



# EDUCATION MANAGEMENT CONTEST AT NAHDLATUL ULAMA BANGILAN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, PASURUAN CITY AND BINA INSAN CENDEKIA ISLAMIC SCHOOL, PASURUAN CITY IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF STUDENTS

**Syahrul Firmansyah, Dewi Masitah**

<sup>1</sup> Islamic Education Management, STAI Al-Yasini Pasuruan),Indonesia

<sup>2</sup> Islamic Education Management, STAI Al-Yasini Pasuruan),Indonesia

Email : syahrulfirmansyah449@gmail.com<sup>1</sup>, masitahdewi2710@gmail.com<sup>2</sup>

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## Abstract :

*This study examines the contestation of educational management in two faith-based elementary schools in Pasuruan City: SD Unggulan Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Bangilan and SDIT Bina Insan Cendekia. The research focuses on the management strategies applied and the ideological, structural, and cultural factors influencing their differences. Employing a qualitative approach with a multiple case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. The findings reveal that SD NU Bangilan adopts a participatory-cultural management model emphasizing Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah values, pesantren traditions, and community involvement. In contrast, SDIT Bina Insan Cendekia applies an integrated Islamic school management model that is systematic, disciplined, and indicator-based, supported by digital tools. The ideological orientation (NU vs tarbiyah), organizational structure, and school culture significantly shape distinct management patterns and influence student quality outcomes. In conclusion, the contestation between the two schools reflects not merely competition but also a constructive contribution of religious ideologies in fostering quality Islamic elementary education that is competitive and contextually relevant.*

**Keywords :** Educational Management, Religious elementary school, Religious ideology (NU vs Tarbiyah)

## INTRODUCTION

The issue of religious-based primary education management in Indonesia cannot be viewed merely as a technical-administrative matter but rather as an ideological, cultural, and structural phenomenon. The cases of SD Unggulan NU Bangilan and SDIT Bina Insan Cendekia in Pasuruan City provide concrete examples of how differences in ideology and organizational culture shape distinctive and diverse models of educational management.

SD Unggulan NU Bangilan, rooted in the Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah tradition, represents the face of traditional Islamic education rich in local wisdom and pesantren culture. Its management model emphasizes community participation, flexibility, and character building through religious practices. In contrast, SDIT Bina Insan Cendekia adopts a modern and structured approach with an integrated Islamic education system. The use of digital technology, systematic reporting, and mentoring programs makes this institution appear more professional and oriented toward achieving clear quality indicators.



When examined through Henry Fayol's management theory (POAC), both schools demonstrate the application of similar management functions but with different emphases. SD NU Bangilan focuses more on actuating, emphasizing value- and culture-based mobilization, while SDIT places greater emphasis on planning and controlling based on measurable systems. These findings show that although both institutions share the same goal—producing graduates who excel academically and religiously—their strategies are heavily influenced by their respective ideologies and institutional structures.

From the perspective of Karl Marx's theory of social contestation, these two schools can be seen as arenas for the struggle over symbolic capital and ideological legitimacy within society. NU highlights cultural capital and local religiosity, while SDIT emphasizes managerial and academic capital that can be quantified. This contestation is not destructive but rather a form of healthy competition that drives innovation in Islamic education in Indonesia. This is reinforced by Bourdieu's perspective on cultural and symbolic capital, which suggests that educational institutions are not merely sites for the transmission of knowledge but also arenas for the production of identity and social legitimacy.

Moreover, Harvey & Green's (1993) and UNESCO's (2005) theories of educational quality can also be applied to understand the differences in quality orientation between the two schools. SD NU Bangilan emphasizes transformative education, where quality is understood as a process of moral, spiritual, and character transformation. Meanwhile, SDIT Bina Insan Cendekia aligns more with fitness for purpose and perfection, where quality is defined as conformity to objectives and consistency with measurable standards.

From the perspective of Total Quality Management (TQM), SDIT Bina Insan Cendekia more closely reflects TQM principles because it implements continuous evaluation, stakeholder involvement, and the use of digital technology for quality monitoring. While SD NU Bangilan has not formally adopted TQM principles, it applies a community- and culture-based model of quality management through public participation, character strengthening, and the integration of local wisdom.

These differences can also be analyzed using Edgar Schein's theory of organizational culture, which divides culture into three levels: artifacts, values, and underlying assumptions. SD NU Bangilan demonstrates artifacts such as religious practices like tahlil and istighosah, values emphasizing togetherness and local wisdom, and the underlying assumption that education must be aligned with Aswaja traditions. Meanwhile, SDIT Bina Insan Cendekia exhibits artifacts in the form of digital reporting systems and regular mentoring, values of discipline and professionalism, and the underlying assumption that education must be systematically designed to produce holistic Muslims (kaffah).

On a broader scale, this phenomenon mirrors the patterns of Islamic education management in other countries. In Malaysia, community-based Islamic schools highlight local identity and Islamic traditions, while modern

Islamic schools adopt structured systems similar to Indonesia's SIT model. In Turkey, the contestation between traditional Imam Hatip schools and modern public schools illustrates how education becomes both an ideological and modernization arena. Thus, the Pasuruan case is not an isolated one but part of a global dynamic in Islamic education that seeks to balance modern challenges while preserving traditional roots.

Practically, these management differences directly influence community perceptions. Parents closer to pesantren traditions tend to choose SD NU Bangilan, as it is considered more capable of shaping children's character according to Aswaja values. Meanwhile, parents seeking modern, measurable, and achievement-oriented education are more inclined toward SDIT Bina Insan Cendekia. This indicates that competition among Islamic organization-based schools reflects the plural dynamics of society, where choosing a school also represents an ideological and cultural choice.

From this discussion, it can be concluded that Islamic education management in Indonesia, particularly in Pasuruan, presents diversity that enriches the national education landscape. Contestation between Islamic organizations should not be seen as negative rivalry but as a space for innovation that fosters various management models tailored to societal needs. In other words, Islamic education in Indonesia demonstrates strong adaptability, maintaining traditional values while embracing modernity, thereby remaining relevant in addressing global challenges.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design, as its primary objective is to explore the meanings, strategies, and dynamics of educational management within a socio-religious context in depth. Such an approach was deemed appropriate to provide contextual understanding rather than mere generalization, thereby enabling a comprehensive explanation of the contestation phenomenon between two Islamic-based elementary schools in Pasuruan City. The research design employed is a multiple case study, as recommended by Yin (2014), which allows for a comparative analysis of two institutions with distinct managerial characteristics and ideological orientations, namely SD Unggulan NU Bangilan and SDIT Bina Insan Cendekia.

The research site was purposively selected in Pasuruan City, East Java, on the grounds that these two schools represent the educational management models of two of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia, characterized respectively by cultural-traditional orientation (NU) and modern-structural orientation (tarbiyah/JSIT). The researcher's presence in this study was participatory, serving as the primary instrument responsible for conducting direct observations, interviews, and document collection. Objectivity, neutrality, and active involvement were rigorously maintained to ensure the credibility and validity of the findings.

The research subjects were determined using purposive sampling, based

on their strategic roles in school management. Informants included school principals, vice principals in charge of curriculum, classroom teachers, subject teachers, and parents. Such a selection ensured the acquisition of data from multiple perspectives, covering policy-making, implementation, and external evaluation of educational management quality.

Data collection techniques comprised in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted to elicit detailed insights into the views and management strategies of key school actors. Participatory observation enabled the researcher to directly examine managerial practices, teacher-student interactions, and the learning environment. Meanwhile, document analysis involved reviewing official school records, such as vision and mission statements, curricula, learning achievement reports, and accreditation documents, which provided supporting evidence for the primary data.

The data analysis process followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of three concurrent stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction was performed by selecting and categorizing essential information from interviews, observations, and documents into thematic units. Data display was presented in the form of narratives, tables, and matrices to facilitate the identification of patterns and enable cross-case comparisons. Finally, conclusions were drawn and verified through triangulation of sources and methods, as well as member checking with informants, in order to ensure the accuracy, consistency, and reliability of the findings.

Accordingly, this research methodology was systematically designed to generate a comprehensive understanding of educational management strategies informed by Islamic organizational values, through the comparative analysis of two institutions with divergent ideological, structural, and cultural foundations, yet situated within the same geographical and social context.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The research findings reveal two contrasting models of educational management between SD Unggulan NU Bangilan and SDIT Bina Insan Cendekia in Pasuruan City.

1. SD Unggulan NU Bangilan applies a participatory-cultural management system rooted in Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah (Aswaja) values. Educational planning integrates the Merdeka Curriculum with NU-specific programs (tahlil, istighosah, khataman). The organizational structure involves the NU foundation, teachers, and parents. The principal conducts daily classroom supervision and weekly *Komunitas Belajar* (KOMBEL) meetings. The school culture is strongly influenced by pesantren traditions, such as shalawat and character habituation practices.

2. SDIT Bina Insan Cendekia (BIC) adopts a systematic-structured management model based on tarbiyah Islamiyah principles. The curriculum combines the Merdeka Curriculum with a tarbiyah framework emphasizing “faith before knowledge, manners before deeds.” The management is supported by measurable indicators, a *Digital Adab Tracking System*, and routine mentoring for both teachers and students. School leadership is corporate-like, disciplined, and professional, aligned with the standards of the JSIT (Jaringan Sekolah Islam Terpadu) network.

**Table 1**  
**Differences in Educational Management Models between**  
**SD NU Bangilan and SDIT BIC**

Aspect	Sd NU Bangilan (NU)	Sdit BIC (Tarbiyah/JSIT)
<b>Planning</b>	Flexible, community-based	Systematic, with clear quantitative targets
<b>Organizing</b>	Participatory, involving foundation & society	Structural, technocratic, hierarchical
<b>Actuating</b>	Value-driven, rooted in local tradition	Mentoring, supervision, program-based
<b>Controlling</b>	Informal, trust-based evaluation	Digital evaluation, measurable quarterly
<b>Culture</b>	Pesantren traditions (tahlil, istighosah)	Modern, disciplined, digital reporting

Based on the research findings, there are fundamental differences in educational management between SD Unggulan NU Bangilan and SDIT Bina Insan Cendekia. SD Unggulan NU Bangilan prioritizes a more flexible, participatory approach, and is applied to local values and the traditions of NU Islamic boarding schools. Planning is carried out by adapting to community needs, organizing is cultural with the involvement of community leaders, teachers, and parents, and mobilization is based on local togetherness and religious beliefs. Supervision is carried out informally with more emphasis on trust and qualitative evaluation. In contrast, SDIT Bina Insan Cendekia uses a more systematic and modern educational management. Planning is carried out technocratically based on quantitative indicators, organizing is structural with a clear division of tasks, and implementation of activities is carried out through direct instruction and a program-based mentoring system. Supervision is stricter with the use of data, digital reporting, and quarterly evaluations. These

differences reflect the ideological, structural, and cultural factors underlying the two schools; NU places more emphasis on togetherness, local wisdom, and mutual cooperation, while tarbiyah prioritizes effectiveness, accountability, and modern standards.

## DISCUSSION

These findings indicate that the educational management models of the two schools are shaped by ideological, structural, and cultural factors.

1. From Fayol's POAC theory, both schools implement management functions but emphasize different pillars. SD NU focuses on *actuating* based on local values, while SDIT BIC emphasizes *planning* and *controlling* supported by measurable data.
2. From Marx's social contestation theory, the contrasting strategies reflect symbolic contestation between Islamic organizations. SD NU relies on cultural capital and local traditions to maintain legitimacy, whereas SDIT BIC builds modern symbolic capital through structured management and measurable quality standards.
3. From educational quality theory (Harvey & Green; UNESCO), SDIT BIC aligns more with *fitness for purpose* and *perfection*, stressing academic and character outcomes that are systematically measured. Conversely, SD NU emphasizes *transformative education*, shaping student character through the internalization of religious and cultural values.

Thus, the two schools do not negate each other; instead, they represent a healthy form of educational contestation. SD NU highlights character formation based on local wisdom, while SDIT BIC prioritizes systematic and professional quality enhancement.

The findings of this research show that the educational management models at SD Unggulan NU Bangilan and SDIT Bina Insan Cendekia cannot be separated from the influence of ideological, structural, and cultural factors that shape them. Viewed through Fayol's POAC theory, both schools apply the functions of management (planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling), but emphasize different aspects. SD NU highlights the actuating aspect by reinforcing local values, pesantren traditions, and togetherness, while SDIT BIC focuses more on planning and controlling through quantitative indicators, digital reporting, and structured evaluations. These findings align with Handoko's (2012) research, which affirms that the application of classical management theory in Indonesian educational institutions is often modified by socio-cultural contexts.

When analyzed using Marx's theory of social contestation, the differences in the schools' strategies reflect symbolic contestation between Islamic organizations. SD NU relies on cultural capital such as pesantren traditions, local wisdom, and socio-religious networks to maintain legitimacy. Meanwhile, SDIT BIC develops modern symbolic capital through systematic, accountable management aligned with global education quality standards. This strengthens Bourdieu's (1986) view of cultural capital and symbolic power,

which posits that educational institutions are arenas of symbolic legitimacy struggles influenced by ideology and cultural strategies.

Furthermore, using Harvey & Green's (1993) theory of educational quality and UNESCO's (2005) standards, SDIT BIC is more oriented toward the concept of quality as "fitness for purpose" and "perfection or consistency," emphasizing academic achievement and character measured regularly. In contrast, SD NU is closer to the concept of quality as "transformative education," where quality is measured by how well education internalizes religious values, local culture, and social togetherness. This emphasis by SD NU also resonates with Tilaar's (2004) idea that Indonesian education should ideally be transformative and rooted in local culture, rather than merely adopting global technocratic standards.

Thus, these two models of educational management do not negate each other. Instead, they can be seen as a form of healthy contestation within Indonesian Islamic education. SD NU represents a cultural-religious approach focused on character formation based on local wisdom, while SDIT BIC reflects the modernization of Islamic education with a systematic, professional, and measurable quality orientation. Their intersection creates an important dynamic in the landscape of Islamic education: on the one hand preserving local-religious identity, and on the other promoting effectiveness and accountability in line with contemporary demands.

## **CONCLUSION**

This research reveals in depth that educational management at SD Unggulan Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Bangilan and SDIT Bina Insan Cendekia Pasuruan City represents two models that both place student quality as the primary goal, but they take different paths strongly influenced by their ideological background, organizational structure, and institutional culture. SD NU Bangilan has developed a participatory management style rooted in the values of Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah, where pesantren traditions and local wisdom serve as the main foundation for shaping student character. This model emphasizes the collective involvement of the community, parents, and religious leaders in various aspects of school administration, including religious activities, worship habituation, and forums for decision-making. Thus, the management model at SD NU Bangilan can be viewed as community-based education that prioritizes spiritual, social, and cultural dimensions as the main instruments for improving student quality. Meanwhile, SDIT Bina Insan Cendekia applies a more modern, structured, and disciplined management model based on tarbiyah ideology. School governance is carried out through the application of digital systems, technology-based reporting, regular mentoring, and tiered evaluations, so that the educational process becomes more systematic and can be measured against clear quality indicators. This model represents a system-based management approach that emphasizes effectiveness, efficiency, and public accountability, aligned with the principles of Total Quality Management (TQM) in education.

The differences in these approaches simultaneously affirm that Islamic educational management is not merely a technical-administrative domain but also a reflection of the ideology and social identity of the communities that underpin it. Both institutions demonstrate that, despite their differing orientations, they are equally capable of producing graduates with strong Islamic character: SD NU Bangilan through a cultural-transformative path rooted in NU traditions, and SDIT Bina Insan Cendekia through a modern-technocratic path driven by performance indicators. Therefore, contestation between Islamic education models at the elementary level can be understood as a form of healthy competition that fosters a diversity of managerial innovations in line with societal needs. These findings enrich the understanding of the dynamics of Islamic education in Indonesia, which is able to present two faces simultaneously: education deeply rooted in tradition and spirituality, and education that is adaptive to modernity and global demands.

The practical implications of this research highlight that improving the quality of students in religion-based schools must integrate three key aspects: ideological values, local wisdom, and modern innovation. Without such integration, religion-based schools risk losing relevance in responding to the challenges of the times. SD NU Bangilan may strengthen its managerial and systematic aspects to become more measurable, while SDIT Bina Insan Cendekia may learn from NU's strength in preserving cultural foundations and local spirituality. Ultimately, the synergy of both can give rise to a model of Islamic education that is balanced, competitive, and contextual.

Furthermore, these findings open several directions for future research. First, it is necessary to conduct studies using mixed-methods approaches to obtain more comprehensive data, both in qualitative depth and quantitative breadth. Second, similar studies can be extended to schools based on other Islamic mass organizations such as Muhammadiyah, Persis, Al-Irsyad, and others, in order to produce a more comprehensive map of Islamic educational management in Indonesia. Third, future research should also examine the role of school leadership, curriculum innovation strategies, and the digitalization of Islamic educational management, given that digital transformation has become an increasingly urgent need in modern education. Thus, it is expected that new models of Islamic educational management will emerge that are not only effective and competitive but also remain firmly rooted in the spiritual values, cultural traditions, and national identity of the Indonesian people.

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