

# Curriculum Transformation in Islamic Higher Education for the Development of Public Administration Based on Islamic Principles

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Diserahkan 23 Agustus 2025 | Diterima 12 Oktober 2025 | Diterbitkan 14 November 2025 | DOI: 10.59966/isedu.v3i2.2028

## Abstract:

*This article explores the integration of Islamic values into public administration studies in Indonesia, highlighting the role of Islamic principles in shaping ethical and effective governance. With over 260 million people and a rich Islamic heritage, Indonesia presents a unique context for the development of public administration that harmonizes both religious and secular principles. This study aims to analyze how the transformation of Islamic higher education institutions contributes to embedding Islamic ethical concepts such as amanah (trust), 'adl (justice), and maslahah (public welfare) into the teaching of public administration. Using a qualitative literature-based approach, the article reviews theoretical foundations central to Islamic governance. It also examines how Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia, particularly through the transformation from Islamic Institutes (IAIN) to State Islamic Universities (UIN), are integrating public administration into their curricula. The findings indicate that curriculum transformation has opened opportunities for interdisciplinary learning aligned with national education reforms like Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM). Despite progress, challenges such as outdated curricula and insufficient faculty training remain. The results imply that integrating Islamic values into public administration education can enhance moral accountability and governance quality, serving as a model for other Muslim-majority countries seeking to balance faith and professionalism.*

**Keywords:** Islamic public administration, Curriculum integration, Governance

## Abstrak :

*Artikel ini mengeksplorasi integrasi nilai-nilai Islam ke dalam studi administrasi publik di Indonesia, menyoroti peran prinsip-prinsip Islam dalam membentuk tata kelola yang etis dan efektif. Dengan lebih dari 260 juta penduduk dan warisan Islam yang kaya, Indonesia menghadirkan konteks unik bagi pengembangan administrasi publik yang menyelaraskan prinsip-prinsip agama dan sekuler. Studi ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana transformasi institusi pendidikan tinggi Islam berkontribusi pada penanaman konsep-konsep etika Islam seperti amanah (kepercayaan), 'adl (keadilan), dan maslahah (kesejahteraan publik) ke dalam pengajaran administrasi publik. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif berbasis literatur, artikel ini mengkaji fondasi teoretis yang penting bagi tata kelola Islam. Artikel ini juga mengkaji bagaimana institusi pendidikan tinggi Islam di Indonesia, khususnya melalui transformasi dari Institut Agama Islam (IAIN) menjadi Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN), mengintegrasikan administrasi publik ke dalam kurikulum mereka. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa transformasi kurikulum telah membuka peluang bagi pembelajaran interdisipliner yang selaras dengan reformasi pendidikan nasional seperti Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM). Meskipun terdapat kemajuan, tantangan seperti kurikulum yang ketinggalan zaman dan pelatihan dosen yang tidak memadai masih tetap ada. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa pengintegrasian nilai-nilai Islam ke dalam pendidikan administrasi publik dapat meningkatkan akuntabilitas moral dan kualitas tata kelola, serta menjadi model bagi negara-negara mayoritas Muslim lainnya yang berupaya menyeimbangkan keimanan dan profesionalisme.*

**Kata Kunci:** Administrasi Publik Islam, Integrasi Kurikulum, Tata Kelola

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## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority nation, offers a unique context for integrating Islamic values into public administration studies (Abbas, 2025; Sanneh, 2019). With over 260 million people and a rich Islamic heritage, the country's diverse cultural landscape calls for a public administration framework that harmonizes religious principles with effective governance. This integration seeks to produce public servants who are not only competent in administrative functions but also grounded in ethical and moral values derived from Islamic teachings (Abbas, 2025; Drechsler et al., 2024).

The theoretical foundations of this integration rest on the principles of Islamic governance, including *amanah* (trust), *adl* (justice), *shura* (consultation), and *maslahah* (public welfare) (Rahmat & Oktavia, 2024; Drechsler et al., 2024). These principles offer an ethical framework for public administration that distinguishes it from Western-centric models, promoting an "Islamic public administration" paradigm. This model addresses the spiritual and communal values emphasized in Islamic jurisprudence, offering a comprehensive approach to governance that considers both the material and moral aspects of administration (Drechsler, 2014; Rahmat & Oktavia, 2024; Wiryanto, 2017). The Indonesian context is particularly significant due to the adoption of Pancasila, Indonesia's constitutional foundation, which incorporates principles of faith traditions, unity, democracy, and social justice (Sanneh, 2019).

The evolution of Islamic higher education in Indonesia reflects this integration. Historically, Islamic educational institutions, particularly the State Islamic Institutes (IAIN), focused primarily on religious studies (Esha, 2020; Gumanti et al., 2023). However, recognizing the need to address modern governance challenges, these institutions have transformed into State Islamic Universities (UIN), incorporating public administration and other disciplines alongside Islamic studies (Esha, 2020; Hayadin et al., 2025). This transformation is driven by a recognition that contemporary governance requires public administrators who can navigate the complexities of both religious and secular realms (Esha, 2020; Nasir & Tobroni, 2024).

The success of Islamic education is largely determined by the harmony between the objectives, curriculum content, and learning methods used (Anon n.d.). The integration of public administration into Islamic higher education is crucial for equipping students with the skills necessary to meet governance challenges. These institutions have developed innovative programs that blend public administration theory with Islamic principles, addressing both technical competencies and ethical foundations (Abbas, 2025; Kusumastuti et al., 2019). The Ministry of Religious Affairs has played an essential role in overseeing this transformation by guiding the development of curricula that align Islamic values with modern administrative practices (Nasir & Tobroni, 2024; Gumanti et al., 2023). These programs are not just theoretical; they incorporate practical applications of Islamic values in contemporary governance (Hayadin et al., 2025; Kusumastuti et al., 2019).

The shift from IAIN to UIN represents a strategic response to globalization and modernization, while maintaining Islamic identity (Hayadin et al., 2025; Gumanti et al., 2023). As of 2024, Indonesia has 29 UINs among 58 Islamic higher education institutions, reflecting the country's commitment to this educational paradigm (Esha, 2020; Hayadin et al., 2025). These institutions now offer programs in public administration, policy analysis, and governance that explicitly integrate Islamic values. The aim is to produce graduates capable of serving in both religious and secular governmental contexts (Kusumastuti et al., 2019; Wiryanto, 2017).

The policy implications of this integration extend beyond educational institutions. The Indonesian government has recognized the importance of incorporating Islamic values into public administration as part of its commitment to religious moderation and national unity (Sanneh, 2019). This approach reflects what scholars describe as the "Indonesian experiment" in balancing Islamic principles with democratic governance. It is supported by major Islamic organizations such as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama, who contribute to the dialogue on

how Islamic values can coexist with modern democratic governance (Sanneh, 2019; Drechsler, 2014).

This literature review explores the multifaceted intersection of Islamic values and public administration studies in Indonesia. By examining theoretical foundations, curriculum developments, and policy documents, it provides a comprehensive understanding of how Islamic principles can inform and enrich public administration education in the country. The review also contributes to the broader discourse on non-Western approaches to governance and administration, demonstrating the potential of Islamic values to influence the development of public administration frameworks in Muslim-majority countries.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach using the library research (literature review) method. The research focuses on analyzing conceptual and documentary sources related to the integration of Islamic values into public administration education within Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia.

Primary data are drawn from classical Islamic governance literature, such as al-Māwardī's *al-Aḥkām al-Sultāniyyah* and Ibn Taymiyyah's *al-Siyāsah al-Shar'īyyah*, which provide the foundational framework for Islamic administrative ethics. Secondary data include recent scholarly works, government policy documents, and publications related to the *Merdeka Belajar–Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) initiative, as well as empirical studies on curriculum transformation at State Islamic Universities (UIN).

## FINDINGS AND RESULTS

### 2.1 Theoretical Foundations of Islamic Public Administration

Islamic public administration is grounded in the principles of justice (*adl*), accountability (*mas'uliyah*), and the welfare of the community (*maslahah*). Scholars have emphasized the importance of aligning administrative practices with Islamic ethics to ensure that governance serves the common good. For instance, Alfian et al. (2023) argue that Islamic bureaucracy should be characterized by norms and ethics that reflect the spirit of Islamic law, promoting a humanist and authoritative approach to public administration. The concept of *Maqāṣid al-Shari'ah* (objectives of Islamic law) provides a framework for evaluating public policies and administrative actions. By ensuring that policies align with the preservation of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property, administrators can contribute to the holistic well-being of society (Alfian et al., 2023). Under this paradigm, public servants are entrusted (*amanah*) with authority that must be exercised according to ethical principles. Alfian et al. (2023) argue that an Islamic bureaucracy should foreground norms and ethics drawn from *sharia*, fostering a humanist yet authoritative approach that transcends purely secular models. By insisting on *shūrā* (consultation) and *amānah* (trustworthiness), this paradigm redefines good governance as not only efficient but also morally grounded, with administrators bearing dual accountability to God and the populace (Alfian et al., 2023).

Classical Islamic scholars have laid the foundational principles of administrative ethics long before modern theories emerged. (al-Māwardī 1996) in *al-Aḥkām al-Sultāniyyah* emphasized justice (*adl*), consultation (*shūrā*), and public welfare (*maṣlaḥah 'ammah*) as the pillars of good governance. He viewed political authority as a divine trust (*amānah*) that must serve the welfare of the *ummah*. Likewise, (Ibn Taymiyyah 1998) in *al-Siyāsah al-Shar'īyyah fī Iṣlāḥ al-Rā'ī wa al-Ra'īyyah* asserted that governance is a form of moral responsibility (*mas'uliyah akhlāqīyyah*) requiring leaders to ensure justice, prevent oppression, and uphold accountability before both God and the people. These classical works provide a normative and theological framework that continues to guide contemporary discourse on Islamic public administration, bridging traditional jurisprudence and modern governance ethics.

## 2.2 Curriculum Integration in Islamic Higher Education

The integration of public administration studies into Islamic higher education curricula has been a focal point of recent reforms. Institutions such as Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta (UIN Jakarta) and Sunan Kalijaga State Islamic University have developed interdisciplinary programs that combine Islamic studies with public administration, aiming to produce graduates proficient in both religious knowledge and administrative skills. These curriculum developments are supported by national policies, including the Merdeka Belajar (Independent Learning) initiative, which encourages universities to design flexible and inclusive curricula. This policy has facilitated the incorporation of public administration courses into Islamic studies programs, allowing students to engage in real-world governance experiences through internships and community service projects (Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta, 2023). Since 2014, UIN Jakarta has aligned its curricula with the Indonesian National Qualifications Framework (KKNI), restructuring courses around clear learning outcomes encompassing attitude, knowledge, practical skills, transferable skills, and lifelong learning (Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta, 2023).

National policy initiatives such as Merdeka Belajar (Independent Learning) and Kampus Merdeka (Independent Campus) have further catalyzed curricular flexibility. Under MBKM, public administration students may undertake internships, community service, or research projects across three semesters outside their home programs, enhancing real-world governance competencies (Apriliyani & Hernawan, 2021; Semantics Scholar, 2021). This linkage between theoretical instruction and experiential learning aims to produce graduates adept in policy analysis, organizational management, and Islamic ethical reasoning. (Pembelajaran 2025)

## 2.3 Challenges and Opportunities

Despite the progress in integrating public administration into Islamic higher education, several challenges persist. A study by Prihatin and Subiyantoro (2022) highlights issues such as outdated curricula, insufficient teacher training, and limited resources as barriers to effective implementation. These challenges necessitate a concerted effort from educational institutions, policymakers, and the community to create an enabling environment for the integration process (Prihatin & Subiyantoro, 2022). Empirical studies in Central Kalimantan universities corroborate these findings, noting gaps in digital infrastructure, fund allocation, and policy coherence across higher education institutions (Muba, 2022).

However, the integration also presents opportunities to revitalize Islamic education by making it more relevant to contemporary societal needs. By producing graduates equipped with both religious and administrative competencies, Islamic universities can contribute significantly to the development of a just and effective public administration system in Indonesia. Moreover, MBKM's emphasis on cross-program mobility and industry partnerships strengthens linkages between academia and government, fostering a talent pipeline attuned to contemporary governance challenges. To capitalize on these opportunities, stakeholders must prioritize curriculum modernization, faculty capacity building, and robust funding mechanisms, thereby institutionalizing an Islamic public administration pedagogy that is both academically rigorous and societally relevant.

## 3. Discussion

### 3.1 Aligning Islamic Values with Public Administration Practices

The alignment of Islamic values with public administration practices is crucial for ensuring that governance serves the moral and ethical needs of society. As Alfian et al. (2024) suggest, an Islamic approach to bureaucracy emphasizes the importance of ethical norms and accountability, which are essential for building public trust and ensuring the legitimacy of administrative actions. An Islamic bureaucratic paradigm foregrounds the principles of amanah

(trust), adl (justice), and shūrā (consultation), ensuring administrators are accountable not only to the state but also to divine injunctions and societal welfare (Alfian et al., 2024). Furthermore, integrating Islamic principles into public administration can lead to more inclusive and participatory governance. By prioritizing the welfare of the community and ensuring that policies reflect Islamic ethical standards, administrators can foster a sense of ownership and responsibility among citizens, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of governance. By embedding these values into codes of conduct and decision-making frameworks, public agencies can rebuild public trust eroded by perceptions of corruption and inefficiency (Alfian et al., 2024).

### 3.2 Curriculum Development and Pedagogical Approaches

The development of curricula that integrate public administration with Islamic studies requires a thoughtful approach that considers both academic rigor and religious values. Institutions such as Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta have adopted interdisciplinary teaching methods that combine lectures, case studies, and community engagement activities to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of public administration within an Islamic context. These curriculum developments are supported by national policies, including the Merdeka Belajar (Independent Learning) initiative, which encourages universities to design flexible and inclusive curricula. This policy has facilitated the incorporation of public administration courses into Islamic studies programs, allowing students to engage in real-world governance experiences through internships and community service projects (Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Jakarta, 2023). Additionally, the adoption of competency-based education frameworks allows for the development of curricula that are responsive to the evolving needs of the public administration sector. By aligning learning outcomes with the competencies required in the field, educational institutions can ensure that graduates are well-prepared to meet the challenges of modern governance. Mustofa, Dara, and Sok (2025) demonstrate that competency-based education enhances graduates' employability skills—communication, critical thinking, and innovation—while preserving Islamic moral imperatives through tailored assessment rubrics that evaluate both technical mastery and ethical judgment. This dual emphasis equips students to navigate complex public sector challenges with both professionalism and integrity (Mustofa, Dara, & Sok, 2025).

### 3.3 Addressing Implementation Challenges

To address the challenges identified in the integration process, a multi-faceted approach is required. Prihatin and Subiyantoro (2022) identify outdated course content, insufficient faculty training in both administrative sciences and Islamic ethics, and resource constraints as barriers to effective implementation. This includes updating curricula to reflect contemporary issues in public administration, investing in professional development for educators, and allocating resources to support the integration efforts. Collaboration between Islamic higher education institutions, government agencies, and civil society organizations can facilitate the sharing of best practices and the development of supportive policies that promote the integration of public administration studies with Islamic values. These efforts will help overcome barriers such as limited faculty capacity and outdated course content, ensuring that students are equipped to handle both contemporary governance challenges and the moral imperatives of Islamic teachings (Prihatin & Subiyantoro, 2022).

## CONCLUSION

The integration of Islamic values into public administration studies in Indonesia represents a transformative approach that aligns governance with ethical and moral principles derived from Islam. This integration is not only theoretical but also practical, as it provides a comprehensive framework for developing public servants who can navigate both religious and

secular domains. By aligning administrative practices with Islamic principles, educational institutions can produce graduates who are not only skilled in governance but also committed to serving the community in accordance with moral and ethical standards. The guiding principles of Islamic governance, such as amanah (trust), adl (justice), shura (consultation), and maslahah (public welfare), offer a robust ethical foundation for public administration that contrasts with Western-centric models.

The evolution of Islamic higher education, particularly through the shift from Islamic Institutes to State Islamic Universities (UINs), reflects Indonesia's commitment to producing graduates equipped with both administrative skills and Islamic values. These graduates are better prepared to address contemporary governance challenges while maintaining a strong ethical grounding. The incorporation of public administration curricula into Islamic higher education, supported by national policies like Merdeka Belajar (Independent Learning), has allowed students to gain practical experience in governance, which further enhances their readiness to serve in both religious and secular roles.

However, despite these advancements, challenges remain in the effective integration of Islamic values into public administration education. Issues such as outdated curricula, inadequate faculty training, and limited resources need to be addressed to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of this integration. While challenges remain in the integration process, the opportunities to enhance the relevance and impact of Islamic higher education are substantial. A collaborative effort involving educational institutions, policymakers, and civil society is necessary to overcome these barriers and strengthen the role of Islamic values in governance.

Ultimately, the Indonesian experience presents an innovative model of integrating Islamic values into public administration that could serve as a reference for other Muslim-majority countries seeking to harmonize religious principles with modern governance practices. Through continued collaboration, curriculum development, and policy support, Indonesia can develop a public administration system that reflects its Islamic heritage and meets the needs of its diverse society. By continuing to prioritize both academic rigor and ethical standards, Indonesia can develop a public administration system that is not only efficient but also morally grounded, fostering a governance culture that promotes justice, accountability, and the welfare of society.

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