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Reinterpreting Presidential Educational Requirements in Indonesia: Constitutional Court Decision No. 87/PUU-XXIII/2025 from the Perspective of *Siyasah Dusturiyah*

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Abstract

Constitutional Court Decision Number 87/PUU-XXIII/2025 concerning the minimum educational requirements for presidential and vice-presidential candidates has generated constitutional debate regarding the balance between democratic inclusiveness and leadership competency in Indonesia's constitutional system. The decision rejected the petition seeking reinterpretation of Article 169 letter r of Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections, which requires candidates to possess at least a senior high school diploma or its equivalent. This study aims to analyze the juridical foundation of the Constitutional Court's reasoning within the doctrine of open legal policy, examine its implications for constitutional loss and judicial review access, and evaluate the relevance of the minimum educational requirement from the perspective of *siyasah dusturiyah*. This research employs normative juridical methods with statute and conceptual approaches using constitutional regulations, court decisions, and Islamic political thought as primary analytical sources. The findings reveal that the Constitutional Court reaffirmed the doctrine of open legal policy and judicial restraint by emphasizing that the determination of educational qualifications for presidential candidates belongs to legislative authority as long as constitutional principles are preserved. The decision also strengthens the Court's restrictive interpretation of constitutional loss by limiting judicial review access to applicants who can demonstrate direct constitutional injury. From the perspective of *siyasah dusturiyah*, however, the minimum educational requirement of senior high school graduation is considered substantively inadequate because it does not fully reflect the principle of *kifayah 'ilmiyyah* emphasized by Al-Mawardi and may potentially undermine *masalah 'ammah* in contemporary governance. This study argues that leadership competency should be positioned as an important component of constitutional morality and public welfare within Indonesia's constitutional democracy.

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Introduction

The constitutional regulation of presidential and vice-presidential candidacy requirements constitutes a fundamental aspect of democratic governance and constitutional design in Indonesia. As mandated by Article 1 paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia (UUD NRI 1945), sovereignty rests in the hands of the people and is exercised through democratic mechanisms, including general elections. In order to maintain electoral integrity and ensure fair political competition, the legislator establishes various candidacy requirements for public office, including educational qualifications. Article 169 letter r of Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections stipulates that candidates for President and Vice President must possess at least a senior high school diploma or its equivalent. Although this provision formally guarantees broad political participation and reflects the democratic principle of inclusiveness, it has simultaneously generated constitutional debate regarding whether such a minimum educational threshold remains adequate to address the increasingly complex demands of contemporary state leadership.

The controversy intensified following the submission of a judicial review petition before the Mahkamah Konstitusi Republik Indonesia in Case Number 87/PUU-XXIII/2025 by Hanter Oriko Siregar and Horison Sibarani. The petitioners argued that the minimum educational requirement of senior high school graduation potentially allows individuals with insufficient intellectual and managerial competence to occupy the highest executive offices in a country with more than 280 million inhabitants and multidimensional governance challenges, including economic instability, technological transformation, geopolitical competition, and climate crises. Consequently, the petition requested the Constitutional Court to reinterpret Article 169 letter r by requiring presidential and vice-presidential candidates to possess at least an undergraduate degree or its equivalent. However, in its decision delivered on 17 July 2025, the Constitutional Court rejected the petition and reaffirmed that the determination of educational qualifications for presidential candidates falls within the domain of open legal policy, which constitutionally belongs to the authority of the legislature as long as the regulation does not violate principles of rationality, morality, and non-discrimination.

The Constitutional Court's reasoning reflects a broader constitutional doctrine concerning judicial restraint and the limitation of judicial intervention in legislative policymaking. In Indonesian constitutional jurisprudence, the doctrine of open legal policy has frequently been employed to justify legislative discretion in determining electoral and political arrangements. Previous studies have discussed the Constitutional Court's tendency to exercise judicial restraint in cases involving electoral systems, candidacy requirements, and political rights, emphasizing the Court's role as a negative legislator rather than a positive legislator. Other scholars have examined the concept of constitutional loss (constitutional impairment) and legal standing in judicial review proceedings, particularly regarding the Court's restrictive approach toward *actio popularis* petitions. Meanwhile, studies within Islamic constitutional thought (*siyasah dusturiyah*) have generally focused on principles of leadership, justice, *maslahat*, and governance in Islamic political theory. Nevertheless, existing scholarship tends to examine these issues separately, either from the perspective of constitutional law or Islamic political thought,

without critically integrating the doctrine of open legal policy with the normative standards of leadership competency within *siyasah dusturiyah*.

This article argues that the Constitutional Court's formalistic reliance on open legal policy leaves unresolved a substantive constitutional question concerning the quality and competency of national leadership in a democratic state. Although the Court correctly maintained institutional restraint within the framework of separation of powers, the decision may still be critically evaluated from the perspective of Islamic constitutional theory, particularly through the principles of *maslahah 'ammah* (public welfare) and *kifayah 'ilmiyyah* (intellectual competence) articulated by classical Muslim scholars such as Al-Mawardi. In the tradition of *siyasah dusturiyah*, leadership is not merely procedural legitimacy obtained through electoral mechanisms, but also a substantive trust (*amanah*) that requires adequate intellectual, moral, and administrative capability to ensure public welfare and prevent social harm (*mafsadah*). Therefore, the issue of educational qualifications for presidential candidates cannot be viewed solely as a matter of democratic inclusiveness, but must also be examined through the broader objectives of constitutional governance and public benefit.

This study aims to analyze the juridical foundation and constitutional reasoning of Constitutional Court Decision Number 87/PUU-XXIII/2025 within the framework of open legal policy, to examine its implications for constitutional loss doctrine and judicial review access, and to evaluate the relevance of the minimum educational requirement for presidential and vice-presidential candidates from the perspective of *siyasah dusturiyah*. By integrating constitutional law analysis with Islamic political thought, this article offers a critical reinterpretation of leadership qualifications in Indonesia's constitutional democracy and contributes to contemporary discourse on constitutional morality, democratic governance, and public welfare-oriented leadership standards..

Method

This study employs a normative juridical research method with a qualitative approach to examine the constitutional and Islamic legal dimensions of Constitutional Court Decision Number 87/PUU-XXIII/2025 concerning the minimum educational requirements for presidential and vice-presidential candidates. Normative juridical research is used because the primary focus of this study lies in analyzing legal norms, constitutional doctrines, judicial reasoning, and Islamic political thought related to leadership qualifications within the Indonesian constitutional system.

The research applies two main approaches, namely the statute approach and the conceptual approach. The statute approach is utilized to analyze relevant legal instruments governing presidential candidacy requirements, particularly Article 6 paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, Article 169 letter r of Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections, and Constitutional Court Decision Number 87/PUU-XXIII/2025. Through this approach, the study examines the constitutional basis of legislative authority in determining educational qualifications for presidential and vice-presidential candidates, as well as the juridical considerations employed by the Constitutional Court in interpreting the doctrine of open legal policy.

In addition, the conceptual approach is employed to explore legal doctrines and theoretical perspectives concerning constitutionalism, judicial restraint, constitutional loss,

open legal policy, and Islamic constitutional theory (*siyasah dusturiyah*). This approach enables the researcher to construct an analytical framework based on legal concepts and scholarly doctrines relevant to the issue under examination. The study particularly adopts the concepts of *maslahah 'ammah* (public welfare) and *kifayah 'ilmiyyah* (intellectual competence) derived from classical Islamic political thought, especially the ideas of Al-Mawardi in *Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyyah*. These concepts are used as analytical instruments to evaluate the substantive relevance of educational qualifications for national leadership within the framework of *siyasah dusturiyah*.

The legal materials used in this research consist of primary, secondary, and tertiary legal sources. Primary legal materials include the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections, Constitutional Court Decision Number 87/PUU-XXIII/2025, and other related constitutional regulations. Secondary legal materials comprise books, journal articles, previous studies, and scholarly works discussing constitutional law, judicial review, open legal policy, democratic governance, and Islamic political thought. Meanwhile, tertiary legal materials include legal dictionaries, encyclopedias, and official institutional publications relevant to the research topic.

Data collection was conducted through library research and document analysis by examining constitutional documents, judicial decisions, classical Islamic texts, and academic literature obtained from official government websites, legal databases, digital libraries, and indexed scientific journals. The collected materials were subsequently classified based on constitutional arguments, judicial reasoning, doctrinal perspectives, and principles of *siyasah dusturiyah* relevant to the issue of leadership qualifications.

The analysis technique employed in this study is qualitative-prescriptive legal analysis. Legal materials were analyzed systematically through interpretation, comparison, and critical evaluation of constitutional doctrines and Islamic political principles. The study further applies analytical interpretation to identify the relationship between the Constitutional Court's reasoning on open legal policy and the substantive standards of leadership competency emphasized in *siyasah dusturiyah*. Through this method, the research aims to formulate a critical juridical evaluation regarding the constitutional adequacy and public welfare implications of the minimum educational requirements for presidential and vice-presidential candidates in Indonesia.

Results

Constitutional Court Considerations within the Framework of Open Legal Policy and Democratic Constitutionalism

The Constitutional Court Decision Number 87/PUU-XXIII/2025 constitutes an important constitutional precedent concerning the limits of judicial intervention in determining the qualifications of presidential and vice-presidential candidates in Indonesia. The primary issue examined in the case was the constitutionality of Article 169 letter r of Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections, which stipulates that candidates for President and Vice President must possess at least a senior high school diploma or its equivalent. The petitioners argued that such a minimum educational requirement was insufficient to ensure competent national leadership in a modern constitutional state facing increasingly complex governance challenges. Consequently, they requested the

Constitutional Court to reinterpret the provision by requiring candidates to possess at least an undergraduate degree or its equivalent.

In its legal reasoning, the Mahkamah Konstitusi Republik Indonesia rejected the petition and reaffirmed that the determination of educational qualifications for presidential and vice-presidential candidates falls within the domain of open legal policy. The Court emphasized that Article 6 paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia explicitly delegates the regulation of presidential candidacy requirements to statutory legislation. Since the Constitution does not expressly determine a specific educational threshold, the legislature possesses constitutional discretion to formulate such requirements as part of legislative policymaking. Accordingly, the Court held that the minimum educational requirement of senior high school graduation does not contradict constitutional principles as long as it remains rational, non-discriminatory, and consistent with democratic values.

The Court further stated that the contested norm reflects the constitutional principle of democratic inclusiveness by ensuring broad political participation for Indonesian citizens. According to the Court, the requirement does not restrict highly educated individuals from contesting presidential elections, but rather establishes a minimum threshold that allows wider access to political participation while preserving the people's sovereignty to determine leadership quality through electoral mechanisms. Therefore, the Court viewed the issue primarily as a legislative policy matter rather than a constitutional violation warranting judicial intervention.

The findings also indicate that the Constitutional Court consistently applied the doctrine of judicial restraint throughout its reasoning. Rather than functioning as a positive legislator by formulating new legal standards concerning educational qualifications, the Court maintained its role as a negative legislator whose authority is limited to assessing the constitutionality of statutory provisions. This approach demonstrates the Court's institutional commitment to preserving the principle of separation of powers between the judiciary and the legislature. The Court thereby avoided substituting legislative discretion with judicial preference concerning the ideal educational qualifications for presidential candidates.

Nevertheless, the Court acknowledged that debates concerning leadership competency and educational qualifications remain constitutionally and politically significant within Indonesia's democratic system. The decision implicitly recognizes that questions regarding the adequacy of presidential educational standards are more appropriately resolved through democratic and legislative processes rather than constitutional adjudication. Thus, the Court positioned itself as the guardian of constitutional boundaries rather than the determinant of political or technocratic standards of leadership.

Implications of the Decision for Constitutional Loss Doctrine and Judicial Review Access

Another significant finding of this study concerns the Constitutional Court's interpretation of constitutional loss (*constitutional impairment*) and legal standing in judicial review proceedings. The Court concluded that the petitioners failed to demonstrate a direct and specific constitutional loss resulting from the implementation of Article 169 letter r of Law Number 7 of 2017. According to the Court, the petitioners' concerns regarding the

potential emergence of incompetent national leaders were hypothetical and speculative rather than actual constitutional injuries capable of satisfying the requirements of judicial review admissibility.

The findings reveal that the decision reinforces the Constitutional Court's increasingly restrictive approach toward legal standing in constitutional adjudication. The Court emphasized that constitutional loss must possess a clear causal relationship (*causal verband*) with the challenged legal provision and must involve specific, actual, or reasonably predictable constitutional harm experienced directly by the petitioners. Consequently, generalized public concerns regarding leadership quality were deemed insufficient to establish constitutional standing before the Court.

This interpretation carries important implications for the development of constitutional jurisprudence in Indonesia. First, the decision strengthens the Court's rejection of *actio popularis*-based constitutional claims in which petitioners seek judicial review solely on the basis of public interest considerations without direct constitutional injury. Second, the ruling reinforces the distinction between constitutional disputes and political policy disagreements. By refusing to intervene in matters categorized as open legal policy, the Court further clarified the boundaries between judicial authority and legislative policymaking within Indonesia's constitutional democracy.

The findings additionally demonstrate that the Court's reasoning reflects a broader tendency toward procedural constitutionalism rather than substantive constitutional activism. The Court prioritized procedural limitations concerning judicial authority and constitutional standing over broader normative concerns regarding leadership competency and democratic quality. In doing so, the Court strengthened judicial restraint as a guiding principle in constitutional adjudication while simultaneously narrowing public access to constitutional review mechanisms for issues framed primarily as public policy concerns.

At the same time, the study finds that this formalistic approach may generate constitutional criticism. Although the Court successfully maintained institutional boundaries, the restrictive interpretation of constitutional loss potentially limits constitutional protection in matters with substantial long-term implications for democratic governance and national leadership quality. The decision therefore illustrates an ongoing tension within Indonesian constitutionalism between preserving judicial restraint and addressing substantive constitutional concerns related to democratic governance and public welfare.

The Relevance of Minimum Educational Requirements from the Perspective of Siyasah Dusturiyah

From the perspective of *siyasah dusturiyah*, the findings indicate that the minimum educational requirement of senior high school graduation remains substantively problematic despite its constitutional validity within positive law. Islamic constitutional thought emphasizes that leadership is not merely a procedural or electoral matter, but also a substantive public trust (*amanah*) requiring intellectual competence, moral integrity, and administrative capability to realize public welfare (*maslahah 'ammah*).

The analysis demonstrates that classical Islamic political scholars, particularly Al-Mawardi, regarded intellectual competency (*kifayah 'ilmiyyah*) as one of the essential qualifications of state leadership. In *Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyyah*, Al-Mawardi emphasized that

a leader must possess sufficient knowledge and intellectual capability to formulate policies, resolve public disputes, and safeguard the interests of society. This principle is closely connected to broader objectives of Islamic governance aimed at preserving religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property within society.

The findings further reveal that the minimum educational standard stipulated in Article 169 letter r may inadequately reflect these substantive leadership requirements. Although the provision supports democratic inclusiveness and political participation, a senior high school educational qualification alone does not necessarily ensure adequate analytical, administrative, and policy-making capacity required in contemporary governance. Modern state administration involves increasingly complex issues such as economic management, international diplomacy, technological transformation, environmental crises, and social conflict resolution, all of which require substantial intellectual and managerial competence.

Using the framework of *maslahah 'ammah*, the study finds that leadership qualifications should be oriented toward maximizing public welfare and minimizing potential social harm (*mafsadah*). In this regard, the principle of *dar' al-mafasid muqaddam 'ala jalb al-masalih*—preventing harm takes precedence over obtaining benefit—becomes highly relevant. While maintaining low educational barriers may produce democratic benefits through broader political participation, it simultaneously risks allowing the emergence of national leaders lacking sufficient competency to govern effectively. Such conditions may potentially generate broader societal harms affecting economic stability, social cohesion, and public trust in democratic institutions.

The findings therefore suggest that, from the perspective of *siyasah dusturiyah*, educational qualifications for presidential and vice-presidential candidates should not merely function as procedural administrative requirements but should also reflect substantive standards of leadership competency. Consequently, although the Constitutional Court correctly categorized the issue as open legal policy within constitutional doctrine, the study indicates that revisiting the educational threshold through legislative reform may better align Indonesia's democratic system with principles of public welfare, constitutional morality, and competent leadership emphasized in Islamic constitutional thought.

Discussion

The Constitutional Court Decision Number 87/PUU-XXIII/2025 demonstrates the continuing dominance of procedural constitutionalism within Indonesia's democratic legal system. By categorizing the minimum educational requirement for presidential and vice-presidential candidates as part of the legislature's open legal policy, the Mahkamah Konstitusi Republik Indonesia reaffirmed its institutional commitment to judicial restraint and the principle of separation of powers. From a constitutional perspective, the Court's reasoning is understandable because Article 6 paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution explicitly delegates the determination of presidential candidacy requirements to statutory legislation. Consequently, the Court avoided transforming itself into a positive legislator by imposing new educational standards that were not expressly mandated by the Constitution.

This position reflects a broader constitutional tendency in Indonesia in which the Constitutional Court frequently exercises restraint when reviewing legislative policies

related to electoral governance. Such an approach aims to preserve democratic legitimacy by respecting the authority of elected political institutions to formulate public policy. In this context, the Court emphasized that democratic legitimacy ultimately derives from the sovereignty of the people, who retain the constitutional authority to evaluate the competence and credibility of political candidates through electoral mechanisms. Therefore, the Court viewed the issue of educational qualifications primarily as a matter of legislative discretion and political accountability rather than constitutional adjudication.

Nevertheless, the decision simultaneously reveals an unresolved tension between procedural democracy and substantive constitutionalism. Although democratic systems must preserve inclusiveness and equal political participation, democratic legitimacy cannot be reduced solely to procedural openness. Modern constitutional democracies also require institutional safeguards capable of ensuring that public leadership possesses adequate competency to manage increasingly complex state affairs. The contemporary presidency involves responsibilities extending beyond symbolic representation, including economic governance, international diplomacy, national security, digital transformation, environmental policymaking, and crisis management. These responsibilities require analytical capability, strategic reasoning, and policy literacy that may not necessarily be guaranteed through minimal educational standards.

Within this context, the doctrine of open legal policy should not be interpreted as absolute legislative freedom without substantive constitutional evaluation. Legislative discretion remains constitutionally limited by broader principles of constitutional morality, rational governance, proportionality, and public welfare. The Constitutional Court correctly maintained institutional restraint; however, the decision also illustrates the limitations of purely procedural constitutional reasoning when confronting questions concerning leadership quality and democratic sustainability. Consequently, the debate regarding presidential educational qualifications remains relevant not because the Constitution explicitly requires higher education, but because constitutional governance increasingly demands competent and knowledge-based leadership.

The discussion becomes more significant when examined through the perspective of Islamic Political Thought, particularly the framework of *siyasa dusturiyah*. In Islamic constitutional theory, leadership is fundamentally understood as a public trust (*amanah*) aimed at realizing collective welfare (*maslahah 'ammah*). Classical Muslim scholars such as Al-Mawardi emphasized that political authority should only be entrusted to individuals possessing intellectual capability, moral integrity, and administrative competence. Leadership is therefore not merely a procedural outcome of political selection but also a substantive ethical responsibility directly connected to the welfare and stability of society.

The principle of *kifayah 'ilmiyyah* articulated by Al-Mawardi is particularly relevant to contemporary constitutional governance. In *Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyyah*, Al-Mawardi argued that a leader must possess sufficient knowledge and intellectual capacity to formulate sound judgments, resolve public disputes, and govern society effectively. Although classical Islamic scholarship did not define competency through modern academic degrees, the underlying principle clearly prioritizes intellectual preparedness and administrative capability. In the context of the modern nation-state, formal education may therefore function as one measurable indicator of intellectual readiness, even if it is not the sole determinant of leadership quality.

This analysis does not imply that higher academic qualifications automatically produce just, ethical, or effective leaders. Leadership quality is also influenced by morality, political experience, integrity, communication skills, and commitment to public service. History demonstrates that some highly educated political elites may still engage in corruption, authoritarianism, or ineffective governance. Conversely, certain influential leaders without advanced academic credentials have demonstrated exceptional political wisdom and social legitimacy. Therefore, educational qualifications should not be treated as the exclusive criterion of leadership competency.

However, dismissing educational standards entirely may also create institutional vulnerabilities within democratic governance. In large and highly complex states such as Indonesia, insufficiently competent leadership may contribute to ineffective policymaking, populist governance, poor crisis management, and declining public trust in democratic institutions. This concern becomes increasingly relevant in the digital era, where policymaking requires interdisciplinary understanding involving economics, science, technology, law, and international relations. From the perspective of *maslahah 'ammah*, leadership competency is not merely a private attribute of political candidates but a matter directly affecting collective public welfare.

The principle of *dar' al-mafasid muqaddam 'ala jalb al-masalih*—preventing harm takes precedence over obtaining benefit—provides an important evaluative framework in this discussion. The current educational requirement indeed generates democratic benefits by preserving inclusiveness and avoiding elitist political barriers. Nonetheless, the potential harm arising from incompetent national leadership may carry broader and more systemic consequences affecting economic stability, social cohesion, legal certainty, and national resilience. In this regard, the issue is not merely whether citizens possess the right to contest elections, but whether constitutional systems should incorporate minimum competency safeguards to protect long-term public interests.

At the same time, increasing educational qualifications for presidential candidates also raises legitimate democratic concerns. Excessively high educational standards may create political elitism and potentially exclude capable leaders emerging from marginalized social groups with limited access to higher education. Such exclusion would contradict the democratic principle of equal political participation and may strengthen the domination of political elites already possessing social and economic privilege. Therefore, the challenge lies not in establishing technocratic barriers detached from social realities, but in balancing democratic inclusiveness with substantive leadership competency.

In this regard, the responsibility for ensuring leadership quality should not rest solely upon constitutional adjudication or formal educational requirements. Political parties play a decisive role as gatekeepers within democratic systems. Ideally, political parties should function not merely as electoral vehicles seeking political victory, but as constitutional institutions responsible for recruiting competent, ethical, and capable leaders. Within the framework of *siyasaḥ dusturiyah*, political parties carry moral responsibility to ensure that candidates presented to society fulfill the principles of *amanah*, justice, and public welfare. Consequently, leadership quality should be strengthened not only through legal reform but also through internal party democratization, political education, and merit-based candidate recruitment.

Ultimately, the Constitutional Court Decision Number 87/PUU-XXIII/2025 illustrates the continuing dialectic between constitutional restraint, democratic inclusiveness, and substantive leadership standards within Indonesia's constitutional order. The Court appropriately preserved constitutional boundaries by respecting legislative authority; however, the broader normative debate regarding the adequacy of presidential educational qualifications remains unresolved. From the perspective of *siyasah dusturiyah*, leadership competency constitutes an inseparable component of public welfare and constitutional morality. Therefore, future legislative reform concerning presidential qualifications should not merely focus on procedural democratic participation, but should also consider the long-term necessity of competent, ethical, and welfare-oriented national leadership within Indonesia's constitutional democracy.

Conclusion

Constitutional Court Decision Number 87/PUU-XXIII/2025 reaffirms the Constitutional Court's commitment to the doctrine of open legal policy and judicial restraint within Indonesia's constitutional system. By declaring that the determination of minimum educational qualifications for presidential and vice-presidential candidates falls within the constitutional authority of the legislature, the Mahkamah Konstitusi Republik Indonesia emphasized that judicial review should not be used to replace legislative policy preferences unless a clear constitutional violation exists. The decision therefore strengthens the procedural dimension of constitutional democracy by preserving the separation of powers and respecting legislative discretion in electoral regulation.

At the same time, the decision also reinforces a more restrictive interpretation of constitutional loss and legal standing in judicial review proceedings. The Court's rejection of hypothetical constitutional harm demonstrates its increasingly formalistic approach toward constitutional adjudication and limits the expansion of *actio popularis* claims within Indonesian constitutional law. Although this approach contributes to institutional stability and prevents excessive judicial activism, it may also narrow public access to constitutional protection in matters involving broader concerns of democratic quality and national leadership competency.

From the perspective of Islamic Political Thought, particularly within the framework of *siyasah dusturiyah*, the minimum educational requirement of senior high school graduation remains substantively insufficient to fully reflect the principles of *kifayah 'ilmiyyah* and *maslahah 'ammah*. Classical Islamic political theory emphasizes that leadership is not merely procedural legitimacy obtained through elections, but also a substantive public trust requiring intellectual competence, moral integrity, and administrative capability. In the context of contemporary governance characterized by increasingly complex political, economic, technological, and environmental challenges, leadership competency becomes an essential component of public welfare and constitutional morality.

Nevertheless, this study does not argue that formal education alone guarantees effective leadership, nor does it advocate the exclusion of political participation through excessively elitist standards. Rather, the study highlights the necessity of balancing democratic inclusiveness with substantive competency in national leadership recruitment. Educational qualifications should therefore be understood as one important indicator of

intellectual preparedness within a broader framework of ethical and welfare-oriented governance.

This study contributes theoretically by integrating constitutional law analysis with the normative framework of *siyasah dusturiyah* in evaluating the doctrine of open legal policy and leadership qualifications in Indonesia. It further demonstrates that constitutional debates concerning electoral requirements should not only focus on procedural legality but also consider broader questions of constitutional morality, democratic sustainability, and public welfare. Accordingly, future legislative reform concerning presidential candidacy requirements should be directed toward strengthening leadership quality while maintaining democratic accessibility and constitutional inclusiveness within Indonesia's constitutional democracy.

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