

Quality Culture Management in Islamic Educational Institutions: Balancing Religious Identity and Global Standards

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ABSTRACT

Islamic educational institutions face growing pressure to improve educational quality while preserving their religious identity amid global educational demands. This study examines how Islamic educational institutions develop a sustainable quality culture by integrating Islamic values with global education standards. This study employed a qualitative multi-case study design involving two Islamic educational institutions in Jombang, Indonesia: MA Unggulan Darul Ulum Step-2 and SMA Darul Ulum 2 Unggulan BPPT. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis involving school leaders, teachers, students, and parents. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis and cross-case comparison to identify patterns of quality culture development, integration strategies, and resistance management. The findings reveal that both institutions developed quality culture through different but complementary strategies. MA Unggulan Darul Ulum Step-2 emphasized religious habituation, pesantren-based discipline, and character formation, while SMA Darul Ulum 2 Unggulan BPPT adopted international curriculum practices, technology-supported learning, and global competence development without abandoning Islamic principles. Resistance to change emerged from concerns over weakening religious identity, but it was managed through value alignment, participatory leadership, stakeholder dialogue, and gradual implementation. The study proposes the Religious-Global Management Model as a contextual framework for balancing Islamic identity and global standards in quality culture development. The model highlights religious values, global orientation, adaptive leadership, stakeholder participation, and institutional routines as key elements for sustaining quality in Islamic educational institution.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Improving educational quality is of paramount importance for societal advancement. Quality education plays a critical role in developing human resources, fostering individuals who are not only

knowledgeable but also ethical, and equipped to face modern challenges (Attahakul, 2025; Yulia et al., 2025). In this context, Islamic educational institutions must find a balance between imparting religious values and addressing the demands of contemporary education. This research is significant as it offers an in-depth understanding of how Islamic educational institutions manage and cultivate a culture of quality, which can positively influence the overall education system in Indonesia. By integrating religious values with global educational standards, this study aims to propose a practical, sustainable model for the enhancement of educational quality in Islamic schools. Consequently, this research is expected to contribute significantly to global discussions on how Islamic educational institutions can maintain high standards of education while preserving their religious identity (Saada, 2023; Sulhan & Hakim, 2023; Umami & Yasin, 2024).

Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia are facing significant challenges in maintaining and improving the quality of education they offer. Although these institutions have the potential to produce graduates who excel both academically and ethically, the quality of education remains limited by traditional curricula that are often misaligned with global trends and rapid social changes. Furthermore, many Islamic educational institutions struggle to manage quality culture effectively across various dimensions, including administration, teaching methods, and supporting infrastructure (Hasbi et al., 2025; Maulana, 2025). This has resulted in subpar educational outcomes that fail to meet the standards of competitiveness at the national or international levels. Therefore, this research is essential in providing solutions to address these issues, particularly by developing effective management strategies to improve the educational quality in Islamic institutions (Shofiyyah et al., 2023; Sodikin et al., 2024).

Previous studies have indicated that quality management in Islamic education faces several challenges, such as a lack of adequately trained human resources in educational management and resistance to reforms necessary to improve quality (Zolak Poljašević et al., 2025). Research by Hasbi et al. (2025) highlighted the role of organizational culture and community participation in improving educational quality, yet these studies often overlook the integration of Islamic values with global management standards in the quality management framework. This research seeks to fill this gap by introducing a model that combines religious and modern global perspectives in managing quality in Islamic educational institutions. By addressing this gap, the study contributes to the academic discourse on managing quality in Islamic education in a manner that is both contextual and holistic (Moslimany et al., 2024; Sodikin et al., 2024).

Other research, such as the work by Menteşoğulları, (2023) and Palah, Wasliman, Sauri, & Andriana Gaffar, (2022), has examined strategic management in educational quality improvement, with a focus on curriculum development and professional growth of educators. However, these studies tend to overlook how religious values can be incorporated into the quality management practices in Islamic schools. This research aims to build upon existing studies by introducing a management model that not only addresses technical aspects of quality management but also integrates Islamic values with global educational standards. Thus, this study contributes to the literature by providing a more holistic approach to managing quality in Islamic education, one that balances academic excellence with the preservation of religious identity (Sodikin et al., 2024; Udhma & Minarti, 2025).

This study presents a novel approach to quality management in Islamic educational institutions through the introduction of the "Religious-Global Management (RGM) Model," which integrates both Islamic values and global educational standards. Unlike previous research that has focused on either religious or global perspectives in isolation, this model offers a balanced framework that can be practically applied in Islamic educational institutions (Malizal, 2025; Saada, 2023). The RGM model provides a solution to the challenges faced by Islamic schools striving to maintain high-quality standards while preserving their religious identity. This innovative model is expected to make a significant contribution to the development of Islamic education by offering a pragmatic and sustainable management approach that can help Islamic institutions thrive in a globalized educational landscape (Hajar, 2024; Quadri & Al-Azhari, 2025).

The main research problem is how to develop a culture of quality in Islamic educational institutions that integrates both religious values and global educational standards. This research aims to answer this question by developing a comprehensive management model that addresses the integration of religious

principles with modern management systems. The model seeks to balance academic excellence with the preservation of Islamic values, ensuring that Islamic schools can compete globally while maintaining their unique religious identity.

This study contributes by offering an innovative solution for managing quality in Islamic educational institutions. It provides a framework that can be adopted by schools to integrate Islamic values into their quality management practices while aligning with global educational standards. By developing the Religious-Global Management (RGM) Model, this research helps bridge the gap between traditional Islamic educational practices and contemporary educational management, offering a new approach for improving educational quality in Islamic schools globally.

2. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative case study design with a multi-case study approach. This design was selected to enable an in-depth exploration of management strategies and quality culture practices in two Islamic educational institutions, as well as to allow comparative analysis of how each institution aligns global standards with religious values (Candra Susanto et al., 2024; Kawar et al., 2024). A qualitative approach is deemed appropriate as it captures complex social phenomena and provides nuanced insights that quantitative methods may not fully reveal.

The research was conducted at two Islamic educational institutions in Jombang, Indonesia: MA Unggulan Darul Ulum Step-2 and SMA Darul Ulum 2 Unggulan BPPT. These sites were chosen for their exemplary integration of religious values and global educational standards. MA Unggulan Darul Ulum Step-2 is recognized for its strong pesantren tradition, while SMA Darul Ulum 2 Unggulan BPPT is noted for adopting international curricula and modern management systems. Selecting these institutions allows for a comparative examination of traditional versus modern educational contexts in managing and developing quality culture.

Table 1. Overview of Informant Selection and Data Collection Procedures

Methodological Component	Detailed Description
Informant Categories and Number	School leaders, vice principals, teachers, students, and parents/guardians; total of 15 informants
Selection Criteria	Purposive sampling of individuals with strategic roles or direct experience in quality management
Interview Duration	Face-to-face interviews lasting between 45 and 90 minutes per session
Observation Focus	Coordination meetings, teaching supervision, ICT integration, head-teacher interactions, curriculum implementation, and quality evaluation
Documents Analyzed	Quality policy documents, curricula/syllabi, internal evaluation reports, annual work programs, meeting minutes, and photo/video documentation of activities

Data were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach (Braun & Clarke, 2024). The process involved transcribing interviews, organizing observation notes and documents, coding the data, and identifying themes related to quality culture development, management strategies, and resistance to change. The analysis also examined the interplay between religious values and global standards, followed by cross-case comparison to identify best practices and areas for improvement (Hancock et al., 2022).

Data credibility was strengthened through several validation strategies. Source triangulation compared information from interviews, observations, and documents to confirm consistency. Method triangulation examined the phenomenon through different procedures. Member checking allowed participants to verify interpretations. Audit trails documented research decisions transparently, while peer debriefing provided external reflection to reduce researcher bias and improve the trustworthiness of research findings and conclusions (Belina, 2023; Dolczewski, 2022; Morgan, 2024).

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In this section, we present the key findings derived from the research on the development of quality culture in Islamic educational institutions. The findings provide an in-depth analysis of how two distinct Islamic educational institutions have integrated religious values with global education standards to foster a culture of quality. Through this exploration, we identify the strategies each institution employs to overcome resistance and the resulting outcomes in terms of academic achievement, student character development, and institutional performance. The findings are structured around two main themes: conceptual frameworks and strategies for developing a quality culture, and outcomes and resistance management strategies. These findings offer valuable insights into how Islamic schools can adapt to the challenges of modern education while preserving their core religious principles, and they contribute to a deeper understanding of the development of quality culture in the context of Islamic education.

3.1 Findings

3.1.1 Concepts and Strategies for Developing Quality Culture in Islamic Educational Institutions

Quality culture is operationally defined as a set of shared values, managerial routines, educational practices, and stakeholder commitments that guide Islamic educational institutions in defining, implementing, monitoring, and sustaining educational quality. In the field, quality culture was not understood merely as the achievement of academic targets, but as an institutional habitus that combines religious formation, student discipline, curriculum implementation, teacher commitment, leadership supervision, and responsiveness to global educational demands. Thus, the concept of quality culture in both institutions refers to the practical alignment between Islamic values, organizational management, and educational improvement practices.

Interview data indicate that MA Unggulan Darul Ulum Step-2 constructed quality culture primarily through religious habituation and pesantren-based discipline. The principal stated, "Our approach to quality education begins with instilling strong religious values. We align our curriculum with Islamic teachings while ensuring that students develop character and discipline." This statement shows that institutional quality was framed through the internalization of Islamic values into curriculum delivery, daily routines, and student character formation. According to the researcher's interpretation, religious values served as the normative foundation that shaped institutional expectations, teacher-student relations, and behavioural standards.

A different emphasis emerged at SMA Darul Ulum 2 Unggulan BPPT. The principal explained, "Our strategy revolves around providing an international curriculum, such as the Cambridge system, and ensuring that our students are globally competitive. At the same time, we do not abandon our Islamic roots." This interview excerpt indicates that the institution positioned global standards as a tool for institutional competitiveness, while Islamic values remained the moral boundary of educational modernization. The researcher interprets this strategy as a dual-orientation model, in which internationalization was accepted not as a replacement for religious identity, but as a mechanism to strengthen institutional relevance in a changing educational environment. The ideal influence of quality culture development can be summarized in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Ideal Influence of Quality Culture Development

Informant Position	Interview Excerpt	Indicator
Principal, MA Unggulan Darul Ulum Step-2	"Our approach to quality education begins with instilling strong religious values."	Integration of religious values into curriculum, discipline, and student character formation
Vice Principal for Curriculum, MA Unggulan Darul Ulum Step-2	"Academic programs must remain consistent with pesantren values, because students are expected to be knowledgeable and morally disciplined."	Alignment between academic management and pesantren-based value formation

Teacher, MA Unggulan Darul Ulum Step-2	"Students are guided not only to complete lessons, but also to develop responsibility, manners, and religious awareness."	Teacher-mediated transmission of religious and moral quality standards
Principal, SMA Darul Ulum 2 Unggulan BPPT	"We provide an international curriculum, but we maintain Islamic values as the foundation of our school identity."	Integration of global standards with Islamic institutional identity
Vice Principal for Student Affairs, SMA Darul Ulum 2 Unggulan BPPT	"Students are encouraged to compete academically, use technology, and participate in international-oriented programs without losing religious discipline."	Development of global competence within an Islamic behavioural framework
Parent/Guardian Representative	"We expect the school to prepare our children for the future, but we also want them to remain religious and disciplined."	Stakeholder expectation for balanced religious and academic development

The table demonstrates that the ideal influence of quality culture development lies in institutional actors' ability to translate abstract values into concrete educational practices. In MA Unggulan Darul Ulum Step-2, quality culture was strongly associated with religious discipline, moral formation, and pesantren-based educational control. The principal, vice principal, and teacher excerpts show that quality was understood through the consistency between Islamic teachings and daily institutional practices. This indicates that religious values operated not only as symbolic identity, but also as managerial principles that regulated curriculum implementation, student behaviour, and teacher responsibility.

Observation data supported the interview findings. At MA Unggulan Darul Ulum Step-2, the researcher observed that religious routines, structured student supervision, teacher guidance, and pesantren-based activities were embedded into daily school life. Students engaged in academic learning while also practising religious rituals that reinforced discipline and moral conduct. At SMA Darul Ulum 2 Unggulan BPPT, classroom observations revealed greater use of technology, curriculum enrichment, and globally oriented learning activities, while religious practices remained part of the institutional rhythm. These observations suggest that each institution translated its quality culture into distinct operational practices: one through religious habituation and structured discipline, the other through curriculum modernization and the development of global competence. The results of the observations are shown in the table below.

Table 3. Panel Arrangement for Observational Documentation

		This panel demonstrates that quality culture is embedded in religious discipline, moral formation, and pesantren-based educational practices at MA Unggulan Darul Ulum Step-2. Religious habituation activities, pesantren routines
		Teacher supervision, head-teacher interaction. This panel shows that quality culture is sustained through structured supervision, teacher guidance at MA Unggulan Darul Ulum Step-2.
		Classroom technology use, international curriculum activities. This panel illustrates how global standards are operationalized through curriculum modernization, digital learning, and academic competitiveness at SMA Darul Ulum 2 Unggulan BPPT.



Coordination meeting, Curriculum discussion
This panel indicates that quality culture is developed through collaboration, communication, and shared commitment among school leaders, teachers, and stakeholders at SMA Darul Ulum 2 Unggulan BPPT.

Observational documentation of quality culture practices in MA Unggulan Darul Ulum Step-2 and SMA Darul Ulum 2 Unggulan BPPT. Panel A presents religious habituation and pesantren-based discipline as the foundation of quality culture. Panel B shows leadership supervision and teacher guidance in sustaining institutional values. Panel C illustrates technology-supported and globally oriented learning practices. Panel D presents coordination and stakeholder participation as mechanisms for maintaining quality culture.

Both institutions developed a culture of quality by combining Islamic identity with educational quality improvement, but they differed in their strategic emphasis. MA Unggulan Darul Ulum Step-2 emphasized religious formation as the core pathway to quality, whereas SMA Darul Ulum 2 Unggulan BPPT emphasized global competitiveness while maintaining Islamic values as the ethical foundation. Therefore, quality culture in these institutions should not be read as a single uniform model, but as a context-sensitive institutional strategy shaped by history, leadership orientation, curriculum policy, and stakeholder expectations.

In SMA Darul Ulum 2 Unggulan BPPT, the table reveals a broader orientation toward global competence, technology use, and international curriculum adaptation. However, the data also show that global standards were not adopted in a purely secular or technocratic manner. Instead, they were filtered through Islamic values and stakeholder expectations. This finding is important because it explains how modernization becomes acceptable in Islamic educational institutions when it is framed as compatible with religious identity. Thus, the ideal influence of quality culture lies not in academic modernization alone, but in the institution's capacity to maintain normative coherence while responding to global educational demands.

3.1.2 Outcomes and Resistance Management in Quality Culture Development

Outcomes and resistance management are operationally defined as the observable and perceived institutional effects of quality culture development, along with the strategies school leaders use to address hesitation, concern, or opposition to educational change. The term "outcomes" does not refer to statistically measured improvement, because this study did not employ quantitative academic performance data. Instead, outcomes refer to empirically observed and informant-reported indicators, including student discipline, curriculum implementation, teacher coordination, stakeholder participation, institutional consistency, and perceived readiness to engage with modern educational standards.

Interview data from MA Unggulan Darul Ulum Step-2 show that resistance mainly emerged from concerns that modern management practices might weaken pesantren traditions. The principal stated, *"Our strategy focuses on integrating Islamic values with academic achievement, so that modernization does not remove the pesantren spirit."* This statement suggests that resistance was managed by framing change as a continuation of Islamic educational values rather than as an external intervention. The researcher interprets this as a value-alignment strategy, in which leadership reduced resistance by ensuring that innovation was religiously meaningful and institutionally acceptable.

At SMA Darul Ulum 2 Unggulan BPPT, resistance was more closely associated with concerns about adopting international curricula and global learning standards. A vice principal explained, *"Some stakeholders initially worried that international programs would reduce Islamic identity, but we involved teachers and parents in discussions so they could understand the direction of the school."* This excerpt indicates that resistance was managed through participation, communication, and stakeholder inclusion. The researcher interprets this as a participatory adaptation strategy, where institutional acceptance of

change was built through dialogue, shared understanding, and gradual policy implementation. The empirical flow of resistance management can be described as follows.

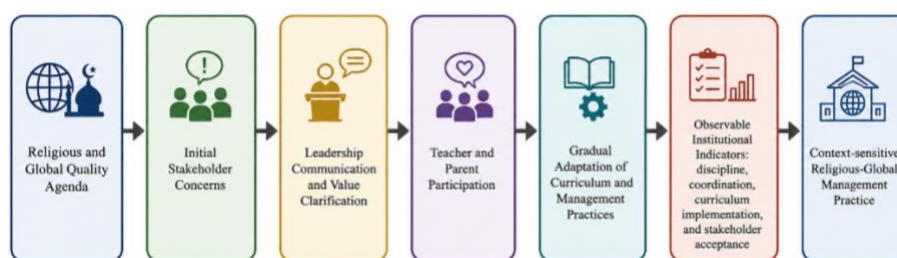


Figure 1. Empirical Flow of Outcomes and Resistance Management in Quality Culture Development

This flow on figure 1 shows that quality culture development did not occur solely through linear policy implementation. Instead, it moved through a process of negotiation between institutional aspirations and stakeholder concerns. Religious values served as the legitimizing foundation, while leadership communication and stakeholder participation served as mechanisms to reduce resistance. The observed outcomes were therefore not simply the result of adopting global standards or preserving religious traditions, but of continuous alignment among values, practices, and institutional expectations.

The ideal influence of resistance management and quality culture outcomes can be summarized as follows.

Table 3. Ideal Influence of Outcomes and Resistance Management in Quality Culture Development

Informant Position	Interview Excerpt	Indicator
Principal, MA Unggulan Darul Ulum Step-2	"Our strategy focuses on integrating Islamic values with academic achievement, so that modernization does not remove the pesantren spirit."	Value alignment as a mechanism for reducing resistance
Vice Principal, MA Unggulan Darul Ulum Step-2	"Changes are introduced gradually through coordination with teachers and by referring to the values already accepted in the pesantren."	Gradual adaptation and internal institutional legitimacy
Teacher, MA Unggulan Darul Ulum Step-2	"When a program is explained as part of improving student responsibility and religious discipline, teachers can accept it more easily."	Teacher acceptance through religious framing and pedagogical relevance
Principal, SMA Darul Ulum 2 Unggulan BPPT	"We focus on global competencies, ensuring our students are prepared for a globalized world while maintaining Islamic character."	Global competence development within an Islamic value framework
Vice Principal for Curriculum, SMA Darul Ulum 2 Unggulan BPPT	"Teachers and parents are involved in curriculum discussions so that international programs can be understood and accepted."	Participatory curriculum governance and stakeholder communication
Parent/Guardian Representative	"We support innovation as long as the school continues to protect religious discipline and student character."	Conditional stakeholder acceptance of modernization

Table 4 indicates that the relationship between leadership framing and stakeholder trust shaped resistance management. In MA Unggulan Darul Ulum Step-2, the excerpts show that resistance was managed through internal cultural legitimacy. Change was accepted when presented as strengthening rather than replacing the pesantren tradition. This finding suggests that religious values served as a stabilizing mechanism, enabling the institution to introduce academic and managerial reforms without disrupting its core identity.

In SMA Darul Ulum 2 Unggulan BPPT, the table shows that resistance was managed through participatory governance and strategic communication. The adoption of international curricula and

global competencies required institutional actors to explain, negotiate, and contextualize change. Stakeholder support was conditional: parents and teachers accepted innovation when Islamic character formation remained protected. This demonstrates that the success of a globally oriented quality culture depends on the institutional capacity to maintain ethical continuity while implementing educational modernization.

Both institutions experienced resistance because educational change raised concerns about their institutional identities. However, resistance was not treated as a problem to be suppressed. Instead, it was managed through dialogue, alignment with religious values, gradual implementation, teacher involvement, parent participation, and leadership mediation. The findings, therefore, suggest that the effectiveness of quality culture development depends less on the mere adoption of modern standards and more on how institutional actors make those standards compatible with the religious and cultural expectations of the school community.

The data show a recurring pattern: resistance decreases when change is communicated as value-consistent, participatory, and beneficial for students. In MA Unggulan Darul Ulum Step-2, the dominant mechanism was religious legitimation, in which modernization became acceptable when linked to pesantren values. In SMA Darul Ulum 2 Unggulan BPPT, the dominant mechanism was participatory internationalization, in which global standards were accepted when teachers and parents were involved in interpretation and implementation. These two pathways form the empirical basis of the proposed Religious-Global Management Model.

The pattern emerging from the data consists of four connected stages. First, institutional change introduced new quality expectations, either through the modernization of pesantren management or the adoption of global curricula. Second, stakeholders expressed concern about the possible weakening of Islamic identity. Third, leaders responded by aligning change with religious values and involving teachers, parents, and school communities in the process. Fourth, the institutions produced observable indicators of quality culture, such as disciplined routines, coordinated curriculum implementation, teacher acceptance, and stakeholder support. This pattern supports the conclusion that quality culture in Islamic education develops through negotiated alignment between religious identity and global educational demands.

3.1.3 The Religious-Global Management Model as an Empirically Derived Construct

Based on the cross-case analysis, the Religious-Global Management Model can be formulated as an empirically derived management construct that explains how Islamic educational institutions integrate religious identity with global educational standards in developing a quality culture. The model consists of five interrelated components: religious value foundation, global standard orientation, adaptive leadership, stakeholder participation, and quality culture practices. Religious values provide normative legitimacy and behavioural direction, while global standards offer external reference points for curriculum development, institutional competitiveness, and future-oriented competencies. Adaptive leadership connects these two dimensions by translating strategic goals into institutionally acceptable practices, whereas stakeholder participation strengthens ownership and reduces resistance to change.

The working mechanism of the model follows a contextual sequence in which Islamic values legitimise educational change, leaders interpret global standards through religious and institutional priorities, stakeholders participate in the adaptation process, and quality culture becomes embedded in daily routines. These routines include supervision, curriculum implementation, student discipline, teacher coordination, and evaluation mechanisms. The model works most effectively under conditions of strong leadership commitment, shared religious identity, openness to educational improvement, teacher involvement, parental trust, and organizational routines that enable monitoring and reflection. Without these supporting conditions, the model may remain rhetorical rather than becoming an institutionalized practice.

However, the model has clear limitations. It was developed from two Islamic educational institutions in Jombang, Indonesia, so its transferability depends on contextual similarity rather than statistical generalization. The study also does not claim causal improvement in academic achievement,

as it did not analyse longitudinal academic data or standardized performance metrics. Therefore, the Religious-Global Management Model should be understood as a qualitative analytical framework grounded in perceived and observed quality culture practices. Its empirical contribution lies in showing that Islamic schools can negotiate tradition and globalization through the interaction of values, leadership, participation, and institutional routines.

3.2 Discussion

The findings show that quality culture in Islamic educational institutions is not formed merely through formal quality policies, but through the institutionalization of values, routines, leadership practices, and stakeholder participation. In MA Unggulan Darul Ulum Step-2 and SMA Darul Ulum 2 Unggulan BPPT, quality culture emerged as a negotiated construct between Islamic identity and contemporary educational demands. This finding extends previous studies on the blending of traditional and modern education systems (Castro, 2019; Hasbi et al., 2025; Ogunmakin, 2024) by showing that integration requires leadership mediation, curriculum alignment, institutional routines, and stakeholder trust. From the perspective of quality management theory, quality culture is not limited to technical compliance with standards, but involves continuous value alignment and organizational commitment. From organizational culture theory, both schools show that institutional quality is shaped by shared assumptions about what counts as “good education,” whether defined through religious discipline, global competence, or both.

The cross-case analysis reveals two distinct but complementary pathways. MA Unggulan Darul Ulum Step-2 represents a religious-value-based pathway, where pesantren tradition, moral discipline, and Islamic habituation function as the main sources of institutional legitimacy. In this case, quality is understood as the ability to produce students who are academically engaged, religiously disciplined, and morally responsible. In contrast, SMA Darul Ulum 2 Unggulan BPPT represents a global-standard-oriented pathway, where international curriculum adoption, ICT-supported learning, and modern management systems are used to strengthen institutional competitiveness. However, global orientation does not replace Islamic identity; it is interpreted through Islamic values so that modernization remains culturally acceptable. This differs from Rahman & Azzahra, (2024), who argued that many Islamic institutions separate religious education from academic curriculum. The present study shows that such separation is not inevitable because religious and academic orientations can be integrated into a coherent quality culture (Hajar, 2024; Saada, 2023).

Theoretically, the findings suggest that quality culture in Islamic education operates through a dual logic of preservation and adaptation. Preservation refers to maintaining Islamic values as the moral foundation of institutional life, while adaptation refers to selectively adopting global standards, modern curricula, and technology-supported learning. Religious values serve as the internal quality philosophy, while global standards function as external benchmarks for development. In organizational culture terms, Islamic values shape the deeper layer of institutional meaning, while global standards influence visible practices such as curriculum implementation, supervision, learning innovation, and evaluation. This explains why both institutions could pursue educational modernization without detaching themselves from their religious identity.

The findings on resistance indicate that quality culture development is inherently contested. At MA Unggulan Darul Ulum Step-2, resistance emerged because modern management practices were perceived as potentially disruptive to pesantren traditions. At SMA Darul Ulum 2 Unggulan BPPT, resistance appeared through stakeholder concern that international curriculum adoption might weaken Islamic identity. This aligns with Lomba-Portela et al. (2022) and McLure & Aldridge (2022) those who identify resistance as a major barrier in educational reform. However, this study deepens that argument by showing that resistance in Islamic educational institutions is not only administrative or technical, but also cultural, emotional, and theological. Unlike Quinteros & Covarrubias (2024), who focused mainly on faculty resistance, this study shows that resistance is distributed across teachers, students, parents, and institutional leaders, requiring multi-stakeholder negotiation (Nwisagbo et al., 2025; Oloba, 2025).

The strategies used by both institutions, including dialogue, leadership involvement, value clarification, stakeholder participation, and recognition mechanisms, are consistent with participatory change management in education (Haveman et al., 2023). Yet, the data show that participation becomes effective only when accompanied by value alignment. At MA Unggulan Darul Ulum Step-2, change was accepted when linked to religious discipline and pesantren values. At SMA Darul Ulum 2 Unggulan BPPT, global curriculum reform became acceptable when explained as compatible with Islamic character formation. This refines studies on rewards and recognition in educational change (Airin & Md Sharif, 2024; Khanum et al., 2025) by showing that incentives may support commitment, but deeper acceptance depends on whether change is perceived as strengthening the moral mission of the institution (Chychun et al., 2023; Priya et al., 2025).

The practical implication is that Islamic educational institutions should not treat global standards and religious values as separate agendas. Quality culture becomes more sustainable when global practices are translated into the language of Islamic institutional identity. At MA Unggulan Darul Ulum Step-2, the key challenge was introducing modern management routines without disrupting pesantren-based moral order. At SMA Darul Ulum 2 Unggulan BPPT, the challenge was adopting international curricula without producing anxiety about religious dilution. Therefore, communication and stakeholder involvement should be treated as core mechanisms of quality management, not supplementary activities (Qusairi et al., 2025; Romlah et al., 2025). The study also requires cautious interpretation of outcomes: it identifies perceived and observed indicators such as disciplined routines, teacher coordination, curriculum implementation, stakeholder acceptance, and integration of Islamic values with modern learning practices, but it does not claim statistically measured improvement in academic achievement or institutional efficiency because no longitudinal academic data or standardized performance metrics were analysed. This complements Pitriani et al. (2024) by explaining the institutional process through which religious and secular knowledge are integrated, rather than claiming causal improvement.

Overall, this study contributes to the literature by proposing the Religious-Global Management Model as an empirically grounded analytical framework. The model is not a universal formula, but a context-sensitive explanation of how Islamic educational institutions negotiate religious identity and global educational standards. Its main components are religious value foundation, global standard orientation, adaptive leadership, stakeholder participation, and institutionalized quality practices. Islamic values provide legitimacy, global standards provide developmental direction, leadership mediates meaning, stakeholders strengthen ownership, and routines embed quality culture into daily practice. This model addresses a gap in previous literature by moving beyond general claims about the compatibility of Islam and modernization, explaining instead how such compatibility is constructed, contested, and sustained in real institutional settings.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Islamic educational institutions can integrate religious values with global educational standards in developing a sustainable quality culture through context-based strategies. The findings show that quality culture was developed through three main approaches: strengthening Islamic character and religious traditions, adopting modern educational management and international standards, and managing institutional change through participatory leadership and stakeholder involvement. The two institutions implemented different strategies according to their institutional orientation, yet both maintained Islamic principles while improving educational quality.

The study contributes to the field of Islamic educational management by providing an empirical model of quality culture development that combines religious values with global educational demands. These findings offer practical insights for Islamic educational institutions seeking to strengthen institutional quality without losing their religious identity. This study is limited to two Islamic educational institutions in one region of Indonesia. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve a wider range of institutions and different regional contexts to validate and refine the proposed

model, as well as to examine the long-term impact of quality culture development on institutional performance and student outcomes.

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