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## Strategic Management and Competitiveness of Islamic Educational Institutions: A Systematic Literature Review of Global Trends

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### ABSTRACT :

The academic anxiety underlying this study stems from the persistent gap between the ideal aspiration of Islamic educational institutions to achieve global excellence and the reality of their limited institutional competitiveness. Many institutions remain administratively oriented and have not yet adopted adaptive strategies in response to digitalization and global transformation. This study aims to systematically examine the relationship between strategic management and the competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions within the context of global trends. Using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), this study analyzes thirty national and international scholarly sources published between 2021 and 2025 through thematic analysis and conceptual synthesis. The findings indicate that strategic management serves as a conceptual foundation for strengthening governance, developing human resources, and fostering curriculum innovation grounded in Islamic values and the principles of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*. The integration of spiritual values and institutional professionalism contributes to the development of sustainable competitive advantage. The study concludes that the integration of strategic management and Islamic values provides a strategic basis for developing Islamic educational institutions that are excellent, adaptive, and responsive to global dynamics.

**Key words:** *Strategic management, Institutional competitiveness, Global trends*

## INTRODUCTION

Strategic management is a fundamental approach that guides organizations in achieving long-term goals through planning, implementation, and continuous evaluation. Wheelen and Hunger define it as a systematic process that ensures all organizational components move in alignment with a shared vision.<sup>1</sup> An effective strategy enables institutions to build sustainable competitive advantage by optimizing internal resources while remaining responsive to external changes.<sup>2</sup> In Islamic educational institutions, strategic management is not only a technical managerial tool but also a framework grounded in Islamic values such as *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, positioning strategy as both a governance mechanism and a moral responsibility.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dina Okta Egi Priatin and Humairoh, "Kupas Tuntas Teori Whelen Dan Hunger Dengan Metode Kualitatif," *Mantra: Jurnal Manajemen Strategis* 1, no. 1 (2023): 17–25.

<sup>2</sup> Fajar Pasaribu et al., *Manajemen Strategi: Teori, Implementasi Dan Evaluasi* (Serasi Media Teknologi, 2025); Endi Rochaendi et al., "Reconceptualizing Educational Information Management for Strategic Reform in Primary Education," *Tarbawi: Jurnal Keilmuan Manajemen Pendidikan* 11, no. 02 (2025): 341–52.

<sup>3</sup> Finy Muslihatuz Zahro, "Manajemen Strategis Dalam Pengembangan Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Berbasis Pesantren," *Unisan Jurnal: Jurnal Manajemen Dan Pendidikan* 4, no. 2 (2025): 21–30.

Islamic educational institutions are increasingly required to demonstrate global competitiveness, particularly in response to demands for innovation, accountability, and institutional excellence.<sup>4</sup> However, many institutions still operate in an administrative pattern and have not fully implemented strategic leadership, curriculum innovation, human resource development, digital transformation, and stakeholder partnerships as intentional competitive strategies. The gap between expectation and reality reflects the distinction between *das sollen* (the ideal vision of competitive Islamic institutions) and *das sein* (the current condition marked by limited resources, managerial constraints, resistance to change, and insufficient strategic direction). These challenges demonstrate that competitiveness cannot be achieved solely through institutional labeling or religious identity but requires structured and evidence-based strategic management.

The spiritual mandate of Islamic education strengthens the urgency of strategic management by shaping educational goals toward producing individuals who are intellectually competent and morally grounded. Institutional success is therefore assessed not only through accreditation status or student enrollment but also through the institution's ability to integrate managerial rationality with Islamic ethics. Contemporary Islamic education scholarship highlights that competitive advantage should emerge from value-based institutional identity supported by measurable, adaptive, and future-oriented strategies rather than imitating secular models of institutional management.<sup>5</sup>

Global trends, such as digital transformation, the paradigm of Society 5.0, shifting labor market expectations, and the rise of international quality assurance frameworks, require Islamic educational institutions to adopt strategic frameworks that are adaptive, technology-enabled, and aligned with global standards while remaining rooted in Islamic values. Ariska, Kurahman, and Rusmana highlight the importance of integrating technology with human values, requiring Islamic education to strengthen digital literacy, critical thinking, and cross-institutional collaboration.<sup>6</sup> These shifts show that Islamic educational institutions increasingly need strategic management models that are adaptable, ethically grounded, and responsive to global trends.<sup>7</sup>

This study is structured into three analytical focuses: (1) strategic management and institutional competitiveness in Islamic education; (2) the relationship between strategic management and institutional competitiveness based on existing literature; and (3) global trends

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<sup>4</sup> H Ahmad Tantowi, *Pendidikan Islam Di Era Transformasi Global* (Kendal: PT. Pustaka Rizki Putra, 2022).

<sup>5</sup> Siti Nurhasanah et al., "Bridging the Gap: A Systematic Review of Deep Learning Pedagogy for Indonesia's Curriculum Reform," *Tarbawi: Jurnal Keilmuan Manajemen Pendidikan* 11, no. 02 (2025): 277–92.

<sup>6</sup> Mutiara Ariska, Opik Taupik Kurahman, and Dadan Rusmana, "Transformasi Manajemen Peserta Didik Di Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Pada Era Society 5.0," *IHSAN: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 3, no. 1 (2025): 138–48.

<sup>7</sup> Yesi Puspita et al., "Andalas University Branding Strategy: Institutional History Identification in Building Identity as an Entrepreneurial Campus," *Jurnal Ranah Komunikasi*, 2025, 27–37.

and their implications for the strategic development of Islamic educational institutions. This research contributes to the development of Islamic education management by integrating modern strategic management theories with Islamic values and by offering a conceptual framework relevant for institutional practice. The urgency of this study lies in the need to establish strategic patterns that are ethical, adaptive, and sustainable to strengthen the global competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions.

## Methods

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to examine the relationship between strategic management and the competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions within the context of global trends.<sup>8</sup> The SLR approach was chosen because it enables a structured and comprehensive mapping of existing knowledge, facilitates the evaluation of empirical findings, and supports the identification of theoretical gaps relevant to the field of Islamic education management. This method also ensures that the synthesis of information is conducted transparently and systematically.<sup>9</sup>

Data sources consisted of thirty national and international scholarly publications, including accredited national journals, international journals, conference proceedings, and academic books published between 2021 and 2025. The literature search was carried out using multiple academic databases such as Google Scholar, DOAJ, and ResearchGate, using keywords including strategic management, Islamic education competitiveness, Islamic school management, and global trends in education. The inclusion criteria covered studies that addressed managerial strategies in Islamic educational institutions, the integration of Islamic values in educational governance, and research that discussed global influences on Islamic schooling. Publications that lacked conceptual relevance, contained purely descriptive analysis without strategic implications, or focused on non-Islamic educational contexts were excluded.<sup>10</sup>

The review process followed three main stages: identification, screening, and synthesis. The identification stage involved selecting literature based on titles and abstracts aligned with the study focus. Screening was conducted by reading the full text of selected articles to ensure relevance and methodological suitability. The synthesis stage included organizing and categorizing findings into three key thematic areas: strategic management concepts in Islamic education, the

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<sup>8</sup> Listiyani Siti Romlah, Latiful Wahid, and Rahmad Purnama, "Manajemen Strategis Kurikulum Di Era Digital: Systematic Literature Review," *Didaktika: Jurnal Kependidikan* 13, no. 001 (2024): 1057–72.

<sup>9</sup> Ari Riswanto et al., *Metodologi Penelitian Ilmiah: Panduan Praktis Untuk Penelitian Berkualitas* (PT. Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia, 2023).

<sup>10</sup> Romlah, Wahid, and Purnama, "Manajemen Strategis Kurikulum Di Era Digital: Systematic Literature Review."

relationship between strategic management and institutional competitiveness, and global trends influencing Islamic educational governance.<sup>11</sup>

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, relationships, and conceptual linkages across the selected literature. Through this approach, the study categorized findings into three analytical domains: (1) planning and implementation of strategic management in Islamic educational institutions; (2) value-based competitiveness enhancement; and (3) institutional adaptation to global developments. The validity of the review findings was strengthened through cross-checking between sources and comparison with established strategic management theories such as the Balanced Scorecard and Total Quality Management.<sup>12</sup>

The reliability and credibility of the findings were maintained through triangulation of literature, comparing insights from various national and international contexts. Researcher reflexivity was applied to minimize bias during interpretation and synthesis. Overall, the methodological approach provided a strong foundation for generating meaningful and practical conclusions for the development of strategic management in Islamic educational institutions.<sup>13</sup>

## Result

### Strategic Management and Institutional Competitiveness

Strategic management is generally defined as a comprehensive process of formulating, implementing, and evaluating cross-functional decisions to effectively achieve an organization's long-term objectives. Wheelen and Hunger explain that strategic management encompasses a systematic process involving environmental analysis, strategy formulation, strategy implementation, and outcome control. Strategic management is both a science and an art used to formulate, implement, and evaluate strategies in order to attain long-term organizational goals.<sup>14</sup>

An effective strategy creates sustainable competitive advantage through the efficient utilization of internal resources and responsiveness to external dynamics. In the context of Islamic education, the concept of strategic management serves a dual function, namely as an instrument for institutional efficiency and as a moral mechanism for safeguarding Islamic values amid global competition.<sup>15</sup> The conceptual development of strategic management demonstrates a paradigm shift from an administrative orientation toward adaptive systems that emphasize the integration of

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<sup>11</sup> Mike Nurmalia Sari, Nelvia Susmita, and Al Ikhlas, *Melakukan Penelitian Kepustakaan* (Pradina Pustaka, 2025).

<sup>12</sup> Andi Sulistio, Sulistyorini, and Agus Zaenul Fitri, "Konsep, Model, Dan Implementasi Manajemen Strategik Dalam Meningkatkan Kualitas Pendidikan Islam Di MAN 4 Kediri," *International Conference on Islam, Law, and Society (INCOILS) Conference Proceedings 2024*, 2024, 1–28.

<sup>13</sup> Ahmad Zain Sarnoto, *Manajemen Pendidikan Islam: Integrasi Nilai Spiritual Dan Inovasi Institusional* (Takaza Innovatix Labs, 2025).

<sup>14</sup> Yanto Ramli and Dwi Kartini, *Manajemen Strategik Dan Bisnis* (Bumi Aksara, 2023).

<sup>15</sup> Pasaribu et al., *Manajemen Strategi: Teori, Implementasi Dan Evaluasi*.

vision, mission, and performance-based control. The evolution of this concept is summarized in Table 1 below.<sup>16</sup>

**Table 1.** The Historical Development of Strategic Management Concepts

Basic Financial Planning	Forecast-Based Planning	Externally Oriented Planning	Strategic planning	Strategic Management
1950-an	1960-an	1970-an	1980-an	1990 s/d sekarang
Focus on annual budget preparation; short-term orientation.	Planning based on projected trends; beginning use of forecasting data.	External environmental analysis (competitors, technology, regulations).	Vision, mission, long-term goals; emergence of strategic planning documents.	Cyclical process of formulation → implementation → evaluation; more adaptive.

These historical developments show that strategic management has evolved into a dynamic system oriented toward a continuous cycle of strategy formulation, implementation, and evaluation. In Islamic educational institutions, the principles of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, preserving religion, life, intellect, lineage, and wealth, serve as ethical foundations in every stage of planning and strategy implementation.<sup>17</sup> The application of strategic management within Islamic institutions requires a balance between modern professionalism and spiritual values, as institutional success is measured not only by organizational effectiveness but also by the institution's social contribution and spiritual value.<sup>18</sup>

The basic elements of strategic management consist of three main stages: formulation, implementation, and evaluation. In the planning stage, institutions analyze strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) to determine realistic policy directions. The strength of this approach lies in its ability to identify institutional advantages, such as qualified teachers and the religious character of students. However, its weakness lies in limited human and financial resources, which often hinder the implementation of long-term strategies.<sup>19</sup>

In the implementation stage, strategies are translated into concrete actions such as strengthening *tahfidz* programs, providing digital training for teachers, or establishing partnerships with social institutions. This is consistent with findings from the Integrated Islamic School (SIT) Al-Fath Cibinong, which indicate that character-based education strategies in the digital era emphasize the integration of Islamic values with technological innovation in learning. A widely

<sup>16</sup> Deni Gustiawan, *Manajemen Strategis* (PT Indonesia Delapan Kreasi Nusa, 2024).

<sup>17</sup> Zahro, "Manajemen Strategis Dalam Pengembangan Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Berbasis Pesantren."

<sup>18</sup> Sarnoto, *Manajemen Pendidikan Islam: Integrasi Nilai Spiritual Dan Inovasi Institusional*.

<sup>19</sup> Mochammad Syafiuddin Shobirin, Agus Zaenul Fitri, and Muhammad Al Fatih, "Memilih Formulasi Strategi Terbaik. Untuk Meningkatkan Mutu Lembaga Pendidikan," *Jurnal Education and Development* 11, no. 2 (2023): 190–95.

observed practice is integrated learning, which combines modern science with Islamic values to create contextual and relevant learning experiences.<sup>20</sup>

This strategy is reflected in character and technology-based flagship programs, the digitalization of academic systems, and thematic learning that embeds Islamic values across all subjects. Improving teacher quality through professional training and foreign language certification is an essential part of strategic management implementation to support institutional competitiveness. Evaluation of success is carried out by measuring indicators such as increased student enrollment, parental satisfaction, institutional accreditation, and public recognition of school reputation.<sup>21</sup>

A strategic paradox emerges when survey results show high satisfaction levels, yet institutions remain unable to compete with public or international schools. This condition indicates the need to evaluate public perceptions of quality and institutional image. Islamic schools may provide strong services, but without solid brand positioning, they continue to be perceived as secondary alternatives. Husni and Wahyudiati emphasize that improving educational quality must be accompanied by external competitiveness strategies to gain public trust and recognition.<sup>22</sup>

The competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions does not emerge instantly but is built through consistency between vision, mission, and leadership with strategic direction. Institutions with a clear vision, such as producing Qur'anic generations with global competitiveness, are able to mobilize institutional activities more effectively. Measurable missions, such as improving learning quality and empowering communities, act as tools for evaluating the effectiveness of short-term strategies. Murdianto asserts that the success of madrasahs in Lombok in enhancing competitiveness lies in the synergy between vision, transformative leadership, and the implementation of integrated quality management, which results in improved quality, innovation, and public trust.<sup>23</sup>

Leadership becomes the key factor in maintaining strategic direction. The ideal leader of an Islamic institution is not only visionary but also a moral and intellectual role model. Literature shows that value-based leadership fosters organizational cultures that are disciplined, collaborative,

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<sup>20</sup> Muhammad Yazid Syukrillah and Diah Pranitasari, "Strategi Pendidikan Berkarakter Di Era Digital Sekolah Islam Terpadu Cibinong," *JEINSA: Jurnal Ekonomi Ihsan Sidenreng Rappang* 4, no. 1 (2025): 91–114.

<sup>21</sup> Syukrillah and Pranitasari.

<sup>22</sup> Faizun Husni and Dwi Wahyudiati, "Relevansi Manajemen Strategik Kepala Sekolah Dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan Dan Daya Saing Di Sekolah Dasar," *Dirasat: Jurnal Manajemen Dan Pendidikan Islam* 8, no. 1 (2022): 34–47.

<sup>23</sup> Murdianto, "Revitalisasi Madrasah: Strategi Meningkatkan Daya Saing Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Di Lombok," *Journal of Innovation Research and Knowledge* 1, no. 10 (2022): 1439–44.

and loyal. In the context of strategic management, such leadership strengthens competitiveness because every policy is grounded in honesty, responsibility, and trustworthiness.<sup>24</sup>

The competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions greatly depends on their ability to adapt to change without abandoning Islamic values. Institutions that can integrate Islamic leadership training with project-based learning are able to produce students who are both innovative and religiously grounded. Islamic values do not hinder competitiveness; instead, they serve as moral energy that strengthens institutional character in facing modernization challenges. Findings by Jabbar, Chotimah, and Sulistyorini show that implementing the values of *amanah*, *adl*, *ihsan*, *sidq*, and *ta'awun* in strategic management not only preserves the Islamic identity of institutions but also enhances adaptability and competitive advantage in the digital globalization era.<sup>25</sup>

Yusuf emphasizes that well-planned image branding strategies can strengthen the reputation of Islamic educational institutions while expanding their influence amid global competition. Branding has become a primary strategy for gaining public trust. Effective branding does not merely highlight the label “Islamic school” but showcases real strengths such as international programs grounded in Islamic values, excellence in Arabic and English, and measurable Qur’anic character development. In the digital era, branding can be implemented through inspirational social media content, such as documentation of student activities, alumni testimonials, or teachers’ creative works shared widely online.<sup>26</sup>

Building a large number of followers and viewers cannot rely solely on visual promotion. The key lies in content credibility and value consistency. Institutions that consistently display active, creative, and courteous students will develop an authentic image in the eyes of the public. In addition, community branding strategies, such as family religious gatherings, Ramadan social programs, and collaboration with local communities, reinforce institutional identity as part of the social life of the ummah. Thus, branding is not merely a promotional activity but a way for institutions to demonstrate integrity and relevance within a critical digital society.<sup>27</sup>

One of the most evident challenges in strengthening the competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions is financial limitation, as funding often comes only from tuition fees, community donations, and government assistance. Yet long-term development strategies require

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<sup>24</sup> Husni and Wahyudiati, “Relevansi Manajemen Strategik Kepala Sekolah Dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan Dan Daya Saing Di Sekolah Dasar.”

<sup>25</sup> Moch. Rikza Alkhubra Abdul Jabbar, Chusnul Chotimah, and Sulistyorini, “Integrasi Nilai Keislaman Dalam Manajemen Strategik Untuk Membangun Keunggulan Kompetitif Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Di Era Globalisasi Digital,” *Cendekia: Jurnal Ilmu Pengetahuan* 5, no. 1 (2025): 185–92.

<sup>26</sup> M Yusuf, “Strategi Branding Image Dalam Mewujudkan Keunggulan Kompetitif Pada Lembaga Pendidikan Islam,” *At-Tabsir: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan* 3, no. 2 (2023): 72–89.

<sup>27</sup> Wulan Sari et al., *Manajemen Pemasaran Pendidikan Islam* (PT. Sonpedia Publishing Indonesia, 2025).

sustainable investment in infrastructure, teacher training, and curriculum innovation to continuously enhance learning quality. Therefore, institutions need structured financial planning and the development of alternative funding sources to avoid dependence on a single channel. This aligns with findings by Rohaniyah and Mardiyah, who highlight that aligning cost planning with innovative and transparent funding sources is key to maintaining the effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of Islamic educational institutions.<sup>28</sup>

First, funding diversification can be achieved by establishing productive Islamic-based business units such as sharia cooperatives or Islamic edu-café. Second, philanthropic partnerships with alumni and zakat, infak, and waqf institutions can be directed specifically toward education. Third, optimizing digital fundraising through transparent and accountable online donation platforms can support institutional development. Institutions should also build strategic cost management by allocating budgets not only for operational needs but also for strengthening innovation and service quality.<sup>29</sup>

### **The Relationship Between Strategic Management and Institutional Competitiveness**

Strategic management has a direct relationship with improving performance and enhancing the competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions. In many cases, institutions with clear strategic direction, ranging from vision and quality policies to human resource development strategies, demonstrate better achievements in accreditation, student satisfaction, and community trust. Strategies designed through a systemic approach are able to unify all institutional components so that they move in the same direction. Susanto and Hakim explain that the consistent implementation of strategic management in educational institutions strengthens performance effectiveness, improves service quality, and expands institutional competitiveness at both local and national levels.<sup>30</sup>

The relationship between strategy and outcomes is not always linear. Some institutions may have comprehensive strategic plans but lack adequate monitoring and evaluation, resulting in insignificant impacts on competitiveness. This indicates that strategy is not merely about documents or plans, but about how far organizational values and culture are internalized in daily practice. When strategies are executed consistently and involve all elements of the institution, the

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<sup>28</sup> Aisyah Rohaniyah and Mardiyah, "Penyelarasan Rencana Biaya Dengan Sumber Pendanaan Organisasi Pendidikan Islam," *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan* 10, no. 2 (2025): 428–44.

<sup>29</sup> Rohaniyah and Mardiyah.

<sup>30</sup> Dedi Susanto and Lukman Hakim, "Manajemen Strategik Pendidikan Islam Dalam Menghadapi Tantangan Globalisasi," *IHSAN: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 2 (2024): 58–70.



outcomes extend beyond quality improvement and include enhanced institutional reputation and attractiveness in the eyes of the public.<sup>31</sup>

The implementation of strategic management in Islamic educational institutions can be carried out through various models such as the Balanced Scorecard (BSC), Total Quality Management (TQM), and Islamic value-based strategic models. MAN 4 Kediri uses the BSC as one of its strategic management models, encompassing four main perspectives: financial, customer, internal processes, and learning and growth. The integration of spiritual values into the BSC reinforces the identity of the madrasah as an Islamic educational institution that regards blessing and moral value as part of its strategic performance.<sup>32</sup>

The impact is evident in the enhanced effectiveness of quality management, improved teacher discipline, and greater parental satisfaction. This model also assists the institution in determining strategic priorities, such as strengthening technology-based learning or expanding collaboration with international Islamic universities. In this context, it is essential to conduct regular strategic follow-up meetings to ensure that strategies remain relevant and adaptive to external changes.<sup>33</sup>

Islamic values serve as the moral foundation guiding all strategic activities in Islamic educational institutions, shaping policy directions based on sincerity (*ikhlās*), trustworthiness (*amānah*), and consultation (*shūrā*) as core institutional principles. Strategies grounded in these values generate competitive advantages that cannot be replicated by secular institutions, as their spiritual dimension embeds the meaning of worship and moral responsibility in every strategic decision. The teacher recruitment process places moral character, spiritual integrity, and leadership capacity alongside academic competence, creating a balance between professionalism and role modeling. The application of *shūrā* in decision-making reinforces institutional participation and justice, strengthening collective responsibility and contributing to superior performance in Islamic educational organizations.<sup>34</sup>

The integration of Islamic values is reflected in the financial management system based on sharia principles that uphold transparency and public accountability. Value-oriented strategies function as a strategic strength that enhances institutional reputation and competitiveness in an

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<sup>31</sup> M. Munif, Agus Eko Sujianto, and PrimMasrokan Mutohar, "Korporasi Produksi Pendidikan: Paradigma Baru Dalam Meningkatkan Kompetensi Dan Daya Saing Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Transformatif," *Al-Mafazī: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 1 (2023): 23–40.

<sup>32</sup> Sulistio, Sulistyorini, and Fitri, "Konsep, Model, Dan Implementasi Manajemen Strategik Dalam Meningkatkan Kualitas Pendidikan Islam Di MAN 4 Kediri."

<sup>33</sup> Sulistio, Sulistyorini, and Fitri.

<sup>34</sup> Adiba Maulidiyah, "Integrasi Evaluasi Dan Pengendalian Mutu Dalam Upaya Penguatan Kompetitif Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Nasional," *Al-Muqaddimah: Journal of Educational and Religious Perspectives* 1, no. 1 (2025): 15–22.

increasingly competitive global environment. The implementation of Islamic leadership training, digital pedagogy, and curriculum innovation improves teachers' professional capacities while maintaining balance between technological adaptation and spirituality. The curriculum of Islamic educational institutions evolves through the integration of modern scientific knowledge, digital literacy, and Islamic values, producing graduates who are religiously grounded, globally competent, and highly competitive in society.<sup>35</sup>

The implementation of strategic management in Islamic educational institutions faces various structural and cultural challenges. Structural challenges include limited human resources, differences in perception between leaders and implementers, and the absence of strong monitoring systems. Cultural challenges arise in the form of resistance to innovation or narrow interpretations of Islamic values perceived as being at odds with modernity.<sup>36</sup>

Strategic solutions in Islamic educational institutions are carried out through three main approaches grounded in moral values and managerial rationality. The leadership capacity-building approach requires institutional leaders to possess strategic analytical skills and ethical sensitivity so that decisions reflect integrity and long-term vision. The digitalization of management is implemented through the development of integrated academic information systems that enhance governance effectiveness and accelerate data-driven decision-making. The strategic partnership approach is realized through collaborations between leading madrasahs and state universities in Islamic-based STEM teacher training, resulting in innovative learning with spiritual character that reflects institutional competitiveness that is adaptive, ethical, and sustainable.<sup>37</sup>

### **Global Trends and Their Implications for Islamic Education**

Globalization requires Islamic educational institutions not only to preserve Islamic values but also to develop global competencies among their students. Strategies that may be adopted include curriculum integration, international collaboration, and the digitalization of learning management. First, curriculum integration involves incorporating global skills, such as digital literacy, cross-cultural communication, and critical thinking, into Islamic value-based subjects. For example, Fiqh can be contextualized with global business ethics, or Arabic can be taught through the lens of international diplomacy.<sup>38</sup>

Second, international collaboration can be implemented through teacher and student exchanges, joint research among global Islamic institutions, and participation in international

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<sup>35</sup> Sarnoto, *Manajemen Pendidikan Islam: Integrasi Nilai Spiritual Dan Inovasi Institusional*.

<sup>36</sup> Muhammad Ansori et al., "Internasionalisasi Pendidikan Islam: Analisis Kajian Pustaka Tentang Dinamika, Peluang, Dan Hambatan," *Journal of Islamic Religious Studies* 2, no. 3 (2025): 300–311.

<sup>37</sup> Puspita et al., "Andalas University Branding Strategy: Institutional History Identification in Building Identity as an Entrepreneurial Campus."

<sup>38</sup> Susanto and Hakim, "Manajemen Strategik Pendidikan Islam Dalam Menghadapi Tantangan Globalisasi."

educational forums. These initiatives broaden global perspectives without diminishing Islamic identity. Third, digitalized learning may utilize a sharia-based Learning Management System (LMS) that ensures content remains free from non-educational elements while providing character-tracking features to assess students' etiquette and moral development online.<sup>39</sup>

The dilemmas of modernity require Islamic educational institutions to balance modern administrative efficiency with the spiritual authenticity that defines their identity. The principle of *ḥikmah* guides the ability to select beneficial innovations without compromising Islamic values, such as implementing an efficient paperless classroom system while ensuring the sanctity of digital content from elements of violence, pornography, or consumerist culture. The principle of *tawāḥḥun* preserves balance between rationality and spirituality through teacher performance evaluations that assess not only teaching productivity but also moral exemplarity and the quality of social interaction with students. An integrative approach grounded in *ḥikmah* and *tawāḥḥun* enables Islamic institutions to adopt modernity selectively, apply ethical innovations, and create harmony between technology, efficiency, and spirituality within educational governance.<sup>40</sup>

In the context of globalization, cross-border collaboration becomes an essential strategy for strengthening competitiveness. Islamic institutions must maintain adaptive moral standards, the ability to adjust international practices to Islamic norms. For example, partnerships with international universities may focus on halal industry research, global character education, or ethically grounded educational technology. Student exchange programs can be directed toward strengthening global citizenship that remains rooted in the values of *tauḥīd* and *ukhūwwah*.<sup>41</sup>

The current era has shifted from Industrial Revolution 4.0 to Society 5.0, in which humans and technology are integrated to promote social well-being. In this context, Islamic educational institutions need to transform into human-centered institutions, institutions that utilize technology to enhance learners' humanity and morality rather than replace them. The implementation of Society 5.0 strategies in Islamic institutions can include:<sup>42</sup>

1. Spiritual technology-based learning (spiritual tech-learning), such as digital Qur'an memorization applications equipped with reflective moral insights;
2. Ethical career education programs that equip students with professional skills grounded in moral awareness; and

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<sup>39</sup> Susanto and Hakim.

<sup>40</sup> Sarnoto, *Manajemen Pendidikan Islam: Integrasi Nilai Spiritual Dan Inovasi Institusional*.

<sup>41</sup> Faiz Akmal Baihaqi et al., "Transformasi Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam Menuju Standar Internasional: Tantangan Dan Peluang," *An Najab (Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Dan Sosial Keagamaan)* 4, no. 4 (2025): 50–56.

<sup>42</sup> Ariska, Kurahman, and Rusmana, "Transformasi Manajemen Peserta Didik Di Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Pada Era Society 5.0."

3. Halal industry partnerships with sharia-compliant companies for internships, research, and Islamic entrepreneurial innovation.

Outstanding Islamic educational institutions sometimes face difficulties in connecting their graduates to the global workforce. This challenge arises from two factors: first, a mismatch between graduates' competencies and industry needs; and second, limited partnership networks. The solution is to establish an Islamic Career Hub within the institution, a dedicated unit that connects graduates with halal companies, social organizations, or Islamic value-based startups. Through this approach, Islamic educational institutions function not only as learning centers but also as engines of economic empowerment for the Muslim community in the era of Society 5.0.<sup>43</sup>

Gamar and Maliki explain that Islamic educational institutions serve as balancing forces that cultivate humanity, ethics, and spirituality. Being a “balancer” does not mean being anti-modern; rather, it means positioning Islamic values as moral controls over the direction of global progress. For example, when global education systems heavily emphasize academic achievement and profitability, Islamic institutions balance them with the principles of *iḥsān* (benevolence), *‘adl* (justice), and *rahmah* (compassion). In management systems, Islamic institutions reject corruption and discrimination, practices that sometimes appear in profit-oriented institutions, and replace them with transparent and participatory financial systems.<sup>44</sup>

## Discussion

### Strategic Management and Institutional Competitiveness

Strategic management in Islamic educational institutions is understood as an integrated process that directs all institutional resources toward achieving long-term excellence grounded in moral and spiritual values. Wheelen and Hunger, in *Strategic Management*, emphasize that an effective strategy must involve planning, implementation, and evaluation that remain adaptive to internal and external environments. In the context of Islamic institutions, these aspects are expanded into an ethical instrument guided by the principles of *maqāṣid al-shar‘ah*, preserving religion, life, intellect, lineage, and wealth, as the foundation for strategic decision-making.<sup>45</sup> This value-based strategic orientation shapes an institutional direction that is not only managerially efficient but also spiritually and socially meaningful.

Competitive advantage in Islamic educational institutions cannot be separated from their ability to integrate modern professionalism with Islamic values, which form the institution's moral identity. Findings by Syukrillah and Pralitasari demonstrate that character-based educational

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<sup>43</sup> Susiyati and Sihono, “Reformasi Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Negeri: Menuju Pendidikan Berkualitas Dan Berdaya Saing Global,” *Pendas : Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* 10, no. 01 (2025): 212–34.

<sup>44</sup> Nur Gamar and Putriani L Maliki, *Manajemen Lembaga Pendidikan Islam* (Penerbit NEM, 2025).

<sup>45</sup> Ramli and Kartini, *Manajemen Strategik Dan Bisnis*.

strategies at Integrated Islamic School Al-Fath Cibinong combine Islamic values with digital innovation in learning. The implementation of this integrated learning model creates a contextual, participatory, and religious learning environment, successfully enhancing the institution's image as a leading educational provider. This strategy shows that the combination of spiritual values and modernity can create strong differentiation in the global educational landscape.<sup>46</sup>

Strategic leadership is a key factor in realizing a competitive institutional direction. Literature on strategic management explains that the effectiveness of a strategy depends on leaders who can mobilize all resources toward shared objectives in a systemic manner. In Islamic educational institutions, leaders function not only as decision-makers but also as value stewards who protect the purity of organizational culture.<sup>47</sup> Visionary, ethical, and participatory leadership fosters a collaborative work culture, increases discipline, and strengthens the sense of ownership among teachers and staff.

The factors contributing to competitive success in Islamic educational institutions are rooted in the consistency of strategic implementation supported by a just and fair evaluation system. Syukrillah and Pranitasari's study indicates that institutions applying character-based evaluation, such as assessing sincerity in work and moral responsibility, tend to achieve higher levels of loyalty and public trust. Strategic evaluation that balances quantitative indicators, including increased enrollment and accreditation, with qualitative dimensions such as moral satisfaction, cultivates institutions that are resilient in competition. The integration of managerial rationality and Islamic spirituality becomes the core of competitiveness that distinguishes Islamic institutions from secular ones and ensures long-term sustainability of quality.<sup>48</sup>

### **The Relationship Between Strategic Management and Institutional Competitiveness**

The relationship between strategic management and the competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions is direct, as it synchronizes vision, quality policies, and human resource development strategies. Susanto and Hakim explain that institutions with systematically planned strategic directions experience improvements in effectiveness, efficiency, and public trust. This process enables institutions to maximize internal potential while managing external pressures in a measured and sustainable manner. In the Islamic context, these strategies carry a spiritual dimension because every organizational decision is directed toward collective benefit and institutional blessing.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Syukrillah and Pranitasari, "Strategi Pendidikan Berkarakter Di Era Digital Sekolah Islam Terpadu Cibinong."

<sup>47</sup> Sarnoto, *Manajemen Pendidikan Islam: Integrasi Nilai Spiritual Dan Inovasi Institusional*.

<sup>48</sup> Syukrillah and Pranitasari, "Strategi Pendidikan Berkarakter Di Era Digital Sekolah Islam Terpadu Cibinong."

<sup>49</sup> Susanto and Hakim, "Manajemen Strategik Pendidikan Islam Dalam Menghadapi Tantangan Globalisasi."

The effectiveness of strategic implementation is determined not only by the planning documents but also by the extent to which strategies are internalized into institutional work culture. Munif, Sujianto, and Mutohar found that strategies without continuous monitoring and evaluation fail to significantly strengthen competitiveness. Strategic management in Islamic institutions requires the involvement of all organizational elements, leaders and educators alike, to develop collective commitment to quality and service. The internalization of Islamic values in managerial practices creates an integration of professional orientation and spiritual principles, thereby reinforcing institutional competitive advantage.<sup>50</sup>

The application of management models such as the Balanced Scorecard and Total Quality Management in Islamic institutions demonstrates the effectiveness of the relationship between strategy and institutional outcomes. Sulistio, Sulistyorini, and Fitri note that MAN 4 Kediri employs the Balanced Scorecard with four key perspectives, financial, customer, internal processes, and learning and growth, which are synergized with spiritual values.<sup>51</sup> This approach enhances teacher discipline, learning quality, and community satisfaction with the institution. The integration of modern management principles with sharia values strengthens moral legitimacy and expands competitiveness in the dynamic global educational environment.

The integration of Islamic values in institutional strategy serves as a distinctive dimension that affirms the identity and direction of Islamic educational institutions. Maulidiyah stresses that the principles of sincerity (*ikhlāṣ*), trustworthiness (*amānah*), and consultation (*shūrā*) provide moral foundations for participatory and just institutional policies. Teacher recruitment based on moral character, sharia-compliant financial management, and organizational culture that cultivates collective responsibility exemplify the implementation of value-based strategies. These strategies strengthen competitiveness through public trust and moral reputation that are difficult for secular institutions to replicate because they are embedded within the institution's spirituality.<sup>52</sup>

The interconnectedness between strategic management and competitiveness is also evident in human resource development, curriculum formulation, and institutional governance systems. Sarnoto explains that training in Islamic leadership, digital pedagogy, and curriculum innovation enhances teacher professionalism while preserving the spiritual essence of education. Curriculum development that integrates modern knowledge, digital literacy, and Islamic values produces

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<sup>50</sup> Munif, Sujianto, and Mutohar, "Korporasi Produksi Pendidikan: Paradigma Baru Dalam Meningkatkan Kompetensi Dan Daya Saing Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Transformatif."

<sup>51</sup> Sulistio, Sulistyorini, and Fitri, "Konsep, Model, Dan Implementasi Manajemen Strategik Dalam Meningkatkan Kualitas Pendidikan Islam Di MAN 4 Kediri."

<sup>52</sup> Maulidiyah, "Integrasi Evaluasi Dan Pengendalian Mutu Dalam Upaya Penguatan Kompetitif Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Nasional."

graduates who are globally competent with strong religious identity.<sup>53</sup> This approach shows that the competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions does not arise from adopting Western strategies but from synthesizing managerial rationality with revealed values.

The main challenges faced in implementing strategic management in Islamic educational institutions include limited human resources, cultural resistance to innovation, and weak monitoring systems. Ansori et al. explain that many institutions still perceive modernity as a threat to Islamic values rather than an opportunity to strengthen Islamic educational missions. Institutions that fail to navigate this resistance often experience stagnation in quality and loss of public trust. Epistemological awareness that Islam encourages innovation and adaptation becomes crucial for transforming these challenges into strategic opportunities for building sustainable competitiveness.<sup>54</sup>

### **Global Trends and Their Implications for Islamic Education**

The globalization of education creates a new competitive landscape that requires Islamic institutions to possess adaptive advantages and global competencies without compromising Islamic identity. Susanto and Hakim explain that integrating digital literacy, cross-cultural communication, and critical thinking into curriculum design is essential for addressing global changes. Islamic educational institutions may cultivate global awareness through contextual learning, such as teaching Fiqh through international business ethics or Arabic through the diplomacy of the Muslim world. Curriculum integration that responds to global dynamics broadens learners' perspectives while affirming Islamic values as moral guidelines.<sup>55</sup>

International collaboration becomes a key driver of competitiveness for Islamic educational institutions. Baihaqi et al. show that cross-border cooperation in research, teacher exchanges, and global academic forums expands institutional networks and enhances international reputation. Adaptive moral standards are essential for maintaining Islamic values amid plural global educational practices. Collaborative research in halal industry development, ethical educational technology, and global character education demonstrates that Islamic values remain relevant for building a civilized society.<sup>56</sup>

The transformation toward Society 5.0 positions Islamic educational institutions as human-centered institutions that integrate technology with humanity and spirituality. Ariska, Kurahman, and Ruhmana highlight the importance of spiritual tech-learning, technology-based learning that

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<sup>53</sup> Sarnoto, *Manajemen Pendidikan Islam: Integrasi Nilai Spiritual Dan Inovasi Institusional*.

<sup>54</sup> Ansori et al., "Internasionalisasi Pendidikan Islam: Analisis Kajian Pustaka Tentang Dinamika, Peluang, Dan Hambatan."

<sup>55</sup> Susanto and Hakim, "Manajemen Strategik Pendidikan Islam Dalam Menghadapi Tantangan Globalisasi."

<sup>56</sup> Baihaqi et al., "Transformasi Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam Menuju Standar Internasional: Tantangan Dan Peluang."

reinforces moral consciousness, such as Qur'an memorization applications accompanied by reflections on life values. Ethical career education prepares students to become professionals with integrity, while halal industry partnerships open pathways for internships and socially impactful research. This approach frames technology as a vehicle for strengthening character and promoting communal welfare.<sup>57</sup>

Islamic educational institutions still face challenges when academically strong graduates are not optimally absorbed into the global workforce due to limited networks and competency mismatches. Susiyati and Sihono argue that establishing an Islamic Career Hub can provide a strategic solution by connecting graduates with halal industries, social organizations, and sharia-based economic sectors.<sup>58</sup> Through these collaborations, Islamic educational institutions can expand their role as engines of economic empowerment for the Muslim community. This strategy strengthens the institution's position as a relevant actor that addresses modern societal needs while contributing to social welfare.

Islamic educational institutions function as balancing forces within a global education system that tends to be pragmatic. Gamar and Maliki explain that Islamic values serve as moral controls over the direction of global progress, which is often profit-oriented and characterized by extreme competition. The principles of *iḥsān* (benevolence), *ʿadl* (justice), and *rahmah* (compassion) ensure balance between academic achievement and humanity. Transparent financial systems, participatory governance, and anti-corruption culture demonstrate how Islamic institutions can serve as moral exemplars in a modern global education ecosystem while maintaining dignity.<sup>59</sup>

The novelty of this study lies in the systematic integration of contemporary strategic management theory with Islamic epistemological principles to construct a competitiveness framework specifically designed for Islamic educational institutions. Existing literature tends to discuss strategic management and Islamic values separately, either emphasizing managerial efficiency or focusing on ethical-spiritual dimensions, without providing a unified, operational, and context-responsive conceptual model. This study addresses that gap by demonstrating how spirituality may function not only as an ethical foundation but also as a strategic driver shaping institutional governance, curriculum innovation, technological adoption, human resource development, and stakeholder collaboration in response to global competitiveness demands. Through the synthesis of literature across diverse geographical and cultural contexts, this review

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<sup>57</sup> Ariska, Kurahman, and Rusmana, "Transformasi Manajemen Peserta Didik Di Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Pada Era Society 5.0."

<sup>58</sup> Susiyati and Sihono, "Reformasi Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Negeri: Menuju Pendidikan Berkualitas Dan Berdaya Saing Global."

<sup>59</sup> Gamar and Maliki, *Manajemen Lembaga Pendidikan Islam*.



generates a value-driven and adaptive strategic management model that balances institutional effectiveness with Islamic identity, offering both theoretical enrichment and actionable direction for the future of Islamic educational management.

## Conclusion

Strategic management serves as the fundamental foundation for building the competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions through the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of policies oriented toward collective benefit and institutional blessing. The relationship between strategic management and competitiveness is reflected in an institution's ability to integrate Islamic values into governance, human resource development, and curriculum innovation that remains adaptive to global environmental changes. Global trends such as digitalization and Society 5.0 require Islamic educational institutions to transform into human-centered entities while maintaining their spiritual identity and moral values. This study contributes to the development of an Islamic education management paradigm by offering a more integrated conceptual framework that unifies Islamic values, institutional professionalism, and sustainable global competitiveness, while also providing theoretical enrichment for scholarly discourse and practical guidance for policymakers, institutional leaders, and practitioners in strengthening governance, innovation capacity, and long-term institutional resilience within the evolving global landscape.

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