

THE ROLE OF MASS MEDIA IN SHAPING PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION POLICY

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Abstract

Islamic education plays a strategic role in shaping national civilization and character, particularly in Muslim-majority countries such as Indonesia, where it forms an integral part of the national education system. Beyond its function as a vehicle for knowledge transmission, Islamic education serves as a foundation for moral and ethical development rooted in Islamic values. In the era of globalization and rapid technological advancement, the adaptability of Islamic education becomes increasingly vital especially as mass media emerges as a powerful force in influencing public perception of related policies. This study explores how Islamic education policies are portrayed in the mass media, the extent to which such portrayals shape public opinion, and the patterns of framing and bias that may be present in media coverage. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach through literature review, the research draws on a range of sources including books, academic journals, news articles, and digital publications. The findings reveal that mass media significantly influence public attitudes toward Islamic education policy through agenda-setting and framing techniques. While mainstream media often align with government narratives, alternative media tend to highlight critical perspectives, including concerns about the potential secularization of Islamic education. The study concludes by emphasizing the need for more inclusive and transparent communication strategies involving collaboration among policymakers, scholars, and media practitioners to foster a more informed and balanced public discourse.

Keywords: Education Policy, Islamic Education, Mass Media, Framing, Agenda Setting, Public Opinion.

Abstrak

Pendidikan Islam memainkan peran strategis dalam membentuk peradaban dan karakter nasional, terutama di negara-negara dengan mayoritas penduduk Muslim seperti Indonesia, di mana pendidikan Islam menjadi bagian integral dari sistem pendidikan nasional. Selain berfungsi sebagai sarana transmisi pengetahuan, pendidikan Islam juga berperan sebagai landasan pengembangan moral dan etika yang berakar pada nilai-nilai Islam. Di era globalisasi dan kemajuan teknologi yang pesat, kemampuan adaptasi pendidikan Islam menjadi semakin vital, terutama seiring munculnya media massa sebagai kekuatan yang berpengaruh dalam membentuk persepsi publik terhadap kebijakan terkait. Studi ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana kebijakan pendidikan Islam

digambarkan dalam media massa, sejauh mana penggambaran tersebut membentuk opini publik, serta pola framing dan bias yang mungkin terdapat dalam liputan media. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif melalui tinjauan literatur, penelitian ini mengacu pada berbagai sumber termasuk buku, jurnal akademik, artikel berita, dan publikasi digital. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa media massa secara signifikan mempengaruhi sikap publik terhadap kebijakan pendidikan Islam melalui teknik agenda-setting dan framing. Meskipun media mainstream sering sejalan dengan narasi pemerintah, media alternatif cenderung menyoroti perspektif kritis, termasuk kekhawatiran tentang potensi sekularisasi pendidikan Islam. Studi ini menyimpulkan dengan menekankan perlunya strategi komunikasi yang lebih inklusif dan transparan yang melibatkan kolaborasi antara pembuat kebijakan, akademisi, dan praktisi media untuk mendorong diskursus publik yang lebih terinformasi dan seimbang.

Kata Kunci: Kebijakan Pendidikan, Pendidikan Islam, Media Massa, Framing, Agenda Setting, Opini Publik.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education has a strategic role in building civilization and the character of the nation. Muslim-majority countries such as Indonesia make Islamic education a fundamental part of the education system. The function of Islamic education is not only a means of transferring knowledge, but also an instrument of moral and ethical formation based on Islamic values (Karimah and Khotimah 2021, 21).

أَمَّنْ هُوَ قَانِتٌ آنَاءَ اللَّيْلِ سَاجِدًا وَقَائِمًا يَحْذَرُ الْآخِرَةَ وَيَرْجُوا رَحْمَةَ رَبِّهِ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ

Meaning: "Is it the polytheist who is more fortunate) or the one who worships at night in a state of prostrate, standing, fearing the Hereafter, and hoping for the mercy of his Lord? Say, "Are those who know (the rights of Allah) the same as those who do not know (the rights of Allah)?" Indeed, only ululalbab (people of sound mind) can receive lessons."

This verse emphasizes the importance of knowledge as the main differentiator between knowledgeable individuals and those who are not. Islamic education plays a role in shaping a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also has strong morals and character. History records that the glory of Islamic civilization was born from education based on Islamic values and openness to science. Therefore, Islamic education policy must ensure that education remains relevant to the demands of the times, without eliminating Islamic spiritual values and morality.

In the modern era, the challenges of globalization and technological developments require Islamic education to be more adaptive. The mass media has a strategic role in shaping public opinion on Islamic education policies, both in supporting, criticizing, and disseminating information. Therefore, an effective communication strategy and synergy between the government, academics, and scholars are needed to ensure that Islamic education policies remain the main pillars in building a civilization with character and civility.

Islamic education policy is the result of a complex interaction between Islamic values, state policies, and socio-cultural developments (Khumaini, Isroani, and Aya 2022). Regulations such as Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System recognize madrasas and pesantren as part of the national education system (Dasopang et al. 2024, 68).

The mass media has a significant role in shaping public opinion on Islamic education policies. Print and digital media are the main means of disseminating information, criticism, and policy analysis. The media is often a catalyst for policy change by voicing the aspirations of the public and academics, thus influencing government decisions (Apriliani 2022, 156).

Changes in Islamic education policies have received wide reactions from various parties. Academics, education practitioners, scholars, and the general public highlight policy issues through mass media reporting. The media is a tool for supporting policies as well as a means of criticism of policies that are not in favor of Islamic education (Suwarno 2016, 72). The study of media coverage of Islamic education policies is important to understand news patterns, news biases, and impacts on policy implementation.

The formulation of the research problem includes the following aspects:

1. How does the mass media report on Indonesia's Islamic education policy?
2. To what extent does media coverage affect public opinion and policy making in the Islamic education sector?
3. What are the patterns and biases of media reporting on Islamic education policies?

The mass media has the power to shape public perception of Islamic education policies. Research shows that the media plays a role as a tool for legitimizing government policies, but also as a means of criticism of policies that are less in favor of Islamic education. Framing news affects people's views on Islamic education policies. The media's critical narrative causes the public to see policies as problematic. On the contrary, positive news makes it easier for policies to be accepted by the public. The study examines how mass media frames Islamic education policies, news patterns, and impacts on public opinion and policy-making. This analysis is expected to find a more effective communication pattern to convey Islamic education policies to the community.

METHOD

This study uses a literature study method with a descriptive qualitative approach. This method is applied to collect, analyze, and evaluate various relevant references related to Islamic education policies reported through the mass media. The literature study aims to present an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of Islamic education policy from the perspective of mass media and its impact on public perception. This research focuses on understanding the relationship between Islamic education policy and the way it is reported by the mass media, as well as how the media affects public perception related to these policies. This approach is carried out without collecting primary data, but by

analyzing existing literature, such as books, scientific journals, articles, research reports, and publications from various mass media, both print and online.

This literature study method aims to describe and analyze the trends of media coverage of Islamic education policies, as well as to identify the influence caused by such news on public opinion. This research is explanatory, because it aims to explain the cause-and-effect relationship between the two main variables to be studied, namely the Islamic education policy reported in the mass media and the public's perception of the policy.

The research process was carried out by selecting and analyzing relevant literature sources to dig up data that reflected the relationship between the two variables. The researcher will interpret the results of this analysis to gain a comprehensive understanding of how the mass media shapes public views on the prevailing Islamic education policies, as well as what impact the news has. Thus, through this literature study method, this research is expected to make a significant contribution in describing the relationship between Islamic education policy and the influence of mass media on public perception of these policies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Islamic Education Policy

Definition and Scope of Islamic Education Policy

Islamic education policy is a series of regulations, decisions, and strategic steps to regulate the education system based on Islamic values. The main objectives of this policy include strengthening scientific aspects, character development based on moral character, and adjustment to the challenges of the times (Kurniati, El Widdah, and Su'aidi 2023, 119). Islamic education policy not only discusses curriculum aspects, but also institutions, educators, evaluation systems, and the management of Islamic educational institutions such as madrasas, Islamic boarding schools, and Islamic universities. The scope of this policy includes:

1. Curriculum policy. Integration of religious and general sciences to create graduates with Islamic insight and professional skills;
2. Institutional policies. Management of madrasas and pesantren as part of the national education system;
3. Educator policy. Standardization of the competence of religious teachers and lecturers of Islamic universities;
4. Evaluation system policy. Assessment based on academic competence and Islamic character (Ahmadi and El Widdah 2023, 115).

Main Principles in the Formulation of Islamic Education Policy Islamic education policy is based on the main principles sourced from the Qur'an, hadith, and the thoughts of scholars. These principles include:

1. Tawheed as the main foundation. Education aims to form individuals with a strong monotheistic awareness as stated by Allah in QS. Al-Alaq verses 1-5 regarding the importance of faith-based knowledge;
2. Knowledge as an obligation. The Prophet's hadith emphasizes the obligation to seek knowledge for every Muslim, so that Islamic education policies must ensure access to quality education;
3. Integration of religious science and world science. The thoughts of scholars such as Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun emphasized the need for a balance of religious knowledge and world knowledge in order to form superior human beings;
4. Justice and inclusivity. Islamic education policies must cover all levels of society without discrimination;
5. Relevance to the development of the times. Imam Shafi'i emphasized the need to reform thinking in accordance with social changes to ensure the effectiveness of Islamic education policies (Triarni and Islam 2024, 183).

Regulatory Framework and Implementation of Islamic Education Policy in Indonesia In Indonesia, Islamic education policies are regulated in various regulations to ensure synergy between Islamic values and the national education system. Some of the key regulations include:(B, Naro, and Yuspiani 2024, 39).

1. Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System;
 - a. Recognizing madrassas and pesantren as part of the national education system;
 - b. Ensuring the right of every citizen to obtain religious education according to their own beliefs;
 - c. To organize the Islamic education curriculum to ensure a balance between religious and general knowledge;
2. Regulation of the Minister of Religion and Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology;
 - a. The Regulation of the Minister of Religion regulates the standards of madrasah education, the curriculum of Islamic boarding schools, and the competence of Islamic religious teachers;
 - b. The Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology ensures the synergy of Islamic education policies with national policies, including the Merdeka Learning program for madrasas and Islamic boarding schools.
3. Madrasah and Islamic Boarding School Curriculum Policy
 - a. The Islamic education curriculum was developed to reflect the balance between religious and general knowledge;

- b. National standards of Islamic religious education adjust to global developments to ensure the competitiveness of graduates.

With these regulations and policies, Islamic education in Indonesia continues to develop to answer the challenges of the times and ensure that graduates have academic competence and strong Islamic character.

Mass Media as an Agent of Public Opinion Shaping

The mass media has a strategic role in shaping public opinion and influencing Islamic education policy. In a democratic system, the media functions as a means of conveying information, social control, and a link between the government and the community. The media shapes public perception of Islamic education policies by presenting news, analysis, and opinions from various parties (Qadri 2020, 50).

In the context of Islamic education policies, the media is not only a tool for disseminating information, but also plays a role as a driver of social change. The media can accelerate policy adoption by building public awareness and pressuring the government to respond to public demands. On the contrary, the media can also cause resistance to certain policies through negative news that forms critical public opinion (Muhammad, 2018).

Independent media and mainstream media have different reporting patterns in highlighting Islamic education policies. The mainstream media tends to follow the government's perspective by prioritizing aspects of legality and policy effectiveness. On the other hand, independent media often present criticism by presenting the viewpoints of the community, academics, and Islamic organizations (Musli 2021).

The media influences the formation of public opinion and perception of Islamic education policies. According to Entman (1993), framing is a process of selecting and emphasizing certain aspects of an issue in order to form public interpretation. In Islamic education policy, framing is used to describe a policy as a solution or as a problem that needs to be criticized. The mass media has an important role in shaping the narrative about Islamic education policy by choosing certain aspects to be emphasized in the news. A concrete example of the application of framing can be seen in the news about the pesantren curriculum policy. Certain media outlets portray the policy as an effort to modernize the Islamic education system, highlighting its positive impact on improving education standards and integration with the national system. On the other hand, other media outlets have described the policy as a form of state intervention against the autonomy of Islamic boarding schools, underscoring concerns about the loss of traditional values in Islamic education (Wahyuni 2018).

In addition to framing, agenda setting theory is also the main approach in understanding how the media shapes public opinion on Islamic education policy. This theory states that the media not only presents news, but also determines which issues are considered important by society. In the context of Islamic education, the media can build a perception of the urgency of a policy by repeatedly displaying news and highlighting its impact on

society. By highlighting certain aspects, the media can direct public attention to certain issues in Islamic education policy. Studies show that the media often strengthens certain discourses related to Islamic education policies by presenting the opinions of scholars and academics as a form of validation or criticism of government policies. This pattern of reporting reflects how the media is not only a conveyor of information, but also an active agent in influencing policy and public response to Islamic education issues.

An analysis of news coverage of Islamic education policies shows the difference in news patterns between mainstream media and alternative Islamic media.

1. Media Mainstream

- a. Media such as Kompas and Tempo tend to highlight Islamic education policies in the context of national policies.
- b. The news focuses more on regulations, social impacts, and the effectiveness of policy implementation.
- c. Coverage tends to be neutral or supportive of government policies by featuring statements by officials and Islamic education policy experts.

2. Alternative Islamic Media

- a. Media such as Republika and Islamic community-based media often use a critical approach in reporting on Islamic education policies.
- b. The main focus of the news includes the impact of policies on the sustainability of Islamic values in the education system.
- c. The narrative used emphasizes the importance of maintaining Islamic identity in education policy and highlights the possibility of secularization bias in government policies.

The different perspectives of the media in framing Islamic education policies reflect how the media can shape public opinion as well as influence public responses to implemented policies. Further study is needed to understand how the media can be used as an advocacy tool for more inclusive Islamic education policies as well as.

The mass media has a role in shaping public opinion on Islamic education policies. Pro-policy media tend to highlight the benefits of policies and quote official statements to reinforce policy legitimacy. On the other hand, critical media emphasize the negative impact as well as the perspectives of academics or scholars who question the effectiveness of policies. Mainstream media such as Kompas and Tempo often feature Islamic education policies within the framework of national development, while alternative Islamic media such as Republika highlight the independent aspect of Islamic education.

The news about the implementation of the Independent Learning Curriculum in madrassas and pesantren shows different narratives. Pro-policy media portrayed this reform as a step forward to increase the competitiveness of madrassas and Islamic

boarding schools. On the contrary, critical media highlights the potential for secularization, the loss of traditional values, and the resistance of scholars to the new curriculum (Wazis, Hidayat, and Wahyudin 2020).

Differences in perspectives in the reporting of Islamic education policies are influenced by the ideological orientation of the media. Media affiliated with the government tend to display policies in a positive narrative, while Islamic media focus more on aspects of Islamic education independence and criticism of state intervention. By understanding media bias, it can be seen how news affects public opinion and policy-making in the Islamic education sector.

Strategy to Strengthen the Image of Islamic Education Policy in the Mass Media

The dissemination of Islamic education policies requires an effective communication strategy to ensure that policies can be understood and accepted by the public. Strategic communication functions to convey policy information transparently, build public trust, and manage public perception of Islamic education policies (Fauzan, Nadir, and Ikhwan 2024). Effective communication strategies in the dissemination of Islamic education policies include several key approaches:

1. **Positive Framing:** Governments and educational institutions should package policies with language that emphasizes the benefits and positive impacts for the development of Islamic education.
2. **Communication Crisis Management:** Criticized policies need to be responded to with data- and fact-based communication strategies to avoid disinformation.
3. **Digital Media Participation:** The use of social media and online platforms is needed to reach a wider audience and form positive public opinion on Islamic education policies

The Role of Academics, Scholars, and the Media in Presenting Objective News (Ririn Nuraini and Sri Ambarwati Cahyaningrum 2022).

CONCLUSION

The mass media plays a central role in the reporting of Islamic education policies in Indonesia. Various media framing policies with different perspectives, where pro-policy media tends to highlight the benefits of policies for the modernization of Islamic education, while critical media emphasize more on potential negative impacts and possible secularization bias. In the process, the media uses framing strategies and agenda setting to shape public opinion and influence public perception of the policies implemented.

Media reporting not only serves as a means of information, but also has a major impact on public opinion and policy-making in the Islamic education sector. Repetitive and dominant news in one perspective can direct public opinion to support or reject certain policies. In some cases, criticism conveyed through the media encourages the government to adjust policies or improve implementation strategies to better suit the needs of the

community. The media is also an advocacy tool for certain groups to pressure the government in the process of formulating Islamic education policies.

Analysis of media reports shows that there are patterns and biases in the way Islamic education policies are reported. Mainstream media tend to highlight administrative aspects as well as their relation to national policies, while alternative Islamic media focuses more on issues of identity, independence of Islamic education, and state intervention in the Islamic-based education system. Ideological bias in news is reflected in the selection of narratives, the use of news sources, and the approach used in describing Islamic education policies.

From these findings, a more effective communication strategy is needed to ensure that Islamic education policies can be well accepted by the public. The government, academics, and the media must collaborate in presenting objective and data-driven news to avoid disinformation. The use of digital media and the involvement of scholars in socializing policies are also strategic steps to increase public acceptance. This overall analysis shows that the mass media is not just an information tool, but also an instrument that can determine the direction and acceptance of Islamic education policies. Therefore, communication transparency and research-based approaches are the main factors in creating inclusive and sustainable Islamic education policies.

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