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Managing the Merdeka Curriculum for Strengthening Pancasila Learner Profile Projects: Cases in Elite Madrasah Aliyah

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ABSTRACT

This study analyses the management of Indonesia's Merdeka Curriculum for implementing the Pancasila Learner Profile Strengthening Project (Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila, P5) at two elite state Madrasah Aliyah in the first Sekolah Penggerak cohort: MAN Insan Cendekia Serpong (MIC) and MAN 4 Jakarta Selatan (M4J). Adopting a qualitative comparative case study design with a two-stage replication logic, data were collected from 26 informants through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and document analysis, with G. R. Terry's POAC framework as the analytic lens. Both madrasah enacted all four functions systematically, but the cross-case contrast is sharper than that shared architecture suggests: MIC manages P5 as an inquiry-driven extension of its selective boarding science ecosystem, with vertically coordinated planning and assessment weighted toward evidence and argument, whereas M4J manages it as an outward-facing civic programme, with horizontally negotiated planning and assessment weighted toward public presentation and social effect. The two also embed Rahmatan lil 'Alamin values differently. The study proposes the Integrated POAC–P5 Madrasah Management Model (I-POAC-P5), stated as four testable propositions with specified boundary conditions, and derives policy implications for teaching hours, teacher workload, and project budgets.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Fourth Industrial Revolution and Society 5.0 have placed unprecedented demands on national education systems, requiring them to cultivate character, creativity, and adaptive capacity alongside cognitive competencies (Hunaepi & Suharta, 2024; Trilling & Fadel, 2009). Indonesia has responded through successive reforms, culminating in the *Merdeka* Curriculum under the *Merdeka Belajar* policy (Kemdikbudristek, 2022; Menteri Pendidikan Riset, 2024) Grounded in Law No. 20 of 2003 (Republik Indonesia, 2003), it grants schools substantial autonomy to design contextual learning that develops academic competencies alongside character formation.

A central pillar of the curriculum is the Pancasila Learner Profile Strengthening Project (*Projek Penguatan Profil Pelajar Pancasila*, P5), an interdisciplinary, project-based approach cultivating six dimensions: faith in and devotion to God Almighty with noble character, global diversity, mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), independence, critical reasoning, and creativity (Firoh et al., 2025; Yasa et al., 2023). As a mandatory co-curricular component, P5 bridges academic learning with real-world problem solving (Bell, 2010; Trilling & Fadel, 2009).

Empirical evidence nevertheless indicates significant challenges in translating policy into practice. Studies report gaps in teacher readiness, uneven institutional capacity, insufficient infrastructure, and difficulties integrating P5 within densely scheduled programmes (Cholilah et al., 2022; Fitriyah & Wardani, 2022; Hartati & Nurhadi, 2024; Kaharuddin et al., 2024). Further research documents variation in how schools interpret the six dimensions, some emphasising formal compliance and others cultivating deeper transformative learning (Delviyani et al., 2025; Fajriansyah et al., 2023; Istiqomah & Haryanto, 2023).

Within the Indonesian Islamic education ecosystem, *madrasah aliyah* occupy a distinctive position, combining religious formation with the national curriculum (Kosim et al., 2023; Rodliyah et al., 2024). State *Madrasah Aliyah* holding *Sekolah Penggerak* status combine institutional maturity, government support, and reputational incentives to implement P5 with fidelity (Ghofur et al., 2026), so studying them offers insight into best practices and transferable strategies for the wider system.

Existing scholarship exhibits three gaps. First, most empirical studies of the *Merdeka* Curriculum and P5 focus on general public schools at primary or junior secondary level (Firoh et al., 2025; Fitriyah & Wardani, 2022), while few examine elite state *madrasah aliyah*. Second, prior work tends to describe programme content or short-term outcomes without an integrated managerial analysis. Third, few studies have systematically applied G. R. Terry's POAC framework as an analytic lens for P5 (Isniah et al., 2020; Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018).

These gaps matter because P5 in a *madrasah* is not the same managerial object as P5 in a general senior secondary school, and the difference is institutional rather than contextual. Three conditions distinguish it. First, dual curricular governance: P5 originates as a Kemendikbudristek instrument, yet *madrasah* answer to the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which layers the *Profil Pelajar Rahmatan lil 'Alamin* (PPRA) onto the six Pancasila dimensions, so managers reconcile two learner profiles and two reporting lines within one cycle. Second, the *madrasah* curriculum already carries a larger compulsory religious load, so P5 hours are extracted from a denser timetable, making hour allocation and teacher workload first-order constraints. Third, a project's legitimacy depends on its defensibility in religious-normative terms, so theme, partner, and assessment choices pass through an explicit value filter.

Applying POAC to *madrasah* P5 is therefore not a replication of standard POAC research on a different subject: each function acquires additional content. Planning must negotiate two learner profiles; organizing must mobilise religious-normative alongside pedagogical authority; actuating must hold Islamic value formation and twenty-first-century skill formation within the same project; and controlling must report against two rubrics that national guidance has not reconciled. This is consistent with scholarship showing that leadership in faith-based institutions follows an accountability logic distinct from secular templates (Alazmi & Bush, 2024; Arar et al., 2022; Brooks & Mutohar, 2018).

A fourth gap concerns value integration. Although religious moderation (*wasatiyyah*) and PPRA have become policy priorities, the P5 literature and the moderation literature have developed in parallel: studies of P5 rarely ask how moderation values are operationalised inside project cycles, while studies of moderation curricula rarely examine the managerial machinery that would make integration durable (Mukhibat et al., 2024; Rachman et al., 2023). Principals in Islamic schools act as curators of socio-religious practice (Brooks et al., 2020); reading P5 through this literature treats value integration as a managerial variable rather than a rhetorical commitment.

The novelty of this study lies in three respects. First, it examines P5 implementation in two elite *Madrasah Aliyah* combining institutional prestige with a religious identity, an under-researched site

(Kosim et al., 2023). Second, it employs POAC as an integrating analytic lens, allowing systematic cross-case comparison of managerial functions rather than isolated programme features (Miller et al., 2023). Third, it advances the Integrated POAC–P5 Madrasah Management Model (I-POAC-P5) linking each function to the six Pancasila dimensions.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze how the *Merdeka* Curriculum is managed at MAN Insan Cendekia Serpong and MAN 4 Jakarta Selatan for P5 implementation across the four POAC functions, including challenges and adaptive strategies, and to formulate an integrated management model linking managerial functions to character-formation outcomes.

2. METHODS

This study adopted a qualitative comparative case study design (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Miller et al., 2023; Yin, 2018), selected to enable in-depth exploration of *Merdeka* Curriculum management for P5 across two contrasting institutional contexts while allowing systematic cross-case comparison, and to capture participants' interpretive accounts and managerial reasoning.

Research sites were MAN Insan Cendekia Serpong (MIC) in South Tangerang and MAN 4 Jakarta Selatan (M4J), both state *Madrasah Aliyah* in the first *Sekolah Penggerak* cohort. They were purposively selected for implementing P5 for more than two academic years; for documented achievement—MIC was designed as an integrated science–faith flagship, M4J once held ISO 9001 certification as a national model *madrasah*; and for contrasting institutional characters, a selective boarding-oriented science *madrasah* and a metropolitan day *madrasah*.

Participants were selected through purposive sampling, recruited on direct involvement in the design, implementation, or experience of P5. Twenty-six participants took part, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Profile of Research Informants

Code	Informant Category	Role/Position	Madrasah
KM1–KM2	Madrasah Principals	Chief institutional leader	MIC & M4J
WK1–WK4	Deputy Principals	Curriculum & student affairs	MIC & M4J
GP1–GP4	Guru Penggerak	P5 mobilizing teachers	MIC & M4J
GR1–GR8	Senior Teachers	P5 facilitators / subject teachers	MIC & M4J
ST1–ST6	Students	Grade XI participants of P5	MIC & M4J
OT1–OT2	Parents & Partner Reps	Parents and MoU partners	MIC & M4J

Data were collected over January to June 2025 using three techniques. In-depth semi-structured interviews explored perceptions across the four POAC functions; each lasted 45–90 minutes and was audio-recorded with consent. Non-participant observation covered project sessions, classroom instruction, coordination meetings, and reflection events. Document analysis included strategic and semester plans, P5 modules, MoUs, assessment records, portfolios, and student reflection journals. The researcher served as the principal instrument, with reflexive journaling and peer consultation minimising interpretive bias (Nowell et al., 2017).

Analysis followed the interactive model of Miles et al. (2020)—data condensation, display, and conclusion drawing and verification—proceeding through verbatim transcription, organization of materials by case, POAC function, and P5 dimension, repeated reading, open coding of meaningful units, axial coding into categories aligned with the four functions and six dimensions, thematic synthesis (Braun & Clarke, 2022), within-case and cross-case analysis, and iterative verification across data sources.

The comparative component followed a two-stage replication logic. Each *madrasah* was first analysed as a self-contained case, with codes assembled into a within-case matrix whose rows were the four POAC functions and whose columns were managerial practice, enabling condition, constraint, and evidentiary source. The two matrices were then placed side by side in a cross-case display, and each paired cell classified as literal replication, theoretical replication, or unexplained divergence requiring

a return to the data. Contrasts were reported only when corroborated by at least two data types in both cases.

Saturation was operationalised through stated stopping criteria rather than a global judgement. Within each informant category, interviewing continued until three consecutive interviews generated no new first-level codes for any POAC function, two successive rounds of analysis added no new sub-theme, and every function was supported by evidence from at least three informant categories plus one documentary source. Saturation was assessed separately for each case and met before the final scheduled interviews in both.

Reliability across researchers was maintained through documented procedures. A codebook containing code labels, definitions, inclusion and exclusion rules, and anchor examples was drafted after the first five transcripts. Two team members independently coded a subset of transcripts from both cases; disagreements were recorded in a decision log and resolved through consultation, with the codebook revised after each round and applied retrospectively. A third member audited the final coding, and an audit trail of transcripts, coded extracts, matrix versions, memos, and the decision log was retained (Nowell et al., 2017).

Trustworthiness was strengthened through source and technique triangulation, prolonged engagement, member checking, and peer debriefing. Formal permission was obtained from both *madrasah* leaderships; participants received explanations of objectives, voluntary participation, confidentiality, and their right to withdraw, and written informed consent was obtained before all interviews. Identities were anonymised using codes (KM1, WK1, GP1, GR1, ST1, OT1).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Both MIC and M4J implemented the *Merdeka* Curriculum for P5 systematically, enacting each POAC function in ways that combine institutional maturity with adaptive innovation. The overall pattern, with challenges encountered and solutions adopted, is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Cross-Case Overview of Merdeka Curriculum Management for P5

POAC Function	Key Managerial Practices (Cross-Case)	Dominant Pancasila Dimensions Activated
Planning	Renstra, annual and semester plans; PBL-based themes matched to student needs	All six dimensions embedded in themes
Organizing	Team teaching; guru penggerak as facilitators; MoUs with universities and industry	Gotong royong, global diversity
Actuating	Project-based learning, collaborative inquiry, reflection cycles; field studies	Critical reasoning, creativity, independence
Controlling	Formative and summative assessment; rubrics, portfolios, reflective journals	Independence, critical reasoning
Challenges	Teacher readiness, resource limits, dense schedules, low parental engagement	Cross-cutting
Solutions	Teacher training, external partnerships, facility optimization, parent communication	Cross-cutting

Table 2 reports what the two cases share. Because that shared architecture can obscure the differences that matter managerially, Table 3 sets the cases against each other on the dimensions along which they actually diverge. These contrasts are not degrees of maturity but alternative configurations of the same managerial architecture.

Table 3. Cross-Case Contrast between MIC and M4J

Dimension of Comparison	MAN Insan Cendekia Serpong (MIC)	MAN 4 Jakarta Selatan (M4J)
Planning logic	Vertically coordinated: themes derived from the research orientation and boarding timetable, finalised with the principal before the year opens; dimensions prioritised first	Horizontally negotiated: themes proposed by subject clusters from the metropolitan environment and partner availability, then brokered; dimensions mapped on afterwards
Organizing base	Internal: dormitory staff and evening time extend the timetable; team teaching around laboratories and research mentoring	External: broad partner portfolio (municipal agencies, enterprises, interfaith bodies); coordinator acts as boundary-spanner
Actuating signature	Inquiry-shaped: problem formulation, data work, laboratory or field testing, written product defended before mentors; technical supervision	Intervention-shaped: community problem, stakeholder consultation, prototype or action, public presentation; logistical supervision
Controlling emphasis	Written product and quality of reasoning; rubrics granular on evidence and argument	Public presentation and demonstrated effect; rubrics granular on collaboration and communication
PPRA value anchoring	Scientific integrity, stewardship of creation, honesty in handling evidence	Tolerance, civic contribution, interfaith and intercultural engagement
Dominant dimensions and cost structure	Critical reasoning and independence lead; costs absorbed internally	Gotong royong and global diversity lead; costs concentrated in transport and partnership

Planning: Building Project Themes on a Foundation of Institutional Strategy

Planning at both *madrasah* is systematic, layered, and grounded in strategic documents. Both aligned P5 with their *Rencana Strategis*, annual operational plans, and semester programme plans, then translated these into project themes built on Project-Based Learning (Bell, 2010; Zhang & Ma, 2023). One deputy principal explained: "We start by asking which of the six dimensions of the Pancasila Learner Profile need the most work this semester, then we design themes and timelines that translate those dimensions into student experience" (WK2).

Both ensured that themes are contextual: MIC leveraged its identity as an integrated science–faith flagship, orienting projects toward technological innovation and scientific literacy, while M4J's metropolitan setting facilitated projects on urban social issues, entrepreneurship, and interfaith engagement—consistent with evidence that P5 planning is most effective when linked to local social realities (Firoh et al., 2025; Maryati et al., 2025). Both involved principals, teachers, parents, and external stakeholders, reflecting Ornstein and Hunkins' (2018) argument that participatory planning strengthens ownership and coherence.

The contrast between the cases is sharper than their shared procedural architecture suggests, and it originates at planning. At MIC, theme selection is vertically coordinated: the coordinator derives candidate themes from the *madrasah*'s research orientation and boarding timetable and finalises them with the principal before the year opens, so dimensions are prioritised first and projects built to fit them. At M4J it is horizontally negotiated: subject clusters propose themes drawn from the metropolitan environment and available partners, and the coordinator brokers a settlement, with dimensions mapped on afterwards. The consequence is a trade-off rather than a difference of quality: MIC gains tight dimension–theme alignment at the cost of flexibility, M4J gains contextual responsiveness at the

cost of an alignment reconstructed retrospectively. The PPRA layer differs too: MIC embeds it in scientific integrity and stewardship, M4J in tolerance and civic contribution.

Theoretically, planning in both cases resonates with constructivist accounts of experiential and socially situated learning (Vygotsky, 1978), while classical Islamic educational ideals complement contemporary character-education frameworks (Miftahuddin et al., 2024; Rachman et al., 2023). Both *madrasah* nevertheless recognised recurring bottlenecks—limited teaching aids, insufficient infrastructure, and uneven communication with parents—whose resolution requires strengthened coordination and digital infrastructure (Hartati & Nurhadi, 2024; Kaharuddin et al., 2024).

Organizing: Structural Clarity and Multi-Stakeholder Synergy

Organizing is characterized by clear role differentiation and multi-stakeholder synergy. The principal serves as policy director, deputy principals coordinate structural aspects, a designated P5 coordinator manages cross-disciplinary integration, and *guru penggerak* function as project facilitators. Team teaching enables interdisciplinary collaboration. A *guru penggerak* noted: "P5 does not belong to one teacher or one subject; every theme is co-designed by teachers from different disciplines, so students see how knowledge is connected" (GP2).

Both cultivated external partnerships with universities, industry actors, and educational communities, governed by formal MoUs and SOPs covering academic, resource, and financial dimensions. Internship placements, field studies, and external mentorship strengthen project authenticity (Al-Bahadli et al., 2023; Rodliyah et al., 2024; Sulastri et al., 2024). Parents were engaged as supporters and sometimes as domain experts, though both principals acknowledged that parent–school communication remains uneven (Fajriansyah et al., 2023).

At the pedagogical infrastructure level, both have begun integrating the TPACK framework to modernize teaching, progressively strengthening digital laboratories, learning management systems, and multimedia resources, though further optimization remains necessary (Komariah et al., 2024; Salsabila et al., 2023). Overall, clear structures, distributed leadership, and strategic partnerships form the backbone of effective P5 implementation.

Organizing also diverges in ways the overview flattens. MIC's boarding structure supplies a resource M4J lacks—dormitory staff and evening time—so organizing extends beyond the formal timetable and team teaching is arranged around laboratories and research mentoring. M4J organizes outward: its partner portfolio is broader and more heterogeneous, and the coordinator's role approximates boundary-spanning. MIC's organizing burden is internal coordination density, M4J's is partnership maintenance and student transport—configurations that illustrate the curatorial role attributed to leaders of faith-based schools (Alazmi & Bush, 2024; Brooks et al., 2020).

Actuating: Project-Based Implementation and Reflective Practice

The actuating function is enacted through project-based learning that integrates theory and practice to develop critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration. Each semester, students engage in thematic projects designed around their characteristics and needs (Al-Bahadli et al., 2023; Delviyani et al., 2025).

At MIC, implementation reflects a constructivist orientation: students are active agents of exploration while teachers facilitate, and Kolb's experiential is visible in the sequence of concrete experience, reflective observation, conceptualization, and active experimentation. At M4J, implementation emphasises problem-based learning on entrepreneurship, environmental care, and community engagement. A student reflected: "In P5 I no longer just memorize; I choose a real problem, design a solution, present it, and then reflect on what I did well and what I need to improve" (ST3).

The two implementation signatures can be stated directly. MIC's projects are inquiry-shaped: problem formulation, literature and data work, laboratory or field testing, and a written product defended before teachers and external mentors. M4J's are intervention-shaped: a community or market problem, stakeholder consultation, a prototype or action, and a public presentation to the audience

affected. Both satisfy the mandate, but they activate the six dimensions in different sequences and impose different supervision demands, predominantly technical at MIC and logistical at M4J.

Persistent implementation challenges include stakeholder coordination, project assessment, student time management, integration with formal subjects, and infrastructure gaps (Fajriansyah et al., 2023; Rizki & Fahkrunisa, 2022). Both respond through regular programme reviews and expanded use of digital platforms for transparency and coordination, consistent with meta-analytic evidence that project-based learning, when supported by strong structural conditions, produces gains in engagement and higher-order skills (Zhang & Ma, 2023).

Controlling: Multi-Instrument Assessment and Reflective Feedback

Controlling combines formative and summative assessment with authentic instruments: observation, project-based assessment, portfolios, and self-reflection evaluate both process and product (Miftahuddin et al., 2024). Project rubrics articulate expectations linked to the six dimensions, while reflective journals allow students to trace their own growth.

Results are communicated transparently to students and parents via academic reports and *madrasah* websites. A principal emphasized: "We do not report only scores; we report growth—what the student can now do in a project that they could not before" (KM1). This aligns with evidence that authentic, communicative assessment reinforces engagement and parental support (Purwanti et al., 2025; Yasa et al., 2023) and with Terry's controlling function as understood in contemporary management-in-education literature.

The assessment contrast follows from these signatures. MIC weights the written product and the reasoning behind it, with rubrics more granular on evidence and argument; M4J weights the public presentation and the demonstrated effect on the partner or community, with rubrics more granular on collaboration and communication. Both report against the six dimensions and, separately, against PPRA indicators, and neither has resolved how the two relate. Facilitators identified the rubrics as the least settled element of the cycle: criteria that read clearly in guidance produce inconsistent judgements across facilitators.

Further controlling challenges persist: optimizing the teacher's facilitator role, integrating project assessment with formal subject grading, infrastructure limitations, and parental participation. Responses include ongoing teacher training in project-based learning, strengthened internal communication, and expanded external partnerships (Kolb, 2015; Wiggins, 1998).

Persistent Barriers to Merdeka Curriculum Management for P5

Despite the elite status of both *madrasah*, several barriers persist. Many teachers still lean on conventional methods, limiting their capacity to mentor students through project design and reflection—mirroring evidence that teacher readiness is the most consistently reported challenge (Cholilah et al., 2022; Kaharuddin et al., 2024). Infrastructure gaps in laboratories and digital libraries constrain the depth of exploration (Hartati & Nurhadi, 2024); densely packed timetables limit sustained engagement; and parental participation remains uneven (Fajriansyah et al., 2023).

Adaptive Solutions and Strategic Responses

Both respond with adaptive, multi-layered strategies. On human resources, they conduct training, mentoring, and professional learning communities to develop project-based learning competencies (Komariah et al., 2024; Salsabila et al., 2023). On infrastructure, they optimize existing facilities and cultivate partnerships with universities and industry (Al-Bahadli et al., 2023; Rodliyah et al., 2024). On policy, they adjust internal regulations and timetables; on parental engagement, both expanded communication mechanisms (Arum & Purwanti, 2025; Istiqomah & Haryanto, 2023).

Ornstein and Hunkins' (2018) framework for curriculum management, together with Fullan's (2016) theory of educational change, help interpret these strategies: successful reform depends on the

alignment of human capacity, structural resources, and cultural conditions, and the evidence confirms that addressing any one in isolation is insufficient.

The Integrated POAC–P5 Madrasah Management Model (I-POAC-P5)

Synthesizing these findings, the study proposes the Integrated POAC–P5 Madrasah Management Model (I-POAC-P5), a continuous managerial cycle in which each POAC function is intentionally linked to the six Pancasila dimensions and to the enabling conditions identified in the analysis. The principal and P5 coordinator form the managerial nucleus; *guru penggerak* and subject teachers the pedagogical engine; and parents, university and industry partners, and government agencies the surrounding ecosystem.

The central proposition is that effective P5 implementation is not a one-off project cycle but a sustained architecture in which planning specifies which dimensions are prioritized, organizing distributes responsibility and mobilizes networks, actuating operationalizes project-based learning aligned with those dimensions, and controlling produces feedback that recursively strengthens the next cycle (Isniah et al., 2020; Zhang & Ma, 2023). Around this cycle the model foregrounds three enabling conditions—teacher capability, structural resources, and stakeholder engagement (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2018).

To move the model beyond description, its claims are stated as testable propositions. P1, *dual-profile specification*: where planning assigns each project both a Pancasila dimension and a PPRA indicator before implementation begins, controlling yields usable feedback; where the assignment is retrospective, assessment collapses into compliance reporting. P2, *authority pairing*: organizing is effective when pedagogical authority, carried by *guru penggerak*, is paired with religious-normative authority in the same forum. P3, *load conservation*: actuating degrades when P5 hours are added to a timetable rather than exchanged against it, irrespective of teacher capability. P4, *rubric singularity*: controlling stabilises only when Pancasila and PPRA criteria are merged into one instrument.

The model also specifies boundary conditions rather than a single ideal type. MIC and M4J instantiate two configurations of the same architecture: a vertically integrated configuration, viable where residential time and a selective intake permit dimension-first planning; and a horizontally brokered configuration, viable where a dense external environment substitutes for internal time but which requires stronger boundary-spanning capacity. I-POAC-P5 accordingly predicts that transplanting the first into a day *madrasah* without residential time will fail at actuating, and the second into a *madrasah* with a thin partner environment will fail at organizing—which is what makes the model falsifiable beyond the two cases studied.

I-POAC-P5 contributes in two ways. Theoretically, it integrates a classical management framework with a contemporary character-education programme, an alignment asserted but rarely modelled (Arum & Purwanti, 2025; Firoh et al., 2025). Practically, it offers *madrasah* leaders a diagnostic blueprint for locating each managerial task within a coherent cycle, monitoring which dimensions are activated at each stage, and identifying which enabling condition requires strengthening (Ghofur et al., 2026).

Policy Implications: Teaching Hours, Teacher Workload, and Project Budgets

Three policy implications follow, each requiring action from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology rather than from *madrasah* leaders alone. The first concerns teaching hours. In *madrasah*, the P5 allocation is carved out of a timetable already carrying a full complement of compulsory religious subjects and Arabic. Both met it by block-scheduling project weeks, which protects P5 but compresses subject teaching around the block. The workable response is not to enlarge the allocation but to make the exchange explicit: a joint structure stating which subject hours are formally reduced when P5 blocks run. Without this, the allocation exists on paper while its cost is absorbed by teachers.

The second concerns teacher workload. Team teaching is the organisational solution both adopted, but the prevailing workload regulation counts certified teaching hours by subject, and hours spent co-

facilitating a project are not straightforwardly countable. Facilitation is therefore performed in addition to the certified load, and the associated work—module drafting, partner liaison, progress monitoring, rubric completion, documentation—is the single largest source of the administrative burden described in both cases. Two measures follow: recognise P5 co-facilitation as countable equivalent hours within the certification scheme, and set a ceiling on the number of project groups one facilitator may supervise.

The third concerns project budgets. P5 costs are real—materials, transport, partner engagement, exhibition—but they sit awkwardly across the operational assistance scheme, committee contributions, and ad hoc partner support, and the cases resolved this differently: MIC absorbed most costs through existing laboratory and boarding budgets, whereas M4J depended on partner contributions, leaving its portfolio vulnerable to withdrawal. Policy should establish an identifiable P5 line within the operational budget structure, with reporting codes allowing *madrasah* to charge these costs without reclassifying them.

These recommendations are deliberately modest, because the evidence does not support an idealised account. Even in two well-resourced *madrasah* holding *Sekolah Penggerak* status, P5 ran on improvised scheduling, uncompensated facilitation, uncertain budget lines, and rubrics applied inconsistently; for some facilitators, documentation rather than pedagogy was the dominant experience. If these frictions obtain here, they are likely more acute elsewhere. The contribution of I-POAC-P5 is to locate where friction arises within the managerial cycle, not to imply that good management dissolves it.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the *Merdeka* Curriculum for P5 at MAN Insan Cendekia Serpong and MAN 4 Jakarta Selatan has been managed systematically through the four POAC functions. Planning translated the six Pancasila dimensions into project themes anchored in strategic documents; organizing established clear structures, *guru penggerak* roles, and external partnerships; actuating implemented project-based and reflective learning; and controlling deployed formative and summative assessment with portfolios and reflective journals. Beneath this common architecture, the two cases run on different configurations: MIC on a vertically integrated, inquiry-shaped model made possible by residential time and a selective intake, M4J on a horizontally brokered, intervention-shaped model substituting a dense metropolitan partner environment for internal time. Recognising these as alternative configurations rather than degrees of maturity is what makes cross-case comparison useful for *madrasah* elsewhere.

The principal contribution is the Integrated POAC–P5 Madrasah Management Model (I-POAC-P5), which links Terry's four managerial functions with the six Pancasila dimensions, mediated by three enabling conditions—teacher capability, structural resources, and stakeholder engagement—and stated as four testable propositions with specified boundary conditions.

Practically, the findings recommend three directions. *Madrasah* leaders should institutionalize the POAC cycle as routine annual practice, explicitly mapping each Pancasila dimension to project themes, assessment instruments, and responsible actors. Teacher professional development in project-based learning, TPACK, and authentic assessment should be strengthened, coupled with mentoring by *guru penggerak* and university partners. Policymakers should provide differentiated support responsive to the managerial gaps of *madrasah* across typologies and regions.

This study focuses on two elite *Madrasah Aliyah* in the Greater Jakarta area, and its qualitative design does not permit statistical generalization. Future research should test I-POAC-P5 in *madrasah* of different typologies, expand geographical coverage, employ mixed-methods designs to triangulate these accounts with quantitative evidence of student outcomes, and examine longitudinal trajectories of P5.

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