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Hybrid Curriculum Model in a State Madrasah: A Case Study of Centralized and Decentralized Practices at MTsN 1 Malang

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Abstract: Curriculum models play a crucial role in determining the quality and direction of education. However, the implementation of centralized and decentralized curricula often presents challenges in balancing national standards with local needs. This study aims to analyze the application of a hybrid curriculum model at MTsN 1 Malang City, an Indonesian state madrasah that integrates both centralization and decentralization mechanisms. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with three key informants (the madrasah head, vice principal for curriculum, and a senior teacher), participatory observations of curriculum practices, and document analysis of curriculum guidelines and lesson plans. The findings reveal that centralization is realized through compliance with national standards set by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, ensuring uniformity in core subjects, learning outcomes, and assessment frameworks. Decentralization is manifested through locally initiated innovations, including the establishment of Ma'had Al-Madany (a student dormitory program), the development of special class programs (Bilingual, Tahfidz, and Olympic classes), and the initiation of Project-Based Learning, all of which accommodate students' interests, talents, and contextual needs. Teachers play a dual role in this hybrid model: as implementers of centralized policies and as innovators within decentralized spaces. The novelty of this study lies in its detailed empirical illustration of how a hybrid curriculum model operates in a madrasah context by systematically mapping the interaction between dual ministerial regulations and locally driven innovations. Unlike previous studies that tend to discuss curriculum centralization and decentralization separately, this research demonstrates a practical framework for harmonizing national policies with contextual educational creativity in Islamic secondary education. The study concludes that the hybrid curriculum model at MTsN 1 Malang represents a strategic approach to improving madrasah education quality through balanced integration of central regulation and local innovation, with implications for curriculum policy, school leadership, and teacher professional development.

INTRODUCTION | مقدمة | PENDAHULUAN

In the world of education, the curriculum serves as the primary framework determining the direction, quality, and outcomes of learning in schools (Setiawan et al., 2023). The curriculum is not merely a guideline for teachers in designing the teaching and learning process; it is also a standard that measures educational success in producing a quality generation, as reflected in national assessment systems and minimum competency standards (Alfi et al., 2024). In Indonesia, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum demonstrates concretely how curriculum models guide competency-based learning, assessment standards, and expected learning outcomes across educational levels.

However, the implementation of curriculum models across various regions continues to exhibit complex dynamics, particularly regarding the tension between decentralization and centralization (Shafira & Alsyah, 2023). Not all schools can implement the national curriculum

optimally due to differences in resources, geographical conditions, and student characteristics. Evidence shows significant disparities in infrastructure availability, teacher competency, and access to learning facilities between urban and rural schools (Siskawati et al., 2024). This phenomenon raises profound questions about how schools can manage and implement the curriculum in accordance with both local conditions and national demands.

In the Indonesian context, the national curriculum has been implemented centrally for many years with the explicit aim of ensuring uniformity in the quality of education (Barlian et al., 2022). This centralization is reflected in national policy frameworks that standardize learning outcomes, assessment systems, and instructional time allocation across all regions. The National Assessment system provides competency benchmarks that all schools are expected to meet, creating a uniform standard of educational quality.

However, this centralized approach is not always relevant to local needs and contexts. Critics argue that it leaves insufficient room for teacher and school innovation in designing contextual learning experiences for their students (Sein-Echaluce et al., 2020). Empirical studies report that teachers in centrally regulated systems tend to rely heavily on prescribed teaching materials and assessment formats, which reduces opportunities for locally contextualized pedagogy, particularly in diverse socio-cultural settings (Dewi, 2021).

On the other hand, curriculum decentralization—which transfers authority to local governments and schools—is expected to address local needs through approaches such as school-based management (SBM) and local content adjustment. Decentralization aims to increase community and school participation according to local needs, while centralization ensures educational equality as mandated by the National Education System Law (Karolina et al., 2021). The challenge is to find an optimal balance between these two seemingly contradictory forces.

At the madrasah level, the integration of the national curriculum with Islamic values presents additional challenges. Madrasahs in Indonesia operate under dual authorities: the Ministry of Religious Affairs (which oversees Islamic education) and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (which oversees general education). This dual oversight creates unique complexities in curriculum management.

Previous research at MTsN 2 Malang City, for instance, documented an integrative curriculum combining general science and religion through programs such as "Building Learning Power" and full-day schooling based on Islamic character development (Widodo, 2021). Similarly, studies on educational decentralization have shown that it brings significant opportunities for quality improvement through local needs-based approaches and community involvement, although obstacles such as resource inequality and regional managerial capacity remain (Habib et al., 2025; Sofiani et al., 2024).

The literature also points to the possibility of balance between centralized strategic policies and locally oriented operational execution as an ideal model. This balance has been observed in certain educational institutions, such as LPPH Hidayatullah Balikpapan (Anisa et al., 2025). Research suggests that optimal collaboration between decentralized and centralized models can strengthen learning effectiveness and improve educational quality when managed well by schools (Handoyo & Rokhman, 2025).

Preliminary observations at MTsN 1 Malang indicate practical challenges in implementing a hybrid approach. These challenges include: 1) The need to simultaneously comply with dual

ministerial regulations (Ministry of Religious Affairs and Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology); 2) Managing differentiated student programs (Bilingual, Tahfidz, and Olympic classes); and 3) Integrating locally initiated programs such as Ma'had Al-Madany within nationally standardized curricular structures

These conditions create tensions between administrative compliance, instructional flexibility, and resource allocation at the school level. Teachers and administrators must navigate between fulfilling national requirements and responding to local student needs.

Despite extensive studies on curriculum centralization or decentralization as separate models, limited research has empirically examined how both mechanisms interact in practice within state madrasas, particularly at the level of daily curriculum management and instructional implementation. Most previous studies have treated centralization and decentralization as opposing paradigms rather than potentially complementary approaches.

The novelty of this study lies in its detailed empirical illustration of how a hybrid curriculum model operates in a madrasah context by systematically mapping the interaction between dual ministerial regulations and locally driven innovations. Unlike previous studies that tend to discuss centralization and decentralization separately, this research demonstrates a practical framework for harmonizing national policies with contextual educational creativity in Islamic secondary education.

This study aims to answer the following research questions: 1) How does MTsN 1 Malang implement centralized curriculum policies in its daily educational practices?; 2) How does MTsN 1 Malang implement decentralized curriculum innovations to address local needs and student potential?; 3) What is the role of teachers in the implementation of this hybrid curriculum model?; and 4) What are the practical implications of the hybrid curriculum model for madrasah education quality?

METHOD | منهج | METODE

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach, chosen because it aims to explore and understand in depth how the application of decentralized and centralized curriculum models is carried out at MTsN 1 Malang City. This approach allows researchers to obtain data in the form of verbal descriptions of the processes, experiences, and real practices occurring in curriculum management (Nasution, 2023). The researcher acts as the primary instrument in collecting and analyzing data to obtain a comprehensive and contextual understanding of the field situation.

Research Site

The research was conducted at MTsN 1 Malang City, a state madrasah tsanawiyah (Islamic junior high school) located in East Java, Indonesia. This site was selected purposively based on the following criteria:

1. It is a formal state madrasah with an established reputation for curriculum innovation
2. It operates under dual ministerial authorities (Ministry of Religious Affairs and Ministry of Education)
3. It has implemented distinctive programs (Ma'had Al-Madany, Bilingual, Tahfidz, Olympic classes) that suggest a hybrid curriculum approach

4. It has sufficient documentation and accessibility for research purposes

Informants and Sampling

The research subjects consisted of **three key informants**, selected through purposive sampling based on the following criteria:

- Direct involvement in curriculum planning or implementation
- At least three years of teaching or managerial experience at the madrasah
- Adequate knowledge of both national curriculum policies and local curriculum initiatives

The informants were:

1. The head of the madrasah (responsible for overall curriculum policy and institutional vision)
2. The vice principal for curriculum and student affairs (directly managing curriculum implementation)
3. A senior teacher representing both general and religious subjects (providing classroom-level perspectives)

While three informants may appear limited, the in-depth nature of qualitative case study research prioritizes depth of information over breadth. Each informant was interviewed multiple times, and data were triangulated with observations and documents.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection employed **triangulation** through three complementary methods:

a. **Semi-Structured Interviews**

In-depth interviews were conducted with all three informants. Interview questions explored:

- Experiences and perceptions of centralized and decentralized curriculum policies
- The process of developing local curriculum innovations
- Challenges and successes in implementing a hybrid curriculum
- The role of teachers in curriculum development
- Each interview lasted 60–90 minutes and was audio-recorded (with permission) and transcribed verbatim.

b. **Participatory Observation**

Observations were conducted in:

- Classroom learning activities (3 sessions)
- Curriculum coordination meetings (2 meetings)
- Extracurricular program implementation (Ma'had Al-Madany activities)
- Observations focused on curriculum practices, interactions among teachers, students, and school management, and the actual implementation of both centralized and decentralized programs.

c. **c. Document Analysis**

Relevant documents analyzed included:

- Curriculum guidelines and frameworks
- Lesson plans (Rencana Pelaksanaan Pembelajaran/RPP)

- Academic calendars
- School policy documents regarding special programs
- Student selection test materials for special classes

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman interactive model (Huberman & Miles, 2002), consisting of three stages:

a. **Data Reduction**
Selecting, focusing, and simplifying raw interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents to highlight information relevant to the research objectives. Irrelevant data were discarded; relevant data were categorized according to emerging themes.

b. **Data Display**
Organizing reduced data into thematic narratives and matrices to facilitate interpretation. For this study, data were displayed according to three main themes: centralization practices, decentralization practices, and teacher roles.

c. **Conclusion Drawing and Verification**
Identifying recurring patterns, themes, and relationships across data sources. Conclusions were continuously validated through cross-checking data sources (interviews, observations, documents) and researcher reflection to ensure credible and consistent findings.

Trustworthiness

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of findings, this study employed:

a. Source triangulation: Comparing information from different informants (head, vice principal, teacher)
b. Method triangulation: Comparing interview, observation, and document data
c. Member checking: Returning interview summaries to informants to verify accuracy of interpretation
d. Prolonged engagement: Spending sufficient time in the field (three months) to understand the context.

RESULTS | نتائج | TEMUAN

Curriculum Model at MTsN 1 Malang

The findings reveal that MTsN 1 Malang implements what can be termed a hybrid curriculum model—an intentional integration of centralized and decentralized approaches. This finding emerged consistently across interviews, observations, and document analysis.

Centralization Aspects

The vice principal for curriculum, Mr. M. Kholis Widodo, stated:

"In principle, madrasahs are required to follow the national curriculum determined by the central government; therefore, MTsN 1 implements curriculum policies issued by both the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Religious Affairs as mandatory standards."

This statement confirms the application of curriculum centralization, where authority over core competencies, learning outcomes, and national standards remains under central government control. The madrasah waits for instructions from the central government to implement policies outlined by law. This aligns with centralized curriculum theory that emphasizes uniformity and educational equity.

Document analysis of curriculum guidelines confirmed that all core subjects (Indonesian, English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Islamic Religious Education) follow national standards. Learning outcomes, assessment criteria, and instructional hour allocations are determined by ministerial regulations.

Decentralization Aspects

However, field observations and interview data also indicate that MTsN 1 Malang implements curriculum decentralization. As Mr. Widodo explained:

> *"The madrasah is given space to develop programs that suit students' talents and interests, as long as they do not contradict national regulations."*

This decentralization is evident in the independent development of special programs:

- Bilingual classes (using English and Indonesian as languages of instruction)
- Tahfidz classes (Qur'an memorization program)
- Olympic classes (intensive academic preparation for subject competitions)

The curriculum framework at MTsN 1 Malang integrates regulations from both ministries, which are further developed by the school through documented curriculum plans, locally designed enrichment programs, and academic-oriented local content.

Implementation of Decentralized and Centralized Curriculum

Decentralization in Practice

One of the most distinctive decentralized innovations is Ma'had Al-Madany, a student dormitory program. This ma'had functions as a non-formal education space where students stay for specified periods with the assistance of caregiver teachers. Through activities at the ma'had, students gain additional learning, including strengthening spiritual and cultural values and developing independence.

It is important to note that Ma'had Al-Madany is not a direct instruction from the central government. Rather, it resulted from a madrasah initiative developed collaboratively with teachers, committees, student guardians, and the surrounding community as an adaptation to more contextual educational needs.

Special Class Programs

Decentralization is also reflected in special class programs designed to accommodate students' interests and talents through grouping based on specific fields:

Program	Focus	Selection Method
Bilingual Class	Language learning (Indonesian and English)	Admission test
Tahfidz & Arabic Program	Qur'an memorization and Arabic language	Admission test + Qur'an reading test
Olympic Program	Mathematics and natural sciences competition preparation	Academic admission test

The process of determining student placement in special classes is conducted through selection based on admission tests. These tests map students' backgrounds, interests, and academic potential so that teachers can place them in programs best suited to their abilities. Thus, special class division is not merely administrative grouping but a pedagogical strategy based on learning differentiation.

Project-Based Learning Innovation

Furthermore, MTsN 1 Malang is developing project-based curriculum innovations (Project-Based Learning). This model addresses the often fragmented workload across various subjects. Through a project-based approach, a single task can integrate multiple competencies across subjects. For example, a battery manufacturing project in science can also serve as material for Indonesian language assignments (writing reports or making summaries of the process). This innovation requires collaboration between teachers across disciplines, making learning more meaningful, contextual, and efficient.

Centralization in Practice

Observations confirmed that all core subjects follow the provisions issued by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology and the Ministry of Religious Affairs. National curriculum standards are maintained, even as the madrasah develops local innovations through decentralized programs. This combination reflects a balance between maintaining national education standards and adapting learning to local contexts and student potential.

The Role of Teachers in the Hybrid Curriculum Model

The role of teachers in this hybrid model can be understood through two complementary perspectives.

Teachers as Implementers of Centralized Curriculum

In the centralized curriculum model, teachers' involvement in macro-level curriculum formulation is limited. The macro curriculum is designed by central teams, while teachers primarily function as implementers at the micro level. This condition is evident at MTsN 1 Malang, where teachers are required to follow national curriculum structures issued by both ministries.

As one teacher stated:

> *"We follow the competencies and learning outcomes determined by the ministry, but we are responsible for translating them into annual programs, semester programs, and lesson plans that suit our students."*

In practice, teachers at MTsN 1 Malang:

- Prepare annual and semester plans
- Formulate learning objectives
- Organize teaching materials
- Select appropriate methods and media
- Adjust learning strategies to students' abilities and interests

Teachers as Innovators in Decentralized Curriculum

In contrast, the decentralized curriculum model provides broader space for teachers to actively design and develop learning based on local needs. This role is reflected through teachers' involvement in developing special programs (Bilingual, Tahfidz, Olympic classes), where teachers

collaboratively design:

- Enrichment materials
- Additional learning hours
- Differentiated assessment strategies

A curriculum coordinator explained:

"Teachers are encouraged to innovate as long as the programs support students' talents and remain aligned with national standards."

These practices demonstrate how decentralization allows teachers to become curriculum developers who respond to contextual conditions, resulting in variations in curriculum implementation across classes. Thus, teachers at MTsN 1 Malang play a **dual role**: implementers of centralized curriculum policies and innovators within decentralized curriculum spaces.

DISCUSSION | مناقشة | DISKUSI

The Hybrid Curriculum Model: A Theoretical Synthesis

The findings demonstrate that MTsN 1 Malang has successfully operationalized a hybrid curriculum model that integrates centralized and decentralized approaches. This model challenges the traditional dichotomy that presents centralization and decentralization as mutually exclusive alternatives.

Centralization ensures compliance with national standards issued by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Religious Affairs. This aligns with the top-down approach that emphasizes equality and uniformity across educational institutions (Craddock et al., 2013). National standards serve several critical functions: they guarantee minimum competency levels, facilitate student mobility between regions, provide accountability benchmarks, and ensure that all citizens receive comparable educational quality regardless of location.

Decentralization manifests in innovations such as Ma'had Al-Madany, special class programs (Bilingual, Tahfidz, Olympic), and Project-Based Learning. These initiatives reflect a bottom-up model that responds to local needs and promotes school autonomy (Dewi, 2021; Sofiani et al., 2024). School-based management allows madrasahs to adapt national policies to local contexts, address specific student needs, and leverage community resources.

The key insight from MTsN 1 Malang is that centralization and decentralization are not opposing forces but complementary mechanisms. Centralization provides the structural framework—the "scaffolding"—within which decentralization can safely operate. Without central standards, decentralized innovations risk producing unequal outcomes; without decentralized flexibility, central standards become rigid and irrelevant to local contexts.

The Dual Role of Teachers in Hybrid Curriculum Implementation

The findings reveal that teachers at MTsN 1 Malang occupy a dual role that requires sophisticated professional capabilities. As implementers of centralized policies, teachers must master national curriculum documents, understand standard assessment frameworks, and align their instruction with prescribed learning outcomes. As innovators in decentralized spaces, teachers must also design enrichment materials, differentiate instruction, and develop local programs responsive to student needs.

This dual role has significant implications for teacher professional development. Traditional teacher training has focused either on implementing prescribed curricula or on developing local materials—rarely both simultaneously. MTsN 1 Malang's hybrid model requires teachers to be competent in both domains, suggesting that professional development should integrate:

- National curriculum literacy (understanding standards and assessments)
- Local curriculum development skills (designing contextual materials and programs)
- Differentiated instruction strategies (addressing diverse student needs within standardized frameworks)

The finding that MTsN 1 Malang encourages teacher innovation "as long as programs support students' talents and remain aligned with national standards" provides a practical guideline for balancing these roles. Innovation is not unlimited but bounded by national frameworks—a principle that could inform hybrid curriculum policies elsewhere.

Ma'had Al-Madany: A Case Study in Contextual Innovation

The establishment of Ma'had Al-Madany represents a particularly significant example of decentralized innovation. This program addresses a specific local need: the desire of parents and the community for character education and spiritual development that extends beyond classroom hours. By creating a dormitory-based program, the madrasah provides structured opportunities for:

- Independent living skills
- Peer learning and social development
- Extended practice of Islamic values
- Arabic language immersion (through daily use)

Importantly, Ma'had Al-Madany does not replace the national curriculum but supplements it. The program operates outside formal instructional hours, meaning that national curriculum requirements are still met. This demonstrates how decentralized innovations can be added to—rather than substituted for—centralized requirements, expanding rather than reducing educational provision.

The participatory development process (involving teachers, committees, parents, and community) aligns with school-based management principles and likely contributes to program sustainability. When stakeholders feel ownership of innovations, they are more likely to support and maintain them.

Special Class Programs: Differentiation Within Standardization

The special class programs (Bilingual, Tahfidz, Olympic) illustrate another dimension of the hybrid model: differentiation within standardization. While all students must meet the same national standards, MTsN 1 Malang provides differentiated pathways to reach those standards based on student interests and talents.

This approach has several advantages:

1. Talent development: Students with specific gifts (e.g., in languages, memorization, or mathematics) receive targeted enrichment
2. Motivation: Students are more engaged when studying content aligned with their interests
3. Efficiency: Instruction can be tailored to student readiness levels, reducing boredom or

frustration

The selection process (using admission tests) ensures that students are placed in programs matching their abilities. This is a form of ability grouping or *tracking*, which has both advocates (who argue it improves learning efficiency) and critics (who argue it can perpetuate inequality). At MTsN 1 Malang, the existence of multiple pathways (including the regular program for students not in special classes) provides choice while maintaining access to the national curriculum for all.

Project-Based Learning as Curricular Integration

The planned development of Project-Based Learning (PBL) addresses a common criticism of centralized curricula: that they fragment knowledge into isolated subjects, reducing opportunities for interdisciplinary understanding. PBL allows students to work on extended projects that integrate multiple subjects, mirroring real-world problems that do not respect disciplinary boundaries.

The example provided (a battery project serving both science and Indonesian language learning) illustrates how PBL can be implemented within standardized frameworks. The project does not replace science or Indonesian standards but provides an authentic context for applying them. This approach aligns with contemporary educational research emphasizing deeper learning, critical thinking, and transferable skills.

However, the finding that PBL is still "planned" rather than fully implemented suggests an implementation gap. Moving from pilot to school-wide PBL requires:

- Teacher training in facilitation rather than direct instruction
- Revised assessment systems capable of evaluating complex projects
- Scheduling flexibility for extended project work
- Administrative support for interdisciplinary collaboration

These requirements may explain why many schools struggle to implement PBL despite recognizing its benefits.

Comparison with Previous Research

The hybrid model observed at MTsN 1 Malang is consistent with findings from other Indonesian educational contexts. Anisa et al. (2025) documented a similar balance between centralized strategic policies and locally oriented operational execution at LPPH Hidayatullah Balikpapan. Widodo (2021) found that MTsN 2 Malang also integrates general and religious curricula through innovative programs.

However, MTsN 1 Malang's model is distinctive in its **systematic approach to talent differentiation**. While other madrasahs may offer extracurricular enrichment, MTsN 1 has institutionalized specialized classes as a core curriculum feature, with formal selection processes, dedicated instructional time, and specialized teacher assignments. This suggests a more comprehensive commitment to differentiation than typically found in Indonesian madrasahs.

The finding that teachers play dual roles as implementers and innovators extends previous research that has often treated these roles as separate or sequential. At MTsN 1 Malang, teachers simultaneously fulfill both roles, suggesting that professional development should integrate rather than separate these competencies.

Practical and Policy Implications

The findings of this study have several implications for curriculum policy and practice:

For school leaders:

- Hybrid curriculum models require intentional design, not accidental emergence. Schools should explicitly map which aspects of curriculum are centralized (and why) and which are decentralized (and why).
- Stakeholder participation in innovation development (as seen with Ma'had Al-Madany) increases ownership and sustainability.
- Teacher dual roles require differentiated support: training in national standards implementation AND local curriculum development.

For teachers:

- The hybrid model creates opportunities for professional creativity within structured frameworks. Teachers should view national standards as supporting, not constraining, innovation.
- Collaboration across disciplines (as in PBL) requires new skills in co-planning and co-teaching.
- Differentiated instruction for special classes requires ongoing assessment of student readiness and progress.

For policymakers:

- National standards and local innovation need not conflict. Policies should provide "flexible frameworks" that specify required outcomes without prescribing all methods.
- The Indonesian dual ministry system (Religious Affairs and Education) can be leveraged as complementary rather than contradictory, with each ministry focusing on different aspects of curriculum (e.g., Religious Affairs on Islamic content, Education on general competencies).
- Funding and professional development should support both centralized implementation capacities AND local innovation capacities.

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged:

- Sample size: With only three informants, the study cannot claim to represent all perspectives at MTsN 1 Malang. Other teachers, students, parents, and administrative staff might have different views.
- Single case study: As a single case study, findings cannot be generalized to all madrasahs. However, the detailed description allows readers to judge transferability to similar contexts.
- Data collection timing: Observations and interviews were conducted at one point in time. A longitudinal design would capture how the hybrid model evolves over time, particularly as PBL is implemented.
- Researcher positionality: As an external researcher, I may have missed tacit knowledge and taken-for-granted practices visible only to insiders.
- Document limitations: While curriculum documents were analyzed, some internal school documents may not have been accessible.

Directions for Future Research

Future research should address the following questions:

- Comparative studies: How do hybrid curriculum models differ across madrasahs in different regions (urban vs. rural, large vs. small, traditional vs. modern)?
- Student perspectives: How do students experience the hybrid curriculum? Do special class students show different outcomes compared to regular class students?
- Quantitative outcomes: What is the measurable impact of the hybrid model on student achievement, motivation, and post-graduation pathways?
- Implementation process: How do schools transition from centralized to hybrid models? What are the critical success factors and common failure modes?

CONCLUSIONS | خاتمة | SIMPULAN

This study concludes that MTsN 1 Malang City successfully applies a hybrid curriculum model that systematically integrates centralization and decentralization mechanisms. Centralization ensures compliance with national standards set by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, providing uniformity in core subjects, learning outcomes, and assessment frameworks. Decentralization manifests in locally initiated innovations, including Ma'had Al-Madany (student dormitory program), special class programs (Bilingual, Tahfidz, and Olympic classes), and the planned implementation of Project-Based Learning.

Teachers at MTsN 1 Malang play a dual role in this hybrid model: as implementers of centralized curriculum policies (translating national standards into classroom practice) and as innovators within decentralized spaces (designing enrichment materials, differentiation strategies, and local programs). This dual role requires professional development that integrates national curriculum literacy with local curriculum development skills.

The hybrid model at MTsN 1 Malang demonstrates that centralization and decentralization are not opposing forces but complementary mechanisms. Centralization provides the structural framework—the "scaffolding"—that ensures equality and accountability. Decentralization provides the flexibility and responsiveness that enable contextual adaptation and innovation. When balanced intentionally, these mechanisms together improve educational quality more effectively than either approach alone.

The findings answer the research problem by proving that national policies and local innovations can coexist within a single curriculum system. Teachers are encouraged to design creative, student-centered learning; school leaders need to manage curriculum development that balances innovation with compliance; and policymakers should provide flexible frameworks that support both equity and contextual adaptation. Through this synergy, the hybrid model at MTsN 1 offers a strategic path to improving the quality of madrasah education in Indonesia and similar contexts worldwide.

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