

DYNAMICS OF MADRASAH AND IMPLEMENTATION SYSTEM EXCELLENT ISLAMIC EDUCATION

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Abstract

This research aims to examine the dynamics of madrassas and the system of implementing excellent Islamic education in Indonesia. Using a descriptive qualitative method with a literature study approach, this study examines data from various scientific sources, official policies, and educational documents. The data collection technique is carried out through thematic documentation, while the analysis is carried out by content analysis technique. The results of the study show that madrassas have undergone significant transformation since the colonial period to the era of the Independent Curriculum. Several important policies, such as the Decree of the Three Ministers, the MAPK program, the 2013 Curriculum, and the Independent Curriculum became milestones in Islamic education reform. Despite progress, challenges such as inequality in human resources, limited infrastructure, and suboptimal management still hinder the delivery of excellent Islamic education. The research concludes that the reformulation of the madrasah system needs to be carried out through a participatory management approach, the application of the principle of total quality education, and the strengthening of the local context and Islamic values. The results of this study are expected to be a reference in designing Islamic education policies that are more adaptive, inclusive, and sustainable.

Keywords

Education Policy, Education Management, Excellent Islamic Education, Implementation System Madrasah Dynamics.



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INTRODUCTION

As an Islamic educational institution, Madrasah is strategically positioned in Indonesia's national education system. Its existence is not only as an institution for transmitting religious knowledge, but also as a vehicle for integration between general science and Islamic values. From the colonial period to the reform era, madrassas changed and adapted to social, political, and economic demands. During the Dutch colonial period, madrassas grew out of the cultural movement of the Muslim community, which wanted an alternative education to the colonial school system (Asmanto et al., 2023). Entering the era of independence, madrassas began to gain formal recognition, although they still faced challenges regarding quality, equality, and legal status. Transformation continues, especially after madrasas are integrated into the national education system through various policies, such as the National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003. Today, madrasas function as religious educational institutions and as providers of quality educational services on a par with public schools, with an integrated curriculum that contains Islamic content and modern science. The existence of various forms of Islamic education, such as pesantren, surau, dayah, and langgar, also enriches the treasures of Islamic education. However, madrasas have their role because of their formal and structured operations (Sudjatnika & Shafarini, 2022).

Amid global dynamics and information technology developments, implementing Islamic education in Indonesia, especially madrasas, faces new and more complex challenges. These challenges are related to the quality aspect of graduates and the effectiveness of institutional governance, curriculum relevance, availability of competent human resources, and adaptation to the needs of a growing community (pendis.kemenag.go.id, 2020). Madrasas must provide excellent education that produces spiritually pious, academically and socially competent students. The main problem is building an excellent, inclusive, sustainable madrasah implementation system that can respond to local and global challenges without losing Islamic identity. Most madrassas still face classic obstacles such as budget limitations, minimal facilities and infrastructure, and inefficient management bureaucracy (kompas.id, 2017). Therefore, the issue of the reformulation of the system of implementing excellent Islamic education is critical to be studied in depth as a foothold for the development of future Islamic education policies and practices.

Various studies have examined the development and dynamics of madrassas from various perspectives. (Azman et al., 2024; Lundeto et al., 2024) Examine the management of Islamic education from the classical era to the era of the Industrial Revolution 5.0, and emphasize the

importance of managerial innovation that can adapt to changing times. The study at MTsN 2 Ponorogo shows how image development strategies, human resource quality, and community participation are the keys to building excellent madrasas. The research (Murdianto, 2022; Nugraha et al., 2025) focuses on madrasah management innovation, emphasizing the importance of transformative leadership, strengthening quality culture, and developing adaptive curriculum. (Hanif et al., 2024; Nudin et al., 2024) Research highlights the dynamics of Tafaquh Fiddin and the preservation of classical Islamic values through the Special Program Aliyah Madrasah (MAPK), a form of differentiation of Islamic education with specific models of excellence. Meanwhile, (Diantoro, 2022; Shafira & Alsyah, 2023) a madrasah (school-based management) approach is proposed as a decentralization strategy that allows madrasahs to be more independent and innovative in management. Although these findings have significantly contributed to strengthening the management and direction of madrasah development, most studies are still sectoral and have not fully touched the madrasah implementation system in a more systemic and historical framework.

Although much research has been done on the management and development of madrasahs, an important gap has not been seriously touched: the lack of studies that combine historical perspectives, policies, and praxis in an evaluative framework regarding implementing excellent Islamic education. Previous studies have addressed micro aspects, such as managerial strategies, teacher characteristics, or learning innovations, without comprehensively linking them to the structure and system of Islamic education at the national level. In this context, the novelty of this research lies in the effort to compile a synthesis of the history of madrasah development, institutional practices in the field, and reflection on the applicable education policies, in order to build a model of excellent madrasah implementation that is not only ideal in theory, but also applicable in the local context. This research tries to go beyond a mere managerial approach by offering a systemic mapping that includes institutional aspects, resources, leadership, curriculum, and community participation as an integral unit in implementing excellent Islamic education.

Based on this background, this study aims to comprehensively examine the dynamics of the development of madrasahs in Indonesia from the aspects of history, institutions, and implementation policies. The primary focus is directed at exploring the internal strengths of madrasahs, identifying the main challenges faced, and preparing strategic recommendations in designing an excellent Islamic education delivery system that is contextual, sustainable, and

responsive to the challenges of the times. With this approach, it is hoped that the research results can make a theoretical contribution to the development of Islamic education studies and provide practical benefits for policymakers, madrasah managers, and the broader community in formulating directions for strengthening the national Islamic education system. This research is also expected to reference Islamic education reform efforts in Indonesia, which remains grounded in Islamic values while opening itself to global change and innovation.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the library research method as the primary data mining and analysis basis. This type of research was chosen because it can provide an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of implementing excellent Islamic education through the search and synthesis of relevant literature (Zed, 2014). The data sources used in this study come from various credible scientific references, such as academic books, national and international journal articles, research reports, and official policy documents from the Ministry of Religion and related Islamic educational institutions. This approach emphasizes a systematic exploration of the development of madrassas as Islamic educational institutions and the policy dynamics that shape their implementation system.

The data collection technique is done through a systematic and structured literature search process by considering the themes and substance's relevance. The researcher conducted a thematic literature search, which focused on three main domains: (1) the institutional dynamics of madrassas from time to time, (2) the excellent Islamic education model that has developed and been implemented, and (3) the adaptive and quality-oriented Islamic education implementation system. All data collected were analyzed using content analysis techniques, namely by performing thematic categorization, information reduction, presentation of synthesis, and concluding the available secondary data. This analysis allows researchers to evaluate the developing discourse, compare it with the results of previous studies, and develop a recommended framework based on the conceptual findings obtained (Purwono et al., 2019). Thus, this research is descriptive and makes a reflective and normative contribution to developing an excellent Islamic education system that is contextual and sustainable.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

To understand the dynamics of implementing Islamic education in Indonesia, especially in madrasah institutions, it is important to examine various policies and programs that have been implemented occasionally. Each policy reflects a change in the orientation of national education and the adaptation of madrasahs to the challenges of the times. From the equalization of the curriculum in the era of the Three Ministerial Decree to the transformation of learning in the Independent Curriculum, madrasahs have undergone a complex systemic evolution. The following table presents a chronological summary of the policies and characteristics of each period, reflecting the direction and impact of the madrasah education delivery system over the past almost five decades.

Table 1. Dynamics and System of Implementation of Islamic Madrasah in Indonesia

No	Era	Policies/Programs	Characteristics and Impacts
1	1975	Decree of the Three Ministers	Equalization of the general curriculum; madrasahs equivalent to public schools; Criticism: Religious dualism
2	1987	MAPK	tafaqquh fiddin program with dormitory and Arabic-English language; Output of Intellectual Scholars
3	1994-2006	National Curriculum	Standardization of religious and general curriculum, legalization of madrasahs in the national system
4	2013	Curriculum 2013	Integration of scientific approaches and authentic assessment; Implementation Challenges in Regional Madrasahs
5	2022	Independent Curriculum	Project-based learning, teacher flexibility, emphasis on Pancasila profile; Potential for character strengthening

Remarks: Data were extracted from a review of various literature between 2015 and 2023.

The results of this study show significant dynamics in the Islamic madrasah education system in Indonesia, which is reflected in various strategic policies and programs throughout its history. In 1975, the policy of the Three Ministers Decree became the initial milestone in equalizing the status of madrasahs with public schools through curriculum standardization. Although this policy strengthens the position of madrasahs in the national education system, it has drawn criticism for creating a dichotomy between religious and general education. Furthermore, the year 1987 was marked by the emergence of the Madrasah Aliyah Religious Program (MAPK), which emphasized the deepening of Islamic knowledge (tafaqquh fiddin), equipped with a dormitory system and mastery of the Arabic-English language. This program has succeeded in producing young scholars with modern intellectual insights.

The period from 1994 to 2006 showed the government's efforts to standardize the national curriculum, both from religious and general aspects, which helped to strengthen the existence of madrasas within the framework of the national education system. This legalization effort clarifies madrasas' status and strengthens their operational regulations. 2013 the 2013 Curriculum was implemented, emphasizing scientific approaches and authentic assessments. However, challenges arise in its implementation, especially in regional madrasas that still lack supporting resources. Finally 2022, the Independent Curriculum will be implemented, focusing on project-based learning, teacher flexibility in teaching, and character strengthening through the Pancasila Student profile. This policy opens up new opportunities for madrasas to be more adaptive and responsive to the challenges of the times through a more contextual and innovative approach.

Overall, the data in the table show that the dynamics of madrasah education policy reflect changes in the national education system and consistent efforts to transform madrasas into excellent, adaptive, and relevant institutions. From time to time, the policies implemented reflect the government's response to the need to strengthen the quality of Islamic education and integration with general education, a characteristic of madrasah education in Indonesia.

Discussion

The results of this study summarize the historical dynamics and system of Islamic education through madrasas in Indonesia from 1975 to 2022. Several government policies and strategic programs have significantly changed madrasas' position, curriculum, and management system. The birth of the Decree of the Three Ministers in 1975 became an important milestone in equalizing the status of madrasas with public schools by integrating the general curriculum into the madrasah learning structure (Rabbi & Habib, 2019). This policy provides formal legitimacy to the existence of madrasas in the national education system. However, this step has also drawn criticism from several circles, because it is considered to give rise to a dualism between religious and general lessons, which in practice is difficult to synergize fully (Kusnanto et al., 2023).

Entering 1987, the government introduced the Madrasah Aliyah Special Program (MAPK) as an innovation in Islamic education oriented towards deepening Islamic sciences or tafaquh fiddin. MAPK is designed as a boarding madrasah with an intensive learning approach and the use of Arabic and English as the language of instruction. This program has succeeded in producing graduates who not only have a deep understanding of the classical scientific treasures of Islam but are also able to master modern scientific discourse, so that a generation of relevant intellectual

scholars is born in the context of globalization. The existence of MAPK also strengthens the image of madrasahs as an institution that is adaptive to the needs of the times and the challenges of the contemporary scientific world (Nurhadi, 2021; Rif'atin, 2024; Sidik, n.d.; Taufiq et al., 2020).

From 1994 to 2006, this period became another important phase in madrasah education, marked by implementing a national curriculum that integrated competency standards for religious and general subjects. This standardization provides a strong legal umbrella for madrasahs as an integral part of the national education system, while encouraging the improvement of teaching quality by preparing an integrated syllabus. Within this framework, madrasahs are positioned no longer as alternative educational institutions, but as formal institutions that can offer educational services equivalent to public schools. However, the standardization process also requires the readiness of human resources and adequate infrastructure, which not all madrasahs can meet uniformly (Mufarokah et al., 2025; Salafiyah, n.d.; Umar & Munadi, 2024).

The transformation continued in 2013 with the enactment of the 2013 Curriculum (K13), which brings a scientific approach to the learning process and an authentic assessment system. K13 emphasizes critical, creative, and collaborative thinking skills, as well as the integration of attitudes, knowledge, and skills. In the context of madrasahs, implementing K13 is a challenge due to teachers' limitations in understanding scientific approaches, lack of professional training, and lack of support for technological infrastructure. However, K13 opens up a space for pedagogic renewal that is more contextual and oriented towards forming a complete student character, by Islamic values (Arrafii, 2020; Dewi, 2019).

In 2022, the government launched the Independent Curriculum to continue the spirit of education reform. This curriculum emphasizes teaching flexibility, project-based learning, and character strengthening through the Pancasila Student Profile. In its implementation in madrasahs, the Independent Curriculum provides wider opportunities for teachers to design learning according to the local context and the needs of students. In addition, the curriculum reinforces a participatory approach that allows for students' active involvement in the learning process (Hermansyah, 2024; Sofiyan et al., 2024). This concept aligns with Islamic education principles, which place students as active subjects seeking knowledge, not just teaching objects.

The discussion of these findings shows that madrasahs have undergone a significant transformation from traditional pesantren-based institutions to modern educational institutions that are integrated into the national system. The Decree of the Three Ministers is indeed a crucial legal-

structural foothold. However, integrating religious and general curricula still leaves pedagogical challenges that have not been completely solved. Meanwhile, the existence of MAPK can be understood as a form of internal reform that combines the advantages of tradition and modernity (Mukhibat et al., 2020; Yusri et al., 2024). This model represents the cadre of scholars who are intellectually and spiritually competitive in facing the dynamics of the global society.

Implementing the 2013 Curriculum and the Independent Curriculum reflects the government's efforts to encourage the reorientation of Islamic education towards a more adaptive and responsive direction to the changing times. Although many madrassas experience limited resources and infrastructure, the spirit to innovate continues to grow in various regions. This shows a collective awareness among madrasah managers to continue improving the quality of learning (Badrun, 2024; El Widdah, 2022; Rofiki, 2025; Wafa, 2025). However, the success of this transformation is highly dependent on institutional capacity to manage change, which includes visionary leadership, teacher empowerment, and community participation.

In management, madrass-based management models (MBM) and total quality education (TQE) offer relevant strategic approaches. MBM emphasizes the importance of decentralizing decision-making and madrasah autonomy in regulating the learning process, while TQE prioritizes sustainable quality in all aspects of education. These two models provide a basis for developing an Islamic education delivery system that relies on government regulations and optimizes the internal capacity of institutions and local wisdom. Research supports the importance of this approach as a long-term strategy for strengthening madrasahs.

The results of this study also reinforce previous findings that show that the synergy between government policies and institutional capacity greatly determines the success of implementing excellent Islamic education. In this case, national policies must be designed with adaptive flexibility to be applied effectively in various urban and rural madrasahs (Alene et al., 2025; Atli & Krystallis, 2025; Htun & Lim, 2025). In addition, the government needs ongoing technical support, including teacher training, curriculum strengthening, and the provision of technology-based infrastructure.

By adopting quality management principles and a curriculum based on local contexts, madrassas have great potential to become a driving force for social change rooted in Islamic values. Therefore, implementing excellent Islamic education must be holistic, transformative, and inclusive. Not only does it answer regulatory demands, but it also accommodates the needs of students, community dynamics, and global challenges. This research affirms the importance of a collaborative

approach in madrasah reform. It opens up space for further research on the effectiveness of the implementation of the MBM and TQE models in various local contexts, especially in rural madrasahs, as well as an in-depth analysis of the impact of the Independent Curriculum on the formation of the profile of madrasah graduates who excel spiritually, intellectually, and socially.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that madrasahs, as an integral part of the national education system, have experienced complex and layered dynamics, ranging from curriculum equalization to learning innovations that require institutional readiness and human resources. Several strategic policies, such as the Decree of the Three Ministers, the development of MAPK, and the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum and the Independent Curriculum, show that there are systematic efforts to improve the quality and competitiveness of madrasahs. However, structural challenges such as limited infrastructure, teacher capacity inequality, and resistance to change are significant obstacles to achieving sustainable quality. Therefore, implementing excellent Islamic education in the future must be designed collaboratively by considering the local context, strengthening the quality culture through pedagogical innovation, and reforming institutions gradually and continuously. To deepen the practical implications of these findings, it is recommended that further research focus on field studies on the implementation of Madrasah Based Management (MBM) and Total Quality Education (TQE) models, especially in the context of rural madrasahs, as well as conduct a critical analysis of the effectiveness of the Independent Curriculum in shaping the profile of madrasah graduates who excel intellectually, spiritually, and socially.

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