

Journal of Educational Management Research

Vol. 04 No. 02 (2025) : 463-476 Available online at https://serambi.org/index.php/jemr

Islamic Education Policy in Dealing with Social Change

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.61987/jemr.v4i2.955

Keywords:

Policy, Social Change, Character Formation, Institutional Response

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ABSTRACT

In the face of increasingly complex social changes, Islamic educational institutions are required to have policies that are adaptive and relevant to the evolving dynamics of society. Pesantren, as a traditional institution, faces a significant challenge in upholding Islamic values while addressing contemporary issues such as moral crises, digital disruptions, and cultural diversity. This study aims to examine Islamic education policies in response to social change in schools, with an emphasis on the policy of forming socio-spiritual character and value integration strategies in the curriculum, as well as the institutional challenges faced. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, utilizing data collection techniques that include observation, documentation, and interviews. The results of the study show that this school implements progressive and responsive education policies by integrating Islamic values into contextual programs. However, cultural resistance and institutional limitations are still obstacles to optimizing policies. This study contributes to the development of a contextual and transformational model for Islamic education policy.

Article History:

Received: March 2025; Revised: April 2025; Accepted: June 2025

Please cite this article in APA style as:

Firmansyah, F., Subagyo, A., Hadi, M. S. (2025). Competency-Based Islamic Education Curriculum Development Policy. *Journal of Educational Management Research*, 4(2), 463-476.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education plays a central role in shaping the character and moral identity of the younger generation. In the context of increasingly rapid social change, Islamic education is required not only to maintain authentic Islamic values but also to respond to the challenges of the times with adaptive and transformative policies (Adeoye, 2025; Haddad et al., 2024; Irawan et al., 2023). Changes in social, cultural, and technological orders require Islamic educational institutions to develop relevant policy approaches in order to guide students in facing a world that is constantly changing (Rofiqi, 2025; Mardani et al., 2024; Vatanparast et al., 2021). This research is important because it provides an indepth understanding of how Islamic educational institutions formulate policies in response to complex social dynamics and how these policies shape the direction of education, making it more contextual and solution-oriented.

Modern society faces various forms of social change, ranging from shifts in family values and identity crises in adolescents to the pressures of globalization and digitalization. In this context, Islamic educational institutions, particularly Islamic boarding schools, and madrasahs are expected not only to serve as centers of religious instruction but also to provide moral and social guidance (Basri et al., 2023; Dalimunthe et al., 2023; Osmonova et al., 2024). However, in many Islamic educational institutions, the response to social change remains reactive and has not yet been based on systematic policies. This is often caused by a lack of long-term planning, weak management capacity, and minimal integration between Islamic values and modern policy approaches (Setiyawan et al., 2024). Therefore, this study aims to identify how Islamic education policies can be formulated to strategically address social change.

The phenomenon in the field indicates that several Islamic educational institutions have begun to innovate; however, not all of them have a strong and contextual policy foundation. At SBQ Izzati Depok, efforts are underway to respond to social change through the development of educational programs that promote values and social sensitivity. However, the implementation of these policies often faces challenges, including limited resources, cultural resistance, and the lack of structured policy guidelines (Derbesh, 2023; Nikonova & Minakova, 2023). Nevertheless, SBQ Izzati shows potential as a model of Islamic educational institutions that seek to align Islamic values with contemporary social needs. This study will examine the process of formulating and implementing Islamic education policies, as well as how these policies become instruments of adaptation to social change.

Several previous studies have emphasized that education policies play a crucial role in shaping an education system that is responsive to change (Gunasekaran et al., 2022; Musyafaah et al., 2021). However, studies of Islamic education policies still tend to be normative and rarely touch on managerial aspects and implementation strategies. Most of the literature focuses on curriculum content or the role of teachers without examining how institutional policies are developed to address social realities (Malakhov, 2020). In this context, this study has an urgency to fill the gap in the literature by presenting a case study of the formulation of educational policies at SBQ Izzati Depok, which represents the transformation process in Islamic educational institutions.

Previous studies have also revealed obstacles to the implementation of policies in Islamic educational institutions, including a limited understanding of data-based policy approaches, low leadership capacity, and weak institutional communication (Rismawati et al., 2024; Sain, 2025). Policies made are often not accompanied by social impact evaluations or effectiveness measurements, making it difficult to respond optimally to the challenges of change. This study

will explore how a modern Islamic boarding school, such as SBQ Izzati, develops an adaptive policy mechanism while considering aspects of values, culture, and participation among school residents.

The novelty of this study lies in its approach, which places Islamic education policies as an active response to social change rather than just as an administrative instrument. This study also makes theoretical contributions to the development of a policy model grounded in Islamic values while remaining oriented toward dynamic social change. By focusing on the policy formulation process and the context of its implementation, this study aims to serve as a reference for other Islamic educational institutions in developing a more responsive and transformative policy system.

The primary issue addressed in this study is how Islamic education policies at SBQ Izzati Depok are formulated and implemented in response to social change. This study aims to analyze the strategies, challenges, and impacts of these policies on the direction of education and student development. The primary argument of this study is that the success of Islamic educational institutions in responding to social change is highly dependent on the quality and contextual relevance of the educational policies developed, as well as institutional commitment to implementing these policies consistently and inclusively.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore how Islamic education policies are formulated and implemented in response to social change within Islamic educational institutions (Haryono, 2023). The case study design was chosen because it allows researchers to explore phenomena in depth in a specific and complex context. This approach provides space to capture policy dynamics, interactions between educational actors, and the meaning contained in each policy implemented in the permanent environment. With this approach, researchers can understand how Islamic values are combined with responses to social dynamics through contextual education policies.

This research was conducted at SBQ Izzati Depok, a modern pesantren recognized for its active development of internal policies in response to various forms of social change. This location was chosen because SBQ Izzati has implemented several policy initiatives, including those in curriculum development, student development, and strengthening the social role of institutions in society. SBQ Izzati is a relevant example to examine how Islamic educational institutions respond to social shifts with an adaptive policy approach, yet grounded in fundamental values. In addition, this pesantren also

represents a transformation trend among urban pesantren that are starting to integrate a more modern and measurable policy approach.

Data collection techniques in this study include in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation studies (Assyakurrohim et al., 2022; Harahap, 2020). Interviews were conducted with policymakers at SBQ Izzati, including the head of the Islamic boarding school, the head of education, teachers, and senior students, to explore their views on the process of formulating and implementing policies. Observations were made of the daily activities at the Islamic boarding school, including policy implementation in the classroom and social activities, as well as interactions between institutional elements in the decision-making process. Documentation studies were employed to analyze formal documents, including visions and missions, internal education policies, annual programs, and policy evaluation reports.

Data analysis was conducted through the processes of data condensation, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification, as stated by Rifa'i (2023). Data from interviews and observations were coded to find patterns, main themes, and relationships between relevant concepts. This analysis process aims to reveal the policy logic used by the institution, as well as the challenges and opportunities faced in integrating Islamic values into policies that are responsive to social change. The findings will be presented both descriptively and analytically to provide a comprehensive picture of the dynamics of Islamic education policy within the context of contemporary social transformation.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Responsive Education Policy to Social Change

Responsive education policy to social change refers to the efforts of Islamic educational institutions in formulating policies that are not only normative but also adaptive to the developing social dynamics. At SBQ Izzati Depok, the implemented education policy shows a progressive tendency, combining Islamic values with an awareness of external challenges such as the moral crisis of the younger generation, technological disruption, and cultural diversity. This policy response is evident from several internal regulations and coaching programs that are explicitly directed at forming students who are not only spiritually pious but also socially resilient.

The first informant, one of the core administrators of SBQ Izzati, stated that the education policy implemented since 2022 was designed to address the "direction crisis" experienced by many teenagers in the current era. According to him, this institution tries to align the classic values of Islamic boarding schools, such as discipline and sincerity, with a more contextual social coaching approach.

He explained, "We adjust the curriculum and extracurricular activities to prepare students who can not only read books, but also understand social realities." This is realized in programs such as the Santri Social Dialogue Session, public communication training, and strengthening media literacy to address hoaxes and misleading information in society.

The second informant, a senior teacher at SBQ Izzati, added that the policy has begun to show positive impacts, especially in shaping the way students think to be more open and reflective of the social conditions around them. He said that in recent years, the approach to fostering students is no longer only focused on ritual aspects, but also includes an understanding of social problems such as bullying, social inequality, and the importance of tolerance in diversity. "We were asked to insert social issues in the interpretation and fiqh material, so that students not only understand the law, but also have social sensitivity," he said.

The results of the researcher's observations for two weeks in the SBQ Izzati environment showed consistency between written policies and implementation in the field. In daily activities, it was seen that students were given space to discuss openly about the social phenomena they experienced, both in study forums and informal discussions. The Mimbar Santri program, held every week, is an important forum for students to voice their views on societal issues, such as moral degradation on social media and the role of Muslim youth in maintaining social harmony. In addition, researchers also noted that the caretakers of the boarding school are actively involved in coaching, not only as teachers but also as social mentors who accompany the students directly.

Based on the results of interviews and observations, it can be concluded that the educational policy at SBQ Izzati Depok was designed with full awareness of social change. The policy is not only reactive, but also proactive by compiling a coaching program and curriculum that integrates Islamic values with sensitivity to the conditions of modern society. This approach makes SBQ Izzati one example of an Islamic boarding school that is starting to position itself as an agent of social change, not just as an institution that preserves tradition.

The pattern that emerges from the data above shows that the success of Islamic educational institutions in dealing with social change is greatly influenced by the quality of the policies they formulate and implement. Policies that are responsive, adaptive, and in line with social reality can strengthen the relevance of Islamic education amidst the rapid flow of change. In addition, the active role of institutional leaders and teacher involvement in socializing and implementing policies in concrete ways are important factors in ensuring the effectiveness of the policy. Thus, SBQ Izzati Depok can be seen as a model of Islamic boarding schools that have begun to build a paradigm of educational policy based on social reality without losing the roots of Islamic values.

Character Education Policy as a Foundation for Social-Spiritual Formation

The integration of character education as a core of Islamic education policy in SBQ Izzati Depok reveals a strong institutional emphasis on social awareness and spiritual resilience. Rather than separating academic performance from moral development, SBQ Izzati implements a series of character-building programs designed to shape students' behavior, empathy, and spiritual commitment in facing contemporary social dynamics. The institution's policy strategically positions character formation as an essential response to rapid societal change, ensuring that students are not only intellectually capable but also ethically grounded.

Through the documentation of educational activities and direct observations, it was identified that SBQ Izzati systematically embeds social-spiritual values into its curriculum and extracurricular structures. The integration of character formation programs is reflected in weekly reflections, thematic social campaigns, and value-based leadership camps. These elements are not treated as supplementary, but as integral to daily life in the pesantren. The evidence supporting this finding is summarized in the following table:

Table 1. Institutional Programs Supporting Social-Spiritual Character Formation

Program/Activity	Focus Value	Mechanism	Interpretation
Weekly Character	Responsibility,	Students deliver	Encourages internalization of
Reflection	honesty	personal reflections	values through self-awareness
		on moral dilemmas	and communal dialogue
Social Empathy	Empathy,	Visits to	Direct exposure to social
Campaign	generosity	marginalized	inequality cultivates compassion
		communities and	and social sensitivity
		donation drives	
Leadership	Discipline,	Simulated	Shapes moral leadership by
Training Camp	initiative	leadership	integrating Islamic principles
		scenarios based on	into problem-solving and team-
		Islamic ethics	based decision-making
Tadabbur Sosial	Critical	Interpreting	Promotes contextual
(Social Tafsir)	thinking,	Qur'anic verses	understanding of religious
	relevance	through current	values and relevance to daily
		social issues	societal life
Character Report	Integrity,	Behavioral tracking	Formalizes character
Cards	consistency	and monthly	development as a measurable
		teacher assessments	educational outcome, not merely
			moral advice

Based on the data presented in Table 1, SBQ Izzati has effectively institutionalized social and spiritual value formation through programmatic, observable mechanisms. Each activity targets specific moral values and is embedded in both curricular and co-curricular environments. Notably, the use of reflection and community engagement as tools for internalizing values shows that character education is framed not just as obedience but as an active process of consciousness-raising and ethical decision-making. The integration of tadabbur sosial into the religious studies curriculum, for instance, bridges textual knowledge with real-world application. Instead of abstract preaching, students are encouraged to explore how Qur'anic messages can be implemented to address issues like poverty, injustice, and ethical dilemmas in technology use. This pedagogical model supports critical religious literacy, making the values not only internalized but also relevant and adaptable.

The pattern that emerges from these findings is that character education in SBQ Izzati functions as a transformative framework, not only aiming to preserve Islamic identity but also to equip students with the moral capital to engage with modern society. The policies demonstrate that building social-spiritual resilience is not achieved through doctrinal rigidity, but through a dynamic process of engagement, reflection, and ethical practice. By turning values into actions, the pesantren creates an educational environment where moral development is both systematic and personalized. Thus, character policy is positioned as a strategic institutional pillar bridging the internal world of faith with the external realities of change. This strategic linkage ensures that the graduates of SBQ Izzati are not only religiously literate but also socially responsive and ethically oriented.

Institutional Constraints and Cultural Resistance to Policy Adaptation

While SBQ Izzati has shown strong leadership in embedding social-spiritual values into its educational framework, the study also uncovered persistent challenges that impede the optimal execution of Islamic education policies. These challenges are not merely logistical, but also deeply rooted in institutional culture, stakeholder perception, and internal readiness to embrace broader socio-educational change. This indicates that Islamic education transformation requires more than visionary policies it demands cultural negotiation and internal alignment.

One of the primary constraints identified relates to institutional rigidity. As an Islamic boarding institution with a strong traditionalist foundation, SBQ Izzati upholds a structured and hierarchical operational model. While this fosters discipline, it also poses challenges when flexible, adaptive responses are needed, especially in areas like curriculum innovation, student autonomy, and

responsiveness to external social dynamics. For instance, the addition of collaborative or cross-disciplinary learning components often faces procedural delays due to the institution's layered decision-making mechanisms.

In addition, cultural resistance among some senior educators has emerged as a limiting factor in policy adoption. Although the leadership promotes an integrative vision of education that includes social engagement and contextualized Islamic learning, some faculty members remain committed to conventional teaching styles and view newer pedagogical models with skepticism. This resistance tends to manifest not through direct opposition but through passive disengagement from newer initiatives, creating a cultural gap between policy direction and classroom practice.

Another challenge pertains to communication asymmetry between the policy-making body and the implementing actors. While policy documents outline clear objectives for building adaptive, value-based Islamic education, these directives often fail to be translated into actionable steps at the teacher or student level. Limited professional development sessions, combined with inconsistent policy socialization, result in uneven understanding of what "Islamic education responsive to social change" concretely entails. The following table illustrates key institutional and cultural obstacles observed in the study:

Effective Policy Bureaucratic and Streamlined **Cultural Barriers Policy Implementation** <u>Implementation</u> Slows down grassroots Promotes innovation Expedite curriculum Balance heritage with Bridge gap in policy Provide motivational adjustment approvals progressive adaptation and pedagogical support

Overcoming Policy Implementation Challenges

Figure 1. Institutional and Cultural Challenges in Policy Implementation

The data in picture 1 confirms that institutional and cultural dynamics can either support or hinder the practical effectiveness of education reform. In the case of SBQ Izzati, the policy ambition to align Islamic education with contemporary social needs must be accompanied by cultural transformation, not just structural implementation. Without open dialogue, continuous mentoring, and inclusive participation, even the most well-articulated policies risk becoming symbolic rather than transformative.

This pattern highlights the necessity of designing Islamic education policies that are not only ideologically sound but also socially embedded and institutionally supported. Strategic alignment across leadership levels, faculty mindset, and structural adaptability is essential to navigate the tension between tradition and transformation. In this regard, SBQ Izzati would benefit from investing in cultural transition strategies, such as peer-led pedagogical workshops, leadership rotation mechanisms, and participatory policy forums that include teachers and students.

Ultimately, these findings emphasize that Islamic education reform in response to social change is as much a cultural challenge as it is a structural one. The success of such reform depends on the willingness of institutions not only to innovate but also to critically engage with their traditions, reinterpreting them as dynamic rather than static legacies in the pursuit of meaningful transformation.

Discussion

The discussion in this study links field findings with relevant literature reviews and outlines the theoretical and practical implications of implementing Islamic education policies that are responsive to social change. The first finding shows that SBQ Izzati Depok has formulated educational policies that are responsive to modern social dynamics, such as the moral crisis of the younger generation, technological disruption, and the challenges of diversity. This is in line with the ideas of Hina (2024) and Jali (2025), who emphasize the importance of Islamic education to be adaptive in facing the challenges of the times, not just maintaining normative heritage. SBQ Izzati's efforts to integrate Islamic values with social dialogue and digital literacy programs prove that Islamic boarding schools can be agents of social transformation, not just conservative institutions. However, what distinguishes this finding from much of the literature is SBQ success in implementing a contextual curriculum systematically, where spiritual values are not only taught through lectures, but through social dialogue and reflective practice. This answers criticism from experts such as Aziz (2025) and Achruh (2024), who stated that Islamic education is often trapped in a dogmatic approach. In this context, SBQ Izzati offers a more participatory and realistic educational model for social reality.

The second finding strengthens the position that the character education policy implemented in SBQ Izzati is not only an administrative complement, but has become the core of the socio-spiritual formation of students. The models used by SBQ Izzati, such as social tadabbur, leadership training camps, and social empathy campaigns, support the holistic approach recommended by Setiawan (2024), Awaludin (2024) and Ridwan (2022) in effective character education: namely that it must be intentional, sustainable, and rooted in values. This finding strengthens the view that character education in the context of Islamic boarding

schools can be developed from a normative approach to a process of internalizing values through direct experience.

In theoretical terms, this finding develops the discourse on character education by placing social experience and contextual awareness as the main strategy (Abdullah, 2024; Umar & Khaer, 2024). This adds a new dimension to Islamic education theory, which has so far emphasized memorization and ritual worship as benchmarks for character success. It is precisely through leadership simulations, social interpretation of the Qur'an, and community involvement that the character of students can be formed reflectively and relevant to contemporary challenges (Arifin et al., 2024; Billah et al., 2024; Nisa' & R, 2024).

However, the third finding shows serious obstacles in the implementation of the policy, especially in the institutional and cultural aspects. Limited technical capacity, cultural resistance from some senior teachers, and asymmetry of communication between policy makers and implementers in the field indicate that the success of the policy is not only determined by the substance of the policy itself, but also by the readiness of the culture and internal structure of the institution. This is in accordance with Ali (2024) that educational reform requires changes in organizational culture, not just changes in administrative policies.

The practical implication of this finding is that in order to strengthen the effectiveness of Islamic education policies that are responsive to social change, institutions such as SBQ Izzati need to take a transformative approach to their internal structure and culture. This includes pedagogical training for senior teachers, cross-generational discussion forums, and the involvement of students in program formulation through a participatory approach. In addition, a more transparent policy evaluation mechanism is needed so that implementation in the field does not depend on the interpretation of each teacher, but is based on common indicators that can be measured and agreed upon together.

Overall, this study shows that the success of the transformation of Islamic education in the modern social era depends on three pillars: adaptive policies, strengthening contextual character education, and institutional readiness to make internal cultural changes. SBQ Izzati shows that Islamic boarding schools can be a model for Islamic education reform that does not lose its traditional values, but instead actualizes them in a new and relevant social format. This research contributes to the development of Islamic leadership theory and education policies that are value-based, adaptive to reality, and emphasize the importance of balance between spirituality and social responsibility.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Islamic education policy at SBQ Izzati Depok is an adaptive response to complex social changes, emphasizing the integration of Islamic values and social awareness in every educational program. The policy is not only normative, but also progressive in facing the challenges of the times, such as technological disruption, moral crisis, and cultural diversity. Through a socio-spiritual character approach, this Islamic boarding school has succeeded in forming students who are not only ritually religious but also have social sensitivity and the ability to think critically about the surrounding reality. However, this study also found structural obstacles and cultural resistance that hinder the optimization of the policy, especially at the level of technical implementation and acceptance among senior educators. The limitations of the research location are an important note, so further research needs to be conducted in various institutions with different cultural and managerial backgrounds. The results of this study reinforce the importance of designing an adaptive, contextual, and participatory Islamic education policy.

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