriculum principles and identify implementation gaps. Fourth, focus group discussions with teachers and curriculum coordinators investigate interdisciplinary collaboration, particularly in P5 project integration, and collective perspectives on challenges in implementing differentiated learning and authentic assessment.

Data analysis follows the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, comprising three concurrent activities. Data condensation involves systematic coding

using both deductive codes derived from Merdeka Curriculum frameworks and inductive codes emerging from the data. Data display organizes findings into matrices and cross-case comparison tables to identify commonalities and variations across schools. Conclusion drawing involves iterative interpretation verified through member checking with participants, peer debriefing, and triangulation across data sources and methods.

Trustworthiness is established through credibility strategies including prolonged engagement and triangulation; transferability supported by thick description of research contexts and participant characteristics; dependability ensured through systematic documentation and audit trails; and confirmability guaranteed through researcher reflexivity and maintenance of raw data for verification.

The study spans one academic year, with data collection conducted across two semesters, followed by analysis and reporting phases. Ethical protocols include informed consent obtained from all participants, participant anonymity, data confidentiality, right to withdraw at any time, and institutional ethics approval obtained prior to fieldwork commencement. This qualitative descriptive methodology provides a rigorous yet flexible framework for capturing the realities and nuances of curriculum transition in Islamic education contexts, producing findings that are both credible and useful for informing educational policy and practice.

## **Result**

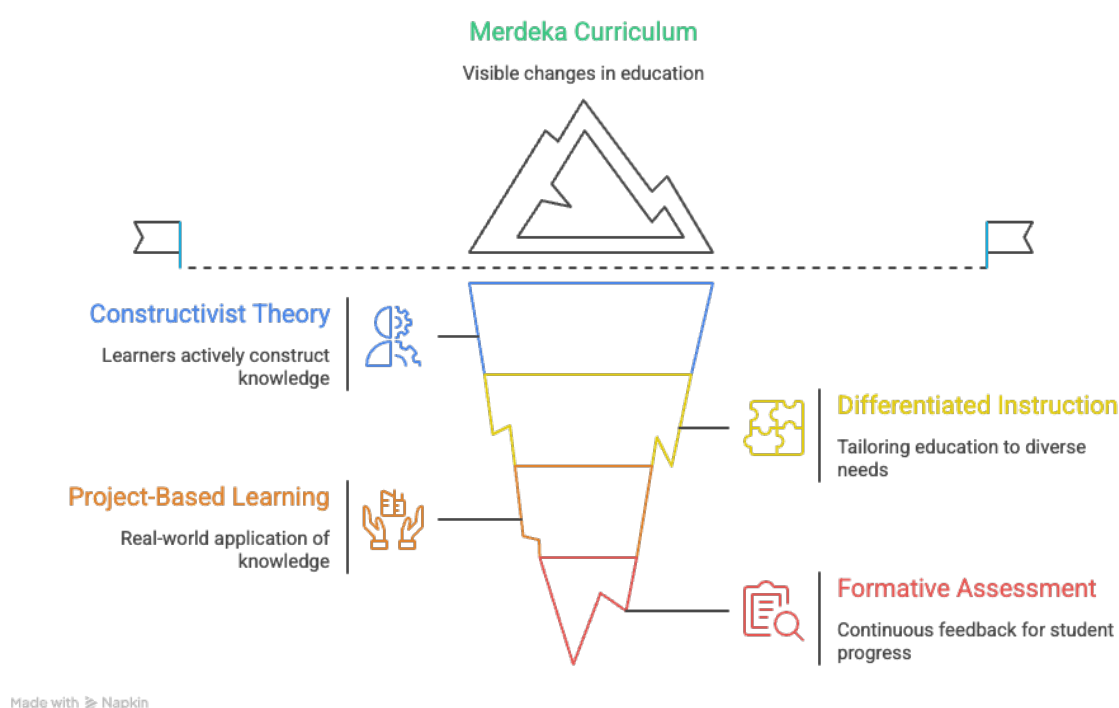
### **Theoretical Framework And Contextual Background**

To situate the analysis, it is necessary to briefly review the theoretical foundations of the Merdeka Curriculum and their relevance to Islamic Religious Education. The Merdeka Curriculum draws philosophically from constructivism (Alfarizi et al., 2024), which posits that learners actively construct knowledge through social interaction and experience, rather than passively receiving transmitted information. This philosophical orientation is operationalized through three key pedagogical principles embedded in the curriculum: differentiated instruction, project-based learning, and formative assessment.

Differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 2001) requires teachers to vary the content, process, product, and learning environment based on students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles. For PAI teachers, this represents a significant departure from the dominant paradigm of rote memorization and uniform recitation that has historically characterized Islamic religious instruction in Indonesian schools.

Research in Islamic education reform (Miftahudin et al., 2024) has consistently identified teacher-centered, text-bound pedagogy as a structural limitation of PAI instruction, making the Merdeka Curriculum's differentiated model both a challenge and an opportunity.

**Picture 1. Merdeka Curriculum`s Tranformasi Potential In Islamic Religious Educationn**



The Profil Pelajar Pancasila, as the normative framework underpinning the Merdeka Curriculum, resonates strongly with classical Islamic educational philosophy. The first dimension beriman, bertakwa kepada Tuhan Yang Maha Esa, dan berakhlak mulia (faithful, God-fearing, and noble in character)—directly maps onto the traditional PAI objective of tarbiyah (holistic moral and spiritual formation). The other dimensions critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, independence, and global diversity correspond to broader Qur'anic and prophetic traditions emphasizing iqra' (intellectual engagement), shura (deliberation), and khalifah (responsible stewardship). This conceptual alignment provides a theological rationale for PAI's active participation in the Merdeka framework (Sukari & Hasan, 2025).

## Discussion

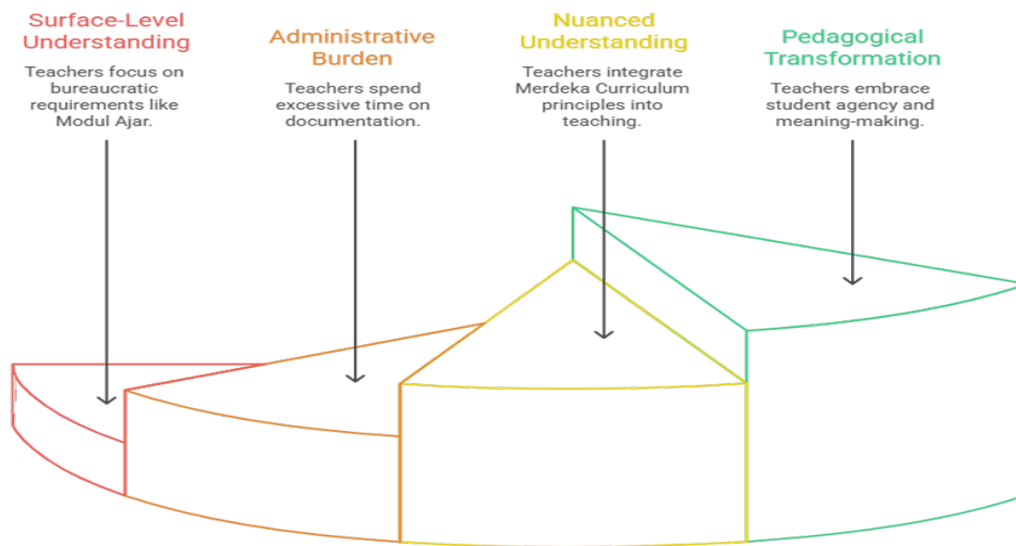
### Teachers' Understanding and Readiness

The findings reveal a notably uneven landscape of Merdeka Curriculum readiness among PAI teachers across the six research sites. While all participating teachers had attended at least one formal Pelatihan Mandiri (Independent Training) session through the Platform Merdeka Mengajar (PMM), the depth of conceptual understanding varied significantly. Approximately 60% of teachers demonstrated a surface-level understanding of Merdeka Curriculum principles, primarily framing it as a bureaucratic requirement involving the production of Modul Ajar rather than a substantive pedagogical transformation (Sukari & Hasan, 2025).

A recurring theme in teacher interviews was the perception of the Merdeka Curriculum as administratively burdensome. Several teachers reported spending disproportionate time on documentation preparing ATP, Modul Ajar, and assessment rubrics at the expense of actual instructional planning. One teacher at School B commented: 'We have more paperwork now than before. The spirit is good, but we spend too much time making documents and less time actually thinking about how to teach.' This finding aligns with broader concerns raised in the implementation literature about the risk of procedural compliance overshadowing genuine pedagogical change (Nasehudin et al., 2025).

In contrast, approximately 25% of teachers—predominantly those with prior exposure to active learning methodologies through private training or university coursework demonstrated a more nuanced and integrated understanding. These teachers articulated the Merdeka Curriculum not merely as a document framework but as a philosophical reorientation toward student agency and meaning-making. They reported actively experimenting with cooperative learning structures, inquiry-based discussion of Qur'anic verses, and student-led P5 projects centered on Islamic social ethics (Angga et al., 2023).

**Picture 2. Achiving Merdeka Curriculum Readiness**

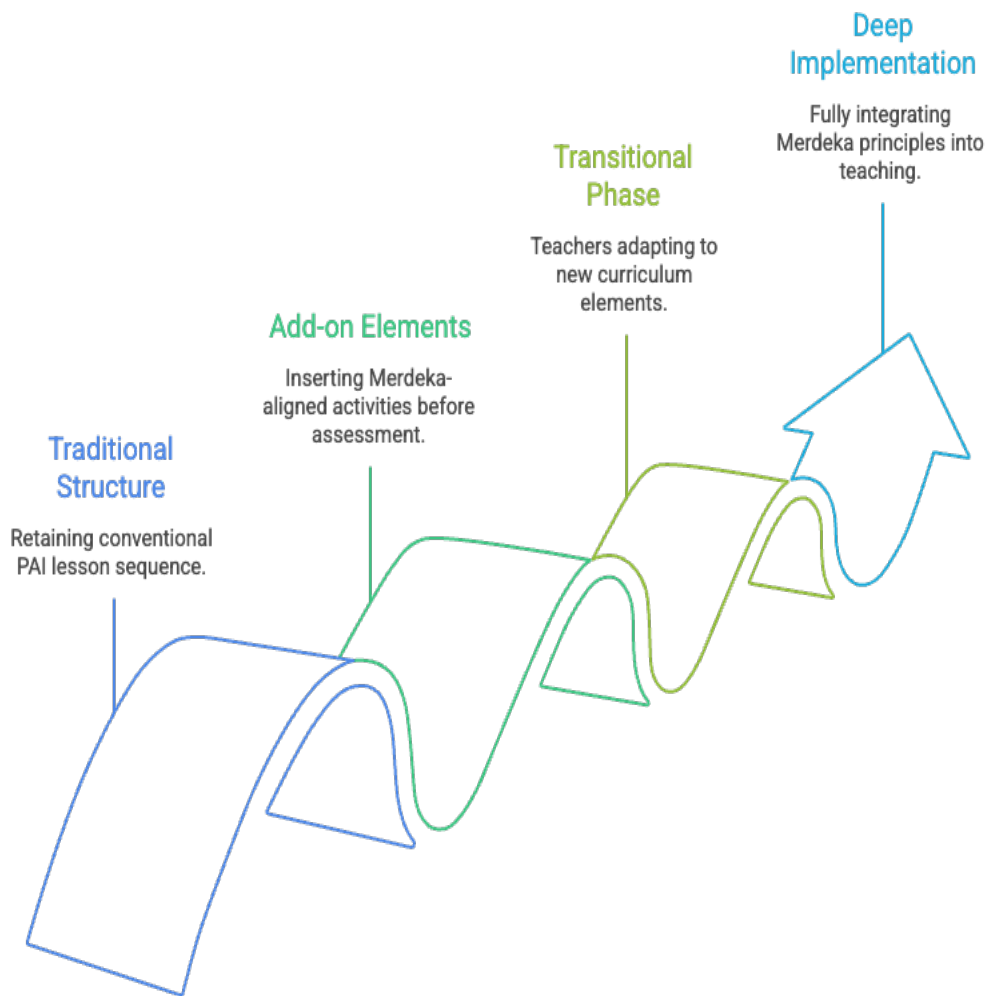


### **Instructional Practices in Merdeka-Aligned PAI Classrooms**

Classroom observations across the six schools revealed a spectrum of instructional practices ranging from minimally adapted traditional approaches to genuinely innovative Merdeka-aligned delivery. The most commonly observed lesson structure retained elements of the conventional PAI sequence opening du'a (prayer), recitation review, teacher exposition, and structured Q&A with Merdeka-aligned elements appended rather than integrated. This 'add-on' pattern, where, for instance, a group activity was inserted before the final assessment task, suggests that many teachers are in a transitional phase of curriculum adoption rather than deep implementation (Romdani, 2023).

However, in three of the six schools, observers documented genuinely differentiated instruction. In one Grade 4 PAI class, the teacher organized students into three learning groups based on pre-assessed Qur'anic reading fluency: students at advanced levels worked independently on contextual analysis of Surah Al-Hujurat verses; intermediate learners engaged in peer-tutoring dyads; and emerging readers received direct phonics and tajwid (recitation rules) support from the teacher. This differentiated structure, while modest in scope, exemplifies the kind of responsive, student-centered practice envisioned by the Merdeka Curriculum (Zekina et al., 2023).

**Picture 3. Transition To Merdeka Aligned PAI**



The integration of P5 projects into PAI instruction emerged as one of the most creative and contested findings of the study. At School D, a P5 project titled 'Akhlak dalam Keberagaman' (Ethics in Diversity) brought together PAI, Social Studies, and Bahasa Indonesia teachers in a six-week interdisciplinary unit exploring Islamic principles of tolerance and pluralism. Students produced documentary-style videos presenting community members of different faiths engaging in cooperative activities, framed through Qur'anic verses on human dignity and coexistence. The project was

unanimously praised by both teachers and students for its relevance and depth. However, the PAI teacher expressed concern about the time diverted from core syllabus coverage, noting: "The project was meaningful, but I worry the students might miss foundational content that will be tested in the national assessment (Paramasasti & Marzuki, 2025).

### **Challenges and Barriers to Effective Implementation**

Three principal barriers to effective Merdeka Curriculum implementation in PAI emerged consistently across the research sites: (a) limited digital and technological competency among PAI teachers; (b) insufficient and inconsistently delivered professional development; and (c) structural tension between the Merdeka Curriculum's adaptive philosophy and the prescriptive nature of religious content (Santoso, 2025).

Digital literacy presented a significant challenge, particularly for senior PAI teachers. The Platform Merdeka Mengajar (PMM), the Ministry's primary vehicle for teacher training and resource sharing, requires reliable internet connectivity and basic digital navigation skills. In two schools serving lower-income catchment areas, several PAI teachers reported accessing PMM only sporadically due to device limitations or connectivity issues. More critically, even when access was available, the platform's predominantly text-based training modules were perceived as insufficiently practical and contextualized for PAI-specific needs (Abdurrahman & Muharom, 2024).

Professional development emerged as the second major barrier. While the government mandates regular In-House Training (IHT) at the school level and subject-specific MGMP (Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran) sessions, the quality and frequency of these sessions varied considerably. PAI-focused MGMP sessions were often merged with general religious education workshops, diluting their relevance to Merdeka Curriculum implementation specifics. Teachers repeatedly expressed the desire for hands-on, peer-learning professional development that modeled Merdeka-aligned PAI lessons rather than presenting theoretical frameworks (Butarbutar et al., 2025).

**Picture 4. Barriers hinder merdeka curriculum implementation**



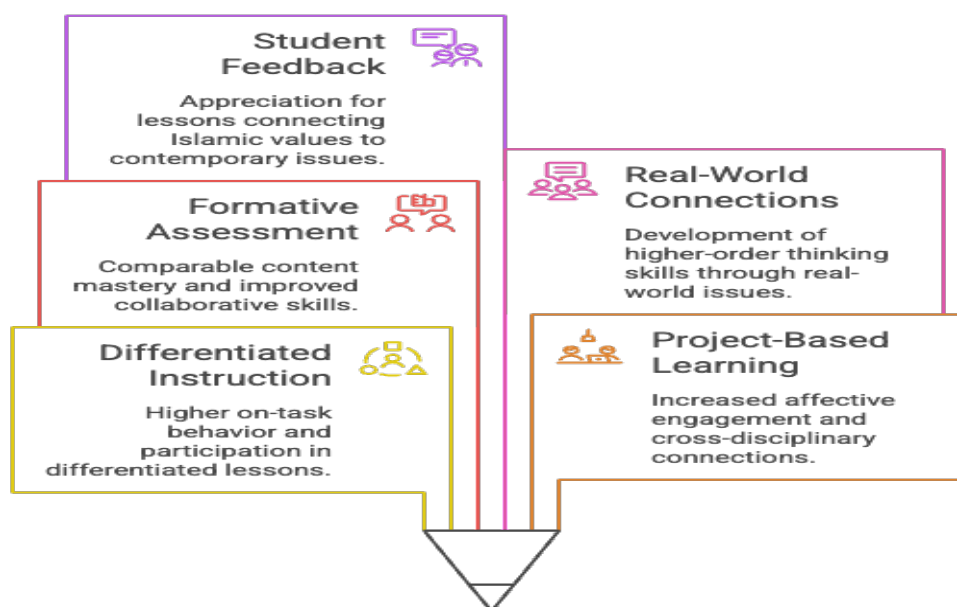
The third and most philosophically complex challenge concerns the tension between the curriculum's open-ended, constructivist orientation and the epistemological character of Islamic religious content. Several teachers articulated discomfort with applying fully student-driven inquiry to matters of *aqidah* (creed) or *fiqh* (jurisprudence), where doctrinal correctness is paramount and deviation carries moral and social consequences. As one teacher explained: 'In Math, it's fine if a student discovers the answer themselves. In PAI, the answer about what is *halal* or *haram* is already determined. We cannot make it open-ended.' This tension reflects a fundamental epistemological friction between secular constructivist pedagogy and normative religious knowledge traditions, which the Merdeka Curriculum framework does not explicitly address (Alimuddin, 2023).

### **Student Engagement and Learning Outcomes**

Despite the implementation challenges, student engagement observations yielded encouraging findings in classrooms where Merdeka-aligned practices were genuinely adopted. Students in differentiated and project-based PAI lessons demonstrated markedly higher levels of on-task behavior, voluntary participation, and affective engagement compared to those in conventionally structured classrooms. In P5-integrated lessons, students demonstrated cross-disciplinary connections between

PAI content and real-world social issues, suggesting the development of higher-order thinking skills consistent with the Merdeka Curriculum's goals (Fakhrudin et al., 2025).

**Picture 5. Pathways to PAI Excellence**



Teacher-reported formative assessment data, while limited in methodological rigor, suggested that students in more innovative PAI classrooms performed comparably or better on content mastery assessments, while showing additional gains in collaborative skills and self-reflective capacities. Students themselves, in informally observed group discussions, frequently expressed appreciation for PAI lessons that connected Islamic values to contemporary issues environmental stewardship (khalifah fil ard), social justice, and digital ethics over lessons confined to ritual knowledge transmission (Defa et al., 2023).

### **Institutional Support and Leadership Dimensions**

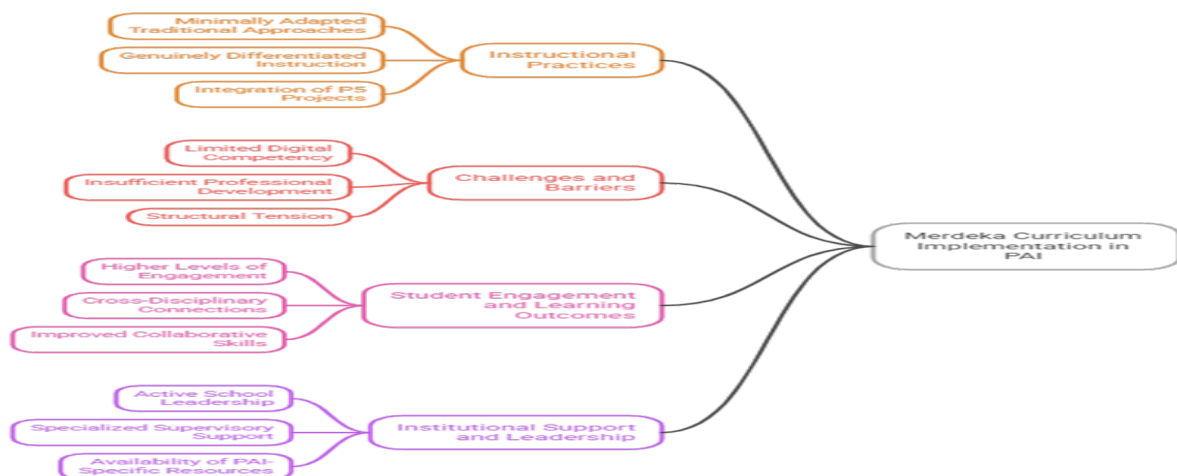
School leadership emerged as a critical mediating variable in implementation quality. Schools where principals demonstrated active knowledge of the Merdeka Curriculum, participated in teacher professional development sessions, and allocated

dedicated time for PAI teachers to collaborate showed significantly stronger implementation fidelity. Conversely, in schools where principals delegated curriculum responsibility entirely to curriculum coordinators without direct engagement, PAI teachers reported feeling unsupported and uncertain about implementation expectations (Susilawati et al., 2024).

The role of the Pengawas PAI (Islamic Education Supervisor) also emerged as pivotal. In two districts, supervisors had received specialized Merdeka Curriculum training and were conducting structured classroom visits with constructive feedback protocols. In three other districts, supervisors reported receiving no specific training for evaluating Merdeka Curriculum implementation in PAI, relying instead on traditional administrative checklists that assessed document completeness rather than pedagogical quality. This systemic inconsistency in supervisory support reflects broader infrastructural gaps in the national Merdeka Curriculum rollout that disproportionately affect subject-specific supervision (Kaloko, 2025).

A further institutional consideration concerns the availability and quality of PAI-specific curriculum resources under the Merdeka framework. While the Ministry has released official Buku Teks PAI (PAI textbooks) and sample Modul Ajar through PMM, teachers and observers noted that these materials often retain the presentational, information-dense format of K-13 materials, with insufficient guidance on differentiation strategies, formative assessment design, or P5 integration. This resource gap places the burden of genuine curriculum innovation disproportionately on individual teacher creativity and initiative, without adequate systemic scaffolding (Junaidi et al., 2023).

**Picture 2 Merdeka Curriculum Implementasi in PAI**



Taken together, the findings paint a picture of curriculum implementation in flux a system poised between reform aspiration and institutional inertia. The Merdeka Curriculum has undeniably catalyzed important conversations among PAI educators about the purposes, methods, and values of Islamic religious education (Utami & Zainuri, 2024). Yet the translation of these conversations into durable, equitable classroom transformation requires investments in teacher development, resource quality, supervisory capacity, and philosophical dialogue that current policy frameworks have only partially provided.

## **Conclusion**

This study has examined the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at the elementary school level in Indonesia in 2026, drawing on qualitative data from six research sites across three provinces. The findings reveal a complex and multifaceted implementation landscape characterized by genuine pedagogical innovation in some classrooms, significant capacity and resource constraints in others, and deep philosophical questions about the compatibility of constructivist curriculum philosophy with normative Islamic educational traditions.

Three principal conclusions emerge from the analysis. First, the effective implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in PAI is not merely a technical or administrative challenge but a deeply pedagogical and epistemological one. PAI teachers need not only technical skills in Modul Ajar development and differentiated instruction design but a conceptual framework for navigating the interface between student-centered learning and the authoritative character of Islamic religious knowledge. Professional development programs must therefore address both dimensions, moving beyond procedural training to engage teachers in substantive dialogue about the educational philosophy underpinning the reform.

Second, institutional support structures particularly school leadership engagement, supervisory capacity, and the quality of curriculum resources are decisive determinants of implementation quality. Policy interventions that focus exclusively on teacher-level competencies, without addressing the enabling conditions at school and system levels, are unlikely to produce the systemic change envisioned by the Merdeka Curriculum. Targeted investment in PAI-specific supervisory training, collaborative resource development, and leadership capacity building is therefore essential.

Third, and most significantly, the Merdeka Curriculum offers a genuine and largely unrealized opportunity for the renewal of Islamic religious education in Indonesia. The alignment between the Profil Pelajar Pancasila's character dimensions and classical Islamic educational values provides a compelling theological basis for PAI's active, creative engagement with the new curriculum. PAI need not be positioned as a resistant or peripheral subject in the Merdeka framework; rather, it has the potential to serve as its moral and spiritual heart, provided that teachers are empowered, supported, and trusted to exercise the professional judgment the curriculum demands.

Future research should expand the geographic and institutional scope of inquiry, include longitudinal tracking of student learning outcomes in Merdeka-aligned PAI classrooms, and explore the perspectives of students and parents as key stakeholders in the religious education reform process. Comparative studies examining PAI implementation across different school types public, private Islamic, and pesantren-integrated schools would also enrich the evidence base.

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