

REPOSITIONING MADRASAS AS ISLAMIC EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN THE DIGITAL ERA: AN ANALYSIS OF GOVERNMENT POLICY ON NATIONAL E-LEARNING

NURLELAH¹, AEP SAEPUL ANWAR², DEDE RIDHO FIRDAUS³

^{1,2,3} Universitas Pamulang Indonesia

*email: dosen02891@unpam.ac.id, dosen10116@unpam.ac.id, dosen03462@unpam.ac.id

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Abstract

This study analyzes the repositioning of madrasahs as Islamic education institutions in the digital era through a review of government policies on national e-learning. Using qualitative methods, the research examines key policies, particularly the 2019 Islamic Boarding School Law and the Regulation of the Minister of Primary and Secondary Education Number 13 of 2025, and their implications for strengthening madrasahs as formal institutions equivalent to public schools. Data were collected through literature review and analysis of official documents. The findings reveal that the government has introduced strategic policies aimed at expanding access to education, enhancing quality, developing a 21st-century competency-based curriculum, and embedding religious moderation as the foundation of madrasah education. While legal recognition of madrasahs has become stronger, implementation continues to face challenges such as disparities in quality among institutions, limited cross-ministerial coordination, and varying levels of readiness for digital transformation. Nevertheless, initiatives such as the madrasah development roadmap, teacher competency improvement, and curriculum modernization demonstrate the government's commitment to strengthening the competitiveness of madrasahs amid social change and global demands. This study concludes that madrasahs hold significant potential to contribute to the development of superior, character-based, and adaptive human resources in Indonesia through integrated policy support and sustainable implementation.

INTRODUCTION

Madrasahs, as Islamic educational institutions, have a long history within the context of national education in Indonesia. The first madrasahs in Indonesia can be traced back to the early 20th century, such as Madrasah Abadiyah, founded in Padang in 1909, and experienced rapid development in Java since 1912, taking on various forms adapted to the needs and characteristics of the local community (M. Drajat, 2017). For example, Madrasah Muhammadiyah began integrating general education into the religious teaching system, creating an inclusive and responsive model to changing times. The position of madrasahs as a subsystem within the

national education system was further strengthened after official recognition from the government. Through Law Number 2 of 1989 concerning the National Education System, Islamic education, including madrasahs, was officially recognized as an integral part of the national education system (Yahya, 2011). Furthermore, a more concrete strengthening occurred with the enactment of Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which explicitly placed madrasahs on an equal footing with public schools in the formal education system (Rubini, 2016).

Government policies strengthening the legality of madrasahs within the national education system not only impacted their institutional status but also encouraged adjustments in curriculum, management, financing, and accreditation. The government, through the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, has attempted to integrate policies between general and religious education, marking the beginning of a new era of educational policy harmonization in Indonesia (Alawiyah, 2014). However, madrasahs in Indonesia still frequently face structural and cultural challenges, particularly in their efforts to achieve quality standards and competitiveness equivalent to those of public schools. Various inequalities remain frequently identified, including access to educational facilities, budget allocation, teaching staff quality, and recognition of graduates' outcomes in the workplace and further education (Maksum, 2017). These inequalities are a major concern in the discourse on future national education development.

In the context of current policy, the government has implemented a number of strategic reforms, including the issuance of Law Number 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools (Pesantren) and Regulation of the Minister of National Education and Culture Number 13 of 2025, which are intended to further strengthen the position and function of madrasahs within the national education system. These policies are expected to serve as legal and operational instruments for improving the quality, competitiveness, and relevance of madrasahs to societal demands and global developments. With these policies, it is hoped that madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools will be able to respond to the challenges of the times, both in terms of educational quality and social contribution. These regulations serve as legal and operational instruments that support the development of competent, virtuous human resources who are adaptive to global change. Furthermore, the existence of this Law and Regulation of the Minister of National Education opens opportunities for religious educational institutions to collaborate with the government, the business world, and the wider community in developing innovative programs, educational research, and community service activities. Thus, these policies are not merely administrative

formalities, but rather a comprehensive strategy to improve the quality, competitiveness, and relevance of Islamic education in Indonesia.

The government has also demonstrated a real commitment to strengthening madrasas by increasing the allocation of the education budget for madrasas, providing teacher professional development programs, improving infrastructure, and adapting the madrasa curriculum to align with community needs and industrial developments (BSKAP, 2025). These efforts align with the community's expectation that madrasas should not only produce graduates with religious competencies, but also possess 21st-century skills. Furthermore, collaboration between the central and regional governments in developing madrasas is crucial, especially in areas where public access to formal education is still limited. The function of madrasas as alternative educational institutions has been proven to have a significant impact on expanding access to education, shaping national character, and strengthening a moderate Islamic identity (Drajat, 2017). Haba Malla's (2016) research also confirms that government policies supporting madrasas can be a strong foundation for accelerating equity and improving the quality of national education.

The reality on the ground demonstrates a dualism in management between public schools under the Ministry of Education and madrasas under the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Yahya, 2011). This dualism often gives rise to differences in approaches and operational policies, including human resource management, curriculum, and evaluation systems. However, with recent developments in national education system policies, madrasas are increasingly recognized as equal educational institutions, integrating religious and general education. Furthermore, public demand for madrasas is increasing, not only as centers of religious education but also as institutions that produce competent human resources capable of adapting to changing times. In the context of globalization and the Fourth Industrial Revolution, madrasas face the challenge of adapting to the needs of the global community without losing their Islamic identity and local character (Toharudin, 2025). Digital transformation, curriculum innovation, and mastery of information technology are pressing needs for madrasas in today's era.

Recent developments, such as the integration of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum, present both challenges and opportunities for madrasas in creating a more flexible learning system focused on developing student potential. Regulatory adjustments and adaptive policy implementation are key to ensuring that madrasas remain on par with other educational institutions. Adopting the values of religious moderation and strengthening digital literacy are

two crucial aspects in realizing superior madrasas based on Islamic values. However, the role and position of madrasas within the national education system are strongly influenced by the direction of effective, impartial, sustainable government policies supported by various stakeholders, including the community, Islamic organizations, and the business world (Alawiyah, 2014). Active community participation in supporting madrasah progress will accelerate the achievement of national education goals and create a generation of Muslims who are superior, virtuous, and adaptable to global change. Therefore, it is crucial for policymakers and stakeholders to continuously evaluate and innovate madrasah development policies. An inclusive, equitable, needs-based, and quality-oriented policy approach will determine the future of madrasah education in Indonesia (BSKAP, 2025).

Amidst these dynamics, research on the direction of government policy regarding the status of madrasahs is urgently needed. This research offers a novel approach by critically and comprehensively reviewing the implications of the latest policies following the enactment of the 2019 Islamic Boarding School Law and the 2025 Ministerial Regulation on Elementary and Secondary Education, and integrating perspectives on public policy, Islamic education, and social resilience within the context of modern national education. This contrasts with previous research, which was primarily historical and descriptive in nature. This study fills a gap in contemporary research regarding the relevance of madrasahs in the digital and global era.

The urgency of this research is further heightened given the rapid and complex nature of policy changes, which have the potential to produce ineffective normative policies if not supported by comprehensive and reflective research. Harmonious yet inclusive and responsive policies are essential for madrasahs to adapt to the challenges of the digital revolution and globalization without losing their identity. This research is crucial as a strategic discourse and policy evaluation tool, providing recommendations that are not only theoretically based but also aligned with realities on the ground.

The repositioning of madrasahs has become urgent due to persistent quality gaps, dualism in management between ministries, and the growing demand for mastery of information technology. In this context, government policy on National E-Learning serves as a strategic instrument that goes beyond administrative formalities, shaping the direction of madrasahs as Islamic educational institutions that are adaptive, competitive, and capable of contributing to the development of superior human resources. Therefore, this study is significant in critically examining the repositioning of madrasahs, assessing the urgency of digital policy, and exploring the extent to which the integration of government policy, digital transformation of education, and

religious moderation can strengthen the position of madrasahs within the national education system.

The primary objectives of this research are to analyze in-depth the direction of government policy regarding the status of madrasahs within the national education system; identify opportunities and challenges in implementing these policies in the field; and evaluate the impact of these policies on the development of the national education system. and provides strategic recommendations that can strengthen madrasahs so they can compete and contribute optimally to an inclusive and modern national education system. Furthermore, this research also examines how policies can accommodate the needs of madrasahs facing the challenges of globalization and the digital revolution, in order to create high-quality and competitive madrasahs.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research method used in this article is a qualitative method that aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the direction of government policy related to the repositioning of madrasahs in the digital era, an analysis of government policy on national e-learning. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore the complexity of social phenomena and policies that are dynamic and contextual, as explained by Creswell (2014) that qualitative research focuses on understanding how subjects experience and give meaning to the phenomena studied. The focus of the research is directed at analyzing the latest government policies that affect the position of madrasahs, including regulations, ministerial regulations, and relevant official documents as the main study materials.

Data were collected through literature review and document analysis techniques, including official materials such as laws, government regulations, Ministerial Regulations of Education and Culture, as well as secondary literature from journals, books, and reliable news sources discussing madrasah and national education policies (Moleong, 2022). This approach is effective in exploring the textual and legal content and meaning of policies, as well as identifying their impact and social context. The research instrument, a systematic and comprehensive written document analysis tool, was used to support accurate data interpretation.

Data analysis was conducted qualitatively, adopting content analysis and thematic analysis techniques aimed at identifying patterns, themes, and relationships between policy elements within the analyzed documents (Sugiono, 2017). The analysis process was iterative and in-depth, starting with data reduction and presentation, and finally drawing valid and accountable

conclusions. Thus, the research results are expected to provide a clear, critical, and comprehensive picture of the direction of government policy regarding the position of madrasahs within the national education system and the challenges and opportunities faced by madrasahs in the modern era.

The qualitative method applied is in keeping with the characteristics of research in the field of Islamic education and public policy, which requires a nuanced understanding of meaning and complex social contexts (Creswell, 2014; Moleong, 2022; Sugiono, 2017). This approach also allows for contextualization of research findings related to the diverse policy dynamics and implementation processes in the field during the policy's implementation. Therefore, this method is highly relevant for producing rich, in-depth studies and contributing to the development of future madrasah education policies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Position of Madrasahs in the National Education System and the Implications of Government Policy

Madrasahs, as Islamic educational institutions, have been officially recognized as part of the national education system under Law Number 20 of 2003. This legal recognition places madrasahs on an equal footing with public schools in the formal education system, thus granting them equal rights to receive government support and treatment (Yahya, 2011). However, the position of madrasahs in the field often faces challenges related to dual management, which distinguishes between the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which oversees madrasahs, and the Ministry of Education and Culture, which oversees public schools. This results in differences in technical policies and funding priorities. The qualitative approach in this study reveals that sectoral policies still pose obstacles to synergy and optimization of madrasah functions within the national education system.

Furthermore, the current government policy, the 2025-2029 Madrasah Development Roadmap, addresses these challenges by emphasizing four main focuses: improving access, quality, competitiveness, and relevance of madrasah education (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2025). This initiative demonstrates the government's serious intention to be at the forefront of strengthening madrasah institutions, both in academic aspects and in developing student character. This strengthening includes teacher training programs, the provision of modern facilities, and the adaptation of a modern curriculum that remains rooted in Islamic values. Thus,

madrasas are no longer merely religious institutions but also play a role in the development of national human resources.

However, disparities in the quality of madrasas between regions remain a significant issue. Madrasas in urban areas tend to have better access to facilities and competent teaching staff than those in remote areas (Maksum, 2017). This structural disparity must be a policy concern to achieve equitable education quality. The qualitative methods used helped identify social and cultural variables influencing policy implementation, such as local community resistance and varying capacities of madrasah administrators (Khoiriyani, 2023).

This policy analysis also revealed that the existence of madrasas as religious educational institutions, which are part of the national education system, requires management that is not only administrative but also managerial and innovative. Legal recognition must be accompanied by real institutional empowerment so that madrasas can compete and absorb global educational advances. Thus, integrative and participatory policies from various stakeholders are the key to success in developing madrasas.

Therefore, the position of madrasahs within the current national education system is at a critical juncture in institutional strengthening to address sustainability challenges caused by dualistic management and resource inequality. Government policies focused on improving quality and equity are strategic, but they need to be followed by more holistic policy formulation and cross-sectoral coordination to realize the potential of madrasahs as quality and relevant educational institutions.

Curriculum and Religious Moderation as Pillars of Strengthening Madrasahs

The madrasah curriculum underwent significant transformation based on Regulation of the Minister of Elementary and Secondary Education Number 13 of 2025, which requires madrasahs to balance comprehensive religious education with 21st-century competencies such as digital literacy, creativity, and critical thinking (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2025).

This curriculum adopts a learning paradigm that is more flexible and responsive to global developments without sacrificing Islamic values. This is crucial for preparing madrasah students not only to master religious knowledge but also to compete and adapt in the world of work and further education.

Implementing this new curriculum requires intensive efforts to improve teacher quality and facilities. Field data indicates that teacher training is a top government priority, through certification programs and ongoing training that are expected to enrich teaching methods and

mastery of digital materials (Ministry of Religious Affairs of DKI Jakarta, 2025). However, challenges related to teacher quality and distribution remain obstacles, particularly in less developed regions. This requires more specific policies to ensure equitable distribution of madrasah teaching capacity.

In addition to the curriculum, religious moderation, as part of government policy, has emerged as a crucial pillar for maintaining Indonesia's diversity while simultaneously encouraging madrasahs to become agents of peace and tolerance. This program to enhance the value of moderation has begun to be implemented in madrasah learning materials and extracurricular activities (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2025). The focus of moderation is to build students' character, fostering broad insight and high tolerance, and distancing them from radical and extremist ideologies that could threaten social stability.

Analytically, the integration of the competency curriculum with the strengthening of religious moderation demonstrates the government's holistic effort to modernize madrasahs without losing their religious roots. This approach also serves as a strategy for adapting madrasahs to remain relevant amidst changing times and global value challenges (Toharudin, 2025). The effectiveness of this policy depends heavily on the synergy between curriculum development, teacher training, and involvement of the madrasah community.

Thus, curriculum development and religious moderation are key pillars for strengthening madrasahs as educational institutions that not only maintain quality but also contribute to the development of an inclusive and moderate national character. Policies that align these two aspects provide hope for madrasahs as producers of graduates who are ready to face global challenges and maintain Indonesia's diversity.

Policy Implementation and Challenges of Madrasah Management Synergy

The implementation of madrasah development policies has shown progress, particularly in the planning and initiation of quality improvement programs, teacher professional development, and curriculum refinement (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2025). However, qualitative analysis reveals various challenges that hinder the comprehensive and equitable implementation of these policies. These include disparities in madrasah quality between regions, limited infrastructure, and the need to improve the competency of teaching staff. These factors constitute serious obstacles that must be addressed to ensure that policies do not stop at the regulatory level.

One major challenge is the ongoing dualism in management between the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Culture, which has led to a disconnect in

administrative management, operational standards, and funding for madrasahs compared to public schools (Yahya, 2011). This policy conflict often leads to redundancies and unclear responsibilities, complicating coordination and evaluation of educational quality. Therefore, more intensive cross-sectoral policies and effective coordination mechanisms are needed to align the national education vision and mission.

Digital technology, as part of the industrial revolution 4.0, also brings both challenges and opportunities for madrasahs. The government has made efforts to develop technological facilities, train teachers in digital literacy, and develop online learning resources. However, the readiness of madrasahs, especially in remote areas, remains an unresolved issue. This presents a significant challenge for the government to implement policies fairly and effectively.

This analysis indicates that policy effectiveness depends heavily on the active participation of various stakeholders, including madrasah administrators, teachers, students, the community, and local governments. A collaborative, locally based approach is key to adapting standardized policies to diverse realities on the ground, resulting in more optimal results and a direct positive impact.

Therefore, the success of madrasahs as part of the national education system depends heavily on consistency in policy implementation, harmonization between institutions, and the madrasahs' ability to innovate and adapt. Ideal policies also require ongoing monitoring and evaluation to continuously improve them in line with social dynamics and future educational needs.

Government Policy Regarding E-Learning in Madrasahs

The Indonesian government has taken important steps to promote the modernization of education in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) and madrasahs (Islamic schools) by implementing regulations that support the use of information technology. The legal basis for this is reflected in Law Number 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools (Pesantren) and Regulation of the Minister of Elementary and Secondary Education Number 13 of 2025, which clearly emphasizes the integration of technology into learning activities. These regulations provide a foundation for madrasahs to implement digital learning systems legally and in an organized manner. In line with this policy, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, through the Directorate of Madrasah Education, has launched various web-based e-learning platforms, such as Madrasah Online and E-Rapor Madrasah Digital. These platforms facilitate teachers and students' access to

teaching materials, participate in evaluations, and obtain academic reports online. This allows for flexible and interactive learning, without the constraints of time and space.

Furthermore, the government is conducting training programs to improve the digital skills of madrasah teachers. This training covers the use of Learning Management Systems (LMS), video conferencing, and interactive learning media, enabling teachers to manage digital learning professionally and help students optimally utilize technology in the teaching and learning process. The government has issued Law Number 18 of 2019 concerning Islamic Boarding Schools and Regulation of the Minister of Elementary and Secondary Education Number 13 of 2025, which explicitly mention the use of information technology in learning.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs, through the Directorate of Madrasah Education, provides web-based e-learning platforms, such as Madrasah Online and E-Rapor Madrasah Digital, which allow teachers and students to access learning materials, exams, and academic reports online. Training programs are available for madrasah teachers to improve digital competency, including the use of LMS (Learning Management Systems), video conferencing, and interactive media.

Ideas and Research Contributions for Strengthening Madrasas in the Digital Era

This research makes an important contribution in strengthening the repositioning of madrasas as Islamic educational institutions that are adaptive to the digital era. First, this research offers an integrative digital curriculum model that combines 21st century competencies with Islamic values, so that madrasas are able to produce graduates who are not only religiously competent, but also have digital literacy and critical thinking skills.

Second, this research emphasizes strengthening teacher capacity through continuous training in the use of learning technology and developing e-learning content. With digitally competent teachers, madrasas can create learning that is more interactive and relevant to the needs of the times. Third, this research provides input regarding the development of digital infrastructure, especially in areas with limited facilities. Government and community support in providing internet access, technological devices and learning management systems will be an important foundation for madrasa transformation.

Fourth, this research proposes multi-stakeholder collaboration between government, Islamic organizations, the business world and society. This collaboration can accelerate the digitalization of madrasas through innovative programs, joint research and community service. Fifth, this research emphasizes the importance of digital-based religious moderation as a strategy to maintain the Islamic identity of madrasas while instilling the values of inclusivity and tolerance amidst globalization. Finally, this research provides a critical evaluation of e-learning policies, with

recommendations for making policies more responsive to the needs of madrasahs in various regions. This ensures that the repositioning of madrasahs does not only occur at the regulatory level, but is also implemented in real terms in the field

CONCLUSION

This research confirms that government policy regarding the position of madrasahs within the national education system has undergone significant development, focusing on strengthening madrasah institutions as a whole. Through various regulations, such as the 2019 Islamic Boarding School Law and Minister of Elementary and Secondary Education Regulation No. 13 of 2025, the government is striving to integrate madrasahs into the national education system, emphasizing improving access, quality, competitiveness, and relevance of education. This policy not only legally recognizes madrasahs as formal educational institutions equivalent to public schools but also provides ample room for them to innovate and adapt to changing times.

Furthermore, in terms of curriculum and religious moderation, the government has developed an approach that accommodates the needs of 21st-century learning while strengthening Islamic values and religious moderation within madrasahs. The implementation of this balanced curriculum provides a significant opportunity for madrasahs to produce graduates who are not only religious but also competent and adaptable to global challenges and developments in digital technology. Religious moderation is a crucial pillar in ensuring madrasahs contribute to the formation of a tolerant, inclusive, and integrated national character.

Despite various innovative programs and significant quality improvements, policy implementation faces significant challenges, particularly in terms of equalizing the quality of madrasahs, synergizing between the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Culture, and ensuring madrasahs' readiness to face the digital revolution. Therefore, the success of this policy depends heavily on cross-agency commitment and coordination, increasing the capacity of educators, and strengthening information technology infrastructure in madrasahs. This research underscores the importance of continuous evaluation and adaptive policy formulation to ensure that madrasahs can become superior and relevant educational institutions in the future.

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