



CONTEMPORARY TRENDS AND ISSUES IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION MANAGEMENT: A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify and analyze emerging trends and contemporary issues in Islamic educational management practices. In the era of globalization and digitalization, Islamic educational institutions face various challenges and opportunities that influence educational management policies, strategies, and implementation. This study uses a qualitative approach with a library research method of analyzing relevant scientific literature. The results of the study indicate that current trends in Islamic educational management include digitalization of management, integration of Islamic values with modern management principles, and increasing the professionalism of educators. Prominent contemporary issues include the quality gap between institutions, weak strategic leadership, and minimal managerial innovation. This study is expected to provide a conceptual contribution to the development of adaptive and sustainable Islamic educational management practices.

1. Introduction

Dignified and character-based Islam, since the early days of Islam, education has played a central role in the transmission of knowledge, Islamic values, and the formation of a life ethos based on monotheism (Sutiono, 2025). In the current context, Islamic education faces increasingly complex challenges due to globalization, technological disruption, cultural pluralism, and the values crisis affecting society (lina & Aini, 2025). This complexity demands educational management that is not only administratively efficient and effective, but also substantively and contextually relevant to Islamic values (Engkizar et al., 2024).

Educational management, in a general sense, is the process of planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising educational activities to optimally achieve educational goals (Abbas et al., 2025). In the context of Islamic education, management aims not only to improve academic quality but also to ensure that Islamic values remain the foundation for decision-making and the implementation of educational program (Haris et al., 2025). This provides a unique nuance to the practice of Islamic educational management that distinguishes it from general educational management (Fathurrohman et al., 2023).

Deductively, we can start from the premise that Islamic education has a holistic, transcendental vision, integrating spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and social aspects (Aslan & Shiong Pong, 2023). From this, it

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follows that Islamic educational management must be integrative and not merely administrative (H. Kurniawan et al., 2024). This approach places Islamic values as the foundation of educational planning, implementation, and evaluation, and positions educational managers as moral-spiritual leaders, not merely administrators (Jakiyem et al., 2025).

In reality, many Islamic educational institutions have not been able to optimally apply professional, structured, and innovative management principles (Syukron et al., 2025). Most institutions are still managed conventionally with traditional approaches that are out of step with modern demands. This results in low quality educational services, weak graduate competitiveness, and limited influence of Islamic educational institutions in modern society (S. Kurniawan, 2025). On the other hand, there are also institutions that have been able to adopt modern management models without losing their Islamic identity, demonstrating that integration between modern management and Islamic values is very possible (Ibnu Sholeh et al., 2025).

The urgency of this research becomes even more relevant when we observe the disruption caused by the development of digital technology, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic. Islamic educational institutions are required to adapt rapidly to changes in learning systems, communication patterns, and technology-based management models (Sodikin et al., 2024). Furthermore, the emergence of 21st-century educational concepts characterized by digital literacy, critical thinking skills, collaboration, and creativity presents a unique challenge for Islamic education management, which has traditionally focused primarily on cognitive aspects and memorization (Amini, 2022). This emphasizes that without relevant and responsive managerial strategies, Islamic education risks losing its relevance amidst global change (Halimah et al., 2024).

From a theoretical perspective, Islamic education should adhere to management principles that are not only efficient and rational, but also ethical and spiritual. Principles such as *shura* (deliberation), *amanah* (responsibility), *isa* (justice), and *ihsan* (excellence) constitute philosophical foundations that need to be internalized in every managerial process (Othman & Yaakub, 2025). These principles can also be contextualized with contemporary management theories, such as transformational leadership, school-based management (SBM), and total quality management (TQM), to produce an Islamic education management model that is adaptive, innovative, and remains valuable (Norman et al., 2025).

However, literature that discusses contemporary trends and issues in Islamic education management in depth is still limited, particularly in the form of comprehensive literature reviews (Kosim et al., 2023). Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by systematically reviewing relevant literature to map the key trends and critical issues faced by Islamic educational institutions in their managerial practices (Assalihee & Boonsuk, 2023). This study is expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions to the development of a superior and contextual Islamic education management system (Ekasari et al., 2021).

This study aims to identify and analyze contemporary trends and issues in Islamic education management through a literature review. Based on a synthesis of various literature sources, two main categories are the focus of the analysis: (1) contemporary trends in Islamic education management, and (2) issues that pose major challenges to the sustainability and effectiveness of the current management system of Islamic educational institutions.

2. Methodology

This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature review method. A literature review is a research method that focuses on collecting and analyzing data from relevant written sources, such as books, scientific journals, conference articles, research reports, and other official documents related to the topic under study (Zed, 2004). This approach was chosen because the primary objective of the research is to explore and synthesize scientific thinking and previous findings regarding contemporary trends and issues in Islamic education management. This type of research is descriptive qualitative, aiming to systematically and in-depthly describe the phenomena under study based on data obtained from various literature. The descriptive approach is used to classify and interpret various trends and issues emerging in Islamic education management in the contemporary era, without manipulating variables or directly intervening in the field. The data sources in this study consisted of:

- a) Academic books and primary references on Islamic educational management
- b) Articles from nationally and internationally accredited scientific journals
- c) Relevant dissertations and theses
- d) Publications from government and educational institutions on Islamic educational management policies

The inclusion criteria for literature selection included: (1) relevance to the topic of Islamic educational management; (2) publications within the last 10 years (2013–2023); and (3) academic credibility, such as from peer-reviewed journals or recognized academic publishers. Data were collected through a systematic literature search using databases such as Google Scholar, DOAJ, ScienceDirect, SINTA, and university digital libraries. The search keywords used included: "Islamic educational management," "contemporary issues in Islamic education," "educational management trends," "Islamic education management," and "educational leadership in Islamic schools." All literature found was critically evaluated to ensure its relevance, validity, and contribution to the study's focus. The selected literature was then classified based on key themes, such as management trends, contemporary challenges, educational innovation, and the integration of Islamic values in management. The data was analyzed using thematic content analysis, which identifies key thematic patterns from the reviewed literature and then organizes them into analytical categories. This process was carried out iteratively, involving reading, recording, categorizing, and synthesizing the data to gain a deeper understanding.

3. Results

3.1. Contemporary Trends in Islamic Education Management

1). Digitalization of Educational Management

One of the most significant trends in Islamic education management is the adoption of digital technology in the management of educational institutions. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the digitalization process, which was previously slow to be implemented by Islamic educational institutions, particularly madrasas and Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). Administrative processes, academic supervision, evaluation, and even teaching have shifted online, with the use of learning management systems (LMS), digital attendance applications, and online reporting systems.

Digitalization of management not only simplifies administrative efficiency but also opens up opportunities for transparency and accountability. Several Islamic educational institutions have developed internal Android/iOS-based applications to manage finances, student grades, class schedules, and parent-teacher communication (Ramadhan, 2022). However, the technological gap between institutions presents a challenge.

"The integration of ICT in Islamic education is not only a necessity, but a necessity for the education system to adapt to the information society" (Hasan, 2020).

2). Integration of Islamic Values with Modern Management Principles

Contemporary Islamic educational management demonstrates a trend toward transformation through the integration of sharia values such as amanah (responsibility), shura (deliberation), and ihsan (performance optimization with sincerity) with modern management theories such as Total Quality Management (TQM) and the Balanced Scorecard (BSC). This approach is known as value-based management, a management model that combines professionalism and managerial

accountability with a foundation of Islamic morality and ethics. This integration aims not only to achieve efficiency and effectiveness in managing educational institutions but also to ensure that all managerial processes align with the Islamic principles that underpin their identity.

The implementation of this model is beginning to be seen in a number of large Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) and leading Islamic schools that apply the principles of continuous quality evaluation, student-centered learning, and quality management based on accreditation and international standards (Lubis, 2021). These steps reflect the awareness that Islamic values are not only compatible with professional management systems but can also enrich modern management practices. Thus, Islamic education management is not trapped in the dichotomy between tradition and modernity, but rather utilizes the synergy of both to create superior educational institutions, which are globally competitive, and remain rooted in Islamic moral and spiritual values.

3). Professionalization of Educational Personnel

Another emerging trend in Islamic education management is the growing awareness of the importance of professionalism among principals and teachers. Islamic educational institutions are beginning to adopt a merit-based recruitment system that emphasizes competence, academic qualifications, and personal integrity. Furthermore, various regular training programs are held to improve pedagogical, managerial, and information technology skills. Encouraging teachers to pursue higher education is also part of the human resource development strategy. These professionalization efforts are believed to be a strategic step in strengthening the quality of learning while enhancing the effectiveness of Islamic educational institution governance.

In this new paradigm, teachers are no longer viewed solely as transmitters of subject matter, but also as learning facilitators, curriculum developers, and agents of change within the school environment (Asmani, 2017). Similarly, principals are expected to function not only as administrators but also as instructional leaders capable of guiding, coaching, and inspiring teachers and students. The principal's role as a learning leader includes developing a quality-oriented educational vision, empowering work teams, and creating a school culture conducive to innovation. Thus, the professionalism of principals and teachers is a key factor in building Islamic educational institutions that are adaptive to the challenges of the global era while also consistent with Islamic values.

4) Collaborative and Participatory Approach

Current Islamic education management is showing a tendency to adopt a participatory leadership model that places all school components—teachers, students, parents, and the community—as integral parts of the decision-making process. This approach aligns with the principles of School-Based Management (SBM), which emphasizes the autonomy of educational institutions and the active participation of stakeholders in every aspect of management. This model aims not only to improve management quality but also to strengthen a sense of shared ownership of the school's vision and mission. Thus, Islamic education management is transforming from a centralized to a more decentralized model, allowing the initiative and creativity of all parties to thrive.

The implementation of this participatory approach can be seen in a number of Islamic schools and madrasas, where school committees are beginning to be empowered to participate in strategic decision-making processes, oversee transparency and accountability in budget use, and plan long-term programs. This involvement significantly shapes the democratic climate in educational institution governance, while simultaneously encouraging stronger public accountability. According to Sallis (2002), participation involving various stakeholders is a prerequisite for creating a sustainable quality culture. Therefore, empowering school committees and strengthening the role of the

community is not merely a complement but a key factor in building Islamic educational institutions that are adaptive, transparent, and oriented towards continuous quality improvement.

3.2. Contemporary Issues in Islamic Education Management

1). Quality Gaps Between Institutions

One fundamental issue facing Islamic education management is the disparity in management quality between institutions, both in terms of human resources, infrastructure, and curriculum quality. Educational institutions located in urban areas generally have better access to technology, teacher training, and regulatory and funding support from the government. This allows them to adapt more quickly to learning innovations and the implementation of modern management. Conversely, institutions located in remote areas often face limited infrastructure, limited access to training, and limited operational funding, which ultimately limits their ability to improve the quality of educational services (Zuhdi, 2015).

This inequality not only impacts student learning outcomes but also influences public perception of the quality of Islamic educational institutions. Traditionally managed schools or madrasahs without managerial innovation are often viewed as less able to compete with institutions that have adopted modern approaches. Consequently, public trust in some Islamic educational institutions has declined, particularly those that fail to demonstrate significant improvements in the quality of learning and governance. Therefore, reducing this gap is a strategic agenda that requires policy intervention, strengthening managerial capacity, and ensuring equitable access to adequate educational resources.

2). Weak Strategic Leadership

Most Islamic educational institutions are still managed using a conventional approach dominated by administrative and charismatic leadership styles. This leadership model tends to be oriented towards carrying out daily administrative routines without the support of a clear strategic vision for long-term development. Limited understanding of the importance of data-driven planning, needs analysis, and the implementation of continuous quality evaluation systems has resulted in stagnation in managerial innovation. As a result, educational institution management often remains stuck in a pattern of maintaining tradition without attempting to integrate more adaptive and visionary modern management practices.

In the context of globalization, strategic leadership is needed to guide Islamic educational institutions toward measurable and sustainable change. Transformative leadership is key to motivating and empowering all school components to achieve a shared vision, expand collaborative networks, and increase competitiveness at the national and international levels (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Without leaders with strategic capacity and a renewal orientation, Islamic educational institutions will struggle to develop, be less responsive to change, and risk losing relevance amidst the dynamics of modern society.

3). Lack of Managerial Innovation

Innovation in Islamic education management remains relatively limited, both in curriculum design, learning methods, and evaluation systems. Many educational institutions still rely on traditional approaches that are less relevant to the needs of modern students. One prominent weakness is the limited implementation of an integrated curriculum, which integrates religious education with general knowledge in an integrated and contextual manner. The lack of innovation in learning and management strategies has led to Islamic educational institutions tending to operate mechanically, without sensitivity to the dynamics of the social, economic, and technological environment. As

emphasized by Suyadi (2020), without managerial innovation, Islamic educational institutions risk losing relevance and competitiveness amidst rapid global change.

Nevertheless, a number of leading Islamic educational institutions have begun making significant breakthroughs. Some have implemented data-driven management to monitor student progress and objectively measure learning effectiveness. Others have developed competency-building programs based on industry needs and implemented a character curriculum that emphasizes moral and ethical values. These efforts demonstrate an awareness of the importance of managerial innovation to optimize educational quality. However, these practices remain sporadic and unevenly distributed nationally, necessitating a systematic strategy and policy support for widespread and sustainable implementation of innovations.

4). Curriculum Dualism and Educational Goals

Some Islamic educational institutions still face a fundamental problem in the form of a dualism between the national curriculum and the religious curriculum. This situation creates disorientation in institutional management, particularly regarding academic planning, organizational structure, allocation of learning time, and determining indicators of student success. Curriculum dualism also results in a double workload for teachers as they must meet the demands of two different systems, often with limited resources. As a result, achieving curriculum targets is difficult to optimize in a balanced manner, and the learning process becomes less effective and prone to overlap.

Curriculum integration is an urgent strategic solution to address these problems while strengthening managerial efficiency and effectiveness in Islamic educational institutions. This integration not only unifies religious and general learning content but also synergizes educational goals, teaching methods, and evaluation systems in an integrated manner. Its implementation requires inclusive, collaborative, and forward-thinking management policies so that educational institutions can produce graduates who possess both strong academic competencies and Islamic character. Thus, curriculum integration can serve as a crucial foundation for managing Islamic education that is relevant to current needs and capable of competing globally.5). Ketergantungan pada Bantuan Eksternal

Another critical issue facing Islamic educational institutions is their high dependence on government assistance and external donors. This financial dependence has the potential to limit the institution's autonomy in managerial decision-making, particularly regarding educational program development, resource allocation, and learning innovation. Furthermore, the institution's operational sustainability becomes vulnerable when funding sources decrease or cease altogether. This situation places many Islamic educational institutions in a financially unstable position, making it difficult to conduct sustainable long-term planning.

To address this issue, strengthening independent and sustainability-oriented financial management is necessary. One strategy that can be implemented is establishing an educational business unit capable of generating additional income to support operational costs and program development. Another alternative is developing an endowment fund or productive waqf, the proceeds of which can be used sustainably to support educational activities. By implementing a financial independence strategy, Islamic educational institutions can not only reduce their dependence on external assistance but also gain greater flexibility in determining the direction of their institutional development in line with their stated vision and mission.

6). *Lack of Research-Based Policies*

Another fundamental weakness faced by Islamic educational institutions is the lack of managerial policymaking based on educational research findings. In many cases, strategic decisions are often determined by intuition, personal experience, or long-standing habits, rather than based on empirical data analysis and measurable research findings. This approach risks producing policies that are poorly targeted and unresponsive to the dynamics of student needs and developments in the educational environment. As a result, educational institutions struggle to implement targeted innovation and significantly improve service quality.

The implementation of evidence-based management is a strategic step to strengthen the quality of decision-making in Islamic educational institutions. This concept requires that every policy be based on research results, statistical data, and systematic evaluation of the institution's performance. By utilizing empirical evidence, educational managers can formulate strategies that are more effective, efficient, and relevant to both local and global contexts. Furthermore, the implementation of evidence-based management can also strengthen accountability and transparency, as every decision has a scientifically and morally justifiable basis. Therefore, strengthening a research culture within Islamic educational management is a crucial prerequisite for achieving sustainable quality.

4. CONCLUSION

Islamic educational management is currently undergoing a strategic transition, necessitating the contextualization of its foundational traditional values to align with modern demands. This transition necessitates a combination between normative Islamic concepts and pragmatic modern management strategies. The key goals of reform include the digitalization of learning systems, the integration of Islamic values into contemporary government, and the promotion of professionalism among educational human resources. In this context, information technology serves as both a supportive tool and a catalyst, empowering Islamic educational institutions to enhance their accessibility, quality, and competitiveness in the face of intensifying global competition. The exchange process encounters numerous structural and cultural obstacles. Disparities in educational quality, inadequate leadership capabilities, insufficient technology literacy, and a lack of creativity in management represent significant challenges that must be addressed. Resistance to change, frequently arising from a conservative mentality, further impedes the adaptation to contemporary expectations. Consequently, a managerial transformation approach focused on sustainability and contextual significance is essential, ensuring that reforms are not merely trend-driven but reinforce the uniqueness of Islamic education. This methodology aims to create a management system that is adaptive, visionary, and distinctive, capable of addressing the challenges of the global era while preserving the integrity of the underlying Islamic values.

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