



The Urgency of BPPK-URI in Strengthening National Leadership and Human Resource Resilience

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Abstract

The transformation of national leadership development governance has become a strategic issue in the face of geopolitical competition, technological disruption, and demands for bureaucratic reform. The government has introduced the National Character Education Management Agency–University of the Republic of Indonesia (*Badan Pengelola Pendidikan Kebangsaan–Universitas Republik Indonesia*, BPPK-URI) as a model for integrating national leadership education that encompasses schools of excellence, higher education, and training for state apparatus. This study aims to analyze the urgency of establishing BPPK-URI from the perspectives of public governance, constitutional law, and national human resource resilience. It employs a literature study with a descriptive-analytical approach to regulations, policy documents, and scholarly publications related to national leadership development. The findings indicate that the establishment of BPPK-URI has the potential to strengthen the integration of state talent development, harmonize leadership competency standards, and support the resilience of strategic human resources. However, its implementation faces challenges, including potential overlaps of authority with existing institutions, the need for a clear legal basis, the risk of academic resistance, and demands for public accountability. This study concludes that the effectiveness of BPPK-URI depends heavily on clear institutional design, regulatory harmonization, inclusive academic governance, and a strengthened national merit system, enabling it to become an instrument of leadership development that sustainably supports national resilience.

Keywords: BPPK-URI; national leadership; human resource resilience; governance; national defense

INTRODUCTION

The transformation of the quality of strategic human resources (HR) is one of the main prerequisites for strengthening state capacity in the face of geopolitical dynamics, technological disruption, and the complexity of modern public governance. Many countries position leadership education as a strategic instrument for building a professional bureaucracy with integrity and a long-term orientation toward the national interest (OECD, 2017). In this context, the Indonesian government has introduced the National Character Education Management Agency–University of the Republic of Indonesia (BPPK-URI) as a model for integrating national leadership education that encompasses schools of excellence, higher education, and training for state apparatus (Pemerintah Republik Indonesia, 2026).

National leadership education has become a growing practice in many countries. France developed the *École Nationale d'Administration* (ENA), which was later reformed into the *Institut National du Service Public* (INSP) to broaden access and strengthen the public service orientation (INSP, 2022). Singapore built a talent management system through the Public Service Division and the Civil Service College, while the United Kingdom emphasizes leadership competency development through the Government Campus and Civil Service Learning (Civil Service College Singapore, 2024; UK Government, 2024). These experiences show that leadership education is generally regarded as part of a strategy for building state capacity sustainably.



In Indonesia, the leadership development system remains dispersed across various institutions, such as technical ministries, universities, apparatus training agencies, and defense and security institutions. This condition creates a gap between the need for integrated national leadership competency standards and the reality of education and training that remain sectoral. At the same time, the establishment of BPPK-URI has sparked public debate concerning its legal basis, potential overlaps of authority with existing institutions, academic culture, and state budget priorities (Mahfud MD, 2026).

Developments in the global strategic environment also show that threats to the state are no longer dominated by conventional military threats. Geopolitical rivalry, information warfare, disinformation, cyberattacks, economic warfare, and competition for technological mastery constitute multidimensional threats that demand adaptive and visionary national leadership (Buzan & Wæver, 2003). In this context, the quality of national leaders is a strategic asset for national defense, because leaders with integrity, strategic thinking, national insight, and sound managerial capacity are better able to formulate policies that safeguard the national interest while enhancing the nation's competitiveness.

Law Number 3 of 2002 on National Defense affirms that Indonesia's defense is organized through a total (*semesta*) national defense system that involves all national resources in an integrated manner (Republik Indonesia, 2002). Accordingly, developing national leadership and strengthening the quality of strategic human resources can be viewed as part of efforts to reinforce national resilience and the nation's deterrence capability.

Although many countries have developed integrated national leadership cadre systems, studies on the position of BPPK-URI from the perspectives of public governance, constitutional law, and Indonesia's human resource resilience remain relatively limited. This study therefore aims to analyze the urgency of establishing BPPK-URI in strengthening national leadership and national human resource resilience through the lenses of public governance, constitutional law, and national defense. It is expected to make a conceptual contribution to the development of national leadership education policy and to inform the design of a more effective, accountable, and sustainable institutional framework.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a literature study (*library research*) method with a descriptive-analytical approach. This approach was chosen because the research focuses on analyzing the policy and governance of the establishment of BPPK-URI from the perspectives of national leadership, constitutional law, and national defense. The literature study was used to identify concepts, arguments, and policy developments related to national leadership development and the resilience of strategic human resources.

The research data consist of primary legal materials, secondary legal materials, and policy documents. Primary legal materials include the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, Law Number 12 of 2012 on Higher Education, Law Number 20 of 2023 on the State Civil Apparatus, Law Number 3 of 2002 on National Defense, and Presidential Decree Number 80/P of 2026. Secondary legal materials include books, journal articles, reports of international organizations, and scholarly publications discussing leadership education, state talent management, public governance, and national resilience. Government policy documents related to the establishment and development of BPPK-URI were also used as supporting sources for the analysis.

Data were collected through a systematic search of official government sources, publications of international institutions, and relevant academic literature. Data analysis proceeded through the stages of data reduction, thematic categorization, interpretation, and drawing conclusions. The main themes analyzed include the institutional design of BPPK-URI, the urgency of strengthening national leadership, the implications for state apparatus development, and its contribution to human resource resilience and national defense. To maintain the validity of the analysis, source triangulation was carried out by comparing regulations, policy documents, and scholarly publications in order to obtain a more objective picture of the urgency of establishing BPPK-URI.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Concept and Institutional Design of BPPK-URI

The establishment of BPPK-URI reflects the government's effort to build a more integrated national leadership development system. According to the government's explanation, BPPK-URI is not positioned merely as a new university but as an umbrella institution that integrates character education, leadership education, managerial development, state apparatus development, talent development for state-owned enterprises, and the strengthening of national insight (Pemerintah Republik Indonesia, 2026). Given these characteristics, BPPK-URI is more accurately understood as a *National Leadership University* model oriented toward the sustainable development of the state's leadership capacity.

This integration concept resembles international practices in public-sector leadership development. France, through ENA and its successor INSP, positions leadership education as an instrument for developing the state's administrative elite as well as a means of strengthening public service (INSP, 2022). Singapore has developed a talent management system that links education, state scholarships, and the career development of civil servants in a continuous manner (Civil Service College Singapore, 2024). The United Kingdom emphasizes the development of leadership and decision-making competencies through the Government Campus and Civil Service Learning (UK Government, 2024). These experiences show that national leadership development is generally achieved through the integration of education, career development, and state talent management.

In the Indonesian context, the establishment of BPPK-URI can be seen as a response to the fragmentation of strategic HR development, which has so far been dispersed across various ministries, agencies, and universities. This fragmentation means that continuity in talent development, from secondary education and higher education to the career development of state apparatus, has not yet been fully integrated into a single national ecosystem. BPPK-URI offers a different approach by linking talent identification, character education, the strengthening of academic competence, leadership formation, and the career development of prospective national leaders within a more unified policy framework.

From a public governance perspective, the institutional design of BPPK-URI offers several potential strategic advantages. First, it creates continuity in national leadership development from a young age to the level of strategic leadership. Second, it harmonizes leadership competency standards for civil servants, managers of state-owned enterprises, and prospective public leaders. Third, it strengthens the internalization of Pancasila values, nationalism, integrity, and public service ethics as the foundation of national leadership. Fourth, it develops a national leadership network that can serve as social capital in governance and national development.

Nevertheless, this institutional design also raises several strategic questions. Integrating the functions of higher education, apparatus training, and national leadership development may create overlaps of authority with institutions that already hold similar mandates, such as state universities, the National Institute of Public Administration (*Lembaga Administrasi Negara*), and other leadership development institutions. The effectiveness of BPPK-URI therefore depends heavily on a clear institutional mandate, a clear division of authority, inter-agency coordination mechanisms, and a transparent public accountability system.

Conceptually, the establishment of BPPK-URI signals a paradigm shift in HR development from a *human capital development* approach toward *strategic national leadership development*. This shift positions national leadership development as a strategic state investment in preparing leaders capable of meeting the geopolitical challenges, digital transformation, and multidimensional threats of the twenty-first century. BPPK-URI therefore has not only an educational dimension but also broader dimensions of state governance and national resilience.

The Urgency of Strengthening National Leadership

The urgency of establishing BPPK-URI cannot be separated from an increasingly complex global strategic environment. Geopolitical rivalry among states, digital disruption, cyberattacks, disinformation, energy crises, climate change, and competition for technological mastery have changed the character of

threats to the state (Buzan & Wæver, 2003). In such circumstances, the quality of national leadership becomes a decisive factor in the state's ability to formulate strategic policies, maintain national stability, and defend long-term national interests.

The experience of many countries shows that successful development is determined not only by democratic mechanisms of leadership succession but also by the quality of the system that prepares those leaders. The OECD (2017) emphasizes that planned public-sector leadership development is an important part of *state capacity building*. Investment in national leadership education is therefore regarded as a long-term investment to ensure the continued quality of governance.

In Indonesia, the challenges of national leadership development are still marked by the fragmentation of strategic HR development across agencies. The education system, apparatus training, and career development continue to operate within relatively separate institutional corridors. This condition may lead to gaps in leadership competency standards, limited continuity in talent development, and weak integration among character education, technical competence, and strategic leadership development. BPPK-URI is seen as an effort to reduce this fragmentation by building a more integrated leadership development ecosystem.

This urgency becomes even more relevant in relation to reforms in civil service management. Law Number 20 of 2023 on the State Civil Apparatus emphasizes strengthening the merit system and national talent management as the basis for managing a professional, competent civil service with integrity (Republik Indonesia, 2023). BPPK-URI has the potential to become one of the supporting instruments for preparing national leadership talent in line with the direction of this bureaucratic reform.

From a national defense perspective, strengthening national leadership is part of building national resilience. Law Number 3 of 2002 on National Defense affirms that Indonesia's defense system is total in nature, involving all national resources in an integrated manner (Republik Indonesia, 2002). Thus, the quality of strategic human resources, including the quality of national leadership, is an important component in supporting the nation's deterrence capability. Leaders with integrity, national insight, strategic thinking, and sound managerial capacity are better able to manage national resources effectively in the face of multidimensional threats.

The evolution of modern defense paradigms also shows a shift from the dominance of *hard power* toward a *smart power* approach, namely a combination of military power, diplomacy, the economy, technology, education, and the quality of national leadership (Nye, 2011). Within this framework, BPPK-URI can be regarded as part of a strategy to strengthen Indonesia's *smart power* through investment in human development and national leadership. The urgency of establishing BPPK-URI is thus related not only to the need for educational and bureaucratic reform but also to the state's strategic need to build human resource resilience and national leadership capacity able to face the challenges of the twenty-first century sustainably.

Constitutional Law Analysis

The establishment of BPPK-URI raises important discourse from the perspective of constitutional law because it concerns the President's authority to create new state institutions and the management of the national education system. Constitutionally, Article 31 of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia affirms that every citizen has the right to education and that the government shall organize a national education system that enhances faith, piety, noble character, and the intellectual life of the nation (Republik Indonesia, 1945). This provision provides the constitutional basis for the state to design education policies that support character building and national leadership.

However, the national education system is regulated in further detail at the level of statutes. Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System stipulates that education must be organized on democratic, just, and non-discriminatory principles and must guarantee academic freedom in higher education (Republik Indonesia, 2003). In addition, Law Number 12 of 2012 on Higher Education regulates governance, academic autonomy, and the mechanism for establishing higher education institutions (Republik Indonesia, 2012). The legal position of BPPK-URI therefore needs to be clearly defined: whether it functions as a higher

education institution, an education management agency, an apparatus training institution, or a combination of these functions.

From the perspective of administrative law, the President does have the authority to establish certain government institutions according to the needs of governance. This authority is part of the executive function in running the state. However, the establishment of a new institution must still observe the principles of legality, legal certainty, institutional effectiveness, and conformity with the hierarchy of laws and regulations. In the case of BPPK-URI, the use of Presidential Decree Number 80/P of 2026 as the basis for its establishment has triggered debate about the adequacy of its legal basis if the institution is to perform higher education functions in full.

This debate indicates the need for regulatory harmonization between the policy establishing BPPK-URI and the national education and higher education systems regulated by statute. Harmonization is required to prevent dual authority, uncertainty in academic governance, and potential administrative disputes in the future. A clear legal basis is also important to guarantee institutional legitimacy and long-term policy sustainability.

Beyond education, BPPK-URI is also linked to the state apparatus development system. Law Number 20 of 2023 on the State Civil Apparatus stresses the importance of the merit system and national talent management in managing civil service human resources (Republik Indonesia, 2023). If BPPK-URI performs leadership development functions for the state apparatus, clear arrangements are needed regarding its institutional relationship with the agencies responsible for civil service management to prevent overlapping authority.

Based on this analysis, the key issue from a constitutional law perspective is not merely whether the state may establish a national leadership development institution, but how to ensure that the institutional design of BPPK-URI rests on an adequate legal basis, a clear division of authority, accountable academic governance, and effective oversight mechanisms. The clarity of these aspects will determine the constitutional and administrative legitimacy of BPPK-URI as an instrument of national leadership development.

Implications for the Civil Service and National Defense

The establishment of BPPK-URI does not merely introduce a new educational institution; it also reflects a paradigm shift in national HR development from *human capital development* toward *strategic national leadership development*. This shift positions national leadership development as part of the state capacity-building strategy, so that the quality of the apparatus and of prospective public leaders is regarded as a strategic national asset.

For the state civil apparatus (*Aparatur Sipil Negara*, ASN), this paradigm shift has direct implications for patterns of competency development. Law Number 20 of 2023 on the State Civil Apparatus emphasizes strengthening the merit system and national talent management as the basis for managing a professional, competent civil service with integrity (Republik Indonesia, 2023). Within this framework, competency development is no longer understood merely as the fulfilment of administrative obligations but as a process of forming public leaders who can think strategically, adapt to change, possess digital literacy, and collaborate across sectors.

If designed in synergy with the national talent management system, BPPK-URI could become one of the supporting instruments for preparing leadership talent within the state apparatus. The integration of character education, leadership, national insight, and strategic competency development can strengthen continuity in apparatus development from education to career advancement. This approach can also support the transformation of the *learning culture* within the bureaucracy through competency- and leadership-based *continuous learning*.

From a public governance perspective, strengthening national leadership is expected to improve the quality of public policy formulation, inter-agency coordination, crisis management capability, and public-sector innovation capacity. Bureaucratic leaders with integrity, analytical ability, and an orientation toward the

national interest will be better able to maintain effective governance amid a constantly changing strategic environment.

The implications of BPPK-URI must also be viewed from a national defense perspective. Law Number 3 of 2002 on National Defense affirms that Indonesia's defense system is total in nature, involving all national resources in an integrated manner (Republik Indonesia, 2002). In this system, the quality of strategic human resources, including the quality of national leadership, forms part of the supporting components of national defense. Strengthening national leadership through BPPK-URI can therefore be seen as a long-term investment in building national resilience.

The development of multidimensional threats, such as cyberattacks, information warfare, disinformation, and technological competition, demands public leaders who not only understand government administration but can also think across sectors and understand the dynamics of national security. In this context, national leadership development contributes to strengthening the nation's *national deterrence* by improving the quality of strategic decision-makers.

The modern defense paradigm also highlights the importance of a *smart power* approach, namely the integration of military power, diplomacy, the economy, technology, education, and national leadership (Nye, 2011). BPPK-URI can therefore be positioned as one of the instruments for strengthening Indonesia's *smart power* through human development and strategic leadership. This contribution is relevant because success in defending national interests in the contemporary era increasingly depends on leaders who can manage all instruments of national power in an integrated manner.

Nevertheless, the contribution of BPPK-URI to strengthening the civil service and national defense will only be optimal if it is supported by merit-based recruitment, transparent governance, objective performance evaluation, and effective coordination with ministries, agencies, universities, and defense institutions. Without these prerequisites, the integration of national leadership development may face institutional resistance and fail to achieve its intended strategic goals.

Implementation Risks and Policy Mitigation

Although BPPK-URI offers a strategic concept for integrating national leadership development, its implementation faces several policy risks that need to be anticipated from the outset. The first risk is the potential overlap of authority with institutions that already perform HR development functions, such as universities, apparatus training agencies, and other leadership development institutions. Overlapping authority may cause institutional inefficiency, program duplication, and unclear accountability. It is therefore necessary to affirm the institutional mandate, clearly divide functions, and establish effective inter-agency coordination mechanisms.

The second risk concerns legal legitimacy and academic governance. The debate over the legal basis for establishing BPPK-URI indicates a need to harmonize regulations with the national education and higher education systems. Without clarity regarding institutional status and academic oversight mechanisms, policy implementation may face resistance from the academic community and higher education stakeholders. This risk can be mitigated by drafting more comprehensive implementing regulations, involving universities and academics in policy formulation, and strengthening the principles of academic autonomy and public accountability.

The third risk is the potential politicization of participant recruitment and institutional management. As an institution oriented toward developing prospective strategic leaders, BPPK-URI is vulnerable to political interference if its selection system is not merit-based. Such a condition could undermine the institution's credibility and weaken the goal of national leadership development. The recruitment system must therefore be designed to be transparent, competitive, and competency-based, and it must be overseen by an independent mechanism.

The fourth risk relates to funding sustainability and the state's fiscal priorities. Developing a national leadership education ecosystem requires long-term investment in infrastructure, teaching staff, policy research, and talent development systems. Under fiscal constraints, the government needs to ensure that

BPPK-URI is developed gradually and based on strategic needs so that it does not disrupt existing priorities in education and HR development.

The fifth risk is institutional resistance and organizational culture. Integrating various education and leadership development functions may encounter obstacles such as sectoral egos, differences in organizational culture, and concerns about losing authority. Experience with institutional reform in various countries shows that successful integration is strongly influenced by change leadership, effective policy communication, and the active involvement of stakeholders (OECD, 2017). The implementation strategy for BPPK-URI therefore needs to be accompanied by planned and sustained *change management*.

In addition to institutional risks, there is also a strategic risk if leadership development overemphasizes uniformity of thought and leaves little room for creativity, innovation, and critical thinking. Effective national leadership education should strike a balance between internalizing national values, discipline, and integrity and developing the capacity for critical thinking in addressing complex public problems. Curriculum design and academic governance must therefore guarantee a learning environment that is open, dialogical, and adaptive to developments in science and knowledge.

In light of these risks, implementing BPPK-URI requires a comprehensive mitigation strategy that includes strengthening the legal basis, affirming the institutional mandate, applying the merit system, involving stakeholders inclusively, managing organizational change, and strengthening performance evaluation mechanisms. Such an approach is important so that BPPK-URI can develop into an effective, accountable, and sustainable instrument of national leadership development without distorting existing educational and governmental arrangements.

CONCLUSION

The establishment of BPPK-URI can be understood as the government's strategic effort to build a more integrated national leadership development system in response to the geopolitical challenges, technological disruption, and multidimensional threats of the twenty-first century. This study shows that BPPK-URI has the potential to strengthen continuity in national talent development, harmonize leadership competency standards, support the strengthening of the civil service merit system, and contribute to building human resource resilience and national defense through a *smart power* approach. However, the effectiveness of this policy depends heavily on a clear legal basis, an institutional design that does not overlap with existing institutions, accountable academic governance, merit-based recruitment, and transparent coordination and evaluation mechanisms. The development of BPPK-URI should therefore be carried out gradually, inclusively, and on the basis of good governance so that it can grow into an effective, legitimate, and sustainable instrument of national leadership development that supports state capacity and Indonesia's national interests.

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