



Furudhul Ainiyah As an Instrument of Academic Quality and Character Development of UNUJA Students

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Abstract

This study examines the implementation of the furudhul ainiyah policy at Nurul Jadid University (UNUJA), which aims to integrate religious values into the higher education system. The policy requires students to obtain a furudhul Ainiyah competency certificate as a graduation requirement, assessing not only their academic abilities but also their application of religious values in daily life. The positive impacts of this policy are evident in several aspects, such as enhanced religious understanding, the development of students' character, and the strengthening of graduate quality who are both competent and possess integrity. Although this policy faces challenges, such as the diversity of student backgrounds and synchronization with government policies, UNUJA has developed strategic technology-based measures to address these limitations. This study underscores the importance of collaboration among higher education institutions, the government, and stakeholders in creating an educational model that integrates religious values with academic achievement. UNUJA provides a concrete example of how religious education can be effectively implemented in higher education to produce graduates with global competitiveness and strong moral commitment.

INTRODUCTION

Higher education is not only an arena for intellectual development, but also a means to form a strong and integrity-filled character (Qurtubi et al., (2023) . In the midst of the global educational transformation that increasingly prioritizes academic quality and innovation, Nurul Jadid University (UNUJA), a university rooted in the tradition of Islamic boarding schools, dares to take a different step in presenting education that integrates religious aspects into its academic policies (Sudiarti, Syarvina, & Jannah, nd) . This policy focuses on the implementation of furudhul ainiyah - religious obligations that must be understood and implemented by every Muslim individual - as one of the requirements for continuing the submission of student thesis defense (Aliah, 2020) . At UNUJA, not only academic achievement is valued, but also the depth of practice of religious values, which is reflected in a furudhul ainiyah competency certificate as part of student graduation (BZ, 2023).

Although this policy has been running for years, it is rare to find a study that comprehensively examines how furudhul ainiyah is implemented in the academic policy system in higher education, as well as its impact on educational planning and student character formation (Maghfiroh, 2023) .

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This creates a significant research focus: how this religious-based education policy not only influences students' understanding of religion, but also contributes to character development that is relevant to the challenges of the times (Fitriyanti & Sirozi, 2024). This study, therefore, focuses on how the policy of integrating *furudhul ainiyah* in the UNUJA academic system can be a model for educational planning based on religious values, while also assessing its impact on a more holistic student character (Hanifiyah, 2024).

In the context of higher education policy in Indonesia, the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemdikbud) has long encouraged the strengthening of national character through religious education (Kebudayaan, 2020). Kemdikbud, through the character education policy stipulated in the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia No. 23 of 2015, seeks to integrate religious education to strengthen national character. However, this policy is mostly applied at the elementary and secondary levels, while its application at the tertiary level is still limited (Musbikin, 2021). UNUJA comes with a more radical approach, where *furudhul ainiyah* is not only seen as a religious obligation, but as an integral part of academic learning. This is what makes UNUJA unique and provides a new contribution to the discourse on religion-based higher education in Indonesia (Sa'adah, Zainab, Wali, & Suhermanto, 2022).

Several previous studies, such as those conducted by Hassan & Ahmad (2018) and Binti et al. (2020), have discussed the influence of religion-based policies on character formation in Islamic educational institutions, but most of them focused on elementary and secondary madrasas and Islamic boarding schools (Mariana & Helmi, 2022; Rahma & Perawironegoro, 2024; Setiawan & Fahriannor, 2024). This study goes further by examining the implementation of these policies at the higher education level, where students are faced with more complex academic challenges and must be able to bridge religious integrity and the demands of the global academic world (Blegur, 2020; Sudirjo et al., 2023; Wakit et al., 2024).

Through a qualitative approach and policy analysis, this study aims to reveal how much influence the implementation of *furudhul ainiyah* has on educational planning at UNUJA and how it affects the formation of student character (Aziz, Nurfarida, Budiyanti, & Zakiah, 2020; Ismail, Suhana, & Zakiah, 2020). This study is expected to provide new insights into the development of higher education policies in Indonesia, which integrate religious aspects as an integral part of character formation and academic excellence (Imaduddin, 2024; Mesiono et al., 2024). Not only that, the results of this study can also contribute to the development of a more comprehensive religious values-based education model at the tertiary level, which has the potential to be adopted by other educational institutions in Southeast Asia (Faturrahman, Setiawan, Astuti, & Khasanah, 2022; Khamim, Sesmiarni, Siregar, Dasopang, & Lindra, 2023; Shinta & Ain, 2021).

This research not only focuses on theoretical and policy aspects, but also offers a new perspective on how religious education, in this case *furudhul ainiyah*, can be an effective instrument in shaping students' character amidst the increasingly rapid globalization of higher education. (Azah, Al-Fatih, & Kurniawan, 2023; Azizah, nd; Mahbubi, Gunawan, Rosid, Ulum, & Assibli, 2024).

METHODS

This study adopts a case study approach with an in-depth qualitative design, focusing on the exploration of the implementation of the *furudhul ainiyah* policy in the academic system of Nurul Jadid University (Nurahma & Hendriani, 2021; Pahleviannur et al., 2022). This approach was chosen to explore a comprehensive understanding of the integration of religious aspects in higher education policies and their impact on student character formation, with particular attention to the balance between academic achievement and moral character development (Fadli, 2021; Safarudin, Zulfamanna, Kustati, & Sepriyanti, 2023).

To obtain comprehensive data, in-depth interviews were conducted with informants who had direct experience related to this policy (Waruwu, 2023). Semi-structured interviews focused on their perceptions and experiences regarding the influence of the policy on religious understanding and personal character development. The data collected from these interviews will provide sharper insights into how the policy is received and implemented in academic life (Achjar et al., 2023).

In addition to interviews, participatory observation was also applied to map the dynamics that occur in the classroom and academic environment of UNUJA. This observation focused on events related to the implementation of the furudhul ainiyah policy, such as the academic evaluation process and the issuance of religious competency certificates as part of graduation (Data, 2019). With this observation, we can understand more deeply about social interactions and the influence of policies on student behavior in the academic context (Achjar et al., 2023; Sudiarti et al., nd).

Document analysis is also an important part of this study, by reviewing academic guidelines, curriculum, and relevant reports related to the implementation of the policy (Djaelani, 2013). Through this document study, it can be seen how the furudhul ainiyah policy is integrated into the academic system and whether the policy is consistent with broader educational goals (Faridi & Yogawati, 2022).

The collected data will be analyzed using thematic analysis with an interpretive approach (Judijanto et al., 2024). This technique not only focuses on identifying the main themes, but also on how these themes develop in the context of the goals of Indonesian higher education. With this approach, the study aims to reveal the relationship between religion-based education and student character development in facing the challenges of the times (Rifa'i, 2023).

To increase the validity of the results, source triangulation was applied by comparing data from various sources and methods, as well as member checking to ensure that the findings obtained reflect the reality in the field (Agus Suprpto et al., 2024; Dwiyanto, 2002; Roosinda et al., 2021). In addition, grounded theory techniques were used to develop theories that emerged from the data, without relying on pre-existing theoretical frameworks. This approach is expected to produce more relevant and applicable findings in developing religious-based education policies at the tertiary level (Ariati, 2022; Jailani & Husnullail, 2024; Oktaria, Agustina, Aliyah, Siroj, & Afgani, 2023; Ramadona, Fitria, Nazmi, & Heikal, 2023; Ruswandi, 2016).

This research is expected to provide new contributions to the development of higher education policies in Indonesia that integrate religious values in a more substantial and practical way, as well as enrich the discourse on the relationship between religious education and student character formation amidst the globalization of higher education (Hakim, 2020; Minarti, 2022; Mustakim, 2011).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Implementation of Furudhul Ainiyah Policy in UNUJA Academic System

The furudhul ainiyah policy at Nurul Jadid University (UNUJA) has been implemented comprehensively in the academic system and is not only limited to religious learning. One of the important innovations offered by this policy is the integration of religious values with students' academic achievements. As part of this policy, students are required to have a furudhul ainiyah competency certificate which is the main requirement in submitting a thesis defense. This means that students are not only tested based on their academic abilities, but are also assessed on the extent to which they implement religious values in their daily lives.

The implementation of this policy illustrates that religious education is not viewed as an additional subject, but rather as an integral part of building student character that is balanced with mastery of science. The furudhul ainiyah certificate is proof that students who graduate not only have academic competence, but also practice religious values in their

profession and social life.

Table 1: Interview Table on the Implementation of Furudhul Ainiyah Policy in the UNUJA Academic System

No	Name	Position	Questions asked	Answers/Views	Additional information
1	Moh. Alief Hidayatullah, ME	Lecturer of Islamic Economics	What is the impact of the furudhul ainiyah policy on students?	This policy strengthens students' understanding of religion and character. Students more disciplined and alert his morals .	Lecturers feel that this policy links religious knowledge with academic tasks.
2	Salman Alfarisi	Informatics Engineering Student	How does this policy impact your academic life?	This policy adds to the burden, but teaches the importance of integrity in studies.	Feeling the pressure, but realizing the benefits in personal life.
3	Abu Zainur Rizal , S.Pd.	English Education Alumni	To what extent does the furudhul ainiyah policy have an impact after graduation?	Very useful, because it has a strong moral foundation in the world of work.	This policy equips us with high discipline.
4	Prof. Dr. Naufal Baidawi, M.Pd.	Postgraduate Student Alumni	Does this policy affect your daily worship activities?	Yes, I have become more consistent in carrying out my worship.	Its influence is immediately visible in everyday life.
5	Zainal Arifin, M.Kom.	Dean of the Faculty of Engineering	What are the biggest challenges in implementing this policy?	The diversity of student backgrounds, but this can be overcome with a more inclusive approach.	There must be a method that can adapt to this diversity.

The results of interviews with various elements at Nurul Jadid University (UNUJA) revealed that the implementation of the furudhul ainiyah policy is not just an additional policy in the academic system, but has been absorbed as an integral part that forms the character and spiritual depth of students. In the midst of the hustle and bustle of academic routines, students are forced to not only run after a degree, but also to interpret their every step with religious values that are the foundation of morals and ethics in their lives.

Several respondents, both lecturers and students, said that this policy presents its own challenges. Some students feel that there is an additional burden in the form of the obligation to take religious courses which, according to them, could interfere with academic focus. However, behind all that, they realize that this policy has a much greater positive impact in the long term, especially in their daily lives. Students who were previously not very consistent in their worship, began to feel encouraged to be more disciplined in carrying out their religious obligations. In fact, for alumni, this policy turned out to be very useful for forming a strong moral foundation in their careers, giving them a solid foundation to face the challenges of the world of work which is full of temptations.

Meanwhile, several lecturers expressed that although this policy has a positive impact, the biggest challenge faced is how to align this policy with the diversity of students' religious backgrounds. Not infrequently, they have to find a way to convey religious material that is not only in accordance with Islamic teachings, but can also be accepted by students with diverse religious views. Even so, they believe that with a more inclusive and understanding approach, this policy can be well received by all students.

Ultimately, the implementation of the furudhul ainiyah policy at UNUJA is more than just an academic obligation. It is a conscious effort to form students who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have strong character and high integrity. This makes religious education at UNUJA not just an additional course, but a foundation that strengthens them to face the outside world with balanced knowledge and morals. This policy clearly shows that religious learning is not only in the classroom, but also in every step of a student's life which is based on deep Islamic values.

2. Influence on Students' Understanding of Religion

The furudhul ainiyah policy at Nurul Jadid University (UNUJA) is not only a complement to the academic system, but also a fundamental element that shapes how students understand and practice religious values. This policy breaks the old pattern that separates religious education from science, presenting a new approach that harmoniously

unites the two. As a result, religion is no longer seen as an additional burden, but as a light that illuminates the academic journey and life of students.

One of the most striking aspects of this policy is how students are encouraged to understand religion contextually. In this program, they not only learn the pillars of faith or fiqh by rote, but also how those principles are applied to moral dilemmas and challenges of modern life. For example, computer engineering students learn how the values of honesty and responsibility in Islam can be applied to transparent and ethical software development.

It doesn't stop there, this policy also provides a space for deep reflection. At every academic stage, students are faced with mentoring sessions that combine religious discussions with everyday life issues. For example, how to manage time between worship, study, and social activities without sacrificing one. The effect is extraordinary; students who previously tended to ignore the five daily prayers are now more disciplined, even making it a calming routine amidst their busy academic schedule.

In addition to its influence on religious discipline, this policy has also succeeded in building a more inclusive mindset among students. They learn that religion is not only about an individual's relationship with God, but also about how they contribute to society. Students from various cultural and educational backgrounds are united in a common vision to implement universal Islamic values such as justice, compassion, and solidarity.

Interestingly, the impact of this policy does not stop on campus. UNUJA alumni often report that the religious understanding they gained during college has become a valuable asset in the workplace. They feel more confident in dealing with pressure, making decisions, and establishing harmonious working relationships. For example, one alumnus said that understanding the importance of fairness and trustworthiness in Islam helped him gain the trust of colleagues at the multinational company where he worked.

With all its advantages, this policy changes the paradigm of students. Religion is no longer just a theory or ritual, but becomes a solid foundation that guides them in achieving worldly and hereafter success. For UNUJA students, understanding religion means living its values in every action, making furudhul ainiyah not just an academic requirement, but part of a larger life journey.

3. Student Character Formation

The furudhul ainiyah policy at Nurul Jadid University (UNUJA) has a big vision: to produce students who not only excel academically, but also have strong characters, integrity, and are based on Islamic values. This is where this policy shows its strength, because building character is not enough with formal teaching; it requires a holistic approach that touches the mind, heart, and action.

In practice, this policy provides real experience to students in living religious values as their moral foundation. For example, every student is required to follow a religious mentoring program that not only discusses aspects of worship, but also how characters such as honesty, discipline, and trustworthiness can be applied in everyday life. For example, an engineering student is taught that reporting research results honestly is part of the trust exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad SAW.

In addition, activities such as routine studies, religious-based community service, to practical challenges such as completing group assignments without involving plagiarism are real forms of character building in the field. Students not only learn to be good individuals, but also to become team members who are able to work together, respect differences, and prioritize common interests above personal egos.

The impact of this approach is clearly visible in student behavior. Those who previously tended to neglect their responsibilities began to show positive changes, such as arriving on time for lectures, completing assignments before deadlines, and committing to being active in campus social activities. In fact, these changes were felt not only by the students themselves, but also by their lecturers and friends.

Another advantage of this policy is the formation of characters that are relevant to

the challenges of the modern era. For example, students in the digital era are often faced with the temptation to spread false information or misuse technology. Based on *furudhul ainiyah*, students are encouraged to become wise users of technology, who use their skills to create benefits for society. One informatics student, for example, developed an application to detect hoaxes, using his technological expertise as a tool to uphold honesty in society.

Character building through *furudhul ainiyah* does not stop at the campus environment. When students become alumni, the character that has been built during their studies becomes a provision that distinguishes them from graduates of other institutions. A UNUJA alumni who now works as an entrepreneur admits that the integrity and work ethic that he built on campus helped him build a business that is trusted by customers. "For me, being successful is not enough, but being successful in a good way is everything," he said.

Ultimately, this policy not only shapes students into individuals with Islamic personalities, but also into agents of change in society. The characters they carry are a reflection of UNUJA's grand vision: building a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also morally and spiritually superior.

4. Integration of Religious Education in Higher Education

Nurul Jadid University (UNUJA) has created a new paradigm in higher education through the *furudhul ainiyah* policy, which harmoniously integrates religious education into the modern academic structure. This is not simply the addition of religious material as a supporting course, but a process that unites religious values with the learning of science, technology, and the arts, creating a comprehensive and meaningful educational experience.

This approach is based on the belief that religious education is not only about knowledge, but also character building and practicing moral values in every aspect of life. At UNUJA, this integration is seen in the strategically designed curriculum. General courses, such as economics, informatics, or management, are not only taught from the perspective of conventional science, but also include Islamic principles. For example, in economics courses, students not only learn the concept of supply and demand, but also understand the importance of sharia principles such as fairness in transactions and the prohibition of usury.

This integration is strengthened by various campus activities, such as religious mentoring programs, scientific and Islamic-based group discussions, and students' obligations to attend seminars or workshops that discuss the theme of integrating religion and science. Not only that, lecturers at UNUJA also act as role models who are able to bridge worldly knowledge with religious teachings, creating an academic atmosphere that does not separate spiritual and intellectual values.

The impact of this approach is starting to be seen in students' learning outcomes. They not only excel in academic knowledge, but are also able to understand and apply Islamic values in real solutions. A computer engineering student, for example, develops an artificial intelligence-based application to help people understand *fiqh* laws easily. Meanwhile, students from the management department use their knowledge to create business strategies based on the values of justice and sustainability.

The integration of religious education in higher education also provides significant added value for UNUJA graduates. They are recognized not only as competent individuals in their fields, but also as leaders who have a moral vision and commitment to Islamic values. In the world of work, this character is a differentiator that makes them respected and relied upon.

However, implementing this integration is not without challenges. The diversity of students' backgrounds often influences how they receive and internalize the religious values taught. To address this, UNUJA uses an inclusive approach, creating discussion spaces that respect differences and encourage deeper understanding. Special programs, such as cross-department dialogue sessions, allow students from different fields to discuss how religious

values can be applied in various disciplines.

Ultimately, this policy is not only aimed at producing graduates who are ready to face the world of work, but also individuals who are able to become solutions to societal challenges. Through the integration of religious education in higher education, UNUJA proves that spiritual values and science can go hand in hand, forming a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also morally and spiritually superior.

5. Impact of Policy on Graduate Quality

The furudhul ainiyah policy at Nurul Jadid University (UNUJA) is not just an academic formality, but a significant catalyst in producing high-quality graduates. In this context, quality is not only seen from the mastery of knowledge and professional skills, but also from the ability of graduates to practice religious values in everyday life, both in the workplace and in society.

One of the most striking impacts is the creation of graduates who have a solid moral foundation. They are not only ready to compete in the professional world but are also able to maintain integrity amidst global challenges. A UNUJA graduate, for example, who now works in a multinational company, is known for his extraordinary analytical skills. However, more than that, he is respected for his honesty and commitment to implementing sharia principles in every business decision.

Not stopping there, UNUJA graduates also stand out in their ability to adapt to the dynamics of world change. This is inseparable from the holistic educational approach implemented through the furudhul ainiyah policy. In the educational process, students are taught to view knowledge as a means of worship, so that every innovation and idea they produce is always oriented towards the welfare of the people.

In the field of technology, for example, informatics engineering students who have undergone this policy have succeeded in creating an environmentally friendly application that integrates blockchain technology for halal transactions. This application has not only won a national award but is also recognized as a solution based on Islamic ethical principles. Meanwhile, graduates from the health sector have developed a spiritual-based approach to public health services, providing a new dimension to the medical world.

The implementation of the furudhul ainiyah policy also influences the mindset of students, making them more reflective and wise individuals in making decisions. UNUJA graduates do not only focus on material achievements, but also on the social impact of their actions. This philosophy makes them sought-after leaders in various sectors, from education to the creative industry.

Despite challenges often arising, such as how to ensure that religious values remain relevant in each discipline, UNUJA consistently develops innovative programs to support students. One of these is a character development workshop based on Islamic values, designed to help students integrate religious studies into a professional context.

Ultimately, the real impact of this policy is the birth of graduates who are not only skilled, but also have caring hearts and wise minds. They are not only a reflection of the success of UNUJA education, but also become agents of change who carry the mission of goodness in every step they take. Thus, the furudhul ainiyah policy has made the quality of UNUJA graduates one of the best among other higher education institutions.

6. Limitations and Policy Implications

Every education policy, including furudhul ainiyah at Nurul Jadid University (UNUJA), is inseparable from the dynamics and challenges faced. This policy, which aims to align religious values with academic achievement, also requires synchronization with government policies as the main regulator of national education.

One of the main challenges is to ensure that the furudhul ainiyah policy is in line with the graduate competency standards set by the government, as stated in the Indonesian National Qualifications Framework (KKNI). The government emphasizes the importance

of college graduates not only having academic and professional skills, but also strong character that reflects the nation's identity. In this context, UNUJA has strategically made furudhul ainiyah an instrument to fulfill the character education dimension that is a national priority.

On the other hand, this integration also faces limitations, especially in terms of flexible regulations. Standards set by the government are often general in nature, so they need to be adapted to the local context of UNUJA. For example, furudhul ainiyah certification as a prerequisite for graduation requires adjustments to government regulations related to college accreditation and assessment of graduate qualifications. This process requires regulatory harmonization so that UNUJA policies remain legally valid and do not conflict with national policies.

In addition, the furudhul ainiyah policy faces challenges in technical implementation in the field. Data generated from this program, such as the level of students' religious understanding and competency achievements, must be aligned with the government-managed higher education reporting system, such as the Higher Education Database (PD-DIKTI). Obstacles arise when data management at the university level has not been fully integrated with the government system, which can cause obstacles in holistic policy evaluation.

However, UNUJA has taken progressive steps to address these challenges. One of them is by building a technology-based academic information system designed to integrate student data, furudhul ainiyah certification, and other academic reports. This system not only simplifies internal management, but also strengthens the relationship between the university and the government in reporting and evaluating policies.

In terms of implications, the integration of government policies with furudhul ainiyah policies has a significant impact. Universities are not only able to meet national standards, but also demonstrate excellence in aligning local values with global needs. This can be seen from UNUJA graduates who not only have high competitiveness in the world of work, but are also known as individuals who uphold moral and religious values.

To ensure the sustainability of this policy, a collaborative commitment between the government and universities is needed. The government is expected to provide clearer guidance on how character education can be integrated into higher education policies. On the other hand, UNUJA must continue to improve its capacity in managing data-based policies, so that it can provide relevant feedback for the development of national policies.

By making the furudhul ainiyah policy a model of integration between religious education and higher education policy, UNUJA not only strengthens its position as a leading educational institution, but also contributes to the development of quality and characterful human resources in Indonesia.

CONCLUSIONS

The furudhul ainiyah policy implemented at Nurul Jadid University (UNUJA) is an innovation in higher education that has successfully integrated religious values into the academic system comprehensively. This policy not only emphasizes mastery of knowledge, but also instills morality, ethics, and spirituality which are important foundations for the formation of student character. The impact of this policy is clearly visible in several aspects. First, students not only have a deep understanding of religious values, but are also able to apply them in their daily lives, including in the professional world after graduation. Second, this policy creates an educational ecosystem that balances academic and spiritual aspects, thus producing graduates who are competent and have strong moral integrity. However, the implementation of this policy also faces challenges, especially in terms of synchronization with government policies and limitations in integrated data management. Nevertheless, UNUJA has taken strategic steps by developing a technology-based information system that facilitates data management and policy harmonization with the government. The overall furudhul ainiyah policy not only has a positive impact on students

and institutions, but also provides a concrete example of how religious education can be effectively integrated into higher education. UNUJA has succeeded in showing that education is not just a transfer of knowledge, but also a means to produce individuals who have superior character, global competitiveness, and commitment to moral and religious values. Thus, this policy can be used as a model for other universities that want to integrate local and religious values into their education system, without forgetting national and global standards. Close collaboration between universities, government, and all stakeholders is the key to the sustainability of this policy to continue to provide greater benefits in the future.

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