

Islamic Education Learning Management in Creating Religious Culture in Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools

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Abstract

This systematic literature review analyzes the management of Islamic Religious Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) learning in Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools (*Sekolah Dasar Islam Terpadu*/SDIT) in Indonesia as a strategic mechanism for constructing substantive religious culture amid the challenges of globalization and secularization. Employing thematic content analysis of sources from Scopus, Google Scholar, DOAJ, and institutional repositories (2010–2025), the study synthesizes evidence on how religious culture is constructed through habituation practices (such as congregational prayers and *tadarus*), the benefits of PAI learning management (including strengthened discipline and emotional resilience through optimized resource use), and key challenges (such as deficits in teacher training, digital distractions, and gaps in *Merdeka* Curriculum integration). The findings show that structured PAI management functions—planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling—serve to bridge *sharia* principles with modern pedagogy, fostering holistic character formation while addressing tendencies toward exclusivism and responding to infrastructural constraints through solutions such as

blended learning, professional development workshops, and parental collaboration. Theoretically, the study advances Islamic education discourse by hybridizing a *tamhid*-based habitus with contemporary educational models; practically, it offers policy-oriented insights for SDIT leaders and for Indonesia's Ministries of Religious Affairs and Education. The review recommends that future empirical research validate these conclusions using mixed-methods designs in diverse institutional contexts to assess the long-term impact of PAI learning management on students' religious identity.

Keywords: Learning Management; Islamic Religious Education; Religious Culture; Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools; Systematic Literature Review

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam/PAI*) in the era of globalization faces complex challenges in instilling a religious culture among the younger generation. Amidst the tide of secularization and the influence of popular culture that dominates the lives of young children, educational institutions are required to integrate Islamic values holistically to shape a sustainable religious character (Rahmad, 2025). Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools (*Sekolah Dasar Islam Terpadu/SDIT*) as a modern education model emerged as a response to this need, by combining the national curriculum and an integrated Islamic-based approach (Rusdiana, 2024). However, the success of SDIT in realizing a religious culture depends on effective learning management, which includes planning, implementation, evaluation, and development of resources (Widayati, 2024). This study explores how the management of Islamic religious education learning in SDIT can be a strategic instrument for building a religious culture that is not only ritualistic, but also substantive and contextual.

Religious culture refers to the patterns of behavior, values, and norms embedded in the daily life of the school community, where religion is central to moral and spiritual orientation (Majidah, 2018). In the context of SDIT, religious culture is realized through collective worship practices, integration of Qur'anic values in non-religious subjects, and the creation of a learning environment that supports piety (Wulandari, 2024). However, a national survey shows that only 45% of students in Islamic schools demonstrate a deep understanding of religious values, due to a lack of adaptive learning management to the dynamics of children (Nurhasanah, 2024). This phenomenon creates a gap between the

vision of Islamic education and the reality of implementation, so that an in-depth analysis of managerial factors is needed.

Management of Islamic education (PAI) learning involves a systematic approach that includes four main functions: curriculum planning based on religious competencies, organizing teacher resources and facilities, implementing interactive teaching strategies, and outcome-based evaluation (Jayadi et al., 2024). This management is unique because it must bridge the gap between the Merdeka Curriculum standards and Islamic educational principles, such as monotheism and noble morals (Suyudi & Putra, 2024). Previous research highlighted that weak learning management often results in students memorizing verses without understanding their essence, so that religious culture becomes a mere formality (Khoiri, 2024). Therefore, management optimization is the key to transforming school culture (Sugianto, 2024).

In Indonesia, Integrated Islamic Schools have developed rapidly since the 2000s as an alternative to modern Islamic education that integrates science, technology, and religion (Sukhoiri, 2022). Since 2014, there have been more than 1.000 Integrated Islamic Schools across the country, with an increase of 15% per year (Wahyuningsih & Budiyo, 2014). The central problem in this study is the inefficiency of Islamic religious education learning management in SDIT, which hinders the realization of an optimal religious culture. Key questions include: (1) What is the PAI learning management model in SDIT? (2) What factors hinder and support the formation of a religious culture? (3) What strategies are effective in realizing it? This ineffectiveness is evident from the low participation of students in extracurricular religious activities and the lack of transfer of knowledge to everyday behavior. This condition reflects the urgency of learning management reform to align the SDIT vision with the demands of the Independent Curriculum, which emphasizes holistic character development.

The management of Islamic Education (PAI) learning linked to religious culture has been widely researched. The research from Susilawati et al. (2022) at SMPIT Khoiru Ummah Rejang Lebong shows that good Islamic Education management, including the habituation of religious culture such as greetings, congregational Dhuha prayers, and *tadarrus* the Qur'an, has succeeded in forming students' noble character through extracurricular activities. Dewi and Istikomah (2025) conducted research that PAI management has a significant impact on students if it can be implemented and integrated into the religious

culture at school. A similar study by researchers at Datopara University, Palu, namely Darwis et al. (2025), confirms that the development of culture-based Islamic Religious Education can strengthen religious identity in implementing the theory of pluralism in Indonesia, because learning is more contextual and relevant to the social conditions of society. Research from Muslim et al. (2023) added that the implementation of PAI management, combined with teachers' enthusiasm for religious culture in integrated Islamic schools, effectively brings religious values to life daily. Supriadi et al. (2024) highlight the integration of PAI-based literacy in Islamic elementary education, which supports religious culture through contextual learning management strategies. This study, compared to the various studies mentioned above, presents significant differences, making it a valuable reference for understanding Islamic Religious Education (PAI)-based learning in elementary schools.

The central problem in this study is the inefficiency of Islamic religious education learning management in Islamic elementary schools (*Sekolah Dasar Islam Terpadu/SDIT*), which hinders the realization of an optimal religious culture. Key questions include: how to construct a religious culture in integrated SDIT, what are the benefits of PAI management in realizing a religious culture in SDIT, and what are the challenges and solutions for Islamic religious education learning management in Indonesian SDIT. The benefits of this study include theoretical contributions in the form of enriching the literature on Islamic education management and practical contributions in the form of recommendations for SDIT principals and policymakers. Specifically, these results can guide the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology in developing Islamic religious education management training modules. This study limits its scope to SDIT in urban areas of Indonesia, focusing on core learning management aspects (rather than general administrative ones). Broader implications offer insights for religious education in other Muslim countries.

METHODS

This study applies a library research or systematic literature review (SLR) approach to comprehensively analyze the management of Islamic Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam/PAI*) learning in realizing a religious culture in Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools (SDIT) (Kusumastuti & Khoiron, 2021). This design was chosen to synthesize empirical evidence from relevant primary and secondary literature, identify theoretical gaps, and

formulate an innovative management model without primary data collection, with a focus on the 2010-2025 publication period to capture the development of the Independent Curriculum and contemporary SDIT.

The literature search procedure was conducted systematically through six primary databases: Scopus, Google Scholar, DOAJ, and various university repositories. Secondary data analysis used a thematic content analysis approach, which included descriptive coding (identifying management themes: planning, organizing, actuating, controlling) (Rahmadani, 2024), interpretive coding (causal relationships with religious culture), and narrative synthesis to formulate an integrated conceptual framework (Safrudin et al., 2023). Methodological validity is achieved through triangulation of sources (national/international journals, government policies).

RESULTS

Islamic Education Management

Islamic Education Management is a branch of management science that focuses on the management of educational institutions based on Islamic values, such as madrasas, Islamic boarding schools, and Islamic schools. This approach integrates sharia principles with modern management theory to achieve holistic educational goals, encompassing aspects of faith, sharia, and morals (Faozi, 2024). Historically, Islamic Education Management evolved from the tradition of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, which emphasized the leadership of kyais (Islamic clerics) as a charismatic management model. Today, Islamic education management faces the challenges of globalization, where educational managers must balance the national curriculum with the Islamic vision of *rahmatan lil alamin* (blessing for the universe) (Kompri, 2018).

The theoretical basis of Islamic Education Management is rooted in the Quran and Hadith, such as QS Al-Jumu'ah: 9-10, which emphasizes education as collective worship, as well as the concept of tawhid, which is the foundation of integrated management (Marhani et al., 2025). Islamic management theories from thinkers such as Al-Ghazali and Ibn Khaldun add dimensions of ethics and social justice, differing from the more rational-instrumental secular management of the West (Ichsan et al., 2023). In the Indonesian context, MPAI is influenced by the National Education System Law No. 20/2003, which requires religious education, so managers must adopt a hybrid model: sharia-compliant with

national competency standards. In-depth analysis shows that this imbalance of foundations often leads to conflicts between institutional autonomy and state regulation.

The functions of Islamic educational management include planning (*tadbir*), organizing (*tansyiq*), implementation (*tanfidz*), and supervision (*muraja'ah*), in accordance with the Islamic management cycle. Planning involves a vision and mission based on *maqasid sharia*, such as preserving religion and reason (Gusriadi & Hartutik, 2025). The organization emphasizes a hierarchical structure with a *muhtasyib* (sharia supervisor) to ensure halal accountability. Implementation focuses on integrated teaching, while supervision uses tauhid-based KPI indicators, such as increasing student *ihsan*. Case studies in modern Islamic boarding schools demonstrate that this function is effective when supported by technology, although it is often hampered by resistance from traditional cultures (Thahir, 2014).

Leadership in Islamic education management is transformational, combining the caliph (leader as a substitute for Allah) with servant leadership in the style of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. The ideal leader is *qadha'* (authoritative) and *rahmah* (loving), who can motivate through example rather than formal authority (Ichsan, 2019; Ichsan et al., 2021; Sholeh & Ichsan, 2025). In Indonesia, the leadership model of the *kyais* at the Gontor Islamic boarding school exemplifies this with a system of student independence (Fatihah, 2018). However, critical analysis reveals weaknesses: charismatic dependency is vulnerable to succession, so competency-based leadership training is needed to face the digital era.

Human resource management in Islamic education emphasizes teachers as spiritual educators, with standards of brotherhood and sincerity. Recruitment is based on religious competence and professionalism. Effective strategies include career development based on collective *ijtihad* and non-material incentives such as spiritual recognition. A SWOT analysis reveals strengths in ideological loyalty, but weaknesses in the quality of modern pedagogy (Das & Halik, 2022).

The Islamic education management curriculum adopts an integrated curriculum approach that combines religious and general knowledge, in accordance with MUI fatwa No. 4/2012. Managers are responsible for designing the competency-based curriculum (KTSP) with 70% religious content, including memorization of the Qur'an and noble morals. Innovations such as blended learning are integrated for 21st-century relevance, but often face infrastructure challenges. In-depth evaluations using data triangulation: Sharia

testing, behavioral observations, and stakeholder feedback, have improved student outcomes by up to 15% in high-performing institutions.

Islamic education management faces challenges such as the secularization of the national curriculum, extreme radicalization, and digital disruption. In Indonesia, cases of intolerance in madrasas demand risk management based on religious moderation (Tobroni, 2024). The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated online transformation, but weakened spiritual bonds. A PESTEL analysis indicates political factors (Ministry of Religious Affairs policies) and technological factors (AI for personalized learning) as drivers, while social factors such as urbanization are eroding traditional values (Chew, 2021). A holistic solution requires collaboration with multiple stakeholders to ensure sustainable quality education.

Religious Culture in Educational Institutions

Religious culture in educational institutions refers to the patterns of spiritual values, norms, and practices embedded in daily school life. In Indonesia, this context is increasingly relevant given the Pancasila principle of religious harmony, where educational institutions such as madrasahs or faith-based schools serve as the primary forum. In-depth analysis shows that this culture not only shapes students' identities but also influences social dynamics and academic achievement (Nasution, 2024). Through an ethnographic approach, researchers such as Geertz in the study of Javanese culture illustrate how daily rituals create communal cohesion, despite the potential to give rise to resistance in the era of secularization.

Theoretically, religious culture is based on Bourdieu's concept of habitus, where religious practices become unconscious dispositions that shape student behavior (Parasian, 2020). In Islamic educational institutions, for example, an integrated curriculum with the values of monotheism strengthens the internalization of religion as cultural capital. Previous research has confirmed that schools with a strong religious culture tend to have better levels of discipline than public schools (Muspiroh, 2018). However, critics from a Foucauldian perspective see it as a form of panoptic discipline, where moral surveillance through religious teachers limits individual autonomy.

The implementation of religious culture is manifested in routines such as regular religious study groups, celebrations of religious holidays, and a sharia-based dress code. In modern Islamic boarding schools, *muhadharah* (recitation of the Koran) and *tadarus* (recitation

of the Koran) activities develop religious literacy as well as speaking skills (Farida, 2025). Data indicate that students in madrasas experience an increase in work ethic due to this culture (Siswogo, 2021). The challenge arises when integrating with the national curriculum, where the allocation of time for religious studies often clashes with the demands of STEM competencies, requiring innovations such as blended religious-digital learning.

The most prominent positive impact is holistic character development, where students internalize values such as noble character and tolerance. A case study at the State Islamic University (UIN) Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang showed a decrease in bullying cases thanks to the morality study program (Huzeini, 2023). Religious culture also increases mental resilience; a meta-analysis of research findings found a positive correlation between the frequency of religious services and students' emotional resilience during the pandemic (Indasari et al., 2020). The metaphor of a deeply rooted tree illustrates how religious foundations maintain stability amidst the storms of globalization.

However, religious culture has the potential to create exclusivism, where students from minority backgrounds feel marginalized. In monofaith-based schools, incidents of subtle discrimination, such as moral judgments based on non-conventional appearance, were reported by the National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM) (2024). Furthermore, overemphasis on rituals can stifle creativity, as evidenced by UNESCO research on rigid religious curricula that suppress innovation. Contemporary challenges include digital radicalization, where social media platforms reinforce extreme interpretations within school culture.

To optimize this, educational institutions need to adopt inclusive approaches, such as interfaith dialogue programs and inclusive religious competency-based curricula. Government policy, through the 2022 Ministerial Regulation on Education and Culture, encourages this by strengthening Religious and Character Education (Wiranata, 2024). Further recommendations include teacher training in critical-religious pedagogy, data-driven evaluation to measure cultural impact, and collaboration with AI for digital educational content based on religious values. Therefore, religious culture is not merely a legacy but a catalyst for sustainable educational progress.

DISCUSSION

Construction of Religious Culture in Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools

The construction of a religious culture in Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools (SDIT) involves a systematic process of developing Islamic religious values integrated into the daily routines, curriculum, and social interactions of early childhood students. This approach aims to create a religious habitus through habits such as congregational prayer and prayer before learning, as outlined in research at SDIT Al Rahbini, which emphasized teacher commitment to supervision and evaluation. This construction is based on the school's vision of *Ablus Sunnah wal Jama'ah*, where the principal leads a team to plan programs that involve all members of the school community (Habibah & Fardani, 2022).

Planning for the construction of a religious culture begins with the identification of core values such as monotheism and morals, formulated jointly by the principal, curriculum representative, and teachers. At SDIT, this step includes establishing activities such as the habit of greeting, shaking hands, and smiling, as well as a school slogan that reinforces religious identity. Research shows that this collaborative planning ensures mutual agreement, so that these values are effectively internalized in the learning environment (Amiyah & Subiyantoro, 2020).

Practical implementation is realized through morning routines such as congregational Dhuha prayer, short surah recitation, and almsgiving, which are consistently applied in various Islamic elementary schools (SDIT). A study at SDIT Surya Buana Malang revealed that this process shapes character through daily observation and guidance, not only in the classroom but also outside of formal interactions. Integration with the 2013 Curriculum enriches learning with religious elements, such as sermons and commemorations of Islamic holidays (Krisanti, 2015).

Internal support, such as the principal's commitment and the cooperation of the school community, are key pillar of this structure. At SDIT, student engagement and teacher innovation, including collaboration with parents, strengthen this culture, as evidenced by observations in schools implementing the S7 program and religious motivational slogans (Amiyah & Subiyantoro, 2020). External factors, such as the community environment, are also supportive, although they require close organization from the leadership.

The impact on student character development includes improved discipline and learning ethos, with research showing a positive correlation between the frequency of

religious activities and the emotional resilience of elementary school-aged children. This construction at Islamic elementary schools like Al Rasyid instills religiosity through the management of principals who are adaptive to the era of disruption. As a result, students experience a holistic internalization of Islamic boarding school values (Andesta, 2024).

Challenges in construction include potential resistance from modern students or an imbalance with STEM academic competencies. Sociological research has found that while congregational prayer and hand-kissing are effective, over-emphasizing rituals can stifle creativity if not balanced with critical pedagogy. At SDIT, digital radicalization is a new risk that requires adaptation (Riswan & Patappa, 2025).

Comparisons with traditional madrasahs show that Islamic elementary schools (SDIT) are more structured with an integrated model, similar to Islamic junior high schools (SMP IT) that implement an organized religious system. Comparative analysis indicates SDIT's superiority in the socio-emotional dimension, consistent with data from a study of religious character based on spiritual activities. It reflects the adaptation of Islamic boarding school values to the modern context (Bali & Susilowati, 2019). Strategic recommendations include developing an inclusive curriculum with interfaith dialogue and data-driven evaluation, such as that implemented in Islamic elementary schools (SDIT) to measure cultural impact. The government, through the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation, encourages this, with suggestions for teacher training in religious-digital pedagogy to optimize sustainable development (Sari et al., 2025).

The Benefits of Islamic Education Management in Religious Culture in Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools

Islamic Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) management at Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools (SDIT) effectively builds a religious culture through structured planning that integrates the values of monotheism and morality into the daily curriculum. This planning function includes the development of programs such as congregational prayer and *tadarus* (recitation of the Koran), which enhance the quality of Islamic education by balancing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor skills. As a result, students experience a holistic internalization of Islamic values, as seen at SDIT Al Firdaus, where parental support strengthens implementation (Kasmarang et al., 2025).

Human resource organization is a key benefit, with principals and PAI teachers trained to create an active and religious learning environment. At Cahaya Islam Papua Elementary School (SD Tahfidzul Qur'an), this management optimized infrastructure, resulting in a 30% increase in student discipline through team coordination. This approach ensures efficiency and reduces wasted time and energy, in accordance with the principles of the Qur'an and Hadith (Syarhani, 2022).

Islamic Education (PAI) management directives encourage student participation in extracurricular activities such as sermons and almsgiving, which reinforce religious culture as a way of life. Research shows that this directive at SDIT produces a generation of Quranic students with balanced characters, supported by regular monitoring from the leadership. The benefits are evident in the reduction of negative behaviors such as bullying, thanks to targeted moral development (Kasmarang et al., 2025).

Continuous monitoring and evaluation ensure the sustainability of religious culture, with indicators such as Quran memorization and worship ethos. At SDIT Iqra' 1, Islamic Religious Education teacher workshops produced a curriculum that maintains spiritual-moral balance and enhances students' emotional resilience in an era of disruption. This process effectively achieves the goals of Islamic education, in accordance with Islamic-based management principles. The financial benefits of PAI management are realized through budget optimization for religious programs, which attracts community and parental support. Studies at SDIT show that this approach produces students with high character, with supporting factors such as the school's early religious study group (*Majelis Taklim*). This efficiency reduces external dependency while enriching the school's culture (Muzakkiyati, 2017).

The overall improvement in educational quality has had a significant impact, with Islamic Religious Education (PAI) management integrated with the Independent Curriculum producing students who excel in social and emotional aspects. Data from institutions such as SDIT Al Firdaus confirms the improvement in educator quality through evaluation strategies, which impacts academic and religious achievement. It aligns to create faithful caliphs (*khalifah fil ardh*) (Kasmarang et al., 2025).

Challenges such as diverse student backgrounds are addressed through inclusive management, which enriches religious culture with tolerance. Research emphasizes that adaptive supervision transforms obstacles into opportunities, as in Tangerang with a local-

Islamic approach. Long-term benefits include the sustainable development of noble character (Arsyla, 2025). Strategically, Islamic Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam*/PAI) management at SDIT recommends collaborating with digital technology to strengthen religious culture, such as using a *tabfidz* (memorization) app. This integration, supported by the Minister of Education and Culture's Regulation, ensures future relevance while maintaining the essence of integrated Islam. As a result, SDIT has become a model for global character education.

Challenges and Solutions for Islamic Education Learning Management in Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools

The management of PAI learning in Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools (SDIT) faces a major challenge: a lack of professional teacher training, leading to unpreparedness in integrating the Independent Curriculum with Islamic values. Research at elementary schools (SDN) shows that PAI teachers often lack continuous development, resulting in monotonous and unengaging learning for early childhood students. It is exacerbated by limited supporting facilities, such as the lack of digital media for Quran memorization (Ritonga, 2025). Limited technological infrastructure and digital skills among educators are crucial issues, particularly in remote areas, where PAI teachers still rely on traditional methods. Studies highlight that many teachers are reluctant to learn technology because they perceive it as complicating matters, resulting in PAI learning lagging behind the Industrial Revolution 4.0. Public skepticism toward Islamic institutions also adds to financial pressures and the recruitment of qualified human resources (Probowati et al., 2025).

The first solution is to improve ongoing training programs for PAI teachers, including workshops on the Independent Curriculum (*Kurikulum Merdeka*) and developing digital competencies through blended learning. The research recommends attractive incentives and adequate facilities to motivate teachers in Islamic elementary schools (SDIT). This approach has proven effective in building holistic professionalism. Strategies for strict internet monitoring, such as teacher mentoring and blended learning with educational videos from authentic religious sources, have successfully addressed digital distractions. In public junior high schools, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers implemented interactive quizzes and discussions to boost student motivation, a model that could be adapted to

Islamic elementary schools. Collaboration with parents through religious study groups strengthens external oversight (Basarrudin, 2025).

Comprehensive Islamic Education (PAI) quality management, encompassing inclusive curriculum planning, human resource development, and a culture of quality assurance, is a long-term strategic solution. Doctoral research emphasizes regular evaluation to effectively integrate e-learning technology in Islamic elementary schools (SDIT). This approach transforms challenges into opportunities for innovation in integrated Islamic education in the future (Amin, 2025).

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that effective management of Islamic Education (*Pendidikan Agama Islam/PAI*) learning in Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools (*Sekolah Dasar Islam Terpadu/SDIT*) serves as a pivotal instrument for constructing a substantive religious culture, yielding significant benefits such as enhanced student discipline, emotional resilience, and holistic character development through structured planning, resource organization, and continuous evaluation. Despite persistent challenges—including inadequate teacher training, digital distractions, infrastructural limitations, and curriculum integration gaps with the Merdeka Curriculum—these are addressable via targeted solutions like professional development workshops, blended learning technologies, parental collaborations, and inclusive quality assurance frameworks. Theoretically, this synthesis enriches Islamic education management discourse by bridging sharia principles with modern pedagogy, while practically informing SDIT principals, policymakers, and the Ministries of Religious Affairs and Education in crafting adaptive training modules and policy reforms. Future research should employ empirical mixed-methods studies in diverse Indonesian contexts to validate these models and explore longitudinal impacts on religious identity amid globalization.

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