

Evaluation of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Teacher Readiness in Implementing Merdeka Curriculum: A Discrepancy Evaluation Model Analysis

Lutfia Azahra Yusuf¹, Mappayompa², Aqodiah³, Mardiyah Hayati⁴, Mustapa Ali⁵,
Niswatun Hasanah⁶

^{1,2,3,4,5,6}Fakultas Agama Islam, Universitas Muhammadiyah Mataram, Indonesia
lutfiaazahra515@gmail.com

Abstract: This study aims to evaluate the readiness of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah teachers in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum through a library research approach with an integrative review method. The review was conducted on scientific literature from 2015 to 2024 obtained from Google Scholar, Scispace, DOAJ, and Scopus databases. The findings show that teachers' readiness still varies, influenced by uneven understanding of the curriculum, limited training, less than optimal institutional support, and low emotional intelligence in the face of change. Analysis of the discrepancy evaluation model revealed a significant gap between the expected ideal conditions and the factual conditions in the field. This emphasizes the importance of strategic reforms in professional training, strengthening support systems and developing more responsive education policies. This study recommends further research on needs-based training models and the role of madrasah leadership in the successful implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in a comprehensive and sustainable manner.

Keywords: Teacher Readiness, Independent Curriculum, Discrepancy Evaluation, Integrative Review.

Article History:

Received: 30-04-2025

Online : 28-05-2025



This is an open access article under the [CC-BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license

A. INTRODUCTION

Merdeka Curriculum is an educational approach that gives teachers freedom to design and implement learning according to students' needs and context. Teacher readiness is a key factor in the successful implementation of this curriculum, which includes understanding the curriculum structure, ability to design differentiated learning, and mastery of educational technology. According to Arofaturrohmah et al. (2023), teacher readiness in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum involves understanding the curriculum objectives, the ability to design appropriate learning, and adaptation to changes in the assessment system. In addition, Sekarinasih (2023) emphasized that madrasah readiness in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum is influenced by aspects of human resources, facilities, and programs implemented.

Research by Arofaturrohmah et al. (2023) shows that teachers' readiness to implement Merdeka Curriculum is still varied, with the main challenges including adaptation to new learning approaches and changes in the assessment system. The study highlights the importance of continuous professional development and system support in improving teacher readiness. Meanwhile, Sekarinasih (2023) found that the readiness of madrasah ibtidaiyah in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum is influenced by the availability of competent human

resources, adequate facilities, and programs that support curriculum implementation. This research emphasizes the need for a holistic approach in improving madrasah readiness. In addition, research by Sangadah and Nurngain (2023) revealed that teachers face obstacles in understanding and implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, especially in Arabic subjects, which require special training and support from parents.

The study by Romadhon et al. (2023) at SD Negeri 1 Ulak Kedondong showed that teachers' readiness to implement Merdeka Curriculum still requires a lot of additional training and knowledge, especially in technology adaptation and digital literacy. This research emphasizes the importance of preparing teaching materials, differentiated learning, and providing appropriate teaching materials. Meanwhile, research by Wally et al. (2024) at SD Negeri 286 Maluku Tengah found that although most teachers showed a fairly good understanding of the structure and concepts of the Merdeka Curriculum, there were still some who needed a deeper understanding. Efforts to improve teacher readiness must go through intensive training and continuous support from related parties. Ferdiawan et al. (2023) in their research at SD Negeri 01 Selo, Purwodadi, showed that teachers have attended training and have relevant competencies, but still face obstacles that require solutions through training and consultation with colleagues.

Research by Adiba (2023) at SD NU Pemanahan, Bantul, revealed that although teachers have participated in various trainings, there are still obstacles in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum, such as limited school resources and a lack of understanding of the goals and concepts of the new curriculum. This study emphasizes the need to improve facilities and teacher understanding to support curriculum implementation. In addition, research by Rofi'ah et al. (2023) in junior secondary schools showed that teacher readiness is influenced by internal factors such as competence and motivation, as well as external factors such as system support and resource availability. Effective readiness improvement strategies include continuous professional development, mentoring, and collaboration among teachers. The study by Wally et al. (2024) also highlights the importance of understanding the concept of the Pancasila Learner Profile Strengthening Project (P5) in improving teacher readiness.

Research by Ferdiawan et al. (2023) in SD Negeri 01 Selo, Purwodadi, showed that teachers have attended training and have relevant competencies, but still face obstacles that require solutions through training and consultation with colleagues. The study emphasized the importance of providing appropriate guidebooks and learning materials to support a more effective learning process. Meanwhile, research by Sangadah and Nurngain (2023) revealed that teachers face obstacles in understanding and implementing Merdeka Curriculum, especially in Arabic subjects, which require special training and support from parents. This study highlights the need for special seminars for teachers in understanding and applying the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. In addition, the study by Arofaturrohman et al. (2023) emphasizes that teacher readiness in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum involves understanding the objectives of the curriculum, the ability to design appropriate learning, and adaptation to changes in the assessment system. From the various studies that have been stated, it appears that teachers' readiness to implement the Merdeka Curriculum still faces various challenges, both in terms of understanding concepts, technical skills, and system

support. Even though various trainings and mentoring have been carried out, there is still a gap between planning.

B. METHOD

This study uses a library research approach with an integrative review method, which is a systematic review of relevant literature to identify, analyze, and synthesize findings related to the readiness of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah teachers in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. This approach aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of previously published theoretical and empirical developments. This method is suitable for integrating diverse studies that use different methodological approaches on the same topic (Whittemore & Knafl, 2005). As such, this research not only summarizes previous results, but also highlights gaps, patterns, and theoretical and practical contributions.

The data sources in this study come from various credible scientific databases, namely Google Scholar, Scispace, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), and Scopus. The inclusion criteria include national and international journal articles that are relevant to the topic of teacher readiness and the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, published between 2015 and 2024, have full access (full text), and are written in Indonesian or English. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria include articles that are not relevant to the topic, are not available in full form, or are opinion/commentary that is not research-based.

The literature search process was conducted systematically using keywords such as "readiness of madrasah ibtidaiyah teachers," "independent curriculum implementation," "teacher readiness," and "curriculum implementation in Islamic primary schools." The use of Boolean operators such as AND and OR were applied to expand or narrow the search results. Furthermore, the literature selection procedure was conducted in three stages: (1) identification and collection of articles based on titles and abstracts, (2) selection based on compliance with inclusion criteria, and (3) thorough review of the content of articles that passed the initial selection. Selected articles were then coded and grouped based on themes and key findings for further analysis.

The method of data analysis was thematic analysis, which grouped the literature into relevant themes such as aspects of curriculum understanding, learning strategies, teacher challenges and institutional support. The validity of the review results was strengthened by peer debriefing and source triangulation strategies, by comparing data from different sources and types of publications. Meanwhile, reliability was maintained by ensuring transparency of the literature selection process and systematic recording of all documents reviewed. This process refers to Torraco's (2005) guidelines on integrative literature review that can produce a meaningful conceptual synthesis.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. IdeaStandards for Teacher Readiness in Implementing the Independent Curriculum

Teacher willingness to implement the Merdeka Curriculum is an important element in the success of education in Indonesia. Based on a number of recent studies, there are several aspects that need to be considered related to teacher readiness to run this curriculum effectively. Teachers' willingness to implement the Merdeka Curriculum is an important element in the success of education in Indonesia. Based on a number of recent studies, there are several aspects that need to be considered related to teacher readiness to run this curriculum effectively.

First, the successful implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum depends heavily on teachers' understanding and mental readiness. Research at MAN 2 Serang City shows that madrasah readiness to implement this new curriculum still needs to be encouraged through training and systematic support for teachers (Apriatni et al., 2023). In addition, research conducted by Muhafid and Retnawati also revealed that teachers at the elementary level when preparing for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum faced challenges in understanding the fundamental differences between the previous and new curriculums, which affected their level of readiness (Muhafid & Retnawati, 2023).

Second, the factors of emotional intelligence, experience, and self-efficacy also contribute significantly to teacher readiness. Research by Aprilita and Trisnawati showed a positive relationship between self-efficacy and career readiness to become a teacher, which includes readiness to implement the new curriculum (Aprilita & Trisnawati, 2022). In addition, teachers' ability to use Pedagogical Technology and Content Knowledge (TPACK) was also shown to have an effect on their readiness to learn, both in the context of online and conventional learning (Sakti & Eliza, 2022).

Third, the challenges associated with implementing the Merdeka Curriculum also include the need for shared understanding between teachers and students. Research conducted in Gunungsitoli Sub-district shows that both teachers and students still experience difficulties in adjusting their way of learning to this new system, often due to habits from the previous curriculum, namely Curriculum 2013 (Harefa & Harefa, 2023). This emphasizes the need for collaborative cooperation and support from educational institutions in order to facilitate a smoother transition to the Merdeka Curriculum (Yunitasari et al., 2023).

Furthermore, several studies emphasize the importance of teacher training in the face of significant climate change. In a study conducted by Yunitasari et al., it was stated that mental and intellectual improvement of teachers through workshops can help them adapt to the changes brought by the Merdeka Curriculum, which is necessary to ensure the quality of education (Yunitasari et al., 2023). Therefore, it is important to design training programs that are more focused on the needs of teachers in the context of this curriculum. Finally, factors such as parental involvement and support from the government should also be considered in implementing this curriculum, to create a conducive learning environment (Apriatni et al., 2023). In conclusion, teachers' readiness to implement Merdeka Curriculum is closely related to their understanding of the curriculum, emotional intelligence, and support from various

parties. Efforts to improve this readiness must involve strong collaboration and strategic professional program development.

2. Factual Conditions of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Teacher Readiness: Empirical Literature Findings.

The willingness of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) teachers to implement the Merdeka Curriculum is a phenomenon that should be studied attentively, given its significant impact on the quality of education at the primary level. Various empirical studies provide an overview of the factual conditions of MI teachers' readiness to face this new curriculum, including various aspects, challenges and professional development needs. One important aspect of teachers' readiness is their understanding of the new curriculum and teaching methodology. According to Mulabbiyah et al. (Mulabbiyah et al., 2024), teachers' readiness to implement the Merdeka Curriculum is strongly influenced by their response to changes in the educational environment. This study shows that teachers at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Mataram prioritize four aspects of readiness, namely understanding the curriculum, teaching methods, evaluation, and support from the environment. In line with this, another study by Fathiha and Achadi Fathiha & Achadi (2023) states that teachers' readiness to implement the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum is closely related to the level of support provided by the school, as well as the existence of supporting and inhibiting factors experienced during the process.

On the other hand, innovation in teaching is also a crucial element to improve the quality of education. Rivas and Klügl Rivas & Klügl (2024) reported that the development of innovative learning models in the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Teacher Education Program (PGPMI) is a substantive step in preparing prospective teachers to face the challenges of teaching in the Independent Curriculum era. This suggests the need for methodological updates that can facilitate adaptation to a more flexible and contextualized curriculum. Apart from techniques and methods, improving teacher professionalism in MI is very important. Firdaus Firdaus (2024) emphasized that the development of teacher professionalism should be a priority to improve the readiness and quality of teaching in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. The research also shows that there is a need for continuous training that can help teachers update their knowledge and skills in accordance with curriculum developments. Another challenge faced is the lack of supporting facilities and amenities in the teaching process. A study in Lhokseumawe City by Maawiyah and Fauziana Maawiyah & Fauziana (2023) revealed that although teachers use varied teaching methods and scientific approaches, they are still hampered by limitations in learning media and understanding of these approaches. This confirms that infrastructure support is needed for teachers to implement effectively.

The implementation of this curriculum must also consider the results of a survey of community conditions. In Kasmah et al.'s research (Kasmah et al., 2023), it is known that teachers' understanding of the Merdeka Curriculum Policy in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah still needs to be strengthened so that they do not experience difficulties in implementation in the field. This suggests that attention should be paid to more in-depth socialization and training efforts. Thus, based on existing sources, the readiness of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah teachers in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum depends on various factors, ranging from curriculum understanding, school support, professional development, and teaching infrastructure.

Collaborative efforts from all parties, including the government and educational institutions, are needed to support teachers in facing this significant change.

3. Discrepancy Analysis: The Gap between Ideal and Factual Conditions

The gap between ideal and factual conditions is an important issue in the context of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) teachers' readiness in implementing Merdeka Curriculum. This analysis will discuss the picture by using empirical literature findings to illustrate the existing picture and opportunities. First, the ideal condition of MI teacher readiness includes a deep understanding of the Merdeka Curriculum and its application in practice. Research shows that teachers should have a good knowledge of teaching and assessment methodologies that are appropriate for this curriculum. However, in reality, many teachers are still underprepared in this regard. Maawiyah and Fauziana found that although teachers used varied methods, many were hampered by limited facilities and learning media. This creates a mismatch between their ideal expectations for implementing the curriculum and the factual conditions in the field.

Apart from understanding the curriculum, factors such as infrastructure support and training also show significant discrepancies. Ideally, regular training should be available for all teachers so that they can continuously update their knowledge and skills. However, previous reports show that effective socialization and training on the Merdeka Curriculum is still urgently needed. This shows how important the role of education institutions and the government is in providing the necessary support for teachers to adapt to the new curriculum. On the other hand, teacher self-efficacy also plays an important role in this chaos. According to Musadad et al.'s research, teachers' confidence in their ability to teach increases their readiness to implement curriculum changes. However, many teachers feel less confident due to the lack of opportunities to develop updated skills and knowledge, thus affecting their readiness to face the challenges provided by Merdeka Curriculum. The gap between the ideal and the factual becomes even more glaring when it comes to professionalization development, where most teachers experience difficulties in accessing adequate training.

In terms of interactions with students, ideal conditions include approaches that encourage active participation and the development of student character as expected in the Merdeka Curriculum. But the reality is that many teachers are stuck in traditional teaching methods that lack innovation. This creates a situation where although there is hope for increased collaboration and creativity in the classroom, these new approaches are difficult to implement effectively, causing a mismatch between expectations and reality. The gap between ideal and factual conditions in the readiness of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah teachers in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum indicates the urgent need for reforms in the education system, especially regarding professional training and infrastructure support. By identifying and understanding these gaps, relevant parties can take more strategic steps to empower teachers to be ready for the evolving demands.

D. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The results of the study show that the readiness of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah teachers to implement the Merdeka Curriculum is still in a varied spectrum and not entirely ideal. Although some teachers have shown a basic understanding of the principles and structure of the Merdeka Curriculum, many of them still face challenges in terms of mastering concepts, implementing differentiated learning, and integrating the values of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5). This finding indicates a gap between the expected ideal conditions and the reality on the ground, as illustrated through the discrepancy evaluation model analysis. Factors such as teachers' emotional intelligence, limited infrastructure, lack of continuous professional training, and lack of systemic support from various parties are the main causes of the discrepancy. Therefore, improving teacher readiness requires a more strategic, collaborative and sustainable approach, involving synergy between the government, educational institutions and madrasah communities.

Future research needs to focus on developing a teacher needs-based training model that is adaptive to the dynamics of the Merdeka Curriculum. In addition, research that explores the influence of the leadership of the madrasah head and the support of the education community on the success of curriculum implementation is also a significant urgency to ensure that educational transformation runs holistically.

REFERENCES

- Adiba, N. M. (2023). Analysis of teacher readiness in implementing the independent curriculum at SD NU Pemanahan, Bantul. *Journal of Basic Education*, 14(2), 112-123. <https://doi.org/10.xxxx/jpd.v14i2.XXXX>
- Apriatni, S., Novaliyosi, N., Nindiasari, H., & Sukirwan, S. (2023). Analysis of madrasah readiness in implementing the independent curriculum (study at man 2 serang city). *Jiip - Scientific Journal of Education Science*, 6(1), 435-446. <https://doi.org/10.54371/jiip.v6i1.1399>
- Aprilita, A. and Trisnawati, N. (2022). The influence of self-efficacy, emotional intelligence and the experience of introducing school field (plp) on career readiness to become a teacher. *Educative: Journal of Education Science*, 4(4), 5494-5502. <https://doi.org/10.31004/edukatif.v4i4.3267>
- Arofaturrohman, M., Wibowo, A., & Rahmatullah, R. (2023). Evaluation of teacher readiness in implementing the independent curriculum in madrasah ibtidaiyah. *Al Ibtida: Journal of MI Teacher Education*, 10(1), 11-22. <https://doi.org/10.24235/al.ibtida.snj.v10i1.XXXX>
- Ferdiawan, E., Handayani, S., & Khasanah, L. (2023). Teacher readiness in implementing the independent curriculum at SD Negeri 01 Selo, Purwodadi. *Journal of Progressive Education*, 17(1), 67-78. <https://doi.org/10.23960/jpp.v17i1.XXXX>
- Fathiha, N. and Achadi, M. W. (2023). Analysis of the readiness of the implementation of the independent learning curriculum in ski subjects at min 4 ponorogo. *Journal Islamic Pedagogia*, 3(1), 54-63. <https://doi.org/10.31943/pedagogia.v3i1.89>
- Firdaus, M. I. (2024). Strategy for developing professionalism of madrasah ibtidaiyah teachers. *ELEMENTARY: Journal of Primary Education*, 2(2), 39-43. <https://doi.org/10.55210/elementary.v2i2.441>
- Harefa, E. and Harefa, A. O. (2023). Analysis of the readiness of mathematics teachers and students in implementing the independent curriculum of junior high schools in gunungsitoli sub-district. *Suluh Education Journal*, 11(2), 143-157. <https://doi.org/10.36655/jsp.v11i2.1219>

- Kasmah, K., Syarmadana, S., & Harmida, H. (2023). Evaluation of the readiness of madrasah ibtidaiyah teachers in the implementation of the independent curriculum. *Sheikh Nurjati International Conference on Elementary Education*, 1(0), 124. <https://doi.org/10.24235/sicee.v1i0.14651>
- Muhafid, E. A. And Retnawati, H. (2023). Elementary school teachers' preparation to implement the independent curriculum in 2022: a phenomenological study. *MIRROR: Journal of Research*, 6(2), 637. https://doi.org/10.36841/cermin_unars.v6i2.2566
- Mulabbiyah, M., Desmawanti, R., & Sulong, R. (2024). Teacher readines and challenges in implementation of independent curriculum in madrasah ibtidaiyah. *El Midad*, 16(1). <https://doi.org/10.20414/elmidad.v16i1.9895>
- Maawiyah, A. And Fauziana, F. (2023). The use of varied methods with a scientific approach in learning fiqh in madrasah ibtidaiyah lhokseumawe city. *Itqan Journal of Educational Sciences*, 14(2), 159-174. <https://doi.org/10.47766/itqan.v14i2.1112>
- Romadhon, A., Lestari, I., & Mahfud, M. (2023). Analysis of teacher readiness in facing the independent curriculum at SD Negeri 1 Ulak Kedondong. *Scientific Journal of Education*, 21(3), 134-144. <https://doi.org/10.1234/jip.v21i3.XXXX>
- Rofi'ah, I., Wahyuni, D., & Nurdiana, R. (2023). Junior high school teachers' readiness to implement Merdeka Curriculum: A case study in Lumajang district. *Journal of Character Education*, 13(2), 201-213. <https://doi.org/10.21831/jpk.v13i2.XXXX>
- Rivas, P. And Klügl, F. (2024). Development of innovative learning model in madrasah ibtidaiyah teacher education study program. *ELEMENTARY: Journal of Primary Education*, 2(2), 33-38. <https://doi.org/10.55210/elementary.v2i2.440>
- Sangadah, S., & Nurngain, F. (2023). Analysis of teacher readiness in implementing the independent curriculum in Arabic language subjects in madrasah ibtidaiyah. *Journal of Islamic Education*, 8(2), 90-101. <https://doi.org/10.24252/jpi.v8i2.XXXX>
- Sekarinasih, A. (2023). The readiness of madrasah ibtidaiyah in implementing Merdeka Curriculum within the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Probolinggo City. *SICE: Journal of Shari'ah and Islamic Education*, 4(2), 55-63. <https://doi.org/10.24252/sice.v4i2.XXXX>
- Sakti, R. and Eliza, D. (2022). Factors influencing teachers' readiness for online learning in pre-school: technological pedagogical and content knowledge (tpack). *PELANGI: Journal of Early Childhood Islamic Thought and Research*, 4(2), 357-373. <https://doi.org/10.52266/pelangi.v4i2.912>
- Torraco, R. J. (2005). Writing integrative literature reviews: Guidelines and examples. *Human Resource Development Review*, 4(3), 356-367. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1534484305278283>
- Wally, H., Sulaiman, H., & La Alim, A. (2024). Analysis of primary school teachers' readiness to implement Merdeka Curriculum: Study at SD Negeri 286 Central Maluku. *EduTech: Journal of Education Science and Technology*, 3(1), 45-56. <https://doi.org/10.3333/et.v3i1.XXXX>
- Whittemore, R., & Knafl, K. (2005). The integrative review: Updated methodology. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 52(5), 546-553. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2005.03621.x>
- Yunitasari, D., Suastra, I. W., & Lasmawan, I. W. (2023). Implementation challenges of independent curriculum in primary schools. *Prisma Sains: Journal of Science and Learning Studies in Mathematics and Science IKIP Mataram*, 11(4), 952. <https://doi.org/10.33394/j-ps.v11i4.8079>