

## ISLAMIC EDUCATION MANAGEMENT AND THE FUTURE OF ARABIC LANGUAGE IN ISLAMIC PRIMARY EDUCATION: A CRITICAL REVIEW

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### Abstract:

Arabic language education occupies a central position in Islamic primary education, not only as a medium for understanding religious texts but also as a foundation for Islamic intellectual and cultural formation. However, in many Islamic primary schools, particularly Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, Arabic learning continues to face structural and pedagogical challenges that hinder its effectiveness. This article critically examines the role of Islamic education management in shaping the future of Arabic language learning in Islamic primary education. Using a critical-conceptual approach supported by relevant literature, the study argues that the sustainability and quality of Arabic education at the primary level are not merely pedagogical concerns but are deeply rooted in managerial orientations, institutional priorities, and governance practices. The article highlights key managerial issues, including curriculum governance, leadership vision, teacher development, and learning culture, and proposes a reorientation of Islamic education management toward a more strategic, integrated, and future-oriented framework. This study contributes to the discourse on Islamic education by positioning management as a decisive factor in revitalizing Arabic language learning in Islamic primary education.

### Abstrak:

Pendidikan bahasa Arab menempati posisi sentral dalam pendidikan dasar Islam, tidak hanya sebagai media untuk memahami teks-teks keagamaan tetapi juga sebagai landasan pembentukan intelektual dan budaya Islam. Namun, di banyak sekolah dasar Islam, khususnya Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, pembelajaran bahasa Arab terus menghadapi tantangan struktural dan pedagogis yang menghambat efektivitasnya. Artikel ini secara kritis mengkaji peran manajemen pendidikan Islam dalam membentuk masa depan pembelajaran bahasa Arab di pendidikan dasar Islam. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan konseptual kritis yang didukung oleh literatur yang relevan, studi ini berpendapat bahwa keberlanjutan dan kualitas pendidikan bahasa Arab di tingkat dasar bukan hanya masalah pedagogis tetapi sangat berakar pada orientasi manajerial, prioritas kelembagaan, dan praktik tata kelola. Artikel ini menyoroti isu-isu manajerial utama, termasuk tata kelola kurikulum, visi kepemimpinan, pengembangan guru, dan budaya belajar, dan mengusulkan reorientasi manajemen pendidikan Islam menuju kerangka kerja yang lebih strategis, terintegrasi, dan berorientasi masa depan. Studi ini berkontribusi pada wacana tentang pendidikan Islam dengan memosisikan manajemen sebagai faktor penentu dalam merevitalisasi pembelajaran bahasa Arab di pendidikan dasar Islam..

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## INTRODUCTION

Arabic language education occupies a pivotal position within Islamic primary education, particularly in institutions such as Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, where it functions as a foundational medium for religious literacy and identity formation. Arabic is not merely taught as a linguistic skill but is deeply embedded in the epistemological structure of Islamic learning, serving as the primary gateway to the Qur'an and the broader corpus of Islamic scholarship (Felsenthal & Agbaria, 2023). Through early exposure to Arabic, learners are introduced to sacred texts in their original linguistic form, enabling a more authentic engagement with meaning, interpretation, and religious reasoning (Ayyad, 2022). Traditional practices of Qur'anic memorization, such as khatma, illustrate how Arabic learning simultaneously cultivates cognitive discipline, linguistic sensitivity, and intellectual endurance, positioning the language as a lifelong companion in religious learning rather than a transient school subject.

Beyond its textual and cognitive functions, Arabic language education also plays a significant role in shaping socio-cultural identity and collective consciousness within Muslim communities. Language operates as a vehicle for transmitting values, cultural memory, and religious ethos across generations, reinforcing a sense of belonging and continuity. In various Islamic contexts, Arabic contributes to the formation of moral frameworks, family values, and communal cohesion, underscoring its relevance far beyond the classroom (Zakarneh & Mahmoud, 2025). However, this cultural and religious centrality increasingly faces pressure from globalization, linguistic dominance of non-Arabic languages, and shifting educational priorities. Contemporary educational discourse therefore calls for a reconfiguration of Arabic language pedagogy—one that moves beyond rote memorization toward critical and hermeneutical engagement with texts, while simultaneously preserving linguistic authenticity (Lessy, 2023). This tension between tradition and modernity highlights the urgent need for strategic educational approaches capable of sustaining Arabic literacy and relevance within rapidly transforming educational landscapes (Carroll et al., 2017).

Despite its central position within Islamic primary education, Arabic language instruction continues to face persistent and deeply rooted challenges at the classroom level. Pedagogical practices in many Islamic primary schools remain heavily oriented toward rote memorization, grammatical drills, and translation-based instruction, often at the expense of communicative competence and meaningful textual engagement. Such approaches tend to alienate learners, who frequently perceive Arabic as abstract, difficult, and detached from their lived

experiences, resulting in declining motivation and limited linguistic confidence (Selim, 2023). Rather than functioning as a living language that facilitates understanding and expression, Arabic is often reduced to a mechanical academic requirement, reinforcing a sense of distance between learners and the language itself. This pedagogical rigidity not only constrains students' linguistic development but also undermines the broader educational objectives of Islamic primary education.

Recent studies, however, suggest that these learning difficulties are not inherent to the Arabic language but are closely linked to instructional design and institutional support structures. Research demonstrates that narrative-based texts foster stronger emotional engagement and comprehension than purely informative materials, indicating the importance of text selection in shaping students' learning experiences (Rusli et al., 2025). Similarly, collaborative learning strategies in vocabulary instruction have been shown to produce more effective outcomes than individual, teacher-centered tasks, highlighting the pedagogical potential of interaction and peer engagement (Rabie-Ahmed & Mohamed, 2022). Yet, the limited adoption of such approaches reflects broader institutional constraints, including inadequate curriculum frameworks, insufficient teacher training, and weak managerial support for pedagogical innovation. While emerging initiatives—such as the integration of online learning tools and multimedia resources—offer promising alternatives, their sustainability ultimately depends on systemic institutional commitment rather than isolated classroom experimentation (Mohd. Yazid et al., 2022).

The future trajectory of Arabic language education in Islamic primary schools is inseparable from the quality and orientation of education management practices. Curriculum design, leadership vision, teacher development, and school culture collectively shape the conditions under which Arabic is taught and learned. A curriculum that meaningfully integrates Arabic language instruction with Islamic values has been shown to enhance learning coherence and relevance (Nuryahman & Majeed, 2024). Likewise, leadership approaches grounded in Islamic pedagogical principles influence institutional priorities and everyday decision-making, thereby affecting how Arabic is positioned within the broader educational agenda (Supriyono et al., 2025). Teacher professional development further constitutes a critical managerial dimension, as sustained training equips educators with both linguistic competence and pedagogical adaptability necessary for effective Arabic instruction. These managerial elements do not operate in isolation; together, they

construct an educational ecosystem that either enables or constrains the sustainability of Arabic language learning at the primary level.

Despite growing scholarly attention to individual aspects of Arabic pedagogy and Islamic school management, existing research remains fragmented and largely compartmentalized. Studies tend to examine curriculum, leadership, or teacher training separately, while the systemic relationship between Islamic education management and the future direction of Arabic language education—particularly at the primary level—remains underexplored (Alazmi & Bush, 2024). Moreover, debates persist regarding the risk of over-managerializing education at the expense of learners' pedagogical needs, suggesting the necessity of a balanced framework that aligns managerial governance with instructional realities. This article addresses this gap by offering a critical review that situates Arabic language education within the broader architecture of Islamic education management. By foregrounding management as a strategic, rather than merely administrative, determinant of Arabic learning, the study contributes a novel integrative perspective that reframes the future of Arabic language education in Islamic primary schools as a matter of institutional vision, governance, and educational sustainability.

## **METHOD RESEARCH**

### **1. Research Design**

This study employs a qualitative critical review approach to examine the relationship between Islamic education management and the future of Arabic language education in Islamic primary schools. Rather than generating new empirical data, the research is designed to critically synthesize and interrogate existing scholarly works in order to identify structural patterns, conceptual gaps, and emerging themes (Creswell, J. W., Creswell, 2018). This approach is particularly appropriate given the study's objective to reposition Arabic language education as a managerial and institutional issue, rather than merely a pedagogical concern.

A critical review method allows the researcher to move beyond descriptive summarization by evaluating underlying assumptions, dominant paradigms, and limitations within existing studies. In this context, the method is used to analyze how curriculum governance, leadership practices, teacher development, and school culture are discussed in relation to Arabic language education within Islamic primary education.

### **2. Data Sources**

The data for this study consist of peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, and policy-related academic publications focusing on three interrelated

domains: Islamic education management, Arabic language education, and Islamic primary education. Sources were selected from reputable international and national databases, including Scopus-indexed journals, Web of Science, and leading regional journals in Islamic education and Arabic language studies (Hosseini & Haukås, 2025).

The literature reviewed spans approximately the last ten years to ensure conceptual relevance, while seminal works were included where necessary to establish theoretical foundations. Priority was given to studies that explicitly address curriculum design, leadership models, teacher professional development, learning culture, and institutional governance within Islamic or faith-based educational contexts.

### 3. Selection Criteria

Literature selection followed purposive criteria aligned with the research focus. Included sources were required to:

- (a) Address Arabic language education within Islamic or religious schooling contexts;
- (b) Engage with management, leadership, or institutional dimensions of education; and
- (c) Demonstrate clear relevance to primary or foundational levels of education.

Studies that focused exclusively on technical linguistics without educational implications, or on management issues unrelated to learning processes, were excluded. This selection strategy ensured conceptual coherence and analytical depth.

### 4. Analytical Procedure

Data analysis was conducted through thematic and interpretive analysis. Selected texts were read iteratively to identify recurring themes related to managerial influence on Arabic language education, including curriculum orientation, leadership vision, teacher capacity building, and school culture. These themes were then examined critically to uncover tensions, contradictions, and silences within the literature.

The analysis did not aim to aggregate findings quantitatively but to construct a conceptual synthesis that highlights how Islamic education management shapes, enables, or constrains the future of Arabic language education at the primary level. Through this process, the study identifies gaps in existing research and articulates an integrative framework that links management practices with pedagogical sustainability (Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, 2014).

## 5. Trustworthiness and Rigor

To ensure analytical rigor, the study applied strategies of source triangulation by engaging with literature from diverse geographical, methodological, and theoretical perspectives. Reflexive reading was employed to minimize bias and avoid uncritical reproduction of dominant narratives. Conceptual consistency was maintained by continuously aligning the analysis with the study's research focus and theoretical orientation (Dinour & Mendez Camacho, 2025).

Although this study does not claim empirical generalizability, its strength lies in theoretical transferability, offering insights that can inform future empirical research and policy-oriented studies in Islamic education management and Arabic language education.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Positioning Arabic Education within Islamic Education Management

The critical review reveals a persistent tendency in existing literature to treat Arabic language education in Islamic primary schools primarily as a pedagogical or methodological concern. Most studies focus on classroom techniques, learner motivation, or instructional materials, while giving limited attention to the managerial and institutional conditions that shape these pedagogical practices. This pattern constitutes a clear research gap: the absence of a systemic analysis that situates Arabic language education within the broader framework of Islamic education management at the primary level.

The findings of this review suggest that many challenges associated with Arabic learning—such as limited instructional quality, fragmented curricula, and low student engagement—are not merely instructional failures but manifestations of weak management orientation. In Islamic primary education, management structures determine how Arabic is positioned within institutional priorities, how resources are allocated, and how learning objectives are aligned with the broader mission of Islamic education. By reframing Arabic language education as a management issue, this study challenges reductionist explanations that locate problems solely at the classroom level and instead emphasizes the decisive role of institutional governance in shaping educational outcomes. The challenges associated with Arabic learning in Islamic primary education are deeply rooted in management structures rather than solely instructional failures. This perspective emphasizes that effective management is crucial for aligning educational priorities, resource allocation, and learning objectives with the broader mission of Islamic education. By addressing Arabic language education as a management issue, the

study highlights the importance of institutional governance in shaping educational outcomes.

#### a. Management Structures and Educational Quality

Effective educational management plays a decisive role in determining the quality and sustainability of learning processes in Islamic primary education, particularly in the governance of Arabic language instruction. Management is not merely an administrative function but a strategic mechanism that structures curriculum coherence, allocates human resources, and aligns institutional goals with pedagogical practices (Nuryahman & Majeed, 2024). Well-managed educational institutions demonstrate greater capacity to translate normative visions—such as the integration of Islamic values and linguistic competence—into operational curricula and classroom practices. In the context of Arabic education, weak managerial planning often results in fragmented curricula, overemphasis on grammatical formalism, and a lack of continuity across grade levels, ultimately undermining students' linguistic development and motivation. Conversely, management-oriented curriculum design enables Arabic to be positioned as a meaningful communicative and cultural resource rather than a purely ritualistic subject.

Leadership further mediates the effectiveness of management by shaping institutional culture and pedagogical priorities. Leadership models grounded in Islamic values emphasize ethical responsibility, collective growth, and educational purpose, which directly influence teacher commitment and student engagement. That value-based leadership fosters a learning environment where teachers are encouraged to innovate and contextualize instruction, rather than merely comply with rigid instructional routines (Alazmi & Bush, 2024). In Islamic primary schools, such leadership is crucial for repositioning Arabic language education within a broader educational vision that balances spiritual objectives with cognitive and communicative outcomes. When leadership actively supports professional development, reflective teaching practices, and curriculum adaptation, Arabic learning becomes more responsive to learners' developmental needs and sociocultural contexts. This underscores that the future viability of Arabic education at the primary level is inseparable from the quality of educational management and leadership that governs it.

#### b. Student Engagement and Curriculum Fragmentation

Non-Arab Muslim learners frequently encounter Arabic language programs that rely heavily on repetitive instructional patterns, where drills and memorization

dominate classroom activities with little variation or contextual relevance. That such pedagogical routines often produce frustration rather than mastery, as learners struggle to connect linguistic forms with meaningful use or personal experience (Selim, 2023). In Islamic primary education, this dissatisfaction is not simply a matter of teaching technique but reflects deeper structural weaknesses in how Arabic programs are planned and governed. When instructional objectives are narrowly defined and detached from learners' cognitive and socio-cultural realities, Arabic is perceived as an obligatory subject rather than an accessible medium of communication and religious understanding. Over time, this perception erodes motivation and reinforces the belief that Arabic learning is inherently difficult and unengaging.

These challenges are compounded by fragmented curricula that lack vertical and horizontal coherence across grade levels. Selim (2023) emphasizes that discontinuities in curriculum sequencing and learning outcomes often result from weak educational management, where curriculum design, instructional planning, and evaluation operate in isolation. In Islamic primary schools, such fragmentation prevents the gradual development of linguistic competence and deprives students of a clear sense of progression. This underscores the necessity of cohesive management strategies that place student experience at the center of curriculum governance. Effective management can integrate pedagogical goals, teacher coordination, and assessment frameworks into a unified structure, ensuring that Arabic learning evolves systematically and meaningfully. By addressing fragmentation at the managerial level, Islamic education institutions can transform Arabic programs from repetitive routines into structured learning pathways that sustain engagement and support long-term language acquisition.

### c. Implications for Institutional Governance

The alignment between educational objectives and institutional priorities constitutes a foundational element of effective management in Islamic primary education. That when school goals are clearly articulated and consistently reflected in leadership decisions, curriculum planning, and resource allocation, a coherent learning environment emerges (Supriyono et al., 2025). In the context of Arabic language education at the primary level, such alignment ensures that the teaching of Arabic is not treated as a peripheral or symbolic subject, but as a strategic component of the school's educational mission. Institutional priorities that explicitly value linguistic competence, religious literacy, and student-centered learning enable schools to design policies and programs that support sustained engagement,

pedagogical continuity, and meaningful learning experiences.

Moreover, schools that adopt critical pedagogic models tend to translate these aligned objectives into more inclusive leadership practices. Supriyono et al. (2025) highlight that leaders operating within critical pedagogical frameworks are more likely to encourage teacher participation, reflective practice, and responsiveness to student needs. This form of leadership reshapes school culture by fostering dialogue rather than compliance, thereby creating space for innovation in Arabic language instruction. Inclusive leadership not only empowers teachers to adapt methods and materials but also enhances student engagement by recognizing diverse learning backgrounds and capacities. Within Islamic primary schools, such leadership practices strengthen educational outcomes by integrating managerial vision with pedagogical sensitivity, reinforcing Arabic language education as both an academic and formative endeavor.

## **2. Managerial Governance of Arabic Curriculum in Islamic Primary Schools**

One of the central findings concerns the governance of the Arabic curriculum within Islamic primary education. The literature indicates that Arabic curricula in many Madrasah Ibtidaiyah are formally mandated but weakly governed. While curriculum documents often articulate ambitious goals related to religious literacy and Islamic identity, their implementation is rarely supported by coherent management strategies. This disconnect reflects a managerial gap between policy formulation and educational practice. Islamic education management plays a crucial role in translating curriculum ideals into effective educational practices, particularly in Arabic language programs. Weak governance in curriculum implementation often leads to fragmented and inconsistent pedagogical approaches. To address this, effective management models must integrate curriculum planning, instructional supervision, and continuous evaluation within a unified Islamic educational vision. This synthesis highlights several key aspects of effective Islamic education management.

### **a. Curriculum Governance**

Effective management in Islamic primary education depends heavily on structured coordination and consistent monitoring across institutional actors. That curriculum alignment cannot be achieved through isolated classroom practices alone, but requires deliberate coordination between school leaders, curriculum developers, and teachers (Nuryahman & Majeed, 2024). In the context of Arabic language education, weak coordination often results in overlapping content, inconsistent learning targets, and disjointed instructional pacing across

grade levels. Robust management mechanisms—such as joint planning forums, standardized curriculum maps, and clear lines of responsibility—enable schools to maintain coherence between institutional goals and classroom implementation. This coordinated approach ensures that Arabic learning progresses systematically, reinforcing both linguistic competence and religious literacy within Islamic primary education.

Equally important is the presence of continuous evaluative feedback that informs decision-making and instructional improvement. That systematic assessment practices, widely discussed in higher education, are equally relevant at the primary level when adapted appropriately. Regular monitoring of teaching practices, student outcomes, and curriculum effectiveness allows schools to identify gaps and respond with timely adjustments (H. Asep Idrus Alawi, 2024). In Islamic primary schools, such feedback mechanisms support reflective management by linking evaluation to professional development rather than mere compliance. When assessment data are used constructively, they guide leadership in refining Arabic language programs, strengthening teacher capacity, and sustaining educational quality. This integration of coordination and evaluation positions management not only as an administrative function but as a dynamic process that shapes the long-term viability of Arabic education.

#### b. Holistic Approaches

The integration of formal and non-formal education represents a strategic dimension of management in Islamic primary education, particularly in responding to the diverse learning needs of Muslim communities. Nuryahman and Majeed (2024) argue that a holistic approach, which connects classroom-based instruction with non-formal learning spaces such as Qur'anic circles, community programs, and extracurricular religious activities, can strengthen educational continuity and relevance (Nuryahman & Majeed, 2024). In the context of Arabic language education, this integration allows students to encounter Arabic not only as an academic subject but as a living language embedded in daily religious and social practices. When managed coherently, the interaction between formal and non-formal settings reinforces learning outcomes, sustains student motivation, and bridges the gap between institutional instruction and community-based religious life.

Curriculum reform plays a crucial role in enabling this holistic integration, as demonstrated by the Muhammadiyah education system. Muhammadiyah's holistic-integrative curriculum as a model that successfully aligns Islamic values

with contemporary pedagogical approaches. Rather than positioning religious knowledge and modern education as competing domains, this curriculum frames them as mutually reinforcing. Within Islamic primary schools, such an approach provides a managerial framework for reforming Arabic language education, ensuring that linguistic competence supports both religious understanding and critical engagement with modern knowledge. By embedding Arabic within a broader educational vision, curriculum reform under Muhammadiyah illustrates how effective management can transform Islamic education into a cohesive system that is both rooted in tradition and responsive to present challenges (Hamami & Nuryana, 2022).

### c. Management Capacity

Strong leadership and the strategic management of human resources constitute the backbone of effective Islamic primary education. That leadership in Islamic schools extends beyond administrative control to include pedagogical vision, moral authority, and the capacity to mobilize teachers toward shared educational goals (Nuryahman & Majeed, 2024). In the context of Arabic language education, well-prepared teachers are essential for translating curricular intentions into meaningful classroom practice. Continuous professional development, mentoring systems, and performance-based support enable teachers to refine instructional strategies while remaining aligned with institutional values. When leadership invests in human resources as a long-term asset, educational strategies are more likely to be implemented consistently, resulting in sustained quality outcomes rather than short-term improvements.

Equally important is cultural alignment within educational management, particularly in Islamic primary schools that operate at the intersection of religious tradition and contemporary educational demands. That culturally responsive management creates learning environments in which students and teachers feel recognized and supported, thereby enhancing engagement and development. In Arabic language education, cultural sensitivity ensures that teaching approaches resonate with students' linguistic backgrounds, religious practices, and community values (H. Asep Idrus Alawi, 2024). Management that acknowledges these cultural dimensions can foster a sense of ownership and relevance, positioning Arabic not as an abstract or imposed subject but as an integral part of students' lived experience. Such alignment strengthens institutional coherence and reinforces the role of Islamic education as both a cultural and intellectual endeavor.

### 3. Leadership and Institutional Vision in Islamic Primary Education

The analysis further highlights leadership as a critical component of Islamic education management that directly influences the future of Arabic language education. Studies reviewed consistently show that school leaders play a pivotal role in shaping institutional culture, determining educational priorities, and legitimizing pedagogical innovation. In Islamic primary schools, leadership that lacks a clear vision for Arabic education often reproduces minimalistic approaches, where Arabic is treated as a symbolic subject rather than a strategic educational asset. The role of leadership in Islamic education management is crucial, particularly in shaping the future of Arabic language education. Effective school leaders are instrumental in establishing a positive institutional culture, prioritizing educational goals, and fostering pedagogical innovation. Conversely, a lack of vision in leadership can lead to a superficial treatment of Arabic as merely a symbolic subject, undermining its potential as a vital educational asset. The following sections elaborate on these dynamics.

#### a. Leadership's Influence on Educational Culture

School leaders play a decisive role in shaping institutional culture, as their values, priorities, and managerial decisions permeate everyday teaching and learning practices. In Islamic primary education, leadership influences whether Arabic language instruction is treated as a central educational mission or merely a formal requirement. When leaders articulate clear expectations, support collaborative planning, and model commitment to educational quality, they cultivate a school culture that values pedagogical depth and coherence. Such an environment encourages teachers to move beyond routine instruction and to align their practices with broader institutional goals, thereby strengthening the overall quality of Arabic language education (Ahmadi & Saad, 2024).

A clearly articulated vision for Arabic education further enables a more integrated and strategic approach to teaching and learning. Ahmed (2020) argues that when school leaders frame Arabic as both a linguistic and formative resource, instructional planning becomes more purposeful and interconnected. This vision guides curriculum design, teacher development, and assessment practices, ensuring that Arabic learning is sequenced, contextualized, and responsive to student needs. Within Islamic primary schools, a shared vision fosters consistency across classrooms and grade levels, enhancing student engagement and academic achievement (Ahmed, 2025). By anchoring Arabic education within a strong institutional vision, leadership transforms the language

from a fragmented subject into a cohesive pillar of Islamic education.

#### b. Pedagogical Innovation and Priorities

Leaders who place Arabic education at the center of institutional priorities create the conditions for pedagogical innovation that is both educationally sound and value-oriented. That leadership grounded in Islamic values enables schools to design instructional models that move beyond mechanical language transmission toward meaningful engagement with texts and contexts. In Islamic primary education, such leadership supports the integration of communicative approaches, contextual learning, and reflective practices that connect Arabic with students' religious lives and everyday experiences. When innovation is guided by a clear moral and educational framework, Arabic learning becomes a formative process that nurtures linguistic competence alongside ethical and spiritual awareness.

The adoption of critical pedagogic models further strengthens this leadership orientation by promoting inclusive decision-making and collaborative governance. Supriyono et al. (2025) emphasize that critical pedagogy reshapes leadership from a hierarchical function into a participatory process involving teachers and other stakeholders. Within Islamic schools, this collaborative approach allows educators to contribute insights from classroom realities, ensuring that Arabic language policies and practices remain responsive and adaptable. Inclusive leadership fosters shared ownership of educational goals, transforming institutional culture and teaching practices. As a result, Arabic education evolves from isolated classroom activity into a collective endeavor, supported by coherent management and sustained by a shared commitment to educational improvement.

#### c. Challenges of Minimalistic Approaches

Leadership that operates without a clear strategic vision tends to reduce Arabic education to a marginal position within Islamic primary schools. Hammad and Hallinger (2017) observe that in such contexts, Arabic is often treated as a supplementary subject, allocated limited instructional time, minimal resources, and low institutional attention. This managerial neglect shapes school culture and teacher expectations, signaling that Arabic is less important than other subjects. As a result, curriculum planning becomes fragmented, professional development related to Arabic instruction is overlooked, and teaching practices remain routine and unreflective (Hallinger & Hammad, 2019). The absence of strategic direction thus weakens the institutional foundations necessary for

sustaining high-quality Arabic language education.

Over time, this minimalistic approach generates a cycle of underachievement and disengagement among students. When Arabic is presented as peripheral, learners struggle to perceive its relevance to their religious identity and intellectual development. Limited exposure and uninspiring instruction hinder the development of linguistic proficiency, while the lack of cultural contextualization diminishes students' connection to the language (Ahmadi et al., 2025). This cycle not only restricts students' academic progress but also undermines their broader cultural and religious competencies. Breaking this pattern requires leadership that repositions Arabic as a core component of Islamic education, supported by deliberate planning, consistent investment, and a vision that recognizes language as a central medium of knowledge and identity formation.

Conversely, leadership models rooted in Islamic pedagogical values demonstrate the potential to elevate the status of Arabic within the institutional framework. When leaders articulate Arabic learning as integral to Islamic intellectual formation, it becomes embedded in school culture, teacher collaboration, and academic planning. This finding reinforces the centrality of leadership within Islamic education management and underscores its function as a bridge between normative Islamic ideals and everyday educational practice.

#### **4. Management of Teacher Development in Islamic Primary Schools**

Another significant result of the critical review relates to teacher development as a managerial responsibility. While Arabic teachers are often expected to deliver high-quality instruction under complex linguistic and pedagogical conditions, institutional support for their professional growth remains limited. Existing research frequently documents teacher-related challenges but seldom interrogates the management systems that produce these conditions. Sustainable improvement in Arabic language education necessitates a comprehensive approach to teacher development, particularly within the framework of Islamic education management. This perspective emphasizes that professional development should be viewed as an institutional investment rather than an individual endeavor, aligning with long-term educational goals. The following sections elaborate on key aspects of this approach.

##### **a. Systematic Teacher Development Policies**

Effective professional development in Islamic primary education must be conceived as a continuous and collective process rather than a series of isolated

training events. That professional learning yields tangible impact when it is sustained over time, collaborative in nature, and closely connected to the specific subject being taught (Sims & Fletcher-Wood, 2021). For Arabic language teachers, subject-specific development allows educators to deepen both linguistic mastery and pedagogical precision, particularly in addressing the complexities of teaching Arabic to non-native learners. Collaborative forums such as lesson study, peer observation, and reflective dialogue enable teachers to translate theoretical insights into classroom practice, strengthening instructional quality and contributing directly to improved student learning outcomes.

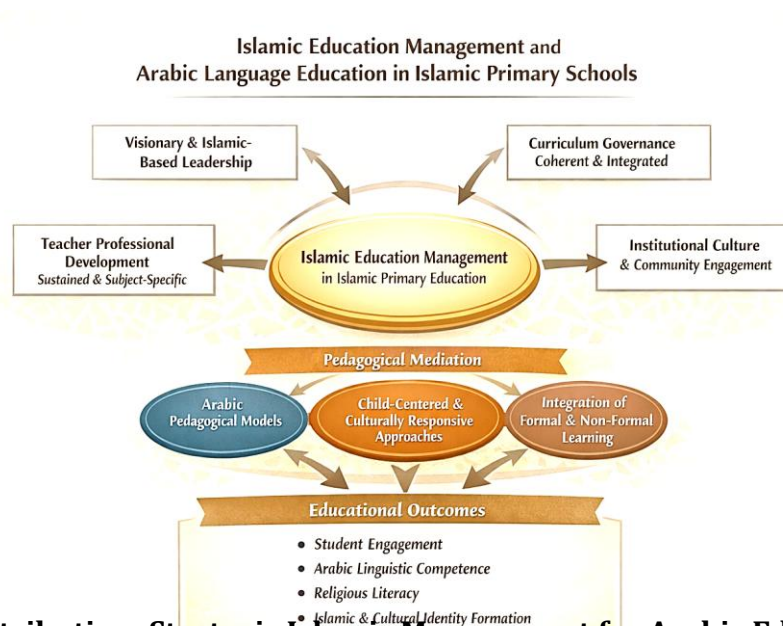
Within Islamic education, professional development also requires a tailored orientation that integrates child-centered pedagogy with reflective practice. That teachers in Islamic schools must be equipped not only with content knowledge but also with the capacity to respond to students' developmental stages, learning differences, and socio-religious contexts (Alhashmi & Moussa-Inaty, 2021). In Arabic language education at the primary level, this entails designing instruction that is engaging, developmentally appropriate, and meaningful, while encouraging teachers to critically reflect on their own assumptions and methods. Such integrated training empowers educators to adapt their teaching to diverse student needs, ensuring that Arabic learning supports both linguistic development and holistic educational goals within Islamic primary schools.

#### b. Institutional Responsibility and Governance

The discourse on teacher development in Islamic primary education increasingly demands a shift from individual initiative to institutional responsibility. that when professional growth is left to personal motivation alone, it becomes uneven and unsustainable (Memon, 2011). In the context of Arabic language education, this approach often results in significant disparities in instructional quality, as teachers receive limited guidance and support from school leadership. Positioning teacher development as a core element of educational governance requires leaders to design structured policies, allocate dedicated resources, and establish clear expectations for professional learning. Such institutional commitment signals that teaching quality is not an optional enhancement but a central pillar of educational management.

Embedding professional development within the institutional framework further enables schools to cultivate a culture of continuous improvement and accountability. that when professional learning is systematically integrated into

school routines—through mentoring systems, reflective supervision, and performance-informed feedback—it becomes part of everyday practice rather than an external obligation. In Islamic primary schools, this culture encourages teachers to regularly evaluate and refine their instructional approaches, particularly in complex subjects such as Arabic (Alkouatli et al., 2023). By aligning professional development with institutional goals and evaluative mechanisms, schools can ensure that improvements in teaching practices are sustained, collectively owned, and directly linked to student learning outcomes.



## 5. Novel Contribution; Strategic Islamic Management for Arabic Education

The study's key contribution lies in its innovative approach to Arabic language education within Islamic primary education, advocating for a strategic framework that integrates Arabic learning into broader Islamic educational management. This perspective shifts the focus from viewing Arabic as a standalone subject to understanding its role within the holistic context of Islamic education, addressing significant gaps in existing scholarship.

### a. Integration of Arabic in Islamic Education

The proposed framework positions Arabic language education not as an isolated academic subject but as an integral component of Islamic education that is inseparable from values, beliefs, and institutional purpose. That when Arabic is framed within an Islamic value system, learning moves beyond technical proficiency toward meaning-making and identity formation (Alazmi & Bush, 2024). In Islamic primary education, this interconnectedness allows students to experience Arabic as a language that carries ethical, spiritual, and cultural

significance. Such a framework demands managerial coherence, where curriculum design, leadership vision, and instructional practices collectively reinforce the role of Arabic as a foundational medium of Islamic knowledge rather than a peripheral requirement.

By situating Arabic learning within the domain of Islamic educational management, this study underscores the decisive role of cultural and societal contexts in shaping educational practice. Zaini (2022) argues that educational models divorced from their social and cultural environments risk becoming abstract and ineffective. In Islamic primary schools, management decisions that acknowledge community values, religious traditions, and social expectations can ensure that Arabic education remains relevant and sustainable (Zaini, 2022). This managerial perspective reframes Arabic instruction as a culturally embedded practice, governed by institutional choices that mediate between tradition and contemporary educational demands. In doing so, the framework offers a sharper analytical lens for understanding how Islamic education management can strategically shape the future of Arabic language education at the primary level.

#### b. Community-Based Educational Models

Research on Moroccan diaspora communities provides compelling evidence that Arabic and Islamic education can remain effective when it is flexibly adapted to local social contexts. Calpe et al. (2025) document how learning spaces such as private homes, mosques, and community centers function as alternative educational settings where Arabic is taught alongside Islamic values. These arrangements are not merely logistical solutions to institutional limitations but reflect a conscious alignment between educational practice and community life (Girós Calpe et al., 2025). By situating Arabic learning within familiar and culturally meaningful spaces, these models reduce the psychological distance between learners and the language, fostering sustained participation and relevance that formal school settings often struggle to achieve.

More importantly, these community-driven initiatives reveal the strategic potential of grassroots educational management in strengthening Arabic language education. Calpe et al. (2025) show that when communities assume an active role in organizing, supporting, and legitimizing learning, Arabic education becomes more inclusive and identity-affirming. Such initiatives empower learners to view Arabic not as an imposed curriculum but as a shared cultural resource. For Islamic primary education, these findings underscore the importance of management approaches that recognize and integrate community

participation. By bridging institutional structures with community-based practices, educational management can expand access, reinforce cultural identity, and enhance the overall effectiveness of Arabic language education.

### c. Implications for Future Research

This conceptual repositioning foregrounds Islamic educational leadership as a critical force in shaping Arabic language pedagogy, rather than treating pedagogy as an isolated technical domain. That leadership grounded in Islamic educational philosophy can mediate between institutional vision and classroom practice, influencing how curricula are designed, enacted, and evaluated (Alazmi & Bush, 2024). In Islamic primary education, such leadership has the potential to generate pedagogical strategies that are both linguistically effective and educationally meaningful, ensuring that Arabic instruction aligns with broader formative goals. By framing Arabic education within a coherent leadership and management structure, this perspective opens new pathways for curriculum development that are responsive to learners' cognitive, cultural, and religious contexts.

At the same time, this emphasis invites critical caution. That an exclusive focus on integrating Arabic into Islamic education risks underestimating the linguistic complexity of Arabic itself, particularly for non-native learners. Pedagogical integration, if not accompanied by specialized language instruction, may fail to address persistent challenges such as phonological acquisition, grammatical complexity, and communicative competence (Abdul-Jabbar, 2022). This tension underscores the need for a balanced approach in Islamic primary education—one that situates Arabic within an Islamic educational framework while simultaneously applying rigorous, language-specific methodologies. Such a synthesis allows leadership and management to support pedagogical innovation without sacrificing linguistic precision, strengthening both educational coherence and instructional effectiveness.

By synthesizing insights across curriculum governance, leadership, and teacher development, this study offers a novel integrative lens through which Arabic language education can be understood as an institutional and managerial project. The findings suggest that without a reorientation of Islamic education management toward strategic planning and transformative leadership, pedagogical innovations in Arabic instruction are unlikely to achieve lasting impact. In this sense, the future of Arabic language education in Islamic primary schools is less a question of methodological refinement than of managerial vision and institutional commitment.

## **KESIMPULAN**

This study demonstrates that Arabic language education in Islamic primary schools cannot be understood solely as a pedagogical or linguistic issue, but must be reframed as a matter of Islamic education management. The findings reveal that weak leadership vision, fragmented curriculum governance, and unsystematic teacher development contribute significantly to student disengagement and limited learning outcomes in Arabic education. Conversely, institutions that embed Arabic learning within a coherent management framework—integrating Islamic-based leadership, curriculum alignment, professional development, and community engagement—are more likely to foster meaningful student engagement, linguistic competence, and religious literacy. These results confirm that management practices play a decisive role in shaping how Arabic is positioned, taught, and sustained within Islamic primary education.

Furthermore, this study contributes a conceptual novelty by positioning Islamic education management as a strategic mediator between Arabic pedagogy and educational outcomes. By situating Arabic language education within institutional vision and governance, the research highlights the importance of cultural, religious, and societal contexts in educational decision-making. This integrated perspective challenges approaches that treat Arabic as a marginal or technical subject and underscores its role in identity formation and holistic Islamic education. The findings suggest that sustainable improvement in Arabic education requires balanced attention to managerial structures and language-specific pedagogy.

Future research is recommended to empirically test this management-driven framework in diverse Islamic primary school settings, including comparative studies between different educational organizations such as Muhammadiyah, state madrasahs, and community-based schools. Quantitative investigations into the relationship between leadership styles, teacher professional development, and student Arabic proficiency would further strengthen the model proposed in this study. Additionally, longitudinal research could explore how institutional management reforms impact Arabic learning outcomes over time, offering deeper insights into the long-term sustainability of Arabic education in Islamic primary contexts.

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