



Strengthening the Quality of Islamic Education through Ihsan-Based Management Strategies

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ABSTRACT

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Ihsan-based management; Islamic education quality; Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliyah

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The transformation and increasing demands for quality improvement in Islamic education require a management model that extends beyond structural and administrative orientations to incorporate spiritual and ethical values. Ihsan, as a fundamental Islamic principle, offers a relevant foundation for educational management practices. This study aims to analyze the implementation of ihsan-based management strategies in improving the quality of Islamic education at Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliyah (MDT) Al-Hidayah Pasir Biru, Cibiru District, Bandung City. Employing a qualitative approach with a field research design, data were collected through in-depth interviews with institutional managers and key stakeholders. The data were analyzed thematically based on established indicators of Islamic education quality, including teacher professionalism, curriculum and learning processes, facilities and infrastructure, as well as learning evaluation and assessment. The findings reveal that ihsan-based management is systematically implemented and functions as a managerial ethos that promotes continuous and holistic quality improvement. Core values such as responsibility, trustworthiness, sincerity, and fairness underpin institutional management practices and contribute positively to both graduate quality and public trust. The study implies that ihsan-based management can be operationalized as a sustainable, context-sensitive strategy for enhancing the quality of Islamic education and may serve as a conceptual model for similar Islamic educational institutions.

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic education plays a crucial role in shaping human resources who are intellectually capable, morally upright, and spiritually grounded, which are essential qualities for sustainable social development (Alam & Mohanty, 2023; Kusnanto et al., 2023; Putri et al., 2024). In Muslim societies, Islamic educational institutions are expected not only to transmit knowledge but also to cultivate

ethical awareness and character formation rooted in Islamic values. However, achieving these multidimensional goals largely depends on the quality of educational management. Effective management determines how institutional visions are translated into learning practices, educator professionalism, and public accountability. In the contemporary era, societal expectations toward Islamic education have intensified, particularly regarding transparency, quality assurance, and graduate competence. Studies indicate that institutions with weak management systems struggle to maintain public trust and educational relevance (Ni'am et al., 2025). Therefore, improving Islamic education management is not merely an institutional concern but a societal necessity. Without a strong management foundation that integrates professional standards and spiritual values, Islamic education risks losing its transformative role in addressing moral, intellectual, and social challenges faced by modern society.

Despite its strategic importance, Islamic education management continues to face persistent challenges that hinder quality improvement (Hadi & Masuwd, 2025; Haris, 2024; Khotimah et al., 2024; Sa'diyah et al., 2024). Many Islamic educational institutions operate within limited managerial capacities, inadequate planning systems, and weak evaluation mechanisms. These limitations often result in inconsistent teacher performance, ineffective learning processes, and minimal institutional innovation. Furthermore, management practices are frequently oriented toward administrative compliance rather than long-term quality development (Hasani, 2025; Kulsum & Manshur, 2025; Wahyudi, 2025). As a consequence, educational outcomes do not always align with the moral and intellectual ideals envisioned in Islamic education. Public criticism has emerged regarding the ability of Islamic institutions to respond to contemporary demands, including professionalism, accountability, and competitiveness with general education institutions. This situation reflects a broader problem in society, where Islamic education is sometimes perceived as morally rich but managerially weak. Such perceptions threaten the sustainability and credibility of Islamic educational institutions. Therefore, addressing managerial shortcomings is essential not only to enhance institutional performance but also to restore societal confidence in Islamic education as a holistic and relevant educational system.

Empirical realities in the field demonstrate that Islamic education management practices often remain fragmented and insufficiently value-oriented (Hasanah et al., 2024; Jannah & Rizquha, 2025; Makiyah, 2024; Mukarromah, 2025). Many institutions still conceptualize management as a routine administrative task, focusing on documentation, reporting, and formal compliance with regulations. In practice, this approach neglects the internalization of Islamic ethical principles in daily managerial decisions. Field

observations reveal that educators frequently experience unclear performance standards, limited professional development, and assessment systems perceived as unfair or inconsistent. Learning processes tend to emphasize content delivery rather than meaningful character formation (Nuriyah et al., 2024; Putri et al., 2024; Rusdiah, 2024; Windiasari et al., 2025; Yakin, 2025). Additionally, infrastructure management and learning support systems are often underdeveloped, further affecting educational quality (Dewi, Hikmah, et al., 2025). These conditions indicate that the spiritual values inherent in Islamic education have not been systematically translated into management strategies. Consequently, a gap emerges between Islamic ideals and managerial realities. This phenomenon underscores the urgent need for a management model that integrates spiritual consciousness with professional practice, enabling Islamic educational institutions to function effectively while remaining faithful to their ethical foundations.

Previous studies have explored various approaches to improving the quality of Islamic education management. Latif and Sesmiarni (2024) introduced the concept of Kaizen as a strategy for continuous quality improvement in Islamic educational institutions, emphasizing incremental change and organizational commitment. Mahmudah et al. (2025) examined the integration of Total Quality Management principles with Qur'anic values, highlighting the compatibility between modern management theories and Islamic teachings. Similarly, Yuliyana and Hendrawati (2025) argued that embedding Islamic values within quality management systems strengthens institutional identity and ethical orientation. These studies collectively demonstrate that Islamic values possess significant potential to enhance education quality management. They also affirm that modern management frameworks can be adapted to Islamic contexts. However, most of these works emphasize conceptual alignment rather than practical implementation, leaving questions about how Islamic values function operationally within daily managerial practices (Dewi, Najiburohman, et al., 2025).

Although the existing literature recognizes the importance of Islamic values in education management, several limitations remain. Many studies position these values as normative ideals rather than actionable strategies. Empirical investigations that examine how specific Islamic values are operationalized in institutional management are still limited. Harahap (2022), for instance, discussed ihsan-based organizational culture but did not explicitly connect it to comprehensive indicators of educational quality, such as curriculum management, teacher professionalism, and assessment systems. Moreover, previous research rarely focuses on Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah as a distinct educational context, despite its significant role in community-based Islamic

education. This gap indicates a lack of empirical evidence explaining how *ihsan* can function as a concrete management strategy rather than merely a moral concept. Addressing this gap is essential to develop a contextual, value-based management model that can be applied directly in Islamic educational institutions.

The novelty of this research lies in its empirical examination of *ihsan* as a managerial strategy rather than solely a spiritual or ethical concept. This study positions *ihsan* as an operational ethos that guides planning, implementation, and evaluation within Islamic education management. Unlike previous studies that focus on general Islamic values or imported management models, this research specifically analyzes how *ihsan* informs teacher professionalism, curriculum development, learning processes, infrastructure management, and assessment systems. The focus on Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah further enhances the originality of this study, as this institutional context has received limited scholarly attention. By grounding *ihsan* within measurable indicators of educational quality, this research contributes to the development of a value-based yet practical management framework. Consequently, the study advances the discourse on Islamic education management by bridging the gap between spiritual ideals and managerial practices.

This study is important because it addresses the urgent need for an Islamic education management model that integrates professionalism and spirituality in a balanced and applicable manner. In an era characterized by increasing accountability and quality demands, Islamic educational institutions must demonstrate that spiritual values can enhance, rather than hinder, organizational effectiveness. By operationalizing *ihsan* as a management strategy, this research offers an alternative paradigm that challenges the dichotomy between technical competence and spiritual commitment. The findings are expected to provide practical guidance for educational leaders, policymakers, and practitioners seeking to improve institutional quality without sacrificing Islamic identity. Furthermore, this study contributes to the broader discourse on value-based management, showing that ethical and spiritual principles can serve as drivers of sustainable quality improvement. Thus, the research holds significance not only for Islamic education but also for educational management studies more generally.

Based on the above discussion, this study seeks to answer the question of how *ihsan*-based management strategies are implemented and how they contribute to improving the quality of Islamic education at MDT Al-Hidayah Pasir Biru, Cibiru District, Bandung City. The central argument of this research is that *ihsan*, when internalized as a managerial foundation, can shape a holistic and sustainable culture of quality. This study assumes that integrating *ihsan* into

every aspect of educational management will enhance both academic performance and moral development. By examining managerial practices through the lens of *ihsan*, this research aims to demonstrate that quality improvement in Islamic education is most effective when professionalism and spirituality are treated as inseparable dimensions. Ultimately, this study contributes a contextual and value-driven management model that responds to contemporary challenges while remaining rooted in Islamic principles.

RESEACH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research approach with a case study design. The qualitative approach was selected to enable an in-depth exploration of the meaning, processes, and implementation of *ihsan*-based management strategies within their natural institutional context. A case study design was considered appropriate because the research focuses on a single educational institution that demonstrates distinctive management practices rooted in Islamic values. This design allows for a holistic understanding of managerial phenomena that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measurement. By using a case study, the research seeks to uncover how *ihsan* values are internalized and operationalized in educational management practices, particularly in relation to improving the quality of Islamic education. The approach also facilitates a contextual and interpretative analysis of management strategies as lived experiences of institutional actors.

The research was conducted at Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliyah (MDT) Al-Hidayah Pasir Biru, located in Cibiru District, Bandung City. This institution was purposively selected based on several considerations. First, MDT Al-Hidayah has demonstrated consistency in integrating Islamic values into its management and educational practices. Second, the institution has shown observable improvements in educational quality, particularly in teacher professionalism, learning processes, and public trust. Third, as a Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliyah, the institution represents a form of community-based Islamic education that remains underrepresented in academic research. These characteristics make MDT Al-Hidayah a relevant and strategic site for examining the implementation of *ihsan*-based management in a real educational setting.

Data were collected using qualitative data collection techniques to ensure depth and richness of information. The primary method was in-depth and semi-structured interviews conducted with institutional managers who were directly involved in planning, implementing, and evaluating educational management. Informants were selected purposively to ensure relevance to the research focus. Interview guidelines were developed based on *ihsan* values and indicators of Islamic education quality, including teacher professionalism, curriculum and

learning processes, facilities and infrastructure, and learning and assessment systems. In addition to interviews, document analysis was conducted to examine institutional records, planning documents, and evaluation reports. These documents served as supporting data to strengthen contextual understanding and enhance data triangulation.

Data analysis was conducted using a qualitative thematic analysis model consisting of data condensation, data display, and data verification. Data condensation involved transcribing interview recordings, selecting relevant information, and reducing data according to themes related to *ihsan*-based management and educational quality indicators. The condensed data were then organized and displayed in thematic matrices and narrative descriptions to facilitate pattern identification and interpretation. Data verification was carried out through continuous comparison between data sources, reflection on emerging themes, and confirmation of findings to ensure credibility and consistency. This iterative process continued until a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between *ihsan*-based management strategies and improvements in the quality of Islamic education at MDT Al-Hidayah was achieved.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The results of this study were obtained through in-depth interviews with the administrators of Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah (MDT) Al-Hidayah Pasir Biru, Cibiru District, Bandung City. The focus of the study was directed at analyzing *ihsan*-based management strategies in improving the quality of Islamic education. The indicators of educational quality used in this study are those proposed by Umiarso & Imam Gojali in Ibrahim & Rusdiana (2021), namely teacher professionalism, curriculum and learning process, facilities and infrastructure, and learning and learning assessment.

In general, the findings show that the value of *ihsan* is systematically internalized in institutional management practices and contributes significantly to improving the quality of Islamic education. *Ihsan* is not only understood as an individual moral value, but is also operationalized as a managerial principle that influences the planning, implementation, evaluation, and control of education quality.

Table : 1 Research Findings on Ihsan-Based Management Strategies at MDT Al-Hidayah

Education Quality Indicators	Research Findings
Teacher Professionalism	The implementation of ihsan begins during recruitment through a letter of commitment to service. Teachers are required to demonstrate trustworthiness, itqan, discipline, and responsibility. Evaluation and guidance are conducted periodically.
Curriculum and Learning Process	The curriculum refers to the FKDT Kota and is developed through the local curriculum. It focuses on character building, religious practices, role models, and learning services according to the needs of the students.
Facilities and Infrastructure	Facilities are managed by instilling values of responsibility and care. Learning facilities are utilized and maintained as a form of trust and gratitude.
Assessment of Learning and Teaching	The assessment is comprehensive, covering both academic and non-academic aspects. Honesty, fairness, objectivity, and compassion are the main principles of evaluation.

These findings indicate that the ihsan-based management strategy implemented at MDT Al-Hidayah makes a direct and significant contribution to the holistic improvement of the quality of Islamic education. This strategy is reflected not only in the enhancement of instructional processes but also in the strengthening of institutional culture grounded in sincerity, responsibility, and moral integrity. Through the integration of ihsan values into planning, implementation, and evaluation processes, educational management at MDT Al-Hidayah fosters a learning environment that balances cognitive development with spiritual and ethical formation. Moreover, the consistent application of ihsan-based principles encourages active collaboration among educators, administrators, students, and the wider community, thereby supporting sustainable quality improvement. As a result, the educational outcomes achieved extend beyond academic achievement to include character development, discipline, and a deeper internalization of Islamic values, demonstrating that ihsan-based management serves as a comprehensive framework for enhancing the overall quality of Islamic education.

DISCUSSION

Ihsan-Based Management Strategy as a Response to the Challenges of Islamic Education Quality

This discussion aims to address the main research question regarding how ihsan-based management strategies are implemented and how they contribute to improving the quality of Islamic education at MDT Al-Hidayah. Based on field research findings, ihsan is not positioned merely as a normative ethical value but operates as a strategic managerial framework that guides institutional planning, implementation, and evaluation. This conclusion is supported by in-depth interviews with institutional managers who consistently emphasized trust, responsibility, and sincerity as core working principles. These values influence decision-making processes, leadership styles, and quality assurance mechanisms within the institution, indicating that ihsan functions as an internalized management ethos rather than an external administrative requirement.

From an Islamic philosophical perspective, ihsan is understood as the awareness to perform work with excellence due to the consciousness that Allah SWT continuously observes human actions (Fathurrohman, 2018). The findings of this study reinforce and extend this perspective by demonstrating that ihsan shapes the organizational culture of Islamic educational institutions. This aligns with international research emphasizing that effective educational leadership is rooted in core values internalized by leaders and organizations (Bush & Glover, 2014). Accordingly, ihsan becomes a foundational driver of professional behavior among administrators and teachers. This confirms that the quality of Islamic education is not solely determined by formal systems and procedures but also by the depth of spiritual awareness among managerial actors (Ardaini et al., 2025).

Teacher Integrity and Professionalism: Integrating Spirituality and Quality Management

The findings indicate that teacher professionalism at MDT Al-Hidayah is developed through an ihsan-based management strategy that begins with recruitment and continues through training and performance evaluation. The requirement of a service commitment letter illustrates that moral and spiritual responsibility are considered essential prerequisites for professionalism. Institutional administrators reported that teachers who demonstrate a strong sense of responsibility and sincerity tend to be more adaptable to professional development processes than those who rely solely on technical competence. This suggests that spiritual commitment strengthens professional consistency and performance sustainability.

Theoretically, these findings are consistent with Aprilianto and Rahmawati (2025), who argue that professionalism in Islamic education must integrate spiritual values with professional competence. However, this study

offers a novel contribution by demonstrating that *ihsan* functions as an internal quality control mechanism. Unlike conventional quality management approaches that emphasize external supervision, standardized performance indicators, and compliance-based evaluation (Ni'am et al., 2025), *ihsan* motivates teachers intrinsically to maintain quality and accountability. Consequently, teacher professionalism is redefined not only as technical expertise but also as moral accountability and continuous self-improvement rooted in spiritual awareness. While this approach fosters long-term commitment, it also requires sustained value internalization and consistent leadership guidance.

Curriculum and Learning Process: *Ihsan* as a Principle of Holistic Quality

The discussion of curriculum and learning processes reveals that *ihsan*-based management strategies promote a holistic orientation toward educational quality. The development of local curricula emphasizing manners, religious practices, and exemplary behavior reflects *ihsan* as a principle of delivering the best possible educational service to students. These practices are derived from curriculum designs tailored to the needs and characteristics of santri, demonstrating a contextual and value-driven approach to learning.

These findings align with Yuliyana and Hendrawati (2025), who emphasize that integrating Islamic values into education quality management strengthens students' character formation. However, this study extends previous research by showing that *ihsan* influences not only curriculum content but also the institutional approach to serving students. In this sense, *ihsan* functions as an Islamic value-based service quality framework that complements the Kaizen concept in Islamic education quality management (Latif & Sesmiarni, 2024). Theoretically, this reinforces the argument that the quality of Islamic education cannot be reduced to academic achievement alone but must also encompass spiritual development, moral conduct, and the relational quality between teachers and students.

Facility Management and Assessment: *Ihsan* as a Principle of Ethical Accountability

Findings related to facility management indicate that *ihsan* is manifested through responsibility and care in the utilization and maintenance of infrastructure. This practice demonstrates that *ihsan*-based management fosters ethical accountability that goes beyond administrative compliance. Theoretically, these findings are consistent with the concept of integrated quality management grounded in Qur'anic values, which emphasize trustworthiness, responsibility, and sustainability (Mahmudah et al., 2025). Ethical stewardship of facilities thus becomes an integral component of institutional quality improvement.

In terms of learning and teaching assessment, the study reveals that *ihsan* encourages fair, objective, and coaching-oriented evaluation practices. This

finding is consistent with Burhanudin et al. (2020), who highlight the importance of fairness in Islamic education assessment, while offering additional conceptual insight that *ihsan* serves as the ethical foundation of evaluation systems. Consequently, assessment is no longer perceived merely as a selection or grading mechanism but as a moral and educational process that supports students' holistic development.

The Effectiveness of Ihsan-Based Management and Key Success Factors

An important finding of this study is the perception among institutional managers that *ihsan*-based management strategies are effective in improving educational quality and strengthening public trust. This effectiveness is reflected in the improved quality of graduates and the positive institutional image amid increasing competition among Madrasah Diniyah Takmiliah. These findings reinforce Harahap's (2022) conclusion that *ihsan* plays a central role in building organizational culture within Islamic educational institutions.

Furthermore, this study identifies responsibility as a key *ihsan* value that underpins successful quality management. This contributes theoretically by demonstrating that responsibility functions as a foundational value that nurtures other *ihsan* principles, such as trustworthiness and professionalism. Thus, this research proposes a conceptual refinement suggesting that *ihsan*-based Islamic education quality management should begin with strengthening responsibility as the core of institutional work ethic. In the international context, educational leadership is understood as a value-driven practice shaped by shared meanings and organizational culture (Branson et al., 2014), which is consistent with this study's positioning of *ihsan* as a managerial ethos.

Overall, this study successfully integrates the philosophical foundation of *ihsan*, quality management theory, and empirical field findings into a coherent analytical framework. It fills a significant research gap by providing empirical evidence of *ihsan* as an operational management strategy. However, the study is limited by its focus on a single institution, indicating the need for further research across diverse contexts to test the generalizability of these findings. Nonetheless, this discussion confirms that *ihsan*-based management represents a relevant and contextual approach with strong potential to enrich both theory and practice in contemporary Islamic education quality management.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that *ihsan*-based management at MDT Al-Hidayah serves as a transformative managerial ethos that significantly enhances the quality of Islamic education. The most important finding of this research lies in the insight that spiritual values—particularly responsibility, trustworthiness, and sincerity—can be operationalized systematically within educational

management functions, including teacher professionalism, curriculum and learning process development, infrastructure management, and learning assessment systems. The key lesson drawn from this study is that sustainable quality improvement in Islamic education is most effectively achieved when managerial practices are driven by internalized spiritual awareness rather than solely by formal procedures or external supervision. By positioning ihsan as an intrinsic source of motivation and ethical accountability, this research shows that quality becomes a continuous, self-sustaining process embedded in the daily practices of educational actors.

From a scholarly perspective, this study contributes to the field of Islamic education management by providing empirical evidence that extends existing normative and conceptual discussions on ihsan into a measurable and strategic management framework. The identification of responsibility as a core ihsan value strengthens the theoretical understanding of value-based quality management and complements prevailing structural and technocratic approaches in education management literature. Nevertheless, this study is limited by its focus on a single institutional context, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. Future research is therefore encouraged to involve broader institutional settings, comparative designs, and mixed-method approaches to further validate and refine an ihsan-based Islamic education quality management model that is adaptable across diverse educational contexts.

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