

Open Access

Cite this article: Khosiin, K., Abdulharis, A., Nurhakim, N., & Humaidi, M. (2024). The Policy of Islamic Religious Education in Indonesia during the New Order Era (1966-1998). *Global International Journal of Innovative Research*, 2(6). Retrieved from <https://global-us.mellbaou.com/index.php/global/article/view/194>

Received: May, 2024

Accepted: June, 2024

Keywords:

New Order Era Policy, Islamic Education.

Author for correspondence:

Khamam Khosiin

E-mail: khamamkhosiin95@gmail.com

Published by:

The Policy of Islamic Religious Education in Indonesia during the New Order Era (1966-1998)

¹Khamam Khosiin, ²Abdulharis, ³Nurhakim, ⁴M.Nurul Humaidi

¹STIT Muhammadiyah Tanjung Redeb, ^{2,3,4}University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia

During the New Order era, Islamic education in Indonesia experienced significant growth and advancement in both quantity and quality compared to the preceding period. The New Order government had distinct characteristics in its administration of Islamic education by making it mandatory at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of schooling. Additionally, Islamic educational institutions, such as madrasahs and pesantrens, began to gain recognition. These institutions received attention for the provision of facilities that met government standards. Islamic education held a recognized position on par with other forms of education at a national level. The development of the education sector was rooted in the country's philosophy of Pancasila, aiming to shape individuals as Pancasila-oriented agents of development. The goal was to nurture physically and spiritually healthy Indonesians, equipped with knowledge and skills. Therefore, these individuals were expected to have the capability of fostering creativity and responsibility, cultivating a democratic attitude and tolerance, developing high intelligence alongside noble character, and nurturing love for the nation and fellow humans, as outlined in the 1945 Constitution.

1. Introduction

Education is the state's responsibility, as stipulated in Article 31 of the 1945 Constitution. Revisiting the history of the New Order era, which spanned from 1966 to 1998, reveals a phase marked by national development. During this period, the Indonesian Communist Party (Indonesian: Partai Komunis Indonesia [PKI]) was effectively banned, prompting the Suharto-led government to institute reforms across various sectors, notably in education, outlined in the Resolution of Provisional People's Consultative Assembly (Indonesian: Majelis Permusyawaratan Rakyat Sementara [MPRS]) of the Republic of Indonesia No. XXVII/MPRS/1966.

Previously, Indonesia's Presidential Decree No. 145/1965 demonstrates the alignment of the Old Order era's national education goals with the Manipol-USDEK principles. The implemented educational objectives were called Panca Wardana (the five principles of development). However, these educational objectives did not endure and were abandoned after the eruption of the 30 September Movement or PKI incident in 1965 (Abdullah, 2011). Public dissatisfaction with President Sukarno's perceived indecisiveness led to prolonged demonstrations, demanding the Tritura (Tri Tuntutan Rakyat or Three People's Demands in English), which included banning PKI politics in Indonesia. This resulted in the issuance of the Supersemar on March 11, 1966.

Concerning educational goals, the objective was to shape individuals based on Pancasila, as stated in the preamble of the 1945 Constitution. Education was not the primary focus during the New Order, as the government prioritized economic improvement and development. The New Order lasted from March 11, 1966, until the transition from President Suharto to President Habibbi on May 21, 1998. The Old Order, dominated by the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), was considered to have deviated from Pancasila. Meanwhile, the New Order introduced a new direction for Islamic education policies, as the shift from communist influence aimed towards refining Pancasila through sustained national development plans. Furthermore, the New Order era was also termed the "Constitutional Order" and "Development Order," aiming to build complete individuals by balancing spiritual and physical aspects for a better life. Moreover, government policies regarding Islamic religious education were shaped by political developments during this time.

After President Sukarno stepped down from power, the regime shifted from the Old Order to the New Order under Soeharto's leadership. This era lasted approximately 32 years. During this period, Islamic education underwent various policy changes. On one hand, it provided advantages to educational providers under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, allowing for innovation, development, and renewal of education across all levels. On the other hand,

government policies regarding Islamic education did not fully grant the same rights as general education. The government's stance on Islamic education was significantly influenced by political developments. For instance, tensions between the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) and the National Army during Sukarno's final years led religious groups, especially Islam and Christianity, to align themselves with the military. From 1961 until the end of Sukarno's rule, the Ministry of Education and Culture had two Ministers. Prijono, associated with the PKI-aligned Murba, was the Minister of Basic Education, while Sjarief Thajeb, a military figure, was the Minister of Higher Education. With support from religious groups, Sjarief Thajeb enforced religious education in various universities in Indonesia, despite the 1950 Education Law not mandating religious education. The failed bloody coup of September 30, 1965, altered Indonesia's political landscape. In resisting the PKI post-coup, Muslims and Christians collaborated with the military. During the 1966 MPRS session, it was decided that religious education should be compulsory from primary schools to universities. However, this significant change, while pleasing to some religious figures, also triggered tensions and conflicts between Islamic and Christian leaders.

The discourse on the threat of Christianization among Muslims culminated in two demands: (1) restricting religious broadcasts solely to those who are not yet affiliated with any religion, and (2) requiring government approval for the construction of places of worship (M. Natsir, 1999).

As per the Republic of Indonesia Law No. 20/2003 regarding the National Education System, Article 1, paragraph 1, education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning environment and learning processes so that students may actively develop their potential to possess spiritual and religious strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the necessary skills for themselves, society, the nation, and the state (<https://kelembagaan.ridtekdkti.go.id>).

2. Method

This study was qualitative research, utilizing an analytical descriptive method. The descriptive method aimed to delineate the object of study by analyzing available data and subsequently conducting critical evaluations of the material. Furthermore, the process involved gathering information on the research subject or problem. Information was obtained from books, scholarly works, the internet, and other sources.

3. Result and Discussion

1. 1968 Curriculum

This curriculum replaced the 1964 curriculum under Sukarno's regime regarding the management of Islamic education in schools. With the enactment of the Provisional People's Consultative Assembly Resolution No. XIII/MPRS/1966 on July 25, 1966, Suharto was elected and subsequently formed a new cabinet. As the President held the power of governance and was the head of state, he had the authority to make changes in all sectors.

The distinctive feature of the 1968 curriculum was the government's focus on an organized approach to subjects, incorporating the cultivation of Pancasila, specific skills, and basic knowledge. There was a significant demand for students to memorize theories without much practical application. The psychomotor and affective aspects received less attention, predominantly focusing on the cognitive aspect (accessed from <https://attriolong.com>).

A joint regulation by the Minister of Religion and the Minister of Education and Culture on October 23, 1967, determined that Grades I and II of elementary school received 2 hours of religious studies per week, Grade III had 3 hours per week, and Grades IV to VI had 4 hours per week. This applied similarly to junior and senior high school levels, with 3 hours per week. Subsequently, in 1970, the Minister of Religion attempted to change the religious education curriculum, aiming for specific classes in elementary and junior high schools to receive 6 hours of religious education per week. However, this attempt failed as the Department of Education did not approve it.

Furthermore, the Resolution of the People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia No. IV/MPR/1973 underscores: "Education fundamentally involves a conscious effort to cultivate one's personality and skills within and beyond the school context—a process that spans a lifetime."

2. 1975 Curriculum

During the second phase of the New Order era, religious education in Indonesia became more positive and constructive. The policy aimed to continue equalizing access to education, although it was only applicable to autonomous institutions under the supervision of the Minister of Religion (Rossi, 2023).

This policy is evident through the issuance of Presidential Decree No. 34 on April 18, 1972, regarding the functional responsibilities of education and training. The decree covered three main points:

- a. The Minister of Education and Culture was tasked with the supervision and responsibility

for general education and educational policies.

- b. The Minister of Labor was responsible for supervising and training vocational skills for workers and civil servants.
- c. The Head of the State Administration Institute was responsible for the specialized education and training of civil servants.

The development of religious education in Indonesia during this period emphasized the goal of MBO (Management by Objective). Learning content and objectives were detailed within the instructional system development procedure known as “lesson units” (Indonesian: Satuan Pelajaran). In addition, lesson plans delineated general instructional objectives and specific instructional objectives. Assessment activities were integrated into the learning process. Furthermore, each teacher had to outline their plans within the learning program. Moreover, face-to-face sessions were scheduled at the beginning of the academic year, introducing a four-month program (Safei, 2020).

3. 1984 Curriculum

In 1984, the government refined the 1975 curriculum by incorporating the Active Student Learning Method (Indonesian: Cara Belajar Siswa Aktif [CBSA]). During this period, subjects were more focused on historical indoctrination. Educational policies aimed at standardization, both in expression and thought. The education system lacked social accountability as the community was not involved in designing it due to its centralized nature. Consequently, education during this time disregarded societal pluralism, resulting in decreased tolerance and increased egotism.

The Islamic education curriculum during the New Order era followed a joint decree by three ministers, elaborated further in the Minister of Education and Culture Decree No. 299/u/1984 and the Minister of Religion Decree No. 45/1984, regulating the implementation of both general school and madrasah curricula. The decree broadly permitted graduates from unstuck madrasahs to pursue higher education in public schools. The Resolution of People’s Consultative Assembly No. II/MPRS/1983 underscored the need to adjust the education system in line with human resource needs and technological advancements. Thus, curriculum changes were crucial to enhance educational delivery, in both public schools and madrasahs (Syahran, 2019).

The 1984 curriculum emphasized a teaching pattern oriented towards pedagogical theories, paying less attention to the subject matter. This was influenced by the educational atmosphere in Educational Training Institutions (Indonesian: Lembaga Pendidikan Tenaga Kependidikan [LPTK]), which prioritized theories of the teaching-learning process. Consequently, the Basic Science Team was formed, responsible for curriculum development

in schools. This team believed in providing a substantial amount of subject matter to students, ensuring they covered a broad curriculum within specific periods.

4. 1994 Curriculum

The administrative model of the 1994 curriculum is known as the top-down staff-line model. Initiatives and ideas originated from the central government, which formulated the curriculum for implementation in every educational unit. Consequently, teachers only executed the predetermined guidelines. In the 1994 curriculum, the teaching of mathematics bore distinctive traits. The material structure aligned with children's developmental psychology, delving deeper into specialized topics like computers. Furthermore, mathematical learning models were presented in various subject areas, focusing on real-life scenarios. Essentially, mathematics learning emphasized textual content while acknowledging contextual elements relevant to the material. Story problems were incorporated at the end of each topic to engage students and enhance their problem-solving skills for daily life challenges. Notable features of the 1994 curriculum's implementation included as follows:

- a. The evaluation system for learning was structured into four-month periods.
- b. All aspects of the curriculum were determined by the Central Department.
- c. The learning process was teacher-centered.
- d. Evaluations or assessment systems emphasized cognitive abilities.
- e. The learning process in the school was more focused on subject matter, resulting in dense content.
- f. It enforced a unified curriculum system for all students across Indonesia.

This curriculum served as a core curriculum, enabling specific regions to develop their teaching methods according to the local environment and community needs.

During teaching and learning activities, teachers had the flexibility to choose and employ strategies involving students actively in learning, encompassing mental, physical, and social engagement. To engage students effectively, teachers posed questions that prompted convergent, divergent (open-ended; allowing for multiple answers), and investigative responses.

5. Characteristics of the 1994 Curriculum

There were prominent characteristics seen in the implementation of the 1994 curriculum, including as follows.

Approach Aspect: The 1994 curriculum employed a content-based approach, emphasizing mandatory subject matter to be imparted to students. In addition, student success was measured based on their mastery of all subjects, aligning with John Locke's *Tabula Rasa* theory.

Development Authority Aspect: Under the 1994 curriculum, the central government had a significant influence, with 80% of the national curriculum content dictated by them. Despite their knowledge of regional conditions, needs, and potential, regional authorities held only 20% influence.

Content Aspect: The curriculum's material appeared overloaded, resulting in repetitions. This not only led to a waste of time, energy, and thought but also caused students' boredom to reach its peak.

Teaching-and-Learning Process Aspect: Success in Teaching-and-Learning Activities (TLA) under the 1994 curriculum depended heavily on teachers and their approach, positioning them as the sole source of learning. This made students passive recipients of classroom realities.

Orientation Aspect: The 1994 curriculum emphasized achieving high test scores, depicted numerically in report cards. Students with higher numeric scores from exams were identified as high-achieving students.

Teacher Aspect: Teachers played an extremely crucial role in the 1994 curriculum as the sole source of learning for students.

Relationship Aspect: The learning atmosphere within the 1994 Curriculum was informative, as teachers were initially the sole source of learning. Didactic methods, commonly employed, involved lectures, thereby creating a monologue situation where teachers were more active in delivering material while students became passive listeners.

Academic Year Aspect: The 1994 curriculum divided the academic year into four-month periods, allowing for three main periods of active learning within a year. Consequently, there were three examination periods (examinations for the learning phase every four months: exams I, II, and III). This was a result of the initial theoretical orientation of teaching, thereby focusing on providing as much material as possible to the students.

Aspect of Effective Days: Under the 1994 Curriculum, students were required to attend classes for six days a week, spending 42 teaching hours. This left only one day for students to socialize with their environment, especially challenging for those undertaking dual education (formal and non-formal education). Almost an entire day was spent in classrooms, from morning to afternoon in Elementary School (Indonesian: Sekolah Dasar [SD]) and from noon to afternoon in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), which was both exhausting and quite tedious.

6. Objectives of the 1945 Curriculum

a. National Objectives

The 1945 curriculum aimed to enlighten the life of the nation and develop the complete

Indonesian human, namely those who are faithful and devoted to the One Almighty God, possessing knowledge, skills, physical-and-spiritual health, solid and independent personality, and societal and national responsibilities (Article 4 of Indonesia's Law No. 2/1989).

b. General Objectives

The general objectives of the 1994 curriculum were to prepare students to confront the evolving conditions in life and the ever-changing world through logical, rational, critical, honest, careful, effective, and efficient thinking. Encouraging student participation in mathematics competitions, locally and internationally, was one way to achieve these goals. Additionally, the implementation of the 1994 curriculum sought to enhance the quality of education by ensuring students had mastered the provided materials. Additionally, teaching materials should align with both GILOs (General Institutional Learning Objectives) and SILOs (Specific Institutional Learning Objectives), thereby preparing students for higher levels of education.

7. Assessment in the 1994 Curriculum

In the 1994 curriculum, assessment focused on the cognitive aspect, specifically on students' understanding of the subject matter. The development of assessment materials was based on class and semester-specific objectives. Within this curriculum, students' success was gauged and reported based on their grades, allowing comparison among their peers. In addition, lesson evaluations were conducted using paper and pencil testing methods.

Students also faced daily assessments aimed at tracking their learning progress concerning specific learning goals and pinpointing particular objectives that needed attention in subsequent teaching sessions. The forms of assessment in the 1994 curriculum included written assessment, oral assessment, performance assessment, and presentation assessment.

8. Weaknesses of the 1994 Curriculum

During the implementation of the 1994 curriculum, several issues emerged, primarily due to the inclination towards a content-oriented approach, including the following.

- a. The students were burdened with an excessively heavy academic load due to the multitude of subjects and extensive content within each subject.
- b. The subject matter was perceived as overly challenging because it lacked relevance to the student's cognitive development level and appeared less meaningful as it lacked connections to everyday life applications.
- c. The teaching process was predominantly classical, focusing on subject mastery, with the teacher positioned at the center of learning and primarily emphasizing content delivery.

d. The evaluation and assessment system placed significant emphasis on cognitive abilities. Students' success was measured and reported based on their grades, which could be compared with those of their peers. Examinations exclusively relied on paper-and-pencil test techniques.

9. Advantages of the 1994 Curriculum

- a. This curriculum utilized strategies that engaged students actively in learning, involving their mental, physical, and social dimensions.
- b. It began with concrete material progressing to abstract concepts, from easy to challenging, and from simple to complex content.
- c. Constructed upon active learning principles, it emphasized conceptual approaches and process skills.
- d. The curriculum adopted a horizontal structure with segregated subjects, evident in high school where subjects such as science were divided into physics, biology, and chemistry.
- e. Its implementation followed a quarterly system, dividing the academic year into three periods known as quarters 1 through 3.
- f. The 1994 curriculum aligned with academic concepts, as it resonated with the perennial philosophy, concentrating more on students' cognitive aspects.

10. Disadvantages of the 1994 Curriculum

- a. The aspects emphasized in the 1994 curriculum were excessively dense and extensive.
- b. The teaching concept was unidirectional, from teacher to student.
- c. Students faced a heavy academic load due to the numerous subjects and extensive material or substance in each subject.
- d. The subjects were perceived as too challenging, lacking relevance to students' thinking development and practical application in daily life.
- e. The teaching process followed a classical approach, solely aiming to master the subject matter, with the teacher as the central figure in the classroom.
- f. Teaching methods employed by teachers tended to be monotonous, primarily relying on lectures without utilizing other teaching methodologies.
- g. Teachers aimed to cover the targeted subject matter for students to master.
- h. The central government had greater control over the curriculum content, contributing 80%, while local authorities, despite having a better understanding of their regions' circumstances, needs, and potential, only had a 20% opportunity.
- i. The overwhelming material led to repetitions, resulting in wasted time, energy, and mental

exhaustion, causing boredom and disengagement among students.

11. Issues with the 1994 Curriculum

During the implementation of the 1994 curriculum, several problems emerged, primarily due to its inclination towards a content-focused approach. These issues include as following.

- a. The student's academic workload became excessively burdensome due to the sheer number of subjects and the extensive material within each subject.
- b. Subjects were perceived as overly challenging because they lacked relevance to students' cognitive development and failed to connect meaningfully with everyday life applications.
- c. The teaching methodology predominantly followed a classical approach, aiming at mastering the subject matter, with the teacher positioned as the central figure in the classroom. The primary focus was on delivering the material only.
- d. Evaluation and assessment systems emphasized cognitive abilities, measuring students' success based on their grades, which could be compared with those of other students. Exams were solely conducted using paper and pencil test techniques.

12. Achievements of Islamic Education during the New Order Era

The New Order era in Indonesia witnessed numerous advancements in Islamic education, including as follows.

The government mandated religious education from elementary school to university level (the Resolution of Provisional People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia No. XXVII/MPRS/1966).

- a. Madrasahs received treatment and status equivalent to public schools.
- b. Pesantrens received attention through subsidies and guidance.
- c. The Indonesian Ulama Council (Indonesian: Majelis Ulama Indonesia [MUI]) was established in 1975.
- d. The prohibition of Social Fund Donations with Prizes (Indonesian: Sumbangan Dana Sosial Berhadiah [SDSB]) started in 1993 after running since the early 1980s.
- e. The government permitted Muslim female students to wear long skirts and headscarves in public schools as an alternative to the typical short skirts and uncovered heads.
- f. The government established Law No. 2/1989 concerning the National Education System.
- g. The government established Law No. 7/1989 concerning Religious Courts.
- h. The Compilation of Islamic Law (Indonesian: Kompilasi Hukum Islam [KHI]) was introduced.
- i. Government support was extended for the establishment of Islamic banks like Bank Muamalat Islam.

- j. The government facilitated the inception of the Board of Zakat, Infaq, and Sadaqah (Indonesian: Badan Amil Zakat Infak dan Sadaqah [BAZIS]).
- k. MUI implemented halal or haram labels for food and beverage products, particularly processed ones.
- l. The government facilitated the deployment of preachers to remote and transmigration areas.
- m. The government organized the Musabaqoh Tilawatil Qur'an (MTQ)—a Qur'an recitation competition.
- n. The government commemorated significant Islamic days at Istiqlal Mosque.
- o. The government printed and distributed the Quran and Islamic books to mosques or Islamic libraries.
- p. The centralization of Hajj pilgrims occurred in Hajj dormitories.
- q. Arabic language lessons were broadcast on TVRI (Indonesian public television).
- r. The government established Public Madrasah Aliyah as a special program.
- s. The Department of Religious Affairs initiated postgraduate education in 1983 for IAIN lecturers, both domestically and abroad, in collaboration with Western countries for Master's and Doctorate studies.

4. Conclusion

Education stands as a critical factor in advancing a nation. A nation faces various challenges, and the development of Islamic education during the New Order era, under President Suharto's administration, carried significant implications and gained trust among the Muslim community. This trust began with the issuance of a Joint Decree of Three Ministers. Subsequently, religious education became compulsory from basic to higher education levels. The Indonesian national character was cultivated through curriculum standardization programs and training. The educational system underwent four changes during the New Order period, in 1968, 1975, 1984, and 1994. Each period had its distinct characteristics, weaknesses, and strengths, yet the government consistently aimed to make the best policy decisions. The era saw numerous successes and advancements, but it is crucial not to rest on these laurels and continuously strive for improvement. Incorporating religious education in a national curriculum is an obligation aligned with the mandate of the 1945 Constitution.

5. References

- Abdullah, T. (2011). *Indonesia dalam Arus Sejarah*. Jakarta: Ichtiar Baru Van Haove.
- Natsir, M. (1999). *Dakwah dan Pemikirannya*. Jakarta: Gema Insani.
- Rossi. (2023, June). Pendidikan Islam Masa Orde Baru: Coretan-Rossi. Retrieved from <http://coretan-rossi.blogspot.com/2023/06/pendidikan-islam-masa-orde-baru.html>
- Safei, H. (2020). Sistem Pendidikan Umum pada Masa Orde Baru. *Jurnal Humanitas*, 7(1).
- Silabus.web.id. (n.d.). Kurikulum 1994 menggunakan pendekatan. Retrieved July 20, 2023, from <https://silabus.web.id/kurikulum-1994-menggunakan-pendekatan/>
- Syahrani Jailani, M. (2019, June). Kilas Balik Kebijakan Pendidikan Islam Indonesia Masa Orde Baru. *Journal for Religious Innovation Studies*, 19(1).
- Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional.
- Yuningsih, H. (2015). *Jurnal Tarbiyah*, 1(1). UIN Sunan Gunung Jati Bandung.