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Value-Based Organizational Culture in Islamic Schools: A Comparative Study of Prescriptive and Adaptive Models

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ABSTRACT

Organizational culture has been widely recognized as a critical factor in educational effectiveness; however, limited research has examined how it functions as a managerial system within Islamic schools. This study aims to analyze the role of organizational culture in educational management and to compare its implementation in two Islamic secondary schools in Yogyakarta, Indonesia: SMA SahabatQu Fullday School and MAN 1 Yogyakarta. A qualitative multiple-case study design was employed. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis involving principals, vice principals, teachers, and students. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, including data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that organizational culture functions not merely as an institutional identity but as a management system that shapes planning, organizing, implementation, and control processes. SMA SahabatQu applies a highly structured cultural approach grounded in Qur'anic values, intensive mentoring, and systematic monitoring, while MAN 1 Yogyakarta adopts a more adaptive approach that integrates Islamic values, local wisdom, and dialogic leadership. The study also reveals that religious and cultural practices contribute to students' educational experiences by fostering a sense of belonging, social cohesion, and personal development. Based on the cross-case analysis, two conceptual models are proposed: the Prescriptive-Holistic Cultural Model and the Adaptive-Contextual Cultural Model. This study contributes to the literature on Islamic educational management by demonstrating that value-based organizational culture operates through multiple cultural pathways shaped by institutional context, leadership philosophy, and educational goals.

Keywords: *Organizational Culture, Educational Leadership, Value-Based Management*

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ABSTRAK

Budaya organisasi telah lama diakui sebagai faktor penting dalam efektivitas pendidikan, namun penelitian yang mengkaji perannya sebagai sistem manajemen pada sekolah Islam masih relatif terbatas. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis peran budaya organisasi dalam manajemen pendidikan serta membandingkan implementasinya pada dua sekolah menengah Islam di Yogyakarta, yaitu SMA SahabatQu Fullday School dan MAN 1 Yogyakarta. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus multisitus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan analisis dokumen yang melibatkan kepala sekolah, wakil kepala sekolah, guru, dan siswa. Data dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña yang meliputi kondensasi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa budaya organisasi tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai identitas institusi, tetapi juga sebagai sistem manajemen yang memengaruhi proses perencanaan, pengorganisasian, pelaksanaan, dan pengendalian pendidikan. SMA SahabatQu menerapkan pendekatan budaya yang terstruktur melalui integrasi nilai-nilai Al-Qur'an, pembinaan intensif, dan sistem monitoring yang sistematis. Sebaliknya, MAN 1 Yogyakarta mengembangkan pendekatan yang lebih adaptif melalui integrasi nilai-nilai Islam, kearifan lokal, dan kepemimpinan dialogis. Penelitian ini juga menemukan bahwa praktik keagamaan dan budaya berkontribusi terhadap pengalaman belajar siswa melalui penguatan rasa memiliki, kohesi sosial, dan pengembangan diri. Berdasarkan analisis lintas kasus, penelitian ini menghasilkan dua model konseptual, yaitu Prescriptive-Holistic Cultural Model dan Adaptive-Contextual Cultural Model. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan kajian manajemen pendidikan Islam dengan menunjukkan bahwa budaya organisasi berbasis nilai dapat diwujudkan melalui berbagai jalur budaya yang dipengaruhi oleh konteks institusi, filosofi kepemimpinan, dan tujuan pendidikan.

Kata Kunci: *Budaya Organisasi, Kepemimpinan Pendidikan, Manajemen Berbasis Nilai*

INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions in the twenty-first century are confronted with increasingly complex challenges resulting from globalization, technological transformation, and growing public expectations regarding educational quality and accountability. Beyond academic achievement, schools are expected to cultivate ethical values, social responsibility, and cultural identity among students. In this context, educational effectiveness is influenced not only by managerial efficiency but also by the organizational culture that shapes how educational goals are interpreted, implemented, and sustained within institutions (Bush, 2020; Fullan, 2020).

Organizational culture has long been recognized as a central factor in institutional performance and change. Schein (2017) defines organizational

culture as a pattern of shared assumptions, values, beliefs, and practices that guide members' behavior within an organization. In educational settings, culture influences leadership practices, communication patterns, decision-making processes, and the implementation of educational policies (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Hallinger, 2018). Rather than functioning merely as symbolic attributes, organizational values can become strategic resources that shape planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation processes throughout the institution. Consequently, sustainable school improvement often depends on the extent to which cultural values are embedded in everyday managerial practices rather than being treated as formal institutional slogans.

The significance of organizational culture becomes particularly evident in Islamic educational institutions, where educational objectives extend beyond academic excellence to include spiritual development, moral formation, and social responsibility. Previous studies on Islamic education have emphasized the importance of Islamic organizational identity, value-based leadership, and pesantren culture in shaping institutional effectiveness and character development (Azra, 2019; Dhofier, 2011; Lukens-Bull, 2013). In this context, leadership is expected not only to manage organizational resources but also to preserve religious values and cultural traditions that serve as the foundation of institutional identity.

Although a growing body of research has examined Islamic values, school culture, and character education, most studies have focused primarily on student outcomes such as religious character, moral development, and academic achievement (Khaidir & Suud, 2020; Ahmad et al., 2025; Al-Nahdi, 2025). Comparatively less attention has been paid to understanding how organizational culture operates as a managerial system that shapes educational planning, organizing, implementation, and control. Furthermore, comparative studies exploring how different cultural orientations influence educational management practices across Islamic schools remain limited. This gap is important because organizational culture may function differently depending on institutional history, leadership philosophy, and environmental demands.

To address this gap, the present study investigates two Islamic secondary schools in the Special Region of Yogyakarta that represent contrasting organizational contexts. SMA SahabatQu Fullday School Yogyakarta combines a full-day school model with a pesantren-based educational environment, where religious practices and character-building programs are integrated into daily educational management. In contrast, MAN 1 Yogyakarta operates within a more formal bureaucratic structure while simultaneously incorporating

Javanese cultural values and principles of religious moderation into its organizational practices. These contrasting contexts provide a valuable opportunity to examine how different cultural orientations shape educational management processes.

Accordingly, this study seeks to answer the following research questions: How is organizational culture integrated into educational management processes in Islamic schools? How does organizational culture support student well-being and educational experiences? How do cultural orientations differ between SMA SahabatQu Fullday School and MAN 1 Yogyakarta?

By addressing these questions, the study contributes to the literature on Islamic educational management by proposing two models of value-based organizational culture: the Prescriptive-Holistic Cultural Model and the Adaptive-Contextual Cultural Model. The study also extends discussions on Islamic organizational identity, educational leadership, and ecological dimensions of school culture by demonstrating how cultural values function as managerial mechanisms that influence institutional practices and educational experiences.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative multiple-case study design to examine how organizational culture shapes educational management practices in two Islamic secondary schools with contrasting institutional characteristics (Yin, 2018). The cases selected were SMA SahabatQu Fullday School Yogyakarta, which integrates a pesantren-based environment within a full-day school system, and MAN 1 Yogyakarta, a public Islamic school recognized for integrating Islamic values, Javanese cultural wisdom, and religious moderation into its organizational practices. The contrasting characteristics of these institutions provided a suitable basis for comparative analysis.

Data were collected over one academic semester using purposive sampling (Patton, 2015). Participants consisted of two principals, four vice principals, ten teachers and *murabbi*, and twelve students who were directly involved in leadership, educational management, and cultural implementation processes. Participant recruitment continued until thematic saturation was achieved, indicated by the recurrence of similar patterns and the absence of substantially new information across interviews and observations.

Data collection involved semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Interviews explored participants' experiences and perceptions regarding organizational culture, leadership, and management practices. Observations focused on leadership interactions,

religious activities, communication patterns, and cultural routines embedded in daily school life. Documentary sources included School Operational Curricula (KOSP), Annual Work Plans (RKT), student character-monitoring instruments (*mutaba'ah*), institutional reports, and other documents related to organizational culture and management.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were first subjected to open coding. Initial codes such as religious discipline, collective responsibility, cultural adaptation, role modeling, and student well-being were identified and subsequently grouped into broader categories, including organizational values, leadership practices, cultural rituals, and managerial processes. These categories were then synthesized into overarching themes that represented the dominant cultural characteristics of each institution.

The analysis was conducted in two stages. First, within-case analysis was used to identify the distinctive cultural and managerial characteristics of each school. Second, cross-case analysis was undertaken to compare similarities and differences across cases, leading to the development of two conceptual models: the Prescriptive-Holistic Cultural Model and the Adaptive-Contextual Cultural Model.

Trustworthiness was established using Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria. Credibility was enhanced through source and method triangulation involving principals, vice principals, teachers, and students, as well as interviews, observations, and document analysis. Dependability and confirmability were maintained through systematic documentation of coding procedures, analytical decisions, and research processes.

RESLUT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Within-Case Analysis: SMA SahabatQu Fullday School Yogyakarta

Data from interviews, observations, and document analysis indicate that organizational culture at SMA SahabatQu is strongly grounded in Qur'anic values, pesantren traditions, and holistic character formation. Participants consistently described the school culture as highly structured and integrated into everyday educational management. The principal explained: "Our goal is not only academic achievement. Every program is designed so that students grow intellectually, spiritually, and morally through Qur'anic values" (P1).

Document analysis of the Annual Work Plan (RKT) and School Operational Curriculum (KOSP) revealed that academic programs, tahfidz activities, character education, and leadership development were planned within a single framework. A tahfidz mentor stated: "Academic learning and Qur'anic learning are planned together because they are part of the same educational mission" (T3).

Observations showed that organizational structures reinforced these priorities. Homeroom teachers also functioned as *murabbi*, while specialized units for Tahfidz, Akhlak, and Leadership coordinated student development programs. Monitoring documents (*mutaba'ah*) further demonstrated systematic supervision of worship practices, character development, and learning discipline.

Daily implementation included congregational prayers, Qur'anic memorization circles, mentoring sessions, and leadership activities. Students generally viewed these activities as part of the school culture rather than additional obligations. "The religious activities have become part of our routine. We do not see them as extra tasks because they are part of how we learn every day." (S4)

Several students also reported that religious activities created opportunities for reflection during the extended school schedule. "After several academic classes, joining the Qur'an session or prayer helps me feel calmer and more focused." (S7)

However, interview data suggest that perceptions of these experiences varied among students. While many described religious activities as beneficial for maintaining motivation and emotional balance, the findings should be understood as students' subjective experiences rather than direct evidence of psychological outcomes.

Overall, organizational culture at SMA SahabatQu was maintained through structured routines, explicit expectations, formal monitoring systems, and continuous mentoring. These characteristics form what this study conceptualizes as a Prescriptive-Holistic Cultural Model.

Within-Case Analysis: MAN 1 Yogyakarta

In contrast, organizational culture at MAN 1 Yogyakarta was characterized by flexibility, contextual adaptation, and the integration of Islamic values with local Javanese cultural traditions. The principal explained: "Our responsibility is not only to teach Islamic values but also to help students practice those values within a diverse social environment." (P2)

Document analysis of the KOSP, student-development programs, and school policies demonstrated that religious education was closely linked with religious moderation, cultural appreciation, and social inclusion. Teachers frequently referred to local values such as *tepa slira*, *unggah-ungguh*, and *andhap asor* as practical guidelines for daily interaction. One teacher noted: “Students are encouraged to respect differences. Religious values and local cultural values are taught together because both contribute to character development.” (T8)

Observations revealed that relationships among teachers, students, and administrators were generally informal and collaborative. Although formal bureaucratic procedures existed, communication was often conducted through discussion and consensus. “Most issues are resolved through dialogue. Formal rules exist, but people prefer discussion before enforcement.” (VP2)

The implementation of the 3S culture (*Senyum, Salam, Sapa*) was consistently observed throughout the school environment. Students, teachers, and staff engaged in courteous interactions that reflected the school’s emphasis on social harmony. Students also emphasized the inclusive atmosphere promoted by the school. “We come from different backgrounds, but we learn to respect one another. That is something teachers always remind us about.” (S10)

Unlike SMA SahabatQu, behavioral regulation relied less on formal monitoring documents and more on interpersonal relationships, dialogue, and collective responsibility. Teachers frequently described persuasion and consensus-building as preferred approaches to student guidance.

These findings indicate that organizational culture at MAN 1 Yogyakarta is sustained primarily through relational leadership, cultural accommodation, and inclusive practices. This pattern is conceptualized as an Adaptive-Contextual Cultural Model.

Cross-Case Analysis

Cross-case analysis identified both similarities and differences between the two institutions. Both schools viewed organizational culture as a central component of educational management rather than a symbolic institutional attribute. In both cases, leaders acted as custodians of institutional values, religious practices were integrated into daily routines, and parents were actively involved in reinforcing school values.

However, the mechanisms through which culture was implemented differed considerably. SMA SahabatQu emphasized structured value transmission through formal regulations, standardized routines, measurable targets, and systematic monitoring. By contrast, MAN 1 Yogyakarta relied more heavily on dialogue, consensus-building, and contextual adaptation.

Table 1. Comparative Characteristics of Organizational Culture Models

Comparative Dimension	SMA SahabatQu Fullday School	MAN 1 Yogyakarta
Cultural Orientation	Structured and value-prescriptive	Flexible and context-responsive
Core Values	Qur'anic memorization, character, leadership	Religious moderation, local wisdom, inclusivity
Communication Pattern	Murabbi-student guidance	Familial and dialogic interaction
Control Mechanism	Formal monitoring and evaluation	Social control and consensus
Cultural Objective	Formation of Qur'anic leaders	Development of tolerant and socially engaged graduates

The comparison suggests that value-based educational management may emerge through different cultural pathways. While SMA SahabatQu prioritizes structured cultural supervision and holistic value formation, MAN 1 Yogyakarta emphasizes adaptive leadership, social inclusion, and cultural accommodation. These findings demonstrate that organizational culture in Islamic schools is shaped not only by religious values but also by institutional history, leadership philosophy, and sociocultural context.

Discussion

Organizational Culture Beyond Symbolic Identity: A Managerial System in Islamic Schools

The findings demonstrate that organizational culture in both SMA SahabatQu and MAN 1 Yogyakarta functions as a managerial system rather than merely a symbolic institutional identity. Consistent with Schein and Schein (2017), organizational culture operates through shared values, assumptions, and routines that influence planning, organizing, implementation, and control processes. In both schools, cultural values were embedded within strategic planning, leadership practices, student development programs, and evaluation mechanisms.

This finding extends previous studies on Islamic schools that have primarily emphasized student character formation, religious values, and educational outcomes (Mardiana et al., 2022; Salabi & Prasetyo, 2022). While earlier research often treated organizational culture as a contextual factor, the present study suggests that culture itself functions as a governance mechanism that shapes how educational management is enacted.

However, the findings also reveal an important tension. Strong value integration can enhance organizational coherence, but excessive cultural formalization may reduce flexibility and responsiveness to emerging educational challenges. Conversely, highly adaptive cultures may promote inclusivity and contextual responsiveness but risk inconsistency in value implementation.

Leadership, Cultural Reproduction, and Institutional Identity

The findings confirm that school leaders play a critical role in sustaining organizational culture. In both institutions, principals acted not only as administrators but also as custodians of institutional values. This supports Hallinger's (2020) argument that educational leadership involves constructing shared meaning and organizational commitment in addition to administrative coordination.

The two schools, however, reproduced organizational culture through different leadership traditions. At SMA SahabatQu, leadership reflected the *pesantren* tradition in which the principal and *murabbi* functioned as moral exemplars who directly supervised students' spiritual and character development. This pattern is consistent with studies of *pesantren* leadership emphasizing authority, role modeling, and intensive mentoring as mechanisms for transmitting institutional values (Dhofier, 2011; Lukens-Bull, 2013).

In contrast, leadership at MAN 1 Yogyakarta relied more heavily on relational influence, dialogue, and cultural accommodation. The integration of Javanese values such as *tepa slira*, *unggah-ungguh*, and *andhap asor* created a leadership environment that emphasized consensus and social harmony. This finding suggests that Islamic organizational identity is not necessarily expressed through a single cultural form but can be interpreted and enacted through diverse local cultural traditions.

These results contribute to the growing literature on Islamic educational leadership by demonstrating that religious values become organizationally effective when translated into culturally meaningful leadership practices rather than merely formal institutional policies.

Organizational Culture and Student Well-Being: Between Spirituality and Psychological Restoration

One of the most interesting findings concerns students' perceptions of religious activities as experiences that support emotional balance within demanding educational environments. Students at SMA SahabatQu frequently described Qur'anic recitation sessions, congregational prayers, and mentoring

activities as opportunities to regain focus after intensive academic learning. Similar patterns were observed at MAN 1 Yogyakarta, where daily religious routines and supportive social relationships contributed to students' sense of belonging.

Attention Restoration Theory (Kaplan, 1995) provides one possible explanation for this finding. From this perspective, religious activities may function as restorative experiences because they temporarily shift students away from cognitively demanding academic tasks and provide opportunities for reflection, emotional regulation, and attentional recovery. Unlike many extracurricular activities that often involve additional performance demands, religious practices in both schools were embedded within daily routines and experienced as meaningful rather than competitive activities.

Nevertheless, alternative interpretations should also be considered. The restorative effects reported by students may not derive solely from spiritual practices themselves. They may also reflect broader social and psychological mechanisms, including supportive peer relationships, a predictable daily structure, and a strong sense of community. Therefore, the findings should not be interpreted as evidence that religious activities automatically improve well-being. Rather, they suggest that spirituality, social belonging, and organizational support may interact in ways that contribute to positive student experiences.

This interpretation expands existing studies on Islamic schooling by highlighting the possibility that organizational culture serves not only managerial and pedagogical functions but also socio-emotional functions that support students' educational experiences. The principal contribution of this study lies in the development of two conceptual models of value-based organizational culture in Islamic schools.

The Prescriptive-Holistic Cultural Model, represented by SMA SahabatQu, is characterized by structured value transmission, intensive monitoring, integrated religious management, and strong organizational supervision. This model appears particularly effective in institutions pursuing specialized religious outcomes, intensive character formation, and high organizational consistency. However, its reliance on formalized routines and close supervision may limit flexibility when institutions face rapidly changing educational environments.

In contrast, the Adaptive-Contextual Cultural Model, represented by MAN 1 Yogyakarta, is characterized by contextual adaptation, dialogic leadership, local wisdom integration, and relational forms of cultural control. This model appears particularly suitable for educational settings characterized

by social diversity, institutional complexity, and the need for inclusivity. Nevertheless, because value transmission depends more heavily on social interaction than formal monitoring, maintaining consistency across organizational members may present greater challenges.

These findings suggest that value-based educational management operates through multiple cultural pathways rather than a single universal framework. The effectiveness of each model depends on the alignment between institutional goals, leadership philosophy, stakeholder expectations, and sociocultural context.

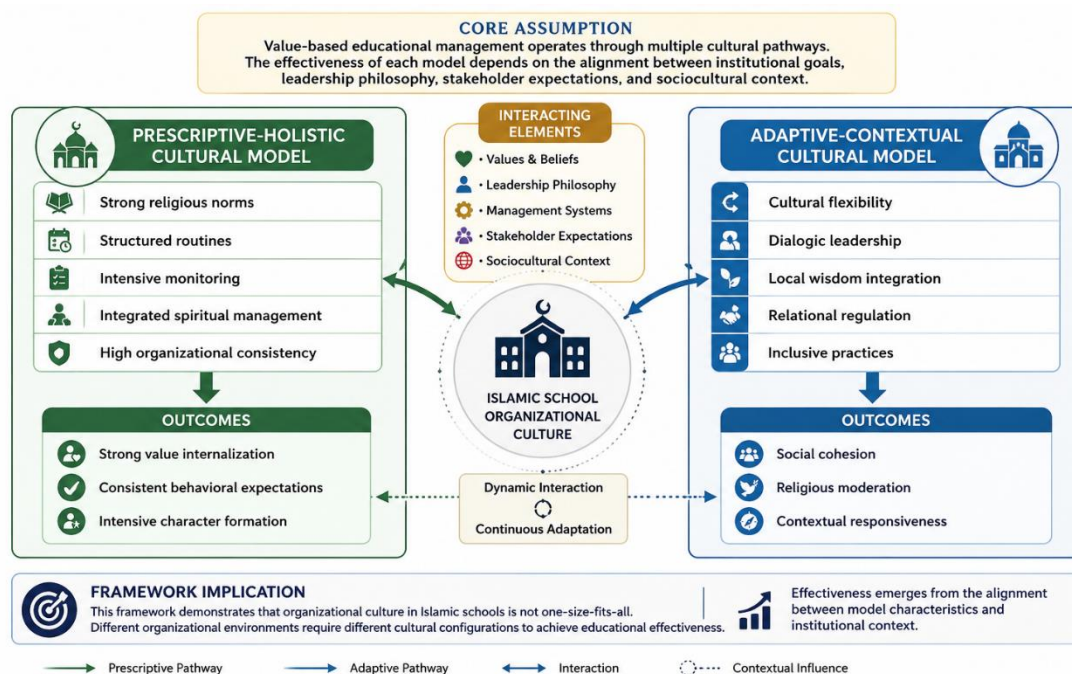


Figure 1. Conceptual Models of Value-Based Organizational Culture in Islamic Schools

The framework demonstrates that organizational culture in Islamic schools should be understood as a dynamic interaction between values, leadership, management systems, and sociocultural context. Rather than proposing one superior model, this study argues that different organizational environments require different cultural configurations to achieve educational effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that organizational culture functions as a strategic management system in Islamic schools by shaping leadership practices, educational planning, organizational routines, and student

development. The findings reveal that value-based educational management is not implemented through a single universal framework but is influenced by institutional goals, leadership philosophy, and sociocultural context.

The study identifies two distinct models of organizational culture. The Prescriptive-Holistic Cultural Model, represented by SMA SahabatQu Fullday School Yogyakarta, emphasizes structured value transmission, intensive monitoring, and integrated religious management. In contrast, the Adaptive-Contextual Cultural Model, represented by MAN 1 Yogyakarta, emphasizes contextual adaptation, dialogic leadership, local wisdom integration, and inclusive educational practices. These findings indicate that different cultural configurations may be equally effective when aligned with institutional needs and educational objectives.

The main theoretical contribution of this study is the extension of organizational culture literature in Islamic educational management by demonstrating that organizational culture operates not only as an institutional identity but also as a managerial mechanism that translates values into practice. The study further contributes by proposing two conceptual models that explain alternative pathways for implementing value-based educational management in Islamic schools.

Practically, the findings suggest that school leaders should integrate organizational values into leadership, planning, and daily educational activities. Islamic educational institutions are encouraged to develop culturally relevant management approaches that reflect their unique contexts, while policymakers should support greater institutional flexibility in implementing value-based educational practices.

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