Challenges and Opportunities in Pesantren Education Policy Formulation: An Application of William N. Dunn's Framework in West Bandung

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the implementation of William N. Dunn's public policy theory in the development of educational policies for Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) in West Bandung Regency, Indonesia. The research employs a descriptive qualitative methodology to examine the phases of policy development namely problem identification, policy design, implementation, and evaluation aiming to elucidate the interaction between local governments and religious institutions in the formulation of effective and contextually relevant education policies. Data were collected using a purposive sampling method, which included key informants from local government agencies, the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD), the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and leaders of pesantren. The results show that the process of making policies has big problems, like not enough infrastructure, poor coordination between agencies, and not enough community involvement. However, strategic opportunities arise from curriculum integration tailored to local needs and collaboration among multiple stakeholders that promotes participatory governance. The study finds that Dunn's analytical framework is very useful for making policy processes in pesantren education that are rational, flexible, and open to everyone. It stresses that to make pesantren education fit with national education goals while keeping its own religious and cultural identity, it is important to improve facilities, strengthen institutional coordination, and make sure that monitoring and evaluation systems are open to everyone.

Keywords: Policy Formulation, Islamic Boarding School, Pesantren Education, Public Policy Analysis, Verbal Protocol Analysis

INTRODUCTION

Education policy in Indonesia continues to undergo complex dynamics as the surrounding social, political, and religious systems evolve. In the context of Islamic education, pesantren hold a strategic position as traditional educational institutions that play a significant role in shaping the morals, character, and intellectualism of the community (Srimulyani, 2013; Rozak & Fitriani, 2024). However, modernisation and the demands for integration with the national education system pose new challenges in formulating policies that can preserve Islamic values while also being adaptable to the times (Lathifah et al., 2025).

The process of formulating education policies in pesantren requires a systematic analytical approach so that the resulting policies are not only responsive to social needs, but also align with Sharia principles and local values. In this case, the public policy theory put forward by William N. Dunn became a relevant framework to use. Dunn (1981) proposed that public policy can be analysed through six main dimensions: problem structuring, forecasting,

recommendation, monitoring, evaluation, and policy maintenance. This framework emphasises the importance of rational and data-driven processes in policy development, which can be applied in the context of Islamic education to produce effective, sustainable, and contextual policies.

Various previous studies have shown that the successful implementation of educational policies is highly dependent on the role of stakeholders, the social environment, and the values held by the community. For example, (Anam et al., 2019) highlighted the role of informal leadership and principal performance in building a culture of quality in Islamic educational institutions. Meanwhile, (Heyward & Cannon, 2011) showed that the implementation of school-based management in Indonesia requires policy governance that is participatory and adaptable to local needs. In the context of pesantren, policy approaches must also consider the religious and cultural dimensions that are deeply ingrained within them (Adi & Adawiyah, 2018; Arwildayanto & Puadah, 2019).

Furthermore, various Islamic education policies in Indonesia cannot be separated from the dynamics of Islamic politics and law within the state system. (Hefner, 2011) explains that Islamic politics in the Indonesian context forms a complex relationship between the state and religious institutions. This condition further underscores the need for policy analysis that is not only administratively rational but also sensitive to the religious and social values of society (Ayumiati et al., 2024; Rachman & Sangare, 2023).

Given this complexity, William Dunn's theory provides an important conceptual contribution to understanding how educational policies in pesantren can be formulated comprehensively. Policy analysis according to Dunn not only assesses the final outcomes of a policy but also examines the processes, actors, and context that underpin its formation. Within this framework, pesantren can be positioned as cultural and institutional actors who play an active role in determining the direction of Islamic education policy in Indonesia (Rohman et al., 2024; Thoha et al., 2023).

Thus, this article aims to understand William N.'s theoretical concepts. Dunn in formulating educational policies at pesantren. This analysis is expected to provide a deeper conceptual understanding of the application of public policy theory in the context of Islamic education, as well as open up space for the formulation of policies that are more adaptive, participatory, and based on the religious values that are characteristic of pesantren in Indonesia.

METHOD

Research Desain

This research utilizes a descriptive qualitative methodology. The qualitative approach was chosen to facilitate a comprehensive examination of the intricate process of policy formulation, which encompasses various stakeholders and is marked by complex social and political dynamics. The descriptive design enables the researcher to systematically, factually, and accurately delineate the stages of the policy formulation process regarding the facilitation of Islamic boarding schools in West Bandung Regency. This approach aims to elucidate the contextual realities and interpret the implications of actors' interactions and decisions within the policy-making process.

Research Subject and Informants

The subjects of this study were those actively involved in formulating the Islamic boarding school facilitation policy in West Bandung Regency. Researchers employed a purposive sample technique to select informants. This strategy enables researchers to select participants based on their relevance, expertise, and direct involvement in the policy process. This strategy ensured that the data collected reflected diverse perspectives from the primary stakeholders.

The individuals who contributed to the research were:
1. Local government personnel, particularly from the Social Welfare Division, who were directly engaged in formulating and implementing the programs.
2. Members of the West Bandung Regency Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) play a crucial role in formulating, approving, and monitoring policies.
3. Representatives from the Ministry of Religious Affairs of West Bandung Regency provided assistance in religious education and institutional matters through advisory and coordination efforts.
4. The leaders of Islamic boarding schools are the primary beneficiaries of and are directly impacted by the facilitation policy.
5. Islamic boarding school organizations and religious institutions, including the Forum Pondok Pesantren (FPP) and the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) of West Bandung Regency, represent the group and provide institutional perspectives on policy implementation.

This cohort of informants was selected to obtain a comprehensive spectrum of perspectives from governmental, legislative, and religious entities, ensuring that the qualitative analysis was both valid and exhaustive.

Verbal Analysis Protocol

In analysing William Dun's concept in policy-making at pesantren, the author used the verbal protocol method, which was initially developed by (Kartini et al., 2025). To investigate the information processing process in strengthening the capacity of local governments. Within a qualitative framework, verbal protocols allow respondents to express their thoughts, emotions, and actions while revealing patterns of policy formulation in pesantren.
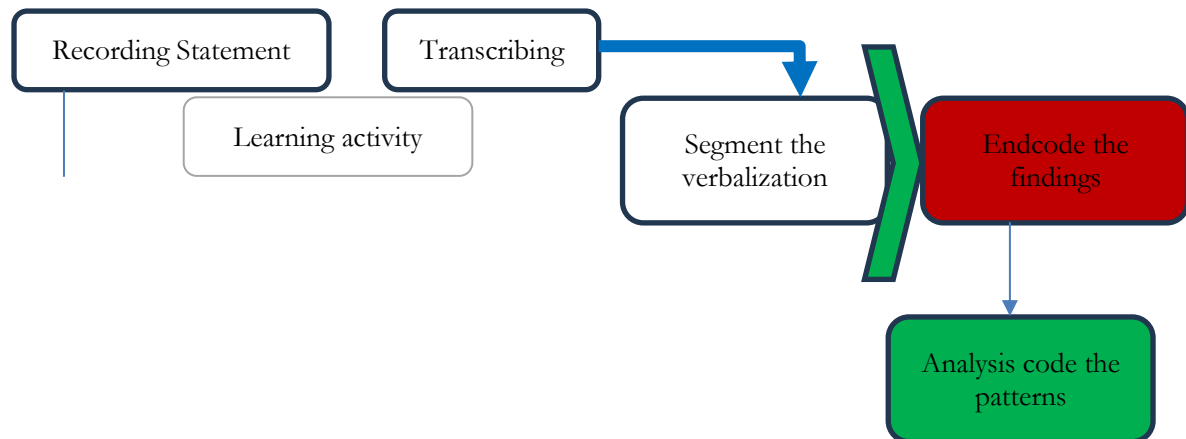

Figure 1. Verbal Protocol Research

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Dunn's Policy Formulation for Pesantren

William N. Dunn's stages in formulating regional government policy provide a structured approach to understanding how policies are developed and implemented, particularly in the context of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) in West Bandung Regency in 2022. The analysis of these stages reveals several key components and their application to the specific educational context of Islamic boarding schools.
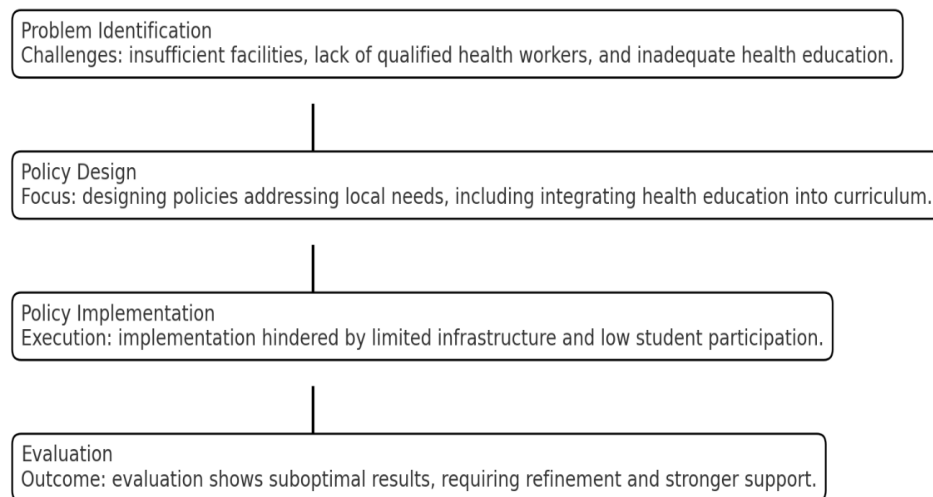

Figure 2. Stage of Policy Formulations Process in Islamic Boardin Schools (West Bandung)

1. **Problem Identification:** This initial stage involves recognizing the specific issues that need addressing within the educational framework of Islamic boarding schools. In West Bandung, challenges such as insufficient facilities, lack of qualified health workers, and inadequate health education have been identified as significant barriers to effective policy implementation in Islamic boarding schools (Suparto et al., 2021).
2. **Policy Design:** Once problems are identified, the next step is to design policies that address these issues. The design must consider the unique characteristics of the region and the educational needs of the

pesantren. For instance, the integration of health education into the curriculum is essential to improve student awareness and engagement with health issues (Suparto et al., 2021).

3. **Policy Implementation:** This stage focuses on executing the designed policies. In West Bandung, the implementation of health posts in Islamic boarding schools has faced obstacles, including limited infrastructure and a lack of student participation (Suparto et al., 2021). The effectiveness of these policies is contingent upon the active involvement of the community and the schools themselves.

4. **Evaluation:** After implementation, evaluating the outcomes is crucial to determine the effectiveness of the policies. This involves assessing whether the policies have met their objectives and identifying areas for improvement. For example, the evaluation of the health post program revealed that it was not functioning optimally due to various challenges, indicating a need for further refinement and support (Suparto et al., 2021).

Context of Islamic Education in Indonesia

The context of Islamic education in Indonesia significantly influences the application of Dunn's stages. Islamic boarding schools play a vital role in shaping the educational landscape, often facing unique challenges such as balancing traditional religious teachings with modern educational demands. The integration of national education standards with Islamic values is essential for the effective governance of these institutions (Yunus Abu Bakar et al., 2024).

Figure 3. Challenges and Opportunities

Figure 3 presents a comprehensive analysis of the challenges and opportunities in developing education policies within pesantren, or Islamic boarding schools. In general, this illustration shows that the process of implementing educational policies in pesantren not only faces structural and institutional obstacles but also opens up space for innovation through collaboration and curriculum integration that is more adaptable to community needs.

From a challenge perspective, there are three main aspects that hinder the successful implementation of the policy. First, the limited pesantren infrastructure makes it difficult to implement various educational reform programs optimally. These facility limitations not only include physical infrastructure but also adequate technological support and learning resources. As stated by (Suparto et al., 2021), the limitations of infrastructure in pesantren have a direct impact on the effectiveness of implementing educational programs, especially in the context of implementing new curricula and competency-based learning activities.

Second, the challenge of policy support arises from the gap between local government policies and the real needs of pesantren institutions. This disconnection often results in policies formulated from the top down without

considering the social and cultural context of pesantren. This aligns with the findings of (Suparto et al., 2021), who emphasized that weak cross-agency coordination makes pesantren education policies less effective in their local implementation.

Third, low community engagement remains another obstacle to the success of educational programs. The minimal involvement of students, parents, and the surrounding community indicates that the participatory approach to policy implementation is not yet optimal. (Suparto et al., 2021) emphasize that community involvement is a crucial factor in the successful implementation of educational programs because it creates a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for policy sustainability.

On the other hand, this image also highlights two strategic opportunities that can be leveraged to strengthen the success of pesantren education policies. First, curriculum integration offers significant potential to incorporate health education and other relevant themes into the pesantren curriculum. This approach can enhance the learning experience of students and make pesantren more responsive to contemporary social issues. (Suparto et al., 2021) emphasize that integrating a local needs-based curriculum can enrich the dimensions of pesantren education while also strengthening the relevance of pesantren within the national education system.

Second, stakeholder collaboration is an important opportunity for creating an environment that supports policy implementation. The involvement of various parties, such as local governments, community leaders, and pesantren leaders, can foster the formation of a synergistic working network. (Rukmana et al., 2020) emphasize that multi-stakeholder collaboration plays a crucial role in creating inclusive and sustainable policies, as it brings together diverse interests and resources within a shared framework.

Thus, the implications of these findings suggest that despite significant obstacles in infrastructure, policy support, and community participation, opportunities to strengthen pesantren education remain wide open through curriculum innovation and strategic partnerships among stakeholders. A strategy that combines institutional improvements with collaborative synergy can be key to the success of transforming pesantren education towards a more adaptive, participatory, and sustainable system.

Analyzing Dunn's stages in the context of Islamic boarding schools can significantly contribute to improving governance and educational outcomes. By systematically addressing each stage, policymakers can create more effective and responsive educational policies that cater to the unique needs of these institutions. This structured approach can lead to better resource allocation, enhanced community involvement, and ultimately, improved educational quality for students in West Bandung Regency.

In conclusion, Dunn's policy formulation stages provide a valuable framework for understanding and improving the governance of Islamic boarding schools in West Bandung. By addressing the identified challenges and leveraging opportunities, local governments can enhance educational outcomes and ensure that these institutions continue to thrive in a changing educational landscape.

CONCLUSION

Based on an analysis of the policy formulation stages according to William N. Dunn in the context of Islamic boarding schools in West Bandung Regency which identifies problems, design, implementation, and evaluation it can be concluded that Dunn's framework has proven to be relevant and useful in providing a systematic flow for formulating Islamic boarding school education policies. The findings indicate that the main constraints are limited infrastructure, weak cross-agency policy support, and low community involvement, but there are also strategic opportunities through integrating a local needs-based curriculum and multi-stakeholder collaboration. Therefore, more effective policies must prioritise participatory and contextual approaches strengthening inter-agency coordination, allocating resources for facility improvements, and establishing sustainable monitoring and evaluation mechanisms so that programs can function optimally and adaptively to pesantren values. The implementation of these steps is expected to improve the quality of pesantren education while also bridging integration with the national education system without neglecting the religious and cultural character of the pesantren itself.

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