

The Role of Islamic Educational Management in Promoting Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education

Samsul Hadi^{1*}, Tomi Apra Santosa², Hasyim Mahmud Wantu³

¹ STIT Palapa Nusantara Lombok, Indonesia

² Akademi Teknik Adikarya, Indonesia

³ IAIN Sultan Amai Gorontalo, Indonesia

Email: samsulhadii038@gmail.com*

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the pivotal role of Islamic Educational Management in fostering inclusive and equitable quality education in accordance with the objectives of Sustainable Development Goal 4. Grounded in the principles of Islamic values such as justice ('adl), compassion (rahmah), and equality (musawah) Islamic educational institutions are uniquely positioned to address disparities in access and learning outcomes. Using a qualitative approach, this research analyzes various management strategies employed by Islamic schools and madrasahs in promoting educational inclusivity, especially among marginalized and underserved communities. The findings indicate that effective leadership, community engagement, and curriculum integration of Islamic ethical values significantly contribute to creating a more inclusive and equitable educational environment. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of policy alignment between national education standards and Islamic educational objectives. This research underscores the need for a transformative management model that harmonizes faith-based values with contemporary educational demands to ensure that no learner is left behind.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi peran penting Manajemen Pendidikan Islam dalam membina pendidikan berkualitas yang inklusif dan adil sesuai dengan Tujuan Pembangunan Berkelanjutan 4. Berdasarkan prinsip-prinsip nilai-nilai Islam seperti keadilan ('adl), kasih sayang (rahmah), dan kesetaraan (musawah) lembaga pendidikan Islam diposisikan secara unik untuk mengatasi kesenjangan dalam akses dan hasil pembelajaran. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, penelitian ini menganalisis berbagai strategi manajemen yang digunakan oleh sekolah dan madrasah Islam dalam mempromosikan inklusivitas pendidikan, terutama di kalangan masyarakat yang terpinggirkan dan kurang terlayani. Temuan-temuan menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan yang efektif, keterlibatan masyarakat, dan integrasi kurikulum nilai-nilai etika Islam secara signifikan berkontribusi untuk menciptakan lingkungan pendidikan yang lebih inklusif dan adil. Lebih jauh, studi ini menyoroti pentingnya penyesuaian kebijakan antara standar pendidikan nasional dan tujuan pendidikan Islam. Penelitian ini menggarisbawahi perlunya model manajemen transformatif yang menyesuaikan nilai-nilai berbasis agama dengan tuntutan pendidikan kontemporer untuk memastikan bahwa tidak ada pelajar yang tertinggal.

1. Introduction

Inclusive and quality education is a key pillar in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 4, which emphasize the importance of ensuring fair and equitable access to education for all individuals without discrimination (Sodikin et al., 2024). This concept not only includes increasing participation in formal education, but also ensuring that all groups of society, including people with disabilities, poor groups, and remote communities, gain meaningful, relevant, and equal learning experiences. UNESCO (2020) emphasizes that inclusive education is not just about placing children from various backgrounds in one classroom, but also requires a comprehensive transformation of the education system, including policies, curriculum, teaching methods, and evaluation of learning outcomes so that all students can develop optimally (Maidugu & Isah, 2024; Masuwd et al., 2024).

Quality education also has a long-term impact on the social, economic, and political development of a nation (Ali et al., 2024; Dewanto et al., 2023; Luciana, 2022). Comprehensive and equitable education can reduce inequality, strengthen social cohesion, and increase economic mobility between generations. According to a World Bank report (2018), every additional year of education can increase an individual's income by up to 10%, which shows how important access to quality education is in empowering communities and accelerating development. Therefore, countries around the world are required to strengthen education governance with an approach that ensures inclusivity and quality, as well as paying attention to the diversity of students' needs in various local and global contexts (Nisa & Aimah, 2024; Hudia et al., 2023).

Muslim-majority countries face significant challenges in terms of gaps in access and quality of education that impact the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG 4 (Maghfiroh & Sugiarto, 2024; Aldhaen, 2023). These inequalities include geographical disparities between urban and rural areas, gender gaps, and limited access to education for vulnerable groups such as children with disabilities and the poor (Palasenda & Salikurrahman, 2025). In some cases, internal conflicts, political instability, and a fragmented education system exacerbate this condition (Wantu et al., 2024); (Oktarina et al., 2021; Hariyadi et al., 2023; Winiasri et al., 2023). For example, a report from the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB, 2019) shows that more

than 30% of school-age children in the member countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) do not receive adequate basic education, and illiteracy rates are still high, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia (Afriyanto & Anandari, 2024).

In addition to access, the quality of education is also a major problem rooted in the lack of professional teaching staff, the lack of continuous teacher training, and the weak evaluation and accreditation system of educational institutions (Hasan, 2021). Curriculums that are not responsive to the needs of the 21st century and low investment in educational infrastructure contribute to the deterioration of the quality of learning (Zulyusri et al., 2023; Zulkifli et al., 2022; Nur & Afif, 2025). According to a report by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2021), many Muslim-majority countries record low scores in basic learning indicators such as literacy and numeracy, which indicates the system's failure in producing competent graduates. Therefore, there is a need for progressive education management reform based on Islamic values and integrated with national policies to tackling this inequality in a systemic and sustainable manner (Uluk et al., 2024; Afriyanto & Anandari, 2024).

Islamic educational institutions have a strategic role in shaping the character, morals, and quality of human resources in Muslim-majority countries (Hasan, 2021). Based on Islamic values such as *monotheism*, *justice*, *mercy*, and *trust*, Islamic education is not only oriented to the cognitive aspect, but also to the spiritual, social, and emotional dimensions of students. In the modern context, Islamic educational institutions—such as madrasas, Islamic boarding schools, and integrated Islamic schools—have developed into important institutions in building an inclusive, competitive, and civilized society (Nur & Afif, 2025). According to Al-Attas (1999), the main purpose of Islamic education is to produce good people (*al-insān al-ṣāliḥ*), that is, individuals who are intellectually and spiritually balanced and able to contribute to the welfare of the ummah (Lestari et al., 2023; Mahrus & Karimullah, 2022).

The management of Islamic education plays a key role in ensuring that these Islamic values are implemented effectively in the education system. Managerial functions such as planning, organizing, mobilizing, and evaluating must be based on the principles of Islamic leadership that are ethical, participatory, and transformative (Mahrus & Karimullah, 2022). Leadership in Islamic

educational institutions is not only tasked with managing resources, but also facilitating the formation of an organizational culture that is inclusive, equitable, and responsive to the needs of students from diverse backgrounds. As stated by Salleh & Ahmad (2009), the effectiveness of holistic Islamic management can encourage the creation of a learning environment that supports academic excellence as well as character building, thereby contributing to the overall improvement of the quality of education (Suryono et al., 2023; Nurtamam et al., 2023); Bachtiar et al., 2023).

Research conducted by Ahmad and Saad (2017) examines the role of Islamic education management in shaping an inclusive school culture in madrasahs in Malaysia. The results of the study show that managerial practices based on Islamic values such as *shura* (deliberation), *ukhuwwah* (brotherhood), and *amanah* (responsibility) contribute greatly to building a fair, collaborative, and open learning environment to the diversity of students (Wheelahan & Moodie, 2017). Principals who apply an Islamic leadership approach tend to be more inclusive in decision-making and proactive in ensuring that all students, including those with weak economic backgrounds, continue to have equal access to and learning opportunities. This research confirms that Islamic education management has the potential to answer the challenges of inclusive education through a transformative and value-based approach (Sattar & Nawaz, 2024).

Another study by Wahab and Mustari (2020) in Indonesia highlights the effectiveness of madrasah management systems in improving the quality of learning and equitable access to education. The study found that the integration of modern management systems and Islamic values has a positive effect on the efficiency of institutional governance, the improvement of teacher competence, and community involvement in education. Madrasahs that develop participatory and value-based management of social justice tend to be more successful in serving the needs of students from diverse backgrounds, including those from disadvantaged areas and minority groups. This research shows that when Islamic values such as justice (*'adl*) and compassion (*rahmah*) are applied systematically in education management, a more inclusive, fair, and quality education system is created. Based on this, this study aims to find out the pivotal role of Islamic Educational Management in fostering inclusive and equitable quality education in accordance with the objectives of Sustainable Development Goal 4.

2. Tinjauan Literatur

a. Islamic Education Management

Islamic Education Management is the process of managing educational institutions based on Islamic values, including planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating in order to achieve holistic Islamic education goals. From an Islamic perspective, management is not only technical-administrative, but also contains spiritual and moral dimensions that direct all educational activities towards the formation of *insan kamil* (perfect human beings). According to Nasution (2016), Islamic Education Management must always be based on sharia principles, such as justice (*'adl*), *amanah*, deliberation, and responsibility as a form of devotion to Allah SWT. With this approach, education management becomes a strategic means to create a religious and productive learning environment. In the era of globalization and the Industrial Revolution 4.0, Islamic Education Management faces challenges in maintaining transcendental values amidst technological developments and social change. Therefore, integration between modern management and Islamic values is needed so that Islamic educational institutions remain relevant and competitive. This integration includes the application of a technology-based management information system for management efficiency, while maintaining spiritual values in organizational culture. According to Suhaimi and Ramli (2020), strengthening Islamic values in the leadership and governance of educational institutions is a key factor in improving the quality and competitiveness of Islamic education in a sustainable manner.

b. Technology In Education

The use of technology in education has revolutionized the way of learning and teaching at various levels, from elementary to higher education. Educational technology not only includes hardware such as computers and tablets, but also includes software, digital platforms, and learning management systems (LMS) that support online and offline learning interactions. According to Bates (2015), the integration of technology in education can increase the accessibility, flexibility, and effectiveness of the learning process if supported by the right pedagogical approach. This allows learning to be more personalized and student-centered, according to the needs and learning styles of each individual. In addition, technology also plays a role in increasing student engagement through interactive learning methods

such as gamification, augmented reality (AR), and learning videos. In the midst of the development of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, digital skills are an inseparable part of the 21st century competencies that students must have. According to Mishra and Koehler (2006), the success of technology integration in education is highly dependent on the readiness of teachers to adopt the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) model, which emphasizes the balance between mastery of material, pedagogy, and technology. Therefore, improving teacher competence in the use of technology is key to transforming education into something adaptive and competitive.

c. Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education

Inclusive and equitable quality education is one of the main pillars of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 4, which emphasizes the importance of providing lifelong learning opportunities for all without discrimination. Inclusive education is not only related to physical access to education, but also includes the dimensions of active participation and acceptance of individual diversity, including children with special needs, minorities, and socially and economically marginalized groups. According to UNESCO (2020), an inclusive and equitable education system can strengthen social cohesion and encourage societal transformation through the optimal development of each individual's potential. In practice, achieving inclusive and equitable education requires systemic reforms that include curriculum, teacher training, evaluation methods, and policies that are responsive to the needs of all learners. The quality of education cannot be separated from equity, because without equity, access to education will not have a significant impact on improving learning outcomes. According to Ainscow (2016), a good education system is one that is able to adapt to the diversity of learners and provide proportional support according to their needs. Therefore, strengthening the capacity of educational institutions in building a culture of inclusion and justice is key to creating truly quality education.

3. Methods

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim of in-depth understanding of Islamic education management practices in promoting inclusive and quality education, as mandated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 4. This approach was chosen because it

allows researchers to explore social realities, Islamic values, and managerial dynamics within Islamic educational institutions. Data collection was carried out through in-depth interview techniques, participatory observation, and documentation, with the main informants consisting of principals/madrasas, teachers, and community leaders who are directly involved in the management of Islamic education. This research focuses on how values such as justice (*adl*), *rahmah*, and deliberation (*shura*) are integrated in managerial policies and practices to support equitable access and quality of education.

Data analysis was carried out using the Miles and Huberman model, namely through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The validity of the data is strengthened through source and method triangulation techniques, to ensure that the findings reflect accurate empirical reality. The research location was purposively chosen in several Islamic educational institutions that have applied the principle of inclusivity and have programs to empower students from marginalized groups. Thus, this research is expected to provide a concrete picture of the strategic contribution of Islamic education management in achieving the SDG 4 targets, as well as offer a managerial model that is adaptive to the local context and Islamic values. The emphasis on transformative managerial practices makes this research relevant in the discourse of educational reform in the Islamic world.

4. Result And Discussion

a. Inclusive Islamic Education Management Practices

Islamic education management has strong roots in the principle of justice (*'adl*), which is the foundation in every aspect of institutional policy, including in the admissions process. Islamic educational institutions that prioritize the value of *'adl* are committed to opening the widest possible access to education without discrimination on the basis of social, economic, gender, or cultural status. In practice, many madrasas and Islamic schools implement a selection system based on the needs and potential of students, not solely based on financial ability or academic achievement. This approach reflects the spirit of the Qur'an Surah Al-Hujurat verse 13, which emphasizes that a person's superiority does not lie in his social identity, but in his piety and contribution to goodness (Davy, 2024).

The implementation of the value of justice in the management of Islamic education is also reflected in efforts to provide scholarships, subsidy programs, and exemptions from education fees for students from vulnerable groups (Sattar & Nawaz, 2024). This shows that inclusivity in Islamic education is not only theoretical, but is manifested in concrete policies that ensure that every child has the same right to a meaningful education. According to the results of research by Wahyudin and Nasution (2021), the application of the *'adl principle* in Islamic education management has been proven to be able to reduce social disparities between students and increase educational participation in marginalized communities. In addition to access policies, Islamic education management also directs attention to the preparation of an inclusive and contextual curriculum (Yu & Leung, 2024). The accommodating curriculum is designed with the diversity of students' backgrounds into account, including differences in learning abilities, social conditions, and local values. Within this framework, Islamic values such as *tawazun* (balance), *tawhid* (unity), and *shura* (participation) become a foothold in the preparation of learning materials and pedagogic strategies. The curriculum includes not only formal scientific aspects, but also spiritual, moral, and social dimensions that encourage the formation of the perfect human being (*insān kāmil*).

This kind of curriculum approach provides space for students to develop their individual potential optimally without having to standardize standards of success. For example, students who have a propensity in the arts or vocational skills are given the same space of expression as those who excel in academics (Leezenberg, 2009). This is in line with the Islamic pedagogical approach that places education as a means of developing the fitrah and uniqueness of the individual, as explained by Ibn Khaldun and Al-Ghazali. In practice, madrassas and pesantren that implement flexible and responsive curricula show significant increases in student participation and active engagement.

Teachers as key actors in the education process play a central role in realizing inclusive and holistic learning. From the perspective of Islamic education, teachers are not only teachers (*mu'allim*), but also educators (*murabbi*) and spiritual guides (*mursyid*). Therefore, the management of Islamic education needs to ensure that teachers are trained not only in pedagogical aspects, but also in building social sensitivity, intercultural skills, and the ability to foster fair and empathetic relationships with all

students. Teacher training oriented towards inclusive education and Islam can strengthen teachers' ability to deal with diversity in the classroom in a positive and constructive manner (Widiana et al., 2018).

Finally, inclusive Islamic education management practices cannot be separated from monitoring and evaluation systems that support justice and sustainability. Evaluations are conducted not only to assess academic achievement, but also to ensure that all students have a fair, comfortable, and meaningful learning experience (Sulistiyani, 2021). In this context, Islamic education not only functions as a means of transferring knowledge, but also as a tool for equitable social transformation. By integrating Islamic values in management, curriculum, and teacher capacity building, Islamic educational institutions can be pioneers in creating a truly inclusive and quality education system in accordance with the mandate of SDG 4. (Yu & Leung, 2024).

b. Integration of Islamic Values in Leadership and Organizational Culture

Leadership in Islamic educational institutions is not merely viewed as an administrative activity, but as a trust that encompasses spiritual and social dimensions. The integration of Islamic values into leadership means instilling the principles of amanah (responsibility), istiqamah (consistency in truth), syura (consultation), and 'adl (justice) in every decision-making process and policy implementation. An Islamic educational leader is responsible not only to their institution but also to Allah SWT and the community they serve. Therefore, Islamic leadership emphasises noble character, exemplary behaviour, and a commitment to creating a learning environment that is just and dignified (Leezenberg, 2009).

In practice, leaders who internalise Islamic values will encourage the creation of an organizational culture that is inclusive, participatory, and humanistic. This organizational culture is built on the principle of ukhuwah (brotherhood), where all members of the institution are viewed as one united community working collaboratively for the common good. This approach creates a harmonious work environment, fosters mutual trust, and reduces internal conflicts (Sulistiyani, 2021). According to Abdurrahman (2020), Islamic educational institutions that integrate the values of ukhuwah and syura into their organizational culture are better able to manage diversity and encourage active

participation from all elements, including teachers, students, and This value inspires all members of the organization to work with integrity, professionalism, and sincere intentions for the sake of Allah (Hudia et al., 2023). In this context, the quality of work is not only measured by results, but also by intentions and processes carried out in accordance with Islamic values. This provides strong spiritual motivation and makes work a form of worship. Islamic leaders must be able to internalise this spirit of *ihsan* into the organizational structure through training, moral development, and setting an example (Saputra et al., 2019). One important aspect in strengthening Islamic values in organizational culture is decision-making based on the principle of *shura* or consultation. In Islamic managerial tradition, decisions are not made authoritatively, but through consultation with various stakeholders. Consultation serves as a means to explore various perspectives, strengthen a sense of ownership, and encourage the involvement of all school members in the management process. This practice indirectly builds Islamic educational democratisation, where the voices of all parties are valued and gathered to achieve the common good (Mahrus & Karimullah, 2022).

Islamic organizational culture also strongly emphasises the value of *tawadhu'* (humility), especially in the relationship between leaders and staff. Islamic leaders are expected not only to be guides but also servants (*khadim*) to the community they lead. By prioritising the ethics of service, leaders build egalitarian and empathetic relationships, which ultimately create strong loyalty and solidarity within the organization (Asnur et al., 2024). According to a study by Salleh and Ahmad (2009), leadership based on the value of humility can improve teachers' work morale and create a school environment conducive to inclusive and fair learning. Overall, the integration of Islamic values in leadership and organizational culture is an important foundation in building Islamic educational institutions that are morally and academically excellent (Lestari et al., 2023). Through this value-based approach, organizations are not only directed towards achieving managerial efficiency and effectiveness but also towards shaping the character and integrity of the entire academic community (Maghfiroh & Sugiarto, 2024). Thus, Islamic education management that integrates Qur'anic and Sunnah values is able to create an inclusive, fair learning environment oriented towards the formation of *insan kamil*, as is the noble ideal of Islamic education (Aldhaen, n.d.).

c. The Impact of Islamic Education Management on Education Quality

Islamic education management is a strategic pillar in determining the quality of education, both from academic, spiritual, and social aspects (Hudia et al., 2023). A managerial system based on Islamic values such as *amanah* (responsibility), *shura* (deliberation), *'adl* (justice), and *ihsan* (optimal work ethics) creates educational governance that is not only efficient, but also ethical and humane. When these values are consistently integrated into educational policies and practices, a learning environment is created that supports the achievement of overall quality of education (Safi'i, 2019).

One of the positive impacts of Islamic education management on the quality of education can be seen in strengthening the character of students. Through a holistic approach that combines cognitive, affective, and spiritual aspects, Islamic education shapes students into knowledgeable and moral individuals. Management that is responsive to the needs of students and based on Islamic values also creates a school culture that supports the moral and academic development of students (Azra, 2015). This distinguishes the Islamic management approach from the conventional system which is often oriented solely on academic results (Masuwd et al., 2024). In addition, the quality of education also depends heavily on the ability of management to empower teachers as agents of change. In Islamic education, teachers are not only positioned as teachers, but also as *murabbi* (coaches) and *uswah hasanah* (good examples) (Nisa & Aimah, 2024). The Islamic management system emphasizes the importance of continuous training and spiritual formation for teachers, so that they are able to internalize Islamic values in the learning process. A study by Yusuf and Nabillah (2021) shows that Islamic schools that implement value-based management have better levels of teacher satisfaction and teaching performance. From an institutional perspective, Islamic education management also has an impact on operational efficiency and accountable governance (Yusron et al., 2024). The principles of *trust* and *mas'uliyah* (accountability) encourage transparency in budget management, strategic planning, and evaluation of educational programs. The involvement of various stakeholders through the principles of *shura* creates a participatory culture that strengthens the legitimacy and sustainability of educational programs (Mukhlisin & Saad, 2020). As a result, educational institutions become more adaptive,

resilient, and able to provide quality services to the community (Sodikin et al., 2024)

Islamic value-based management also encourages innovation in learning strategies and educational services. By taking into account local contexts, cultural values, and diverse student needs, Islamic management is more flexible in developing integrative curriculum, the use of contextual learning media, and pedagogic approaches that build student active participation. The results of research by Rohman and Hidayatullah (2018) show that educational institutions that develop Islamic management models are able to significantly increase student learning engagement and academic outcomes (Zarkasyi, 2017).

Overall, the impact of Islamic education management on the quality of education is not only seen in the academic dimension, but also in character building, institutional governance, and social relations in the educational environment. When Islamic principles are applied consistently in all aspects of management, an inclusive, fair, and quality education ecosystem is formed. In a global context that demands sustainability- and humane-oriented education (SDG 4), Islamic education management can be an alternative model that answers the challenges of the times through a values-based and spirituality approach (Palasenda & Salikurrahman, 2025; Hasan, 2021).

5. Conclusion

Based on the results of the analysis, it can be concluded that Islamic education management has a significant role in realizing inclusive and quality education. The integration of Islamic values such as 'adl (justice), shura (deliberation), amanah (responsibility), and rahmah (compassion) in the leadership and culture of educational organizations is able to create a system that ensures fair access, a learning process that is responsive to the diversity of students, and an overall improvement of the quality of education. These values are the foundation in developing a policy of accepting students without discrimination, an accommodating curriculum, and empowering teachers as agents of social and spiritual transformation.

Thus, Islamic education management has great potential to become a relevant alternative model in supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4), especially in the aspect of equitable distribution and improving the quality of education. The implementation of Islamic principles in management not only strengthens institutional identity, but also makes a real

contribution in responding to global challenges such as access gaps, educational discrimination, and value crises in the world of education. Therefore, institutional capacity building, leadership training based on Islamic values, and multi-sector collaboration are needed to encourage a sustainable, inclusive, and high-quality Islamic education system.

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