At Turots: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam
Vol. 8, No. 2, December 2026, pp. 2514-252
Print ISSN : 2656-7555 || Online ISSN : 2747-089X
http://journal.stitmadani.ac.id/index.php/JPI/index

Challenges of Islamic Education in the Muslim World and the West: A Comparative Study of the Influence of Geopolitics and State Policy

Romaito Rambe[a.1,*], Muhammad Syaifudin[b,2]

[*ab] Universitas Islam Negeri Sultan Syarif Kasim, Indonesia.
[*1] 22590123029@student.uin-suska.ac.id; [2]m.syaifuddin@uin-suska.ac.id
* Romaito Rambe

Received: 12-09-2026 *Revised: 11-10-2026* *Accepted: 08-11-2026*

KEYWORDS

Islamic Education;
Geopolitics;
State Policy;
Muslim World;
Western Countries.

ABSTRACT

Islamic education in Muslim-majority countries and Western countries faces different challenges shaped by geopolitical dynamics, state policies, and the social and cultural conditions of each region. This study aims to analyze the challenges of Islamic education in both contexts, identify the influence of geopolitics and state policies on its implementation, and compare the characteristics of the issues encountered. This research employs a qualitative approach through library research using a descriptive-comparative method. Data were collected from national and international journal articles, academic books, educational policy documents, and official reports from international institutions. The data were analyzed using content analysis and comparative analysis, focusing on geopolitical dynamics, state policies, and the institutional capacity of Islamic education. The findings indicate that Islamic education in Muslim-majority countries faces challenges related to political instability, armed conflicts, unequal access to education, limited funding, and disparities in institutional quality. Meanwhile, Islamic education in Western countries encounters issues concerning institutional recognition, equal rights in religious education, adaptation to national educational regulations, and the preservation of Islamic identity within multicultural societies. This study further reveals that these differences are not solely determined by the majority or minority status of Muslim communities but are also influenced by political systems, political stability, and the relationship between the state and Islamic educational institutions. Therefore, the development of Islamic education requires inclusive, adaptive, and context-sensitive policies through institutional strengthening, equal access to education, curriculum reform, and improvement of human resource quality.

This is an open-access article under the CC–BY-SA license.

Introduction

Islamic education is an important part of the formation of religious identity, the advancement of knowledge, and the social life of Muslims. As it has developed, Islamic education cannot be separated from the influence of political systems, state policies, and geopolitical dynamics that shape the direction of educational provision. In Muslim-majority countries, the challenges of Islamic education include integrating religious and general sciences, renewing the curriculum, achieving equitable access, and adapting to the changing times. In Western countries, meanwhile, Islamic education faces issues of institutional recognition, religious freedom,

 ISSN 2747-089X

secularism, and the social integration of Muslim communities. These differences show that the challenges of Islamic education relate not only to pedagogical aspects but are also shaped by political interests, ideological orientations, and state policies governing the relationship between religion and education.

Empirically, conflict and political instability are among the factors that hinder the provision of education in a number of Muslim-majority countries. UNICEF (2025) reported that at least 30 million children aged 5–18 are out of school in 12 countries in the Middle East and North Africa. This condition is linked to conflict and humanitarian crises that disrupt access to education and its continuity. Although these data cover entire education systems and not Islamic education alone, they show the magnitude of the educational challenges in a region where many Islamic educational institutions operate. In Western countries, the challenges tend to concern the recognition of religious education within school systems, equality in institutional arrangements, and the application of the principle of secularism. Accordingly, the problems of Islamic education need to be understood in the socio-political context of each country, without generalizing that all Muslim or Western countries face the same problems.

Recent research shows that Islamic education is increasingly studied from the perspectives of public policy, the sociology of religion, and comparative education. Hendek (2022) explains that religious education policy in Europe is related to human rights, the position of religious education in schools, and the variety of models of provision. Körs et al. (2023), meanwhile, examine the position of Islamic religious education in Germany in the relationship between religion, education, politics, and society. Ciornei et al. (2022) also show that political orientation and the level of secularization are related to how Islamic education is regulated in public schools in several European countries. These findings show that the provision of Islamic education is determined not only by the needs of Muslim communities but also by political structures and state policies. In addition, geopolitical dynamics in the form of conflict, migration, and security issues can affect access to education, public perceptions of Muslim identity, and the room for maneuver of Islamic educational institutions. The relationship between geopolitics, state policy, and Islamic education therefore needs to be analyzed in an integrated manner.

Previous comparative studies have been conducted largely within Muslim-majority countries. Alam, Dindin, and Hidayatullah (2026) compare Islamic education policy and curriculum in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Turkey; Fitriani, Munir, and Nurlaila (2025) compare Islamic education systems in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Egypt from philosophical, sociological, and pedagogical perspectives; and Saleh Nst and Magdalena (2026) analyze policies, implementation, and strategic challenges in Southeast Asian countries. Sulistio, Usman, and Fadhilah (2026) extend the comparison of policy models to Western countries, but the emphasis remains on policy models rather than on geopolitical dynamics as an explanatory factor. Studies in Western contexts, meanwhile, concentrate on the regulation and recognition of Islamic education within particular countries or regions of Europe (Ciornei et al., 2022; Hendek, 2022; Körs et al., 2023). The geopolitical dimension has mostly been addressed separately, either through the effect of conflict on access to education (UNICEF, 2025) or through responses to specific crises, such as the reconstruction of religious moderation curricula after the Iran-Israel escalation (Fathorrahman & Handayani, 2026).

Three research gaps follow from this review. First, the challenges of Islamic education in the Muslim world and in the West are rarely analyzed side by side using the same analytical categories. Second, geopolitical dynamics, state policy, and institutional conditions tend to be treated as separate topics, even though they are likely to be causally connected. Third, the assumption that the majority or minority status of Muslims is the main determinant of these

 ISSN 2747-089X

challenges has rarely been tested against the role of political systems and state-institution relations. This study addresses these gaps and offers three contributions. (1) It constructs an integrated comparative framework that traces how geopolitical dynamics shape state policy, and how state policy in turn shapes the institutional conditions of Islamic education, namely access, curriculum, funding, governance, and recognition. (2) It places the literature on Muslim-majority and Western contexts in a single analysis based on common comparative aspects. (3) It argues, on the basis of that comparison, that the differences in challenges are explained less by the majority or minority position of Muslims than by political stability, the political system, and the relationship between the state and Islamic educational institutions. The framework is expected to broaden the understanding of Islamic education as an educational institution whose development is also shaped by political conditions and international relations.

Based on the above, this study aims to analyze the challenges of Islamic education in the Muslim world and the West, to identify the influence of geopolitics and state policy on its provision, and to compare the similarities and differences in the challenges that arise in the two contexts. The study proceeds from a main question: How do geopolitical dynamics and state policy shape the challenges of Islamic education in the Muslim world and the West, and what are the implications for developing inclusive, adaptive, and contextual Islamic education policies? The results are expected to contribute academically to the development of comparative Islamic education studies and to serve as input for formulating education policies that can respond to socio-political change without neglecting the needs and characteristics of Muslim communities.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a library research design and a descriptive-comparative method. Library research was chosen because the study compares phenomena across countries and relies on published empirical findings, policy documents, and official reports rather than on primary field data. The approach is used to analyze the challenges of Islamic education in the Muslim world and the West based on geopolitical dynamics and state policy.

Data sources. The data consist of three types of sources: (a) national and international journal articles and academic books on Islamic education; (b) educational policy documents and regulations discussed in the literature; and (c) official reports from international institutions, such as UNICEF. Searches were conducted through Google Scholar and Scopus and through the official websites of the institutions concerned, using combinations of English and Indonesian keywords such as Islamic education, madrasah, pesantren, geopolitics, state policy, secularism, religious education policy, Muslim minority, and comparative study. The search covered publications from 2022 to 2026 so that the analysis reflects recent conditions.

Selection criteria. Sources were included if they (1) discuss Islamic education or Islamic religious education in a Muslim-majority or Western context; (2) address at least one of the three focal aspects, namely geopolitical dynamics, state policy, or institutional conditions; (3) were published between 2022 and 2026 in scholarly journals, academic books, or as official documents; and (4) were written in English or Indonesian. Sources were excluded if they were opinion pieces without an analytical or empirical basis, if they did not discuss Islamic education, or if they duplicated other sources. Statistics covering the entire education system, such as the UNICEF data, were used only as contextual indicators, and the text states explicitly that they do not refer to Islamic education alone.

 ISSN 2747-089X

Analytical procedures. The analysis proceeded in four stages. First, the sources were screened by title, abstract, and full text against the criteria above. Second, the selected sources were coded using content analysis into three categories derived from the research objectives: geopolitical dynamics, state policy, and the institutional capacity of Islamic education (access, curriculum, funding, governance, and recognition). Third, the coded findings were synthesized separately for the Muslim world and for Western countries. Fourth, the two contexts were compared through comparative analysis using the same aspects in every case, as summarized in Table 1, and the relationships among the three categories were then interpreted in the Discussion. Applying the same categories at every stage was intended to keep the analysis consistent. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation, by comparing information across scholarly articles, policy documents, and official reports, and by tying each claim in the Results to the source that supports it.

As library research, the study depends on the availability and quality of published sources. The countries discussed (Indonesia, Pakistan, Malaysia, Turkey, Germany, and the Netherlands) are illustrative cases rather than a representative sample of all Muslim-majority or Western countries, and the findings are interpreted with this limitation in mind.

Result

Geopolitical Dynamics and Their Impact on Islamic Education in the Muslim World

Geopolitical dynamics are among the factors that influence the development of Islamic education, especially in countries experiencing conflict, governmental instability, and political tension. Such conditions can hinder the provision of education through damage to school facilities, a shortage of teachers, population displacement, and a decline in people's ability to access education. As a result, Islamic educational institutions face problems not only in the learning process but also in sustaining their institutional existence. These impacts can be seen in a number of countries in the Middle East that have experienced prolonged conflict. UNICEF (2025) reported that at least 30 million children aged 5–18 are out of school in 12 countries in the Middle East and North Africa. Although these data cover the whole education system, not only Islamic education, this condition shows how greatly political instability affects the fulfillment of people's right to education. Islamic educational institutions in affected areas are also likely to experience disrupted learning activities, limited facilities, and a shortage of teaching staff.

Besides affecting access to education, geopolitics can also influence the orientation of education through political and ideological interests. In situations of conflict, education may be used as a means of shaping identity and spreading particular views. The issue of equitable access to education is also evident in the study by Trinanda, Fakhruddin, and Asha (2025), which compared Islamic education in Indonesia and Pakistan. The study shows that socio-economic disparities, geographical constraints, and unequal access to technology are factors that hinder the equitable distribution of Islamic education. Indonesia has relatively better policy integration, whereas Pakistan still faces a fragmented education system.

 ISSN 2747-089X

State Policy on Islamic Education in the Muslim World

State policy plays an important role in determining the direction of Islamic education's development. Governments have the authority to regulate the curriculum, set educational standards, provide budgets, improve the quality of educators, and grant recognition to religious educational institutions. In Muslim-majority countries, the relationship between the state and Islamic education shows efforts to integrate religious educational institutions into the national education system.

Indonesia is an example of a country that provides room for the development of Islamic education through the existence of madrasahs, pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), and Islamic religious higher education institutions. Recognition of these institutions is an important part of expanding educational opportunities for Muslim communities. However, legal recognition does not fully guarantee equitable quality. Islamic educational institutions still face problems of funding, limited facilities, the quality of human resources, and disparities in institutional management. These problems are reinforced by the study of Zakaria et al. (2026) on madrasah policy in Indonesia, whose results show that the legal recognition of madrasahs has advanced, but funding, curriculum standardization, teacher certification, and digital infrastructure remain challenges.

In terms of curriculum, Jauhari, Walid, and Aziz (2025), through their study of Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs (KMA) Number 347 of 2022 and KMA Number 450 of 2024, show a shift in the direction of madrasah curriculum policy. This shift reflects the government's effort to develop education that is more adaptive, integrates character strengthening, and allows for more contextual learning. Besides madrasahs, pesantren are also an important part of Islamic education policy. The recognition of pesantren through Law Number 18 of 2019 on Pesantren provides a legal basis for the existence, functions, and provision of pesantren education.

Challenges of Islamic Education in Western Countries

Islamic education in Western countries develops in a social and political environment that differs from that of Muslim-majority countries. Most Western countries have systems for regulating the relationship between religion and the state that set certain limits on the involvement of religion in public education. This condition affects the position of Islamic education, particularly with regard to institutional recognition, funding, curriculum, and the provision of educators. The challenges that arise are not solely because Islam is a minority religion but also relate to how national education systems provide equal space for various religious groups.

Topalović's (2023) study of Islamic education in Germany explains that a secular system does not necessarily prevent the provision of religious education. Germany allows religious communities to participate in religious education in state schools through legal arrangements. In this system, the state provides the legal framework, while religious communities are responsible for shaping and delivering the religious education content.

The study by Körs et al. (2023) also shows that Islamic religious education in Germany exists within a complex relationship between religion, education, politics, and society. The provision of Islamic education concerns not only the supply of religious subjects but also institutional legitimacy, public acceptance, and the demands of social integration. The development of Islamic education in

 ISSN 2747-089X

the Netherlands offers another picture. Budak (2025), in a study of Islamic primary schools in the Netherlands, describes the development of Islamic educational institutions from their founding to 2025. The growth of Islamic schools is related to the development of Muslim communities, particularly through labor migration and the arrival of refugee groups from various countries. The existence of these schools is one way in which Muslim communities pass on their religious identity to the next generation while participating in the national education system.

Meanwhile, Amir-Moazami (2022) criticizes the integration policies toward Muslim communities in Western Europe, which at times position Muslims as a group that must continually adjust to definitions of religion and identity determined by the state.

Comparison of the Challenges of Islamic Education in the Muslim World and the West

The findings show that Islamic education in the Muslim world and the West has different characteristics of challenges. These differences are influenced by geopolitical conditions, systems of government, education policy, and the position of religion in people's lives. In Muslim-majority countries, Islamic education generally has a stronger social and institutional foundation. However, its sustainability still faces problems of political conflict, unequal access, limited resources, and the need for curriculum renewal. In contrast, Islamic education in Western countries develops in a more plural society with diverse systems for regulating religion and education. The main problems relate to institutional recognition, funding, curriculum regulation, and the fulfillment of the right to religious education within national systems. These differences can be seen through the following aspects.

Table 1. Comparison of the Challenges of Islamic Education in the Muslim World and the West

Aspect of comparison	Muslim world	Western countries
Geopolitical conditions	Conflict, political instability, and humanitarian crises in a number of countries	Migration, identity dynamics, and social integration
State policy	Integration of Islamic education into the national education system	Regulation of Islamic education based on law and the national education system
Curriculum	Integration of religious and general sciences and curriculum renewal	Adjustment of the religious curriculum to national education standards
Funding	Disparities in budgets and facilities between institutions	Funding follows each country's regulations and institutional recognition
Institutions	Quality improvement, governance, and equitable access	Institutional recognition and equality in the provision of religious education
Religious identity	Strengthening Islamic values in community life	Preserving Islamic identity in a multicultural environment
Main challenges	Stability, equity, and improvement of educational quality	Recognition, equality, and preservation of Islamic identity

 ISSN 2747-089X

Source: Compiled from Trinanda et al. (2025), Othman et al. (2022), Körs et al. (2023), Topalović (2023), and Budak (2025).

Based on the table, the main difference lies in the context of the problems faced. Comparative findings from Indonesia, Malaysia, and Turkey also show that Muslim-majority countries do not apply the same model of Islamic education. Alam, Dindin, and Hidayatullah (2026) show that Indonesia tends to use a pluralistic-decentralized model, Malaysia applies an integrative-centralized model, and Turkey develops education through Imam Hatip schools within a secular state framework.

Similar findings appear in the study by Othman et al. (2022), which compared religious higher education in Malaysia and Turkey. The study shows that the development of Islamic higher education in Turkey more often changes because of political dynamics, whereas development in Malaysia is relatively more stable. Meanwhile, the experiences of Germany and the Netherlands show that Islamic education can develop within a secular system through legal recognition, institutional cooperation, and the participation of Muslim communities. Studies of learning methods likewise indicate variation in Islamic religious education practices between Indonesia and other Muslim countries (Ervina, Awalliyah, & Soleha, 2025).

Discussion

Geopolitics, Access, and the Orientation of Islamic Education

The findings from the cases of Indonesia and Pakistan show that the challenges of Islamic education do not always stem from armed conflict but can also arise from developmental inequality and differences in governments' capacity to provide educational services. Islamic educational institutions therefore need to safeguard academic independence and develop learning that instills the values of peace, tolerance, and humanity, as also discussed by Fathorrahman and Handayani (2026) in relation to curriculum reconstruction for religious moderation amid global geopolitical crisis. Thus, geopolitical dynamics affect Islamic education through three main aspects: the stability of educational provision, the equitable distribution of access, and institutional orientation. This shows that developing Islamic education requires a stable political environment and policies capable of protecting people's right to obtain an education.

State Policy: Recognition and Quality Assurance of Islamic Education

The condition of madrasahs and pesantren in Indonesia shows that the success of education policy cannot be measured by the existence of regulations alone but also by the government's ability to implement policy evenly. This shows that curriculum policy is an important instrument for adapting Islamic education to the needs of changing times. However, implementing such policy still requires funding, better educator quality, and stronger governance so that institutional recognition can be followed by improvements in educational quality. A similar concern about the gap between policy design and implementation is raised in the comparative analysis of Islamic education policy in Southeast Asia (Saleh Nst & Magdalena, 2026).

Based on the above, it can be understood that state policy has two main functions: granting recognition to the existence of Islamic education and guaranteeing the quality of its provision. Both

 ISSN 2747-089X

functions must be kept in balance so that Islamic education not only obtains a formal position but is also able to deliver quality and equitable educational services.

Islamic Education in the Secular Systems of Western Countries

The German experience shows that the relationship between the state and Muslim communities can be built through institutional cooperation without abandoning the principle of secularism. This means that the existence of Islamic education requires regulatory support as well as the ability to build trust with communities of different religious and cultural backgrounds. This perspective is important because it shows that the problems of Islamic education cannot be separated from debates about identity, religious freedom, and the relationship between minority groups and state authority.

Based on these studies, the challenges of Islamic education in the West can be understood through three main issues: institutional recognition, adaptation to national education regulations, and the preservation of religious identity in multicultural societies. Developing Islamic education therefore requires policies that guarantee equal educational rights while encouraging dialogue and cooperation among Muslim communities, the government, and society at large.

Geopolitics, State Policy, and Institutional Conditions: An Integrated Critical Reading

The cases reviewed suggest that geopolitical dynamics, state policy, and institutional conditions operate as a connected chain rather than as separate factors. Geopolitical dynamics shape the capacity and priorities of the state, including its budget, its administrative reach, and its security concerns. State policy translates these conditions into recognition, funding, and curriculum regulation. Institutional conditions, namely facilities, educator quality, governance, and public legitimacy, then determine whether a policy becomes real educational quality. A break at any link explains why formally similar arrangements can produce very different outcomes.

In the Muslim world, the chain breaks at different points. In conflict-affected settings it breaks at the first link: where schools are damaged and populations displaced, as reflected in the UNICEF (2025) data on out-of-school children, institutions must first survive before they can improve quality. The comparison of Indonesia and Pakistan (Trinanda et al., 2025) shows that even without armed conflict, socio-economic disparity and a fragmented system can break the chain at the policy and institutional levels. The Indonesian case breaks it at the third link: madrasahs and pesantren are legally recognized, yet funding, teacher certification, and digital infrastructure lag behind (Zakaria et al., 2026). Recognition is therefore a necessary but not a sufficient condition, and equating integration into the national system with educational quality is not warranted. The contrast between Turkey, where Islamic higher education changes with political dynamics, and Malaysia, where it is relatively more stable (Othman et al., 2022), further indicates that the stability of the state-institution relationship matters more than the fact that a country is Muslim-majority. The three-country comparison of Alam et al. (2026) points the same way, since Indonesia, Malaysia, and Turkey follow different models of Islamic education.

In Western countries, geopolitics works less through physical disruption and more through migration, security discourse, and public perceptions of Muslim identity. Germany and the Netherlands show that recognition can be achieved through legal frameworks and cooperation

 ISSN 2747-089X

between the state and Muslim communities (Topalović, 2023; Körs et al., 2023; Budak, 2025). A critical reading, however, shows that recognition is not neutral. Amir-Moazami (2022) argues that integration policies in Western Europe often require Muslims to conform to definitions of religion set by the state. Cooperation can thus come with conditions, and institutional recognition may carry a degree of state influence over how Islam is taught. These cases also come from systems in which the state cooperates with religious communities, so they cannot be generalized to Western countries that apply stricter models of separating religion and the state.

In sum, the two contexts differ in where the chain tends to break: stability and capacity in much of the Muslim world, recognition and institutional autonomy in the West. They converge on a common point: policy without institutional capacity, and institutional capacity without policy support, both fail to produce quality and equity. This supports the argument that the majority or minority status of Muslims is not the sole determinant of the challenges of Islamic education. These interpretations should nevertheless be read as analytical propositions rather than established causal claims. They rest on library research, the UNICEF figures refer to whole education systems rather than to Islamic education alone, and the cases are illustrative, so they should be tested in further studies with field data and cross-country comparisons.

Interpreting the Differences in Challenges in the Muslim World and the West

Muslim-majority countries have opportunities to develop Islamic education through social and government support. However, these opportunities do not necessarily produce equitable educational quality if they are not accompanied by political stability, adequate funding, and good institutional management. These differences show that Islamic education policy is shaped by history, political structures, and the relationship between state authorities and religious institutions, which is consistent with comparative analyses of Islamic education systems from philosophical, sociological, and pedagogical perspectives (Fitriani et al., 2025).

The comparative findings for Malaysia and Turkey reinforce the view that policy stability and institutional continuity are important factors in the development of Islamic education. Accordingly, the differences in the challenges of Islamic education cannot be explained solely by the majority or minority status of Muslims. The more decisive factor is how the state regulates the relationship between religion, education, and national interests.

The comparison also shows that no single Islamic education policy model can be applied uniformly in all countries. Each country needs an approach suited to its political, social, cultural, and legal conditions, a view consistent with comparative studies of Islamic education policy models (Alam et al., 2026; Sulistio et al., 2026).

Implications of Geopolitics and State Policy for the Development of Islamic Education

The results of the comparative analysis show that geopolitical dynamics and state policy are two interrelated factors that determine the direction of Islamic education's development. Geopolitics can affect stability, access to education, and the continuity of institutions, while state policy determines the form of support, recognition, funding, and regulation of its provision. The development of Islamic education therefore requires policies that take into account both political conditions and the needs of society.

 ISSN 2747-089X

In the context of the Muslim world, governments need to strengthen equitable access to education, improve the quality of infrastructure, and ensure the continuity of educational institutions in conflict-prone areas. In addition, curriculum renewal should be directed toward integrating religious and general sciences so that students acquire religious competence along with knowledge relevant to developments in science and technology. Kosim et al. (2023) show that the shift in Islamic education policy in Indonesia from a domestication approach to an accommodation approach has helped strengthen the position of madrasahs, pesantren, and religious education within the national education system. This finding shows the importance of a constructive relationship between the government and Muslim communities in developing education.

In the context of Western countries, meanwhile, governments need to develop religious education policies that guarantee equality, religious freedom, and recognition of Islamic educational institutions. Such arrangements need to consider the right of Muslim communities to maintain their religious identity without neglecting national education standards. The experiences of Germany and the Netherlands show that cooperation between the government and Muslim communities can be one approach to strengthening the presence of Islamic education. Beyond government support, Islamic educational institutions in both contexts also need to improve their institutional capacity, educator competence, and ability to adapt to social change. Muttaqin's (2023) study on pesantren curriculum integration shows that curriculum development needs to take into account the characteristics of the institution and the social conditions of the community. Musthova and Khalim (2024) similarly examine the integration of national and local curricula in a madrasah diniyah as a way of shaping students' Muslim personalities. This means that renewing Islamic education need not do away with established scholarly traditions but should connect them with the needs of contemporary education.

Thus, developing Islamic education cannot be achieved through curriculum and teaching-method reform alone; it also requires state policy that is responsive to socio-political change. Synergy among the government, educational institutions, and society is an important factor in realizing Islamic education that is high-quality, inclusive, and sustainable.

Based on the whole body of studies, it can be understood that Islamic education in the Muslim world and the West faces different challenges because it is influenced by political conditions, systems of government, and the position of religion in people's lives. In the Muslim world, the main problems relate to political stability, equitable access, funding, and improving the quality of education. In Western countries, the challenges relate more to institutional recognition, policy equality, and the adaptation of Islamic education to the national education system. Nevertheless, both contexts share the same needs: strengthening institutional quality, developing relevant curricula, improving educator competence, and maintaining Islamic values in the face of global change. These differing conditions show that developing Islamic education cannot rely on a single policy model applied uniformly. Each country needs to consider the social, cultural, and political characteristics and the needs of its society.

Conclusion

This study shows that the challenges of Islamic education in the Muslim world and in the West are shaped by the interplay of geopolitical dynamics, state policy, and institutional conditions.

 ISSN 2747-089X

In Muslim-majority countries, the main challenges are political instability and conflict, unequal access, limited funding, and uneven institutional quality. In Western countries, they are institutional recognition, equal rights to religious education, adaptation to national regulations, and the preservation of Islamic identity in multicultural societies. These differences are not determined by the majority or minority status of Muslims alone, but also by political stability, the political system, and the relationship between the state and Islamic educational institutions.

The study contributes an integrated comparative framework that links geopolitics, state policy, and institutional conditions, and it shows that legal recognition of Islamic education is necessary but not sufficient for educational quality and equity.

For policymakers, three implications follow. First, governments in Muslim-majority countries should protect the continuity of education in conflict-prone areas and align funding, teacher certification, and infrastructure with the legal recognition already granted to madrasahs, pesantren, and other Islamic institutions. Second, curriculum policy, including the integration of religious and general sciences, needs to be stable and consistently implemented and monitored. Third, governments in Western countries should develop recognition and cooperation frameworks that guarantee equal educational rights while safeguarding the autonomy of Muslim communities and institutions from state definitions of religion.

For Islamic educational institutions, the implications are to strengthen governance and educator competence, to develop curricula that connect scholarly traditions with contemporary needs, and to build partnerships with governments and communities. Future research should test the proposed framework with field data and a wider set of cases, including other Western countries and conflict-affected Muslim-majority countries.

References

Alam, D. M., Dindin, & Hidayatullah, S. (2026). Rekonstruksi epistemologi pendidikan Islam: Analisis komparatif kebijakan dan kurikulum di Indonesia, Malaysia dan Turki. *Didaktik: Jurnal Ilmiah PGSD STKIP Subang*.

Amir-Moazami, S. (2022). Liberal-secular power and the traps of Muslim integration in Western Europe. *The British Journal of Sociology*. https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12942

Budak, B. (2025). The development of Islamic education in Islamic primary schools in the Netherlands. *Religions*, 16(12), 1475. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel16121475

Ciornei, I., Euchner, E.-M., & Yesil, I. (2022). Political parties and Muslims in Europe: The regulation of Islam in public education. *West European Politics*, 45(5), 1003–1032.

Ervina, E., Awalliyah, N., & Soleha, U. (2025). Studi komparatif metode pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam di Indonesia dan negara-negara Muslim lainnya. *Jurnal Pendidikan Tambusai*.

Fathorrahman, & Handayani, F. (2026). Pendidikan Islam di tengah krisis geopolitik global: Rekonstruksi kurikulum moderasi beragama pasca eskalasi konflik Iran–Israel. *GAPAI: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 4(1).

Fitriani, A., Munir, & Nurlaila. (2025). A comparative analysis of contemporary Islamic education systems: Philosophical, sociological, and pedagogical perspectives from Indonesia, Malaysia, and Egypt. *CENDEKIA: Jurnal Studi Keislaman*, 11(1), 53–76.

Hendek, A. (2022). European religious education policy. *Değerler Eğitimi Dergisi*, 20(43), 243–267.

Jauhari, R., Walid, M., & Aziz, A. (2025). Transformasi kebijakan kurikulum di madrasah: Komparasi kritis antara KMA Nomor 347 Tahun 2022 dan KMA Nomor 450 Tahun 2024. *JIIP: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan*, 8(7), 7009–7016.

Körs, A., Haddad, L., Wagner, C., et al. (2023). Islamic religious education in Germany in between religion, education, politics and society. *Zeitschrift für Religion, Gesellschaft und Politik*, 7, 367–393.

Kosim, M., Muqoddam, F., Mubarok, F., & Laila, N. Q. (2023). The dynamics of Islamic education policies in Indonesia. *Cogent Education*, 10(1), 2172930.

Musthova, A., & Khalim, A. D. N. (2024). The integration of the national and local curricula: A framework for shaping the Muslim personalities of students at Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliyah Ula Al-Hidayah Klaten. *HEUTAGOGIA: Journal of Islamic Education*, 4(2), 147–162.

Muttaqin, I. (2023). Pesantren curriculum integration in Indonesia. *Arfannur: Journal of Islamic Education*, 4(1), 85–99.

Othman, M. K., Jamil, A. I., Zengin, M., & Hendek, A. (2022). Higher religious education at public universities in Malaysia and Turkey: A comparative study. *Cumhuriyet İlahiyat Dergisi*, 26(3), 987–1002.

Saleh Nst, M., & Magdalena. (2026). Analysis of Islamic education policy in Southeast Asian countries: Comparative policies, implementation, and strategic challenges. *Politea: Jurnal Politik Islam*.

Sulistio, A., Usman, & Fadhilah, N. (2026). Model kebijakan pendidikan Islam dalam perspektif komparatif: Analisis sistem pendidikan di Malaysia, Turki, Mesir, dan negara-negara Barat. *Journal Innovation in Education*, 4(2).

Topalović, S. (2023). Religijsko obrazovanje u sekularno uređenom državnom sistemu: Primjer islamskog obrazovanja u Saveznoj Republici Njemačkoj. *Context: Časopis za interdisciplinarne studije*, 10(1), 75–101.

Trinanda, R., Fakhruddin, & Asha, L. (2025). Pemerataan pendidikan Islam komparatif di Pakistan dan Indonesia: Analisis dampak struktural sosio-ekonomi, geografis, dan intervensi kebijakan. *AL-MANAR: Jurnal Komunikasi dan Pendidikan Islam*, 14(2), 501–510.

UNICEF. (2025, January 23). *At least 30 million children out of school in the Middle East and North Africa.*

Zakaria, A. F., Fauzan, M. N., Sulaeman, R., Mahmud, M., & Erihadiana, M. (2026). Recognised but underfunded: A systematic review of madrasah policy in post-reform Indonesia. *TARBAWY: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Education*, 13(1).