



Beyond Strategic Planning: An Integrated Framework for Quality Improvement in Islamic Education

Siti Musfiroh*, Syifa Hanifah Syandra, Rezki Oktoberi, Oki Dermawan
Heru Juabdin Sada

Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Intan Lampung, Indonesia

Email : 2407046028@webmail.uad.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

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*Corresponding Author

Educational quality in Islamic education encompasses academic achievement, moral development, institutional effectiveness, and the internalization of Islamic values. Achieving these objectives requires strategic management processes that connect institutional priorities with educational practices and continuous improvement. This study aims to examine the contributions of strategic planning, strategy implementation, and strategic evaluation to quality improvement and develop an integrated conceptual framework grounded in Islamic educational values. A qualitative approach was employed using a narrative literature review. Relevant scholarly publications were identified through academic databases and journal websites, with particular attention to literature published between 2021 and 2025. The literature was analyzed thematically through data condensation, data display, and conclusion verification. The findings identify four interrelated components of strategic management: value orientation and quality objectives, needs-based strategic planning, coordinated strategy implementation, and strategic evaluation with feedback. These components operate as a continuous improvement cycle in which institutional objectives guide implementation and evaluation findings inform subsequent planning. The study's implications are both theoretical and practical. The proposed framework connects managerial processes with Islamic educational values and provides institutional leaders with a conceptual basis for aligning educational objectives, organizational resources, implementation practices, and quality assessment. However, empirical research is needed to validate its applicability across diverse Islamic educational institutions.

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INTRODUCTION

Educational quality is a fundamental concern for societies because educational institutions shape human capabilities, moral responsibility, and

social development. High-quality education enables learners to acquire relevant knowledge, develop critical thinking, cultivate ethical behavior, and participate productively in their communities (Gechere et al., 2025; Li et al., 2023). In Islamic education, these responsibilities extend beyond academic achievement to include spiritual development, the internalization of Islamic values, and the formation of socially responsible individuals (Maulidy et al., 2025; Oh & Choi, 2023). Consequently, educational quality must be understood as a multidimensional outcome encompassing learning effectiveness, teacher professionalism, institutional governance, and character development. These dimensions are interdependent because weaknesses in institutional management can undermine teaching effectiveness and students' moral development. Improving educational quality is therefore important not only for individual learners but also for families, communities, and society, which depend on educational institutions to nurture competent, ethical, and responsible future generations (Azizah & Widad, 2026; Kohar et al., 2026).

Achieving educational quality requires institutions to establish coherent priorities and translate their educational missions into sustainable organizational practices (Miftahussurur & Widad, 2025; Rizqon & Fimaisarah, 2024a). Strategic management is particularly important because it connects institutional objectives with resource allocation, program implementation, performance monitoring, and continuous improvement. Without an integrated managerial approach, educational institutions may struggle to respond to changing societal expectations, increasing accountability demands, and differences in students' learning needs. Islamic educational institutions face an additional responsibility: maintaining their religious identity while ensuring that educational services remain relevant, effective, and responsive to contemporary challenges. This balance requires managerial decisions that consider institutional capacities, educational objectives, community expectations, and Islamic ethical principles. Strategic management consequently represents more than an administrative procedure; it provides an organizational foundation for aligning educational purposes with institutional action (Haningsih et al., 2026; Sutrisno, 2025). Strengthening this alignment is essential for sustaining educational quality and fulfilling the broader social responsibilities of Islamic education.

Despite the importance of strategic management, educational institutions frequently encounter difficulties in connecting strategic intentions with measurable improvements in educational quality (Mukarromah et al., 2025; Uwaisah, 2026). Institutional plans may establish ambitious objectives without adequately considering financial constraints, human resource capabilities, organizational culture, or implementation readiness. Unclear responsibilities, inconsistent communication, weak coordination, and limited monitoring can

further reduce the effectiveness of planned initiatives. Evaluation also loses its developmental function when institutions concentrate on administrative compliance rather than using evidence to identify weaknesses and adjust subsequent decisions (Mahirah et al., 2026; Putri et al., 2026). These problems create a gap between what institutions intend to achieve and what they actually accomplish. In Islamic education, the consequences may extend beyond operational inefficiency because ineffective management can affect learning experiences, character formation, and the integration of religious values into institutional practices. Addressing these challenges requires examining strategic management as a connected process rather than treating planning, implementation, and evaluation as independent administrative activities (Zahiri & Sahal, 2025; Zulkhairi et al., 2025).

Institutional experiences demonstrate that strategic management effectiveness depends on organizational conditions and the consistency of managerial practices. Islamic boarding schools and other Islamic educational institutions operate within diverse circumstances, including differences in leadership arrangements, financial resources, staff competencies, educational traditions, and community participation (Fatimah & Hasib, 2026; Muharromah, 2025). Such variations influence how institutional strategies are formulated, communicated, and implemented. In some settings, strategic objectives may be weakened by conflicting leadership instructions, insufficient understanding of responsibilities, limited discipline, or inadequate coordination among organizational members. In other settings, participation from school communities, organized program implementation, and periodic evaluation can strengthen institutional efforts to improve educational quality (Bakar et al., 2024; Sanjani et al., 2024). These contrasting conditions indicate that formal strategic planning alone cannot guarantee successful outcomes. Instead, institutional improvement depends on whether plans are translated into coordinated action and whether implementation experiences inform subsequent decisions. Understanding these practical conditions is therefore necessary to explain why similar managerial approaches may produce different results across Islamic educational institutions.

Previous research has examined strategic management in Islamic education through several complementary perspectives, including institutional planning, organizational coordination, program implementation, performance measurement, and educational quality assurance. Studies of Islamic boarding schools have highlighted implementation difficulties associated with leadership communication, staff discipline, and unclear responsibilities (Hermawan et al., 2025; Tohet et al., 2025). Other investigations have emphasized community involvement, organized program delivery, and periodic evaluation as important

conditions for improving educational quality. Additional contributions have explored environmental analysis, SWOT-based planning, competency development, and continuous quality improvement. Collectively, these studies establish that strategic management involves multiple organizational functions and that educational improvement requires more than the formulation of institutional plans (Abdullah et al., 2025; Rizqon & Fimaisharah, 2024). However, the existing discussions frequently concentrate on particular managerial practices, individual institutions, or specific educational outcomes. Consequently, the relationships among strategic planning, strategy implementation, and strategic evaluation remain insufficiently integrated into a comprehensive explanation of continuous quality improvement in Islamic educational institutions.

This fragmented understanding creates an important conceptual gap. Planning is often discussed as a means of determining institutional direction, implementation as the execution of established programs, and evaluation as the assessment of achieved outcomes. When these functions are examined separately, their reciprocal relationships and collective contribution to institutional improvement may remain unclear. In particular, limited conceptual integration makes it difficult to explain how evaluation findings reshape future priorities, how implementation experiences reveal weaknesses in initial plans, and how Islamic educational values guide decisions throughout the management process. Addressing this gap requires a framework that explains strategic management as a continuous and interconnected cycle of institutional learning. Such a perspective can contribute to educational management scholarship by connecting organizational processes with the distinctive educational purposes of Islamic institutions. It can also provide a practical basis for understanding how managerial coherence, organizational capacity, and value-oriented decision-making collectively support sustainable educational quality.

The central research problem concerns how strategic planning, strategy implementation, and strategic evaluation contribute to quality improvement in Islamic educational institutions and how these processes can be integrated within a coherent management framework. This article argues that sustainable improvement is more likely when the three processes operate interdependently rather than as isolated administrative functions. Strategic planning establishes priorities based on institutional objectives and available capacities; implementation translates those priorities into coordinated educational practices; and evaluation identifies achievements, weaknesses, and necessary adjustments. The findings of evaluation should then inform subsequent planning, creating an ongoing cycle of organizational learning and improvement. Within Islamic education, this cycle should also be guided by institutional commitments to

ethical conduct, accountability, professionalism, and the internalization of Islamic values. Accordingly, this article develops a conceptual understanding of strategic management that connects managerial integration, organizational conditions, and Islamic educational principles to the pursuit of sustainable educational quality.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a narrative literature review design to examine strategic management and quality improvement in Islamic educational institutions (Khoiriah & Sujanto, 2026; Syauqi et al., 2025). This design was selected because the study aimed to interpret and synthesize conceptual and empirical discussions rather than investigate causal relationships through fieldwork or statistical analysis. The review focused on three interconnected managerial processes: strategic planning, strategy implementation, and strategic evaluation. A qualitative approach enabled the examination of meanings, organizational conditions, managerial practices, and educational values reflected in the literature (Salmona & Kaczynski, 2024). The narrative design also accommodated publications with different research methods, institutional settings, and analytical perspectives. Through interpretive synthesis, the study sought to identify recurring themes, conceptual relationships, and unresolved issues concerning educational quality. The resulting framework was developed as a conceptual interpretation rather than an empirically validated model of institutional performance.

As a literature-based study, the research did not involve a physical field location or direct engagement with participants. Instead, its research setting consisted of academic information resources containing publications relevant to strategic management and Islamic educational quality. Literature was identified through Google Scholar, GARUDA, the Directory of Open Access Journals, and journal publishers' websites. These sources were selected to provide access to international and Indonesian scholarly discussions, particularly research concerning madrasahs, Islamic schools, and pesantren. The review prioritized publications published between 2021 and 2025 to capture recent developments while retaining earlier conceptual works when necessary to clarify relevant theoretical foundations. The selection of these sources reflected the study's interest in understanding strategic management across diverse institutional contexts. Accordingly, the research examined published scholarship rather than a single geographical location or individual educational institution.

Data were collected through literature searching, document identification, and systematic recording of relevant information from selected scholarly publications. Search terms included strategic management, Islamic education,

educational quality, strategic planning, strategy implementation, strategic evaluation, quality improvement, and Islamic boarding schools, alongside Indonesian equivalents. Publications were considered relevant when (Mustofa et al., 2025) they addressed managerial processes, institutional development, educational quality, or organizational practices applicable to Islamic education. Both empirical studies and conceptual publications were included to capture different perspectives on the research problem. During document examination, information was recorded concerning publication characteristics, institutional context, research objectives, methodological approaches, principal findings, and implications for educational quality. Particular attention was given to discussions of planning, implementation, evaluation, organizational constraints, and Islamic educational values. This procedure provided an organized body of textual information for subsequent thematic interpretation and conceptual synthesis.

Data analysis followed an interpretive process involving data condensation, data display, and conclusion verification. During data condensation, relevant information was selected, simplified, and organized according to its relationship with the research objectives. The material was then classified into three principal themes: strategic planning, strategy implementation, and strategic evaluation. Data display involved presenting the identified themes in descriptive narratives and conceptual relationships to clarify similarities, differences, and connections across the literature. The analysis subsequently examined how institutional vision, resource allocation, leadership, coordination, accountability, and feedback interacted within the strategic management process. Conclusion verification involved revisiting the selected publications, comparing interpretations across sources, and examining whether the emerging conceptual relationships were adequately supported by the reviewed material. Islamic values, particularly amanah, justice, and ihsan, were also considered in interpreting managerial responsibilities. The final synthesis produced a conceptual framework for understanding quality improvement in Islamic education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Strategic Planning as the Foundation of Quality Improvement

The literature synthesis identifies strategic planning as the first component of quality improvement in Islamic educational institutions. This process establishes institutional direction by translating educational vision and mission into priorities, objectives, programs, and performance indicators. Effective planning requires an assessment of internal conditions, including teacher competencies, financial resources, facilities, and organizational capabilities,

alongside external conditions such as government policies, community expectations, and changing educational needs. Environmental analysis helps institutions identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats before determining appropriate strategic priorities. Planning also involves allocating resources, assigning responsibilities, establishing implementation schedules, and defining indicators for assessing progress. Within Islamic education, institutional objectives encompass academic achievement, student competency development, moral formation, and the internalization of Islamic values. These elements establish a foundation for aligning educational aspirations with organizational capacities and operational requirements.

Strategy Implementation: Leadership, Coordination, and Organizational Capacity

The synthesis identifies leadership, organizational coordination, human resource capacity, and program delivery as central elements of strategy implementation. Implementation translates institutional priorities into educational activities involving teachers, administrative personnel, program coordinators, students, and other stakeholders. Three interconnected dimensions emerge from the analysis. The structural dimension concerns the distribution of authority, clarity of responsibilities, and coordination among organizational units. The human resource dimension encompasses staff competencies, professional commitment, discipline, communication, and cooperation. The operational dimension involves program organization, resource utilization, implementation schedules, and monitoring procedures. These dimensions collectively determine how institutional strategies are translated into everyday practices. Educational programs may address curriculum implementation, teacher development, student services, religious activities, and extracurricular learning. Islamic educational values, including amanah, justice, and exemplary conduct, also inform organizational responsibilities, resource management, workload distribution, and relationships among institutional members.

Strategic Evaluation and Feedback

Strategic evaluation emerges as the third principal component of quality improvement. It examines the relationship between institutional objectives, implemented activities, and achieved outcomes. The synthesis distinguishes between process indicators and outcome indicators. Process indicators concern program implementation, teacher participation, resource utilization, coordination, and the fulfillment of assigned responsibilities. Outcome indicators address student competencies, learning quality, educational services, institutional performance, and character development. Evaluative information may be obtained through performance records, structured observations, teacher reflections, student development records, and stakeholder feedback. The analysis

also identifies the importance of interpreting evaluation findings to determine whether existing programs should be continued, modified, or discontinued. Evaluation is therefore connected to institutional accountability, corrective action, and organizational learning. Within Islamic education, assessment extends beyond administrative compliance and academic achievement to include responsible resource utilization, moral development, and consistency between institutional practices and educational values.

Integrated Strategic Management Framework for Quality Improvement

The synthesis produces an integrated conceptual framework consisting of four interrelated components: value orientation and quality objectives, needs-based strategic planning, coordinated strategy implementation, and strategic evaluation and feedback. The first component establishes the educational and ethical purposes guiding institutional decisions. The second translates these purposes into priorities based on environmental conditions, resource availability, and performance indicators. The third connects strategic priorities with organizational practices through leadership, clear responsibilities, staff competencies, program delivery, and stakeholder involvement. The fourth examines implementation processes and outcomes to identify achievements, weaknesses, and necessary adjustments. These components form a recurring cycle rather than a strictly linear sequence. Evaluation findings inform subsequent planning, while implementation experiences may reveal weaknesses in initial objectives or resource assumptions. Islamic educational values provide an orientation across the entire cycle, connecting managerial responsibilities with academic achievement, moral development, institutional accountability, and continuous educational improvement.

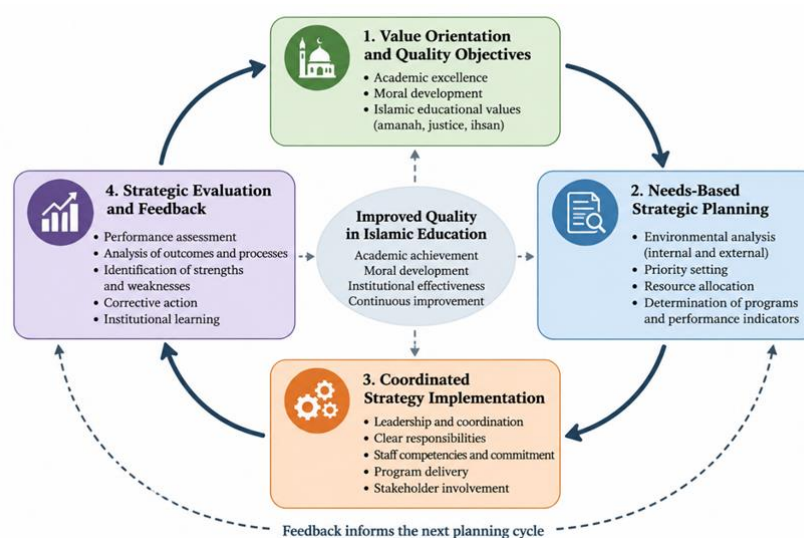


Figure 1. Integrated Strategic Management Framework for Quality Improvement in Islamic Education

Figure 1 illustrates the relationships among the four components of the proposed framework. Value orientation and quality objectives establish the institutional purposes that guide needs-based strategic planning. Planning translates these purposes into priorities, resource requirements, and performance indicators. Coordinated implementation converts the resulting plans into educational programs and organizational practices. Strategic evaluation then assesses performance, identifies strengths and weaknesses, and determines appropriate corrective actions. The circular arrows represent the continuing relationship among these components, while the feedback pathways indicate that evaluation informs subsequent planning and implementation decisions. The central element, improved quality in Islamic education, encompasses academic achievement, moral development, institutional effectiveness, and continuous improvement. The framework also positions Islamic educational values as guiding principles throughout the management cycle rather than as an isolated component of institutional activity.

Discussion

The findings position strategic management as an integrated process connecting institutional objectives, organizational practices, and educational quality. This interpretation corresponds with Shalom et al. (2023), whose examination of strategic management processes and organizational performance in Ugandan agro-processing enterprises highlights the relevance of coordinated managerial processes to organizational outcomes. Although their research concerns a non-educational setting, its organizational perspective provides a useful comparison for understanding the relationship between strategic decisions and institutional performance (Baitussalam, 2025; Elman et al., 2026). The present study extends this perspective by situating strategic management within the educational and ethical purposes of Islamic institutions. Quality improvement is consequently understood not merely as operational efficiency but as the alignment of academic development, moral formation, and institutional responsibility. Theoretically, this interpretation connects strategic management with multidimensional educational quality. Practically, it encourages institutional leaders to evaluate managerial success through both organizational performance and the educational purposes their institutions are established to fulfill.

The findings further indicate that needs-based strategic planning must reflect institutional conditions rather than rely exclusively on predetermined objectives. This interpretation complements Zaini (2024), whose examination of strategic management in Islamic boarding schools identifies coordination

difficulties, unclear responsibilities, and conflicting leadership instructions as implementation constraints. These challenges demonstrate why planning requires realistic assessments of organizational capacity and clear arrangements for translating objectives into practice. The present framework extends this insight by positioning environmental analysis, resource allocation, and performance indicators within a continuous management cycle (Astaman et al., 2026; Rohman et al., 2025). It also emphasizes that institutional priorities should reflect the distinctive purposes of Islamic education, including academic achievement and moral development. Theoretically, this finding highlights the relationship between strategic fit and institutional quality. Practically, leaders should establish achievable objectives, assign responsibilities, identify resource requirements, and select indicators that reflect both operational performance and educational values.

Strategy implementation constitutes a critical connection between institutional planning and actual educational practice. The findings indicate that leadership, staff competencies, coordination, communication, and stakeholder involvement jointly influence this connection. Alfarizi et al. (2024) similarly identify organizational constraints that can prevent established strategic objectives from being implemented consistently. These observations suggest that implementation difficulties cannot always be attributed to weaknesses in strategic formulation; organizational arrangements and personnel capabilities may also restrict execution. Shalom et al. (2023) provide a broader organizational comparison by examining strategic management processes in relation to enterprise performance. Extending these perspectives to Islamic education, the present study conceptualizes implementation as a coordinated organizational process rather than the responsibility of individual leaders alone. The practical implication is that institutions should strengthen communication, clarify authority, support professional development, and monitor program delivery. Such arrangements can improve alignment between strategic priorities and everyday educational activities.

The framework also emphasizes strategic evaluation as a mechanism for organizational learning rather than merely an administrative reporting requirement. Evaluation connects intended objectives with implementation evidence and achieved outcomes, allowing institutions to identify weaknesses and determine appropriate adjustments. This interpretation is consistent with the broader emphasis on interconnected organizational processes in Shalom et al. (2023), although their empirical context differs from Islamic education. Mutaqin (2025), through the concept of the cohesive tetrad, provides a complementary conceptual perspective for considering relationships among interconnected elements. The present study applies an integrative orientation to strategic

management by connecting evaluation findings with subsequent planning and implementation decisions. Its theoretical contribution lies in explaining feedback as a constitutive element of the management cycle. Practically, educational institutions should establish clear indicators, review implementation evidence regularly, investigate the causes of performance gaps, and use findings to revise programs rather than merely document compliance.

An important contribution of this study is the integration of Islamic educational values into the entire strategic management process. The framework positions *amanah*, justice, and *ihsan* as principles that inform institutional objectives, resource allocation, organizational responsibilities, program implementation, and evaluation. This orientation distinguishes the proposed framework from interpretations that primarily emphasize operational performance or administrative efficiency. Mutaqin (2025) offers a conceptual point of comparison through the idea of cohesion, while Shalom et al. (2023) provide an organizational perspective on strategic processes and performance. The present study brings these concerns into dialogue with the normative purposes of Islamic education. Theoretically, it connects strategic management with value-oriented institutional governance. Practically, it encourages leaders to assess whether resources are managed responsibly, responsibilities are distributed fairly, and educational programs promote academic competence alongside moral development. These relationships remain conceptual propositions requiring further empirical investigation.

The study contributes an integrated framework that connects value orientation, needs-based planning, coordinated implementation, and strategic evaluation through continuous feedback (Haya & Syihab, 2025; Sriayu et al., 2025). Its principal contribution is not the identification of entirely new managerial activities but the conceptual integration of these activities within a framework specifically oriented toward Islamic educational quality. This contribution provides a basis for examining how institutional values and organizational processes interact rather than treating them as separate concerns. For practitioners, the framework offers a structure for reviewing institutional objectives, implementation arrangements, and evaluation procedures. Nevertheless, the narrative literature review does not establish causal relationships or demonstrate that the proposed framework produces superior educational outcomes (Emawati & Setyoko, 2025; Ismuhayadi, 2026). The findings should therefore be interpreted as conceptual propositions rather than empirically validated effects. Future research could examine the framework in *madrasahs*, Islamic schools, and *pesantren*, comparing how leadership arrangements, institutional resources, and organizational contexts influence its practical application and contribution to educational quality.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that sustainable quality improvement in Islamic education depends on the integration of strategic planning, strategy implementation, and strategic evaluation within a continuous cycle of institutional learning. The principal lesson is that strategic plans alone cannot guarantee educational improvement unless institutional priorities are translated into coordinated practices and evaluation findings inform subsequent decisions. The study's scholarly contribution lies in developing an integrated conceptual framework comprising value orientation and quality objectives, needs-based planning, coordinated implementation, and strategic evaluation with feedback, while positioning Islamic values as ethical foundations throughout the management process. The implications of this framework are both theoretical and practical: it extends the understanding of strategic management by connecting organizational processes with the distinctive purposes of Islamic education and provides institutional leaders with a conceptual basis for aligning educational objectives, organizational resources, managerial responsibilities, and quality assessment. Nevertheless, the narrative literature review does not establish causal relationships or empirically validate the proposed framework. Future research should therefore examine its applicability across madrasahs, Islamic schools, and pesantren, using empirical and comparative approaches to investigate how institutional contexts influence implementation and educational outcomes.

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