

Conceptual Analysis of the Merdeka Curriculum and Its Implementation at MAN 1 Sukabumi

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Abstract: This research describes the understanding of the head of MAN 1 Sukabumi and the educators regarding the Merdeka curriculum. This understanding led the head of the madrasah to implement the Merdeka curriculum in the madrasah. The implementation consists of the preparation stage, implementation stage, and strengthening the Pancasila student profile and *rahmatan lil'ālamīn* profile. This research employs a qualitative case study method. Data collection methods were in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation studies. This research found that (1) The Merdeka curriculum is understood by educators at MAN 1 Sukabumi as an educational tool that facilitates diverse intracurricular learning, focuses on essential material, and develops student competencies, gives the school the authority to create a curriculum under its characteristics, and supports strengthening Pancasila student profile and *rahmatan lil'ālamīn* profile. (2) The Merdeka curriculum at MAN 1 Sukabumi has been implemented optimally, except for several aspects that have not been fully implemented. There are eleven aspects of implementation at the ready stage, three aspects at the developing stage, and one aspect at the initial stage. (3) Strengthening the student profile of Pancasila and *rahmatan ālamīn* at MAN 1 Sukabumi is carried out through projects with the themes of local wisdom, Pancasila democracy, and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika.

Keywords: Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum; Pancasila Student Profile; *Rahmatan lil'ālamīn* Student Profile; case study.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini memaparkan pemahaman kepala madrasah dan para pendidik di MAN 1 Sukabumi mengenai kurikulum merdeka serta proses implementasinya. Pemahaman kepala madrasah tersebut menghasilkan kebijakan yang ditetapkan untuk mengimplementasikan kurikulum merdeka di madrasah. Proses implementasi terdiri dari tahap persiapan, tahap pelaksanaan, serta penguatan profil pelajar Pancasila dan *rahmatan lil 'ālamīn*. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif dengan menggunakan metode studi kasus (*case study*). Metode pengumpulan data adalah dengan wawancara, observasi, dan studi dokumentasi. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa: (1) Kurikulum merdeka dipahami oleh pelaksana pendidikan di MAN 1 Sukabumi sebagai perangkat pendidikan yang memfasilitasi pembelajaran intrakurikuler yang beragam, berfokus pada materi esensial dan pengembangan kompetensi peserta didik, memberikan kewenangan kepada sekolah untuk mengembangkan kurikulum sesuai dengan karakteristiknya, serta mendukung penguatan profil pelajar Pancasila dan pelajar *rahmatan lil 'ālamīn*. (2) Kurikulum merdeka di MAN 1 Sukabumi telah diterapkan secara maksimal dengan pengecualian beberapa aspek yang belum sepenuhnya terlaksana. Aspek implementasi yang berada pada tahap siap berjumlah sebelas aspek, pada tahap berkembang sejumlah tiga aspek, dan satu aspek pada tahap awal. (3) Bentuk penguatan profil pelajar Pancasila dan *rahmatan lil 'ālamīn* di MAN 1 Sukabumi dilaksanakan melalui proyek dengan tema kearifan lokal, demokrasi Pancasila, dan Bhinneka Tunggal Ika.

Keywords: Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum; Pancasila Student Profile; *Rahmatan lil'ālamīn* Student Profile; case study.

INTRODUCTION

The curriculum in Indonesia has undergone four changes over the last twenty years, namely the 2004 Curriculum (KBK), the 2006 Curriculum (KTSP), the 2013 Curriculum, and the Independent (Merdeka) Curriculum. The development of this curriculum needs to be carried out periodically to keep pace with advancements in science, technology, and information, as well as the evolving needs of the times. This effort is necessary to create a future generation that possesses character, is superior, understands its nation's identity, and can compete in the international world.¹ In addition, the development of the curriculum is also expected to produce a millennial generation that is not only good at memorizing learning materials but also able to utilize technology in their learning process.²

Following the change in curriculum from KBK, KTSP, and K13, learning outcomes remain unsatisfactory, particularly at the primary and secondary education levels. In the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tests, Indonesia ranks low. On a national scale, the results of the Indonesian Student Competence Assessment (AKSI) show low basic competency and high disparities. Although Indonesia has significantly increased participation rates in primary education, findings from various national and international surveys indicate that for the past 15-20 years, learning outcomes have not shown the desired improvement.³

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the learning crisis since March 2020. The pandemic had a consequence that the learning process was conducted online, which, in reality, cannot be executed optimally, leading to an even more severe learning crisis marked by learning loss and increased learning gaps. To address this issue, the government has implemented a learning recovery policy through the Minister of Education and Culture's Decree Number 719/P/2020. This decree grants educational units the freedom to choose whether to fully implement the 2013 curriculum, the emergency curriculum (a simplified version of the 2013 curriculum) developed by the government, or to simplify the 2013 curriculum independently.⁴

¹ Siti Osa Kosassy, 'Analisis Konsep Dan Impelementasi Kurikulum 2013', *PPKn & Hukum*, 12.1 (2017), 78–89.

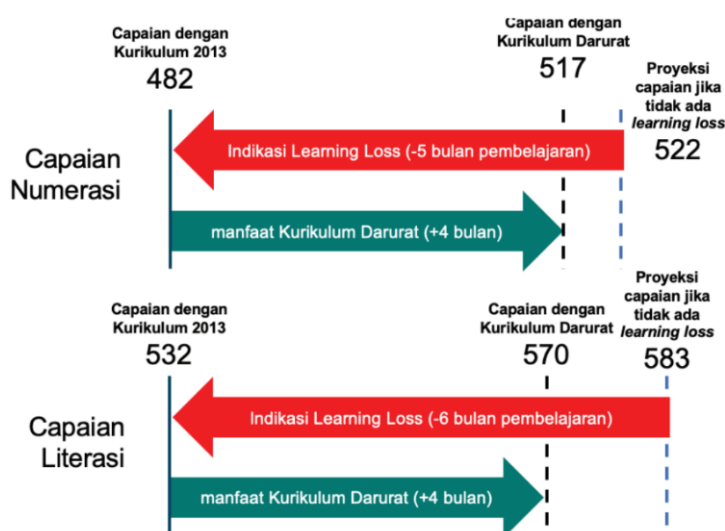
² Yose Indarta and others, 'Relevansi Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar Dengan Model Pembelajaran Abad 21 Dalam Perkembangan Era Society 5.0', *EDUKATIF: JURNAL ILMU PENDIDIKAN*, 4.2 (2022), 3011–24 <<https://doi.org/10.31004/edukatif.v4i2.2589>>.

³ Kemendikbudristek, *Kurikulum Untuk Pemulihan Pembelajaran*, Pusat Kurikulum Dan Pembelajaran, 2021.

⁴ Kemendikbud, 'Kemendikbud Terbitkan Kurikulum Darurat Pada Satuan Pendidikan Dalam Kondisi Khusus', 2020

The implementation of the curriculum during the COVID-19 pandemic revealed that, regardless of socio-economic background, students using the emergency curriculum achieved better learning outcomes than those who fully utilized the 2013 Curriculum. A survey conducted among 18,370 students from grades 1-3 in 612 schools across 20 districts and cities in 8 provinces revealed significant differences in learning outcomes between the 2013 Curriculum and the emergency curriculum. The results indicated that using the emergency curriculum could reduce the pandemic's impact by 73% (in literacy) and 86% (in numeracy).⁵

Figure 1. Projection of the impact of the pandemic on users of the 2013 curriculum and the emergency curriculum



Sumber: Kemdikbudristek 2021

After observing the results of curriculum implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic, it can be concluded that the 2013 curriculum has weaknesses. Therefore, a flexible, decentralized, and user-friendly curriculum is necessary to meet the diverse needs of students and educational units. Consequently, the Ministry of Education and Culture offers three options for use: the 2013 curriculum, an emergency curriculum (i.e., the 2013 curriculum simplified by the Ministry of Education and Culture), and an independent curriculum.⁶ In line with this, KMA Number 347 of 2022 regarding the guidelines for the implementation of the independent curriculum in madrasah is

<<https://www.kemdikbud.go.id/main/blog/2020/08/kemendikbud-terbitkan-kurikulum-darurat-pada-satuan-pendidikan-dalam-kondisi-khusus>> [accessed 23 July 2023].

⁵ Kemendikbudristek, *Kurikulum Untuk Pemulihan Pembelajaran*.

⁶ Kemendikbudristek, *Kurikulum Untuk Pemulihan Pembelajaran*.

the next step taken by the Ministry of Religious Affairs to implement the independent curriculum in *madrasah* (School).

Since its launch in 2022, the Merdeka Curriculum has been implemented by 293,373 schools. Some schools that have implemented the Merdeka Curriculum have expressed that project activities arranged according to their phases and relevant to the environmental conditions help students develop character and the competencies of the Pancasila student profile within themselves. The atmosphere of learning activities becomes active, resulting in a 10% improvement in student outcomes. Nevertheless, there are obstacles faced, namely: Limited facilities and infrastructure in schools that can hinder the learning process, assessments in the independent curriculum that are still confusing, impacting students' learning outcomes, a limited number of learning resources so that educators must use additional sources to ensure that learning runs smoothly, and students' responses tend to be passive, which can hinder the learning process.⁷

Several previous studies have also revealed challenges faced by educators in implementing the Independent Curriculum. Among these challenges, educators must take time to prepare creative, innovative, and stimulating lessons each day. Another challenge is the effort to encourage educators to step out of their comfort zones, as changes implemented by school leaders will be futile if the educators are unwilling to change. The assessment in the Independent Curriculum is comprehensive, encouraging students to develop competencies aligned with their talents and interests, without the presence of Minimum Competency Standards (KKM), which contributes to the lack of motivation among students to compete.⁸ Some schools plan to use the independent curriculum. Still, the obstacle is the lack of understanding and information among educators about the Independent Curriculum, as well as their inability to access the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM). Only educators registered in the Dapodik can access PMM.⁹

⁷ Leny Lince, 'Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Untuk Meningkatkan Motivasi Belajar Pada Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan Pusat Keunggulan', in *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Fakultas Tarbiyah Dan Ilmu Keguruan IAIM Sinjai*, 2022, 1, 38–49 <<https://doi.org/10.47435/sentikjar.v1i0.829>>.

⁸ Restu Rahayu and others, 'Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar Di Sekolah Penggerak', *Jurnal Basicedu*, 6.4 (2022), 6313–19 <<https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v6i4.3237>>.

⁹ Ulfa Laulita, Marzoan, and Fitriani Rahayu, 'ANALISIS KESIAPAN GURU DALAM MENGIMPLEMENTASIKAN ASESMEN DIAGNOSTIK PADA KURIKULUM MERDEKA', *JPI: Jurnal Pendidik Indonesia*, 5.2 (2022), 1–17.

The implementation of the independent curriculum in madrasah has also faced several challenges. Based on investigations, madrasahs implementing the independent curriculum face challenges in carrying out projects to strengthen the Pancasila student profile and the concept of *rahmatan lil'ālamīn*. Among these challenges are the lack of information regarding the development of teaching materials for the independent curriculum for educators, the scarcity of teaching materials or guidebooks available in each madrasa for the implementation of the independent curriculum, which forces educators to seek teaching materials independently, the learning evaluation process in the independent curriculum is somewhat different, and the report card format is not yet available, making it difficult for the curriculum department of the madrasa to adjust and fill out report card grades.¹⁰

This is also experienced by teachers at MA Nasyi'in Sidoarjo, where the implementation of assessments tends to focus on summative assessments. The results of these assessments have not been utilized by teachers as feedback to improve the learning process.¹¹ To implement the independent curriculum, teachers must make changes, including in the application of technology in learning activities. However, not all madrasahs have educators who are competent in technology. There are also problems related to learning targets, such as the lack of understanding among educators regarding the application of the independent curriculum, and educators feeling that they cannot develop their quality because they believe the teaching methods they use are already effective. Students are unable to develop their talents and individual potential because the implementation of IKM still overlaps with Kurtilas.¹²

Despite facing several obstacles, MAN 1 Sukabumi successfully overcame these challenges. MAN 1 Sukabumi is a model MAN in Sukabumi Regency. Therefore, MAN 1 Sukabumi was designated as a pilot madrasa in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. MAN 1 Sukabumi is one of the MANs that have facilities and infrastructure supporting learning, becoming a pioneer at the Sukabumi Regency level. It has achieved numerous academic and non-academic accomplishments and conducted several training sessions on

¹⁰ Erdiansyah, Joharni, and Era Kartikasari Ariani, 'Problematika Madrasah Pilot Project Kurikulum Merdeka Tahun Pelajaran 2022–2023 Di Madrasah Aliyah Se-Kabupaten Musi Banyuasin', *HEUTAGOGIA: Journal of Islamic Education*, 2.2 (2022), 121–34 <<https://ejournal.uin-suka.ac.id/tarbiyah/HJIE/article/view/6277>>.

¹¹ Farid Qomaruddin, 'Problematika Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Dalam Mata Pelajaran Bahasa Arab Di MA Nasyi'in Sidoarjo', *JALIE : Journal of Applied Linguistics and Islamic Education*, 6.2 (2022), 251–68.

¹² Nurul Swandari and Abdurahman Jemani, 'Mitra Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Pada Madrasah Dan Problematikanya', *PROGRESSA: Journal of Islamic Religious Instruction*, 7.1 (2023), 102–20 <<https://doi.org/10.32616/pgi.v7.1.439.102-120>>.

implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. As a result, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at MAN 1 Sukabumi can be carried out. All members of MAN 1 Sukabumi are Muslims, and the majority comes from the Sundanese ethnic group. The educators are graduates of bachelor's, master's, and doctoral programs, which indicates that MAN 1 Sukabumi has adequate resources. The available facilities and infrastructure are also comprehensive, including classrooms, sports fields, laboratories (computer, science, and fashion skills), art rooms, OSIS rooms, mosques, toilets, and other amenities.

During the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, the reasons why MAN 1 Sukabumi succeeded in its implementation are essential to study, as they can serve as a model for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in other Madrasah Aliyah, especially in Sukabumi. Based on this, the primary question in this research is how the principal and teachers of MAN 1 Sukabumi understand the Merdeka Curriculum and how the implementation process unfolds. The objective of this research is to analyze the understanding of the Merdeka Curriculum by education practitioners at MAN 1 Sukabumi, which results in implementation policies, and to analyze the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at MAN 1 Sukabumi.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is categorized as qualitative, as it involves an analysis of the conceptualization and implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in madrasahs. The analysis is used to gain an in-depth understanding of how the Merdeka Curriculum is perceived by educators and implemented in madrasahs. The implementation referred to includes planning, learning, and evaluation of the learning process. Additionally, since this research focuses on a single case and aims to understand how the Merdeka Curriculum is practically applied in madrasahs, the method used is the case study method. The technique used in this research is a case study. A case study is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system (such as activities, events, processes, or individuals) based on extensive data collection..¹³ Johansson, as cited by Ridlo, stated that a case study is a type of study designed to capture the complexity of cases in the social sciences. Rowley also mentioned that the case study method enables the research of a phenomenon within its context.¹⁴

A case study is an in-depth investigation of individuals, groups, organizations, programs, activities, and other subjects over a specific period.

¹³ John W Creswell, *Educational Research*, 4th edn (Boston, 2012).

¹⁴ Ubaid Ridlo, *Metode Penelitian Studi Kasus: Teori Dan Praktik* (Jakarta Selatan: Publica Indonesia Utama, 2023).

The purpose of this case study is to gain a comprehensive understanding of an entity by analyzing collected data, which is then used to generate theories. As in qualitative research, data collection procedures for case studies involve gathering data through interviews, observations, and archival records.¹⁵

The primary data sources in this research are interview results, observation results, and teaching device documents. Interviews were conducted with the head of the madrasa, the deputy head of the madrasa, and seven educators representing each subject cluster. The research duration was approximately one semester, specifically in the odd semester of the 2023/2024 academic year. The documents used as data sources include the Madrasa Operational Curriculum (KOM), which was prepared by the drafting team at MAN 1 Sukabumi. In addition to primary data sources, the author also requires secondary data as supporting data. Supporting data is needed to strengthen the analysis conducted by the author. This supporting data is generally obtained from previous research based on existing sources and typically takes the form of documents.¹⁶ The documents include archival records, reports on program implementation processes, journals, articles, internet sources, and books related to the Merdeka Curriculum.

The methods used to collect data in this research are interviews, observations, and document studies. The data analysis technique employed in this research follows the Miles and Huberman model. The analytical activities include data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification.¹⁷ Data reduction aims to classify direct, select important information, eliminate irrelevant elements, and organize data as a whole, allowing for conclusions to be drawn and verified.¹⁸

At the data reduction stage, the author records the data obtained at MAN 1 Sukabumi in the form of recordings using a recording device and notes. The data is then interpreted, selected, and classified until relevant data is obtained that aligns with the research focus. Data presentation is carried out by transcribing the data and categorizing it, allowing the author to identify themes and data trends for specific topics, and then test these findings. The final stage conducted by the author is data verification or conclusion. At this stage, a re-examination process is undertaken, followed by the formulation of findings regarding the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.

¹⁵ Zuchri Abdussamad, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif* (Makassar: Syakir Media, 2021).

¹⁶ Iqbal Hasan, *Analisis Penelitian Dengan Statistik* (Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 2004).

¹⁷ Abdussamad.

¹⁸ Ivanovich Agusta, "Teknik Pengumpulan Dan Analisis Data Kualitatif" <<https://ivanagusta.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/04/ivan-pengumpulan-analisis-data-kualitatif.pdf>>.

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Merdeka Curriculum

The Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum that employs diverse intrakurricular learning methods, where the material studied is essential, allowing students sufficient time to deepen their understanding and strengthen their skills. Educators can choose various learning methods tailored to students' learning needs and interests. Projects to enhance the Pancasila student profile are developed based on specific themes set by the government. These projects are not directed toward achieving particular learning outcome targets, so they are not bound to subject content.¹⁹

The characteristics of the Merdeka Curriculum, as cited from the Kemendikbud website, are: 1) Development of soft skills and character through projects that strengthen the Pancasila student profile, 2) Focus on essential, relevant, and in-depth material, ensuring sufficient time for students to develop creativity and innovation in achieving fundamental competencies, such as literacy and numeracy. Flexible learning enables educators to tailor lessons to each student's achievement level and development, while also adapting to local content contexts.

The Merdeka Curriculum has several advantages, including: 1) Focus on essential material and the development of students' abilities at their respective phases, making learning more profound, more meaningful, and enjoyable; 2) Providing students, educators, and schools with greater freedom to choose appropriate learning methods; and 3) Being more relevant and interactive through project-based activities. This enables students to actively explore real-world issues, including health, environmental concerns, and other relevant topics.²⁰

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum must be supported by the provision of training, the availability of learning resources for educators, and innovative teaching tools, all of which should be backed by school principals and local education authorities. The main challenge in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum is the readiness of educators as drivers of Merdeka Belajar,

¹⁹ Kemendikbudristek, 'Buku Saku: Tanya Jawab Kurikulum Merdeka', *Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset Dan Teknologi, Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset Dan Teknologi*, 2022, 9–46 <<http://repositori.kemdikbud.go.id/id/eprint/25344>>.

²⁰ Kementerian Pendidikan Kebudayaan Riset dan Teknologi, 'Merdeka Belajar Episode Kelima Belas Kurikulum Merdeka Dan Platform Merdeka Belajar', *Https://Merdekabelajar.Kemdikbud.Go.Id/Episode_15/Web*, 2022, 1–23 <https://merdekabelajar.kemdikbud.go.id/upload/file/170_1645510611.pdf>.

not only in their ability to teach and manage classroom activities effectively but also in building strong relationships with students and the school community.

The implementation of this curriculum strongly supports guaranteed teaching hours and professional allowances for educators. Additionally, the Merdeka Mengajar Platform (PMM) helps teachers enhance their understanding, find inspiration, access references, and improve literacy in applying the Merdeka Curriculum. PMM offers various training opportunities, teaching tools, and assessment features that help educators tailor their teaching methods to meet the needs of their students.²¹ However, the teaching tools available on the Merdeka Mengajar Platform are not yet fully complete, and some educators face obstacles in creating modules because they do not fully align with what educators need.²² Nevertheless, with the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, the changes are strongly felt. Educators have greater flexibility to be creative in teaching to the fullest extent and gain a deeper understanding of students' interests, talents, needs, and abilities.²³

Humanistic Learning Theory in *Merdeka Belajar* (Independent Learning)

Humanistic is a psychological approach that highlights human issues, interests, values, and dignity. According to humanistic theory, learning emphasizes content and processes that are oriented towards the student as the subject of learning. This theory aims to humanize individuals, enabling them to actualize themselves in their lives and livelihoods.²⁴ The humanistic approach views learning as a process that occurs within the individual involving all parts or domains, including the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. In other words, the humanistic approach emphasizes the importance of emotions or feelings, open communication, and the values held by each learner.²⁵ In humanistic learning theory, the goal of education is to humanize individuals. The learning process is considered successful if the learner understands their

²¹ Ahmad Almarisi, 'Kelebihan Dan Kekurangan Kurikulum Merdeka Pada Pembelajaran Sejarah Dalam Perspektif Historis', *MUKADIMAH: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sejarah, Dan Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial*, 7.1 (2023), 111–17 <<https://doi.org/10.30743/mkd.v7i1.6291>>.

²² Evi Susilowati, 'Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Siswa Pada Mata Pelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam', *Al-Miskawih Journal of Science Education*, 1.1 (2022), 115–32 <<https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Home/Details/43920/uu-no-20-tahun->>>.

²³ Rahayu and others.

²⁴ Syarifan Nurjan, *Psikologi Belajar* (Ponorogo: Wade Grup, 2016).

²⁵ Syarifuddin, 'Teori Humanistik Dan Aplikasinya Dalam Pembelajaran Di Sekolah', *Tajdid: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman Dan Kemanusiaan*, 6.1 (2022), 106–22 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.52266/>>>.

environment and themselves.²⁶ Humanistic learning theory posits that any learning theory is valuable and beneficial as long as it aims to humanize individuals through the achievement of self-actualization, self-understanding, and self-realization in students, thereby facilitating optimal learning.

The Independent Curriculum is the 15th episode of Independent Learning. The programs available in Independent Learning are based on humanistic theory, which aims to humanize individuals. Students who are skilled at memorization are no longer the primary focus of this program; instead, the program's objectives are students who possess sharp analytical thinking and creativity.²⁷ Humanistic theory encourages individual learning, where students can study the subject matter at their own pace and in their way to achieve their objectives. Humanistic theory focuses on individual differences in the learning process.

The objective of humanitarianism aligns with the aims of the Merdeka Belajar program, which is to humanize humans. Educators and students have the freedom to determine the learning methods, objectives, materials, and assessment techniques, as long as these choices align with the goals established by the curriculum. Educators freely interpret the curriculum according to their desires and creativity. Educators collaborate with their students to determine the most effective learning approach. There is freedom of thought in this Merdeka Belajar initiative. Both educators and student can optimize their self-actualization so that the learning process is meaningful.

Based on the explanation above, the connection between the Merdeka Belajar concept and humanistic learning theory becomes evident. All learning principles within humanistic learning theory serve as a reference for the Merdeka Belajar concept. Educators and students cannot achieve freedom of thought if their basic human needs are not optimally fulfilled. An educator cannot carry out a high-quality, creative, and innovative learning process if they do not understand the needs of their students. Therefore, collaboration between educators and students is essential in creating the learning experience envisioned by Kemdikbud today. Educators' ability to innovate in teaching is necessary, as understands each student's individual needs and characteristics. This enables educators to provide constructive feedback to students, strengthening their

²⁶ Fahilah Suralaga, *Psikologi Pendidikan Implikasi Dan Pembelajaran* (Depok: Rajawali Pers, 118AD).

²⁷ Dewi Juita and M. Yusmaridi, "The Concept of "Merdeka Belajar" in the Perspective of Humanistic Learning Theory", *SPEKTRUM: Jurnal Pendidikan Luar Sekolah (PLS)*, 9.1 (2021).

academic confidence. Strong self-confidence will ultimately produce a resilient, intelligent, dignified, and responsible generation.²⁸

Portrait of the Curriculum at MAN 1 Sukabumi

MAN 1 Sukabumi has been selected as a pilot madrasah to implement the Independent Curriculum starting from the 2022/2023 academic year. In the first year (2022/2023), the implementation of the Independent Curriculum is carried out for grade X. In the following academic year 2023/2024, the Independent Curriculum will be implemented in grades X and XI with a curriculum structure based on KMA Number 347 of 2022. Meanwhile, grade XII will continue to apply the 2013 Curriculum.

The Merdeka Curriculum implemented at MAN 1 Sukabumi is the Community-Based Merdeka Curriculum (IKMBK). IKMBK is a learning approach that emphasizes community participation in the educational process. Those involved in this IKMBK include the head of the madrasa, educators, supervisors, student guardians, local higher education facilitators, district-level madrasa education section heads, and representatives from the Ministry of Religious Affairs.²⁹

The readiness of educators and schools in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum is critical. From a preparation aspect, educators are required to be more creative in designing the curriculum in the form of activities, methods, and various tools and materials.³⁰ Educators must possess the skills to effectively process learning materials, create a positive learning environment, and utilize multiple technologies for educational purposes.³¹ In addition, the independent curriculum aims not only to educate students in cognitive aspects but also includes character education, the achievement competencies of which have been outlined in the Head of BSKAP Decision number 009/H/KR/2022.

To prepare educators to implement the Independent Curriculum, the madrasah sent several educators to participate in training based on the recommendation from the Ministry of Religious Affairs Central. The first training took place in November 2022, and the subsequent training was conducted in May 2023. This training is an initiative by MAN 1 Sukabumi to

²⁸ Juita and M. Yusmaridi.

²⁹ Wawancara dengan Pahirudin, Kepala MAN 1 Sukabumi, Sukabumi, 31 Mei 2023.

³⁰ Anita Jojo and Hotmaulina Sihotang, 'Analisis Kurikulum Merdeka Dalam Mengatasi Learning Loss Di Masa Pandemi Covid-19 (Analisis Studi Kasus Kebijakan Pendidikan)', *Edukatif: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*, 4.4 (2022), 5150–61 <<https://doi.org/10.31004/edukatif.v4i4.3106>>.

³¹ Rahayu and others.

align educators' understanding of the Independent Curriculum, enabling the effective implementation of student-centered learning.

Schools can be registered or enrolled by the Ministry of Education and Culture or the Ministry of Religious Affairs to implement the curriculum. Based on the Decree of the Director General of Islamic Education number 1443 of 2023 regarding Madrasahs Implementing the Independent Curriculum for the Academic Year 2023/2024, MAN 1 Sukabumi has been established as one of the implementing institutions of the Independent Curriculum. It can be concluded that MAN 1 Sukabumi has met the standards and has an official basis as an implementer of the Independent Curriculum. This aligns with the results of the interview conducted by the author with the vice principal for curriculum. To implement the Independent Curriculum, MAN 1 Sukabumi registered its school by fulfilling the requirements that each school must meet.

Policy of the Head of MAN 1 Sukabumi Regarding the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in educational units is based on Minister of Education and Technology Decision No. 262/M/2022, which amends Decision No. 56/M/2022 regarding the Guidelines for Curriculum Implementation in the context of Learning Recovery. Meanwhile, Learning Outcomes (LOs) are regulated in the Decision of the Head of BSKAP No. 033/H/KR/2022. Furthermore, the aspects of dimensions, elements, and sub-elements of the Pancasila Student Profile are stipulated in the Decision of the Head of BSKAP No. 009/H/KR/2022 of 2022.³²

The policy regarding the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in madrasah is regulated by KMA No. 347 of 2022 and the Decree of the Director General of Islamic Education of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia No. 3211 of 2022 concerning Learning Achievements in Religion Education and Arabic Language in Madrasah. The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in madrasahs essentially follows the policies applied in schools by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Still, under certain conditions, madrasahs make adaptations according to the learning needs of the madrasah and the strengthening of Islamic education and the Arabic language, which are the characteristics of madrasahs. The profile of students developed in madrasah is not only the profile of Pancasila students but also includes the profile of student's *rahmatan lil 'alamin* as a form of practicing moderate religious values.

³² Kemdikbud, 'Regulasi Kurikulum Merdeka', 2023 <<https://kurikulum.kemdikbud.go.id/kurikulum-merdeka/rujukan/regulasi-kurikulum-merdeka>> [accessed 5 September 2023].

Based on the policies of the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Religious Affairs mentioned above, the head of MAN 1 Sukabumi made adjustments to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, considering the readiness of the madrasa, human resources, facilities, and infrastructure, as well as the needs of the madrasa. The curriculum for subjects other than Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and Arabic follows the guidelines prepared by the Ministry of Education and Culture. In contrast, the curriculum for Islamic Religious Education and Arabic refers to the policies developed by the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

The understanding of the head of the madrasah influences the decisions and policies implemented. Reflecting on the implementation framework of the Merdeka Curriculum, as determined by the Ministry of Education and Culture, there is a connection between this understanding framework and the concept of the Merdeka curriculum conveyed by the head of MAN 1 Sukabumi. The idea of the Merdeka Curriculum, presented by the head of MAN 1 Sukabumi, aligns with the concept promoted by the Ministry of Education and Culture, which focuses on essential materials, strengthening student profiles, and developing student competencies, thereby making learning more in-depth, meaningful, and enjoyable.

As part of efforts to prepare for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in madrasahs, the head of the madrasah actively organizes socialization and workshops, both conducted independently and held in collaboration with the Ministry of Religious Affairs. This is by the implementation guidelines of the Merdeka Curriculum, prepared by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which stipulate that madrasahs can undertake various activities as a form of support for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. The head of the madrasah also encourages educators to participate in independent online training to enhance their understanding of the Merdeka Curriculum, thereby ensuring that learning can be carried out effectively.

The head of MAN 1 Sukabumi consistently encourages educators to conduct enjoyable learning by employing varied teaching methods, implementing student-centered learning, and conducting formative assessments as a basis for designing future learning. Meanwhile, the project to strengthen the Pancasila student profile is carried out in stages.

Based on the author's interviews with the head of the madrasah and several educators at MAN 1 Sukabumi, it is believed that the head of the madrasah's policies strongly support the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. Educators are given the freedom to enhance their competencies to deepen their understanding of the Merdeka Curriculum independently. The

strategies implemented include participating in socialization activities and training for the Merdeka Curriculum. The socialization of the Merdeka Curriculum needs to be conducted, and adjustments should be made before it is established as the national curriculum. Therefore, MAN 1 Sukabumi, as one of the model madrasahs in Sukabumi, has already participated in socialization activities as an initial step in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum.

Training was also conducted, attended by school principals, vice-principals, and all educators. Training on the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is crucial because changes and updates to the curriculum require a comprehensive understanding among stakeholders involved in curriculum implementation, including educators, school heads, supervisors, and quality assurance personnel in the field. By enhancing educators' knowledge of the curriculum, in addition to equipping them with academic skills, efforts are made to prepare educators with practical expertise in the realms of teaching and assessment implementation. Implementation is crucial to ensure that good ideas, which have been translated into curriculum change design, can be consistently executed in schools.³³

The following is the policy of the head of MAN 1 Sukabumi regarding the implementation of the independent curriculum:

Policy of the Head of MAN 1 Sukabumi

No	Decree	Regarding
1	R-239.1/Ma.10.01/ KP.00.3/05/2023	MAN 1 Sukabumi Curriculum Development Team for the 2023/2024 Academic Year
2	R-240.1/Ma.10.01/ KP.00.3/05/2023	Determination of local content subjects at MAN 1 Sukabumi for the 2023/2024 academic year
3	R-241.1/Ma.10.01/ KP.00.3/05/2023	Determination of minimum competency criteria at MAN 1 Sukabumi for the 2023/2024 academic year
4	R-242.1/Ma.10.01/ KP.00.3/05/2023	Establishment of habituation at MAN 1 Sukabumi for the 2023/2024 academic year
5	Number 651, Year 2023	Committee for the Pancasila Student Profile and Rahmatan ālamīn Strengthening Project for the 2023/2024 Academic Year with the theme "Build the Soul and Body"
6	Number 652, Year	Committee for the Pancasila Student Profile

³³ Sutjipto Sutjipto, 'Pentingnya Pelatihan Kurikulum 2013 Bagi Guru', *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan*, 1.2 (2016), 235–60 <<https://doi.org/10.24832/jpnk.v1i2.771>>.

	2023			and Raḥmatan ālamīn Strengthening Project for the 2023/2024 Academic Year with the theme “Voice of Democracy”
7	Number 440, 2023		Year	Committee for the Pancasila Student Profile and Raḥmatan ālamīn Strengthening Project for the 2023/2024 Academic Year with the theme “Global Diversity”
8	Number 441.1 2023		Year	Committee for the Pancasila Student Profile and Raḥmatan ālamīn Strengthening Project for the 2023/2024 Academic Year with the theme “Local Wisdom”

The formation of the curriculum development team at the madrasah aims to facilitate the design of the madrasah’s operational curriculum in determining direction, steps, and improving the quality of education at MAN 1 Sukabumi. This team consists of supervisors, the head of the madrasah, the vice principal for curriculum, and 24 educators. The tasks and responsibilities of the curriculum development team include:

- a. Analyzing the potential of MAN 1 Sukabumi as a basis for curriculum planning and development for the upcoming year.
- b. Preparing documents 1, 2, and 3 and updating them annually by educational advancements and the progress of MAN 1 Sukabumi.
- c. Socializing the curriculum that has been officially enacted at the beginning of each academic year.
- d. Evaluating the implementation of the curriculum at the end of the academic year as a foundation for curriculum development in the following year.
- e. Reporting all curriculum development activities at the madrasah to the head of MAN 1 Sukabumi.

Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at MAN 1 Sukabumi

MAN 1 Sukabumi was designated as a pilot madrasah for implementing the Merdeka Curriculum starting from the 2022/2023 academic year. In the first year (2022/2023), the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum was carried out for Grade X. Subsequently, in the 2023/2024 academic year, the Merdeka Curriculum was applied to Grades X and XI, following the curriculum structure based on KMA Number 347 of 2022. Meanwhile, Grade XII is still implementing the 2013 Curriculum.

Based on an interview with the Head of the Madrasah, MAN 1 Sukabumi implements the Community-Based Merdeka Curriculum (IKMBK), a

learning approach that emphasizes community participation in the education process. Those involved in IKMBK include the head of the madrasah, educators, supervisors, student guardians, local higher education mentors, the head of the madrasah education section at the district level, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag). The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum consists of two stages: the preparation stage and the implementation stage.

1. Preparation Stage.

Several steps are taken by the head of the madrasah and their team to prepare for the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. First, they form a curriculum development team, comprising the head of the madrasah, the vice principal, supervisors, and educators. Second, they develop an implementation plan for the Merdeka Curriculum. At this stage, the curriculum development team designs the madrasah operational curriculum (KOM) to tailor the curriculum to the conditions and needs of the madrasah, formulates learning objectives (TP) and learning trajectory (ATP), plans learning activities and assessments, and organizes projects to strengthen the Pancasila Student Profile and Raḥmatan lil ‘Ālamīn (P5RA).

2. Implementation Stage

a. Student-Centered Learning Process.

Student-centered learning is an approach that positions students as the primary subjects in the learning process. Students are not only provided with knowledge and skills but also given space to develop their abilities and creativity.

Educators employ a variety of teaching methods to prevent students from becoming bored with a single approach. They encourage students to actively participate in learning, rather than just listening to explanations. Among the methods used are discussion and collaboration. Students are given the freedom to seek information from various sources, not only from textbooks but also from libraries and online resources.

Several factors enable educators at MAN 1 Sukabumi to implement student-centered learning, including conducting diagnostic assessments at the beginning of lessons to identify students' prior knowledge, needs, interests, and learning styles. This approach helps create an active and collaborative learning environment. Additionally, classes are designed and implemented to ensure real-world relevance, making learning more meaningful for students.

b. Integration of Assessment in the Learning Process.

There are three types of assessments implemented in the Merdeka Curriculum: diagnostic assessments, formative assessments, and summative

assessments. Most educators at MAN 1 Sukabumi have conducted formative assessments, which are carried out after each learning objective (TP) is completed. Formative assessments are performed continuously to monitor, improve, and evaluate learning, identifying students' learning needs, obstacles, and difficulties. Educators typically conduct these assessments by asking questions at the beginning of lessons about previous material, engaging in discussions, self-assessments, and writing questions. Summative assessments at MAN 1 Sukabumi are routinely conducted at the end of classes and semesters. Although semester-end assessments are optional, they have become a common practice within the school community. The assessments are typically conducted through written or oral tests. Some educators have yet to implement formative assessments due to time constraints and the large number of students, requiring more time to provide effective feedback.

c. Learning Process According to Students' Learning Stages.

Teaching at the Right Level is a learning approach that focuses on students' readiness rather than grade level. In addition to implementing Ki Hadjar Dewantara's learning philosophy, this method aims to enhance students' literacy and numeracy competencies, ensuring that each student achieves the expected learning objectives. At MAN 1 Sukabumi, learning is adjusted to students' learning stages. The process begins with an initial assessment, after which students in a class are divided into two groups based on the assessment results. This approach enables students to learn at their own pace, allowing those who have not yet grasped a topic to move on to the following material, while students who have mastered the topic can proceed with their learning.

d. Collaboration among Educators for Curriculum and Learning Needs

In the Merdeka Curriculum, particularly in madrasahs, the madrasah operational curriculum (KOM) requires collaboration among education implementers. The team involved in KOM development consists of the head of the madrasah, the vice principal, and teachers. Additionally, semester and annual meetings are routinely held for evaluation and follow-up at the beginning of the following semester. Since they share the same goal, teacher collaboration is effectively carried out, further strengthened by direct supervision from the head of the madrasah in the development of KOM.

Reflection, Evaluation, and Quality Improvement of Curriculum Implementation Educational institutions conduct regular reflections to assess the success of learning, the structure and system, and the curriculum in place. Comprehensive learning evaluations aim to measure educators' effectiveness in facilitating learning and determine the efficiency of the learning process. At MAN 1 Sukabumi, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is evaluated

through monitoring and evaluation (MONEV) conducted by the head of the madrasah for educators. This evaluation assesses the alignment of the learning process with the Merdeka Curriculum. Additionally, students are evaluated by identifying their participation, achievements, and challenges. The results of reflection and evaluation serve as the basis for adjustments in further learning plans.

Profile of Pancasila Students and Raḥmatan lil ‘Ālamīn Students

The Pancasila Student Profile is a graduate profile designed to showcase the character and competencies expected to be achieved while fostering the noble values of Pancasila among students and stakeholders.³⁴ The Pancasila Student Profile serves as the primary reference for guiding educational policies, providing a framework for educators to shape students' character and competencies. It consists of six dimensions: (1) faith, devotion to God Almighty, and noble character, (2) independence, (3) cooperation, (4) global diversity, (5) critical reasoning, and (6) creativity.³⁵ In educational institutions, the Pancasila Student Profile needs to be developed through complementary and reinforcing strategies, including educational culture, learning activities, and co-curricular projects.³⁶

Specifically for the implementation of the independent curriculum in madrasahs, there is a profile or criteria for graduates of madrasahs, referred to as the profile of student's raḥmatan ālamīn. The profile of students raḥmatan lil ‘ālamīn is the profile of Pancasila students in madrasahs who can embody the insights, understanding, and behavior of taffaquh fiddin as the uniqueness of religious competencies in madrasahs, as well as being able to play a role in society as a moderate figure, beneficial amid a diverse community and actively contributing to maintaining the integrity and dignity of the state and nation of Indonesia. Pancasila students who embody raḥmatan lil'ālamīn call for providing peace, happiness, and safety for fellow human beings and all beings created by Allah Swt, the Almighty God.³⁷

The emergence of the profile of students of raḥmatan lil'ālamīn is based on the rampant turmoil of beliefs in the homeland, which serves as the

³⁴ Kemendikbudristek, 'Buku Saku: Tanya Jawab Kurikulum Merdeka'.

³⁵ Kemendikbudristek, 'Dimensi, Elemen, Dan Subelemen Profil Pelajar Pancasila Pada Kurikulum Merdeka', *Kemendikbudristek*, 2022, 1–37.

³⁶ Kemendikbudristek, 'Buku Saku: Tanya Jawab Kurikulum Merdeka'.

³⁷ Kementerian Agama, 'Keputusan Menteri Agama Republik Indonesia No 347 Tahun 2022 Tentang Pedoman Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka Pada Madrasah', *Implementasi Kurikulum Merdeka*, 2022, 1–60 <<https://www.mgmpmadrasah.com/2022/04/download-kma-keputusan-menteri-agama.html>>.

foundation for the necessity of religious moderation, including in educational institutions. The values of religious moderation referred to are: 1) Civility (ta'addub), 2) Exemplarity (qudwah), 3) Citizenship and nationalism (muwatanah), 4) Taking the middle path (tawassut), 5) Balance (tawazun), 6) Straight and firm (i'tidal), 7) Equality (musawah), 8) Deliberation (syura), 9) Tolerance (tasamuh), 10) Dynamic and innovative (ta'awwur wa ibtikar).³⁸

Implementation of the Strengthening Project of Pancasila Student Profile and Raḥmatan lil 'ālamīn at MAN 1 Sukabumi

In the madrasah, there is a student profile that students must possess, namely the profile of students as a mercy to the world. Therefore, students in the madrasah must practice 10 moderate religious values. For students to achieve the desired Pancasila student profile and the profile of students as a mercy to the world, projects need to be carried out as a form of implementation.

The student profile project provides students with the opportunity to experience knowledge as a process of character development, as well as a chance to learn from their surroundings. The strengthening of the student profile project is expected to be an optimal means of encouraging students to become lifelong students who are competent, have character, and behave according to the values of Pancasila and Islam raḥmatan lil 'ālamīn.

The implementation of P5RA consists of two stages, namely the preparation stage and the implementation stage. In the preparation stage, the head of the madrasah forms a P5RA facilitator team that is responsible for planning and executing project activities for all classes. After the facilitator team is formed, the next step is to prepare the project modules. In the implementation stage, P5RA is carried out using three strategies: project-based co-curricular activities, integration with learning, and extracurricular activities. Regarding its implementation, projects at MAN 1 Sukabumi have already begun. To date, three projects have been implemented, focusing on local wisdom, Pancasila democracy, and Bhinneka Tunggal Ika.

1. Local wisdom

The theme of local wisdom aims to help students understand the diversity of traditions, cultures, and various local wisdom that constitute the nation's cultural wealth. Its implementation is carried out integratively with curricular activities. This theme is realized through an artistic performance of Sundanese culture, featuring traditional Sundanese weddings, including the welcoming of the bride and groom, the gift-giving ceremony, the sawer

³⁸ Kementrian Agama.

ceremony, and the endog ritual. The dimensions of this project encompass global diversity and cooperation. This project also embodies the values of students being *rahmatan lil'ālamīn*, as well as citizenship and nationalism. (*Muwafatanah*)

2. Pancasila Democracy

The theme of Pancasila democracy is carried out by prioritizing deliberation for consensus in decision-making, with majority vote as the next option. Accepting decisions made from a democratic process and being responsible for the decisions that have been made. The project conducted with this theme is the election of the student council (OSIS) and the school committee (MPK) leaders. All students participate in this election activity, with some students serving as the success team for the OSIS/MPK chair candidate. In this project, there are dimensions of cooperation and creativity. Students collaborate to ensure that the election of the chairperson runs smoothly—the chair candidates and their success team's campaign independently and creatively. The value of *rahmatan lil'ālamīn* in this project includes tolerance (*tasamuh*), exemplarity (*qudwah*), as well as being dynamic and innovative (*taṭanwur wa ibtikar*).

3. Unity in Diversity (Bhinneka Tunggal Ika)

Students are expected to understand ethnic, racial, religious, and cultural differences in Indonesia as an inevitability, embrace diversity as a national asset, and promote the richness of the nation's culture while fostering mutual respect and preventing conflicts and violence. The project implementation under this theme includes scientific excursions (RIS) and campus studies. During these excursions, students not only travel but are also assigned to identify local economic potential. These activities are conducted in groups, and the research findings are compiled into a report, which is then presented in class. Through independent exploration, students actively participate and perform well. The Pancasila Student Profile dimensions emphasized in this project are cooperation, independence, and critical reasoning. At the same time, the *Rahmatan Ālamīn* values reinforced include civility (*ta'addub*), tolerance (*tasamuh*), and dynamism and innovation (*taṭanwur wa ibtikar*).

CONCLUSION

This research found that the madrasah principal understands of the Merdeka Curriculum influences the policies implemented in the madrasah. These policies are based on interpreting the Merdeka Curriculum concept in accordance with Kemdikbud and Kemenag, as well as analyzing the needs and

readiness of the madrasah. Based on the findings, various madrasah principal policies support the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, both in the preparation and execution stages. Educators are given the flexibility to enhance their competencies and deepen their understanding of the Merdeka Curriculum through training programs, which provide a general overview of learning within the curriculum.

By early 2024, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at MAN 1 Sukabumi had entered its second year. Several aspects had been successfully implemented, while others were still in progress. Out of the fifteen elements of implementation, eleven had reached the ready stage, while the remaining aspects were still in the developing and initial stages of development. The success of the Merdeka Curriculum implementation at MAN 1 Sukabumi was influenced by the madrasah's readiness, well-prepared educators, and the availability of space and time for teachers to develop teaching materials. However, challenges remained, as not all educators had fully adopted student-centered learning. Although the teaching methods used were varied and tailored to students' needs, some educators still relied on traditional approaches, which tended to dominate and direct student activities during lessons.

The Pancasila and *Rahmatan lil 'Ālamīn* Student Profile Strengthening Project for the odd semester of 2023-2024 was carried out by selecting three project themes: the Local Wisdom Theme, implemented through a Sundanese traditional wedding performance; the Pancasila Democracy Theme, conducted through the election of the OSIS and MPK chairpersons; and the *Bhinneka Tunggal Ika* Theme, executed by observing and reporting on the economic conditions in the areas where students participated in scientific excursions (RIS). The implementation of these projects aims to enhance the expected student profile.

From the conclusion of the research results above, the author proposes some suggestions as follows:

1. All educators can gradually implement student-centered learning, considering that each student has different interests, talents, needs, and learning stage achievements.
2. Collaboration can be carried out with parents, the surrounding community, organizations, or the business and industrial sectors in both intracurricular activities and projects to strengthen the Pancasila and *Rahmatan lil 'Ālamīn* student profiles, gradually, by the implementation guidelines of the Merdeka Curriculum set by Kemdikbud and Kemenag.

3. The Madrasah Operational Curriculum document is expected to serve as a guide for designing other madrasah operational curricula in Sukabumi Regency. Information regarding Merdeka Curriculum policies and implementation can be explained in detail to facilitate educators' understanding within the madrasah environment.

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