

Managing Islamic-Characteristic Elementary Schools: A Qualitative Study of School Governance, Curriculum, Teachers, Facilities, and Financing in Serang City

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ABSTRACT

This study is motivated by the importance of managing Islamic elementary schools as an effort to improve educational quality comprehensively while maintaining strong Islamic values. The research aims to analyze the management dynamics of five Islamic elementary schools in Serang City, focusing on their curriculum, teacher management, facilities and infrastructure, and school financing. A qualitative approach with a grounded research design was employed in this study. The research sites included SD Islam Al-Azhar, SDIT Al-Izzah, SD Persis, SD Islam Tirtayasa, and SD Muhammadiyah Serang City. Data were collected from principals, teachers, and school committee members through interviews, observations, and document analysis, and were subsequently analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model. The findings reveal that all schools integrate Islamic values into curriculum implementation, teacher management, facility administration, and financial management. However, each school demonstrates a distinct institutional identity, reflected in the educational models adopted by SD Islam Al-Azhar, SDIT Al-Izzah, SD Persis, SD Islam Tirtayasa, and SD Muhammadiyah. These differences are evident in curriculum integration patterns, teacher professional development programs, facility management, financing strategies, and school branding. The researcher concludes that school management at SD Islam Al-Azhar, SDIT Al-Izzah, SD Persis, SD Islam Tirtayasa, and SD Muhammadiyah is implemented in a structured, participatory, and collaborative manner, grounded in Islamic values. This research contributes to the development of Islamic educational management studies, particularly in understanding value-based governance of Islamic elementary schools as a foundation for enhancing quality and institutional sustainability.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is the fundamental pillar that underpins national progress and fosters the achievement of sustainable societal development (Haxhihyseni, Tirana, and de Carvalho 2023). Therefore, education is considered a national development priority, as it plays a vital role in nurturing competent generations capable of contributing to the nation's advancement in the face of various contemporary challenges (Rumakabes, Kempa, and Rumfot 2024). In this context, the education sector continues to undergo transformation to enhance the quality of services across all educational institutions (Zhao, Saidin, and Jaafar 2025). As an institution, education plays a vital role in shaping character, developing competencies, instilling moral values, and equipping learners with the diverse skills required to thrive in 21st-century society (Riani and Ain 2022).

A school is a system composed of various interconnected elements that influence one another. Effective elementary school management is considered essential for ensuring high-quality education. (Donkoh et al. 2023). Therefore, schools need to be managed effectively to achieve optimal educational quality. School quality can reach its highest potential when all key components, including the vision, mission, curriculum, teacher professionalism, learning processes, facilities and infrastructure, evaluation systems, and funding, are managed efficiently and effectively (Ibad 2024). Management is an integral component that cannot be separated from the implementation of education. Without effective management, the educational process cannot operate optimally, making it difficult to achieve educational goals in an effective and efficient manner (Mulyasa, 2017:20). Within the context of school management, the curriculum constitutes a fundamental element of the educational system, representing the learning experiences acquired by students under the supervision and guidance of teachers (Cairns, Weinmann, and Cairns 2021). The school curriculum should be flexible, dynamic, and equitable to adapt to the needs and evolving developments of society. (Kabanda 2021). In addition, teacher management encompasses recruitment, placement, professional development, performance evaluation, and continuous mentoring and support (Heikkila 2021). Another important factor is the availability of facilities, infrastructure, and financial resources, which support the effectiveness of the learning process. The optimal utilization of these resources significantly influences both the learning process and students' learning outcomes (Yangambi 2023)

According to the concept of modern educational management, the improvement of school quality is determined by the ability of educational institutions to manage all available resources effectively. This management is carried out through continuous processes of planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation (Hosang and Katuuk 2021). The implementation of quality management in a planned, systematic, and continuous manner can enhance the effectiveness of school management, improve the quality of educational services, and support the optimal achievement of educational goals (Jariah and Suriansyah 2021). Therefore, school management is regarded as a strategic instrument for achieving high-quality, accountable, and adaptive education that can effectively respond to changing circumstances and maintain strong competitiveness in the era of globalization (Amri 2026). School management plays a crucial role in supporting sustainable development, as it influences policies, leadership, and practices that promote the long-term sustainability of educational institutions (Atthakorn 2024). The better the school management, the more effective the learning process in the school becomes (Zhang 2024).

The importance of strengthening school management becomes highly relevant when viewed in relation to the challenges of educational quality in Indonesia. The results of the 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) indicate that Indonesian students' achievement in reading, mathematics, and science remains below the average performance of countries belonging to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD 2023). In addition, the 2018 PISA data revealed that 41.1% of students had experienced bullying, a figure significantly higher than the OECD average of 22.7%. Indonesia ranked 74th out of 78 participating countries. Students frequently faced various forms of violence, including intimidation, social exclusion, theft of personal belongings,

and even sexual harassment, highlighting the inadequacy of child protection measures within educational environments. (Mayus and Samudra 2024).

The low quality of education is commonly caused by several factors, including ineffective curriculum design, substandard infrastructure, unfavorable learning environments, limited resources, the absence of standardized procedures, and insufficient professional development for staff. To address these challenges, effective management plays a crucial role in improving and maintaining educational quality (Sallis 2002). Efforts to improve the quality of education must be supported by strong school management to create an effective and conducive learning environment that focuses on continuous development and improvement (Atmadja and Purnamawati 2024).

An Islamic elementary school is an educational institution that integrates general academic subjects and religious studies within a comprehensively designed and integrated curriculum (Pratama 2023). Integrated Islamic Schools possess more distinctive characteristics and pursue more specific educational goals (Fauzan Ismael 2022). Several well-known Islamic elementary schools in Serang City include SD Islam Al-Azhar 10, SDIT Al-Izzah, SD Persis, SD Muhammadiyah, and SD IT Tirtayasa. These schools are widely chosen by the community due to their strong educational quality. Based on accreditation data, SD Islam Al-Azhar 10, SDIT Al-Izzah, SD Persis, and SD IT Tirtayasa have received an A accreditation rating (Excellent), while SD Muhammadiyah has obtained a B accreditation rating (Good). The accreditation results indicate that these five Islamic elementary schools have met the eight National Education Standards established in Indonesia (Peraturan Pemerintah 2021).

Effective quality management in Islamic education plays a crucial role in strengthening the sustainability and competitiveness of educational institutions. This can be achieved through the efficient management of resources and information, as well as through institutional responsiveness to global changes (Erika Setyanti Kusumaputri, 2021). According to Silvi Marlina (2026), the integration of Islamic values with modern governance principles constitutes a strategic approach to improving the quality of Islamic education amid contemporary challenges and rapid societal developments. Similarly, Susilowati and Ernawati (2025) emphasize that Islamic values internalized within strategic management can serve as an important foundation for school development that is responsive to societal needs, adaptable to change, and oriented toward the cultivation of students' character.

A number of scholars have examined the management of Islamic educational institutions; however, most previous studies have focused on a single institution or on particular aspects of school management. Munawar (2023), in a study entitled *The Integrated Islamic Education Management Model in Efforts to Improve School Quality*, explored an integrated Islamic education management model aimed at enhancing school quality. Abdul Azis (2024), through the study *Strategic Management in Improving Educational Quality at Sabilina Islamic Elementary School*, investigated the role of strategic management in improving educational quality at an Islamic elementary school. In addition, Nurfadilah et al. (2025), in their study entitled *Implementation of Integrated Islamic School Management at SMPIT Al-Biruni*, examined the comprehensive integration of Islamic values into school management, including the formulation of the school's vision and mission, curriculum development, student character formation, and the management of educational facilities and infrastructure.

Despite these contributions, previous studies have not specifically investigated and compared the management practices of five Islamic-oriented elementary schools in Serang City. Therefore, the novelty of the present study lies in its comparative examination of the management components and dynamics of five elementary schools characterized by distinctive Islamic educational values within the same geographical context. By investigating multiple schools rather than a single institution, this study is expected to provide a broader and more comprehensive understanding of how Islamic-oriented elementary schools organize, implement, and develop their management practices in response to institutional needs and contemporary educational challenges. Accordingly, this study seeks to address the following research question: How do the management dynamics of five Islamic-oriented elementary schools in Serang City evolve and operate?

The objectives of this study are to: (1) examine the planning and implementation of the curriculum; (2) investigate teacher recruitment, professional development, and performance evaluation practices; (3) analyze the management of educational facilities and infrastructure; and (4) examine the planning, implementation, and accountability of school financing.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the advancement of knowledge in the field of Islamic educational management at the elementary school level. Practically, the findings may serve as a valuable reference for school principals, teachers, foundations, and policymakers in their efforts to enhance the quality of Islamic elementary schools.

METHODS

This study employs a grounded theory approach. Grounded theory is a qualitative research method used to describe, analyze, and interpret patterns of behavior, beliefs, and language that emerge within and are collectively shared by a cultural group over an extended period of time (Naamy, 2022:85). Through this approach, researchers can develop explanations or theoretical concepts regarding a phenomenon directly from the process of data collection in the field, based on notes and empirical findings that emerge during observation (Nasution, 2023:67). This study was conducted in five Islamic elementary schools in Serang City, namely SD Islam Al-Azhar 10, SDIT Al-Izzah, SD Persis, SD Islam Tirtayasa, and SD Muhammadiyah. The research sites were selected using purposive sampling, based on the consideration that these schools implement Islamic-based education and possess school management practices that could serve as valuable sources of research data. The research participants consisted of principals, teachers, and school committee members who were purposively selected according to their involvement in school management and administration.

Table 1. Research Locations and Participants

Schools	Participant
SD Islam Al-Azhar 10	The principal, teachers, and the school committee
SDIT Al-Izzah	The principal, teachers, and the school committee
SD Persis	The principal, teachers, and the school committee
SD Islam Tirtayasa	The principal, teachers, and the school committee
SD Muhammadiyah	The principal, teachers, and the school committee

Data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. Structured interviews were conducted with participants to obtain information regarding school management practices. Direct observations were carried out to examine school activities and the educational environment in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the management practices implemented. Document analysis was undertaken by reviewing various school documents, including the school's vision and mission statements, curriculum, work programs, educational report cards, and other supporting documents. Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The analysis process was conducted continuously throughout the research, beginning with data collection and continuing until the completion of the study. To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, several validation strategies were employed. These included data triangulation by comparing findings from interviews, observations, and document analysis; member checking with participants to verify and confirm the research findings; peer debriefing through discussions with colleagues; maintaining an audit trail by documenting all stages of the research process; and providing thick descriptions to present detailed accounts of the research context and the findings obtained.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Findings

The findings of this study are presented based on the main themes identified through the analysis of data collected from five Islamic-characteristic elementary schools in Serang City. These themes were developed in alignment with the research objectives and reflect the key dimensions of school management observed across the five institutions. The analysis highlights both common patterns and distinctive practices in the ways the schools organize and implement their management processes while maintaining their respective Islamic educational characteristics. To provide a concise overview of the findings and facilitate comparison across the research sites, the main themes emerging from the analysis are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of the Main Themes Analyzed in Relation to the Research Objectives Across Five Islamic-Characteristic Elementary Schools in Serang City

Theme	SD Islam Al-Azhar 10	SDIT Al-Izzah	SD Persis	SD Islam Tirtayasa	SD Muhammadiyah
Curriculum Integration	The curriculum combines the national curriculum, the Al-Azhar curriculum, and local content, supporting academic excellence, religious values, character development, and extracurricular enrichment	SDIT Al-Izzah integrates the JSIT, National, Foundation, and local wisdom curricula, enriched by Islamic practices and extracurricular activities that nurture students' interests and talents	The Persis Curriculum integrates the pesantren and national curricula through intracurricular, cocurricular, and extracurricular activities, with pesantren subjects as its distinctive feature	The SD Islam Tirtayasa curriculum integrates religious and national education through intracurricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities, including Qur'anic studies, scouting, sports, arts, and science clubs.	Muhammadiyah Elementary Schools in Serang City integrate the national curriculum with Muhammadiyah values through academic, Islamic, and Muhammadiyah studies, supported by religious programs and extracurricular activities
Teacher Recruitment and Professional Development	The teacher recruitment process is conducted selectively through written examinations, interviews, and micro-teaching assessments. Teacher professional development is carried out through training programs, the sharing of best practices among teachers, and	Teacher recruitment at SDIT Al-Izzah is conducted through a selection process that includes testing, interviews, and micro-teaching sessions. Teacher professional development is supported through training programs, religious mentoring, and	Teacher recruitment at SD Persis involves written tests, interviews, Al-Qur'an assessments, and micro-teaching. Hiring decisions are made by the principal and the Foundation, while professional development	At SD Islam Tirtayasa, teacher recruitment includes a written test, Qur'an reading assessment, teaching practice, and interview. Professional development is supported through training, mentoring, and certification programs,	Muhammadiyah elementary school teachers are selected through pedagogical and religious assessments and interviews. They receive professional training from Majelis Dikdasmen Muhammadiyah, and their performance is monitored by principals through classroom supervision and evaluations of

	supervision by the principal to enhance teaching performance and overall effectiveness.	supervisory activities tailored to the specific needs of the teachers.	is conducted through supervision, training, religious studies, and performance evaluations.	while teacher performance is evaluated through academic supervision by the principal	discipline, attendance, and Muhammadiyah values
Facility and Infrastructure Management	The procurement of facilities and infrastructure at SD Islam Al-Azhar 10 is carried out based on identified needs proposed to the foundation and funded through both the School Operational Assistance (BOS) program and the foundation. The available facilities include 24 classrooms, a laboratory, a school health unit (UKS), a library, a meeting room, toilets, a teachers' room, a principal's office, ablution areas, a cafeteria, a swimming pool, multimedia projectors, CCTV systems, and a mosque.	The planning of facilities and infrastructure is conducted at the beginning of each academic year through a needs assessment carried out by the Vice Principal for Facilities and Infrastructure. The primary sources of funding are the Foundation and the School Operational Assistance Fund (BOS). SDIT Al-Izzah's facilities include 30 classrooms, a mosque, science and computer laboratories, a meeting hall, administrative offices, a school administration room, a cafeteria, a playground, gazebos, and 29 restrooms.	The school's facilities and infrastructure are planned based on teachers' needs, budgeted annually, and funded through the School Operational Assistance Fund (BOS) as well as contributions from parents or guardians. The facilities include 25 classrooms, a hall, 12 restrooms, a school health unit (UKS), a library, a prayer room, the principal's office, a cooperative store, and a teachers' room.	The procurement of facilities and infrastructure is carried out through a needs assessment process and requires approval from the foundation, with funding provided by parents' contributions. The school's facilities include 30 classrooms, a teachers' room, a principal's office, a school health unit (UKS) room, an arts room, two computer laboratories, 32 toilets, a mosque, an assembly hall, and multimedia projectors, which are not yet available in all classrooms.	The procurement of facilities and infrastructure at SD Muhammadiyah is carried out through a needs-based planning process involving the principal, treasurer, and teachers. Funding is sourced from the School Operational Assistance Fund (BOS) and contributions from students' parents or guardians. The available facilities include 11 classrooms, a mosque, two restrooms, a teachers' room, a principal's office, a guest reception room, an administrative office, a library, and a school health unit (UKS).
School Financing and Accountability	Financial planning is conducted through the ARKAS system for BOS funds, while other funding is managed by the foundation. Budgeting	SDIT Al-Izzah's financing plan is prepared annually through teacher meetings. Funding comes from BOS funds and parental contributions. BOS financial	Financial planning at SD Persis is carried out through leadership and annual meetings. The school is funded by BOS	School finances are planned through an annual participatory budget. In 2026, SD Islam Tirtayasa is funded exclusively by parents or	The budget is planned two weeks before the academic year begins. Funding is sourced from BOS and parents' contributions, managed by the school administration.

involves academic and class coordinators, and financial reports are submitted to the Education Office and the foundation. Most school funding comes from the foundation.	reports are submitted to the government and the foundation, while foundation-managed funds are reported directly to the foundation	assistance and students' tuition fees (SPP). Financial accountability is managed by the treasurer and reported to the principal and PC Persis	guardians without BOS support. Financial reports are regularly submitted to the Foundation for accountability and supervision	Financial reports are prepared by the treasurer and submitted to the principal and the city-level Muhammadiyah board.
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3.1.1 Curriculum Integration

The findings indicate that all schools implement an integrative curriculum that combines the national curriculum with an Islamic curriculum. However, the form of integration varies among the schools. At SD Al-Azhar 10, the curriculum consists of the national curriculum, the distinctive Al-Azhar curriculum, and local content. The principal and teachers explained:

"The intracurricular program includes the subjects of Islamic Religious Education and Character Development, Qur'anic Education, Pancasila Education, Indonesian Language, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies (IPAS), Physical Education, Sports and Health (PJOK), Arts and Culture, English, Arabic, Computer Studies, Banten Javanese Language, Pencak Silat, as well as developmental programs consisting of habituation activities, Tilawati, and Tahfidz (PKPSDIA03, PKPGSDIA03). The co-curricular program includes habituation activities such as flag ceremonies, Duha prayer, pledges, Qur'an recitation (tadarus), Tokatsu, Market Day, and the Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children. Meanwhile, the extracurricular program consists of Scouts, Religious Activities, Realistic Mathematics, Science, English, Computer Studies, Basketball, Futsal, Coloring and Painting, Archery, and Music and Dance Arts" (CDPK01).

Based on document study findings, the school implements an integrated curriculum that combines religious and national curricula.

SDIT Al-Izzah integrates the Integrated Islamic School Network (JSIT) curriculum with the national curriculum and the foundation curriculum. According to statements from the principal and teachers:

"The curriculum and learning process at SDIT Al-Izzah integrate the Integrated Islamic School Network (JSIT) curriculum, the national curriculum, the foundation curriculum, and local wisdom (PKPAI01, PKPGAI01, CDPKPAI). Intracurricular subjects include Islamic Religious Education (PAI), the Qur'an, Tahfidz (Qur'anic memorization), Pancasila Education, Indonesian Language, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies (IPAS), Arts and Culture, Islamic Character Development (ICD), Physical Education, Sports and Health (PJOK), Arabic, English, Scouting, Self-Development, Worship Practices, and Islamic Etiquette (PKPAI03, PKPGAI03). The distinctive characteristics of SDIT Al-Izzah lie in its curriculum integration and the Islamic Character Development (ICD) program. The Morning Assembly (Majelis Pagi) serves as an innovative habituation activity aimed at strengthening students' moral character and spirituality. Co-curricular activities are implemented through daily habituation practices such as praying, performing Duha prayer, Qur'anic recitation (tadarus), and congregational prayers (PKPAI04). The implementation of students' memorization and character development is supervised by teachers, with each teacher mentoring approximately 10 to 15 students, thereby ensuring the effectiveness of the activities. The school also offers a variety of extracurricular activities

based on students' interests and talents, including horseback riding, swimming, archery, and other programs" (PKPAI04, PVMGAI04)

The document study findings indicate that the school adopts an integrated curriculum that combines both religious and national curricula.

SD Persis designs its curriculum by integrating the Islamic boarding school curriculum with the national curriculum. The principal and teachers explain:

"The intracurricular program includes Islamic boarding school subjects such as the Qur'an, Hifdzun (Qur'an memorization), Akhlak (Islamic ethics), Tauhid (Islamic theology), Tarikh (Islamic history), Tafsir (Qur'anic interpretation), Fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), Worship Practices, Usul al-Fiqh (principles of Islamic jurisprudence), Arabic Language, Imla (Arabic dictation), Nahwiah (Arabic grammar), and Shorof (Arabic morphology) (CDKPPS). The cocurricular program is implemented through habituation activities such as praying, performing Duha prayer, Qur'an recitation (tadarus), memorization activities, proper dress practices, Clean Friday activities, and congregational Dhuhr prayer (PSNIPS03, PSNIGPS03). The extracurricular program includes the Science Club, Math Club, Hifdzul Qur'an, Speech and Debate, Karate, Chess, Silat, Futsal, Painting, Music, Handicrafts, Scouting, School Health Unit (UKS), and Little Doctors Program" (CDKPPS01).

Based on observation data and document studies, a distinctive characteristic of SD Persis is the integration of the Islamic boarding school (pesantren) curriculum, which includes subjects such as Nahwu (Arabic grammar) and Sharaf (Arabic morphology).

SD Islam Tirtayasa develops its curriculum through an integrative approach that combines the religious curriculum with the national curriculum. The principal and teachers explained:

"The curriculum is collaboratively designed by the curriculum team and is evaluated in accordance with institutional needs and ongoing developments (PKP01). The intramural curriculum structure includes Islamic Religious Education subjects (Aqidah, Fiqh, Quran and Hadith, and Islamic History), Indonesian Language, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, English, Physical Education, Sports and Health, Banten Language, Pencak Silat, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) (PKP03). Co-curricular activities include tahfidz (Quran memorization) and tilawah (Quran recitation), additional academic programs such as science and literacy olympiads, as well as skills- and arts-based activities such as traditional dance and Islamic music (PKP04). Extracurricular activities include Scouting, Quran Memorization (Tahfidz Al-Quran), Dance and Music Arts, Futsal, Volleyball, and Science and Computer Clubs (PKP05)."

The results of the curriculum document analysis indicate that SD Islam Tirtayasa integrates religious and national curricula, as well as local content.

The curriculum of SD Muhammadiyah Serang City integrates the Muhammadiyah curriculum with the national curriculum. The principal and teachers explained:

"A distinctive feature of the Muhammadiyah curriculum is ISMUBA, which includes the subjects of Al-Islam, Muhammadiyah Studies, and Arabic Language (PKPMD01, PKPMD12). The subjects classified as intracurricular activities are Al-Islam, Pancasila Education, Indonesian Language, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies (IPAS), Arts and Culture, Physical Education, Sports and Health (PJOK), Arabic Language, Muhammadiyah Studies, Tahfidz (Qur'an memorization), BTQ (Reading and Writing the Qur'an), and Tapak Suci martial arts (CDKP01). Co-curricular activities are implemented through religious habituation programs, including Duha prayer, Qur'an recitation (tadarus), and congregational Dhuhr prayer. Every Friday, a muhadoroh (public speaking session) or religious sermon is conducted, involving students from Grades 4, 5, and 6. The muhadoroh is delivered in three languages: Indonesian, Arabic, and Bantenese Javanese (PKPMD04). Extracurricular activities include BTQ (Reading and Writing the Qur'an), Hifzul Wathon, Degung, Angklung, Pianica, Drum Band, and the Qur'an Club" (PKPMD05).

The document analysis revealed that SD Muhammadiyah implements a distinctive curriculum by integrating the national curriculum with Al-Islam and Muhammadiyah studies, which serve as its unique educational characteristics.

3.1.2 Teacher Recruitment and Professional Development

The research findings indicate that all schools regard teachers as a strategic factor in achieving educational goals. Therefore, teacher recruitment and professional development are conducted selectively and on an ongoing basis. According to the principal and teachers, the teacher recruitment process at SD Islam Al-Azhar is carried out through the following procedures:

“The teacher selection process begins with a written test and an interview conducted by the foundation, covering teaching competencies, religious understanding, as well as personality and moral character. Subsequently, prospective teachers participate in a microteaching test at the school, involving teachers from the relevant subject area, and a Qur’an reading test organized by the foundation. The results of all selection stages are then jointly reviewed by the foundation and the principal to determine the final decision (PGSDIA03, PGGSDIA03). Teacher professional development is supported through training programs provided by the central YPI Al-Azhar Foundation, the Department of Education, independent online learning activities such as Google Education programs, and the sharing of best practices among colleagues (PGSDIA04, PGGSDIA04). The principal conducts regular academic supervision to evaluate teachers’ performance. The assessment covers teachers’ competencies in professional practice, personality and moral character, social competence, and pedagogical competence” (PGSDIA08, PGGSDIA08).

Based on document analysis, teachers receive an annual performance appraisal report from the principal.

SDIT Al-Izzah implements a comprehensive teacher selection process. The principal and teachers stated:

“The teacher recruitment process at SDIT Al-Izzah begins with the school submitting its staffing needs to the Foundation. Subsequently, the Foundation announces vacancies, receives application documents via email, and conducts a selection process consisting of written tests, interviews, and microteaching sessions involving relevant teachers. Candidates who meet the required qualifications proceed to the job interview stage, while the final hiring decision is determined by the Foundation (GAI03, GGAI03). To support teacher professionalism development, the school conducts a needs assessment to identify areas for competency improvement. Training programs are provided on a scheduled basis as well as according to specific needs. Religious development activities are carried out through weekly liqo (teacher religious study sessions), Qur’an recitation submissions, and the Bina Pribadi Islam program, which is mandatory for all teachers. In addition, at the beginning of each academic year, professional development training is organized with resource persons from JSIT and the Department of Education (GAI04, GGAI04). Furthermore, the principal conducts teacher performance evaluations every semester through clinical supervision, academic supervision, and observations of teachers’ involvement in various school activities. This process utilizes a teacher performance assessment instrument developed by the school. Teacher performance reports are issued at the end of each academic year” (GAI08, GGAI08).

Document analysis showed that the school provides teachers with performance evaluation results in the form of teacher performance report cards as evidence of their professional performance.

At SD Persis, the teacher recruitment process emphasizes the alignment of candidates’ academic competencies with the school’s needs, as well as their mastery of Islamic sciences. The principal and teachers explained:

"Teacher recruitment at SD Persis is conducted by a selection committee consisting of senior teachers, the curriculum division, and the boarding school affairs division. The selection process includes a written test, an interview, a Qur'an recitation test, and a micro-teaching assessment. The final decision is determined by the selection committee, involving both the principal and the foundation (PGPS03, PGGPS03). Teacher professional development is supported through supervision by the principal, regular religious study sessions, teacher training programs conducted at the beginning of each academic year, and evaluation meetings held during Monday and Friday morning briefings (PGPS04, PGGPS04). The principal evaluates teachers through monthly supervision and provides direct feedback to the teachers being supervised" (PGPS08, PGGPS08).

Teacher management at SD Islam Tritayasa is carried out systematically. Based on interviews with teachers and the principal, it was explained that:

"Teacher recruitment is conducted through a rigorous selection process consisting of a written examination, a Qur'an reading test, a teaching demonstration, and an interview, with consideration given to pedagogical competence, professional competence, and religious capabilities. The teacher selection committee involves the foundation, the principal, and teachers (PG01, PGG03). Teacher inputs at SD Islam Tirtayasa are drawn from candidates who have undergone a selective recruitment process, prioritizing quality and professionalism to maintain and enhance the quality of education (PG01). Teacher professionalism is developed through training, mentoring, certification programs, and competency development based on Islamic values (PKG04, PGG04). The principal evaluates teacher performance through administrative reviews, classroom observations, and academic supervision. In addition, the principal conducts incidental classroom visits to monitor the teaching and learning process" (PKG08, PGG08).

At SD Muhammadiyah, the teacher recruitment process is carried out systematically. The principal and teachers stated:

"The teacher recruitment process includes pedagogical and religious competency tests, as well as interviews to assess teaching readiness and understanding of Muhammadiyah values and principles. The results are announced one day after the tests. The selection process is conducted by the school, finalized by the principal, and the official appointment is determined by the foundation (PGMD03, PGGMD03). Professional development for teachers at Muhammadiyah Elementary Schools is carried out through various training programs and workshops organized by the Department of Education, as well as internal coaching and development programs provided by the Muhammadiyah Primary and Secondary Education Council (Majelis Dikdasmen Muhammadiyah) (PGMD04, PGGMD04). To evaluate teacher performance, Muhammadiyah Elementary Schools utilize an e-performance system (e-kinerja). In addition, teacher performance is assessed based on attendance, discipline, daily moral conduct, and the implementation of Muhammadiyah religious practices and values in everyday life (PGMD08, PGGMD08)."

The results of the document analysis indicate that SD Muhammadiyah Serang City has not yet established a teacher report card format.

3.1.3 Facility and Infrastructure Management

The management of facilities and infrastructure in the five schools is carried out through a needs-based planning process involving various stakeholders. However, there are differences in facility capacity, which are influenced by student enrollment numbers and sources of funding. The procedures

for managing facilities and infrastructure at SD Islam Al-Azhar, based on information provided by the principal and teachers, are as follows:

"The planning and procurement of facilities and infrastructure are based on the needs proposed by teachers and the school committee. The facilities and infrastructure department, together with the principal, identifies these needs and submits them to the foundation for further action (PSPSDIA01, PSPGSDIA01). The procurement and maintenance of facilities and infrastructure are funded through the School Operational Assistance (BOS) fund; however, the primary source of funding comes from the foundation's budget (PSPSDIA02, PSPGSDIA02).

Based on the observation results, the facilities available at SD Islam Al-Azhar 10 include 24 classrooms, 1 computer laboratory, 1 science laboratory, 1 school health unit (UKS) room, 1 library, 1 meeting room, 25 toilets, 3 teachers' rooms, 1 principal's office, 100 ablution taps, a school canteen, a swimming pool, 24 projectors (one in each classroom), 24 CCTV cameras (one in each classroom), and 1 mosque.

The management of facilities and infrastructure at SDIT Al-Izzah is planned prior to the beginning of each new academic year through a work meeting involving the principal, teachers, the school committee, and the foundation. The principal and teachers explained:

SDIT Al-Izzah plans its facilities and infrastructure at the beginning of each academic year. The needs are identified and mapped by the Vice Principal for Facilities and Infrastructure, reported to the foundation, and managed through routine maintenance (SPAI01, SPGAI01). The procurement of facilities and infrastructure is funded by both the Foundation and the School Operational Assistance (BOS) funds (SPAI02).

Based on the results of observations and interviews, SDIT Al-Izzah has 30 classrooms, 1 mosque, 1 science laboratory, a meeting hall, a computer laboratory, 29 toilets, an administrative office, a meeting room, an administrative staff room, a canteen, a playground, and gazebos.

The management of facilities and infrastructure at SD Persis is planned according to the school's needs. According to the principal and teachers:

"The planning of facilities and infrastructure is carried out based on teachers' needs, which are collected by the facilities and infrastructure department and subsequently submitted to the principal and treasurer for inclusion in the school's annual budget plan (PSPPS01, PSPGPS01). The procurement and maintenance of facilities and infrastructure are funded through the School Operational Assistance Fund (BOS) and contributions from parents or guardians of students" (PSPPS02, PSPGPS02).

Based on observations and interviews, the school has a total of 25 classrooms, of which 22 are in use and 3 are unused. There is 1 hall/meeting room used for prayer activities, 12 toilets, 1 school health unit (UKS) room, 1 library, 1 mosque, 1 principal's office, a cooperative store, and a teachers' room.

The management of facilities and infrastructure at SD Islam Tirtayasa is carried out through needs identification and deliberative discussions. According to the explanations provided by the principal and teachers:

"The procurement of facilities and infrastructure is initiated through a needs assessment, budget planning, and submission to the foundation (PSPTA01, PSPGTA01). Funding for facilities and infrastructure is provided through financial contributions from students' parents or guardians, which are administered by the foundation" (PSPGTA02, PSPTA02).

Based on observations, the school currently has the following facilities: 30 classrooms, 1 teachers' room accommodating 45 teachers, 1 principal's office, 1 school health unit (UKS) room, 1 arts room, 2 computer laboratories, 32 student toilets, 1 mosque, and 1 hall. Some classrooms are equipped with permanently installed projectors, although not all classrooms have them yet.

The management of facilities and infrastructure at SD Muhammadiyah is carried out through needs-based planning. The principal and teachers explained that:

"The procurement of facilities and infrastructure is carried out through needs identification, planning, and implementation processes involving the principal, treasurer, and teachers (PSPMD01, PSPGMD01). The procurement and maintenance of facilities and infrastructure are funded through School Operational Assistance (BOS) funds and contributions from parents or guardians" (PSPMD02, PSPGMD02).

Based on observations, the facilities available at Muhammadiyah Elementary School include 11 classrooms, a mosque, 2 toilets, 1 teachers' room, a principal's office, a guest room, an administrative office, a library, and a school health unit (UKS), which is currently under renovation

3.1.4 School Financing and Accountability

The findings indicate that educational financing is a crucial aspect of ensuring the sustainability of school programs. Schools have developed financing mechanisms that involve both government funding and community participation, although the proportions vary. At SD Islam Al-Azhar 10, educational financing is sourced from parents' contributions and the School Operational Assistance Fund (*Bantuan Operasional Sekolah*—BOS). The principal and teachers explained:

"Financial planning is carried out by the principal and the treasurer through the School Activity and Budget Plan Application (ARKAS) for BOS funds, while other needs are submitted to the foundation. The planning process involves field coordinators and class coordinators to identify and map the school's needs (PPSDIA01, PPGSDIA01). Financial reporting is conducted according to the source of funding. BOS funds are reported to both the education office and the foundation, whereas funds provided by the foundation are reported directly to the foundation. Financing needs that cannot be covered through BOS funds are borne by the foundation" (PPSDIA05, PPGSDIA05).

The Committee explained:

"The principal and the foundation coordinate with the school committee whenever there are school programs. The committee manages funds for school activities related to students' programs and activities. Committee funds are sourced from the foundation's funds." (PPKSDIA01)

SDIT Al-Izzah discusses financial planning in meetings held prior to the beginning of the new academic year. The principal and teachers explained:

"The financial planning of programs at SDIT Al-Izzah is conducted through meetings held before the start of each new academic year, involving all teachers (PAI01, PGAI01). The school's funding comes from the School Operational Assistance Fund (BOS) and parental contributions, which are collected through annual enrollment fees and monthly tuition payments (PAI02, PGAI02). Financial reports concerning BOS funds are submitted to both the government and the foundation. Meanwhile, financial reports related to foundation funds are submitted to the foundation itself" (PAI05, PGAI05).

The committee explained:

"The committee is involved in the management of funding for student activities at the school" (PAIkom).

Financial planning at SD Persis is conducted through leadership meetings involving the principal, branch management board members (PC administrators), various divisions, and the treasurer. According to information provided by the principal, teachers, and the school committee:

"Budget planning is carried out through a leadership meeting involving the principal, branch management committee members (PC administrators), department coordinators, and the treasurer. The outcomes of the leadership meeting are subsequently discussed in the general meeting held at the beginning of the academic year, involving all members of the school community (PPPS01, PPGPS01). The funding sources of SD Persis come from the School Operational Assistance Fund (BOS) and students' tuition fees (SPP) (PPGPS02, PPPS02, PPPSkom02). Financial reports are prepared by the treasurer, consisting of separate BOS and SPP treasurers, with support from the daily treasurer. Financial accountability reports are submitted to the principal and presented during leadership meetings to the Mudir Am as well as the Persis Branch Management Committee (PC) at the sub-district level" (PPPS05, PPGPS05).

The Persis Elementary School Committee explained:

"The funding sources of Persis Elementary School come from the School Operational Assistance Fund (BOS) and from monthly tuition fees or contributions paid by students' parents/guardians." (PPPSkom02).

SD Islam Tirtayasa differs from other Islamic schools. In 2026, SD Islam Tirtayasa does not receive BOS funding; instead, its educational expenses are financed through contributions from students' parents or guardians. The principal and teachers explained:

School financial planning is carried out through the participatory preparation of an annual budget, taking into account operational needs, learning activities, and facility development (PPTA01, PPGTA01). SD Islam Tirtayasa manages funds solely from parents or guardians and does not receive School Operational Assistance (BOS) funding (PPTA02, PPGTA02). Financial reports are submitted to the foundation (PPTA05, PPGTA05).

The school committee explained:

"The school committee is involved in the management of student activity funds at the school. The school committee funds are provided by the foundation" (PPTAkom05).

Budget planning at SD Muhammadiyah is funded through the School Operational Assistance Fund (BOS) and parents' contributions. The principal and teachers explained:

"Financial planning is prepared two weeks before the beginning of the new academic year through a work meeting" (PPMD03, PPGMD03). The sources of funding for Muhammadiyah Elementary School come from the BOS fund and parents' tuition fees (SPP). Both funding sources are managed by the school administration to support the implementation of educational activities (PPMD01, PPGMD01).

The school committee further stated:

"The financial reports are prepared by the treasurer and submitted to the principal as well as directly to the Muhammadiyah city-level management" (PPMDkom05).

3.1.5 A Distinctive Islamic Identity and Strong School Branding

Each school has its own distinct institutional identity: 1) SD Islam Al-Azhar 10: A school that emphasizes *adab* (Islamic manners and character), *tahfidz* (Qur'an memorization), and Tokatsu (special activities), 2) SDIT Al-Izzah: Focuses on Islamic Character Development (ICD), with Tahfidz and bilingual class programs, 3) SD Persis: Integrates the Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) curriculum with Tahfidz education., 4) SD Islam Tirtayasa: Emphasizes the integration of Islamic values and character building, 5) SD Muhammadiyah: Implements the ISMUBA curriculum (*Al-Islam, Kemuhammadiyah, and Arabic Language*) and the Hizbul Wathan scouting program.

3.1.6 Management Challenges

The general challenges faced by the five Islamic-character elementary schools in Serang City include the continuous growth of Islamic schools, which has intensified competition among them. This situation presents a challenge for each Islamic-character school to continuously innovate in order to become a preferred choice for the community. Changes in the curriculum and government policies require schools to adapt and respond flexibly to ensure they remain relevant to contemporary developments. Furthermore, advances in technology and information demand that Islamic-character elementary schools continuously improve the quality of their human resources, as they constitute the main pillar of the school management system. The rapid development of technology and communication also brings negative impacts, creating challenges for schools in preserving local culture through their curricula. In addition, the pace of change has become a major challenge for Islamic-character elementary schools to continuously enhance good school governance so that they can remain relevant and emerge as schools of the future.

3.2 Discussion

The findings demonstrate that the five Islamic-characteristic elementary schools in Serang City share a common management orientation in which Islamic values are integrated into curriculum development, teacher management, facilities and infrastructure, financing, and daily school culture. This pattern indicates that Islamic values function not merely as symbolic or normative attributes but as operational principles that shape institutional decision-making and educational practices. Such a management approach is consistent with the view that effective school management requires the systematic integration of institutional resources, leadership, curriculum, personnel, and financial management to achieve educational quality (Donkoh et al., 2023; Mulyasa, 2017). It also supports Marlina and Ritonga's (2026) argument that integrating Islamic values with principles of good governance provides a strategic foundation for strengthening the quality of Islamic education. Similarly, Susilowati and Ernawati (2025) emphasize that Islamic values embedded within strategic management can support school effectiveness, adaptability, and character development.

Curriculum integration emerged as one of the most prominent similarities across the five schools. Each institution combines the national curriculum with a distinctive Islamic curriculum and reinforces this integration through intracurricular, co-curricular, extracurricular, and religious habituation activities. This finding reflects the concept of Islamic schools as institutions that integrate general education and religious education into a unified learning framework (Pratama, 2023). Nevertheless, curriculum implementation differs according to institutional identity. SD Islam Al-Azhar 10 incorporates the Al-Azhar curriculum, SDIT Al-Izzah adopts the JSIT framework and Islamic Character Development program, SD Persis maintains a strong *pesantren* orientation, SD Muhammadiyah implements ISMUBA, while SD Islam Tirtayasa develops a more adaptive integration of Islamic education, character development, and local needs. These variations confirm that an effective curriculum should remain flexible and responsive to institutional and societal contexts (Kabanda, 2021). They also demonstrate that Islamic schools can preserve their religious identity while adapting curriculum content to contemporary educational demands.

Teacher management represents another important area of convergence. All five schools employ selective recruitment processes that assess both professional competencies and religious qualifications, followed by continuing professional development through training, supervision, mentoring, religious development, and performance evaluation. This supports the notion that teacher management involves not only recruitment and placement but also sustained professional development and evaluation (Heikkila, 2021). The emphasis on religious competence further distinguishes Islamic school management from conventional personnel management because teachers are expected to function simultaneously as educators, professional practitioners, and role models of Islamic values. Differences

in teacher development mechanisms, however, reflect the organizational networks supporting each institution, such as YPI Al-Azhar, JSIT, Persis, and Muhammadiyah.

The management of facilities and financing also demonstrates a combination of common managerial principles and contextual variation. All schools employ needs-based planning and involve multiple stakeholders, including principals, teachers, foundations, committees, and treasurers. This participatory approach is consistent with good school governance, in which accountability, stakeholder involvement, and effective resource utilization contribute to educational quality (Atmadja & Purnamawati, 2024). Adequate infrastructure is particularly important because the availability and effective use of educational facilities can influence learning processes and student performance (Yangambi, 2023). However, differences in financial capacity and funding sources affect the availability of facilities across schools. Most institutions combine School Operational Assistance (*Bantuan Operasional Sekolah* [BOS]) with foundation or parental contributions, whereas SD Islam Tirtayasa, at the time of the study, relied primarily on parental funding. These differences illustrate how institutional resources and foundation support shape management strategies and development priorities.

Overall, the findings suggest that there is no single uniform model of effective Islamic elementary school management. Instead, effective management emerges from the ability of each institution to integrate Islamic values with modern management principles while adapting to its organizational identity, available resources, community expectations, and educational challenges. This interpretation is consistent with Kusumaputri et al. (2021), who emphasize organizational resilience and responsiveness to change in Islamic educational institutions, and with Atthakorn (2024), who highlights adaptive educational management as essential for institutional sustainability. Thus, the distinctive contribution of this study lies in demonstrating comparatively that Islamic values provide a shared governance foundation across schools, while organizational affiliation and contextual conditions generate different management models. This finding extends previous single-institution studies (Abdul Azis, 2024; Munawar, 2023; Nurfadilah et al., 2025) by showing that Islamic educational management is simultaneously value-based, context-sensitive, and institutionally diverse.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Islamic-characterized elementary schools in Serang City implement an integrated management system grounded in Islamic values across their curriculum, teacher management, facilities and infrastructure, and school financing. Although these schools share similar educational objectives, each institution applies these values through distinct characteristics and management strategies that reflect its organizational identity. These findings confirm that Islamic values serve not only as a normative foundation but also as an operational guideline in school governance. From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the field of Islamic educational management by highlighting the role of Islamic values in shaping the management practices of elementary schools. Practically, the findings may serve as a reference for school principals, foundations, and educational administrators in developing integrated, value-based management systems to enhance educational quality.

This study is limited to five Islamic elementary schools in Serang City and employs a qualitative approach; therefore, the findings cannot be generalized broadly. Furthermore, the study does not directly measure the impact of school management practices on student learning outcomes. Future research is therefore recommended to involve a broader geographical scope and to examine the relationship between Islamic school management, school quality, and student learning outcomes.

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