

ISLAMIC EDUCATION MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR SDG 4: EDUCATION COMPARISON INDONESIA AND TURKIYE

Muhammad Rizki Syahputra¹, Wahyu Iskandar²,
Masringgit Marwiyah Nst³, Mahdi Handayani Sidik⁴

¹ Universitas Islam Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

² Institut Islam Muaro (INISMA) Jambi, Indonesia

³ Poltek AMI Medan, Indonesia

⁴ Selçuk Üniversitesi, Türkiye

e-mail : rizkisyahputra@fai.uisu.ac.id¹, wahyuiskandar@inisma.ac.id²,
masringgitmarwiyahnst@poltek-amimedan.ac.id³, mahdihandayani@selcuk.edu.tr⁴

Abstract: Despite growing scholarly interest in Islamic education reform, empirical comparative studies examining how Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) in Indonesia operationalize institutional management strategies to meet modernity's demands, benchmarked against internationally recognized models such as Turkey's Imam Hatip schools, remain absent from Scopus-indexed literature. This research gap motivated a qualitative multi-site case study at three MI in North Sumatra, Indonesia, complemented by cross-national comparative analysis with Turkish Imam Hatip schools, aimed at identifying, theorizing, and benchmarking management strategies that align with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with 18 institutional stakeholders across three MI in Deli Serdang and Medan, participant observation, and institutional document analysis over six months. Five strategic dimensions emerged: (1) integrative curriculum design combining Kurikulum Merdeka with Islamic studies; (2) character-based pedagogy embedded in daily Islamic routines; (3) participatory musyawarah governance; (4) ethically framed digital integration; and (5) teacher professionalism reinforced through PPG Madrasah certification. Comparative analysis reveals that while MI and Imam Hatip schools share foundational Islamic educational values, Turkey demonstrates stronger state-institutional coherence and systematized teacher formation, whereas MI exhibit greater community-driven governance flexibility. These findings offer a replicable governance framework for Indonesian MI reform and inform SDG 4 policy implementation within Muslim-majority educational systems.

Keywords: Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, Islamic Education Management, Comparative Education, SDGs 4, Imam Hatip School.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic primary schools across Muslim-majority nations are caught in a structural tension: how to preserve the religious authenticity that defines their institutional identity while equipping learners with the competencies demanded by an increasingly technological, knowledge-driven, and interconnected global economy. In Indonesia (home to the world's largest Muslim population) Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) function as the primary vehicle for faith-based basic education, serving over four million students annually under the dual oversight of the Kementerian Agama (Ministry of Religious Affairs) and the Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi (Kemendikbudristek). Yet, despite their scale and social significance, MI consistently underperform relative to public primary schools on national standardized assessments, and their institutional management practices remain understudied in international comparative education research (Azra, 2019; OECD, 2023).

The challenge is not merely pedagogical but fundamentally managerial. Without adaptive and coherent institutional governance, even well-designed Islamic curricula fail to translate into the quality learning outcomes envisioned by Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), the global commitment to inclusive, equitable, and quality education by 2030 (UNESCO, 2023). North Sumatra (Sumatera Utara) presents a particularly instructive regional context: as Indonesia's third most populous province, it hosts a diverse multi-ethnic, multi-religious population in which MI operate within competitive pluralistic educational markets, serving predominantly Batak Muslim and Javanese Muslim communities alongside secular national schools and Christian-denominational schools. Managing Islamic identity formation alongside modern academic standards in this context demands sophisticated institutional strategies that have yet to be systematically documented.

A systematic review of Scopus-indexed literature published between 2015 and 2024 reveals that comparative studies of Islamic primary school management, particularly those benchmarking Indonesian MI against internationally established models, are virtually absent. Studies of Islamic education governance predominantly examine macro-level policy reform (Niyozov & Memon, 2011; Hefner & Zaman, 2007), theoretical frameworks of Islamic educational philosophy (Al-Attas, 1993; Wan Daud, 1998), or single-country descriptive accounts of madrasah challenges (Azra, 2019). Turkey's Imam Hatip schools, by contrast, have attracted substantial comparative attention as a model of state-supported Islamic

education that successfully integrates national secular curriculum standards with comprehensive Islamic formation, producing graduates who compete effectively in Turkish higher education and professional markets (Ozgur, 2012; Pak, 2004; Kaymakcan & Meydan, 2014). This comparative neglect of MI relative to Imam Hatip schools constitutes a significant empirical and policy gap.

Turkey's Imam Hatip schools provide a theoretically productive comparative case for Indonesian MI for three reasons. First, both systems emerged from pre-colonial Islamic educational traditions, pondok pesantren and Ottoman medrese respectively, and subsequently underwent state-directed modernization in the twentieth century (Ozgur, 2012; Azra, 2019). Second, both operate within secular-nationalist state systems that simultaneously mandate Islamic education for Muslim students, creating analogous institutional governance dilemmas. Third, Turkey's Imam Hatip model has been subject to substantial international scholarly scrutiny and policy evaluation, providing a robust documentary comparative baseline against which MI practices can be meaningfully assessed. The cross-national comparison thus enables both descriptive documentation and analytical benchmarking of MI management strategies.

The theoretical framework of this study integrates classical Islamic management principles, *takhthith* (strategic planning), *tanzhim* (organizing), *tanfidz* (actuating), and *taqwim* (evaluating) (Rachman, in Ekowati et al., 2025), with contemporary strategic management theory (Mintzberg et al., 2009) and SDG 4's quality education framework (UNESCO, 2023). This integrative lens recognizes that effective Islamic educational institutions are not simply religious organizations but complex managerial entities navigating competing normative, regulatory, and community demands. It further positions Islamic management principles not as obstacles to educational modernity but as potential resources for constructing distinctive, values-coherent governance models.

The novelty of this study is threefold: (1) it provides the first empirical multi-site comparative study of MI management strategies in North Sumatra; (2) it introduces a structured cross-national comparison between Indonesian MI and Turkish Imam Hatip schools using a shared SDG 4 analytical framework; and (3) it generates a five-dimensional institutional governance model that Indonesian MI reform policymakers can deploy within the existing Kurikulum Merdeka (Freedom to Learn) framework. By grounding local institutional analysis in international

comparative benchmarking, this research contributes both to Islamic education management theory and to the practical agenda of faith-based educational governance in the Global South.

This study addresses the following research question: What management strategies do Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in North Sumatra employ to integrate Islamic educational values with the demands of modernity, and how do these strategies compare with those of Turkey's Imam Hatip schools in advancing SDG 4 quality education principles? Answering this question advances understanding of how Muslim-majority nations can pursue global educational sustainability goals without sacrificing religious educational identity.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative multi-site comparative case study design (Yin, 2018; Stake, 2006) to investigate management strategies at three purposively selected Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in North Sumatra, Indonesia, benchmarked against Turkey's Imam Hatip schools through secondary cross-national comparative analysis. The multi-site case study design was chosen because it enables systematic comparison across institutional contexts while preserving the contextual depth essential for understanding governance practices (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Cases were purposively selected to maximize variation across institutional settings: MI A and MI B are located in semi-urban Deli Serdang district, while MI C operates in metropolitan Medan, ensuring diversity in community demographics, resource levels, and governance contexts.

Primary data were generated through: (1) semi-structured interviews with 18 key informants across the three MI, including school principals, classroom teachers, administrative staff, parents/school committee members, and senior students; (2) participant observation of classroom instruction, administrative meetings, and co-curricular activities over six months (January–June 2024); and (3) institutional document analysis encompassing curriculum plans, school profiles, annual work programs (RKAM), and policy correspondence. Table 1 provides an overview of the research design, and Table 2 presents the informant profile. The Turkish Imam Hatip comparative data were derived from Scopus-indexed scholarly literature and official Turkish Ministry of National Education (MEB) policy documents, enabling a structured secondary comparative analysis.

Table 1. Research Design Overview

Component	Indonesia-MI at North Sumatra	Turkiye-Imam Hatip Schools
Research site	Three purposively selected MI in Deli Serdang & Medan, North Sumatra	Secondary literature & policy documents on Imam Hatip schools (MEB, OECD)
Data sources	Semi-structured interviews (n=18), participant observation, school documents	Scopus-indexed comparative studies, Turkish MEB curriculum documents
Duration	Six months (January-June 2024)	Document analysis , concurrent with fieldwork
Analysis	Thematic coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006); NVivo -assisted triangulation	Cross-case comparative matrix; constant comparison
Validation	Member checking, peer debriefing, negative case analysis	Expert panel review (Islamic education scholars)

Table 2. Informant Profile

Code	Position	Institution	Rationale for Selection
KS-01	Principal	MI A – Deli Serdang	Institutional strategic decision-maker
KS-02	Principal	MI B – Deli Serdang	Comparative institutional context
KS-03	Principal	MI C – Medan	Urban MI governance perspective
GU-01 to GU-06	Classroom Teachers (6)	MI A, B, C	Pedagogical strategy implementation
TU-01 to TU-03	Administrative Staff (3)	MI A, B, C	Governance and curriculum planning
WA-01 to WA-03	Parents/Committee (3)	MI A, B, C	Community partnership perspective
PA-01 to PA-03	Students (3, age 11–12)	MI A, B, C	Learner experience of strategies

Data analysis followed Braun and Clarke’s (2006) six-phase thematic analysis framework. Interview transcripts were transcribed verbatim, translated where necessary, and coded inductively using NVivo 14 software. Themes were generated iteratively until theoretical saturation was achieved across all three MI sites. Cross-site comparison was conducted using a constant comparison matrix (Miles et al., 2020), with emergent themes tested against Turkish Imam Hatip literature to develop the cross-national comparative framework presented in Table 2. Credibility was ensured through

member checking (three informants per site), peer debriefing among research team members, and negative case analysis. Ethical protocols included informed consent from all participants, institutional permission from school principals and Kemenag North Sumatra district offices, and participant anonymization throughout reporting.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Integrative Curriculum: Merging Kurikulum Merdeka with Islamic Formation

All three MI demonstrated active efforts to harmonize the national Kurikulum Merdeka framework, introduced by Kemendikbudristek in 2022, with the Kemenag-mandated Islamic studies curriculum. Rather than treating these as parallel tracks, school principals facilitated thematic integration in which Islamic content served as the epistemological anchor for national curriculum domains. For instance, science lessons on biodiversity were systematically linked to Quranic verses on khalifah responsibility and environmental stewardship, while mathematics sessions incorporated Islamic context problems (e.g., calculating zakat proportions).

KS-01 (Principal, MI A) articulated the institutional logic: *“Kami tidak memisahkan mata pelajaran umum dari agama. Kurikulum Merdeka memberi kami ruang untuk itu. Anak-anak harus melihat bahwa ilmu pengetahuan dan iman berjalan beriringan, bukan saling bertentangan.”* [We do not separate general subjects from religion. Kurikulum Merdeka gives us space for that. Children must see that knowledge and faith walk together, not against each other.] This integrative orientation is consistent with Al-Attas’ (1993) ta’dib framework, in which the fragmentation of religious and secular knowledge is fundamentally rejected.

Character-Based Pedagogy Embedded in Daily School Life

Across all three MI, character formation (tarbiyah akhlaq) was institutionally embedded within the temporal structure of school life rather than confined to formal moral education lessons. Observable daily routines included: congregational Dhuhr prayer (shalat berjamaah), morning Quranic recitation (muraja’ah), weekly gotong-royong community service, and structured teacher-led reflective dialogue (tafakkur) connecting daily events to Islamic values. These routines were not treated as peripheral cultural practices but as deliberate pedagogical instruments within the institutional management plan (program kerja madrasah).

GU-03 (Classroom Teacher, MI B) explained: *“Setiap pagi kami mulai dengan muraja’ah dan doa. Ini bukan sekadar tradisi, ini adalah cara kami membentuk karakter anak sebelum pelajaran dimulai. Guru adalah teladan, bukan hanya pengajar.”* [Every morning we begin with muraja’ah and prayer. This is not merely tradition, it is our way of forming children’s character before lessons begin. Teachers are exemplars, not only instructors.] This observation aligns with Noddings’ (2005) ethics of care, extended within an Islamic epistemological frame in which moral formation is inseparable from spiritual discipline.

Participatory Musyawarah Governance

A consistently observed governance mechanism across all three MI was the institutionalization of musyawarah (deliberative consultation) as the primary decision-making mode. Monthly Komite Sekolah meetings brought together principals, teachers, parents, and local community representatives to collectively deliberate on curriculum implementation, behavioral policies, school budgets (RKAM), and community partnership programs. Observational data confirmed that parental inputs materially influenced institutional decisions, including the addition of Tahfizh programs at MI C following sustained parental advocacy through Komite Sekolah.

WA-02 (Parent Committee Member, MI B) noted: *“Kami tidak hanya diminta hadir. Kami diminta berpendapat dan keputusan kami didengar. Itu yang membuat orang tua percaya pada madrasah ini.”* [We are not merely asked to attend. We are asked to give opinions and our decisions are heard. That is what makes parents trust this madrasah.] This governance structure operationalizes Putnam’s (2000) social capital theory by generating institutional trust through participatory inclusion, while simultaneously reflecting SDG 16’s principle of accountable and inclusive governance.

Ethically Framed Digital Integration

All three MI incorporated digital technologies within their management and pedagogical strategies, but consistently framed technology use within Islamic ethical principles of amanah (trustworthiness), mas’uliyah (accountability), and hikmah (wisdom). Teachers utilized digital platforms (including the government’s SIMPKB and institutional LMS applications) for lesson delivery, administrative reporting, and parent communication. Critically, digital literacy instruction was embedded within Islamic character formation: students received explicit teaching on responsible digital behavior framed as an extension of akhlaq education.

KS-03 (Principal, MI C, Medan) stated: *“Teknologi adalah alat, dan seperti semua alat, ia bisa digunakan untuk kebaikan atau keburukan. Tugas kami adalah mengajarkan*

anak-anak cara menggunakannya sebagai seorang Muslim yang bertanggung jawab.”
[Technology is a tool, and like all tools, it can be used for good or harm. Our job is to teach children how to use it as a responsible Muslim.] This approach extends beyond standard digital literacy frameworks by grounding ICT competency within Islamic moral formation, a distinctive governance response to modernity not yet documented in existing MI literature.

Teacher Professionalism Through Dual Certification Systems

A fifth strategy, less visible in prior MI studies, was the systematic investment in teacher professional development through dual certification pathways: the Pendidikan Profesi Guru (PPG) Madrasah program administered by Kemenag, and subject-specific PLPG training aligned with Kemendikbudristek standards. Principals across all three sites identified teacher professionalism as the foundational enabler of all other management strategies, without competent and motivated teachers, integrative curriculum, character pedagogy, and digital integration could not be sustained.

KS-02 (Principal, MI B) emphasized: *“Guru yang baik bukan lahir sendiri. Kami harus mendukung mereka dengan pelatihan yang relevan, bukan hanya tentang cara mengajar, tapi tentang bagaimana menjadi pendidik Muslim yang profesional dan berakhlak.”* [Good teachers are not born on their own. We must support them with relevant training, not only about how to teach, but about how to be a professional and morally grounded Muslim educator.] Table 3 presents a cross-national comparative summary of all five strategies alongside Turkish Imam Hatip school practices and SDG 4 alignment.

Table 3. Comparative Management Strategies:
MI North Sumatra vs. Imam Hatip Turkey

Strategy Dimension	MI-North Sumatra	Imam Hatip-Turkiye	SDG 4 Alignment
Integrative Curriculum	Kurikulum Merdeka + Islamic studies; thematic integration of STEM with Quranic values	National core curriculum + compulsory Islamic subjects (Quran, Hadith, fiqh, Arabic)	SDG 4.1: Inclusive quality basic education
Character-Based Pedagogy	Akhlaq routines (dhuhr prayer, daily recitation, gotong royong); teacher as moral exemplar	Ethics of citizenship integrated with Islamic moral formation; school culture of discipline	SDG 4.7 : Education for sustainable development & global citizenship

Participatory Governance	Musyawarah-based komite sekolah; community and parental co governance	School boards (okul aile birligi); state -community collaboration under MEB oversight	SDG 16 & SDG 17: Inclusive governance & partnerships
Digital-Ethical Integration	ICT tools framed within Islamic ethics; digital literacy as amanah education	EBA (Education Information Network) platform; digital citizenship within Islamic context	SDG 4.4: ICT and 21st-century skills
Teacher Professionalism	PPG Madrasah & PLPG certification; competency-based in - service training	Theology + pedagogy dual-degree formation; national teacher quality standards (MEB)	SDG 4.c : Qualified an d trained teachers

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Discussion

The five-dimensional management model identified across MI in North Sumatra represents a significant empirical advance over prior single-site or policy-level studies of Indonesian madrasah governance. Previous research by Azra (2019) and Niyozov and Memon (2011) has documented the structural bifurcation between secular and religious learning in Islamic schools as a persistent governance challenge, yet has offered limited empirical evidence of how individual institutions actively bridge this divide. The present findings demonstrate that MI in North Sumatra are not passive recipients of national curriculum policy but active institutional managers who construct integrative educational models from available policy resources, most notably the flexibility afforded by Kurikulum Merdeka.

The integrative curriculum strategy observed in North Sumatra MI resonates with, but meaningfully extends, findings from Turkish Imam Hatip research. Ozgur (2012), in a comprehensive historical study of Imam Hatip schools published by SUNY Press, documents that Turkey's state-supported Islamic schools achieved sustained academic competitiveness through a mandatory dual-track curriculum combining national secular subjects with comprehensive Islamic formation, a balance institutionalized through centralized Ministry of National Education (MEB) standards. In contrast, the integrative curriculum at North Sumatra MI is largely a school-level governance

innovation enabled by Kurikulum Merdeka's project-based learning flexibility rather than driven by national mandate. This distinction suggests that Indonesian MI's curriculum integration is more contextually adaptive but also more vulnerable to institutional variation and leadership turnover.

The character-based pedagogy strategy documented across MI sites aligns with Tan's (2011) findings in Singapore's Islamic schools, which identified moral routine institutionalization as a distinguishing feature of high-performing Islamic primary institutions. The present study advances Tan's analysis by revealing the managerial intentionality behind these routines: principals at all three MI explicitly positioned daily akhlaq practices (Dhuhr prayer, muraja'ah, gotong-royong) as planned institutional management instruments within formal annual program documents, not as spontaneous cultural traditions. This deliberate pedagogical framing represents a more sophisticated governance posture than prior Indonesian madrasah literature has recognized (Sejatiningrum, 2019; Hidayah et al., 2025).

Comparative analysis reveals a significant structural divergence between MI and Imam Hatip schools in governance architecture. Turkish Imam Hatip schools benefit from a highly coherent state-institutional governance framework: standardized national curricula, centralized teacher formation programs through theology faculties (ilahiyat), state examination integration, and sustained political support across successive AKP governments (Kaymakcan & Meydan, 2014; Pak, 2004). Indonesian MI, by contrast, operate within a more fragmented dual-ministry governance structure, in which Kemenag and Kemendikbudristek maintain overlapping and sometimes competing jurisdictions over curriculum standards, teacher certification, and assessment policy. This governance fragmentation partially explains the within-country variation in MI quality documented by national assessment data (OECD, 2023).

The musyawarah participatory governance model observed at North Sumatra MI represents a distinctive institutional asset that Imam Hatip schools arguably lack. While Turkish Imam Hatip schools maintain formal parent-school boards (okul aile birliđi), the deliberative co-governance dynamic observed in MI Komite Sekolah meetings, in which parents materially shaped curriculum additions through sustained advocacy, reflects a deeper community embeddedness rooted in Indonesian Islamic civil society traditions (Hefner & Zaman, 2007). This community-governance strength aligns with Putnam's (2000) social capital theory and constitutes a governance resource that Indonesian MI reform should deliberately preserve and systematize, rather than replacing with more centralized administrative models.

The ethically framed digital integration strategy identified in this study represents the most theoretically novel finding relative to existing literature. Prior studies of technology in Indonesian madrasah (Abnisa & Azis, 2025; Ekowati et al., 2025) acknowledge digital tools as a modernity challenge but offer limited evidence of how institutions resolve the tension between technology adoption and Islamic value coherence at the pedagogical level. The present study documents a concrete resolution: North Sumatra MI embed digital ethics within akhlaq education, transforming ICT competency development into an Islamic moral formation practice. Turkey's Imam Hatip schools deploy a comparable logic through the MEB's national Education Information Network (EBA) platform, which is formally governed under Islamic ethical guidelines, suggesting cross-national convergence on this strategic approach that warrants further comparative investigation.

Teacher professionalism emerged as the foundational enabling condition for all other management strategies, a finding consistent with international evidence on school improvement (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017) and with comparative Islamic education research documenting the centrality of teacher quality in Imam Hatip school success (Ozgun, 2012). The dual certification pathway (PPG Madrasah + PLPG) utilized by North Sumatra MI represents a practical institutional response to the dual-ministry governance structure, enabling teachers to satisfy both Kemenag and Kemendikbudristek professional standards. However, informant data suggest that access to PPG Madrasah programs remains inequitably distributed, with smaller rural MI facing greater barriers to teacher certification than their urban counterparts, an equity concern directly relevant to SDG 4.c on qualified teacher provision.

Regarding SDG 4 alignment, Table 3 demonstrates that the five management strategies collectively advance all major SDG 4 sub-targets across both Indonesian and Turkish institutional contexts. This finding contributes an important policy argument: faith-based Islamic educational institutions, when well-managed, are not obstacles to SDG 4 achievement but active contributors to it. This challenges residual assumptions in global education governance literature that treat religious education systems as inherently in tension with secular international development frameworks (Pasha, 2011; UNESCO, 2023).

A critical limitation of this study is the asymmetry in comparative data sources: Indonesian MI data were generated through primary fieldwork, while Turkish Imam Hatip data relied on secondary literature. This methodological asymmetry means that the cross-national comparison is structured as a benchmarking analysis rather than an equivalent empirical comparison, limiting the causal claims that can be drawn from comparative patterns. Future research should address this limitation through direct multi-country fieldwork comparing

MI and Imam Hatip schools using matched-site designs.

The practical implications of this research are substantial for Indonesian Islamic education governance. The five-strategy model, particularly the integrative curriculum, musyawarah governance, and ethical digital integration dimensions, provides a concrete, empirically validated institutional framework that Kemenag policymakers can adapt within the Merdeka Belajar reform agenda. Specifically, formalizing musyawarah governance through standardized Komite Sekolah operational guidelines, and embedding digital ethics within the national Islamic character education (*pendidikan karakter Islam*) framework, represent administratively feasible reforms with strong evidence of institutional effectiveness.

Overall, the comparative analysis affirms that modernity and Islamic educational authenticity are not irreconcilable, both MI in North Sumatra and Imam Hatip schools in Turkey demonstrate that adaptive institutional management, grounded in Islamic principles and oriented toward SDG 4 quality education goals, constitutes a viable and impactful governance model for 21st-century faith-based education. The key governance differentiator between the two systems is not values or pedagogical philosophy but institutional coherence: Turkey's more centralized state-institutional alignment produces greater system-wide consistency, while Indonesia's community-embedded musyawarah governance generates greater contextual responsiveness and social legitimacy.

CONCLUSION

This study identified five empirically grounded management strategies through which Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in North Sumatra, Indonesia, integrate Islamic educational values with the demands of modernity: integrative curriculum design combining Kurikulum Merdeka with Islamic formation; character-based pedagogy embedded in daily school life; participatory musyawarah governance; ethically framed digital integration; and teacher professionalism through dual certification systems. Cross-national comparison with Turkish Imam Hatip schools reveals that both systems share foundational Islamic educational values and comparable SDG 4 strategic orientations, but diverge in governance architecture: Turkey demonstrates stronger state-institutional coherence and systematized teacher formation, while North Sumatra MI exhibit more adaptive community-driven governance. These findings collectively establish a five-dimensional Islamic education management model that is theoretically grounded, empirically documented, and practically applicable to Indonesian MI reform.

This study carries important limitations that bound the generalizability of its conclusions. First, the Indonesian primary data are drawn from three

MI in a single province, and findings may not represent MI governance patterns in Java, Eastern Indonesia, or other distinct regional contexts. Second, the Turkish comparative analysis relies exclusively on secondary literature, introducing methodological asymmetry that limits the equivalence of cross-national comparisons. Third, the six-month observation window may not capture seasonal or annual governance cycles fully. Future research should address these limitations through multi-province Indonesian MI studies, direct primary fieldwork in Turkish Imam Hatip schools using matched-site designs, and longitudinal tracking of student developmental outcomes in MI implementing the five-strategy model.

The policy implications of this research are concrete and actionable. For Kemenag and Kemendikbudristek, the study recommends: (1) formalizing integrative curriculum guidelines that explicitly authorize J-QAF-Kurikulum Merdeka thematic alignment at the school level; (2) standardizing musyawarah governance through national Komite Sekolah operational frameworks that protect community co-governance while ensuring accountability; (3) expanding equitable access to PPG Madrasah certification for rural and small MI to address the teacher quality gap identified in informant data; and (4) developing national digital ethics guidelines for MI that embed ICT competency within the Islamic character education framework. Scholars are encouraged to extend this work through multi-country ASEAN comparative studies examining how Muslim-majority educational systems in Malaysia, Pakistan, and Bangladesh operationalize SDG 4 within faith-based governance frameworks.

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