

ANALYSIS OF THE DYNAMICS OF ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL LAW AND POLICY TO IMPROVE TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM IN INDONESIA

Hilmin, Masnila, Eva Sunarya, Dwi Noviani

Institut Agama Islam Al-Qur'an Al-Ittifaqiah (IAIQI) Indralaya Sumatera Selatan

hilmin@iaiqi.ac.id; nila.syifani@gmail.com

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Abstract

This study examines the dynamics of Islamic education law and policy in Indonesia and their role in enhancing educator professionalism, employing a qualitative method through an extensive literature review. The analysis reveals that Islamic education law and policy in Indonesia are continually evolving to address emerging educational needs and the demands of a rapidly changing social, technological, and global landscape. These legal and policy developments prioritize the enhancement of human resource quality, particularly educators, and exert a significant influence on the national education system through regulatory frameworks that foster character development and academic competence. Professionalism in Islamic education encompasses the advancement of educators' knowledge, skills, and attitudes to effectively navigate the challenges of modern education. The legal framework plays a vital role in supporting this professionalism by establishing competency standards, implementing certification systems, and ensuring legal protection for educators. The study concludes that the synergy between evolving legal frameworks, Islamic education policies, and professional development initiatives is fundamental to improving the overall quality of education in Indonesia.

Keywords: Legal Dynamics; Islamic Education Policy; Educator Professionalism; Competency Standards; Indonesian Education

INTRODUCTION

Education is the primary foundation in forming the personality and civilization of a nation and state (Octofrezi, 2020). Education plays a crucial role in shaping the direction of progress toward quality and competitive human resources. The development of knowledge is the spirit of Islamic education, as affirmed in the first revelation to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), namely the command to read (*iqra'*) in Surah Al-'Alaq: 1 (Al Farabi, 2022). It confirms Islam places knowledge and education as the primary keys to human development. Islamic education's primary goal is to internalize good manners and instill divine values in students so that they become spiritually, intellectually, and morally balanced individuals (Fahrudin et al., 2020).

In discussing the development of education, it cannot be separated from the education policy, which is regulated by the state, and the government makes regulations so that the implementation of education runs well (Yuliah, 2020). In Indonesia, Islamic education is integral to the national education system. It is affirmed in Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which regulates Islamic religious education, making it a compulsory subject at every level of education for Muslims (Jayanti et al., 2021). These policies and regulations show that the direction of national education is an integral part of Islamic religious education to make people who believe in God-fearing and ultimately have good morals. Of course, educational goals cannot be separated from other subjects; there must be integration in the national education system (Ulm, 2020). Religious education emphasizes the state's role in guaranteeing citizens' freedom to receive religious education according to their beliefs, which aligns with the educational goals stipulated in the 1945 Constitution (Ichsan, 2023).

Globally, the issue of Islamic education has become a significant concern for various international organizations, such as ISESCO (Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation), which provide direction for renewal in Islamic education that is progressive and has an impact on the progress of Muslims who are globally competitive (Elice & Semin, 2023). These organizations promote Islamic education reforms toward moderation, tolerance, and integrating science and religion. According to the ISESCO (2020) report, the main challenges in global Islamic education are modernizing the curriculum without losing its Islamic identity and strengthening the quality of educators. The development of Islamic education must be able to integrate the position

of Islamic education with the policies and regulations that govern it, to align with government or state policies that have policy authority, especially in developing the professionalism of educators, teachers, and lecturers (Dewanti et al., 2022).

However, amid the digital era and modernization of education, Indonesia still faces several significant challenges, especially in terms of the certification policy for teachers and lecturers of Islamic Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam* / PAI), which aims to improve the quality and professionalism of teaching staff (Masitoh, 2019). While certification is considered a crucial tool for ensuring teacher professionalism, its implementation often faces administrative, technical, and geographic obstacles. Most Islamic Education (PAI) teachers lack adequate pedagogical training and access to ongoing professional development (Zubaedi, 2011). This problem must be a serious concern in looking at the issues of teachers and lecturers in the Islamic religious education environment, it must start from preparing prospective education personnel from well-selected acceptance at the faculty and university level that prepare prospective education personnel at the Faculty of Tarbiyah and the Faculty of Teacher Training, so that prospective education personnel are prepared professionally and with quality (Masruri, 2019).

The challenge for Islamic religious education nationally and globally is to understand religious texts and contexts in a moderate and humanistic manner (Hilmin, Noviani, & Yanuarti, 2023). The demand for religious moderation also places educators in a key role in shaping the character and disposition of students into moderately religious individuals. Educators are not merely instructors but also agents of change in developing an inclusive and peaceful Islamic perspective. Islamic education must instill moderate values to prevent radicalism and intolerance among students (Saifuddin, 2019). The existence of educational staff (teachers and lecturers) in Islamic education circles will increasingly teach the meaning of Islam in a more moderate and relevant way to the demands of the times and respect differences in the religious and social context.

This research aims to analyze the dynamics of Islamic education law and policy in Indonesia and how these influence the professionalism of educators. By understanding the relationship between Islamic education regulations and teaching practices, this research is expected to identify challenges and opportunities for improving the quality of educators. Furthermore, this research is also essential for providing policy recommendations that can strengthen educators' professionalism in carrying out their duties, thus producing quality

Islamic education that meets the needs of society. Consequently, this research can serve as a reference for improving the Islamic education system in Indonesia.

METHODS

To obtain in-depth analysis results, the researchers employed a qualitative descriptive analysis approach with a library research method (Sugiyono, 2017). This research focused on analyzing and understanding various policies, regulations, and challenges faced in Islamic education, particularly those related to educators, through a study of official documents, laws and regulations, and scientific literature, both national and international (Yunitasari et al., 2023). Data analysis was conducted using content analysis, which involves critical reading, grouping key themes, and drawing conclusions from patterns found in the literature. This technique effectively understands the policy context and its implications for Islamic education practices. This method uncovers phenomena in depth through narrative, rather than numerical, descriptions of data (Moleong, 2018).

RESULTS

Dynamics of Islamic Education Law and Policy

Islamic Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) in Indonesia falls under two ministries: the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) and the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag). These two ministries have different policies and regulations governing Islamic Religious Education, which can lead to overlap and inconsistencies in its implementation. For example, Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System (UU Sisdiknas) recognizes Islamic Religious Education as part of the national education system, but its implementation remains fragmented between the two ministries (Elman, 2024)

Over the past five years, government policies have demonstrated efforts to improve the quality of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) through various programs. However, implementing these policies still faces challenges, such as the lack of integration between the national curriculum and Islamic values, and the low quality of teaching staff. Furthermore, unequal access to religious education persists across regions, hindering the equitable distribution of the quality of Islamic education in Indonesia (Yulia et al., 2025).

The government must strengthen the integration between the national curriculum and Islamic education to address curriculum incompatibilities. It can be done by designing an Islamic Education (PAI) curriculum that teaches theoretical aspects of religion and integrates Islamic values into general subjects (Supriadi et al., 2021). For example, teaching Islamic morality within the context of science, mathematics, or history lessons will make Islamic education more relevant and applicable. Furthermore, a curriculum based on Islamic character education must be incorporated into school curricula to create an intellectually intelligent generation that is morally and spiritually strong (Hayi & Alwi, 2023).

To address the low quality of teaching staff, the government needs to improve ongoing training for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers. These training programs must be adapted to current challenges, such as using technology in learning and a more active pedagogical approach (Ananda et al., 2023). Furthermore, the government must introduce a sustainable certification system that measures religious knowledge and competence in teaching the material using effective and adaptive methods. Improving the welfare and professional status of PAI teachers can also serve as an incentive to improve the quality of their teaching (Munawir et al., 2024).

To address the inequality in access to religious education, the government must strengthen educational infrastructure in remote areas by providing adequate facilities and infrastructure, such as suitable classrooms, learning tools, and competent teaching staff (Ramdhiani & Rahminawati, 2021). One solution that can be implemented is to strengthen distance or online education for areas that lack facilities, so that students throughout Indonesia can access Islamic religious education without being hampered by distance (Salamun & Sauri, 2023). Scholarship and incentive programs for Islamic Education teachers willing to teach in remote areas must also be introduced to encourage more educators to work outside big cities.

In this way, equal distribution of Islamic education can be achieved throughout Indonesia, reducing the gap between developed and underdeveloped regions (Sianipar & Maulia, 2023). Several issues in Islamic Education (PAI) have not been fully addressed in education policy, such as the low quality of management of Islamic educational institutions, the lack of professionalism of teaching staff, and limited educational facilities and infrastructure. Furthermore, the dichotomy between religious and general knowledge

persists, hindering curriculum integration and the holistic development of student competencies (Fathih & Muhlis, 2023).

Strengthening private Islamic educational institutions often receives insufficient attention from the central government regarding funding, accreditation, or curriculum development. It is due to the limited authority of local governments in managing education and a lack of regulations supporting private Islamic educational institutions (Anshori, 2023). Therefore, more inclusive and decentralized policies are needed, allowing private Islamic educational institutions to develop independently and competitively. Local governments will better understand the characteristics and challenges of education in their respective regions. This will enable them to design more relevant and effective policies for funding and curriculum development (Hilmin et al., 2022). More flexible and locally based funding will facilitate improvements in the quality of educational infrastructure and teacher welfare, which are often limited in remote areas.

However, decentralization must also be accompanied by empowering local government capacity in education management. Regions with limited human resources and budgets may struggle to implement quality Islamic education policies without adequate training and capacity building (Rifa'i, 2017). Therefore, besides granting autonomy, the central government must ensure that regional governments have the resources to carry out this task, including funding, training, and effective oversight systems. Training for regional government officials on Islamic education management will strengthen policy implementation and improve the quality of religious education throughout Indonesia (Pitri et al., 2022).

Furthermore, strengthening private Islamic educational institutions is also integral to addressing the gap in the quality of Islamic education in Indonesia. Private Islamic academic institutions, which have played a significant role in providing religious education, often face obstacles such as limited funding, accreditation, and curriculum development (Wahyuni et al., 2020). Providing support in the form of more stable funding and curriculum development tailored to local needs will enable private institutions to innovate further and improve the quality of teaching. The government can provide financial incentives and management training and facilitate the accreditation process to ensure that private Islamic educational institutions can develop optimally. Strengthening these private institutions is also expected

to expand access to quality religious education for communities in various regions, especially those far from urban centers (Hilmin, Noviani, Lisdaleni, et al., 2023).

Professionalism of Educators in Islamic Education

Islamic education teachers' professionalism and teachers' quality in Indonesia, both in madrasas and public schools, still face significant challenges. Implementing the Teachers and Lecturers Law (UUGD) and the teacher certification program is often ineffective in Islamic education (Damayanti, 2023). It is due to the lack of specialized training to improve pedagogical competencies that meet the specific needs of Islamic education. Despite their strong academic qualifications, Islamic education teachers often face difficulties adapting the government-established curriculum to an approach consistent with Islamic teachings (Anwar et al., 2022). The absence of holistic and continuous training on religious aspects and Islamic-based teaching, as well as the lack of supervision in implementing this policy, also hampers the process of teacher professionalization in Islamic education.

One of the main obstacles Islamic education teachers face is the difficulty in adapting the government curriculum, which is more general and secular in nature, with an Islamic-based teaching approach (Sucipto et al., 2024). The Islamic education system in Indonesia, which comprises various types of institutions such as madrasahs and religious schools, requires a more flexible curriculum that remains compliant with Islamic principles. In this regard, developing a more comprehensive and relevant Islamic education curriculum is crucial to facilitate educators in teaching effectively (Ariandini & Hidayati, 2023). Without proper adaptation between the curriculum and teaching methods, the quality of Islamic religious education will continue to lag behind the more structured and standardized general education curriculum (Ichsan et al., 2023).

To overcome this problem, there needs to be a special training program for Islamic education teachers that not only covers the technical aspects of teaching, but also touches on spiritual and religious aspects (Munawir et al., 2024). This training should increase competence in teaching contextually, integrating Islamic values in every subject taught, and introducing innovative learning methods that align with current developments (Suryaman, 2020). This kind of training program should be conducted continuously, not just as a one-time activity, to ensure that teachers continue to develop in response to changes and the needs of society (Luneto, 2022). It will also strengthen the professionalism of Islamic

education teachers, improve the quality of their teaching, and positively impact the quality of Islamic education in Indonesia.

In addition, the lack of supervision in implementing policies regarding Islamic education is an essential factor that hinders the professionalization of teachers (Lukitasari et al., 2017). Even if good policies exist, they cannot be optimally implemented without systematic monitoring and evaluation. Therefore, it is crucial to involve various parties, including central and regional governments and relevant educational institutions, in conducting regular assessments of the implementation of Islamic education policies. Stricter oversight and precise evaluation mechanisms can ensure that all implemented policies positively impact the professionalism of educators and can address the challenges facing Islamic education (Badrudin et al., 2024).

To further improve the professionalism of teaching staff in Islamic education, one crucial step must be taken: strengthening the certification system and ongoing training (Wahyuni et al., 2020). Despite the existence of teacher certification programs, many Islamic education teachers still lack adequate training on how to teach Islamic religious material effectively. Therefore, the government needs to introduce specialized training focused on developing pedagogical competencies relevant to the current needs of Islamic education (Harjali, 2017). This training should introduce more innovative approaches, such as the use of technology in the teaching and learning process, as well as practical ways to educate students from diverse backgrounds and with varying levels of religious understanding. Ongoing training programs, conducted regularly rather than just once, will ensure that Islamic education teachers continue to develop in line with the demands of the times and are better prepared and confident in facing them.

Furthermore, involving educational stakeholders, including the government, academic institutions, and the community, is crucial in teacher professional development. This collaboration between various parties is necessary to create a supportive environment for teachers to improve their skills and the quality of their teaching (Rosita et al., 2022). One way to do this is by creating a learning community for Islamic education teachers to share experiences, challenges, and solutions related to religious teaching. This community allows teachers to hone their pedagogical skills continuously, discuss relevant issues in Islamic education, and receive support from colleagues (Suryaman, 2020). In this way, the professionalism of Islamic education teachers can be improved more effectively and

sustainably, ultimately improving the quality of Islamic religious education in Indonesia (Wardiah et al., 2022).

DISCUSSION

The Role of Law in Supporting the Professionalism of Educators

This study found that the dynamics of education law in Indonesia play a significant role in supporting the professionalism of educators. While supportive, existing policies still fail to address crucial aspects that can strengthen teacher professionalism in Islamic education (Dewanti et al., 2022). The lack of attention to developing adequate regulations for competency-based Islamic religious education hinders the achievement of ideal teaching standards. A more integrated approach between national education policy and the specific needs of Islamic education needs to be strengthened by providing training that aligns with the demands of Islamic teachings and supports educational diversity in Indonesia (Husni et al., 2024).

The phenomenon in the field is that even though many Islamic education teachers have obtained certification through teacher certification programs, many still have difficulty implementing teaching materials based on Islamic religious principles widely accepted in society (Faradila & Basuki, 2022). Despite their adequate academic qualifications, they have often not received sufficient training to teach the Islamic curriculum holistically, especially in the context of globalization and rapid social change. It indicates a gap between existing regulations and actual needs on the ground (Anshori, 2023). For example, many Islamic Education teachers do not have adequate pedagogical skills to teach Islam effectively amidst the diverse social and cultural backgrounds of their students.

According to data from the Ministry of Education and Culture, as of 2022, 60% of Islamic education teachers in madrasas and Islamic boarding schools had not yet received pedagogical competency-based training aligned with the Islamic curriculum. It indicates a significant gap between practical needs in the field and implemented policies. Existing Islamic education teacher certification policies, while essential, often focus solely on technical competencies such as mastery of teaching materials and fail to integrate deeper religious competency development (Kemenag, 2022). Therefore, more specific regulations regarding the competencies of Islamic education teachers need to be prioritized immediately to ensure better quality of teaching in the future.

The importance of more specific regulations regarding the professionalism of educators in Islamic educational institutions. Without detailed regulations governing teacher competency development in Islamic education, efforts to improve the professionalism of Islamic education teachers will be limited (Masruri, 2019). For example, although the national education policy regulates teacher certification, there is still no policy that pays attention to developing the capacity of Islamic religious teachers in a broader context, namely not only in the academic realm but also in the spiritual, moral, and social aspects that are the essence of Islamic education (Ahmad, 2020).

Such regulations must encompass several vital aspects, such as ongoing training, strengthening the faith-based curriculum, and increasing oversight of policy implementation in the field. In this context, strengthening the role of Islamic educational institutions such as Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) and madrasahs is crucial (Rahmawati & Khoir, 2023). These institutions should be given greater freedom to design more flexible curricula tailored to local needs, while maintaining the overall quality of Islamic education. The government needs to provide incentives for Islamic educational institutions committed to improving the professionalism of educators through ongoing training (Heriyanto et al., 2022).

The certification of Islamic Education (PAI) teachers and lecturers aims to improve educators' professionalism. However, in practice, this program still faces various challenges. The mismatch between certification materials and actual needs on the ground means that the program is often viewed as merely an administrative requirement, rather than a means of substantive quality improvement (Damayanti, 2023). This phenomenon is reinforced by the discovery that most Islamic Education teachers admitted that they had not felt a significant increase in their pedagogical skills after certification (Anwar et al., 2022). It demonstrates the need for a comprehensive evaluation of Teacher Professional Education (PPG) implementation to ensure it is more responsive to the realities of education in schools. The PPG program should focus on cognitive aspects and emphasize strengthening teaching skills, character development, and the practical application of digital-based learning media. Islamic Education teachers must develop 21st-century competencies that include digital literacy, collaborative skills, critical thinking, and character development based on Islamic values (Musbaing, 2024).

The need for technology-based and soft skills training must also be expanded to underdeveloped regions, where uncertified teachers still predominate. Disparities in training

and access to technology are significant obstacles to the equitable distribution of religious education quality in remote areas (Munawir et al., 2024). Therefore, future teacher certification and training policies must pay attention to the principle of distributive justice, so that all Islamic Education teachers, both in cities and regions, can access professional development programs equally and sustainably.

The dynamics of Islamic education law indicate that a more integrated approach between national education policy and the specific needs of Islamic education needs to be strengthened. Islamic education in Indonesia must accommodate the uniqueness and diversity of society in terms of religious, cultural, and social values. Therefore, a more integrated approach between national policy and the needs of Islamic education is crucial to creating a more inclusive and relevant education system. Educators are the primary drivers in implementing the curriculum, and the learning approaches regulated by the government are often normative and less applicable to the socio-cultural needs of students. Islamic education in Indonesia must be reoriented so that it emphasizes not only memorization and religious knowledge, but also the instillation of contextual, moderate, and solution-oriented Islamic values (Nasir & Sunardi, 2025). Curriculum reformulation is also an urgent need in the era of digital disruption, where technology integration, validation of online religious content, and hybrid or blended learning methods are required (Aziza, 2024).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the dynamics of Islamic education law and policy in Indonesia play a crucial role in enhancing the professionalism of educators. The evolving Islamic education policies significantly impact the national education system, particularly strengthening educators' competencies. Educator professionalism in Islamic education must be continuously improved by developing knowledge, skills, and attitudes that align with contemporary demands. Furthermore, the role of law is essential in supporting this professionalism through regulations that establish competency standards, certification mechanisms, and legal protection for educators. Therefore, the government should consistently update Islamic education policies emphasizing professional development through ongoing training, effective certification, and incentives for high-performing teachers.

Additionally, strengthening collaboration among educational institutions, the government, and the community is key to supporting educator professionalism and reinforcing a character- and competency-based education system. Enhancing legal protection for educators ensures they work safely and receive rights according to established competency standards. Further research is necessary to explore the implementation of Islamic education policies more comprehensively by incorporating empirical data from various regions in Indonesia.

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