

## The Direction of Islamic Religious Education in High Schools and Vocational Schools: Analysis of Government Policy in Government Regulation of The Republic of Indonesia Number 4 of 2022

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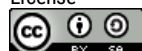
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**Abstract:** Islamic education demands focused governmental attention through strategic policy-making, as it plays a vital role in shaping societal values and development. This issue is especially critical in countries with a religious foundation like Indonesia, where Islamic education serves as a key pillar in fostering moral integrity, spiritual growth, and cultural cohesion. This study investigates the trajectory of Islamic education in Senior High Schools (*Sekolah Menengah Atas/SMA*) and Vocational High Schools (*Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan/SMK*) as delineated in Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 4 of 2022. The research is anchored in a fundamental inquiry: What is the direction of Islamic education in Senior High Schools and Vocational Schools from the perspective of Republic of Indonesia Government Regulation Number 4 of 2022? Employing a qualitative approach within a policy analysis framework, this study relies on primary data extracted from the aforementioned regulation. The findings reveal: (1) the orientation of Islamic education towards achieving Graduate Competency Standards in Senior High Schools and Vocational Schools; (2) the designation of Islamic Religious Education as a compulsory subject within the curriculum of Senior High Schools and Vocational Schools; (3) the establishment of Islamic Religious Education as a mandatory subject in Senior High Schools and Vocational Schools; and (4) the key priorities that must be addressed in the development of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum for Senior High Schools (SMA) and Vocational High Schools (SMK). This study contributes comprehensively to delineating the direction and implementation of Islamic education policies at the secondary education level in Indonesia.

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## INTRODUCTION

Changes in regulations or policies within education represent dynamics that must be approached judiciously so that the public refrains from hastily blaming the government. This includes the government's implementation of changes regarding the National Education Standards through the Republic of Indonesia Government Regulation Number 4 of 2022 Regarding Amendments to Government Regulation Number 57 of 2021 Regarding National Education Standards. However, every policy, in the form of rule amendments, warrants scrutiny to critique or reinforce the position of the new regulations.

In this study, the author focuses on analyzing the policy directions of Islamic education in Senior High Schools and Vocational Schools within the Republic of Indonesia Government Regulation Number 4 of 2022. The author argues that Islamic education should receive attention from the government through its policies, as Islamic education plays a crucial role in societal life, particularly in countries with a religious foundation like Indonesia.

In the current national education system, the subject of Islamic religious education plays a crucial role in achieving the educational goals of instilling attitudes, knowledge, and skills in the behavior of

students (Rosyad, 2020). Students are taught values such as patience, honesty, cooperation, and compassion through Islamic religious education. They are also instructed on the importance of integrity, responsibility, and respect for fellow human beings, which are crucial in fostering good behavior.

Moreover, the author contends that Islamic religious education provides an understanding of spiritual aspects and offers a comprehensive worldview. This encompasses understanding the essence of humanity, the relationship between humans and nature, as well as our responsibilities as creatures of Allah. Additionally, through Islamic religious education, learners are taught how to address conflicts, manage stress, and maintain a balance between spiritual and worldly needs. Thus, Islamic religious education aids in instilling positive attitudes and good behavior in learners.

Based on Al-Ghazali's perspective, Islamic education, which includes both the curriculum and Islamic Religious Education subjects, is a progressive, dynamic, and ongoing process of interaction between teachers and students that extends throughout the learner's lifetime. Its primary objective is to holistically and harmoniously nurture all aspects instilled by Allah within the student, ultimately fostering their well-being and spiritual fulfillment (Sheikh & Ali, 2019). Islamic education is not just about religious knowledge but also about character and morality formation. This process requires time and consistency to develop moral awareness, courage, sincerity, and other values necessary to become a good individual and devoted servant of Allah.

Another definition states that Islamic education encompasses all forms of education based on the Qur'an and Hadith as the primary guidance towards ultimate truth in both the worldly life and the hereafter. It can be concluded that the value of Islamic education is everything that has a positive impact on humans based on the Qur'an and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad (Makmur et al., 2022). Meanwhile, in terms of its scope, Islamic education entails the holistic education of individuals, encompassing intellect and heart, spiritual and physical aspects, morality and skills (Makmur et al., 2022).

In Arabic, Islamic education is known by the terms *tarbiyyah*, *ta'dīb*, and *ta'lim*. *Tarbiyyah* pertains to the educational aspect that emphasizes an individual's physical and mental growth. *Ta'dīb* refers to the endeavor to shape individuals into virtuous beings based on the teachings and noble ethics blessed by Islam, enabling them to behave and interact in society justly. Meanwhile, *ta'lim* pertains to the process of learning and teaching (Yasin & Jani, 2013). Although these three terms differ, they are interrelated and complement each other.

Islamic education scholars, such as al-Abrasyi, an-Nahlawi, al-Jamali, as-Syaibani, and al-Ainani, have each detailed the ultimate goals of Islamic education, which fundamentally revolve around three following components: firstly, to achieve the goal of *hablun minallah* (relationship with Allah); secondly, to achieve the goal of *hablun minannās* (relationship with fellow human beings); and thirdly, to achieve the goal of *hablun minal'ālam* (relationship with the world) (Tolchah & Mu'ammam, 2019). Furthermore, Islamic education also aims to enhance intellectual potential (Zubaidillah, 2018). Islamic education encourages the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are essential aspects of intellectual strength (Ilham et al., 2023). Therefore, Islamic education aims to enhance and elevate individuals' potential holistically, in a balanced and integrated manner, encompassing spiritual, moral, and intellectual aspects, as well as emotional ones (Wachidah et al., 2021).

In the view of Al-Ghazali, the objective of Islamic Education is to engender awareness and facilitate the attainment of life's purpose, namely, surrendering oneself to Allah. Furthermore, the goals of Islamic education must stem from the Qur'an, which asserts that the purpose of human creation is to worship Allah (Sheikh & Ali, 2019). Islamic Education aims to shape and strengthen morality. Through Islamic Education, students are guided to develop a strong spiritual foundation (Ilham et al., 2023). This indicates that Islamic education's primary goal is to cultivate robust spirituality. However, Islamic education aims not solely to shape spirituality but also to foster high morality. Islamic education aims to cultivate noble and meaningful character (Eka, 2017; Fikri et al., 2023). This finding indicates that Islamic education is focused on religious knowledge and the formation of individual character and morality.

Senior High Schools, commonly referred to as *Sekolah Menengah Atas (SMA)*, are formal educational institutions that offer general education at the secondary level, serving as a progression from Junior High Schools, known as *Sekolah Menengah Pertama (SMP)*, Islamic Junior High Schools (*Madrasah Tsanawiyah*), or its equivalents (Muhadi et al., 2017). Students of Senior High Schools are typically

between the ages of 16 and 18, a stage characterized by adolescence, spanning from 10 to 19 years of age. Adolescence represents a transitional period from childhood to adulthood (Muhadi et al., 2017). Meanwhile, according to Article 15 of Law Number 20 of 2003 Concerning the National Education System, vocational education is secondary education that prepares students for employment in specific fields (Republic of Indonesia Law Number 20 of 2003 Concerning the National Education System). Thus, vocational secondary education places greater emphasis on practical skills for employment.

In general, policy is used to indicate how an agent, such as an official, group, or particular institution, should act to address a specific issue. The definition of policy put forth by public policy analysts varies. This indicates that the use of the term “policy” has not yet been uniformly agreed upon in its application. Policy can be understood as an action taken by the government or an organization to achieve specific goals. In the context of sustainability, policy is a response to the urgent need for action by governments worldwide to care for the environment and society at large (Membrillo-hern et al., 2021). Policies aim to ensure sustainable, peaceful, prosperous, and equitable lives on Earth for all, both now and in the future (Membrillo-hern et al., 2021).

Based on the literature survey, studies on the direction of Islamic education remain highly limited. Several scholars and researchers have discussed this theme to some extent. Zuhri & Suparmin (2013) examined the direction of Islamic education, with their study focusing on the curriculum and instructional models of Islamic Religious Education. Rahman (2016) investigated the reform and direction of renewal in Islamic education. Miftahuddin (2022) examined the new direction of paradigm development in Islamic Religious Education, although his study focused on the context of science.

Although previously studied, the researcher found gaps indicating: first, despite existing studies, research on the direction of Islamic education remains highly limited; second, the author did not find previous studies focusing on Islamic education in schools; third, the researcher found that there were no previous studies discussing the direction of Islamic education using the policy analysis research paradigm. Therefore, this study offers novelty regarding the direction of Islamic education in Senior High Schools and Vocational Schools using the public policy analysis paradigm.

This study is guided by one research question: What is the direction of Islamic education in Senior High Schools and Vocational Schools from the perspective of Republic of Indonesia Government Regulation Number 4 of 2022? This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the content of the Republic of Indonesia Government Regulation Number 4 of 2022, particularly in the context of Islamic education in Senior High Schools and Vocational Schools. The findings of this study can be utilized by stakeholders, including schools, teachers, and the government, to understand the implications that need to be addressed.

## **METHOD**

### **Approach**

This study employs a qualitative research approach with content analysis as its primary method. Content analysis is a social science method for interpreting recorded human communication, focusing on written texts such as news media, policy documents, and literature (Baxter, 2020). In this study, the analyzed text is the document of the Republic of Indonesia Government Regulation Number 4 of 2022 Regarding Amendments to Government Regulation Number 57 of 2021 Regarding National Education Standards. The content analysis method enables a comprehensive examination of the document to uncover its key aspects and implications for national education policies.

### **Data Sources**

The primary data source for this study is the official government regulation document mentioned above. This regulation serves as the main textual material for analysis. Secondary data, such as academic literature, reports, and relevant policy documents, are also consulted to provide contextual insights and support the interpretation of the regulation’s content.

### **Data Analysis Procedure**

The content analysis process in this study follows a structured approach, consisting of the following steps: 1) Initial Scanning – The document is reviewed quickly to identify key terms, phrases, and

important paragraphs relevant to the study's focus; 2) Coding – Keywords and significant paragraphs are marked or underlined to facilitate systematic analysis; 3) Interpretation – The identified keywords and key sections are analyzed to uncover meanings, themes, and implications related to the research objectives; 4) Conclusion Drawing – The findings from the analysis are synthesized to generate meaningful conclusions.

Visualization of Findings – Key insights are structured and organized to enhance clarity and coherence; 5) Report Writing – The final stage involves documenting the analysis and presenting the findings in a structured academic format (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Stages of Data Analysis Process

### **Data Validity and Credibility**

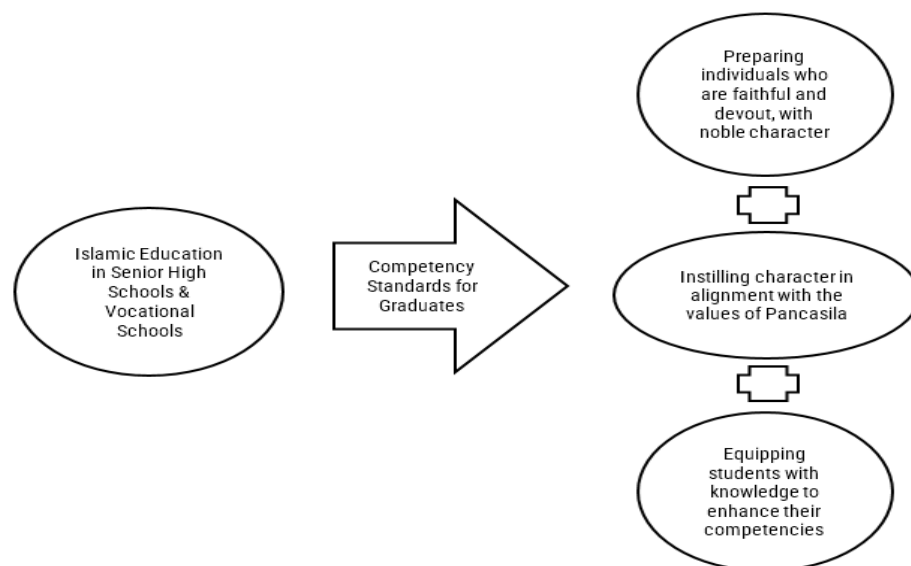
This study employs several verification techniques to ensure the validity and credibility of the findings. Triangulation is applied by comparing findings with insights from related academic literature and policy documents. Peer debriefing is conducted by discussing the interpretations with experts or scholars in the field of education policy. Additionally, a transparent and systematic approach is maintained throughout the content analysis process to enhance the reliability and trustworthiness of the study.

## **RESULT**

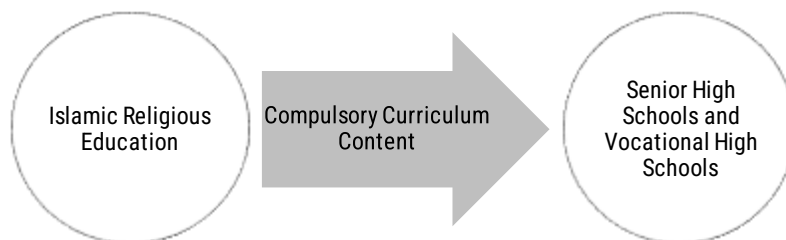
The analysis of Government Regulation Number 4 of 2022, which amends Government Regulation Number 57 of 2021 concerning National Education Standards in the Republic of Indonesia, elucidates that Islamic education in Senior High Schools and Vocational Schools is systematically oriented towards the Graduate Competency Standards for Islamic Religious Education. In Article 6, clause 2, it is mentioned that the Competency Standards for graduates of Senior High School education are focused on three key points: First, preparing students to become members of society who are faithful and devout to the One God, and possess noble character; Second, instilling characters in line with the values of Pancasila; Third, in Senior High School units, equipping students with knowledge to enhance their competencies so that they can live independently and continue their education. Meanwhile, in vocational school units, students are equipped with skills to enhance their competencies so that they can live independently and continue their education.

From the three focuses of the Competency Standards for graduates, the first and second points appear to be directed towards the Competency Standards for Graduates of Islamic Education in Senior High Schools and Vocational Schools. The desired competency standards for graduates are as follows: firstly, students have faith, piety, and noble character; secondly, they possess Islamic character in line with the values of Pancasila (see figure 2).

Furthermore, Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 4 of 2022 concerning Amendments to Government Regulation Number 57 of 2021 on National Education Standards stipulates that religious education is mandated to become a compulsory curriculum in Senior High Schools and Vocational High Schools (see Figure 3). In this context, Islamic religious education appears to receive significant attention from the government, thereby being established as a compulsory curriculum alongside Pancasila education and civic education.

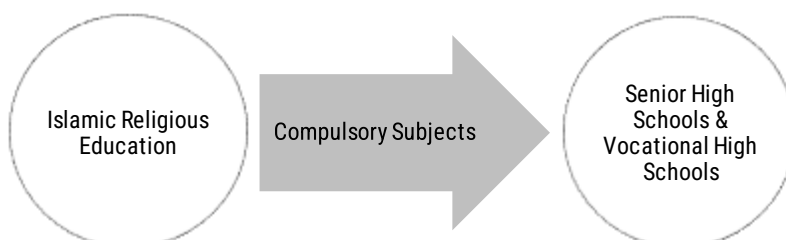


**Figure 2.** The Orientation of Islamic Education Towards Graduate Competency Standards in Senior High Schools and Vocational Schools



**Figure 3.** Islamic Religious Education is Directed as One of the Compulsory Curriculum Content in Senior High Schools and Vocational High Schools

Moreover, Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 4 of 2022 stipulates that the Islamic education curriculum is mandated as a compulsory component within Senior High Schools and Vocational High Schools, implemented through the subject of Islamic Religious Education. This provision further demonstrates the Indonesian government's commitment to prioritizing Islamic education within the national educational framework (see Figure 4)



**Figure 4.** Islamic Religious Education is Directed as One of the Compulsory Subjects in Senior High Schools and Vocational High Schools

In addition, the government's focus on Islamic education is reflected in several key priorities that must be addressed in developing the Islamic education curriculum for Senior High Schools (SMA) and Vocational High Schools (SMK). These priorities include the enhancement of faith and piety, the reinforcement of Pancasila values, the cultivation of noble character, the promotion of religious principles, and the strengthening of national unity (see Figure 5).



**Figure 5:** Key Priorities That Must Be Addressed in The Development of The Islamic Religious Education Curriculum for Senior High Schools (SMA) and Vocational High Schools (SMK)

In designing and developing the Islamic Education curriculum in Senior High Schools and Vocational High Schools, curriculum developers must consider several aspects: faith and piety, Pancasila values, noble character, religion, and national unity.

## DISCUSSION

The direction of Islamic education in Senior High Schools and Vocational Schools, as outlined in Government Regulation of The Republic of Indonesia Number 4 Of 2022, encompasses four key aspects: (1) the orientation of Islamic education towards achieving Graduate Competency Standards in Senior High Schools and Vocational Schools; (2) the designation of Islamic Religious Education as a compulsory subject within the curriculum of Senior High Schools and Vocational Schools; (3) the establishment of Islamic Religious Education as a mandatory subject in Senior High Schools and Vocational Schools; and (4) the key priorities that must be addressed in the development of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum for Senior High Schools (SMA) and Vocational High Schools (SMK).

### 1. The Orientation of Islamic Education Towards Graduate Competency Standards in Senior High Schools and Vocational Schools

In the context of educational regulation in Indonesia, Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 4 of 2022 is the central point in establishing Graduation Competency Standards. The author contends that this regulation tends to emphasize the aspect of Islamic education at the Senior High School and Vocational High School levels. One of the key indicators of the established competency standards is faith and piety, which are positioned as the foremost priorities to be fulfilled. This signifies an educational orientation not solely focused on academic achievements but also on character formation and spiritual values of students as the primary objectives of Islamic education (Mutaqin & Zaki, 2018).

The emphasis on faith and piety as key elements in the Graduation Competency Standards reflects a clear orientation towards the primary goals of Islamic education. Islamic education aims to achieve outcomes that encompass the formation of Islamic personalities, manifested through belief and obedience to the One Almighty God and in morally upright behavior. Nabila (2021) dan Padri et al. (2020) highlight that Islamic education is centered around the attainment of tangible outcomes, encompassing the formation of Islamic personalities characterized by faith, piety, and noble conduct.

The author contends that the approach taken in the regulation of Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 4 of 2022 emphasizes the importance of education that pursues not only academic achievements but also character formation aligned with religious and moral values. Islamic

education in Senior High Schools and Vocational High Schools plays a significant role in shaping individuals who are academically competent and morally and spiritually upright. This aligns with the goals of Islamic education, which emphasize not only academic achievements but also character formation based on Islamic moral and spiritual values (Padri et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the established graduation competency standards encompass belief in the One Almighty God, coupled with the implementation of religious teachings in daily life, indicating the significance of integrating faith, piety, and noble conduct in education (Padri et al., 2020). This argument emphasizes that Islamic education in Senior High Schools and Vocational High Schools plays a crucial role in cultivating individuals who are not only academically successful but also possess high moral and spiritual integrity.

In a broader context, the emphasis on faith, piety, and noble conduct in the Graduation Competency Standards strengthens religion's role within the Indonesian education system. Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 4 of 2022 aligns with Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005, which stipulates that national education standards include minimum criteria concerning educational components that allow each level and track of education to optimally develop education by the characteristics and uniqueness of its programs, including religious values (Mutaqin & Zaki, 2018).

Not only competence in faith and piety but also the cultivation of characters aligned with Pancasila values is a competency requirement as per Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 4 of 2022. This underscores the importance of integrating moral values and Pancasila character into Islamic education, which focuses not only on spiritual aspects but also on shaping individuals' characters and personalities in accordance with the nation's ideology (Padri et al., 2020; Rahman, 2022).

The Pancasila values constitute the foundation underlying the identity and existence of the Indonesian nation, asserting the importance of integrating moral values and Pancasila character into every aspect of life, including the education system. This indicates that education in Indonesia aims not only to enhance students' intellectual intelligence and academic competence but also to shape their characters and personalities in accordance with the fundamental values contained within Pancasila (Mursidawati, 2023; Rahman, 2022). Therefore, incorporating Pancasila values as graduation competency standards reaffirms the commitment to the unity and diversity of the Indonesian nation.

In this regard, the author perceives that the government pays significant attention to the formation of students' characters, which integrates Islamic Education with Pancasila values. The idea of integration is based on several considerations: First, the first and second principles serve as the foundation for developing individuals with religious and humanistic characters; Second, the values of the third principle form the basis for building nationalistic and pluralistic individualistic characters. Third, the fourth and fifth principles serve as the foundation for developing individuals' creative and prosperous personalities (Zaman et al., 2022). The position of Pancasila requires significant attention for two main reasons. Firstly, the principles of Pancasila are imbued with Islamic values, and secondly, Islam provides strong legitimacy for the implementation of Pancasila principles grounded in Islamic principles (Rahman, 2015).

In the context of education, Pancasila values are crucial to be understood and practiced by every individual as a responsible citizen. Incorporating Pancasila as a graduation competency standard conveys that unity in diversity is valued and upheld in Indonesian society. Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 4 of 2022 aligns with Government Regulation No. 57 of 2021, which emphasizes the importance of instilling character with Pancasila values as well as literacy and numeracy competencies among students (Rahman, 2022). This indicates that education in Indonesia aims not only to enhance students' intellectual intelligence and academic competence but also to shape their characters and personalities in accordance with the fundamental values contained within Pancasila.

In pursuing graduation competency standards, spiritual and ideological aspects are focused upon, as well as practical knowledge and skills. Graduation Competency Standards in general secondary education focus on knowledge to enhance learners' competencies for independent living and further education. Meanwhile, Graduation Competency Standards in vocational secondary education concentrate on skills to enhance learners' competencies for independent living and further education in accordance with their chosen field (Rahman, 2022). Therefore, at the Senior High School and Vocational High School levels, students are expected to meet competency standards that encompass both of these aspects.

The knowledge aspect is a key element in shaping students' competencies. At the Senior High School and Vocational High School levels, students are required to master various subjects according to the established curriculum (Dewi et al., 2020). This encompasses fields such as mathematics, natural sciences, social sciences, languages, and others. Broad and in-depth knowledge across various disciplines provides students with a solid foundation to comprehend the world around them and become educated individuals.

Additionally, practical skills also constitute an important component of graduation competency standards in both Senior High Schools and Vocational High Schools. This argument encompasses a range of skills such as communication skills, problem-solving skills, information and communication technology (ICT) skills, social skills, and professional skills relevant to the field or vocational program undertaken by the students (Sunengsih, 2020). These skills are crucial for success in academic life, daily life, and future careers of the students.

By meeting competency standards encompassing knowledge and skills, students in Senior High Schools and Vocational High Schools are expected to leave school equipped with a comprehensive and relevant foundation to face challenges in the real world. They will not only have a strong academic footing but also the practical skills necessary to succeed in various aspects of life (Mursidawati, 2023; Sunengsih, 2020). This approach is crucial in preparing the younger generation to become positively contributing and productive members of society in the nation's development.

## **2. Islamic Religious Education is Directed as One of the Compulsory Curriculum Content in Senior High Schools and Vocational High Schools**

Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 4 of 2022 gives special attention to Islamic education in Senior High Schools and Vocational High Schools. In this context, for instance, the Merdeka Curriculum considers Islamic Religious Education as a crucial subject within the educational unit, playing a role in shaping personalities, characters, morals, and purifying the soul, as well as improving human relationships with God (Bella, 2023). Islamic education aims to guide students to become devout Muslims, perform righteous deeds, possess noble character, and be beneficial to society and the nation. This demonstrates the government's commitment to ensuring that students acquire a sound understanding of religion and moral values within the context of formal education.

The author contends that the inclusion of Islamic Religious Education as a vital component in the compulsory curriculum of Senior High Schools and Vocational High Schools constitutes a strategic move by the government. This step is directed not only towards ensuring the intellectual and academic development of students but also towards instilling moral and spiritual aspects that align with the values upheld by Indonesian society. The Merdeka Curriculum, which provides freedom and autonomy to educational institutions, including in religious education, supports this endeavor (Bella, 2023). Islamic Religious Education, as a subject of significant importance, is expected to prepare students to embrace and succeed in the implementation of the independent learning curriculum. The goal is to shape students' characters, morals, and personalities in alignment with the religious and cultural values of the nation.

## **3. Islamic Religious Education is Directed as One of the Compulsory Subjects in Senior High Schools and Vocational High Schools**

The author observes that the government recognizes religious education, particularly Islamic Religious Education, as having a strong doctrine to shape a spiritually inclined society. Among the sources of spirituality in Islam are faith, piety, and noble character. Through heightened spirituality, it is anticipated that the community can attain mental and spiritual well-being, which significantly impacts other aspects, such as economic and health considerations.

In the realm of economics, various empirical studies have established that spirituality maintains an indirect correlation with both economic prosperity and health. For example, within this context, research conducted by Pratama (2014) concluded that spirituality constitutes one of the contributing variables to lecturers' performance. Similarly, Solichin (2020) also concludes that Islamic spirituality influences job satisfaction. Furthermore, support from Islamic spirituality based on principles of faith in Allah can shape specific attitudes and practices directed as acts of worship. This can be applied to various work tasks (Hijriah, 2016).



In terms of health, spirituality resulting from faith, piety, and noble character also influences well-being in the form of health. Spirituality impacts an individual's psychological health. A study demonstrates that spirituality has an influence on mental health. The findings of this research support previous findings that spirituality is beneficial for mental health (Wahyuni & Bariyyah, 2019). Moreover, Islamic education also aims to instill an Islamic character that does not conflict with Pancasila. Indeed, many scholars agree that Islamic values are not incompatible with Pancasila and national values. Therefore, Islamic education should accommodate and align with the values of Pancasila and Indonesian nationalism.

Nevertheless, in this regard, the author harbors doubts that even though Islamic education receives attention with its primary position in the Graduation Competency Standards, questions arise within the author's mind: can the strengthening of faith, piety, noble character, and Islamic-Pancasila character be achieved while the Islamic education curriculum in Senior High Schools and Vocational High Schools has very limited learning durations? Therefore, various efforts, strategies, and approaches are needed to achieve the goals of Islamic education.

Among the approaches that can be undertaken is the integration of Islamic education values into subjects so that Islamic education is not only conveyed through the Islamic Religious Education subject alone. Furthermore, Islamic education can also be reinforced through extracurricular activities such as Friday morning religious gatherings or "IMTAQ" programs (faith, piety, and moral character development), or Islamic holiday gatherings that are often scheduled in schools, including in Senior High Schools and Vocational High Schools.

#### **4. Key Priorities That Must Be Addressed in The Development of The Islamic Religious Education Curriculum for Senior High Schools (SMA) and Vocational High Schools (SMK)**

The Islamic Religious Education curriculum should be designed to enhance the faith and piety of students. This can be achieved through learning about religious teachings, religious practices, and the development of spiritual awareness in daily life. Integration between formal school education and Islamic boarding school education, in-depth study of the Qur'an and Hadith, as well as the study of classical Islamic texts, can facilitate this goal (Dewi et al., 2020; Mutaqin & Zaki, 2018). Furthermore, fostering noble character (*akhlāq al-karīmah*) is also an integral part of the educational process, which not only focuses on theoretical knowledge but also the practice of worship and the application of Islamic values in daily life (Khoiron, 2023; Mutaqin & Zaki, 2018). Thus, a comprehensive and integrated Islamic education curriculum can assist students in developing their faith and piety in a more profound and applicable manner.

In addition to religious aspects, the Islamic education curriculum should also encompass the teaching of Pancasila values. This is important to ensure that students understand the values of Islam and the national values that underpin Indonesia's identity. Integrating Pancasila values into the Islamic education curriculum can help students develop attitudes of tolerance, diversity, and intense nationalism, in line with the principles of nationhood and statehood. Thus, Islamic education not only focuses on shaping character and spirituality based on Islamic principles but also strengthens national identity and patriotism among students (Dewi et al., 2020; Mutaqin & Zaki, 2018). This aspect reflects the importance of holistic and integrated education, which prepares students not only in religious aspects but also in social skills and nationalism.

Islamic education in senior high schools and vocational high schools indeed must pay special attention to the cultivation of noble character among students. This argument aligns with the national education goals, which aim to develop skills and shape the dignified character and noble morals of the nation in enlightening the life of the nation, as well as to nurture the potential of students to become pious individuals, have a noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, creative, innovative, and independent (Alhamuddin et al., 2022; Dewi et al., 2020). Islamic education is not only focused on religious knowledge but also on teaching ethics, morality, and good behavior in daily life, which are part of the attitude dimension in the Graduation Competency Standards (Dewi et al., 2020). These arguments include values such as honesty, caring, responsibility, lifelong learning skills, as well as physical and spiritual health. Thus, Islamic education in senior high schools and vocational high schools plays a significant role in shaping students' characters in accordance with Islamic values that teach goodness and noble behavior.

The Islamic education curriculum, indeed, should provide a strong foundation in understanding Islam, including comprehension of its teachings, history, and practices of worship. This encompasses aspects such as belief (*aqidah*), ethics (*akhlāq*), the Qur'an, Hadith, History, as well as *Fiqh* (jurisprudence), all of which are integral parts of Islamic education in schools and madrasahs. In this context, Islamic education aims to shape students who are devout in worship, understand and practice the values of Islamic teachings, and are capable of applying the principles of Islamic transactions and Sharia in societal, national, and state life (Maidugu & Isah, 2024; Sunengsih, 2020).

Furthermore, Islamic education in senior high schools and vocational high schools should promote national unity and diversity. This statement includes teaching tolerance among religions, appreciation of different cultures and customs, as well as fostering attitudes that value the unity and integrity of Indonesia. This argument aligns with the national education goal aimed at developing the potential of students to become individuals who are devout and pious towards the Almighty, possess noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, competent, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens (Guna & Yuwantiningrum, 2024; Sunengsih, 2020). This opinion highlights the importance of Islamic education in building the character of students who adhere to their faith and possess attitudes of tolerance and appreciation for diversity as part of national unity.

By considering these aspects in the development of Islamic education curriculum in high schools and vocational schools, the government demonstrates a commitment to ensuring that Islamic education not only shapes students who are devout and pious but also students who possess strong moral values, high national consciousness, and attitudes that value diversity and national unity. This is crucial in building a competitive, integrity-driven generation that contributes positively to the progress of the nation and the country.

## CONCLUSION

The direction of Islamic education in Senior High Schools (SMA) and Vocational High Schools (SMK), as articulated in Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 4 of 2022, underscores a holistic approach to education that integrates spiritual, moral, and national values. This regulation delineates four pivotal aspects: the orientation of Islamic education towards achieving Graduate Competency Standards, the designation of Islamic Religious Education as a compulsory subject, its establishment as a mandatory subject, and the prioritization of key areas in curriculum development. Collectively, these elements aim to cultivate students who are not only academically proficient but also spiritually grounded, morally upright, and socially responsible. By prioritizing faith, piety, and noble character as integral components of graduation standards, Islamic education aligns with the broader objectives of national education, fostering individuals who embody both Islamic values and Pancasila principles. This integration ensures students develop a robust religious identity while appreciating Indonesia's cultural diversity and national unity.

Nevertheless, the limited instructional time allocated to Islamic education within the curriculum presents a significant challenge to achieving these objectives. To address this, innovative strategies such as integrating Islamic values across various subjects, enhancing extracurricular activities, and fostering collaboration between formal education and Islamic boarding schools are imperative. These measures can reinforce the goals of Islamic education, ensuring that students internalize and practice values such as faith, piety, and noble character in their daily lives. In conclusion, the development of Islamic education in Senior High School (SMA) and Vocational High School (SMK) reflects a steadfast commitment to nurturing an intellectually capable, morally grounded, and nationally conscious generation. By harmonizing Islamic teachings with Pancasila values, the curriculum prepares students to contribute meaningfully to society while upholding Indonesia's religious and cultural heritage.

The findings of this study recommend: 1) For the government: To formulate policies aimed at increasing the duration of Islamic Religious Education in public schools, including high schools and vocational schools, according to the needs and significance of religious education for students; 2) For high schools and vocational schools: actively organize additional programs such as religious study groups and other religious activities to provide students with opportunities to deepen their understanding of religion and spirituality; 3) For future researchers: conduct further policy analysis regarding the duration

of Islamic Education learning in public schools and its implications on students' understanding of religion and morality.

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