

Implementation of the Islamic Ramadan Study Program Policy in Vocational High Schools

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Article Info

Article history:

Submission June 26, 2024

Revised July 28, 2024

Accepted September 18, 2025

Published October 16, 2025

Keywords:

Policy,

Education,

Ramadan,

Vocational High School.



ABSTRACT

Vocational high schools play a significant role in enhancing the quality of human resources through practical vocational education that collaborates with industry. Integrated Islamic education is necessary to instil religious values and student character. The objective is to formulate an adaptive and contextual policy model for the Islamic Ramadan Study Program in vocational high schools in order to improve religious character education and synergy among schools, communities, and families. This research is conducted through a literature review of scientific articles. The results indicate that the implementation of the Islamic Ramadan Study Program policy in vocational high schools faces challenges at each stage: problem identification, formulation, implementation, and evaluation. Policy formulation often fails to involve all stakeholders, resulting in inadequate representation. At the formulation stage, Ramadan activities have been designed; however, student participation remains low. Implementation depends on leadership and resource support, but is hindered by infrastructure and bureaucratic obstacles. Evaluation employs both test and non-test methods, yet its effectiveness is constrained by the diverse backgrounds of students and the workload of teachers. Synergy among all parties is essential for the program to operate optimally and to cultivate students' religious character. In conclusion, implementing the Islamic Ramadan Study Program in vocational high schools requires policy synergy, adequate resources, and active participation to achieve optimal effectiveness.



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A. INTRODUCTION

Vocational High Schools represent an investment in human capital aimed at enhancing the quality of education and productivity, enabling competitiveness in the global labour market through a direct linkage between education and industry needs (Ismayati, 2018). Collaboration with industry constitutes a critical aspect in aligning curricula with real-world work environments through internship programs, training, and joint production activities (Widiyanti et al., 2017).

Vocational high schools emphasize practical learning over theoretical instruction by using laboratories, simulation software, and innovative teaching methods to improve students' problem-solving skills while reducing safety risks during practice (Sarwono et al., 2022). The quality of teachers also significantly influences the effectiveness of vocational education; therefore, teacher internship programs are recommended to enhance their competencies (Yoto et al., 2020). Another challenge lies in determining study programs that align with students' interests and potential, which can be facilitated by decision-support systems (Irfiani et al., 2023).

Islamic-based vocational education programs are designed to integrate Islamic values comprehensively into the curriculum and school culture. Values such as honesty, social justice, and responsibility are instilled in every aspect of learning (Fauziah et al., 2024). Models like Islamic Edutechnopreneur combine vocational training with Islamic teachings to cultivate an ethical entrepreneurial spirit (Taufiq et al., 2022). Furthermore, funding through waqf (Islamic endowment) supports innovation and research while addressing financial constraints (Kamarzaman et al., 2025). Project-based learning focusing on water conservation, waste management, and land preservation reflects environmental literacy grounded in Islamic values (Farida et al., 2017). Character education is reinforced through both intra- and extracurricular activities (Purwanto et al., 2021), as well as pesantren (Islamic boarding school) environments that intensively instil moral values (Siregar et al., 2020). The success of these programs also depends on teacher training (Khasawneh & Altakhaineh, 2020) and visionary school leadership (Jumintono, 2018).

School programs, as policies initiated by principals, reflect their strategic role in translating educational policies into practical realities. Principals act not only as liaisons between the Department of Education and school management bodies but also as key actors in responding to policy implementation challenges, such as resource limitations, conflicts of interest, and resistance to change (Kruger & du Plessis, 2025; Tshabalala & Nthontho, 2024). In many cases, principals exercise personal discretion to adapt policies to the school context, safeguard teacher welfare, and create balance within the school environment (Schechter & Shaked, 2017). Their leadership has a direct impact on student learning outcomes and teacher professionalism (Böhlmark et al., 2016). However, the existing principal evaluation systems are often ineffective in objectively measuring performance (Zahraini & Situmorang, 2020; Donaldson et al., 2021; Alajmi & AlShammari, 2025). The success of programs such as REACH and adventure-based courses highlights the importance of innovation and community involvement (Marttinen et al., 2020; Mackenzie et al., 2018).

The principal's policy in school programs based on Islamic culture emphasizes a holistic approach to education encompassing spiritual, mental, and physical aspects through the concept of *āfiyah* (Abdalla & Memon, 2025). A spiritual connection with Allah through worship and adherence to Sharia serves as the foundation for mental clarity and physical well-being. Additionally, this policy encourages student engagement in maintaining cleanliness and promoting environmental sustainability within the school through Islamic-based value learning and parental involvement, aiming to foster a culture of consistent environmental responsibility (Romlah et al., 2024). The curriculum also integrates religious values and scientific knowledge through project-based learning and the incorporation of Qur'anic verses (Isaac, 2025). Religious education aims to shape a Muslim identity that is relevant to contemporary times (Wahab et al., 2019). Teachers are equipped with pedagogical training grounded in Islamic ethics (Khasawneh & Altakhaineh, 2020), and school leadership is directed toward cultivating a culture of discipline

and communication (Abdullah, 2019; Rahmawati et al., 2024).

This study addresses a gap in the literature by providing a specific policy analysis of the implementation of Ramadan programs in Vocational High Schools, particularly regarding the integration in Islamic values with vocational education. The novelty of this study lies in the use of Patton and Sawicki's policy framework to comprehensively analyze all stages from problem identification to evaluation, alongside the integration of participatory and contextual approaches grounded in local culture. The primary objective of this research is to develop an adaptive, effective, and contextually relevant policy model to support the implementation of the Islamic Ramadan Study Program in vocational high schools. The expected impact includes enhanced effectiveness of religious character education, strengthened synergy among schools, communities, and families, and the creation of a holistic and transformative learning environment. This study also contributes to the formulation of data-driven and Islam-based applicable policies, particularly in vocational secondary education within regions characterized by Islamic cultural traits

B. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a literature review to analyze the implementation of the Islamic Ramadan Study Program policy in Vocational High Schools, focusing on the policy process stages: policy problem identification, policy formulation, policy implementation, and policy evaluation. Data were collected through a search for scholarly articles published in national and international journals relevant to the topic, which refer to the conceptual framework based on Carl Vincent Patton and David S. Sawicki's policy process theory (1986).

Data processing began by determining the focus of discussion based on the policy process stages, which constitute the core of the study. Subsequently, relevant articles were identified in journal databases using specific keywords. The articles were then selected based on their relevance to the content, methodology, and contribution to understanding each stage of the policy process. After the screening process, the articles' content was analyzed to identify concepts and practices for each policy stage, from problem identification and formulation to implementation and evaluation. The collected information was systematically synthesized and presented to provide a comprehensive overview of how the Islamic Ramadan Study Program policy is implemented in Vocational High Schools in accordance with the policy process stages. This approach supports a deep, structured understanding of the dynamics and challenges involved in policy implementation.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of educational policy is influenced by various supporting factors that play a crucial role in determining its successful execution (Baidowi, 2021). One critical aspect in this regard is the role of the school principal, particularly in optimizing educational funding, which is an integral part of school management policy (Situmeang et al., 2025). Furthermore, the principal's leadership is evident in the development of nature-based schools, which are part of the school policies being implemented (Sulaiman et al., 2025). These three aspects demonstrate that the success of educational policies depends heavily on internal factors, such as leadership and resource management within the school. The policy stages proposed by Carl Vincent Patton and David S. Sawicki (1986) consist of four steps: problem identification, policy formulation,

policy implementation, and policy evaluation. Based on this framework, the implementation policy of the Islamic Ramadan Study Program in Vocational High Schools is described as follows:

1. Policy Problem Identification of the Islamic Ramadan Study Program in Vocational High Schools

The problem identification process in educational policy formulation begins with defining the issue to be addressed. However, this process is often complex because it involves numerous stakeholders with differing goals, interests, and perspectives (Hampton, 2022). Educational policy is not static; the process is iterative and requires continuous adjustments as new information and contexts emerge (Dawson-Amoah et al., 2024). This complexity is exacerbated by the need to balance conflicting objectives and the influence of actors with diverse interests in interpreting the problem (Vanbuel, 2022). Moreover, a frequent disparity exists between educational research and policy implementation due to systemic barriers, including bureaucracy, limited resources, and a lack of institutional frameworks to bridge communication gaps (Ion et al., 2019). As a result, policies often fail to optimally utilize research findings and become less effective.

In addition to technical and structural challenges, problem identification in educational policy is influenced by broader political, social, and economic contexts. This can lead to biases or conflicts in problem definition, as policies often reflect the views of elite policymakers rather than the actual needs of educators and students in the field (Widjaja et al., 2024; Rasti, 2023). To address this, the problematization approach is crucial, involving critical examination of how a problem is represented and questioning the assumptions underlying proposed policy solutions. Approaches such as "What is the Problem Represented to be?" (WPR) can be used to unpack the ideas shaping the policy, as problem definitions are inseparable from power dynamics and the historical context in which they arise (Warner, 2023). Furthermore, involving diverse stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and the community, is an essential step in accurately and representatively identifying problems (Butler & Leahy, 2023).

The problem identification stage of the Islamic Ramadan Program policy in Vocational High Schools encompasses various important aspects. In regions such as Aceh, the implementation of Sharia values is evident through religious activities, dress codes, and school holidays during Ramadan, highlighting the need for policies that integrate cultural and religious practices (Mujiburrahman & Muluk, 2017). Balancing the curriculum between religious education and vocational training poses a distinct challenge for maintaining quality in both fields (Zainal et al., 2022). Effective school leadership, which understands the local context and is well-trained, is critical in the program's implementation (Jumintono et al., 2018). Additionally, limitations in infrastructure and resources remain common obstacles (Rahmawati et al., 2024). Parental and community involvement enhances the program's relevance and success (Shakeel, 2018), which requires clear, applicable policies and regulations to support it (Kuraedah et al., 2018).

2. Policy Formulation of the Islamic Ramadan Study Program in Vocational High Schools

According to Carl Vincent Patton and David S. Sawicki, policy formulation is a systematic process that involves ongoing activities to implement policies effectively. These

activities must focus on the most critical aspects of the previously identified problems and be adjusted based on the latest data to maintain relevance (Marans & Callewaert, 2017). Key elements in policy formulation include identifying various policy alternatives, assessing the costs, benefits, and external impacts of each option, both positive and negative, and developing policy instruments such as sanctions, grants, or prohibitions, including determining who will be affected and when these measures will take effect (Sidney, 2017). A significant challenge in this process is the need to involve diverse stakeholders to produce well-informed, socially legitimate policies while also helping mitigate conflicts and differences of interest among parties (Rutting et al., 2021).

The policy for the Islamic Ramadan Study Program in Vocational High Schools aims to shape students' character through routine activities grounded in Islamic values. Activities such as congregational prayers, religious sermons (tausiyah), and Ramadan journals are not only instructional but also cultivate students' morals and discipline. Common challenges include discipline issues, low student engagement, and difficulties in classroom management. Addressing these challenges requires an adaptive pedagogical approach that also touches on students' emotional aspects (Tohirin et al., 2025). Collaborative activities with parents and the community, such as the Friday Blessing program and short-term boarding school (Pesantren Kilat), can strengthen a sense of togetherness and social support for the Ramadan program at schools. Cooperation with community leaders is also crucial for increasing resources and expanding the program's reach. Additionally, embedding Islamic values into the school culture through scheduling prayer times, dress codes, and observance of Ramadan can create a religious and conducive learning environment (Mujiburrahman & Muluk, 2017).

From an educational strategy perspective, continuous professional development for teachers is a key factor in successfully integrating Islamic education with vocational training. The curriculum needs to be designed to combine religious values with vocational skills, for example, through production-based learning and Islamic edutechnopreneurship (Taufiq et al., 2022). Critical Islamic Religious Education (CIRE) can be employed to train students to think critically while understanding the modern social context. Concepts such as jihad, umma, ijtihad, maslaha, and maqasid can be integrated to create a balance between faith and life realities (Felsenthal & Agbaria, 2025). The principal also plays a crucial role in leading the policy direction, with a clear vision of producing graduates who are job-ready and possess strong religious ethics. Leadership models that understand local culture, conduct benchmarking, and provide professional training have proven effective (Jumintono et al., 2018). Routine evaluation and program adjustments based on feedback from teachers, students, and parents are essential to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of the Ramadan program in Vocational High Schools (Asfiati et al., 2023).

3. Policy Implementation of the Islamic Ramadan Study Program in Vocational High Schools

According to Carl Vincent Patton and David S. Sawicki, public policy implementation is an ongoing process involving continuous activities. They emphasize the importance of regular monitoring to ensure that programs effectively address the most critical aspects of previously identified problems. Utilizing the most recent and accurate data

is crucial for adjusting program execution so that policies remain relevant and practical. Evaluating the effectiveness of implementation is also a primary focus, as suboptimal execution can hinder the achievement of policy objectives. Patton and Sawicki advocate for a participatory approach through iterative learning cycles and joint decision-making between the government and society. This approach allows policy adjustments based on genuine stakeholder input and strengthens transactional relationships between beneficiaries and program implementers (Marans & Callewaert, 2017; Hanks, 2016).

Policy implementation faces various structural challenges, including limited budgetary and human resources, which significantly impact its effectiveness. Low commitment from authorized officials and weak systems of supervision and sanctions can obstruct the achievement of optimal policy outcomes (Hutagalung & Kurnani, 2021). In the higher education sector, for example, policy implementation is often decentralized, which can create a gap between policy formulators and frontline implementers (Goldrick-Rab & Shaw, 2023). Therefore, active citizen participation is crucial to ensure that policy implementation truly aligns with public needs (Xiaodong et al., 2019). Furthermore, robust digital infrastructure and comprehensive stakeholder engagement can enhance the efficiency, transparency, and accountability of the policy implementation process. Collaborative governance approaches are also considered capable of strengthening coordination among actors and expanding spaces for community participation (Asmawa et al., 2024; Tommy et al., 2024).

The implementation of the Islamic Ramadan Study Program in Vocational High Schools reflects efforts to integrate Islamic values into the educational curriculum and to develop students' social responsibility. Programs such as "Kampus Mengajar" exemplify the application of social justice principles and responsibility from an Islamic perspective, although challenges persist, including infrastructure and resource limitations (Rahmawati et al., 2024). At the State Vocational Islamic High School, policy implementation is frequently hindered by inconsistent policies, weak bureaucratic structures, and limited resources. Therefore, a model encompassing policy feasibility, effective communication, resource availability, bureaucratic efficiency, and implementer loyalty has been proposed to enhance the effectiveness of vocational education based on Islamic values (Musad et al., 2025). The implementation of the Ramadan program must take these conditions into strategic consideration.

Common challenges in implementing Islamic education policies in Vocational High Schools include limited facilities, weak structural support, and low student motivation. For example, school literacy movements in Vocational High Schools frequently face obstacles such as insufficient book availability, lack of funding, and a low reading culture (Jatmika et al., 2020). Similarly, in the context of Arabic language learning at Islamic schools, challenges include students' weak foundational skills, limited instructional hours, and lack of environmental support (Zurqoni et al., 2020). For Ramadan programs, providing adequate facilities and emotional support for students during the fasting month is crucial. Routine evaluations, such as those conducted at Vocational High Schools Batik 2 Surakarta through tests and non-test assessments, along with remedial efforts for students who do not meet standards, can serve as a model for Ramadan program evaluation (Widiyarto & Inayati, 2023; Mujahidin et al., 2021).

4. Policy Evaluation of the Islamic Ramadan Study Program in Vocational High Schools

According to Carl Vincent Patton and David S. Sawicki, policy evaluation emphasizes the importance of continuous monitoring of program activities designed to implement policies. They recognize that these activities must accurately address the main issues previously identified. Therefore, better, up-to-date data are necessary to determine whether adjustments in program implementation are required. Furthermore, the effectiveness of policy execution becomes a primary concern, making periodic evaluation a critical step to ensure optimal policy implementation (Marans & Callewaert, 2017). In practice, policy evaluation requires the active involvement of stakeholders, including implementers, evaluators, and beneficiaries, to enhance coordination and the relevance of the evaluation process (Pucilowski, 2016). Patton and Sawicki also emphasize a utilization-focused evaluation approach that ensures evaluation results are valid for decision-makers. Logic model and systems thinking approaches are also employed to systematically assess policy changes and impacts (Claes et al., 2017).

Evaluation of the Islamic Ramadan Study Program at the vocational high school level generally combines test-based and non-test-based assessments. Tests are used to measure students' cognitive abilities in understanding religious material. In contrast, non-test methods, such as behavioural observation and participation in religious practices, serve as tools for assessing students' affective and spiritual skills (Widiyanto & Inayati, 2023). Challenges in the evaluation process arise from students' diverse backgrounds, both economic and in terms of prior access to religious education. This diversity affects students' readiness and absorption of the taught material (Faradhiba & Inayati, 2023). Additionally, limitations in the teaching staff and a heavy curriculum workload further complicate the full implementation of the program. To overcome these obstacles, adaptive evaluation approaches and contextualized learning strategies are necessary to ensure the program operates optimally and equitably (Fauzi & Inayati, 2023).

In assessing the effectiveness of the Ramadan Program in vocational high schools, the CIPP evaluation model (Context, Input, Process, Product) is highly relevant. This model assesses the program's suitability in the policy context, the adequacy of inputs such as teaching staff and facilities, the effectiveness of implementation processes, and the achievement of student outcomes (Barella et al., 2024). Moreover, the EPK-PAI model emphasizes character strengthening through an input-process-output approach and is well-suited for measuring the success of moral values embedded in Ramadan learning (Choiriyah et al., 2023). Successful program implementation requires visionary leadership from school principals as well as teacher training to enable them to handle the unique dynamics of teaching during the holy month (Jumintono et al., 2018). The program should also be designed to support students' spiritual and social development through activities such as Quran recitation (tadarus), congregational prayers, and social service, all of which can reinforce students' religious character (Ok et al., 2022).

D. CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Islamic Ramadan Study Program policy in Vocational High Schools faces various challenges at each stage of the policy, according to Patton and Sawicki's

model: problem identification, formulation, implementation, and evaluation. During the problem identification stage, policy formulation often lacks comprehensive involvement of all stakeholders, resulting in biased policies that do not fully reflect on-the-ground needs. Additionally, a gap exists between educational research findings and the policies implemented, which is exacerbated by bureaucracy, limited resources, and ineffective communication. At the formulation stage, although Ramadan activities such as congregational prayers, tausiyah (Islamic sermons), and Ramadan journals have been developed, obstacles arise in including low student discipline, limited participation, and non-adaptive learning approaches. Policy implementation is greatly influenced by school leadership, community involvement, and the availability of infrastructure and resources; however, various structural limitations remain significant constraints. Policy evaluation employs both test-based and non-test-based approaches to assess cognitive and affective aspects. However, the diversity of student backgrounds and teachers' heavy workloads reduces the effectiveness of the evaluation. Overall, the program's success is strongly determined by the synergy among the curriculum, teachers, school principals, and the community, with continuous evaluation and participatory approaches as key factors in improving policies that are more contextually relevant and better shape students' religious character.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We express our sincere gratitude for the opportunity and support provided throughout this research process. This study is expected to make a positive contribution by enhancing the effectiveness of the Islamic Ramadan Study Program implementation in Vocational High Schools. The results are expected to inform the development in more adaptive and contextual policies, as well as enhance synergy among schools, teachers, students, and the community. We hope these findings will also encourage the development of a strong religious character and foster a holistic, transformative learning environment, enabling Islamic-based vocational education to grow sustainably and benefit future generations. Thank you to all parties who supported this work.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

- Author 1 : Conceptualization of the Analytical Framework: Designed and developed a structured methodological approach to dissect the research problem.
- Author 2 : Comprehensive Data Collection: Executed systematic data collection using appropriate methods to obtain valid and relevant data.
- Author 3 : In-depth Data Analysis: Applied thematic analysis techniques to transform raw data into identified and meaningful findings.
- Author 4 : Interpretation and Synthesis of Findings: Interpreted the analytical findings and synthesized them into a coherent narrative that addresses the research focus.

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