

# Implementation Of The Regulation Of The Minister Of Religious Affairs Number 31 Of 2020 On Islamic Boarding School Education In Character Development At Darussalam Islamic Boarding School, Bengkulu City

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to describe the implementation of the Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs Number 31 of 2020 on Islamic boarding school education in character development at Darussalam Islamic Boarding School, Bengkulu City. This research used a qualitative descriptive method with data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, consisting of 4 individuals. The analysis is based on Van Meter and Van Horn's implementation theory which includes six indicators: policy standards and objectives, resources, inter-organizational communication, characteristics of implementers, disposition, and economic, social, and political conditions. The findings indicate that policy standards and goals align with the Standard Operating Procedures and target outcomes. Resources including facilities and infrastructure are adequate. Communication among teachers is well-coordinated. Implementers demonstrate competence and discipline in carrying out character development. There is a willingness among implementers to run the program. Economically, the environment supports the character development process. However, the lack of political support and the location of the school on a major road are social obstacles to character development.

## INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental pillar in the development of any nation. In Indonesia, education is not solely focused on academic achievement but also emphasizes the cultivation of moral character, values, and spiritual integrity. As the largest Muslim-majority country in the world, Indonesia recognizes Islamic boarding schools (*pondok pesantren*) as vital institutions in fostering both religious knowledge and moral conduct. These institutions play a strategic role in producing a generation of students who are not only intellectually capable but also morally grounded.

Over time, the Indonesian government has acknowledged the importance of integrating religious-based institutions like pesantren into the national education framework. This recognition was further solidified with the issuance of the Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs Number 31 of 2020 concerning pesantren education. This regulation provides a formal legal framework to ensure that pesantren are not only centers of religious learning but also environments for systematic character development. It emphasizes the role of pesantren in fostering values such as honesty, discipline, independence, and responsibility among students. The rapid development of technology, globalization, and changing societal norms pose challenges to the traditional educational systems in pesantren. Students are increasingly exposed to external influences that may conflict with Islamic values and local wisdom. In this context, character education becomes a strategic necessity. It serves as a defensive and transformative measure to prepare students to become ethically resilient individuals amidst a morally diverse society.

Character, in this sense, refers to the internalization of values and behavior patterns that reflect integrity, discipline, responsibility, and empathy. In pesantren, character building is embedded into daily

routines, from early morning prayers to night-time religious studies. It is through this immersive environment that students are expected to develop strong Islamic identities. However, despite this intensive routine, the success of character development in pesantren remains contingent upon various factors, including the quality of implementation of education policies, availability of adequate resources, competence of teaching staff, and the external socio-political environment. Darussalam Islamic Boarding School in Bengkulu City is one such institution under the auspices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. It has a structured combination of formal and informal Islamic education programs, making it a relevant case study for evaluating the practical implementation of the ministerial regulation. Preliminary observations indicate both strengths and challenges in applying the policy, such as the presence of structured religious programs on one hand, and issues like student indiscipline and lack of political support on the other.

Using the implementation model of Van Meter and Van Horn (1975), which highlights six interrelated variables—policy standards and objectives, resources, inter-organizational communication, characteristics of implementers, disposition of implementers, and the socio-economic-political environment—this study seeks to explore the real-world application of the policy. This model serves as a comprehensive framework to assess whether the character development objectives envisioned in the regulation are being realized on the ground. Hence, the focus of this research is to investigate how the Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs No. 31 of 2020 is implemented in the character development efforts at Darussalam Islamic Boarding School, and what factors support or hinder its effective execution. The findings of this research are expected to contribute both theoretically, by expanding academic understanding of policy implementation in religious education, and practically, by offering recommendations for improving character education strategies in Islamic boarding schools.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Policy Implementation Theory

Policy implementation is a critical stage in the policy-making process where decisions are translated into operational activities. Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) proposed a widely adopted model of policy implementation which outlines six key variables that influence the success or failure of implementation: (1) policy standards and objectives, (2) resources, (3) inter-organizational communication and enforcement activities, (4) characteristics of the implementing agencies, (5) disposition of the implementers, and (6) the political, economic, and social environment. This framework emphasizes that successful implementation depends on the clarity of policy goals, the availability of adequate resources, the coordination among implementing agencies, and the willingness and ability of the individuals involved.

### Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs No. 31 of 2020

This regulation legally recognizes pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) as a vital part of Indonesia's national education system. It delineates three main types of pesantren education: formal, non-formal, and informal. The regulation mandates that pesantren are not only responsible for teaching Islamic knowledge but also for building character, nurturing leadership, and developing life skills. It grants pesantren autonomy in curriculum development while requiring them to align with national education standards. The regulation is a government initiative to strengthen the role of pesantren as centers of holistic education in the modern era.

### Character Education Concept

Character education refers to the deliberate effort to develop moral values and ethical behavior in students. According to Lickona (1991), character education involves cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components. It aims to cultivate core values such as respect, responsibility, honesty, empathy, and perseverance. In the context of pesantren, character education is embedded in daily routines and spiritual practices. Santri (students) are expected to internalize Islamic values through repetitive and structured activities such as prayer, communal living, and religious study. The holistic nature of pesantren life supports the development of *syakhsiyah Islamiyah* (Islamic personality), which combines moral conduct with religious devotion.

### Role of Resources in Implementation

Resources—both human and material—play a crucial role in policy implementation. Without competent personnel, adequate funding, infrastructure, and institutional capacity, even well-crafted policies can fail. In pesantren, the availability of trained teachers, religious instructors, dormitory supervisors, and administrative staff determines the quality of education and character development.

Additionally, proper facilities such as libraries, prayer halls, classrooms, and dormitories support the overall learning environment and help facilitate the implementation of character-building activities.

### **Communication and Coordination in Policy Execution**

Effective communication among policy actors is essential to reduce misunderstandings, promote clarity of purpose, and maintain alignment with policy objectives. In the pesantren context, this involves coordination between administrators, teaching staff, religious mentors, and government agencies such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Without structured communication channels and feedback mechanisms, implementation efforts may become fragmented, leading to inconsistent or superficial outcomes.

### **Disposition of Implementers**

The commitment and willingness of implementers—teachers, school leaders, and administrators—are central to the success of any policy. Even with sufficient resources and clear guidelines, implementation will fail if the actors involved do not believe in or support the policy. In pesantren, the attitudes of teachers and caregivers toward character education, as well as their consistency in modeling good behavior, directly influence the behavior of students. Implementers must not only understand the policy but also embody the values it promotes.

### **Socio-Economic and Political Environment**

The surrounding socio-political context can either support or hinder policy implementation. For pesantren, factors such as community support, political will, economic conditions, and cultural attitudes affect the institution's ability to carry out its educational mission. In some cases, external social challenges—like exposure to delinquency, peer pressure, or family issues—can undermine character development efforts. Political endorsement and regulatory support from government institutions are necessary to reinforce the legitimacy and continuity of pesantren education initiatives.

## **METHODS**

This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach to explore the implementation of the Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs No. 31 of 2020 on Islamic boarding school education, particularly in relation to character development at Darussalam Islamic Boarding School in Bengkulu City. The qualitative method was chosen to enable an in-depth understanding of social realities, institutional dynamics, and personal experiences related to policy implementation in the pesantren environment.

The research design focused on case study analysis, aiming to investigate one specific pesantren as the main site of policy application. Data collection techniques included observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Observations were conducted to examine daily activities and character-building routines of students. In-depth interviews were held with selected informants such as teachers, school administrators, and religious mentors to gain insight into their roles, perceptions, and experiences regarding the policy. Relevant documents—such as school guidelines, program schedules, and institutional reports—were reviewed to supplement field data.

The selection of informants was done through purposive sampling, targeting individuals who were directly involved in the implementation of the policy. Four key informants were identified: one head of the school (MA Darussalam), two religious instructors, and one student affairs officer. These individuals were considered to possess rich information and firsthand experience regarding the character development programs under the framework of the regulation.

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994), which includes three concurrent steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. To interpret findings, the researcher applied the Van Meter and Van Horn implementation model as the analytical framework, examining six variables: policy standards and objectives, resources, inter-organizational communication, characteristics of implementers, disposition of implementers, and socio-economic-political conditions. The overall research process was conducted between November 2024 and March 2025, with permission and support from the school and the local Ministry of Religious Affairs office.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study demonstrate how the implementation of the Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs No. 31 of 2020 has been carried out at Darussalam Islamic Boarding School in Bengkulu City, specifically in fostering character development among students. The analysis is structured around six key variables proposed by Van Meter and Van Horn.

### **Policy Standards and Objectives**

The institution has successfully aligned its character education efforts with the standard procedures outlined in the regulation. Clear objectives related to religious discipline, moral behavior, and daily routines were reflected in the school's Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). Activities such as group prayers, Quran memorization, and public speaking (muhadarah) are practiced routinely and are consistent with the national goals for pesantren education.

### **Resources**

The pesantren was found to have adequate resources in terms of both human capital and physical infrastructure. The school employs 63 educators, including teachers assigned to both the formal and informal education tracks. Although not all staff members are civil servants (PNS), their involvement and dedication to character education were deemed sufficient. Facilities such as dormitories, prayer halls, a library, and spaces for extracurricular activities like martial arts and religious arts support the implementation of the regulation effectively.

### **Inter-Organizational Communication**

The study revealed a well-established coordination system between religious teachers, administrative staff, and student supervisors. Weekly meetings and informal discussions among staff helped ensure that the message of character development remained consistent across departments. However, documentation and structured evaluation methods were still limited.

### **Characteristics of Implementing Agents**

The implementing agents—namely, teachers, administrators, and religious mentors—demonstrated strong personal discipline, religiosity, and competence. They served as role models, consistently emphasizing values such as respect, responsibility, and independence. Their presence in both classroom and dormitory settings enhanced the consistency of character-building efforts.

### **Disposition (Tendency of Implementers)**

Teachers and administrators exhibited a strong commitment to implementing the policy. They not only understood the essence of the regulation but also expressed intrinsic motivation to see students develop into morally grounded individuals. Their enthusiasm and sense of responsibility served as positive drivers for policy success.

### **Economic, Social, and Political Environment**

The economic environment surrounding the pesantren was supportive, as most students came from families that understood and valued Islamic education. However, the political environment lacked formal engagement or backing, and there were no direct support programs from political institutions. Social challenges also existed—such as the pesantren's location along a busy highway, which exposed students to potential distractions and peer pressure from outside the school community.

In summary, the implementation of the Ministerial Regulation No. 31 of 2020 at Darussalam Islamic Boarding School has largely succeeded in aligning with policy objectives, supported by adequate resources and committed implementers. However, it continues to face challenges in terms of political support and social influences from the external environment.

### **Discussion**

The implementation of the Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs No. 31 of 2020 at Darussalam Islamic Boarding School in Bengkulu reflects both strengths and challenges in translating national policy into institutional practice. This discussion elaborates on the six variables of Van Meter and Van Horn's model, highlighting how they manifest in the context of pesantren education.

### **Policy Standards and Objectives**

The school has effectively internalized the policy objectives into its operational framework. Activities such as Quran memorization, daily congregational prayers, and public speaking forums were all aligned with the intent of nurturing Islamic character. These practices mirror the regulatory goal of fostering holistic student development. However, the absence of performance indicators or formal monitoring tools limits the capacity to quantitatively assess outcomes, suggesting a gap between policy intention and evaluation mechanisms.

### **Resources**

Resources are relatively adequate at Darussalam. Although a portion of the teaching staff are non-permanent or non-civil servants, their dedication compensates for any structural limitations. The physical infrastructure—such as prayer spaces, dormitories, and classrooms—supports both formal and informal educational programs. Nevertheless, limited digital tools and a lack of structured character assessment frameworks show that investment in modern pedagogical resources remains necessary.

### **Communication and Coordination**

The presence of consistent internal communication among staff is a positive aspect of the implementation process. Weekly coordination meetings and informal communication help ensure uniformity in the character-building curriculum. However, external coordination—particularly with the Ministry of Religious Affairs or other pesantren—remains minimal. The lack of inter-institutional knowledge-sharing or benchmarking prevents the school from learning from best practices or accessing potential government support.

### **Implementing Agent Characteristics**

Teachers and administrators at Darussalam demonstrate strong moral conviction and pedagogical consistency. This reinforces the theory that the effectiveness of a policy is significantly influenced by the people responsible for executing it. The ability of staff to serve as role models for the students—especially in a pesantren environment where interaction occurs beyond the classroom—is crucial for embedding character values into daily routines.

### **Disposition of Implementers**

The positive disposition of the school staff was clearly evident. Their intrinsic motivation and spiritual dedication play a central role in the success of the character development program. Van Meter and Van Horn emphasized that implementers' willingness directly influences policy success; in this context, the strong commitment among pesantren staff becomes a key enabler, especially in the absence of external enforcement.

### **Political, Economic, and Social Environment**

The pesantren operates in a modest economic setting but benefits from a supportive community. Families value religious education, which creates a conducive environment for character-building. However, the absence of political backing—such as regional funding or formal government collaboration—has left the school to implement the regulation largely on its own. Moreover, the pesantren's location along a main road exposes students to negative social influences, such as peer distraction and lack of control over external interactions.

The findings affirm the view of Edward III (1980), who suggested that even well-designed policies may fail in the absence of implementer support or favorable environmental conditions. In this case, while the implementers are motivated and the internal system is functional, the lack of systemic support from external institutions may constrain long-term sustainability. In conclusion, the policy implementation at Darussalam pesantren has been partially successful. Internal motivation and institutional commitment have filled the gap left by limited political involvement. However, to optimize the implementation and ensure consistency across pesantren nationwide, the government should provide more structured support, including training modules, standard measurement tools, and targeted funding for character education.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

The implementation of the Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs No. 31 of 2020 concerning pesantren education at Darussalam Islamic Boarding School in Bengkulu City has demonstrated substantial progress in aligning character development programs with national policy objectives. The institution has integrated character education into daily routines through religious practices, moral discipline, and structured learning activities—fulfilling the regulation's intent to produce students who are not only academically competent but also morally upright.

Based on the six variables proposed by Van Meter and Van Horn, it is evident that the policy standards and goals have been clearly understood and internalized by the school. The availability of adequate resources, particularly in human capital and facilities, has further supported the operationalization of character-building programs. Communication and coordination within the institution function effectively, ensuring consistency and reinforcement of values among staff and students.

The implementing agents, including teachers and religious mentors, exhibit a high level of commitment and serve as role models for students. Their disposition, marked by sincerity and a sense of responsibility, plays a crucial role in sustaining the policy's implementation. However, despite these internal strengths, the school continues to face challenges from its external environment. A lack of formal political support and exposure to negative social influences—due to its geographic location—pose risks to the sustainability of character education efforts.

In summary, while the pesantren has shown commendable initiative in adopting and implementing the ministerial regulation, broader support from governmental bodies and local stakeholders is necessary. Strengthening inter-institutional collaboration, providing standardized assessment tools, and improving environmental conditions will be essential to optimize the long-term impact of character development policies in pesantren education.

This study, while providing valuable insights into the implementation of the Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs No. 31 of 2020 at Darussalam Islamic Boarding School, is not without limitations. First, the research was limited to a single case study at one pesantren in Bengkulu City. While this allowed for in-depth analysis, it may limit the generalizability of the findings to other pesantren with different institutional characteristics, cultural environments, or resource capacities.

Second, the number of informants was restricted to four individuals, selected through purposive sampling. Although they were key actors directly involved in the implementation process, a broader range of perspectives—including students, parents, and local government officials—might have enriched the data and uncovered additional dimensions of policy effectiveness or resistance. Third, the study relied primarily on qualitative methods such as interviews and observations. These approaches are inherently subjective and may be influenced by researcher bias or informant interpretation. The absence of quantitative data or structured evaluation tools (e.g., pre- and post-character assessments) also limits the ability to measure the tangible impact of character development initiatives. Fourth, the study was conducted within a limited time frame during the academic year 2024–2025. This may not capture seasonal or long-term changes in policy implementation, such as adjustments to curriculum, budget fluctuations, or shifting political dynamics.

Finally, external environmental factors such as political engagement, community involvement, and digital adaptation were only briefly addressed. Future research could explore how these broader systems interact with internal pesantren efforts in implementing national education policies. Despite these limitations, the study provides a foundational understanding of policy-to-practice dynamics in Islamic education and serves as a stepping stone for further investigations.

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