

Strategic Management and Digitalization: Elevating Islamic Education Quality in the Global Era

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Abstract:

The development of globalization and the digital era requires Islamic educational institutions to implement strategic management and digital transformation to improve the quality and competitiveness of institutions. This study uses a qualitative, comparative case study design across two institutions: the Addzimat Dai Indonesia Islamic Boarding School and SMPIT Qordova. Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation analysis. The results show that integrating strategic management, digital transformation, and transformational leadership significantly improves the quality of education. SMPIT Qordova has successfully implemented the EMIS and LMS systems, while the Addzimat Islamic Boarding School has begun implementing digital learning that remains rooted in Islamic values. However, the study also found several obstacles, particularly in digital infrastructure and technological literacy, which are not evenly distributed across the two institutions. Strategic management integrated with a culture of quality and the use of digital technology has been proven to improve the efficiency of Islamic education governance. Digital transformation plays a role in strengthening transparency, managerial effectiveness, and real-time quality data management. This research offers a conceptual framework that can be replicated by other Islamic educational institutions to formulate evidence-based policies that strengthen quality, innovation, and competitiveness in the global and digital era.

Keywords: digitalization; educational quality; Islamic education; strategic management.

INTRODUCTION

The development of globalization and digitalization has shaped a new landscape for global education, demanding faster and more adaptive transformations for educational institutions. Social and economic changes, as well as technological advances, are driving educational institutions to focus not only on teaching but also on strategically understanding external dynamics. In this context, strategic management is a key instrument for guiding policies and decision-making to align with the needs of the times. Furthermore, the use of information technology is no longer merely a complement but has become a key foundation for managing digital-based learning, administration, and educational services. An institution's ability to optimize technology determines the extent to which service quality and educational effectiveness can be improved. Collaboration with local stakeholders, such as local governments, industry, communities, and social institutions, is a crucial

element in building contextually relevant education. This synergy ensures that educational institutions do not operate in isolation but rather become part of a dynamic and globally competitive ecosystem (Chili et al., 2025; Nashrullah et al., 2025). Management of educational institutions, including Islamic boarding schools and integrated Islamic schools, must be carried out with systematic, focused, and data-driven planning to be able to respond to the challenges of the times. In an era of global competition, educational institutions are required not only to produce graduates who excel academically but also possess character, adaptability, and high digital literacy. Therefore, management strategies must be designed through a comprehensive needs analysis, involving an evaluation of internal conditions and external opportunities. Modern management approaches emphasize the importance of strategic planning that is responsive to technological, economic, and socio-cultural developments. Accurate use of data is key to formulating policies, measuring program effectiveness, and ensuring curriculum relevance to the needs of the workforce and global developments. Furthermore, collaboration with external institutions such as government, industry, and local communities is necessary to strengthen the implementation of integrative and contextual education programs. With visionary and data-driven management, Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) and integrated Islamic schools (*madrasahs*) have a significant opportunity to produce graduates who are not only virtuous but also ready to compete nationally and internationally (Arifin et al., 2021). However, not all Islamic educational institutions, particularly traditional Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) and *madrasahs* (*madrasahs*) in Indonesia, are able to optimally address these challenges. Limitations in infrastructure, technological mastery, and curriculum relevance to current needs remain major obstacles to improving educational quality. Several studies confirm that strategic management and quality management in many Islamic boarding schools have not been implemented comprehensively and sustainably (Chili et al., 2025; Eri Purwanti et al., 2020). This has resulted in weak internal quality evaluation systems and limited technology-based learning innovation in Islamic education (Apriyenti et al., 2024).

From an Islamic educational perspective, improving the quality of education is not merely viewed as an administrative task, but rather as a shared responsibility that demands moral and spiritual responsibility from all components of the institution. Educational quality must be managed based on Islamic values and local wisdom, so that the process is not merely technically efficient but also ethically and socially meaningful. In this context, transformative leadership is a key factor capable of mobilizing all resources toward positive change. Comprehensive quality planning, encompassing needs analysis, goal formulation, and strengthening work culture, needs to be implemented systematically and measurably. Furthermore, ongoing evaluation is a crucial tool to ensure that each educational program aligns with the institution's vision. Collaborative leadership, which fosters synergy between teachers, students, parents, and the community, has proven effective in accelerating institutional quality improvement. Through this approach, Islamic educational institutions have the capacity to create a superior, relevant, and impactful educational ecosystem (Hadi, 2018; Lestari et al., 2024). A well-planned human resource management strategy and institutional structure are the primary foundations for building quality Islamic education that is relevant to the needs of the times. Professional human resource management encompasses not only the recruitment and training of educators but also the continuous development of competencies so that teachers and staff are able to respond adaptively to social, technological, and workplace changes. At the same time, a clear, transparent institutional structure oriented toward a long-term educational vision is essential to ensure that each program is effective and measurable. Islamic educational institutions need to implement modern, accountable, and collaborative governance to create a conducive, innovative, and competitive learning ecosystem. Strong synergy between human resource management and institutional frameworks not only strengthens institutional operations but also provides an educational process capable of fostering Islamic character, 21st-century skills, and readiness to face global challenges. Therefore, structured and strategic management is key to achieving superior, adaptive, and sustainable Islamic education (Andikarya & Muluk, 2025; Maharani et al., 2024).

Various case studies conducted at Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) have shown that the implementation of a structured management system significantly contributes to improving institutional performance. A systematic managerial approach enables more targeted and proportional resource management, thus preventing waste and maximizing the institution's potential. This efficiency is not only evident in operational aspects but also has a direct impact on improving the quality of learning program implementation. Through needs-based planning, standardized work procedures, and continuous monitoring, Islamic boarding schools are able to develop more relevant, measurable, and results-oriented educational programs. The learning process becomes more productive because each activity is designed according to

institutional goals, supported by targeted resource allocation. As a result, Islamic boarding schools are not only able to maintain their traditional values but also demonstrate adaptive capacity to face the demands of modern education. Thus, these studies confirm that managerial transformation is not merely a technical necessity but also a strategic element that determines the sustainability and competitiveness of Islamic boarding schools in the context of contemporary Islamic education (Eri Purwanti et al., 2020)

Digital transformation has had a significant impact on the entire education system, including Islamic-based educational institutions. Digitalization not only opens broader access to information and enables the learning process to reach more students, but also offers opportunities to deliver more interactive, personalized, and adaptive learning experiences to meet the needs of the times. More than just a learning tool, digital technology is now a strategic instrument in strengthening the governance of educational institutions. Digital systems enable more accurate and transparent data management, enabling real-time, evidence-based quality evaluation processes. Through the integration of digital platforms in administration, learning, and performance monitoring, Islamic educational institutions can enhance their professionalism, accountability, and institutional efficiency. Thus, digital transformation is not simply a technological trend but a strategic necessity that plays a crucial role in encouraging Islamic educational institutions to become more adaptive, relevant, and competitive in facing current and future global educational challenges (Apriyenti et al., 2024; Chili et al., 2025). The strategic application of educational technology opens up significant opportunities for stronger collaboration between Islamic boarding schools and formal schools. Technology integration not only expands access to modern learning resources but also enables more efficient knowledge exchange, joint program management, and curriculum coordination. Through digital systems, both institutions can synergize traditional approaches based on Islamic values with contemporary learning that is adaptive to global developments. This collaboration ultimately forms an educational ecosystem that is more dynamic, inclusive, and responsive to students' needs in the digital era. By strengthening technology-based connectivity and coordination, Islamic boarding schools and formal schools have a greater opportunity to produce students who are not only noble but also competent, visionary, and ready to compete globally (Nashrullah et al., 2025). This research focuses on how modern management strategies, including digitalization and resource strengthening, can be effectively integrated in two Islamic educational institutions: the Addzimat Dai Indonesia Islamic Boarding School and the Qordova Islamic Junior High School as an effort to improve the quality and competitiveness of educational institutions in the contemporary era.

Previous studies have shown that the use of educational management information systems (EMIS) and digital platforms has contributed to improving the quality of educational services in various contexts, including Islamic-based institutions (Chili et al., 2025; Nashrullah et al., 2025). Furthermore, transformational leadership has been shown to significantly impact organizational culture, strategic planning processes, and human resource capacity development in schools and Islamic boarding schools (Lestari et al., 2024; Maharani et al., 2024). However, most studies have focused on a single institution and have not systematically compared institutions with different characteristics. This article draws on two case studies with contrasting yet complementary institutional backgrounds. Pondok Pesantren Addzimat Dai Indonesia represents a traditional Islamic boarding school model with a strong religious foundation, while SMPIT Qordova represents a modern Islamic educational institution that has integrated technology into its teaching system. This comparative approach allows for a more in-depth analysis of the dynamics of strategic management implementation, digital transformation, and educational quality governance in the contemporary Islamic education ecosystem (Eri Purwanti et al., 2020; Lestari et al., 2024).

Recent literature indicates that the integration of strategic planning, transformative leadership, and digitalization is a powerful conceptual framework for improving the quality of Islamic educational institutions in the global era (Apriyenti et al., 2024; Chili et al., 2025). However, there is still a lack of research in the Indonesian context that comprehensively discusses the application of this strategy to two different types of institutions within a single analytical framework. Therefore, this study aims to bridge this gap through a comparative approach between the Addzimat Dai Indonesia Islamic Boarding School and SMPIT Qordova. Theoretically, this study refers to the three main pillars of strategic management in education: strategic planning, implementation and organization, and control and evaluation. These three functions play an integral role in building an education system that is adaptive to the demands of the times. Strategic planning is necessary to formulate a long-term vision and mission that align with global challenges. Implementation and organization serve as a medium for operationalizing strategies in the form of structured and measurable activities, while control and evaluation functions are used to ensure program achievements and establish

systematic correction mechanisms (Andikarya & Muluk, 2025; Maharani et al., 2024). Related literature indicates that the adoption of strategic management models in Islamic education, particularly in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*), has not been fully systematic. Quality evaluations are often conducted informally without the support of structured data (Arifin et al., 2021; Maharani et al., 2024).

Various studies on digital transformation in education confirm that the success of technology integration is largely determined by the availability of adequate digital infrastructure and the technological competence of educators. Robust infrastructure, including stable internet access, adequate digital devices, and an integrated information management system, is the main foundation for optimal technology-based learning processes. However, infrastructure alone is not enough. These studies emphasize that teachers' capacity to master digital literacy, operate learning platforms, and innovate in designing interactive materials are key factors determining the effectiveness of digital transformation. Teachers are required not only to be able to use technological devices but also to understand how these technologies can improve the quality of the teaching and learning process pedagogically. Therefore, digital transformation in education cannot be understood simply as a process of technology adoption, but rather as a systemic change that encompasses strengthening the capacity of human resources and their supporting ecosystem as a whole (Apriyenti et al., 2024; Tisnawati & Sukari, 2024). These challenges become even more complex when faced with the need to maintain the integrity of Islamic values in the digitalization process.

In terms of leadership and resource management, the quality of leadership and human resource management remains a key determinant of quality achievement, but the implementation mode differs between schools and Islamic boarding schools. In schools, transformational leadership generally operates within a formal bureaucratic framework (RKS/RKAS, SPMI, BAN), focusing on teaching innovation, collaboration between teachers, and accountability based on documented performance indicators (Andikarya & Muluk, 2025; Lestari et al., 2024). In Islamic boarding schools, similar principles need to be aligned with charismatic-collegial authority (*kiai-asātīd*) and a culture of *tarbiyah* and exemplary behavior. Therefore, quality enhancement is more effective when built through the development of learning communities, structured *halaqah* (Islamic religious circles), and the inculcation of values whose impact on students' morals, manners, and religious competence is measurable. Facility management and financial accountability also require a contextual approach: schools rely on infrastructure standards and the School Operational Assistance (BOS/RKAS), while Islamic boarding schools combine typical infrastructure (dormitories, mosques, public kitchens) with socio-religious funding sources (donations, *waqf*), which requires a simple yet transparent audit system (Antoni et al., 2025; Wirawan et al., 2023). Although studies on Islamic boarding school education management continue to develop, comparative research specifically combining strategic management perspectives with digital transformation remains relatively rare. Furthermore, in-depth studies examining how modern school quality standards are contextually adapted to the Islamic boarding school ecosystem, which has distinct cultural characteristics and management practices, remain very limited. This research gap highlights the need for further analysis of quality adaptation models that are not only administrative but also culturally and operationally relevant within the Islamic boarding school environment (Purwanti et al., 2020; Chili et al., 2025).

This study fills this gap with an adaptive quality evaluation framework that combines formal performance indicators and religious character development indicators, enabling it to be operationalized in line with institutional identity. The objectives of this study are, first, to explain how the implementation of strategic management, integrated with a culture of quality and human resource planning, can improve educational quality at the two institutions studied. Second, to analyze how digital transformation can be optimized to expand access and improve learning quality, as well as its relevance to Islamic values. Third, to identify the roles of transformational leadership, human resource management, and facilities management in driving sustainable educational quality improvement. Based on these objectives, two main arguments can be formulated. First, the integration of strategic management and digital transformation is an effective approach to improving the quality of Islamic education in Indonesia. Second, the quality evaluation framework developed from these two case studies has the potential to be replicated at similar institutions to support policy development and capacity building for Islamic educational institutions that are more responsive to current developments.

As a practical contribution, this study not only offers a theoretical mapping but also recommends an adaptive governance model that can be implemented by Islamic educational institutions according to their respective capacities. The model emphasizes the importance of synchronizing macro-planning (value-based vision and mission), strengthening micro-systems (classroom management, supervision, teacher performance monitoring),

and utilizing technology as an integration medium, not merely an administrative tool. In other words, technology is not positioned to replace human roles, but rather to strengthen decision-making processes through more accurate and accountable data. Furthermore, this study offers a framework for developing a collaborative and multi-layered learning ecosystem. Islamic boarding schools and schools are viewed not as dichotomous entities, but as two institutional models that can complement each other in the context of strengthening 21st-century character and competencies. In this context, the comparative approach used aims not only to identify differences but also to explore the potential for integrating value-based quality models and performance-based quality models. This research emphasizes the urgency of aligning the Islamic education management paradigm from a conservative and reactive approach to an innovative and proactive one. This means that quality improvement cannot be achieved simply through short-term technical improvements, but requires the design of a long-term quality ecosystem that positions technology, people, organizational culture, and spirituality as a mutually reinforcing system. This approach is expected to serve as both a conceptual and operational foundation for a visionary and sustainable transformation of Islamic education.

METHOD

This research applies a qualitative approach with a comparative case study design, which aims to explore in depth the application of strategic management in improving the quality and competitiveness of education in two models of Islamic institutions with different institutional characteristics: Pondok Pesantren Addzimat Dai Indonesia as a representation of a traditional Islamic boarding school based on religious values, and SMPIT Qordova Rancaekek as a modern Islamic school that has integrated technology from an early age. This approach was chosen because it provides space to understand the phenomenon contextually, comprehensively, and in-depth, not only limited to the final results, but also in the process of planning, implementation, and evaluation of strategic management in the actual institutional reality (Aprida et al., 2024). The data collection method was carried out through a combination of three main techniques: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation studies. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner involving key informants who have strategic authority and direct experience in institutional management, such as the head of the Islamic boarding school, the principal, the deputy for curriculum, the quality assurance team, senior teachers, and administrative staff. Interview questions were directed at exploring how institutions formulate visions, utilize technology, build a culture of quality, and manage human resources and facilities adaptively to changes in the external environment (Utami et al., 2025). Participatory observation was used to capture the factual dynamics of daily activities, ranging from learning practices, technology integration into academic processes, to quality control mechanisms carried out formally and based on institutional traditions. Meanwhile, the documentation study focused on analyzing strategic planning documents, RPJM/RKAS, institutional SOPs, internal quality evaluation reports, teacher training records, and educational technology use policies. This multi-perspective approach is expected to produce a comprehensive and valid understanding of management practices at both institutions (Sadiyah et al., 2025).

Informants were selected using purposive sampling, based on their involvement and capacity in the institution's strategic processes. The validity of the findings was maintained through source triangulation (between informants), method triangulation (interviews, observation, documentation), and member checking, which involves reconfirming the researcher's interpretations with informants to avoid misinterpretation. Data analysis was conducted thematically through three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing and verifying conclusions. In the reduction stage, data were selected and categorized based on the research focus: strategic planning, digital transformation, and leadership and resource management. The next stage was data presentation in the form of an analytical narrative that facilitated the identification of patterns and relationships between variables. The final stage was drawing conclusions through a process of critical reflection and comparative analysis between the two institutions. Through this comparative analysis, the research aimed to identify similarities and differences in the strategic management approaches applied, while also formulating best practices that could be replicated or adapted by other Islamic educational institutions. With this methodological design, this research is expected to produce findings that are not only academically strong, but also have practical relevance in strengthening the transformation of Islamic education in the era of globalization and digitalization (Nurhayati et al., 2024).

Furthermore, to maintain objectivity and analytical depth, this research process was complemented by reflective journaling to record the researcher's observations of the socio-cultural dynamics that emerged during the observation and interview process. This technique is crucial for the researcher to recognize potential

interpretive bias and understand the cultural context surrounding each observed institutional decision and practice. The collected data were then explicitly compared between the two institutions to map how differences in institutional structure, leadership models, and levels of technology adoption influence the effectiveness of strategic management implementation. To ensure a more thorough analysis, the interpretation process was conducted iteratively, drawing on theoretical frameworks of Islamic educational management, total quality management (TQM), and digital transformation theory in education. This iterative approach enabled field findings to be not only described descriptively but also critically interpreted and linked to relevant conceptual models. Thus, this research methodology is oriented not only toward the exploration of phenomena but also toward the construction of new understandings that can enrich the literature and provide applicable operational recommendations for Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Learning Support Facilities

Data collection results indicate that both institutions have relatively adequate infrastructure and learning support facilities. Classrooms at SMPIT Qordova are equipped with digital whiteboards, presentation equipment, computer labs, and stable internet access. At PP Addzimat, classrooms are more representative but still use conventional equipment, with limited network access in some areas. Nevertheless, both institutions have operated digital platforms for administration, learning, and quality evaluation.

Table 1. Findings Related to Learning Support Facilities

Component	Addzimat Dai Indonesia Islamic Boarding School	Kordova Islamic Junior High School
Classroom	Representative, still conventional	Modern, equipped with digital whiteboard
Laboratory computer	Limited, sharing functions with other spaces	Complete and fully operational
Internet access	Limited availability in key areas	Stable and covers the entire environment
EMIS and digital systems	Used for administration	Integrated with learning and evaluation
Quality document	Yes, it's still in narrative form.	Existing, systematic and indicator-based

Interviews with the leadership of PP Addzimat revealed that the institution is working to improve the digital literacy of educators through internal training and alumni support. The principal of SMPIT Qordova emphasized that the internal digital-based quality assurance system has helped them monitor teacher performance and student learning outcomes in real time. SMPIT Qordova teachers stated that the use of an LMS facilitates material distribution and assessment, while PP Addzimat teachers emphasized the need for device support to expand the implementation of technology-based learning. In terms of strategic management implementation, both institutions have strategic quality planning documents that include learning objectives, performance indicators, and resource allocation. SMPIT Qordova has developed a data-driven evaluation system that is regularly updated, while PP Addzimat still relies on narrative reports and direct supervision from leaders. Stakeholder involvement is evident in discussion forums, coordination meetings, and digital literacy improvement programs that invite parents and the surrounding community. A culture of quality is also internalized through institutional leadership. At PP Addzimat, exemplary leadership emphasizes the integration of Islamic values with the quality of learning. At SMPIT Qordova, the principal implements a transformational leadership style by encouraging curriculum innovation and collaboration among teachers. Both leaders emphasized in interviews that quality values are not just a formality, but must be reflected in the learning practices and guidance of students or Islamic boarding school students.

Digital Transformation

The research results indicate that the digital learning infrastructure at both institutions is at a fairly good level of readiness. SMPIT Qordova has implemented modern facilities such as digital presentation-based classrooms,

computer laboratories actively used for academic activities, and high-speed internet access throughout the school. These conditions allow for optimal implementation of technology-based learning and integration into daily activities. On the other hand, Pondok Pesantren Addzimat Dai Indonesia also demonstrates its commitment to digitalization by providing appropriate learning spaces with ventilation and lighting to support student comfort, as well as a computer laboratory as a digital learning center. However, internet network distribution is still uneven across the boarding school area, so technology utilization is not as fully optimal as at SMPIT Qordova. In terms of quality governance, both institutions have developed formal quality policy documents and conducted outreach to all stakeholders. Various learning and administrative support tools have been adopted, such as the EMIS system, digital attendance, and online learning evaluation. The implementation of this technology not only improves administrative efficiency but also strengthens data accuracy, performance monitoring, and the effectiveness of the overall learning process.

Table 2. Findings Based on Observations and Documentation

Component	PP Addzimat Dai Indonesia	Kordova Islamic Junior High School
Classroom	Representative, conventional	Representative, digital
Laboratory computer	Yes, limited	Complete and integrated
Internet Network	Stable in key areas	Stable across the area
issue	Limited use	Fully integrated
LMS/e-learning	Still limited	Active and used daily
Quality document	Yes, in development	Complete and operational

Interviews with the leadership of PP Addzimat revealed a strong awareness of the importance of digitalization in supporting the quality of learning. The head of the Islamic boarding school emphasized that, "transformation" Digital is not only a demand of the times, but also a means to bring Islamic values closer through a more contextual and adaptive approach. "Teachers at PP Addzimat stated that they are still adapting to digital tools, particularly in terms of managing materials and online evaluations. Meanwhile, the principal of SMPIT Qordova stated that the use of technology is part of a project-based learning strategy and digital literacy. He stated, "We implement a blended learning approach so that students become accustomed to using technology while also understanding the Islamic context." The SMPIT teacher added that the daily use of the Learning Management System (LMS) has facilitated material distribution, interaction, and assessment. The strategic quality planning documents at both institutions include learning quality improvement objectives, performance indicators, resource allocation, and medium-term follow-up plans. Implementation of the quality program involves collaboration between stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and community leaders. Quality evaluation is conducted through coordination meetings, discussion forums, and regular reporting.

To strengthen the implementation of this transformation, the two institutions have also begun designing internal training focused on strengthening digital literacy and developing interactive learning media, so that they go beyond simply shifting conventional methods to online platforms and truly encourage more participatory and contextual learning. Teachers are given space to experiment with integrating Islamic values into technology-based projects, such as creating digital Islamic preaching content, Sharia-based social life simulations, and even spiritual reflection through students' daily digital journals. Furthermore, parental involvement in the digitalization process is being strengthened by providing more flexible and transparent communication channels, so that they are no longer mere recipients of information but rather active partners in monitoring their children's academic and character development. These efforts reflect a paradigm shift that digitalization is not merely a technical matter, but part of a broader strategy to build a more open, adaptive, and collaborative Islamic education ecosystem. Thus, digitalization is understood not as a threat to religious traditions, but rather as a means to expand the reach of Islamic values, ensuring their relevance and grounding in the lives of the modern generation.

Facilities and Quality Readiness

Transformational leadership and resource management have proven to be key drivers of quality improvement at both educational institutions studied. Field findings confirm that both institutions have adequate classroom facilities for face-to-face learning. These classrooms are designed with natural lighting and adequate ventilation, thus supporting a comfortable learning process. SMPIT Qordova has equipped its

classrooms with digital presentation tools that facilitate the integration of technology into learning. Meanwhile, Pondok Pesantren Addzimat Dai Indonesia uses conventional learning facilities, but these are well-maintained and remain suitable for use. Both institutions also provide computer laboratories as centers for technology learning activities, although internet connection stability is more optimal at SMPIT Qordova compared to PP Addzimat, which is not evenly distributed across the area. Furthermore, tools to support learning quality improvement have been prepared and implemented in a structured manner at both institutions. Various systems such as administrative management software, digital evaluation applications, and quality monitoring tools have been used to support smooth operations. Quality policy documents, including vision and mission statements, academic service standards, and quality-based operational procedures, have been formally developed and communicated to all stakeholders. The dissemination of this information includes teachers or *asatidz*, administrative staff, students, and parents or guardians, so that a shared understanding and commitment to maintaining the quality of education is formed.

Table 3. Findings of Facilities and Quality Readiness

Component	PP Addzimat Dai Indonesia	Kordova Islamic Junior High School
Classroom	Representative, conventional	Representative, digital-based
Laboratory computer	Yes, limited	Complete and actively used
Internet access	Limited to main areas	Stable across the area
issue	Limited use	Fully integrated
LMS/e-learning	Not structured yet	Daily active
Quality document	Yes, narrative	Complete and operational

In an interview, the head of PP Addzimat stated that his institution is “working to improve the digital literacy of teachers and staff through internal training and alumni support.” The head of SMPIT Qordova stated that the digital-based quality management system has helped them monitor teacher performance and student progress in real time. A teacher at SMPIT Qordova explained that the use of a Learning Management System (LMS) simplifies material distribution and assessments. The teacher at PP Addzimat expressed the need for improved device support to optimize digital learning. The implementation of strategic management at both institutions is evident in the strategic quality planning documents that contain learning objectives, performance indicators, resource allocation, and medium-term action plans. Quality programs include curriculum improvement, teacher human resource capacity, and strengthening digital literacy. Internal evaluations are conducted periodically, through discussion forums, coordination meetings, and regular reporting. Quality values have been internalized through the institutional culture. The institutional leadership demonstrates a transformational character with a clear quality policy vision, collaborative encouragement, and a focus on improving the quality of learning services. The leadership’s commitment to integrating religious values with educational quality standards is evident in learning practices, student mentoring, and facility management.

These digitalization efforts are also balanced by the development of ongoing teacher mentoring mechanisms through coaching and peer learning systems to ensure that the adaptation process is not individual, but collective and mutually reinforcing. At SMPIT Qordova, for example, senior teachers who are more technologically proficient serve as mentors for other teachers in designing interactive learning modules and authentic project-based assessments. Meanwhile, PP Addzimat has begun exploring collaborations with alumni with educational technology backgrounds to develop simple platforms based on the needs of students, such as memorization applications and *tajwid* evaluations. The involvement of parents and the surrounding community is also strengthened through digital communication forums that allow for rapid and transparent updates on student progress. Both institutions understand that digital transformation is not merely the use of technological devices, but is part of a broader strategy to build an adaptive, collaborative, and sustainable culture of quality. Therefore, the digitalization process is always integrated with spiritual values and Islamic character to ensure it is inseparable from the primary goal of education, which is to develop individuals with noble character who are competent in facing the challenges of the times. This approach shows that technology-based modernization can go hand in hand with strengthening religious identity, not as a threat, but as an instrument to strengthen the mission of Islamic preaching and education.

Integration of Strategic Management and Quality Culture in Improving the Quality of Learning

In terms of learning digitization, both institutions have used EMIS for quality data management. SMPIT Qordova integrates student attendance, assessment, and progress data into a digital platform accessible to teachers, parents, and school management. PP Addzimat has begun implementing limited hybrid learning and utilizing simple digital media for Islamic values-based teaching. Maintaining Islamic values while implementing technology is a primary concern for both institutions. Ecosystem collaboration is evident in both institutions' efforts to share best practices and digital resources. SMPIT Qordova involves parents in digital literacy programs, while PP Addzimat engages alumni to support teacher capacity building. Financial management at both institutions has been continuously documented, with a focus on transparency and accountability to support improvements in learning quality and digital infrastructure. However, challenges have also been identified. Unequal internet access at PP Addzimat continues to impact the consistency of digital learning. The digital literacy of educators at both institutions is uneven, despite training. Quality evaluation policies also require refinement to make indicators more operational and relevant to the context of Islamic boarding schools and SMPIT.

Learning quality indicators at both institutions include curriculum quality, teaching staff competency, improved digital literacy, access to digital materials, administrative efficiency, financial accountability, and stakeholder satisfaction. In summary, field findings demonstrate systematic efforts to integrate strategic management with a quality culture, but still require strengthening in the areas of digital literacy and operational quality evaluation. These field findings support the literature emphasizing the importance of integrating strategic management and a quality culture in improving learning quality. Clear strategic planning, stakeholder engagement, and transformational leadership are key drivers of successful quality improvement (Eri Purwanti et al., 2020; Hadi, 2018). The transformational leadership demonstrated by the leadership of SMPIT Qordova aligns with findings (Lestari et al., 2024) and (Karisma & Nadzirah, 2023) regarding the influence of leadership on improving academic services. In the context of PP Addzimat, the integration of Islamic values with educational quality enriches the quality management model that aligns with the characteristics of Islamic boarding schools.

Digitalization implemented through EMIS and hybrid learning has become an enabler for improving learning quality. This aligns with literature confirming that digitalization improves access, operational efficiency, and quality reporting capabilities through accurate data management (Apriyenti et al., 2024; Chili et al., 2025; Nashrullah et al., 2025). The digital transformation at SMPIT Qordova demonstrates a paradigm shift in curriculum planning and evaluation, aligned with policy alignment, digital literacy, and adequate infrastructure. This model can serve as a reference for traditional Islamic boarding schools (Islamic boarding schools) such as PP Addzimat to implement digitalization that is contextual and aligned with Islamic values (Tisnawati & Sukari, 2024). The findings also emphasize the importance of synergy between leadership, human resource management, and facilities as key to successful quality improvement. The literature indicates that transformational leadership strengthens staff commitment and cross-organizational collaboration, while strategic human resource planning and ongoing training are essential components in improving the quality of Islamic institutions (Karisma & Nadzirah, 2023; Lestari et al., 2024). The availability of supporting facilities, both physical and digital, is a prerequisite for strategic plan implementation (Eri Purwanti et al., 2020; Hadi, 2018). The obstacles identified, such as limited infrastructure and digital literacy, parallel the challenges of implementing EMIS in Islamic education contexts (Apriyenti et al., 2024; Nashrullah et al., 2025). The literature emphasizes the need for a quality evaluation framework that is operational and relevant to religious institutional culture (Chili et al., 2025; Karisma & Nadzirah, 2023). These findings underscore the importance of quality performance indicators that can be measured in real time and replicated across similar institutions in various global contexts.

Practical implications of this research include the need to establish a quality evaluation framework contextualized to religious institutional culture (Hadi, 2018; Karisma & Nadzirah, 2023), strengthening digital literacy capacity for educators and students through ongoing training programs (Tisnawati & Sukari, 2024), and developing sustainable digital infrastructure with transparent and accountable funding (Apriyenti et al., 2024; Chili et al., 2025; Nashrullah et al., 2025). Ecosystem collaboration between Islamic boarding schools, madrasas, families, and communities through integrated quality management practices also needs to be strengthened (Chili et al., 2025; Eri Purwanti et al., 2020). Future research directions include testing a more specific quality evaluation framework, examining the long-term impact of digital transformation on learning outcomes, and developing quality measures that are sensitive to variations in institutional culture. Further research can broaden understanding of inter-stakeholder

dynamics, current communication mechanisms, and the impact of national policies on the implementation of quality management in global Islamic boarding schools and madrasas (Chili et al., 2025; Eri Purwanti et al., 2020; Lestari et al., 2024; Tisnawati & Sukari, 2024).

Digital Transformation as an Enabler of Access and Quality of Islamic Education

The EMIS system is used to record attendance, assessments, and learning progress. Several hybrid activities have also been implemented, such as interactive online learning and cross-institutional digital discussions. Programs to improve teacher capacity in the use of technology have been implemented, although digital literacy challenges persist, particularly in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren). Key identified obstacles include limited network connectivity within the pesantren, disparities in digital competency among teachers, and the lack of a fully integrated digital-based quality evaluation framework. Nevertheless, Islamic values remain the primary foundation of every digital learning process, so technology is used as a means of strengthening, not replacing, the institution's core values. Observed learning quality indicators include curriculum quality, teacher capacity building, digital literacy, access to digital learning materials, administrative efficiency, financial accountability, and the level of satisfaction of students, Islamic boarding school students, and other stakeholders. Digital transformation acts as a lever (enabler) in improving access to and the quality of Islamic education, especially in the context of institutions with a strong religious character such as Islamic boarding schools and integrated Islamic schools. The findings of this study demonstrate that digitalization has opened up new opportunities for efficient learning management, transparency of quality data, and strengthened collaboration between stakeholders. The EMIS system implemented in both institutions serves as an effective tool for monitoring learning performance and supporting data-driven decision-making processes. This aligns with studies confirming that the digitalization of Islamic education is not only technological but also touches on epistemological aspects, curriculum, and social relations within educational institutions (Shobri, 2024; Sutarsih et al., 2024).

The role of transformational leadership and the internalization of a culture of quality are also crucial factors in the success of digital transformation. Findings indicate that leaders at both institutions actively emphasize the importance of cross-functional collaboration, openness to change, and community involvement in maintaining educational quality. The literature suggests that leadership with a long-term vision and the ability to build a reflective culture among educators tends to successfully integrate technology with existing institutional values (Baharuddin & Syaifuddin, 2024; Zakaria & Imanuddin, 2022). The instilled quality values are not merely administrative but also become part of the institution's work ethic and spirituality. The use of EMIS and digital learning platforms has significantly improved the quality reporting system. Data on attendance, assessments, and student achievement can be easily accessed by teachers, parents, and institutional leaders. These findings align with studies emphasizing the role of information systems in supporting the effectiveness of planning, implementation, and evaluation of quality improvement programs (Shobri, 2024; Sutarsih et al., 2024). However, this transformation is not without challenges. Infrastructure issues and digital literacy gaps remain major obstacles to the consistent implementation of digital-based quality programs, as highlighted in a study on digital transformation in Islamic education (Nasir & Maisah Maisah, 2022). The policy implications of these findings are quite broad, particularly for Islamic educational institutions in the early stages of digital transformation. Strengthening operational and contextual quality evaluation frameworks, systematically improving digital literacy, and developing inclusive and sustainable infrastructure are necessary. This study also emphasizes the importance of a collaborative approach across institutions, families, and communities to create a holistic digital learning ecosystem (Shobri, 2024; Zakaria & Imanuddin, 2022). In this context, strategic management responsive to local-global dynamics is essential so that digital transformation is not merely procedural but impacts real quality improvement.

Future research should focus on exploring how digital-based quality management models can be replicated across various types of Islamic educational institutions with diverse religious and social backgrounds. Evaluating the long-term impact of digital transformation on learning outcomes, student character, and teacher performance is also an important aspect that requires further research. Furthermore, developing digital-based quality indicators that are sensitive to religious values will strengthen the public policy framework in supporting inclusive and adaptive Islamic education (Baharuddin & Syaifuddin, 2024; Herlambang & Budiyanti, 2023). Therefore, it can be concluded that digital transformation plays a crucial role in expanding access and improving the quality of Islamic education at the Addzimat Dai Indonesia Islamic Boarding School and Oordova Islamic Junior High School. The integration of technology, strategic management, and a culture of quality has proven to be an effective strategy

for driving Islamic educational institutions towards a more adaptive, transparent, and collaborative direction. This research provides theoretical contributions to the global literature on the digitalization of Islamic education and practical recommendations for the formulation of contextual policies, particularly in addressing the challenges of educational globalization in the digital era.

Transformational Leadership and Resource Management as Drivers of Quality

An education management information system (EMIS) has been used at both institutions to digitally access data on learning quality, attendance, assessments, and student progress. Technology-based learning involves e-learning, digital learning resources, and digital correspondence between Islamic boarding schools and Islamic junior high schools (SMPIT) in several hybrid learning programs. The use of quality data is beginning to be evident in reporting on the progress of teacher capacity building programs and regular curriculum evaluations. Efforts to maintain the identity of Islamic values and local culture remain a crucial part of implementing digital learning. Ecosystem collaboration between Islamic boarding schools and Islamic junior high schools is evident through the establishment of a technology-based learning ecosystem, the sharing of best practices, and the sharing of digital resources. The involvement of parents/guardians and the surrounding community is evident through digital literacy programs for parents and participation in activities supporting curriculum quality. Financial and resource management are documented continuously with transparent and accountable governance, as well as resource allocation for improving learning quality and digital infrastructure. Challenges encountered include limited infrastructure in some locations that impact access to digital learning, and unequal digital literacy among educators and students despite ongoing training. Quality evaluation policies, procedures, and mechanisms require refinement to make quality indicators more operational and relevant for both types of institutions.

Learning quality indicators include curriculum quality, teacher competency, improved digital literacy, access to digital materials, administrative efficiency, financial accountability, and stakeholder satisfaction. Overall, there are systematic efforts to integrate strategic management with a quality culture at both institutions, although infrastructure constraints, the need for improved digital literacy, and strengthening a more operational quality evaluation framework remain areas of focus for improvement. Field findings indicate that transformational leadership plays a key role in the implementation of sustainable quality programs at both institutions. A clear quality vision, collaborative encouragement, and efforts to create agents of change are evident in leadership practices. This aligns with literature showing that transformational leadership has a positive impact on the quality of academic services and a quality organizational culture (Andikarya & Muluk, 2025; Apriyenti et al., 2024; Hadi, 2018). Human resource management aimed at developing teacher competencies and strengthening the capacity of quality support staff is also key to institutional readiness to face the demands of the digital era (Karisma & Nadzirah, 2023; Lestari et al., 2024; Maharani et al., 2024). The integration of religious values with quality leadership practices provides an ethical and operational foundation for improving the quality of learning (Andikarya & Muluk, 2025; Hadi, 2018; Tisnawati & Sukari, 2024).

The synergy between quality planning, quality culture, and human resource performance in both institutions is evident in strategic planning involving stakeholders and appropriate resource allocation. This supports the continuity of institutional quality, as emphasized in previous research (Andikarya & Muluk, 2025; Eri Purwanti et al., 2020; Karisma & Nadzirah, 2023). A quality culture internalized through continuous evaluation practices increases accountability and participation of the school/madrasah community in quality improvement (Hadi, 2018; Karisma & Nadzirah, 2023; Tisnawati & Sukari, 2024). Conceptually, this framework aligns with the quality management model of change in Islamic education, which emphasizes the Determination, Implementation, Evaluation, Control, and Redetermination (PPEPP) cycle as a quality improvement mechanism (Antoni et al., 2025; Karisma & Nadzirah, 2023). Digital transformation is an enabler for access to and quality of learning. EMIS and digital learning platforms improve access to quality information and operational efficiency. The literature confirms that digitalization in education is transforming curriculum design, evaluation, and overall quality governance, with the need for infrastructure, digital literacy, and sustainable funding as key prerequisites (Apriyenti et al., 2024; Chili et al., 2025; Lestari et al., 2024; Nashrullah et al., 2025). Digital transformation also facilitates more structured quality reporting and increases transparency between institutions and parents and the surrounding community (Apriyenti et al., 2024; Chili et al., 2025; Shobri, 2024). However, challenges in infrastructure and digital competency need to be addressed through ongoing training and better funding policies (Sutarsih et al., 2024; Tisnawati & Sukari, 2024).

Ecosystem collaboration between Islamic boarding schools, Islamic junior high schools (SMPIT), families, and communities has proven crucial for improving learning quality through the sharing of digital resources, literacy, and financial and non-financial support. The literature supports the view that an integrated learning ecosystem strengthens quality through synergy between leadership, human resources, digital literacy, and financial governance (Eri Purwanti et al., 2020; Maharani et al., 2024; Purnomo et al., 2024). This approach is crucial for maintaining the sustainability of learning quality in diverse and global religious contexts (Andikarya & Muluk, 2025; Hadi, 2018; Zakaria & Imanuddin, 2022). These findings indicate that policies that promote the integration of transformational leadership, competency-based HRM, and digital transformation can expand access and improve the quality of learning in Islamic institutions, both nationally and internationally (Apriyenti et al., 2024; Chili et al., 2025; Lestari et al., 2024; Purnomo et al., 2024; Tisnawati & Sukari, 2024). Practical implications include strengthening operational and contextual quality evaluation frameworks, improving digital literacy for educators and students, and strengthening sustainable digital infrastructure through partnerships with the public and private sectors (Apriyenti et al., 2024; Nashrullah et al., 2025; Shobri, 2024; Sutarsih et al., 2024). Further research is needed to test whether the transformational leadership and quality-based HRM models can be replicated in institutions with different religious characteristics, and to measure the long-term impact of digital transformation on learning outcomes. Future research should also explore current communication mechanisms, the impact of national policies on quality implementation, and quality performance indicators that are more operational and sensitive to the institutional cultural context (Andikarya & Muluk, 2025; Hadi, 2018; Purnomo et al., 2024; Sutarsih et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

This study reveals that collaboration between strategic management, transformational leadership, and the digitalization of the education system has a significant impact on improving the quality of Islamic educational institutions. The implementation of technologies such as the Education Management Information System (EMIS), the use of digital learning platforms, and performance indicator-based quality planning have been proven to promote effective governance, strengthen data transparency, and accelerate coordination among educational stakeholders. SMPIT Qordova represents a modern Islamic institution that has successfully integrated digital technology with an institutional quality culture, while Pondok Pesantren Addzimat demonstrates a strong adaptive capacity in integrating digitalization without neglecting traditional Islamic values. However, the scope of this study is limited to two institutions in West Java, so the results need to be interpreted contextually. The qualitative nature of the data, based on informant perceptions and institutional documentation, can also present limitations of subjectivity. Furthermore, the relatively short observation period may not fully reflect the long-term dynamics in the implementation of digital-based quality policies. A significant contribution of this study lies in the formulation of a conceptual framework that integrates the dimensions of strategic management, digital transformation, and transformational leadership within the contemporary Islamic education ecosystem. The comparative approach between tradition-based Islamic boarding schools and integrated Islamic schools yields a new, contextually rich and applicable perspective for developing Islamic education policy in the modern era. The proposed model is not only relevant for national implementation but also has the potential for global replication in institutions with similar institutional characteristics.

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