Research Article

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Integration of Islamic Education Policy in the Context of Malay Culture: An Analysis of Its Implementation and Impact on Educational Management in Indonesia

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Abstract

The integration of Islamic educational policy within the Malay cultural milieu reflects a dynamic interplay among religious norms, local traditions, and institutional governance. This study examines how Islamic education policies are interpreted, implemented, and adapted across Malay-influenced regions of Indonesia, and explores their implications for educational management. Employing a qualitative approach supported by a systematic review of scholarly literature, the research investigates the alignment between national policy frameworks, local cultural values, and institutional capacities. The findings indicate that core Malay cultural principles, such as *syura* (deliberation), justice, communal participation, and respect for inherited traditions play a pivotal role in shaping how policies are translated into institutional practice. Yet, implementation continues to face structural obstacles, including uneven curriculum adaptation, limited teacher professionalism, and disparities in institutional resources. Despite these challenges, Islamic educational institutions in Malay cultural settings exhibit adaptive strategies by incorporating local cultural strengths and community support into their managerial practices. The study concludes that effective policy implementation depends on the ability of institutions to navigate regulatory requirements, cultural expectations, and practical operational needs. These insights suggest that future policymaking should adopt a more culturally responsive orientation, strengthen institutional managerial capacity, and foster collaboration among government bodies, cultural leaders, and educational stakeholders. Such efforts are essential for advancing Islamic educational management in Indonesia that is sustainable, inclusive, and grounded in its sociocultural context.

Keywords: Islamic education policy, Malay culture, policy implementation, educational management.

Integrasi Kebijakan Pendidikan Islam dalam Konteks Budaya Melayu: Analisis Implementasi dan Dampaknya terhadap Manajemen Pendidikan di Indonesia

Abstrak

Integrasi kebijakan pendidikan Islam dalam konteks budaya Melayu merupakan interaksi dinamis antara norma-norma agama, tradisi lokal, dan tata kelola kelembagaan. Studi ini mengkaji bagaimana kebijakan pendidikan Islam diinterpretasikan, diimplementasikan, dan diadaptasi di wilayah-wilayah yang dipengaruhi budaya Melayu di Indonesia, serta menganalisis dampaknya terhadap manajemen pendidikan. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif yang didukung oleh tinjauan sistematis literatur akademis, penelitian ini menyelidiki keselarasan antara kerangka kebijakan nasional, nilai-nilai budaya lokal, dan kapasitas kelembagaan. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa prinsip-prinsip budaya Melayu, seperti syura (musyawarah), keadilan, partisipasi komunal, dan penghormatan terhadap tradisi memainkan peran sentral dalam membentuk bagaimana kebijakan diterjemahkan ke dalam praktik kelembagaan. Namun, implementasinya masih terhambat oleh kendala struktural, termasuk

adaptasi kurikulum yang tidak konsisten, profesionalisme guru yang terbatas, dan disparitas sumber daya kelembagaan. Terlepas dari tantangan-tantangan ini, lembaga pendidikan Islam di wilayah Melayu menunjukkan strategi adaptif dengan mengintegrasikan kekuatan budaya lokal dan dukungan masyarakat ke dalam praktik manajemen mereka. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa implementasi kebijakan yang efektif bergantung pada kemampuan lembaga untuk menavigasi tuntutan regulasi, ekspektasi budaya, dan kebutuhan operasional praktis. Temuan ini menyiratkan bahwa perumusan kebijakan di masa mendatang harus mengadopsi pendekatan yang lebih responsif terhadap budaya, memperkuat kapasitas manajerial kelembagaan, dan mendorong kolaborasi antara pemerintah, tokoh budaya lokal, dan pemangku kepentingan pendidikan. Upaya-upaya tersebut penting untuk mengembangkan manajemen pendidikan Islam yang berkelanjutan, inklusif, dan berlandaskan konteks di Indonesia.

***Kata Kunci**: Kebijakan pendidikan Islam, budaya Melayu, implementasi kebijakan, manajemen pendidikan.*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education plays a crucial role in shaping the moral, spiritual, and cultural identity of Malay communities in Southeast Asia (Suhernawati et al., 2024; Uri et al., 2025; Zahira et al., 2024). In Indonesia, a country strongly influenced by Malay traditions, the integration of Islamic values into educational policy is understood not only as a pedagogical necessity but also as a cultural imperative rooted in the long history of the relationship between Islamic teachings and Malay customs (F. S. Ramadhan et al., 2024; Suradi, 2022). The historical interaction between religious norms and social practices within the Malay community has significantly shaped Malaysia's unique model of Islamic education. This model emphasizes a harmonious blend of religious principles, communal values, and cultural traditions, fostering a spiritually enriching and socially cohesive educational environment (Ghazali, 2016; Hamid, 2018; Ismail, 2012). This integration continues to influence how educational institutions design curricula, develop learning environments, and implement policies at various levels (Fitrianto et al., 2025; Idris et al., 2019; Razali et al., 2024).

Although the Islamic education policy framework in Indonesia has been regulated nationally through regulations such as the National Education System Law (UU No.

20/2003), the reality of its implementation on the ground remains heavily influenced by local socio-cultural conditions. In Malay-influenced regions, Islamic education practices consistently interact with local customs (Aritonang, 2024; Fariati et al., 2025; Palawa et al., 2024; Ridho, 2018). Values such as shura (deliberation), adil (justice), and community involvement serve as foundations that shape unique educational management patterns (Zahiri & Sahal, 2025). This situation makes Malay-cultured regions a relevant space for examining how Islamic education policies are reinterpreted, adapted, and negotiated within an institutional context.

However, despite the strategic role of Islamic education policies, the harmonization of policy formulation and implementation still faces numerous obstacles. Previous studies have shown a disparity between formal provisions and implementation on the ground due to limited organizational structures, a lack of competent educators, suboptimal institutional governance, and a poor alignment between national policies and local institutional capabilities (Elvarisna et al., 2024; Hezam et al., 2025). Some examples of issues hindering the achievement of policy objectives include teachers' inability to adapt to the prevailing curriculum (Tas, 2022; Yazıcılar Nalbantoğlu et al., 2022), weak teacher professionalism (Gadiye, 2018), and inequality in education funding (Putri, 2025;

Walker et al., 2019). This challenge is further complicated by the emergence of rapid global changes, both in technology, socioeconomic dynamics, and the demands of 21st-century competencies, which require a transformation in Islamic education management without neglecting fundamental religious and cultural values.

In the Malay cultural space, this issue is further complicated because cultural integration, while on the one hand, provides significant opportunities for education based on local wisdom, also has the potential to give rise to policy fragmentation, differing interpretations of Islamic values, and diverse management patterns between institutions. Therefore, a more in-depth analysis is needed to understand how Islamic education policies are negotiated and implemented within the Malay cultural context, and how these dynamics influence the managerial aspects of educational institutions, such as curriculum management, teacher competency development, institutional leadership, and resource distribution.

The limited number of studies that specifically focus on the integration of Islamic education policies within a Malay cultural framework indicates a crucial research gap that needs to be addressed. Some previous literature has focused more on Islamic education policies in general or aspects of Malay culture without linking the two within a comprehensive policy analysis framework. This opens up space for in-depth research that can explain how Islamic values and Malay cultural identity interact in the policy implementation process and its consequences for education management.

Through a qualitative approach based on an extensive literature review, this research seeks to examine the integration of Islamic education policy within the Malay cultural context and examine its implications for education management in Indonesia. The study identifies key factors influencing the success of policy implementation, outlines the structural and cultural challenges faced by educational institutions, particularly in Indonesia, and offers recommendations.

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature review design to deeply understand how Islamic education policy is integrated into the Malay cultural context and how its implementation influences education management. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for a more comprehensive exploration of social and policy phenomena, including cultural values, institutional dynamics, and stakeholder interpretations that cannot be explained through quantitative data.

The data collection process was conducted through a systematic literature review, beginning with identifying academic sources directly related to the themes of Islamic education policy, Malay culture, and education management. The researcher first determined search keywords, such as Islamic education policy, Malay culture, educational management, policy implementation, and Islamic educational institutions, to ensure a consistent focus. The literature search was conducted through various scientific databases, such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and national journal portals, as well as through academic books, research reports, government regulations, and relevant policy documents. These sources were analyzed to identify patterns, gaps, and trends in the implementation of Islamic education policy, particularly in regions influenced by Malay culture.

Data analysis was conducted through a process of thematic categorization and interpretation to explore relationships

between concepts, such as the integration of cultural values into policy, implementation challenges, and its impact on education governance. Researchers read each source repeatedly to gain contextual understanding, then extracted relevant information and grouped it into key themes that supported the research objectives. The validity of the findings was maintained through source triangulation and logical consistency across the literature. Using this method, the study was able to present a comprehensive picture of how Islamic education policy is implemented in Malay-cultured regions and how this cultural context shapes education management patterns in Indonesia. This approach also enabled researchers to generate more precise and relevant recommendations for strengthening Islamic education policy and management in the future.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Islam Islamic Education Policy Analysis

Islamic education policy plays a crucial role in creating an education system aligned with religious values and spiritual goals. This policy fundamentally aims to produce students with noble character, as evidenced by various studies highlighting the integration of Islamic values into the educational curriculum (Faruq et al., 2024; Khasanah, 2023; Nasution, 2024; Setiawan et al., 2025). This policy focuses on character development through religious teachings and practices, designed to instill values such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy in students (Jamil, 2024; Siregar, 2021; Sulhan & Hakim, 2023). The implementation of these values not only strengthens religious beliefs but also fosters moral and responsible individuals who can contribute positively to society (Fatimah & Siswanto, 2024).

Educational policy is defined as a series of decisions and actions aimed at resolving problems related to the education system and having a significant impact on citizens. Every policy in Indonesia should be continually evaluated and analyzed to ensure that its stated objectives are achieved and aligned with current developments. This also applies to government policies on Islamic education (Safitri et al., 2021). When analyzing Islamic education policies, several key considerations include how effectively the policies are implemented in various educational institutions, how they meet student needs, and how relevant they are to current developments. For example, Indonesian laws and government regulations govern Islamic education, including UU No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which stipulates that religious education must be part of the national education system. However, various issues often hinder the implementation of this policy. These include a lack of resources, teacher quality, and a gap between theory and practice (Umar & Ismail, 2018). Furthermore, many Islamic educational institutions still struggle with complex administrative and regulatory demands, making it difficult for them to optimally implement policies. Islamic education policies must also be able to adapt to social changes and global developments, without sacrificing the core values of religious teachings. In the context of globalization and modernization, Islamic education faces the challenge of maintaining its relevance, particularly amidst advances in technology and information that are transforming teaching and learning methods. Strategic Islamic education policies must consider these aspects, while maintaining a balance between mastery of general knowledge and a strong understanding of religion (Ahdar, 2019). Therefore, Islamic education policies must be able to balance the need to master

modern competencies with strong spiritual development.

On the other hand, community participation, particularly among religious scholars and religious leaders, in the formulation and implementation of Islamic education policies is crucial. The active involvement of various parties can ensure that formulated policies meet the needs of the community and align with Islamic principles (Rosi, 2015). However, this involvement can also give rise to potential conflict, especially if there are differences of opinion between the parties involved. Overall, Islamic education policies must be dynamic, adaptive, and responsive to social, cultural, and technological changes, without abandoning the essence of religious teachings. Thus, the policy serves not only as a formal guideline but also as a means to achieve the broader goals of Islamic education, namely to develop individuals with morals, intelligence, and global competitiveness (Nurainiah, 2020). A flexible, locally based policy approach is key to ensuring policies are able to address practical challenges at the institutional level.

Islamic Education Policy Analysis Method

Islamic education policy analysis is an effort to utilize relevant research sources. The policy analysis method integrates elements from various disciplines: religious studies, political science, sociology, psychology, economics, philosophy, and culture. Policy analysis is descriptive in nature, as the foundation of religious and sociological studies is the primary determinant in presenting the research sources. According to experts, there are several methods for analyzing Islamic education, such as those proposed by William N. Dunn, using descriptive methods from various disciplines, namely: political, normative, and social approaches.

Education at the beginning of independence carried out reform efforts in the fields of education and teaching. The BP KNIP (*Badan Pekerja Komite Nasional Indonesia Pusat*) made a number of recommendations to the Ministry of Education, Teaching, and Culture in its session on December 29, 1945. The actualization of these efforts was the reform of education and teaching, implemented in accordance with the new master plan for education and teaching efforts, which was to be implemented throughout the country. The recommendation also touched on the existence of madrasas and Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). Madrasas and Islamic boarding schools, which are essentially tools and sources of education for the common people, are deeply rooted in the paradigm of our society. Therefore, they should receive attention and moral and financial support from the government in an effort to develop quality strategic programs for madrasas (Kosim, 2007). his recommendation marked the beginning of the integration of Islamic education into the national policy framework and remains an important historical reference in the development of Islamic education policy.

Analyzing Islamic education policy also requires the use of interdisciplinary approaches, including religious studies, social sciences, psychology, political science, economics, philosophy, and various current studies that influence the actors implementing Islamic education policy. Policy analysis is partly descriptive, drawing on traditional disciplines such as political science and religious politics to determine policies on education and the public. It is also normative, assessing the policy's alignment with Islamic values and ideal educational principles. A sociological approach helps understand the influence of the societal context on policy

implementation, while a historical approach provides a picture of policy development over time. The integration of these various approaches makes policy analysis more comprehensive and able to capture dynamics that are not visible through a single approach.

Islamic Education Policy Analysis Method

A policy model is a simplified representation of aspects that might be considered real conditions for achieving certain goals. Policy models are artificial reconstructions of the realities of the environment, objectives, and possible capabilities. Policy models can help problem-solvers identify essential and non-essential aspects of a problem situation, clarify relationships between important factors or variables, and predict the consequences of policy choices. However, mathematical policy models are difficult to communicate.

There are several policy models that may be used in an analysis, including (William N. Dunn, 2000);

1. Descriptive Model: an approach to predicting and explaining the causes and consequences of policy choices, aimed at monitoring the results of policy actions.
2. Normative Model: a model that not only explains or predicts something but also provides arguments and recommendations to optimize the achievement of desired value (utility).
3. Verbal Model: an analytical model that relies on rational judgment to make predictions and offer recommendations. The use of verbal models is relatively easy to communicate between experts and laypeople. The problems used to provide predictions are hidden (implicit), so the arguments are rarely critically examined.
4. Symbolic Model: an analytical model that uses mathematical symbols to explain the relationships between key variables believed to detail a problem. These models are the opposite of verbal models because not everyone understands the details, and therefore misunderstandings about elements that are clearly visible can occur. The disadvantage of symbolic model analysis is that the results are difficult to interpret because the assumptions are not stated in detail.
5. Procedural models: These are analytical models that are always based on cause and effect. Predictions and solutions are derived from simulation results or by examining a set of cause-and-effect relationships. These procedural models also utilize expressive and symbolic models. An important note about these models is the highly diverse assumptions they contain. Therefore, these policy models can also be viewed as a form of expression that may be the culmination of general assumptions, difficult to discern in a personal context.

The policy model above is generally used in various analyses related to public matters. Therefore, to analyze Islamic education, relevant approaches, in addition to those mentioned, are those concerned with efforts to achieve the primary goals of Islamic education. Generally, there are four frequently used approaches and models for Islamic education policy: religious, legal, sociological, cultural, and even historical.

The implementation of education requires implementers, namely those who will implement educational programs, both directly and indirectly. Therefore, management is also required, encompassing sound managerial patterns that can be clearly seen in a structured and orderly manner. Thus, Islamic education can be processed through guidance, the delivery of knowledge, and the formation of attitudes and personalities imbued with Islamic civilization,

leading to the development of people of faith. If this can be done well, the educational goals as stated in the vision and mission will be achieved. This requires Islamic educational institutions to have adequate managerial capacity to implement policies effectively and sustainably.

Implementation and Implications of Islamic Education Policy for Educational Management

The implementation of Islamic education policy in educational management is crucial for determining the path and success of education in Islamic institutions. This encompasses the application of Islamic principles in various aspects of education, such as curriculum, teaching methods, human resource management, and institutional governance. During the implementation phase, Islamic education policy must be translated from formal regulations into practical actions (Kurniawan et al., 2024; Nurhadi, 2021). Aligning the curriculum with Islamic values is a crucial part of implementing Islamic education policy. The curriculum must not only encompass in-depth religious knowledge but also integrate general science with a holistic Islamic approach (Mahmudulhassan et al., 2025; Moslimany et al., 2024). To achieve this goal, planned and effective curriculum management is necessary. This will ensure that the material taught is relevant to students' needs and addresses the challenges of globalization and religion (I. Ramadhan & Tyorinis, 2023).

From a human resource management perspective, the implementation of Islamic education policies impacts the selection and development of educational personnel and teachers. These policies emphasize the importance of teacher professional development, including regular training on Islamic teaching methods and the instilling of moral values in education. Teachers in Islamic institutions must not only be competent in their fields but also possess high moral and spiritual integrity, in accordance with Islamic teachings (Holle, 2020; Iskandar et al., 2025; Madelo, 2015). The implementation of Islamic education policies also influences the governance of educational institutions. Islamic schools often employ a management model based on community and religious leader participation, prioritizing a balance between academic achievement and spiritual development.

Islamic education management typically prioritizes the principles of shura (deliberation), justice, and social responsibility (Arifin, 2025; Gamar & Maliki, 2025; Kusuma, 2025). However, the successful implementation of these policies is often hampered by issues such as a lack of adequate financial resources and infrastructure, thus hindering their optimal implementation (Holle, 2020). We can view the impact of Islamic education policies on educational management from two perspectives: positive and negative. Positively, the implementation of these policies can improve the quality of education by producing graduates who excel not only academically but also possess noble morals and play an active role in society. This will produce a generation capable of becoming leaders in society and the workplace. Conversely, several issues must be addressed.

One is the mismatch between the policies created and the capacity of educational institutions to implement them. For example, some Islamic educational institutions may struggle to comprehensively implement an Islamic-based curriculum due to a lack of competent teaching staff. Furthermore, limited funding often hinders efforts to improve the quality of education and learning

facilities (Rahman & Akbar, [2021]). Islamic education policies also have implications for the broader context of institutional governance, particularly in the management of funds and other resources. Educational institutions managed according to Islamic principles often face challenges in striking a balance between efficient financial management while maintaining transparency and accountability in accordance with Islamic teachings.

Overall, the implementation of Islamic education policies makes a significant contribution to educational management, particularly in creating a moral and ethical educational environment that is relevant to the needs of the times. However, the success of this implementation depends heavily on the ability of educational institutions to effectively adopt the policy and address the various challenges that may arise during its implementation. Therefore, ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of Islamic education policies are necessary, as well as efforts to improve the resources and infrastructure that support them. This underscores the need for ongoing evaluation, institutional capacity building, and policy support that is more responsive to real needs on the ground.

Author's Declaration Regarding the Use of LLM

This article utilizes some text generated by LLM (ChatGPT). However, all use of GenAI was done under the author's supervision and went through a careful editing process. The author retains complete control over the substance, argumentation, and authenticity of the work and therefore assumes full responsibility for the final content of this manuscript.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that the integration of Islamic education policies within the Malay cultural context occurs through a complex process, in which Islamic values and local traditions mutually influence the formulation and implementation of policies in educational institutions. This integration is evident not only in the curriculum and learning aspects, but also in institutional governance, leadership models, and patterns of relationships between schools, communities, and other stakeholders. Values such as shura, justice, and togetherness have been shown to play a significant role in shaping managerial practices in Islamic education environments rooted in Malay culture. Analysis of policy implementation shows that the effectiveness of implementation is highly dependent on the institution's capacity to translate regulations into daily educational practices. The gap between national policies and conditions on the ground remains apparent, particularly related to limited human resources, infrastructure, funding, and the institution's ability to adapt to current demands. On the other hand, cultural support and active community involvement are local strengths that enrich the implementation process and strengthen the relevance of Islamic education in the Malay region. This study also reveals that Islamic education policies have a significant impact on educational management, both in positive dimensions and in the challenges faced by institutions. Positive contributions are evident in strengthening character, improving the quality of values-based learning, and creating a more ethical and spiritual educational environment. Meanwhile, the main challenges

still revolve around uneven teacher competency, suboptimal curriculum implementation, and institutional governance that requires reform to be more responsive to social and technological developments. Overall, this study confirms that the successful integration of Islamic education policies into the Malay cultural context requires a managerial approach that is adaptive, collaborative, and sensitive to local values. To strengthen future implementation, Islamic educational institutions need to develop internal capacity, improve teacher professionalism, and strengthen mechanisms for continuous policy evaluation. Thus, Islamic education policies will not only serve as formal guidelines but will also be able to realize comprehensive and relevant educational goals for Malay society in the modern era.

The findings of this study have several important implications. First, the government and educational institutions need to develop more culturally sensitive policies, giving greater space to Malay values in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of Islamic education policies. Second, it is necessary to strengthen the managerial capacity of Islamic educational institutions, particularly in terms of teacher development, curriculum development, and institutional governance, to align them with national policy demands and local environmental needs. Third, the integration of Malay cultural values has proven to have significant potential for enriching Islamic education management practices, necessitating continued collaboration between religious leaders, indigenous communities, and policymakers. Fourth, this research opens up space for further studies on local culture-based management models and their influence on the effectiveness of education policies in a global context.

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