

Islamic Education Management Based on Nahdiah Values The Perspective of Nahdlatul Ulama Scholars

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to comprehensively examine the management of Islamic education based on Nahdiah values from the perspective of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) scholars. Nahdlatul Ulama, as the largest Islamic organization in Indonesia, is rooted in Nahdiah values, including tawassuth (moderation), tawazun (balance), i'tidal (justice), tasamuh (tolerance), amanah (trustworthiness), and shura (shura), which serve as the philosophical foundation for the management of Islamic educational institutions. Through a systematic literature review approach of 40 relevant scientific sources published between 2021 and 2026, this study analyzes how Nahdiah values are implemented in the management of curriculum, leadership, human resources, finance, and organizational culture in NU educational institutions. The results of the study indicate that management of Islamic education based on Nahdiah values produces educational institutions that excel academically and are strong in character, with a leadership system based on authoritative yet participatory kiai (Islamic scholars), a curriculum that integrates religious and general knowledge in a balanced manner, and a pesantren culture that is resilient to changing times. The practical implications of this study point to the importance of formalizing the Nahdiah value-based management model as a paradigmatic alternative for managing Islamic education in Indonesia that is able to answer the challenges of modernity without losing its identity.

Keywords: Islamic education management; Nahdiah values; Nahdlatul Ulama; Islamic boarding schools; Islamic leadership.

INTRODUCTION

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) is Indonesia's largest Islamic organization, founded in 1926 and playing a significant role in the development of Islamic education in the archipelago. With a network spanning thousands of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), madrasas (Islamic schools), and universities, NU has a unique educational management system rooted in Nahdiah values that have been tested for nearly a century. These values—continuity, tolerance, trustworthiness, and shura—are not merely ideological principles but serve as the operational foundation for managing NU's educational institutions (Nasikhin & Raaharjo, 2022).

Islamic educational management is a discipline that combines modern management principles with Islamic values in the management of educational institutions. Arar et al. (2022), through an international empirical review of Islamic-based educational leadership, demonstrated that the effectiveness of Islamic



educational institution management is largely determined by the extent to which leaders are able to integrate Islamic values into every aspect of organizational management. This finding is relevant to the leadership model of kiai (Islamic scholars) in Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Islamic boarding schools, which have long practiced the integration of Islamic values in educational management (Aisyah et al., 2022).

An identified research gap is the lack of studies that systematically analyze the Nahdiah-based Islamic education management model from the perspective of NU scholars. Most existing studies focus on curricular or pedagogical aspects (Ma'arif et al., 2022; Burga & Damopolii, 2022), without comprehensively mapping the managerial dimensions of NU educational practices. This study aims to fill this gap by offering an integrative conceptual framework for Nahdiah-based Islamic education management from the perspective of NU scholars.

The objectives of this study are: (1) to identify Nahdiah values that have direct relevance to the functions of Islamic education management; (2) to analyze the implementation of Nahdiah values in the leadership and governance of NU educational institutions; (3) to examine the curriculum model based on Nahdiah values in NU Islamic boarding schools and universities; (4) to explore human resource management and organizational culture based on Nahdiah values; and (5) to formulate a comprehensive conceptual framework for Islamic education management based on Nahdiah values.

METHOD

This study uses a systematic literature review (SLR) approach that includes a comprehensive analysis of relevant scientific sources published in 2021–2026. The research procedure consists of four stages: (1) Formulation of research questions using the PICO framework; (2) Literature search through Google Scholar, Scopus, SINTA, and Consensus databases using the keywords 'Islamic education management', 'Nahdlatul Ulama', 'Nahdiah values', 'Islamic boarding schools', 'Islamic leadership', and combinations thereof; (3) Application of inclusion and exclusion criteria; and (4) Thematic data extraction and synthesis.

A total of 40 scientific sources met the inclusion criteria and formed the analytical corpus of this study. Data were extracted based on five main categories: (a) leadership and governance of Islamic education; (b) Islamic value-based curriculum management; (c) human resource management and character development; (d) Islamic boarding school organizational culture; and (e) modernization and adaptation of Islamic educational institutions. Thematic analysis was conducted inductively and deductively to identify patterns and relationships between themes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on a systematic analysis of 40 literature sources, five main dimensions of Islamic education management based on Nahdiah values were identified. Table 1 summarizes the mapping of Nahdiah values and their relevance to the functions of Islamic education management.

Table 1. Nahdiah Values and Their Relevance to Islamic Education Management

Nahdiah Values	Main Principles	Management Functions	Implementation in NU Institutions
Tawassuth (Moderation)	Middle way; avoiding extremism in management	Curriculum planning; institutional policies	Integrative curriculum of religious and general sciences; inclusive policy without discrimination
Tawazun (Balance)	Balance between worldly, ukhrawi and social interests	Curriculum management; resource allocation	Balance of religious and general study hours; balance of operational and development budgets
I'tidal (Justice)	Be fair and proportional in every managerial decision	Human resource management; performance appraisal; recruitment	Merit system in teacher recruitment; performance appraisal based on actual performance; fair distribution of tasks
Tasamuh (Tolerance)	Tolerance of differences; inclusive attitude in management	Organizational culture; conflict management	Inclusive academic culture; consensus-based conflict resolution; non-discriminatory student admission
Trust (Amanah)	Trustee in managing educational institutions	Financial governance; accountability; transparency	Transparent financial reports; program accountability to student guardians and stakeholders
Shura (Deliberation)	Collective decision making based on deliberation	Decision making; strategic planning	Teachers' council meeting; Islamic boarding school family deliberation; participatory curriculum planning

Source: Synthesis of literature review (2021–2026)

A. Kiai Leadership as the Foundation of Islamic Education Management Based on Nahdiah Values

Kiai leadership is a central element in Islamic education management within the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). Aisyah et al. (2022) in their study of the concept of kiai leadership within the organizational culture of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) found that kiai authority stems from a unique combination of religious scholarly competence, moral exemplarity, and community trust built over generations. This leadership model reflects the value of trust, a pillar of Nahdiah values, where

Islamic educational leaders are viewed as trustees of the community, not merely organizational executives.

Arar et al. (2022) conducted an international empirical review of Islamic-based educational leadership over three decades, finding that Islamic values-based leadership, as practiced in the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) tradition, consistently results in more socially cohesive schools and is more effective in transmitting values. Gaol (2021) added, through a systematic literature review of school leadership in Indonesia, that leadership rooted in local cultural and religious values—such as the leadership of NU kiai—is more effective in the Indonesian context than leadership models adopted directly from Western traditions.

The value of shura (deliberation) in the context of NU kiai leadership is realized through the practice of halaqah and bahtsul masail, which are collective discussion forums for important decision-making. Khotimah et al. (2024) showed that improving the competence of Islamic religious education teachers from a madrasah-based management perspective is highly dependent on the leadership quality of madrasah principals who are able to create a participatory climate that reflects the value of shura. Ismail et al. (2022) strengthen this finding by showing that the most influential factor in critical and holistic thinking in Islamic education in Indonesia is a leadership system that encourages participation and dialogue, in line with the principles of NU shura.



Figure 1. Conceptual Representation of Islamic Education Management Based on Nahdhiyah Values

Source: Representative documentation of NU Islamic boarding school academic activities

B. Tawassuth and Tawazun Value-Based Curriculum Management

Curriculum management is one of the most important dimensions in Islamic education management based on Nahdiah values. The values of *tawassuth* (moderation) and *tawazun* (balance) are the main principles in the design and management of the curriculum of NU educational institutions. Ma'arif et al. (2022) examined the implementation of moderate Islamic religious education learning strategies in Islamic universities and found that a moderation-based approach consistently produced a curriculum that was more comprehensive, inclusive, and relevant to the needs of Indonesia's multicultural society.

Burga & Damopolii (2022) documented how strengthening religious moderation through local wisdom-based Islamic boarding schools, a hallmark of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), produced graduates with a strong Islamic identity and openness to differences. Masturin (2023) reinforced this finding by demonstrating that developing Islamic religious education teaching materials based on religious moderation has proven effective in developing moderate and tolerant student character. Mujahid (2021) added that character education based on Islamic orthodoxy in modern Indonesian Islamic boarding schools has succeeded in producing moderate Muslims who balance religious commitment and intellectual openness, a concrete manifestation of NU's *tawazun* (Islamic principle) values.

Wasehudin et al. (2023) examined the transformation of Islamic education through the Merdeka curriculum in Islamic boarding schools and found that NU Islamic boarding schools based on *tawassuth* values have a higher capacity for curriculum adaptation than more traditionalist or reformist boarding schools, because the value of moderation allows NU Islamic boarding schools to adopt curriculum innovations without abandoning the scholarly tradition of Islamic boarding schools. Syarnubi et al. (2023) added that the curriculum design of Islamic religious education study programs in the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 needs to integrate the values of moderation as taught by NU to produce competitive and character-based graduates.

C. Human Resource Management Based on *I'tidal* and *Amanah* Values

Human resource (HR) management in Nahdiah-based Islamic educational institutions is based on the values of *i'tidal* (justice) and *amanah* (trust/integrity). Kanya et al. (2021) found in their study of factors influencing teacher performance that fairness in workload distribution, compensation, and professional development were the strongest predictors of teacher satisfaction and commitment. This finding aligns with the Nahdiah *i'tidal* values, which emphasize proportionality and fairness in all aspects of management.

Khotimah et al. (2024) specifically examined the competency improvement of Islamic religious education teachers from a madrasah-based management perspective and found that competency development programs designed based on the principles of justice and transparency—a manifestation of the NU values of *i'tidal* and *amanah*—resulted in more sustainable teacher performance improvements. Chanifah et al. (2021) added that a spirituality-based Islamic education framework at two successful Indonesian Islamic universities demonstrated that human resource development that integrates spiritual, intellectual, and professional dimensions in a balanced manner—in accordance with the NU values of *tawazun*—resulted in more holistic teaching staff.

Ichsan et al. (2023) examined the development of Islamic human resource management in the digital era for Indonesian small and medium enterprises and cooperatives, and found that Islamic-based human resource management principles, including the value of amanah (trustworthiness), provide a significant competitive advantage by building trust and loyalty among organizational members. Nst et al. (2024) expanded on these findings by demonstrating the link between ushul fiqh (Islamic principles of jurisprudence), qawaid (Islamic principles of jurisprudence), and maqashid al-shariah (Islamic principles of sharia) with Islamic economic management, confirming that Islamic human resource management principles based on Nahdiah values have a solid epistemological foundation.

D. Islamic Boarding School Organizational Culture and Tasamuh Values

The organizational culture of NU Islamic boarding schools is one of the main strengths that distinguishes the Nahdiah-based Islamic education management model from other management models. The value of tasamuh (tolerance) is the soul of NU Islamic boarding school's inclusive and harmonious organizational culture. Fatahillah et al. (2023) in their study of the cultural synergy between Islamic boarding schools, local wisdom, and authentic Islamic values found that the integration of these three elements, as practiced by NU Islamic boarding schools, produces a strong institutional identity and a conducive learning culture.

Jaenullah et al. (2022) documented a resilience model of the traditional Islamic boarding school education system in shaping the morals of students amidst educational modernization, demonstrating that Islamic boarding school culture rooted in the values of tasamuh and syura is able to adapt to changing times without losing its essence. Hastasari et al. (2022) examined the communication patterns of students at the Muallimin Muhammadiyah Islamic boarding school and found that the open and tolerant communication climate characteristic of tasamuh-based Islamic boarding schools significantly contributes to the quality of learning. Hanafi et al. (2021) added that the new identity of Indonesian Islamic boarding schools in the post-COVID-19 'new normal' era demonstrates the resilience of NU Islamic boarding school culture rooted in Nahdiah values.

Hidayah (2021) analyzed the phenomenon of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) for the Indonesian Muslim middle class and found that the appeal of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Islamic boarding schools to the growing middle class segment is inseparable from their reputation as institutions capable of combining deep spirituality with intellectual openness—a reflection of the value of tasamuh (compassion) that lives within the organizational culture of NU Islamic boarding schools. Aderibigbe et al. (2023) reinforced these findings through an international study showing that Islamic education based on tolerance and respect for diversity, as emphasized by NU, is the most relevant and effective model of Islamic education in the era of globalization.

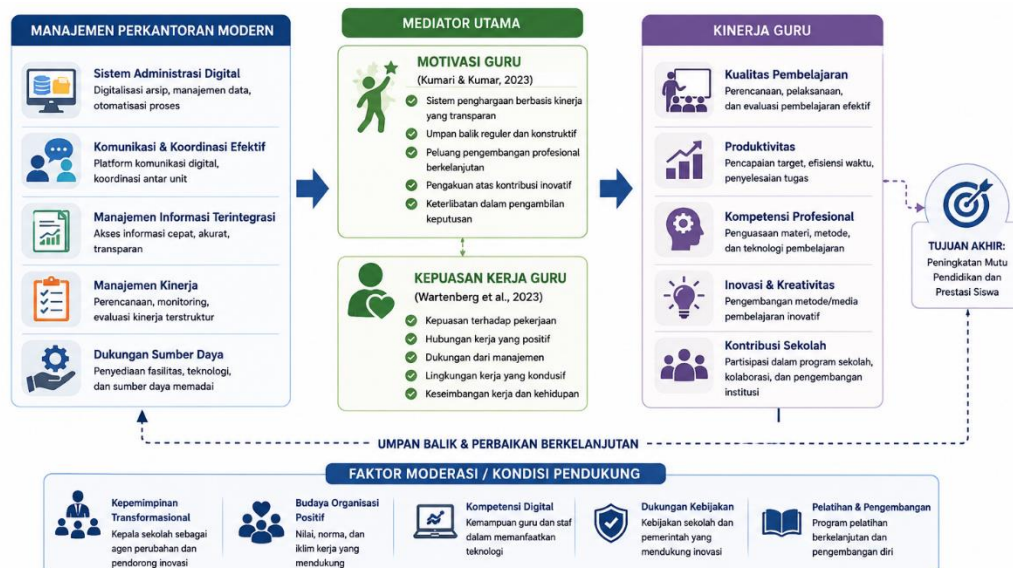


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework of Islamic Education Management Based on Nahdhiyah Values

Source: Modification from literature review (2021–2026)

E. Religious Moderation as a Paradigm of NU's Islamic Education Management

Religious moderation (wasathiyah Islam) is the primary paradigm that distinguishes NU's Islamic education management from other models of Islamic education management. Nasikhin & Raaharjo (2022) compared the concepts of religious moderation in NU and Muhammadiyah from the perspectives of Islam Nusantara and Islam Berkemajuan, and found that despite their differences in approach, both agreed that religious moderation is an uncompromising foundation in the management of Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia. Nasir & Rijal (2021) further demonstrated how Islamic universities in Indonesia, particularly those based on NU, have successfully mainstreamed religious moderation as a pillar of curriculum management and academic culture.

Albana (2023) documented the implementation of religious moderation education in high schools and found that the success of the moderation program was largely determined by the school management's commitment to integrating moderation values into all aspects of management, not just the learning materials. Dasopang et al. (2023) demonstrated the role of religious and cultural education as a conflict resolution tool in Sibolga society, emphasizing that NU's moderation-based educational management has social impacts that extend beyond the school environment. Jubba et al. (2022) strengthened this argument by examining the contestation between conservative and moderate Muslims in promoting Islamic moderation in Indonesia and found that NU educational institutions, through their Nahdhiyah-based management model, play a key role in strengthening religious moderation in Indonesia.

Table 2. Dimensions of Islamic Education Management Based on Nahdhiyah Values

Management Dimensions	Dominant Nahdiah Values	Success Indicators	Primary Source
Kiai Leadership	Trust, Syura, I'tidal	Community trust; institutional stability	<i>Aisyah et al. (2022); Arar et al. (2022); Gaol (2021)</i>
Curriculum Management	Tawassuth, Tawazun	Integration of religious and general knowledge; curriculum adaptation	<i>Ma'arif et al. (2022); Masturin (2023); Wasehudin et al. (2023)</i>
Human Resource Management	I'tidal, Amanah	Teacher performance improves; job satisfaction is high	<i>Khotimah et al. (2024); Kanya et al. (2021); Chanifah et al. (2021)</i>
Organizational culture	Compassion, Compassion	Social cohesiveness; conducive academic climate	<i>Fatahillah et al. (2023); Jaenullah et al. (2022); Hidayah (2021)</i>
Religious Moderation	Tawassuth, Tasamuh, I'tidal	Graduates' moderate identity; resilience against radicalism	<i>Nasikhin & Raaharjo (2022); Nasir & Rijal (2021); Jubba et al. (2022)</i>

Source: Synthesis of literature review (2021–2026)

F. Digital Adaptation of Islamic Education Management Based on Nahdiah Values

Islamic educational institutions based on Nahdiah values face significant challenges in the digital era. Hidayat et al. (2022) examined the challenges and prospects of Islamic educational institutions in the digital era and found that Islamic educational institutions with a strong foundation of values, such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Islamic boarding schools, are better able to manage the digital transition without losing the essence of education. Hanafi et al. (2021) documented the leadership response of Indonesian Islamic boarding schools to COVID-19 and demonstrated that NU Islamic boarding schools successfully maintained educational quality during the pandemic due to their adaptive management model, while remaining rooted in Nahdiah values.

Makruf et al. (2022) examined Moodle-based online learning management in higher education and found that the integration of digital technology into learning management, when grounded in Nahdiah values—particularly tawazun, which maintains a balance between technology and humanism—resulted in a more meaningful learning experience. Zaid et al. (2022) added a social media dimension by examining how digital Islam and millennial Muslims reform religious authority and Islamic practice through social media, emphasizing that Nahdiah-based Islamic education management needs to integrate digital communication strategies consistent with the principles of moderation and tolerance.

Kosim et al. (2023) examined the dynamics of Islamic education policy in Indonesia and found that successful policy implementation is highly dependent on

the capacity of institutional management to align government policies with institutional values. Beribe (2023) reinforced this finding by examining the impact of globalization on the curriculum of elementary madrasas, demonstrating that Nahdiah-based curriculum management is able to select and filter relevant global content without sacrificing the Islamic identity of the archipelago.

Table 3. Summary of Findings: Implementation of Nahdiah Values in Islamic Education Management

Study Aspects	Key Findings	Source
Islamic Leadership	The leadership of kiai based on trust and shura results in community trust and long-term institutional stability.	<i>Aisyah et al. (2022); Arar et al. (2022); Gaol (2021); Khotimah et al. (2024)</i>
Curriculum Integration	The tawassuth-tawazun based curriculum produces graduates who are balanced in religious knowledge, general knowledge, and character.	<i>Ma'arif et al. (2022); Masturin (2023); Mujahid (2021); Wasehudin et al. (2023); Syarnubi et al. (2023)</i>
Educator Management	I'tidal-based HR management system significantly improves teacher performance and organizational commitment.	<i>Kanya et al. (2021); Chanifah et al. (2021); Ichsan et al. (2023); Nst et al. (2024)</i>
Islamic Boarding School Culture	The culture of Islamic boarding schools based on tasamuh creates an inclusive learning climate that is resilient to various contextual changes.	<i>Fatahillah et al. (2023); Jaenullah et al. (2022); Hidayah (2021); Hastasari et al. (2022); Hanafi et al. (2021)</i>
Religious Moderation	Moderation-based management produces alumni with a moderate Muslim identity who are resistant to radicalism and extremism.	<i>Nasikhin & Raaharjo (2022); Nasir & Rijal (2021); Albana (2023); Jubba et al. (2022); Moslimany et al. (2024)</i>
Digital Adaptation	Nahdiah's value-based management facilitates managed digital adaptation without sacrificing the essence of Islamic education.	<i>Hidayat et al. (2022); Makruf et al. (2022); Zaid et al. (2022); Kosim et al. (2023); Dasopang et al. (2022)</i>

Source: Synthesis of literature review (2021–2026)

G. NU Ulama's Perspective on Islamic Education Management

The perspective of NU scholars on Islamic education management has its own uniqueness, stemming from the centuries-old tradition of Islamic boarding school scholarship. Wahidin (2026), in his study of the concept of Islamic religious education from Imam Al-Ghazali's perspective, found a deep harmony between Al-Ghazali's thoughts and the principles of educational management practiced by NU scholars, especially in the emphasis on moral formation as the main goal of education and knowledge as worship. Moslimany et al. (2024) examined the challenges and opportunities in designing a holistic curriculum for Islamic

education and found that the curriculum model developed by NU scholars, which combines Islamic boarding school traditions with modern methodologies, is one of the most comprehensive models in the Islamic world.

Syarnubi et al. (2021) documented the implementation of character education in madrasas from an Islamic perspective and found that madrasas based on Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) values successfully integrated character education into all aspects of school management, not just specific subjects. Ali et al. (2021) examined interfaith literacy learning as a counter-radicalization method in Indonesian Islamic higher education institutions and found that NU educational institutions, based on *tasamuh* (compassionate) values, had a greater capacity to implement interfaith tolerance programs. Ibrahim et al. (2024) added that the contemporary Islamic educational approach to addressing ethical and moral issues suggests that the perspective of NU ulama based on Nahdhiyah values offers more contextual and relevant solutions than more rigid approaches.

Ahyani et al. (2021) demonstrated that developing *rahmatan lil 'alamin* values for Indonesia's economic development in the 4.0 era from the perspective of Islamic economic philosophy and law is a highly relevant agenda to the NU educational vision. Hutabarat (2023) reinforced this diversity dimension by examining religious pluralism and social harmony in Indonesian society, emphasizing that Nahdhiyah-based Islamic education management plays a crucial role in maintaining social harmony in diverse Indonesia. Harahap & Hamka (2023) examined the local wisdom of 'Dalihan Na Tolu' from the perspective of philosophy, culture, language, and Islam, demonstrating that Nahdhiyah values have high compatibility with the local wisdom of the archipelago, making them easier to accept and implement.

CONCLUSION

This research proves that Islamic education management based on Nahdhiyah values, *tawassuth*, *tawazun*, *i'tidal*, *tasamuh*, *amanah*, and *shura* is a comprehensive, contextual Islamic education management paradigm, and has been proven effective in producing Islamic educational institutions that excel academically and character-wise. These Nahdhiyah values do not merely function as ideological principles, but have transformed into real managerial practices that include trustworthy and participatory kiai leadership, a moderate and balanced integrative curriculum, fair and transparent human resource management, an inclusive and resilient Islamic boarding school organizational culture, and well-managed digital adaptability.

The findings of this study have significant practical implications. First, NU-based Islamic educational institutions are recommended to explicitly and formalize the Nahdhiyah value-based management model in their institutional governance documents, so that these values are not only preserved in oral tradition but also documented in measurable operational standards. Second, the government, particularly the Ministry of Religious Affairs, needs to recognize the Nahdhiyah value-based Islamic educational management model as a superior model worthy of development and dissemination. Third, further empirical research using mixed methods is essential to quantitatively measure the impact of the implementation of Nahdhiyah values on various indicators of educational quality.

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