

Implementation of Islamic Educational Philosophy in Educational Policy (2021–2024): Analysis of National Education Standards, the Merdeka Curriculum, and Madrasah Guidelines

Suhaeni¹, Syayidah Afrohah², Rahmat Hidayatullah³, Ahsan Hakim⁴

¹ Institut Ahmad Dahlan Probolinggo; suhaeni0688@gmail.com

² Institut Ahmad Dahlan Probolinggo; saysafa@gmail.com

³ Institut Ahmad Dahlan Probolinggo; rahmat24hidayatullah94@gmail.com

⁴ Institut Ahmad Dahlan Probolinggo; ahsanhakim1988@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Keywords: Islamic educational philosophy; curriculum; madrasah; education policy Article history: Received 2026-06-01 Revised 2026-06-22 Accepted 2026-07-01	<i>This study examines how Islamic educational philosophy is operationalized within Indonesian education policy during 2021–2024. Anchored in three core philosophical orientations—faith and piety (iman–taqwa), moral formation (adab/akhlak), and holistic human development—the study maps these values onto binding policy instruments governing standards, curriculum, assessment, and institutional design. Using a normative–descriptive library research method, the analysis draws on six primary documents: Government Regulation (PP) No. 57/2021 and its amendment (PP No. 4/2022) on National Education Standards; Ministerial Regulations (Permendikbudristek) No. 5, 7, and 21 of 2022 on graduate competency, content, and assessment standards; Ministerial Decree No. 262/M/2022 on the learning–recovery curriculum guideline; Permendikbudristek No. 12/2024 on the Merdeka Curriculum; and the Minister of Religious Affairs’ Decree (KMA) No. 347/2022 on Merdeka Curriculum implementation in madrasahs. The findings show that the 2021–2024 policy framework explicitly embeds faith, piety, and moral character in graduate outcomes, mandates religious education as compulsory content, and provides operational levers through standards-based design, intra–co–extracurricular activities, formative assessment, and madrasah-specific curriculum architecture. The article concludes by identifying policy implications and persistent implementation challenges at the school and madrasah level, including value reduction to cognitive knowledge, weak character assessment, uneven institutional capacity, and the need for cross-ministry synchronization.</i>

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Corresponding Author:

Suhaeni

Institut Ahmad Dahlan Probolinggo; suhaeni0688@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

The philosophy of Islamic education is grounded in a holistic vision of human formation that integrates faith (iman), piety (taqwa), moral character (akhlak or adab), and intellectual development. Classical scholars such as al-Zarnūjī, al-Ghazālī, and Ibn Khaldūn emphasized that the purpose of education extends beyond the transmission of knowledge to the cultivation of virtuous individuals capable of fulfilling their roles as khalīfah fī al-arḍ (vicegerents on earth). In the Indonesian context, this philosophical heritage has long shaped religious-based educational institutions, particularly madrasahs, and continues to inform contemporary debates about the moral and spiritual aims of national education.

Over the 2021–2024 period, the Indonesian government introduced a series of policy reforms in response to the learning crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic and to the broader demands of the twenty-first century. Three reform streams are particularly relevant: the amendment of the National Education Standards (Standar Nasional Pendidikan, SNP) through Government Regulation No. 57/2021 and its successor PP No. 4/2022; the rollout of the Merdeka Curriculum (Permendikbudristek No. 12/2024); and the issuance of madrasah-specific guidelines (KMA No. 347/2022). These instruments claim to embed the values of faith, piety, and moral character into binding standards, curriculum content, assessment mechanisms, and institutional design. However, two questions remain underexplored. First, to what extent do these instruments translate Islamic educational philosophy into operational policy language? Second, do the policies provide implementation mechanisms that go beyond normative rhetoric to support value internalization in classroom and madrasah practice?

This article addresses these questions through a normative–descriptive analysis of the 2021–2024 regulatory framework. The objectives of the study are threefold: (1) to construct a minimal analytical framework derived from Islamic educational philosophy; (2) to map the framework's core values onto the 2021–2024 policy instruments; and (3) to identify the operational levers and their limitations that shape the translation of Islamic educational philosophy into national education policy.

The remainder of the article is organized as follows. Section 2 outlines the research method. Section 3 develops the analytical framework of Islamic educational philosophy and applies it to the 2021–2024 policy corpus. Section 4 concludes with policy implications and recommendations..

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a normative–descriptive library research method (studi kepustakaan) to analyze how Islamic educational philosophy is reflected in Indonesian education policies issued between 2021 and 2024. The research was conducted in three stages.

2.1 Document identification

The corpus comprises six primary legal instruments: (a) PP No. 57/2021 on National Education Standards; (b) PP No. 4/2022 amending PP No. 57/2021; (c) Permendikbudristek Nos. 5, 7, and 21 of 2022 on graduate competency standards, content standards, and assessment standards; (d) Ministerial Decree No. 262/M/2022 on the learning-recovery curriculum guideline; (e) Permendikbudristek No. 12/2024 on the Merdeka Curriculum; and (f) KMA No. 347/2022 on Merdeka Curriculum implementation in madrasahs. Supporting sources include Law No. 20/2003 on the National Education System, which provides the normative foundation.

2.2 Provision extraction

For each document, the analysis extracted: (a) the formulation of educational objectives; (b) the Graduate Competency Standards (SKL) and student profile; (c) the status of religious

education within the compulsory content; (d) the definitions and roles of intra-curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities; (e) assessment principles and reporting mechanisms; and (f) the institutional design specific to madrasahs.

2.3 Framework mapping

The extracted provisions were mapped onto an analytical framework derived from Islamic educational philosophy, focusing on the objectives of faith, piety, and morality (*iman-taqwa-akhlak*); the cognitive-affective-practical dimensions of value internalization; and the structural, pedagogical, and cultural channels through which values can be operationalized. The mapping was used to produce an analysis matrix linking each philosophical dimension to specific policy indicators and textual evidence.

The study relies exclusively on textual analysis of policy documents; it does not include field-level implementation data. This delimitation is acknowledged in the conclusion, where directions for empirical follow-up are proposed.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Analytical Framework: Islamic Educational Philosophy

To assess whether the 2021–2024 policy framework moves beyond rhetorical commitment, this section formulates a minimal analytical framework from Islamic educational philosophy. The framework is intentionally constructed for policy analysis rather than as a historical mapping of scholars or schools of thought.

Educational Goals: Faith, Piety, and Morality (*Adab*)

The classical tradition conceives the goal of education (*al-ghāyah*) as the formation of the *insān kāmil*, the complete human being who integrates intellect, spirit, and moral conduct. Operationally, this implies that education should produce individuals who: al-Attas (1979) frames this as *ta'dīb*—the cultivation of individuals who are 'rightly directed and inwardly sound' through knowledge (*'ilm*) and action (*'amal*), with *adab* as the disposition that unites the two. possess a God-oriented worldview grounded in *iman* (faith) and *taqwa* (piety); (b) demonstrate *akhlak* and *adab*—moral integrity and proper social conduct; and (c) assume social responsibility (*maslahah*) toward the *ummah* and the wider community. The policy implication is that these goals should appear in graduate competency formulations, curriculum content, and learning designs that shape habits and character—not merely in subject knowledge.

Dimensions of Character Formation: Cognitive–Affective–Practice

For values to be internalized rather than memorized, they must engage three dimensions: Cognitive: knowledge of religious and moral teachings. The integration of *iman*–*'ilm*–*'amal* requires that religious and moral values be present: structurally, through compulsory content and standards. Policy Implementation Indicators, Drawing on the framework, the study uses four indicators to assess whether a given policy instrument operationalizes Islamic educational values: (a) explicit mention of values (*iman*, *taqwa*, morality, religion); (b) religious education as compulsory content; institutional design (religious education and the madrasah system); and Normative Foundation: The National Education System Law. The National Education System Law (UU No. 20/2003) embeds religious spirituality and morality within the definition and objectives of national education, and affirms students' right to receive religious education in accordance with their faith, delivered by teachers of the same religion. This statutory foundation undergirds all subsequent 2021–2024 instruments.

National Education Standards (SNP) 2021–2022: PP No. 57/2021 jo. PP No. 4/2022 PP No. 57/2021 established the framework of National Education Standards—graduate competency, content, process, assessment, and other standards—as binding references for curriculum development. PP No. 4/2022 reinforced the orientation of graduate competencies toward being “faithful and pious ... and possessing noble character,” reaffirmed religious education as compulsory curriculum content, and clarified the position of Pancasila values within the standards

architecture. Linkage to the framework. The values of iman-taqwa-akhlak appear as the orientation of educational outcomes, and the integration of iman-‘ilm-‘amal is operationalized through standards for graduate competencies, content, and assessment. Operationalization of Standards (2022): Graduate Competencies, Content, and Assessment Graduate Competency Standards (Permendikbudristek No. 5/2022) Permendikbudristek No. 5/2022 articulates the graduate profile as individuals who are faithful, pious, morally upright, and grounded in Pancasila character. At the elementary level, the competency descriptions include operational indicators such as recognizing God, understanding core religious teachings, practicing worship with guidance, demonstrating honesty, and obeying rules. Linkage to the framework. Iman-taqwa-akhlak goals are translated into concrete outcome criteria, making it easier to embed them in curriculum and assessment rubrics. Content Standards (Permendikbudristek No. 7/2022) Permendikbudristek No. 7/2022 establishes religious education as a compulsory content area in primary and secondary education, with curriculum content formulated in coordination with the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

Linkage to the framework. Compulsory content provides a structural channel for iman-‘ilm integration, and inter-ministerial coordination supports governance coherence. Assessment Standards (Permendikbudristek No. 21/2022). Permendikbudristek No. 21/2022 regulates assessment principles—fairness, objectivity, and educational value—and requires that student progress reports reflect both academic and extracurricular achievement. Promotion and graduation decisions are based on comprehensive progress reports. Linkage to the framework. Formative assessment and progress reporting create space for the affective and practical dimensions (amal), enabling value internalization beyond cognitive recall. The Merdeka Curriculum (2024): Permendikbudristek No. 12/2024. Permendikbudristek No. 12/2024 anchors the curriculum in philosophical, sociological, and psycho-pedagogical foundations, and operationalizes learning as an ecosystem of intra-curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities aimed at strengthening competencies and character. Key provisions include: The regulation's educational goals emphasize independent individuals who are faithful, pious, and morally upright. Linkage to the framework. The intra-co-extracurricular architecture provides legitimate and operational space for character-habitation programs compatible with the moral orientation of Islamic education.

Implementation in Madrasahs: KMA No. 347/2022. KMA No. 347/2022 is the clearest operational expression of Islamic educational philosophy in the 2021–2024 corpus. It defines the Merdeka Curriculum in madrasahs through a dual architecture: (a) general subjects (under the Ministry of Education); and (b) Islamic Education and Arabic Language, plus madrasah distinctiveness, under the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The decree covers curriculum structure, implementation, learning, assessment, profile strengthening, operational curriculum development, and monitoring-evaluation. Linkage to the framework. Institutional design (madrasah) functions as a structural channel for integrating Islamic values, and the combination of the general curriculum, Islamic Education/Arabic, and madrasah distinctiveness exemplifies iman-‘ilm-‘amal integration at the institutional level. Brief Discussion: From Philosophy to Policy to Practice. Normatively, the 2021–2024 framework shows strong consistency: educational goals include faith, piety, and morality; curricula require religious education; and technical policies provide implementation channels. However, normative consistency does not automatically guarantee implementation quality. The framework supplies the levers; the practice of translating them into classroom and madrasah routines remains the decisive variable. Synthesis of Framework–Policy Mapping Table 1 maps the 2021–2024 policy instruments against the four framework indicators derived from the analytical framework. Source: synthesized by the authors from the regulatory documents analyzed in this study.

Policy Instrument	Framework Indicators Addressed	Operationalization
UU No. 20/2003 (Sisdiknas)	Values; Institution	Statutory foundation: iman-taqwa, moral character, and religious education rights.
PP No. 57/2021 jo. PP No. 4/2022 (SNP)	Values; Content; Mechanism	Graduate competencies anchored in faith–piety–morality; compulsory religious content; standards-based architecture.
Permendikbudristek No. 5/2022 (SKL)	Values; Content	Competency descriptors: recognizing God, religious practice, honesty, discipline.
Permendikbudristek No. 7/2022 (SI)	Content; Coordination	Religious education as compulsory content area; inter-ministerial coordination with MoRA.
Permendikbudristek No. 21/2022 (SP)	Mechanism; Practice	Formative assessment and progress reports covering academic and non-academic dimensions.
Permendikbudristek No. 12/2024 (Kurikulum Merdeka); KMA No. 347/2022 (Madrasah)	All four indicators	Intra–co–extracurricular architecture; explicit philosophical foundations; madrasah-specific implementation.

Implementation Challenges, The analysis identifies four systemic challenges: Reduction of values to the cognitive dimension. If religious education is treated merely as knowledge transmission, the affective and practical dimensions are not guaranteed. **Policy Implications.** The 2021–2024 policies provide sufficient policy levers standards, compulsory content, assessment, and intra–co–extracurricular spaces but implementation quality depends on how institutions transform these levers into culture and habits. Madrasahs possess a comparative advantage: the distinctiveness of Islamic Education/Arabic and the institutional identity of the madrasah can ensure integration of Islamic values within the Merdeka Curriculum structure, provided teacher capacity, assessment instruments, and resources are strengthened in parallel.

4. CONCLUSION

This study has examined the operationalization of Islamic educational philosophy in Indonesian education policy during 2021–2024. Anchored in the core values of iman–taqwa–akhlak and the cognitive–affective–practical integration of values, the analysis shows that the regulatory framework is normatively aligned with Islamic educational philosophy and provides operational channels for value internalization. PP No. 57/2021 jo. PP No. 4/2022 establish the

standards-based foundation; Permendikbudristek Nos. 5, 7, and 21 of 2022 operationalize values through graduate competencies, compulsory religious content, and assessment and reporting mechanisms; Permendikbudristek No. 12/2024 supplies the intra-co-extracurricular architecture and the philosophical underpinnings of the Merdeka Curriculum; and KMA No. 347/2022 offers a concrete model of value integration in the madrasah.

Three contributions emerge. First, the analytical framework offers a reusable instrument for mapping Islamic educational values onto education policies beyond the present corpus. Second, the policy-evidence matrix clarifies which instruments carry which values through which mechanisms. Third, the implementation challenges identified—value reduction to cognition, weak character assessment, capacity gaps, and cross-policy coherence—point to specific priorities for policy refinement: developing operational character-assessment rubrics, investing in teacher capacity for affective and practice-based pedagogy, and strengthening inter-ministerial coordination in teaching materials and professional development.

The study is limited to textual analysis of the 2021–2024 policy corpus. Empirical research on classroom- and madrasah-level implementation is needed to verify the extent to which the policy levers identified here are translated into daily practice, and to refine the framework in light of implementation evidence.

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