



Madrasah Committee: Implementation of “Merdeka Belajar” and the Progress of Islamic Education in Pamekasan

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Abstract

Keywords:

Madrasah Committee;
Merdeka Belajar;
Islamic Education

The madrasa committee is an independent institution formed by educational institutions to have a role in improving the quality and services of education in the form of direction, support for both educational facilities and infrastructure, and supervision of the implementation of education in each education unit. The madrasa committee plays a role as an Education Advisory, Education Supporting, Education Mediator, and even controlling the implementation of Education itself. We must carry out the policy of "Merdeka Belajar", because this is a mandate from the government that all education practitioners in each education unit are required to implement "Merdeka" policy which is then poured into the "Kurikulum Merdeka", the education practitioners are through the Guru Penggerak program in each education unit. Therefore, madrasa committees must be present and support the policies of this program. In this research method, the researcher used a qualitative approach with a phenomenological descriptive type. The informants in this study are those who the researchers consider to know and are related to this research. The results of the study show that: 1) Madrasah committees have the duty and responsibility to make madrasahs a progressive educational institution, 2) The potential and strengths of madrasahs must be able to be explored and maximized so that later madrasahs are no longer the number 2 educational institution but have become the leading choice of the community, 3) Madrasahs become centers of excellence for education because educational institutions in the form of madrasahs present more menus and scientific variants when compared to educational institutions in the form of schools.

Abstrak:

Kata Kunci:

Komite Madrasah;
Merdeka Belajar;
Pendidikan Islam.

Komite madrasah merupakan Lembaga mandiri yang dibentuk oleh institusi Pendidikan agar mempunyai peran untuk meningkatkan mutu dan layanan Pendidikan yang berupa arahan, dukungan baik

sarana dan prasarana Pendidikan serta pengawasan dari implementasi Pendidikan pada setiap satuan Pendidikan. Komite madrasah berperan serta sebagai Advisory Pendidikan, Supporting Pendidikan, Mediator Pendidikan dan bahkan controlling dari implementasi Pendidikan itu sendiri. Kebijakan merdeka belajar wajib kita jalankan, karena ini merupakan Amanah dari pemerintah bahwa semua praktisi Pendidikan disetiap satuan Pendidikan wajib untuk mengimplementasi “merdeka belajar” yang kemudian dituangkan kepada “kurikulum merdeka”, praktisi pendidikannya adalah melalui program guru penggerak disetiap satuan Pendidikan, oleh sebab itu, komite madrasah harus hadir dan mendukung terhadap kebijakan program ini. Metode penelitian ini, peneliti menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis deskriptif fenomenologis, Adapun informan dalam penelitian ini adalah mereka yang peneliti anggap memiliki pengetahuan dan ada keterkaitannya dengan penelitian ini. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa: 1) Komite madrasah mempunyai tugas dan kewajiban untuk menjadikan madrasah sebagai institusi Pendidikan yang berkemajuan, 2) Potensi dan kekuatan madrasah harus mapu untuk dieplorasi dan dimaksimalkan agar nantinya madrasah tidak lagi menjadi institusi Pendidikan nomor 2 melainkan sudah menjadi yang utama pilihan masyarakat, 3) Madrasah menjadi pusat keunggulan Pendidikan, karena institusi Pendidikan yang berupa madrasah ini lebih banyak menyajikan menu dan varian keilmuan jika dibandingkan dengan institusi Pendidikan yang berupa Sekolah.

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1. Introduction

The madrasah committee, which the author refers to as the madrasah committee, is an institution that deals explicitly with education issues, from the issues of management, circulation of education, and also Human Resources (HR) in education units, including (education personnel and educators and even school or madrasah principals). This institution, a madrasa committee, is a mandate of the law of National Ministerial Decree No. 014 / U / 2020 dated April 02, 2002¹ concerning Education Organizing Assistance, which we later called (BP3 or *Badan Pembantu Penyelenggara Pendidikan*, which then, according to the 2003 UUSPN National Education System Law, changed the term to the Education Committee as outlined in article 56 paragraph 3, in Indonesian the madrasa committee is an independent institution that can be formed by educational institutions or schools and plays a role in improving the quality of education services by seeking to provide consideration, direction, and support for energy, facilities and infrastructure for education and overseeing the implementation of educational activities at the education unit level.²

¹ The primary basis for forming the school committee for the first time was Law No. 25 of 2000, which was then translated into Minister of National Education Decree No. 044/U/2002. Department of National Education, Empowerment of School Committees: Module 1 Strengthening School Committee Institutions, (Jakarta: Department of National Education, 2009), 5. For developments, see Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, *Penguatan Kelembagaan Komite Sekolah (Modul 2)*, (Jakarta: Direktorat Jendral Pendidikan Dasar, 2012).1.

² Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, *Pemberdayaan Komite Sekolah: Modul 2 Peningkatan Kemampuan Organisasi Komite Sekolah*, (Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2009), 3.

Thus, the madrasah committee has to convince parents, the government, and even stakeholders to trust educational institutions, schools, and madrasahs to implement education management. In addition, the madrasah committee must be able to analyze the school or madrasah condition to carry out the circulation of education and learning that is active, creative, effective, and fun,³ both from the financing sector and the output-outcome of this educational institution to be high quality. This is done to produce competitive graduates, or at least those who are *ready to use* in society.

The formation of a community organization called the madrasa committee aims to establish the madrasah as a partner educational institution called a school, which, in turn, the school can provide a clear commitment to the government and the community to implement the duties and functions as an educational institution that follows mutual expectations, namely becoming a quality educational institution.

Madrasa Committee is formed and can be developed through cultural values, demographics, ecology, and the value of the agreement and the birth of trust built under the existing potential in a surrounding community.⁴ Therefore, the Madrasa Committee has to develop the philosophical wealth of the surrounding community collectively so that the development concept must be user-oriented (client model), sharing authority (power sharing and advocacy model), and the principle of partnership (partnership model), which is then formulated to improve the quality of education services.

The existence of the madrasah committee persists and plays a strategic role in educational institutions (schools and madrasahs). The madrasah committee implements its duties and functions and can place itself in a good and correct position according to applicable laws and regulations; then, its existence is genuinely compelling.⁵

On the other hand, educational institutions, including schools and madrasahs, also need to make more creations and innovations to keep up with the development and need for the advancement of educational institutions, such as curriculum development, which is increasingly developing and advancing. The National Education System is currently enlivening the "Merdeka belajar" system in all lines of education units, starting from the lowest level (early childhood education to the university level).

The government policy concerning the transformation of the implementation of education in Indonesia is to realize superior Indonesian human resources (HR) who have Pancasila students' profiles.⁶ There are several central policies in the implementation of independent learning frameworks, including 1) the National Standardized School Examination, which later on known as (USBN); 2) the National Examination, which we later known as (UN); 3) Lesson Plan (RPP), 4) Government Regulation on New Learners or (PP-PDB).⁷

³ Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, *Pemberdayaan Komite Sekolah: Modul 3 Peningkatan Wawasan Kependidikan Pengurus Komite Sekolah*, (Jakarta: Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, 2009), 47.

⁴ Ditjen Pendidikan Dasar, *Manual Pembentukan Komite Sekolah & Pemilihan Pengurus Baru Komite Sekolah*, (Jakarta: Kemdikbud, 2012).

⁵ Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, *Peningkatan Kemampuan Organisasi Komite Sekolah (Modul 3)*, (Jakarta: Direktorat Jendral Pendidikan Dasar, 2012).1.

⁶ Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, *Peningkatan Wawasan Kependidikan Pengurus Komite Sekolah (Modul 1)*, (Jakarta: Direktorat Jendral Pendidikan Dasar, 2012).

⁷ <https://www.kemdikbud.go.id/main/blog/2019/12/mendikbud-tetapkan-empat-pokok-kebijakan-pendidikan-merdeka-belajar>

For this reason, the madrasah committee must follow and welcome this "Merdeka Belajar" policy, which is then translated into the orientation of implementing education that is progressive, civilized, and has character. The madrasah committee acts as a motor and motivator for this policy in schools so that later, students can and get educational services that match their respective characteristics. There is no more dichotomy of education, which, in essence, instills a sense of confusion and distortion of scientific dualism (religious and general science), including institutionally affiliated with (the Ministry of Religion and the Ministry of Education and Culture).

Based on statistical data on education in Pamekasan, the number of educational conditions in Pamekasan is 0.59 from 2019 to 2021. This can be seen in the following table:

Statistical Data of Education in Pamekasan⁸

Education Index	Education Index (Index)		
Years of Education Index	2017	2018	2019
Education Index	0,59	0,59	0,59

Based on the Table, the Education Index in Pamekasan Regency has experienced stagnant development in the last few years. It is caused by several factors, ranging from the issue of raw-input students, educators' recruitment system, and educational facilities and infrastructure. All of them contribute to the educational achievements of Pamekasan Regency at this time.

The conditions above are one of the rationales for doing the theme of this research and to study indeep about this, so the authors try to formulate the Madrasah Committee and the implementation of the "Merdeka Belajar" policy in Advancing Islamic Education in Pamekasan Regency.

2. Methods

This article used a qualitative approach with a descriptive phenomenology that seeks to describe comprehensively the phenomena occurring in the field, especially regarding the madrasah committee and the implementation of "Merdeka Belajar" for advancing Islamic Education in Pamekasan Regency. The research subjects were several Islamic Education Institutions and education policymakers in Pamekasan Regency. The data collection technique was conducted by interviews with the related parties that the researcher considers to know the theme being discussed, involving the stakeholders of education in Pamekasan Regency. Then, observation and documentation were selected as primary instruments to strengthen the validity of the data collected in the field. As for testing the data's credibility, the research checked the data with the same source using different techniques or different techniques with the same source.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Madrasah Committee, Its Role and Existence in Educational institutions

Madrasah Committee is an independent institution that accommodates community participation to improve education management quality, equity, and efficiency in education units, from the preschool education, school education, and out-of-school education level.⁹

Etymologically, a committee is several people or a group of people appointed to manage specific tasks, especially regarding the government

⁸ Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Pamekasan (bps.go.id)

⁹ Kepmendiknas nomor: 044/U/2002

world.¹⁰ Meanwhile, a madrasah or school is an educational institution based on Islamic principles.¹¹ Furthermore, the madrasah or school committee is also defined as a group appointed by the authorities. It is entrusted to coordinate, motivate, and oversee regulation and circulation in the Education units in madrasahs and schools.

The madrasah committee, traced from its origin, was established based on the decree of National Ministry No. 014 / U / 2002 dated April 2, 2002, concerning the Education Provider Assistance Agency, which was later abbreviated as (BP3), then in 2003 sourced from UUSPN number 20 of 2003 called the school committee or madrasah as an independent institution formed and plays a role in improving the quality of education services by providing consideration, direction and support like energy, facilities and infrastructure, as well as supervision of education conducted in the education unit level.¹²

The presence of the madrasah committee should convince student guardians, the government as a policy maker, the business world (as a user), and society in general (as a stakeholder) that the madrasah can be trusted as an education management institution, both at the basic education level to higher education. Therefore, the madrasah at the technical level needs to develop the ability to analyze the condition of the institution both in terms of strengths (Power), which are then used as opportunities by the madrasah to advance education, or even weaknesses as a trigger and encouragement for managers of educational institutions which then, in the end, this educational institution becomes a competitive and superior institution in doing educational tasks. The madrasah does this to produce graduates who are "ready-to-use" educational outcomes in society.

The madrasah committee is a community organization established by the madrasah that has commitment, loyalty, and a high sense of concern for improving the quality of the madrasah. The madrasah committee can be developed uniquely and rooted in cultural, demographic, ecological, and value agreements and beliefs following the potential of the surrounding community. Therefore, the madrasah committee must be a development of the philosophical wealth of the community collectively.

3.2 Tasks, Roles, and Functions of the Madrasah Committee

Madrasah committees formed by educational institutions have several tasks, roles, and functions. The following are presented the task, role, and function of the madrasah committees:

- a. The tasks of the madrasah committee include:
 - 1) Arranging the memorandum and article association of the School Committee;
 - 2) Encouraging the growth of community attention and commitment to the implementation of quality education;
 - 3) Cooperating with the community and government regarding the implementation of quality education;
 - 4) Accommodating and analyzing aspirations, ideas, demands, and various educational needs of the community;

¹⁰ KBBI, *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia*.

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Departemen Pendidikan Nasional, *Acuan Operasional dan Indikator Kinerja Komite Sekolah*, (Jakarta: Direktorat Jendral Manajemen Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah, 2006), 19.

- 5) Providing input, considerations, and recommendations to the school regarding school policies and programs; RAPBS (School Budget Planning and Funding), school performance criteria, educational staff criteria, educational facility criteria, and other educational matters;
- 6) Reassuring parents and the community to participate in education to support the improvement of the quality and equity of education;
- 7) Raising community funds to finance the implementation of education in schools;
- 8) Evaluating and supervising the program policies, implementation, and output of education in schools.

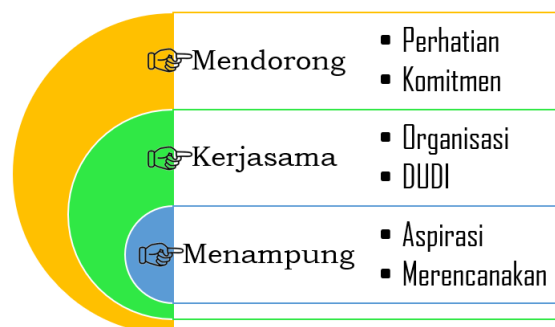
b. The roles of the madrasah committee include:

- 1) As an advisory agency in determining and implementing education policy in education units.
- 2) As a supporting agency in the form of finance, thought, and energy in implementing education in education units.
- 3) As a controlling agency in the framework of transparency and accountability of the implementation and output of education in education units.
- 4) As a mediator agency between the government (executive) and the community in education units.



c. The functions of the madrasah committee include:

- 1) Encouraging the growth of community attention and commitment to the provision of quality education;
- 2) Cooperating with the community (individuals/organizations/business world and industry (DUDI) and the government regarding the implementation of quality education;
- 3) Accommodating and analyzing aspirations, ideas, demands, and various community educational needs.



Encouraging	Attention Commitment
Cooperating	Organization Business and Industrial World (DUDI)
Accommodating	Aspiration Plan

3.3 The Policy of Merdeka Belajar

The "merdeka belajar" policy is conducted to transform Indonesia's existing and applicable education system, starting from the lower level to the higher education level (college). The term "merdeka belajar" explored the students' potentials and teachers' ability to conduct their duties properly.

The Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Anwar Makarim, implemented education reform by changing the curriculum towards broader directions, giving freedom to teachers and students to innovate and create education that accommodates and meets the students' needs. No more burdens and rigid rules bind their expression in studying and learning activities at school.

This reform, considered "simple" reform (merdeka belajar), will have a tremendous impact and influence on the implementation of education. In this policy, there is no longer a rigid emphasis on conducting the circulation of learning in education. Teachers can provide material according to the level and appropriateness to students. Students who are "free to learn" means that they are free to select their interests and talents with their likes and pleasures in their participation in school learning activities. So that there are no more subjects or courses that they dislike. Because the diversity of desires and capacities caused by various factors (sociological factors, geographical factors, and psychological factors), it cannot be forced to be the same as the philosophy of "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika," which is diverse but still in one frame, the frame of education in which there is what we know as learning.

The "Merdeka belajar" program will undoubtedly run and produce outcomes as planned if it gets sympathy and support from all parties from upstream to downstream, including stakeholders and the community. The presence of teachers as technical implementers of educational activities is a benchmark for the success of this "Merdeka belajar" program, where the consensus believes that no matter how good and established the program or curriculum built by the government and educational institutions, if it does not get serious support by teachers as technical implementers, the program becomes useless and will not produce anything. Thus, the "teacher mover" is one way to smooth the new circulation (Merdeka belajar) in education.

There is at least one "teacher mover" in an educational institution whose function is to be the force of the educational movement that has been running. Of course, massive government support and a solid commitment to advancing the world of education are among the actors' strengths in the world of education.

Apart from that ("the merdeka belajar" and "teacher mover"), the presence and the commitment of madrasah committees as partners of

educational institutions is very urgent for the success of the education process in an institution or madrasah. Their existence offers advisory, supporting, mediating, and controlling acts that help to implement education better.

3.4 The implementation of the "Merdeka belajar" Program in Educational Institutions in Pamekasan

According to the National Education Standards Agency (BNSP), the definition of a "Merdeka belajar" curriculum as a derivative of "Merdeka belajar" is a learning curriculum that refers to the approach that promotes students' talents and interests (both students and college students), they can choose whatever lessons they want and according to their talents and interests.

The *Merdeka* (Freedom/Independent) Curriculum or "Merdeka belajar" program released by the Minister of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Mendikbud Ristek) Nadiem Makarim as a form of evaluation of the improvement of the previous curriculum, namely the 2013 curriculum known as the Prototype curriculum. This is the government's effort to produce the nation's next generation more competent in various fields. This Prototype Curriculum is a simple form of the 2013 Curriculum with a learning system based on a particular project, also known as (Project Based Learning).

Starting in 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the implementation of The *Merdeka* (Freedom/Independent) Curriculum or Prototype Curriculum has been piloted in at least 2500 school mover and SMK Centers of Excellence in Indonesia. As a result, schools that have implemented this curriculum have proven to be four to five months ahead of other schools still using the previous or the 2013 curriculum (prototype curriculum).

Starting in the 2022/2023 academic year, the government is committed to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, which will not only be specialized in high school level education units or equivalent but can also be used at other levels, such as kindergarten / early childhood education, elementary school/ Islamic elementary school, junior high school / *Madrasah Tsanawiyah*, even up to the higher education levels.

As an illustration, the following describes the implementation of independent learning at any educational level in Indonesia:

a) At the basic education level (SD / MI level)

Before discussing the differences at the SD/MI level curriculums, it is necessary to know that *Merdeka Belajar* "Merdeka belajar" at the PAUD/RA/TK level means freedom to play. That way, the application of Merdeka "freedom/independent" curriculum at the PAUD/RA/TK level is to invite children to play while learning, not too different from the previous curriculum. Meanwhile, for the elementary school or *madrasah Ibtidaiyah* level, there are some differences in the subjects when implementing the *Merdeka* Curriculum. These differences include combining science and social studies (Natural and Social Sciences) and making English, which was previously a local content subject, become an alternative subject.

b) At the junior high school levels (SMP / MTs level)

Almost the same as the SD / MI level, the *Merdeka Belajar* "Merdeka belajar" Curriculum Guide at the SMP / MTs level also changes several subjects' statuses. For example, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has become compulsory. In the previous curriculum, this subject was only an alternative subject. So, in the future, at all levels of junior high school / MTs, students must obtain an ICT subject.

c) At the senior high school levels (SMA / MA / SMK level)

For the SMA/MA/SMK levels, as mentioned earlier, using the *Merdeka* Curriculum allows students to be no longer distinguished by various specializations, such as natural science, social science, and language science. Meanwhile, at the SMK level, the learning model will be made simpler, comprising 70 percent vocational subjects and 30 percent general subjects. In addition, at the end of their education, students must complete a scientific essay, just like students who must complete a final project or thesis when they graduate. This is to hone the student's ability to think critically, scientifically, and analytically.

d) At the Higher Education level

The implementation of *Merdeka Belajar* "Merdeka belajar" Curriculum for Higher Education is manifested in the Independent Campus Program. Its implementation also has several differences from the previous curriculum. In the Independent Campus Program, students can learn something outside their study program. This can be done in several ways, such as work practices (internships), student exchanges, research, independent projects, entrepreneurship, becoming teaching assistants, as well as participating in a thematic Community Service Program (KKN) to develop villages.

Basically, the "Merdeka belajar" program implemented with a "Merdeka belajar" curriculum is a government initiative, in this case, the Ministry of Education and Culture, which is also followed by the Ministry of Religion in Islamic Education in order to advance the world of education in Indonesia. This good step produces positive energy for the educational environment; one example is:

- a) Exploration of learner potential: With this "merdeka belajar," students or learners are given the broadest possible freedom to identify and explore the potential that they can develop or maximize. Moreover, teachers are obliged to provide services that genuinely meet the student's needs.
- b) In the growth of teacher creativity in teaching, teachers also need to be creative to fulfill the student's needs in the classroom so that the measure is based on diverse learning outcomes rather than uniform because it is on the interests and talents of students and teachers that have been agreed upon beforehand.
- c) Lively educational innovation. It is inferred that educational innovation is not monotonous and rigid because with this "merdeka belajar," it seems that each individual's desires are channeled, as they are given unlimited freedom.
- d) In accordance with the situation and geographical conditions in each region in Indonesia.

However, some small notes also need attention from the government, as the readiness of institutions in several regions to implement this independent learning is different. The causes are the following:

- a) The unpreparedness of teachers to become "teacher mover" to oversee and run this independent learning circulation,
- b) The unbalanced numbers of "teacher movers" with the number of educational institutions in Indonesia,
- c) The "merdeka belajar" and the Merdeka (freedom/independent) curriculum has not been socialized well,
- d) The immature preparation of the institutions, caused by various factors,

Some of these challenges have become challenges for us in realizing our common goal: the success of this "merdeka belajar" program. It becomes

our duty with the government, schools, higher education institutions, and education practitioners to support and carefully prepare for the needs of the “merdeka belajar” program in educational institutions (campuses and schools).

Since the birth of this nation and state, formal education institutions in Indonesia have been covered by the Ministry of Education and Culture (*Kemendikbud*) and the Ministry of Religion (*Kemenag*). These two ministries have authority and great responsibility in education, which is different from general and religious education.

Suppose the Ministry of Education and Culture (*Kemendikbud*) focuses on managing and overseeing general education issues from elementary to higher education levels institutionally, from elementary schools (SD), junior high schools (SMP), senior or vocational high schools (SMA / SMK) and even higher education levels or universities. At the same time, the Ministry of Religious Affairs is responsible for and manages Religious Education Institutions from primary to higher education levels in the form of *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* (MI), *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* (MTs), *Madrasah Aliyah* (MA) and Islamic higher education institutions like Islamic Universities.

These two models, realize it or not, admit it or not, institutions or educational institutions under the auspices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs are considered as “number 2” institutions in the community’s views. These views only happen for a reason. There are several indicators of the problem, one of which may be from administrative arrangements and staffing issues to branding or labeling issues in the community that are less massive.

This is a separate program by the Ministry of Religion to improve institutions under their auspices. Evaluation, innovation, and creation also need to be done so that Madrasahs can become educational institutions that at least occupy the same position as educational institutions called schools.

Based on the observation conducted for some time, the data and facts show that the creativity and innovation of educational institutions under the coordination of the Ministry of Religious Affairs are starting to show good significance. Some of these indicators can be seen from:

- a) The number of educational institutions in the form of RA, MI, MTs, and MA, as well as Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), is increasing from year to year, and the following is the statistical data:

**The Number of Islamic Education Institutions
RA, MI, MTs, MA and *Pesantren* levels in Pamekasan¹³**

No	Region	RA		MI		MTs		MA		<i>Pesantren</i>
		S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	
1	Pamekasan	456	2	319	4	194	2	106	218	

Nb.

- N = State/ Public Institutions
- S = Private Institutions
- RA = Raudhatul Athfal (Islamic Early Childhood School)
- MI = Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Islamic Elementary School)
- MTs = Madrasah Tsanawiyah (Islamic Junior High School)
- MA = Madrasah Aliyah (Islamic Senior High School)

Based on the data above, the numbers of RA alone, if it is divided by the number of villages in the Pamekasan district, which amounted to 189

¹³<http://emispendis.kemenag.go.id/dashboard/?content=datastatistik&action=kab&prov=35&kab=28>

villages and sub-districts, result in 456 Raudhatul Athfal (RA) institutions divided by the average number of villages and sub-districts. The result was that each village and sub-district had an average of 2 to 3 RA institutions. As for *Madrasah Tsanawiyah* (MTs), they have an average of 1 to 2 educational institutions per village and ward using the same formula. Whereas for *Madrasah Aliyah* (MA), there is still less than 1 institution per village and ward. However, for Islamic Education Institutions in the form of *Pesantren*, if those are divided on average, in one village or ward, there are 1 to 2 education institutions in the form of *pesantren*.

With such a position, the researcher believes that Islamic Education Institutions in the form of (RA, MI, MTs, MA, and *Pesantren*) offer great potential and strength to advance Education Institutions, which in turn can advance Pamekasan Regency through its community development sector, primarily through education.

- b) With the implementation of the school zoning policy, many educational institutions named schools (SD, SMP, and SMA) did not reach the target, and the acquisition of students began to decline from year to year. Meanwhile, the acquisition of students (MI, MTs, and MA) tends to increase. The researchers analyze that this is due to the tendency of Pamekasan people who prefer *pesantren* rather than schools, and *pesantren* more affiliated to the Ministry of Religion in the form of (RA, MI, MTs, and MA) for their educational institutions. Another cause is because the zoning system policy do not meet the school's expectations, and the third factor is the number of educational institutions that are growing in the community that can not be followed with the growth and development of the community in Pamekasan Regency.
- c) Madrasahs have now transformed and become educational institutions that are no longer considered "number 2" institutions. Their ranks are increasing, and they have become the first choice for the community to send their sons and daughters to school. This can be seen from the reduction or non-fulfillment of student quotas provided by public/private educational institutions called schools (elementary school, junior high school, senior high school, or vocational school).
- d) Madrasahs provide more scientific variations than schools; for example, all general sciences obtained at school can also be taught in madrasahs. However, not all of the knowledge presented in madrasahs can be obtained in schools, such as varied religious subjects (al-Qur'an Hadith, Fiqh, SKI) and even Arabic language and *kitab* lessons are commonly only provided in madrasahs and not in schools.

Thus, because madrasah is a center of excellence, it has more bargaining value than schools. However, their management system still needs to be addressed and improved because there are so many shortcomings and mistakes in applying for the position and in the rhythm of education. In addition, governance and human resources also need to get more serious attention from all parties. Thus, the output and outcome of educational institutions in the form of madrasahs follow the values and expectations of the community.

The achievement, creation, and innovation of madrasahs are no longer in doubt, considering that madrasah institutions already have tremendous potential in quantity and quality, only in terms of whether they can brand and compete globally.

4. Conclusion

The school committee, which the researchers then termed the madrasah committee, is an independent institution formed and adopted by an educational institution in the form of a madrasah to implement the mandate of the 2003 National Education System law. This madrasah committee aims to assist educational institutions in giving educational services and ensure that education circulation is in the correct position or according to applicable regulations and legislation. The main task of this madrasah committee is to provide consideration, direction, and support to the madrasah so that this educational institution can provide maximum educational services to the community. A madrasah will be good if the madrasah committee has superior independence and is strong and highly committed to the progress of the educational institution or madrasah.

On the other hand, educational institutions such as schools and madrasahs must make changes and transformations in education to be better than before, starting from the system to the mindset of education practitioners to adapt to the increasing and higher educational needs. The government policy regarding the "Merdeka Belajar" program through the implementation of a *Merdeka* or "freedom" curriculum is a mandatory demand that must be fulfilled by educational institutions, education practitioners, and educational managers.

The Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Anwar Makarim, has appealed to education practitioners to provide the broadest possible educational services to students as learners and teachers to be creative and innovative in implementing school learning activities. There are no longer any burdens that can hinder the movement of education; everything must be transformed to provide excellent and maximum education.

Merdeka Belajar is not only devoted to schools under the coordination of Education and Culture (Ministry of Education and Culture) but also the Ministry of Religion, which in this case are Madrasahs (RA, MI, MTs, and MA). Therefore, *Merdeka Belajar* or "Merdeka Belajar" is essential to 1) explore the potential of students so that they can develop their potential so that they become students who are by the vision and mission of educational institutions, 2) to develop the potential of teachers in carrying out the rhythm of learning and the educational process, 3) educational innovation that is increasingly vibrant, 4) adapting to the situations and conditions in which students live.

Madrasahs are centers of excellence because they have broader potential than educational institutions in the form of schools. Madrasahs can present a wider variety of education than schools. Therefore, this great potential needs to receive serious attention from all parties, so realized or not, agree or not, madrasahs must be centers of excellence for educational activities.

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