



TRANSFORMATION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN INDONESIA: A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF GOVERNMENT POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to critically evaluate the substance, evolution, and implementation of government policies on religious education transformation in Indonesia. It analyzes how policies have shifted from normative approaches toward integrative, competency-based models aligned with Indonesia Emas 2045. The research employs a qualitative descriptive method with a critical evaluation approach through literature study (library research). Data were collected from secondary sources including official policy documents (UU No. 20/2003, PP No. 55/2007, Kurikulum Merdeka, Peta Jalan Pendidikan Islam 2023-2045, and Asta Protas), government reports, and related studies, analyzed using content analysis and policy implementation frameworks (top-down vs bottom-up). The results reveal significant policy evolution toward integration of science-religion, digitalization, and eco-theology. However, field implementation remains suboptimal with low effectiveness due to teachers' difficulties in implementing differentiated project-based learning, inefficient budget allocation especially in private madrasahs, and serious equity gaps between urban public and rural/remote institutions. Supporting factors such as government commitment and inter-ministerial cooperation are overshadowed by structural (human resources, infrastructure, funding) and cultural (traditional pesantren resistance) barriers. In conclusion, although the policy framework is progressive, the transformation is hampered by top-down implementation that lacks local participation. Holistic recommendations include massive teacher training, targeted funding for disadvantaged areas, bottom-up participatory models, and integrated digital monitoring systems. This study contributes to bridging the gap between macro policy and micro reality in religious education.

Keywords: religious education transformation; government policy; madrasah reform; curriculum implementation; Indonesia Emas 2045

1. INTRODUCTION

Religious education in Indonesia, particularly Islamic education, plays a strategic role as a major pillar in shaping the nation's character. In a society where the majority of the population is Muslim, religious education does not merely function as a means of transmitting religious knowledge, but also serves as a strong foundation for morality, ethics, and national values. Socially, religious education becomes a highly effective instrument for maintaining social cohesion within Indonesia's plural society. It plays an important role in transmitting religious values, moral principles, and the spirit of nationalism to the younger generation (Muis et al., 2024). In addition, religious education is also expected to respond to various contemporary challenges, such as globalization that brings foreign cultural influences, the threat of radicalism, and the increasingly visible phenomenon of moral degradation among adolescents and youth. In this context, religious educational institutions such as madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools serve as both defensive strongholds and strategic agents of change. Their existence cannot be separated from the long history of the Indonesian nation's struggle for independence and civilization-building. Therefore, the transformation of religious education is an agenda that should not be neglected by either the government or society. Without quality religious education, it will be difficult for this nation to produce a generation that is faithful, pious, morally upright, and competitive in the global era.

Empirical realities show the very large and significant scale of religious education in Indonesia. As of 2025, the Ministry of Religious Affairs recorded more than 87,397 madrasahs spread across Indonesia, the majority of which, around 83,351, were private madrasahs (Direktorat KSKK Madrasah, 2024). Meanwhile, the number of Islamic boarding schools reached more than 42,391 institutions with millions of students pursuing religious education (Kementerian Agama, 2025). These figures demonstrate the massive role of religious education within the national education system. Nevertheless, this sector still faces various complex structural problems. These include the striking quality gap between public and private madrasahs, in which private madrasahs often lack sufficient funding and facilities. Limited infrastructure in remote and underdeveloped regions also remains a persistent issue that has not been fully resolved. In addition, the challenge of adapting to the Independent Curriculum and digital transformation continues to be a heavy burden for many religious educational institutions. Many of them still experience a sharp dichotomy between religious education and general education. The implementation gap between central and local government policies is also frequently evident in practice. Overall, these conditions hinder efforts to achieve high-quality and equitable religious education throughout the Indonesian archipelago.

The government has undertaken various systematic transformation efforts through a series of comprehensive policies. Among the important policies is Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which serves as the main legal framework (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 20 Tahun 2003). This was followed by Government Regulation Number 55 of 2007 concerning Religious Education and Religious-Based Education, which more specifically regulates the implementation of religious education (Peraturan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia Nomor 55 Tahun 2007). In addition, the Madrasah Reform Program initiated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs represents a concrete step in modernizing madrasahs. In recent years, the integration of



religious education into the Independent Curriculum has also become one of the most significant breakthroughs. Broadly speaking, these policies aim to improve educational quality, expand access for all segments of society, and increase the relevance of religious education to contemporary demands. This transformation is expected to produce graduates who not only master religious knowledge in depth but also possess adequate general competencies. Thus, religious education can align with the development of science and technology without losing the essence of Islam that constitutes its distinctive identity. This effort is also part of the government's commitment to realizing inclusive, high-quality, and character-based education in accordance with Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution.

However, the implementation of these policies in the field often encounters serious and complex obstacles. Various studies and reports indicate that the transformation that has been carefully planned has not been fully realized as expected. The main inhibiting factor is weak inter-institutional coordination, especially between the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. In addition, limited human resources, particularly teachers' competence in responding to the new curriculum, has also become a crucial issue. Cultural resistance in several Islamic boarding school and madrasah communities that tend to be conservative toward change further complicates the implementation process. Limited supporting facilities and infrastructure, especially in frontier and rural areas, further weaken policy effectiveness. Moreover, issues of unequal funding and complicated bureaucracy often make it difficult for managers of religious educational institutions. As a result, the gap between policies at the macro level and realities at the micro level, namely madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools, remains quite wide. This condition ultimately affects the quality of religious education outcomes, which has not yet reached an optimal level. Therefore, an in-depth critical evaluation of the entire process of government policy implementation in the field of religious education is urgently needed.

Several previous studies have discussed the transformation of religious education in Indonesia, but significant gaps remain. Salamun and Sauri (2023) discussed issues and problems in the evaluation of Islamic Religious Education policy, particularly the dichotomy between Islamic boarding schools and general education, as well as the lack of coordination among ministries. However, their study was more descriptive in identifying issues and did not conduct an in-depth critical evaluation of policy implementation in a holistic manner (Salamun & Sauri, 2023). Meanwhile, Dalimunthe (2023) focused more on the transformation of Islamic Religious Education in strengthening national character values and emphasized the role of stakeholders, but paid less attention to the analysis of implementation barriers at the micro level, such as those found in madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools (Dalimunthe, 2023). Supaat (2011), along with several recent studies on Madrasah Reform, discussed the transformation of madrasahs into modern educational institutions. However, most of these studies were historical and structural in nature and have not provided a contemporary critical evaluation of policy implementation after the adoption of the Independent Curriculum (Supaat, 2011). Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by conducting a more comprehensive, in-depth, and up-to-date critical evaluation of government policy implementation in the transformation of religious education in Indonesia.

The novelty of this study lies in its more comprehensive critical evaluation of government policy implementation in the transformation of religious education in the post-reform era and within the context of the Independent Curriculum. This study does not merely describe the policy process but also analyzes its effectiveness, barriers, and implications through a policy evaluation perspective, such as the CIPP model or the top-down versus bottom-up approach.

This study aims to analyze in depth the substance and evolution of government policies in the transformation of religious education in Indonesia, ranging from the legal framework to the various programs that have been launched. In addition, this study seeks to conduct a critical evaluation of the implementation of these policies in the field by examining the extent of their effectiveness, efficiency, and alignment between planning and implementation. Furthermore, this study also aims to identify the gaps between policies formulated at the central level and the realities encountered at the micro level, as well as to provide concrete and applicable strategic recommendations for future policy improvement.

Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich scholarly discourse in the field of Islamic education policy, particularly regarding the transformation and evaluation of religious education policy implementation in Indonesia. Practically, the findings of this study may serve as valuable input for policymakers at the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology in formulating and improving more effective policies. In addition, the findings are also expected to serve as an important reference for madrasah and Islamic boarding school administrators in improving the quality of religious education delivery, thereby producing graduates who are more qualified and relevant to the demands of the times.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative research method with a critical evaluation approach. This approach aims to describe, analyze, and critically evaluate in depth the transformation process and implementation of religious education policies in Indonesia (Suwadji, 2024). The descriptive qualitative method is highly appropriate for critical evaluation because it allows researchers to conduct an in-depth interpretation of policy documents, various implementation challenges, and the impacts generated in practice. This study relies on a literature study or library research method as the main technique for data collection (Nurhayati, 2024). The data were obtained from various secondary sources, including official policy documents such as Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, regulations issued by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Independent Curriculum, scholarly journal articles, reference books, government reports, and other relevant articles. The techniques used include intensive reading, recording important themes, grouping data through coding, source triangulation, and comprehensive synthesis of findings.

This study also applies content analysis and policy analysis to examine the content of policy documents, the implementation process in the field based on secondary data, emerging obstacles, and recommendations for improvement (Muhidin Arifin, 2024). The analysis is conducted using theoretical frameworks such as policy implementation theory, including top-down and bottom-up approaches, policy evaluation models covering



aspects of effectiveness, efficiency, and equity, as well as sociological and Islamic perspectives. The methodological structure of this study consists of a descriptive-analytical qualitative research design with a critical evaluative orientation, a literature or library research approach, primary data sources in the form of official policy documents, and secondary sources in the form of journals, books, and government reports (Rahmawati, 2022). Data collection techniques are carried out through documentation and literature review, while data analysis techniques use the model of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing proposed by Miles and Huberman, as well as content analysis. The validity of the study is strengthened through source and technique triangulation (Annisa & Mailani, 2023).

In addition, this study may consider methodological variations such as a case study approach focusing on particular religious educational institutions, a historical approach to trace the transformation from the past to the present, and mixed methods when necessary. Overall, the descriptive-analytical qualitative literature study methodology with a critical evaluation approach is the most appropriate choice for this research. The researcher may also adjust the analytical framework using policy evaluation theories, such as the CIPP model, which consists of Context, Input, Process, and Product, so that the research findings can be presented in a more structured and in-depth manner.

3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

This study produced several important findings, which were analyzed in accordance with the research objectives and the formulated research problems. The analysis was conducted critically by referring to secondary data derived from official policy documents, government reports, and relevant studies.

The Substance and Evolution of Government Policies in the Transformation of Religious Education

The findings indicate that government policies on religious education have undergone significant evolution over time. Substantively, the main policy framework began with Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which provided equal recognition between general education and religious education. This was then strengthened by Government Regulation Number 55 of 2007 concerning Religious Education and Religious-Based Education, the Madrasah Reform Program, and integration into the Independent Curriculum (Fithra, 2022). In 2025, the Ministry of Religious Affairs launched the Islamic Education Roadmap 2023–2045 and “Asta Protas” (Eight Priority Programs), which include the integration of science and religion, the digitalization of governance, and the strengthening of madrasah ecotheology. This evolution reflects a shift from a normative-doctrinal approach toward a more contextual, integrative, and competency-oriented approach in line with the demands of Golden Indonesia 2045.

The findings of this study integrate various government policies, from Law Number 20 of 2003 to the Islamic Education Roadmap 2023–2045 and Asta Protas, into a unified new idea regarding the transformation of religious education in Indonesia. The recognition of equality between general and religious education in the 2003 National Education System Law serves as a normative foundation, which was later enriched by Government

Regulation Number 55 of 2007 and operationalized through the Madrasah Reform Program. This integration continued to develop within the Independent Curriculum, which emphasizes flexibility, and reached its most recent stage in the 2025 initiative that combines science-religion integration, digitalization, and ecotheology. This synthesis produces a new idea that religious education is no longer merely a medium for doctrinal transmission, but rather a vehicle for developing holistic competencies that support the vision of Golden Indonesia 2045 (Nugraha et al., 2026). Various strands of literature that were previously separated into regulatory, curricular, and visionary approaches are now integrated into a contextual framework that is adaptive to the development of the times and responsive to global and local challenges (Hakim, 2024). This process of integration answers the research problem by showing that policy evolution is a systemic effort to bridge the dichotomy between religion and science, as well as between tradition and modernity (Maryati, 2025). The synthesis contributes a new conceptual model of religious education transformation that is competency-based, future-oriented, and rooted in national values. Thus, ideas from different periods no longer stand separately but form a coherent narrative of the journey of religious education toward a more inclusive and competitive era. This synthetic approach strengthens the understanding that government policy is a strategic instrument in developing a generation that is both religious and competent amid global dynamics.

Critically, government policies in the transformation of religious education demonstrate strength in terms of progressive and comprehensive regulation, yet they still leave several weaknesses and gaps. The main strength lies in the consistency of evolution from the recognition of equality in the 2003 law to the integration of science-religion and digitalization in 2025, reflecting adaptation to contemporary needs. However, the literature indicates weaknesses in implementation at the field level, where the Madrasah Reform Program and the Independent Curriculum often face obstacles related to infrastructure, teacher readiness, and resistance from traditionalist groups (FathurRohman, 2025). The research gap can be seen in the limited number of long-term empirical studies on the impact of Asta Protas on madrasah students' competency achievement, particularly in remote areas. Compared with previous literature, which tends to be more normative, the current approach is more integrative but remains weak in rigorous quantitative data-based outcome evaluation. Another weakness is the potential urban-centric bias in digitalization policies, which have not fully considered disparities in technological access across regions. Nevertheless, the vision of ecotheology offers an innovative opportunity that has not been widely explored in conventional religious education literature. This evaluation reveals that although the policy framework is already advanced, there remains a gap between macro-level policy and micro-level implementation that needs to be addressed through further research. Overall, the literature data show a positive shift but still require stronger monitoring mechanisms and contextual adaptation so that the policy does not become elitist. These strengths and weaknesses provide important reflections for future policy improvement (Hidayatulloh, 2024).

The conceptual discussion reveals the deeper meaning behind the evolution of religious education policy as a manifestation of the state's commitment to harmonizing religious identity with the demands of national progress in the contemporary era. Behind the series of regulations from the 2003 law to Asta Protas 2025 lies the spirit of



reconstructing educational epistemology by integrating religious values with scientific and technological knowledge, thereby producing an educational model that is not dichotomous but synergistic. Its relevance to the present context is very strong, especially in facing the challenges of Golden Indonesia 2045, which requires human resources who possess noble character while also being globally competitive. This interpretation shows that policy is not merely an administrative document but a philosophical manifestation of education as an instrument for building a civilized civilization (Ismawati Saragih, 2025). The contextual meaning behind the digitalization of governance and the strengthening of ecotheology lies in efforts to respond to the environmental crisis and technological disruption affecting modern society. From the author's perspective, this transformation reflects a paradigm shift from a rigid doctrinal approach toward a contextual approach that is humanistic and responsive. Its relevance to the present study lies in the urgency of building a religious education system capable of producing a generation that is resilient in facing the complexity of the times without losing its spiritual roots. This concept also opens a space for dialogue between religious tradition and the demands of inclusivity and sustainability (Chandra, 2025). Overall, the analyzed literature strengthens the understanding that government policy is a dynamic arena in which the noble values of the nation continue to be reinterpreted to respond to the real needs of society. This discussion affirms the importance of sustained political and academic commitment in realizing the vision of transformative religious education.

Policy Implementation in the Field: Effectiveness, Efficiency, and Equity

The findings indicate that policy implementation has not yet run optimally. Many madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools have attempted to adopt the Independent Curriculum, but only a small number have implemented it fully. Effectiveness remains low because most teachers still experience difficulties in developing project modules and applying differentiated learning. In terms of efficiency, budget utilization is often not well targeted, especially in private madrasahs, which constitute the majority of madrasahs in Indonesia. Meanwhile, the aspect of equity remains a major problem; madrasahs in remote and rural areas lag far behind public madrasahs in major cities in terms of digital infrastructure and teacher training.

Critically, there is a wide gap between policies at the central level, which are top-down in nature, and the reality of implementation at the lower level, which requires a bottom-up approach. The policy implementation model tends to be top-down without sufficient involvement of local stakeholders, causing many policies to become "stalled" at the provincial or district level. This is in line with policy implementation theory, which states that without adequate resource support and effective communication, policies will find it difficult to achieve their intended goals (Suciana, 2022).

The findings on the implementation of religious education policy integrate various aspects of effectiveness, efficiency, and equity into a unified new idea concerning the gap between central policy and field practice. The adoption of the Independent Curriculum, which only a small number of madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools have been able to implement fully, is closely linked to teachers' difficulties in preparing project modules and differentiated learning, as well as the misallocation of budgets in private madrasahs. This condition is further connected to the striking disparity in equity between rural or remote

madrasahs and urban public madrasahs in terms of digital infrastructure and teacher training. This synthesis produces a holistic understanding that policy implementation remains dominantly top-down and weak in bottom-up support, causing visionary national policies to frequently become stalled at the provincial and district levels. Various perspectives in the literature on policy implementation, ranging from resource theory and communication to stakeholder involvement, are integrated into an analytical framework that explains the failure to achieve policy goals due to limited coordination and local adaptation (Sahara, 2025). The new idea that emerges is the need for a hybrid implementation model that combines a top-down approach with the active participation of madrasah and Islamic boarding school communities. This synthesis comprehensively answers the second research problem by showing that effectiveness, efficiency, and equity are interconnected and mutually influential in the transformation process of religious education (Erison, 2022). This process of integration strengthens the argument that without contextual adjustment, major policies will remain idealistic documents without real impact in the field. The result is a conceptual contribution in the form of recommendations for strengthening implementation mechanisms that are more responsive, field-data-based, and oriented toward equitable access. Thus, this finding forms a coherent understanding of the practical challenges of transforming religious education toward Golden Indonesia 2045.

Critically, the implementation of religious education policy demonstrates fairly fundamental structural weaknesses, although several partial strengths can be found at certain levels. The strengths can be seen in the successful adoption of the Independent Curriculum in some madrasahs; however, overall effectiveness remains low due to teachers' limited competence in differentiated learning and project module development (Ihsan, 2025). In terms of efficiency, poorly targeted budget utilization, especially in private madrasahs, represents a serious weakness that reflects weak supervision and accountability (Rafsanjani, 2025). Equity constitutes the most striking gap, as rural and remote madrasahs remain far behind in digital infrastructure and training, thereby widening national inequality in religious education. Compared with the literature on policy implementation theory, this finding is consistent with criticism of top-down models that minimally involve local stakeholders, causing policies to often become "stalled" at the middle level (Supardi, 2025). The main weakness lies in the lack of in-depth studies on regional contextual factors that influence successful implementation (Ente, 2025). A research gap is also identified in the limited number of longitudinal evaluations examining the impact of equity-oriented interventions on student achievement in marginal madrasahs. Nevertheless, this finding is strong in portraying field realities that contrast sharply with the rhetoric of central policy. This critical evaluation reveals the need for systemic improvement in the aspects of resources, communication, and monitoring so that policies do not remain merely ambitious on paper. Overall, the data indicate that without implementation reform, the target of transforming religious education will be difficult to achieve.

The conceptual discussion reveals the deeper meaning behind policy implementation findings as a reflection of the misalignment between national vision and the micro-level realities of religious education in Indonesia. Behind the low effectiveness, budget inefficiency, and inequitable distribution lies a fundamental problem in the top-down implementation model, which is insufficiently sensitive to the diverse conditions of



madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools. This meaning is highly relevant to the current context, in which the demands of Golden Indonesia 2045 require an inclusive and equitable transformation, not merely transformation centered in urban areas (Tasliyah, 2024). The author's interpretation shows that teachers' difficulties in developing modules and differentiated learning are not merely technical problems, but rather reflect a systemic failure to provide sustainable mentoring and capacity development. Its relevance to the present study lies in the urgency of building a hybrid implementation model that integrates the strengths of central policy with local wisdom and stakeholder participation. The concepts of ecotheology and digitalization in Asta Protas will only become meaningful if infrastructure and training in remote areas are also strengthened. This discussion emphasizes that policies without effective, efficient, and equitable implementation will only sharpen the dichotomy between modern and traditional religious education. The meaning behind this gap is the need to reconstruct educational governance to become more democratic and just. From a broader perspective, this finding strengthens the understanding that the success of religious education transformation depends on the alignment between macro-level policies and strong micro-level support. Overall, this conceptual analysis offers a foundation for policy recommendations that are more contextual and outcome-oriented (Mahardini, 2023).

Inhibiting and Supporting Factors and Strategic Recommendations

The main supporting factors in the transformation of religious education are the relatively strong commitment of the central government, the availability of fairly comprehensive policy documents, and the increasing inter-institutional cooperation between the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. However, inhibiting factors are far more dominant and have become the main challenge in policy implementation. These factors include limited human resources, particularly the small number of teachers who are truly competent in implementing the Independent Curriculum; uneven infrastructure and funding across regions and between public and private madrasahs; cultural resistance from traditional Islamic boarding school communities that tend to be conservative toward change; and weak inter-institutional coordination as well as insufficiently intensive monitoring and evaluation systems (Usman, 2024).

The analysis shows that these inhibiting factors are both structural and cultural in nature, thus requiring a holistic and comprehensive approach to overcome them. Strategic recommendations that can be proposed include strengthening teacher training and mentoring on a massive and sustainable scale, increasing special funding allocations for private madrasahs and underdeveloped regions, developing a more bottom-up and participatory policy implementation model by involving Islamic boarding school leaders and madrasah principals in the formulation of technical policies, and building an integrated digital-based monitoring and evaluation system across institutions (Sudjalil, 2024). In this way, the gap between policy and field reality can be minimized, allowing the transformation of religious education to run more effectively in the future.

The findings regarding inhibiting and supporting factors in the transformation of religious education integrate various elements into a unified and comprehensive new idea to answer the third research problem. The commitment of the central government, the

availability of complete policy documents, and inter-institutional cooperation between the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology serve as supporting factors that are intertwined with the dominance of inhibiting factors, such as limited teacher human resources, uneven infrastructure and funding, cultural resistance from traditional Islamic boarding schools, and weak coordination and monitoring. This synthesis produces a holistic understanding that although a strong policy foundation exists, structural and cultural obstacles are more dominant and therefore require a comprehensive approach. Various perspectives in the literature on policy implementation, ranging from resources and organizational culture to governance, are integrated into an analytical framework that emphasizes the importance of balancing top-down and bottom-up approaches. The new idea that emerges is a participatory transformation model, in which strategic recommendations such as massive teacher training, special funding allocations, and an integrated digital monitoring system become unified solutions. This synthesis coherently answers the research problem by showing that inhibiting factors can be addressed through holistic and sustainable recommendations (Mareta, 2024). This process of integration strengthens the argument that the transformation of religious education requires synergy among political commitment, institutional capacity, and cultural acceptance. The synthesis contributes conceptually by offering contextual strategic recommendations that support the vision of Golden Indonesia 2045. Thus, the findings no longer stand separately but form a comprehensive strategy to minimize the gap between policy and field reality. This approach affirms the importance of local adaptation in realizing transformative religious education.

Critically, the supporting factors for the transformation of religious education are relatively strong at the macro-policy level, yet the inhibiting factors are far more dominant and systemic in nature. The strengths lie in the government's commitment and increasingly strong inter-institutional cooperation, which provide a solid foundation for change. However, the main weaknesses are found in the limited number of teachers competent in implementing the Independent Curriculum, infrastructure and funding disparities between public and private madrasahs as well as between urban and rural areas, cultural resistance from traditional Islamic boarding schools, and weak monitoring systems. This evaluation reveals a research gap in the limited number of empirical studies examining the effectiveness of participatory bottom-up interventions among Islamic boarding schools. Compared with previous literature, which focuses more on regulatory aspects, these findings are stronger in portraying cultural and structural realities, although they remain less detailed in terms of quantitative data on the impact of resistance on policy adoption. Another weakness is the continued dominance of the top-down approach, meaning that strategic recommendations such as continuous training and special funding allocations need to be evaluated more rigorously so that they do not become temporary measures. Nevertheless, the recommendation to develop an integrated digital monitoring system offers an innovative opportunity that has not been widely explored. This critical evaluation reveals that without simultaneously addressing the root structural and cultural problems, policies will find it difficult to achieve optimal effectiveness. Overall, these findings are realistic and relevant, but further research is needed to measure the long-term success of the proposed recommendations.



The conceptual discussion reveals the deeper meaning behind the inhibiting and supporting factors as a reflection of the complex dynamics between the vision of modernizing religious education and Indonesia's socio-cultural realities. Behind the government's commitment and comprehensive policy documents lie structural challenges, including human resources, infrastructure, and funding, as well as cultural challenges, such as resistance from traditional Islamic boarding schools, which indicate the need for a holistic approach rather than merely a technocratic one. This meaning is highly relevant to the current context, in which the transformation toward Golden Indonesia 2045 requires harmony between religious tradition and the demands of global competence without abandoning the roots of identity. The author's interpretation shows that strategic recommendations, such as massive teacher training, special funding for underdeveloped regions, a participatory bottom-up model, and digital monitoring, are not merely practical solutions but also efforts to reconstruct educational governance to become more inclusive and equitable. Its relevance to this study lies in the urgency of transforming cultural resistance into collaborative strength through the involvement of Islamic boarding school leaders and madrasah principals. This concept strengthens the understanding that the success of transformation depends on alignment between central policy and local acceptance (Setiawan, 2024). This discussion emphasizes that the inhibiting factors are interconnected, so the solutions must be comprehensive and sustainable. From a broader perspective, these findings open space for the development of policy implementation theory that is sensitive to the Indonesian religious context (Qomariyah, 2024). Overall, this conceptual analysis provides a philosophical foundation for strategic recommendations that can minimize gaps and accelerate meaningful transformation in religious education.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the transformation of religious education in Indonesia has undergone significant policy evolution, beginning with the recognition of equality through Law Number 20 of 2003, Government Regulation Number 55 of 2007, the Independent Curriculum, the Islamic Education Roadmap 2023–2045, and Asta Protas. Substantively, there has been a paradigm shift from a normative-doctrinal approach toward an integrative model that combines science and religion, digitalization, and ecotheology, in line with the vision of Golden Indonesia 2045. However, implementation in the field still faces serious challenges in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, and equity. Only a small number of madrasahs and Islamic boarding schools have been able to fully adopt these policies due to limited teacher competence, inaccurate budget allocation, and infrastructure disparities between urban and rural areas. Supporting factors, such as government commitment and inter-institutional cooperation, have not yet been able to offset structural obstacles, including human resources, funding, and infrastructure, as well as cultural barriers, particularly resistance from traditional communities. These conditions have created a wide gap between macro-level policies and micro-level realities.

Overall, the findings of this study affirm that although the policy framework is progressive and visionary, the transformation process of religious education has not yet run optimally because the implementation model remains predominantly top-down and

insufficiently participatory. The synthesis of the three research problems indicates the need to reconstruct religious education governance in a more holistic, integrative, and equitable manner in order to produce a generation that is religious, competent, and adaptive to global challenges. These findings strengthen the understanding that the success of transformation depends not only on the substance of policy, but also on the alignment between political commitment, institutional capacity, and cultural acceptance at the field level.

Based on these conclusions, several strategic recommendations are proposed: (1) strengthening massive and sustainable teacher training and mentoring; (2) increasing special funding allocations for private madrasahs and underdeveloped regions; (3) developing a hybrid bottom-up implementation model by involving Islamic boarding school leaders and madrasah principals; and (4) establishing an integrated digital-based monitoring and evaluation system. Further research is recommended to conduct longitudinal empirical studies on the impact of Asta Protas on student achievement, particularly in marginal madrasahs, and to explore the effectiveness of participatory interventions in overcoming cultural resistance. Thus, the transformation of religious education can make a more concrete contribution to the development of high-quality Indonesian human resources in the future.

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