
Religious Culture Policy Implementation and Learning Quality in Indonesian Madrasah

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ABSTRACT

This article examines how the implementation of a religious culture policy is associated with learning quality and whether madrasah climate mediates that relationship at MANU Putra Buntet Pesantren Cirebon. The study is presented as a transparent mixed-methods journal article model using a simulated yet internally consistent dataset because authentic field data were not supplied. The quantitative phase involved 186 student responses analyzed with SPSS-style descriptive statistics, reliability testing, Pearson correlation, linear regression, and Sobel mediation procedures. The qualitative phase used simulated semi-structured interview excerpts from school leaders, teachers, and students to explain the statistical pattern. The quantitative results indicate that religious culture policy implementation has a positive effect on learning quality ($B = 0.521, p < .001$) and on madrasah climate ($B = 0.702, p < .001$). When both the independent variable and the mediator were entered simultaneously, madrasah climate remained a strong predictor of learning quality ($B = 0.437, p < .001$), while the direct effect of religious culture policy implementation decreased but remained significant ($B = 0.214, p = .005$), indicating partial mediation. The qualitative findings suggest that the policy works primarily by converting religious routines into behavioral regularity, teacher role modeling, and a more orderly academic atmosphere. The article argues that value-based policy contributes to learning quality not simply because it is religious, but because consistent implementation reorganizes everyday school interactions into a more supportive learning climate.

Keywords: religious culture policy, madrasah climate, learning quality

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INTRODUCTION

Learning quality in Indonesian schools remains a strategic concern because the post-pandemic period has exposed persistent gaps in instructional effectiveness, teacher readiness, and student learning continuity. Recent Indonesian discussions on learning loss and recovery show that the quality problem is not limited to curriculum coverage, but also involves students' concentration, participation, classroom order, and the institutional capacity to restore meaningful learning routines. In madrasahs, this challenge is more complex because educational quality is expected to combine academic performance with moral and spiritual formation rather than treating them as separate goals.¹

Recent studies on Indonesian madrasahs indicate that educational quality depends not only on technical management but also on the institutional culture through which values are translated into daily school life. Research on madrasa quality culture and quality management consistently shows that organizational values, leadership practices, and school-wide routines influence whether learning processes become disciplined, purposeful, and sustainable. In other words, quality in madrasah education is increasingly understood as a cultural and managerial issue rather than a purely instructional one.²

Within that broader quality agenda, religious culture policy deserves specific attention because it represents a formal attempt to institutionalize values in observable school practices. In Indonesian Islamic schools, such policies commonly include congregational prayer, Qur'anic recitation, moral habituation, respectful communication, punctuality, cleanliness, teacher exemplarity, and the integration of Islamic values into academic routines. The policy becomes educationally meaningful only when those practices are implemented consistently enough to influence how teachers teach, how students behave, and how the school day is organized. This is why the analytical problem is not the existence of religious activities per se, but the quality of their implementation.³

A growing body of evidence suggests that the pathway from institutional policy

¹Rahman, A. (2024). Madrasah education quality reform: Improving teacher quality post pandemic in Indonesia. *Al-Ishlah: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 16(1), 54–66. <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v16i1.3899>; Wahyudi, A. (2021). Learning loss during COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia and the strategies to minimize it. *Journal of English Education and Linguistics*, 2(2), 18–25. <https://doi.org/10.56874/jeel.v2i2.579>

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³Pramesti, F., Nurkolis, N., & Nyoman, N. A. (2026). The influence of academic supervision and positive school culture on learning quality in Indonesian elementary schools. *Journal of Innovation and Research in Primary Education*, 5(1), 2174–2183. <https://doi.org/10.56916/jirpe.v5i1.2879>; Rahman, A. (2024). Madrasah education quality reform: Improving teacher quality post pandemic in Indonesia. *Al-Ishlah: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 16(1), 54–66. <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v16i1.3899>

to academic outcomes is likely to pass through school climate. Meta-analytic findings show that school climate is a meaningful correlate of academic achievement, and more recent comparative work similarly reports that climate and leadership have moderate effects on student achievement across different educational contexts. Related empirical studies also show that specific climate dimensions, such as professional learning atmosphere, order, and relationships, can explain why broader organizational conditions affect learning performance.⁴

This argument is especially relevant in the madrasah context because climate is not merely a psychological perception of comfort; it is also the lived experience of moral order, authority, fairness, and collective identity. Evidence from East Java madrasahs shows that teachers' perceptions of school climate vary according to experience and are closely tied to efforts to improve the quality of Islamic education. Studies from other educational sectors likewise indicate that school climate is associated with student engagement and achievement, suggesting that climate may serve as an organizational mechanism through which values and routines become academically productive.⁵

The case of MANU Putra Buntet Pesantren Cirebon is analytically important because the school operates inside a pesantren-based educational ecosystem where religious routines, institutional discipline, and communal identity are deeply embedded in everyday life. That setting makes it possible to study a theoretically significant question: whether a policy that explicitly regulates religious culture affects learning quality directly, or whether its effect depends primarily on the climate created by its implementation. The site therefore provides a suitable context for testing both the educational significance of religious culture policy and the mediating role of madrasah climate in a value-based school environment.⁶

Based on that rationale, this study addresses four questions. First, what are the levels of religious culture policy implementation, madrasah climate, and learning quality at MANU Putra Buntet Pesantren Cirebon? Second, does religious culture policy

⁴Amsalu, A., & Belay, S. (2024). Analyzing the contribution of school climate to academic achievement using structural equation modeling. *SAGE Open*, 14(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440241227271>; Erdem, C., & Kaya, M. (2024). The relationship between school and classroom climate, and academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *School Psychology International*, 45(4), 417–437. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01430343231202923>; Ozdogru, M., Sarier, Y., & Korucuoglu, T. (2025). How leadership and school climate influence student achievement: Evidence from a comparative meta-analysis. *Educational Process: International Journal*, 15, e2025156. <https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2025.15.156>

⁵Mustofa, A. (2022). Towards quality Islamic education: Madrasa teachers' views on school climate in East Java. *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-ilmu Keislaman*, 45(2), 264–285. <https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v45i2.856>; Tomaszewski, W., Xiang, N., & Huang, Y. (2024). School climate, student engagement and academic achievement across school sectors in Australia. *The Australian Educational Researcher*, 51, 667–695. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13384-023-00618-8>

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implementation significantly affect learning quality? Third, does religious culture policy implementation significantly affect madrasah climate? Fourth, does madrasah climate mediate the relationship between religious culture policy implementation and learning quality? The study tests the hypotheses that religious culture policy implementation positively affects learning quality, positively affects madrasah climate, and indirectly improves learning quality through madrasah climate as a partial mediator.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design. The quantitative phase was conducted first to estimate the relationship among the three variables, and the qualitative phase was then used to explain the mechanisms behind the statistical pattern. The design was selected because mediation analysis can identify whether a relationship exists and how strong it is, but it cannot by itself explain how religious routines become educationally consequential in daily school life. Integrating the two components also supports transparency because numerical findings and interpretive explanations can be compared rather than reported in isolation.⁷

The article is presented as a fully structured journal manuscript model using simulated data. This choice was made because the user requested a complete article with quantitative and qualitative findings, but no authentic field dataset, interview transcripts, or institutional documents were provided. To keep the manuscript academically transparent and replicable, all statistics, tables, and interview-based interpretations are explicitly labeled as simulated and should be replaced with real field data before submission to a journal. The simulated design nevertheless follows a plausible educational research structure, allowing the article to function as a methodological template rather than as a claim about the actual empirical condition of the school.

The quantitative dataset consists of 186 simulated student responses from Grades X, XI, and XII at MANU Putra Buntet Pesantren Cirebon. The independent variable was religious culture policy implementation (X), operationalized through five indicators: religious habituation, teacher role modeling, disciplinary consistency, value integration into school routines, and policy enforcement. The mediating variable was madrasah climate (M), measured through five indicators: interpersonal relations, orderliness, psychological comfort, leadership support, and academic atmosphere. The dependent variable was learning quality (Y), measured through five indicators: readiness to learn, classroom focus, participation, instructional order, and perceived learning effectiveness. Each indicator used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

⁷Bazeley, P. (2024). Conceptualizing integration in mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 18(3), 225–234. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15586898241253636>

The quantitative analysis was designed to be directly replicable in SPSS. Instrument quality was examined through corrected item-total correlation and Cronbach's alpha. Descriptive statistics were then used to estimate central tendencies, followed by Pearson correlation to test bivariate relationships. Three regression models were run: the total effect of X on Y, the effect of X on M, and the joint effect of X and M on Y. Mediation was evaluated by comparing the change in the regression coefficient of X after M entered the model and by calculating a Sobel test for the indirect effect. This procedure allows the direction, strength, and partial mediation pattern to be tested in a transparent sequence.

The qualitative component used simulated semi-structured interviews and field-note style summaries involving a principal, a vice principal for curriculum, three teachers, four students, and one administrative staff member. The qualitative protocol focused on how school actors interpreted religious routines, discipline, role modeling, and their relation to classroom learning. The material was coded through reduction, categorization, display, and conclusion drawing to identify recurring themes that could explain the quantitative pattern. Because the qualitative evidence is simulated, it is presented as an analytic illustration of mechanism rather than as factual institutional testimony. The logic of integration in this article therefore lies in explaining how climate plausibly mediates the policy-learning relationship.⁸

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results section is reported in two stages. The first stage presents the simulated quantitative findings in SPSS-style tables and narrative interpretation. The second stage presents the qualitative themes used to explain why the statistical relationships emerged. Because the dataset is simulated, the numbers should be read as a coherent model of analysis rather than as verified field evidence.

1. Quantitative Results

Instrument testing showed that all items met the minimum validity threshold and all reliability coefficients exceeded .90. This indicates that the three constructs were measured with a satisfactory level of internal consistency for subsequent correlation, regression, and mediation analysis.

⁸Bazeley, P. (2024). Conceptualizing integration in mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 18(3), 225–234. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15586898241253636>

Table 1. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Interpretation
Religious culture policy implementation (X)	5	0.918	Highly reliable
Madrasah climate (M)	5	0.912	Highly reliable
Learning quality (Y)	5	0.905	Highly reliable

Table 2. Item Validity Summary

Item	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Decision
X1-X5	0.641-0.812	Valid
M1-M5	0.603-0.791	Valid
Y1-Y5	0.588-0.776	Valid

Descriptive statistics indicate that respondents evaluated religious culture policy implementation, madrasah climate, and learning quality at a moderately positive level. The three mean scores are relatively close, which suggests that the school context modeled in this article is characterized by a coherent pattern rather than by a strong imbalance between policy, climate, and instructional experience.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Sd
Religious culture policy implementation (X)	186	2.20	4.80	3.613	0.512
Madrasah climate (M)	186	2.00	4.90	3.605	0.536
Learning quality (Y)	186	2.10	4.85	3.571	0.501

Pearson correlation analysis shows that the three variables are positively and significantly related. The strongest bivariate relationship is between religious culture policy implementation and madrasah climate, followed by the relationship between madrasah climate and learning quality. This pattern already suggests that climate is likely to be more than an accompanying variable and may plausibly function as a mediating mechanism.

Table 4. Correlations Among Variables

Variables	1	2	3
1. Religious culture policy implementation (X)	1.000	0.643**	0.517**
2. Madrasah climate (M)	0.643**	1.000	0.610**

3. Learning quality (Y)	0.517**	0.610**	1.000
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The first regression model indicates that religious culture policy implementation has a positive and statistically significant effect on learning quality ($B = 0.521, p < .001$), with 26.7% of the variance in learning quality explained by the predictor alone. The second regression shows that the same policy variable has a stronger positive effect on madrasah climate ($B = 0.702, p < .001$), explaining 41.4% of the variance. The larger explained variance in the second model strengthens the expectation that climate is the more proximal organizational outcome of policy implementation.

Table 5. Regression Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
X → Y	0.517	0.267	0.263	0.430
X → M	0.643	0.414	0.411	0.411
X + M → Y	0.655	0.429	0.423	0.381

Table 6. Regression ANOVA

Model	F	Sig.
X → Y	67.077	<.001
X → M	129.852	<.001
X + M → Y	68.745	<.001

Table 7. Regression Coefficients

Model	Predictor	B	SE	Beta	t	Sig.
1	Constant	1.689	0.230	-	7.343	<.001
1	X	0.521	0.064	0.517	8.190	<.001
2	Constant	1.067	0.223	-	4.786	<.001
2	X	0.702	0.062	0.643	11.395	<.001
3	Constant	1.222	0.214	-	5.710	<.001
3	X	0.214	0.075	0.212	2.844	.005
3	M	0.437	0.071	0.462	6.165	<.001

The mediation model confirms that madrasah climate partially mediates the effect of religious culture policy implementation on learning quality. After the mediator enters the equation, the direct effect of religious culture policy implementation decreases from 0.521 to 0.214 but remains significant, while madrasah climate itself shows a strong significant effect on learning quality ($B = 0.437, p < .001$). The Sobel test result ($z = 5.524, p < .001$) supports the significance of the indirect path.

Table 8. Mediation Test Results

Path / Test	Coefficient	Result
Total effect of X on Y (c)	0.521	Significant
Effect of X on M (a)	0.702	Significant
Effect of M on Y controlling X (b)	0.437	Significant
Direct effect of X on Y controlling M (c')	0.214	Significant
Indirect effect (a × b)	0.307	Partial mediation
Sobel z	5.524	p < .001

2. Qualitative Results

The qualitative analysis was designed to explain the mechanisms underlying the mediation result. Five themes were identified: policy translation into routine practice, conducive learning atmosphere, discipline and responsibility, positive interpersonal relations, and teacher role modeling. Together, these themes suggest that the policy becomes educationally influential only when it structures everyday school interactions in a stable and credible way.

Table 9. Summary of Qualitative Themes

Theme	Illustrative finding	Analytical meaning
Policy translated into routine practice	Religious activities were experienced as daily structure, not occasional ceremony.	Implementation was visible and operational.
Conducive learning atmosphere	Classes were described as calmer, more focused, and easier to manage after habituation activities.	Climate became more supportive of attention and time-on-task.
Discipline and responsibility	Students linked routines with self-punctuality and readiness for lessons.	Policy strengthened self-regulation.
Positive interpersonal relations	Teachers and students described more respectful communication and mutual care.	Climate supported trust and belonging.
Teacher role modeling	Rules were considered meaningful when teachers enacted the same values they expected from students.	Policy credibility depended on adult consistency.

The principal described religious culture as an organizational framework rather than an isolated program. In the simulated narrative, daily prayer, collective recitation,

punctuality norms, and teacher monitoring functioned as repeated signals of what the school considered valuable. This theme explains why the policy variable was statistically powerful: the policy was experienced as operational structure rather than ceremonial symbolism.

Teachers emphasized that religious routines reduced classroom noise, improved transitions into lessons, and made the beginning of instructional sessions more predictable. Students similarly reported that they felt calmer and more ready to learn after habituation activities. These accounts support the interpretation that the policy influences learning quality partly by regulating emotional readiness and classroom order before formal teaching begins.

Another recurrent theme was teacher role modeling. Students perceived school rules as fair and meaningful when teachers themselves embodied punctuality, politeness, cleanliness, and seriousness in worship and study. This theme explains why climate emerged as a mediator: trust in institutional norms was built not only through formal rules but through visible adult consistency. In that configuration, policy implementation shaped climate, and climate in turn shaped learning quality.

Discussion

The first major finding is that religious culture policy implementation has a positive association with learning quality. This pattern is theoretically plausible because a policy of this kind does not only introduce symbolic religious practices; it organizes punctuality, transitions into class, teacher expectations, and behavioral norms that directly affect time-on-task and classroom focus. Recent Indonesian studies on madrasah reform and quality management reinforce this interpretation by showing that educational quality depends on whether institutional values are operationalized into daily management and instructional routines rather than remaining rhetorical commitments.⁹

The second major finding is that religious culture policy implementation has a stronger relationship with madrasah climate than with learning quality directly. This matters because climate is the level at which school members experience policy in practice. A policy can be formally strong but educationally weak if students do not perceive the school as orderly, fair, supportive, and academically serious. The present pattern is therefore consistent with evidence from school-climate research showing that climate operates as an organizational condition that makes other reforms educationally effective.¹⁰

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¹⁰Amsalu, A., & Belay, S. (2024). Analyzing the contribution of school climate to academic achievement using

The partial mediation result offers the clearest explanation of how the policy works. The direct effect indicates that some benefits of implementation arise immediately through regulation, habituation, and routine formation, while the indirect effect indicates that a substantial part of the policy's educational value is transmitted through a more conducive climate. This aligns with broader comparative evidence showing that school climate and leadership jointly influence student achievement, and with sectoral evidence indicating that climate is associated with student engagement and academic performance across different types of schools.¹¹

The qualitative findings further suggest that teacher role modeling is a decisive mechanism connecting policy and climate. Students are more likely to interpret religious routines as legitimate and educationally meaningful when teachers embody the same discipline, courtesy, and seriousness expected from learners. This insight is compatible with Indonesian madrasah scholarship emphasizing that school quality is culturally sustained through shared values, visible examples, and consistent institutional conduct. In practical terms, policy implementation becomes credible when teachers convert formal rules into a lived norm that students encounter every day.¹²

The findings also have wider significance for Islamic education management. Recent work on positive school culture and learning quality indicates that learning improvement is inseparable from the broader moral and organizational environment in which instruction occurs. For pesantren-based madrasahs, this means that quality improvement strategies should not rely exclusively on technical supervision or curriculum refinement; they should also evaluate whether school-wide religious culture is producing an atmosphere that supports concentration, trust, and disciplined participation. In that sense, madrasah climate is not a peripheral variable but a strategic mechanism for translating value-based policy into learning quality.¹³

This article has an intentional limitation: all empirical materials are simulated. The limitation is not hidden, because transparency is necessary for the manuscript to remain

structural equation modeling. *SAGE Open*, 14(1), 1–17. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440241227271>; Erdem, C., & Kaya, M. (2024). The relationship between school and classroom climate, and academic achievement: A meta-analysis. *School Psychology International*, 45(4), 417–437. <https://doi.org/10.1177/01430343231202923>

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¹²Mustofa, A. (2022). Towards quality Islamic education: Madrasa teachers' views on school climate in East Java. *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-ilmu Keislaman*, 45(2), 264–285. <https://doi.org/10.30821/miqot.v45i2.856>; Ulyan, M., Purwanto, G. D., & Basit, A. (2021). Rethinking the quality culture of Indonesian madrasa in the global era. *International Journal of Social Science and Religion*, 2(3), 223–250. <https://doi.org/10.53639/ijssr.v2i3.40>

¹³Pramesti, F., Nurkolis, N., & Nyoman, N. A. (2026). The influence of academic supervision and positive school culture on learning quality in Indonesian elementary schools. *Journal of Innovation and Research in Primary Education*, 5(1), 2174–2183. <https://doi.org/10.56916/jirpe.v5i1.2879>; Setyowati, R. D., Tisnawati, N., & Pahrudin, A. (2024). Quality education management in madrasah. *Tadbir: Jurnal Studi Manajemen Pendidikan*, 8(1), 45–54. <https://doi.org/10.29240/jsmp.v8i1.10027>

academically defensible and replicable. The article therefore should be used as a submission-ready model of structure, argumentation, and analysis, but the claims about MANU Putra Buntet Pesantren Cirebon must not be treated as factual until they are replaced by authentic survey data, interview transcripts, and institutional records. Once real data are inserted, the same analytic logic can be retained with minimal structural revision.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that religious culture policy implementation is positively associated with learning quality and that madrasah climate partially mediates this relationship. In the present model, the policy improves learning not simply because it contains religious content, but because consistent implementation organizes school life into more orderly, value-consistent, and relationally supportive patterns. The practical implication is that madrasah leaders should evaluate policy implementation not only in terms of ritual compliance but also in terms of climate formation and learning consequences.

The findings also suggest that climate is the most important explanatory bridge between policy and learning quality. Schools may formulate ambitious religious culture policies, but those policies will have limited academic value if they fail to generate a fair, calm, and supportive learning atmosphere. For that reason, future empirical research should examine whether different dimensions of madrasah climate, such as safety, trust, instructional seriousness, and leadership support, mediate value-based policy in the same way or with different strengths.

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