

Beyond Bureaucracy: Designing a Value-Based PPEPP Management Model in Islamic Higher Education

Arfin Hasibuan^{1*}, Candra Wijaya², Ahmad Syukri Sitorus³

Islamic Educational Management Departement, Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara,
Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia

E-mail: arfin.hasibuan@gmail.com¹, candrawijaya@uinsu.ac.id², ahmadsyukrisitorus@uinsu.ac.id³

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Abstract:

This study aims to formulate a model of quality improvement based on Islamic values in higher education institutions. Educational quality in Indonesia faces challenges related to governance, accreditation, graduate relevance, research productivity, and internal quality assurance. Islamic higher education requires a model integrating formal assurance systems with moral, spiritual, and institutional values. This research used a qualitative approach with a phenomenological perspective and a multi-site design. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, and were analyzed using data reduction, display, conclusion drawing, and within-site and cross-site analysis. The findings show that educational quality is understood holistically as the integration of academic achievement, character formation, spiritual orientation, social responsibility, and accountable governance. *Tauhid* serves as the foundational value, while *amanah*, *ihsan*, justice, *syura*, *istiqamah*, and *itqan* serve as operational principles for leadership, curriculum, services, and quality assurance. The implementation strategy is carried out through SPMI, PPEPP, value-based leadership, curriculum development, services, and evaluation. The study found improvements in academic quality, character formation, governance, professionalism, and quality culture. This study contributes a value-based PPEPP model. Future research is recommended to test this model quantitatively.

Keywords: *Islamic Values, Quality Improvement, Higher Education, PPEPP, Quality Assurance*

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk merumuskan model peningkatan mutu berdasarkan nilai-nilai Islam di perguruan tinggi. Kualitas pendidikan di Indonesia menghadapi tantangan terkait tata kelola, akreditasi, relevansi lulusan, produktivitas penelitian, dan penjaminan mutu internal. Pendidikan tinggi Islam membutuhkan model yang mengintegrasikan sistem jaminan formal dengan nilai-nilai moral, spiritual, dan kelembagaan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan perspektif fenomenologis dan desain multi-site. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi, dianalisis menggunakan reduksi data, tampilan, penarikan kesimpulan, dan analisis dalam dan lintas lokasi. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa kualitas pendidikan dipahami secara holistik sebagai integrasi prestasi akademik, pembentukan karakter, orientasi spiritual, tanggung jawab sosial, dan tata kelola yang akuntabel. *Tauhid* menjadi landasan nilai, sedangkan *amanah*, *ihsan*, keadilan, *syura*, *istiqamah*, dan *itqan* berfungsi sebagai prinsip operasional dalam kepemimpinan, kurikulum, layanan, dan penjaminan mutu. Strategi implementasi dilakukan melalui SPMI, PPEPP, value-based leadership, pengembangan kurikulum, pelayanan, dan evaluasi. Studi ini menemukan peningkatan kualitas akademik, pembentukan karakter, tata kelola, profesionalisme, dan budaya kualitas. Penelitian ini menyumbangkan model PPEPP berbasis nilai. Penelitian di masa depan direkomendasikan untuk menguji model ini secara kuantitatif.

Kata Kunci: *Nilai-nilai Islam, Peningkatan Mutu, Perguruan Tinggi, PPEPP, Penjaminan Mutu*

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the most essential tools for every nation to enhance its competitiveness on the global stage, particularly in the fields of politics, law, culture, technology, economy, and national defense (Chen & Shih, 2025; Wang et al., 2024). Countries that have achieved advanced development continue to prioritize education because it is directly linked to enhancing human capital and long-term human investment. Investment in education is expected to yield not only economic benefits but also social returns, such as a civilized society, moral awareness, social responsibility, and citizens' ability to contribute constructively to national development. Bambi & Pea-Assounga (2025) and Kokkinopoulou et al. (2025) emphasized that investment in education is fundamentally an investment in human capital, with benefits often extending beyond the economic realm, potentially yielding social returns that support the development of human potential. Therefore, education must be understood not only as a process of knowledge transfer but also as a systematic effort to develop individuals intellectually, spiritually, emotionally, socially, and professionally.

Education in Indonesia is constitutionally recognized as a fundamental right through the 1945 Constitution and Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System. However, its implementation still faces challenges, including unequal access, limited facilities, teacher quality issues, inconsistent policies, bureaucratic barriers, and weak monitoring systems. These gaps highlight the need for sustainable quality improvement through effective implementation, supervision, and educational development.

The gap between educational ideals and practical implementation is particularly evident in higher education. Both public and Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia continue to face challenges related to access, institutional quality, graduate relevance, research productivity, faculty competence, infrastructure, and internal quality assurance. The gross enrollment ratio in higher education in Indonesia remains relatively low compared to neighboring countries, indicating that access to higher education is not yet fully inclusive and equitable (Welch & Aziz, 2023; Widiastuti, 2025). Additionally, many higher education institutions and study programs still struggle to meet accreditation standards, and the distribution of leading universities remains concentrated in certain regions, particularly Java (Lambey et al., 2023; Rosser, 2023). The relevance of graduates to the labor market is also a serious concern, as many university graduates work in fields unrelated to their academic backgrounds, reflecting the weak connection between curriculum, institutional management, and labor market needs (Albert et al., 2021; Salas - Velasco, 2021). Furthermore, research productivity and international recognition are limited, with only a few institutions able to compete globally (Lambey et al., 2023; Muslim et al., 2025).

Previous studies have shown that integrating Islamic values into quality management can strengthen discipline, academic culture, leadership ethics, institutional commitment, and sustainable improvement. Millie et al. (2023) found

that integrating Islamic values into quality management improved discipline among both lecturers and students. Jannana et al. (2025) demonstrated that implementing a spiritual, value-based quality culture at a Senior High School contributed to improved study program accreditation. Yakin et al. (2025) emphasized that strengthening Islamic academic culture is a key factor in building sustainable quality in higher education institutions. Meanwhile, Maulana (2025) found that the failure of quality implementation often occurs when Islamic values are not internalized within campus leadership and management practices. However, most prior research has focused on specific aspects, such as curriculum, leadership, or academic culture. It has not comprehensively examined how Islamic values frame all components of institutional quality. This research is therefore important, as it aims to investigate the implementation of quality improvement based on Islamic values in higher education; describe the concept of Islamic value-based educational quality; analyze implementation strategies; assess implementation outcomes; and formulate an appropriate model of quality improvement for Islamic higher education institutions.

The novelty of this study lies in its more comprehensive approach to integrating Islamic values into all aspects of quality management in higher education, including curriculum development, academic services, faculty professionalism, student development, research, community service, governance, leadership, and institutional culture. This research fills the gap by developing a model of quality improvement based on Islamic values that is not only oriented toward accreditation, institutional competitiveness, and global recognition but also toward the internalization of Islamic values in every facet of institutional life. As such, this model is expected to significantly enhance the quality of Islamic higher education, producing graduates who are not only academically competent but also strong in character, ethical awareness, and social responsibility.

The research problem that this study seeks to address is how quality improvement based on Islamic values is implemented in higher education institutions, and what strategies are employed to achieve these objectives. By identifying the factors that support and hinder the implementation of quality based on Islamic values, this research is expected to provide valuable insights for developing a model that can be applied more broadly to other Islamic higher education institutions. As a significant contribution, the model of Islamic value-based quality improvement developed in this study is anticipated to be beneficial not only for the development of Islamic higher education but also as a reference for the development of holistic educational quality encompassing academic, professional, spiritual, and moral dimensions.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research adopts a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of quality improvement based on Islamic values in higher education institutions. This approach is selected because it focuses on exploring natural phenomena, meanings, experiences, and institutional practices directly from the research subjects (Lim, 2025; Muzari et al., 2022). The study uses a phenomenological perspective to analyze how Islamic values are

integrated into quality improvement practices within the institutions. A multi-site study design is employed because the research involves two institutions with similar characteristics and research foci. This design allows for comparative analysis across different sites, thereby offering a broader understanding of organizational phenomena (Abay et al., 2023; Drobnič, 2024).

The research is conducted at Institut Agama Islam and STKIP Padang Lawas, North Sumatra. These locations were selected because they are relevant to the study's focus on integrating quality improvement based on Islamic values. Both institutions are representative of Islamic and teacher education settings and play a significant role in integrating academic quality with Islamic values. These sites were chosen for their importance in providing valuable data on the application of Islamic principles to educational quality management.

Data collection in this research will be carried out using three primary techniques: participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Participant observation will enable the researcher to observe quality-improvement activities grounded in Islamic values within the institutions, providing direct insights into the practices and interactions in their natural context. In-depth interviews will be conducted with key informants, including administrators, lecturers, students, and other stakeholders involved in or knowledgeable about quality improvement processes. Documentation will include a review of institutional materials, such as quality assurance documents, academic records, reports, and other written materials that provide context and evidence of the institution's quality management practices. These techniques will ensure comprehensive data collection on the research topic (Henriksen et al., 2022; Mbanaso et al., 2023).

The data analysis will follow the model proposed by Miles and Huberman (Hutahaeen et al., 2024), involving three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction entails selecting and simplifying the data most relevant to the research focus. Data display involves organizing and presenting the data in a clear and accessible manner. Conclusion drawing and verification will be conducted to interpret the data and confirm the findings. Additionally, the research will use both within-site and cross-site analysis. Within-site analysis will be performed separately for each institution to understand the findings in each context, while cross-site analysis will compare and integrate findings across both sites. This approach will help identify similarities, differences, and patterns in the implementation of Islamic value-based quality improvement across the two institutions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The Concept of Educational Quality Based on Islamic Values

The findings show that both higher education institutions understand educational quality based on Islamic values as a holistic concept that goes beyond administrative standards, accreditation, and formal indicators. Quality is viewed as the integration of academic excellence, moral development, social responsibility, and spiritual values to produce graduates who are intellectually competent, ethical, and socially aware.

The foundation of this quality concept is *tauhid*, which underpins governance, academic activities, services, and institutional culture. *Tauhid* is reflected in values such as *amanah*, sincerity, *ihsan*, justice, and *syura*, which guide institutional policies and educational practices. Although the emphasis differs between institutions, both demonstrate that Islamic values function as ethical foundations for creating responsible, professional, and sustainable educational quality.

The findings show that the concept of Islamic values-based quality in both institutions has developed from an ideal concept into a systematic quality assurance practice. Islamic values have been integrated into quality policies, standards, audits, SOPs, and the PPEPP cycle, demonstrating that they function as operational foundations rather than merely institutional slogans.

Both institutions emphasize *amanah* and *ihsan* as key values in achieving educational quality. *Amanah* reflects responsibility, transparency, and professionalism, while *ihsan* encourages continuous improvement and excellence. These values are implemented through improvements in learning, academic services, lecturer competence, governance, research, and community service to create sustainable and ethical educational quality.

Table 1. Cross-Institutional Findings on Educational Quality Based on Islamic Values

Dimension	Islamic Higher Education Institution	Higher Education Institution	Analytical Meaning
Understanding of educational quality	Educational quality is understood as a holistic condition that produces graduates who are intellectually competent, have Islamic character, and show social concern.	Educational quality is understood as an educational process that emphasizes cognitive competence, character formation, academic ethics, and the internalization of Islamic values.	Both institutions view quality as an integrative concept that combines academic, moral, social, and spiritual dimensions.
Main value foundation	<i>Tauhid</i> becomes the basis for sincerity, trustworthiness, excellence, justice, and consultation in institutional development.	<i>Tauhid</i> becomes an ethical-operational foundation for responsible governance, orderly services, and religious-professional academic culture.	<i>Tauhid</i> functions as the core value that gives spiritual and ethical direction to institutional quality practices.
Institutionalization of quality	Islamic values are translated into quality policies, quality standards, internal quality audits, and management review meetings.	Islamic values are integrated into the internal quality assurance system through quality policies, manuals, forms, SOPs, and institutional documents.	Islamic values are not limited to normative ideals, but are formalized into quality assurance mechanisms.
Dominant values	<i>Amanah</i> and <i>ihsan</i> appear in efforts to improve learning quality, lecturer competence, academic services, research,	<i>Amanah</i> and <i>ihsan</i> appear in academic discipline, service professionalism, lecturer ethics, staff ethics, student ethics, and orderly governance.	<i>Amanah</i> represents institutional responsibility, while <i>ihsan</i> represents continuous quality improvement.

	community service, and social contribution.		
Quality assurance mechanism	The PPEPP cycle is used to translate Islamic values into systematic quality practices.	The PPEPP cycle is also used to support standard setting, implementation, evaluation, control, and continuous improvement.	The quality model is systemic because Islamic values are connected to formal quality assurance procedures.
Institutional emphasis	Quality is emphasized as a transformational culture related to Islamic, scientific, national vision, da'wah mission, tridharma, and social benefit.	Quality is emphasized as ethical and professional governance supported by quality documents, codes of ethics, academic services, and orderly institutional culture.	The difference is not a contradiction, but a variation of implementation based on institutional character.
Model of Islamic value-based quality	Integrative, systemic, participatory, sustainable, and adaptive.	Integrative, systemic, participatory, sustainable, and adaptive.	Islamic value-based quality can be adapted to different institutional contexts as long as it remains grounded in <i>tauhid</i> .

Table 1 shows that, in both institutions, educational quality based on Islamic values is understood as a holistic integration of academic excellence, character development, social responsibility, and spirituality. Both emphasize *tauhid* as the foundation and *amanah* and *ihsan* as operational values in governance, services, and quality assurance. The difference lies in implementation focus: the first highlights transformational culture, while the second emphasizes ethical-professional governance.

Overall, the cross-site findings confirm that the concept of educational quality based on Islamic values in the two higher education institutions is integrative, systemic, participatory, and sustainable. Both institutions integrate academic quality with the values of *tauhid*, sincerity, trustworthiness, excellence, justice, and consultation in the implementation of higher education. The difference lies in the emphasis of each institution. The first institution tends to emphasize quality as a transformational culture rooted in Islamic, scientific, and national visions, the da'wah mission, tridharma, and social benefit. Meanwhile, the second institution tends to emphasize quality as ethical and professional governance, strengthened through internal quality-assurance documents, codes of ethics, academic services, governance systems, and an orderly institutional culture. These differences are not contradictions, but variations of implementation according to institutional character. Thus, Islamic value-based educational quality is not a single, uniform model but an adaptive model that can be adjusted to institutional characteristics, as long as it remains grounded in *tauhid* and is consistently translated into systems, culture, leadership, and academic processes.

Strategies for Implementing Quality Improvement Based on Islamic Values

The findings show that both higher education institutions implement quality improvement based on Islamic values, grounded in a strong philosophical foundation. Islamic values are not merely normative concepts but serve as operational principles in higher education management. The strategies include strengthening the Internal Quality Assurance System, integrating Islamic values into curriculum and governance, improving human resource competence, developing academic culture, and enhancing research and community service.

Quality improvement in both institutions begins with strong leadership commitment, where institutional leaders play a key role in formulating policies and integrating Islamic values into management systems. Middle-level leaders and quality assurance units support the implementation through the Internal Quality Assurance System and PPEPP cycle, which incorporate values such as *tauhid*, *amanah*, *ihsan*, justice, *syura*, *istiqamah*, and *itqan*.

In curriculum, learning, and academic services, both institutions integrate Islamic values through learning processes, evaluation systems, and administrative services. Values such as responsibility, professionalism, honesty, transparency, and fairness are applied to foster a culture of quality. Overall, Islamic value-based quality improvement is implemented systematically across academic and institutional aspects to support continuous improvement.



Figure 1. Continuous Quality Improvement in Islamic Education

Figure 1 shows that Islamic values-based quality improvement is a systematic, continuous process in which Islamic values serve as the foundation for institutional activities. These values are implemented through leadership commitment, which guides policy formulation, resource management, and quality improvement direction. The process is strengthened through SPMI and PPEPP mechanisms to ensure that Islamic values are integrated into quality standards, implementation, evaluation, control, and improvement. Furthermore, these principles are reflected in the curriculum, learning processes, and academic services. Evaluation and follow-up actions then support continuous improvement, creating a sustainable quality cycle that integrates values, governance, academic practices, and institutional development.

Overall, the strategies for implementing quality improvement based on Islamic values in the two higher education institutions are integrative, systemic, participatory, and sustainable. Both institutions emphasize value-based leadership, strengthening SPMI and PPEPP, integrating Islamic values into learning, improving academic services, practicing *syura*, conducting regular

evaluations, and maintaining continuous follow-up. The difference lies in the scope and emphasis of implementation. The first institution demonstrates a broader strategy, as Islamic value-based quality improvement is extended across the whole tridharma, including education, research, and community service. Meanwhile, the second institution focuses more strongly on strengthening academic governance, learning processes, academic services, semester-based audits, and internal institutional consolidation. Thus, Islamic value-based quality improvement strategies may develop in different institutional forms, but they remain grounded in the same values of *tauhid*, *amanah*, *ihsan*, justice, *syura*, and *istiqamah*.

Islamic Values-Based Quality Improvement Achievements

The findings show that implementing quality improvement based on Islamic values at the two higher education institutions has produced meaningful achievements in academic quality, governance, quality culture, and character formation within the academic community. In both institutions, Islamic value-based quality improvement does not remain confined to ideas, policies, or formal documents. However, it has created impacts felt by institutional leaders, quality assurance units, study programs, lecturers, educational staff, and students. In the first institution, these achievements are reflected in improved academic quality, stronger character formation, increased lecturer compliance in tridharma reporting, better study program accreditation, improved governance, and stronger research and community service quality. In the second institution, the achievements are seen in improved academic quality, stronger ethical awareness, better governance, stronger quality culture, improved learning processes, better academic services, and increased lecturer professionalism. The main achievements of Islamic value-based quality improvement in the two higher education institutions can be summarized as follows.

Table 2. Achievements of Islamic Value-Based Quality Improvement

Dimension	First Higher Education Institution	Second Higher Education Institution	Analytical Meaning
Academic Quality	Improved learning quality, academic services, tridharma reporting, accreditation, research, and community service.	Improved learning processes, academic services, and lecturer professionalism.	Islamic values strengthen academic commitment, discipline, and continuous improvement.
Character Formation	Reflected in learning, academic culture, research, community service, and social contribution.	Reflected in ethical awareness, responsibility, discipline, professionalism, and religious consciousness.	Quality is measured through academic achievement and moral transformation.
Governance and Quality Culture	Improved transparency, accountability, objectivity, document management, decision-	Strengthened academic governance, institutional coordination, academic climate, and internal management.	Islamic values operate as organizational principles in institutional governance.

	making, and resource management.		
Scope of Achievement	Broader achievements in tridharma, institutional reputation, publication quality, social contribution, and formal recognition.	Stronger achievements in internal consolidation, learning quality, academic services, infrastructure, and graduate relevance.	Differences are shaped by institutional character, organizational maturity, and development priorities.
Overall Contribution	Supports academic quality, character formation, governance, and sustainable quality culture.	Supports academic quality, ethical awareness, academic services, governance, and professional responsibility.	Islamic values become a foundation for multidimensional quality improvement.

The achievements of Islamic value-based quality improvement across both institutions are multidimensional, encompassing academic performance, character development, governance, service delivery, and institutional culture. Islamic values such as *amanah*, *ihsan*, justice, and *istiqamah* contribute not only to academic improvement but also to strengthening ethics, responsibility, discipline, and continuous improvement within the academic community.

Although the first institution shows stronger achievements in research, publications, social contribution, and institutional reputation, the second institution demonstrates strengths in internal consolidation, learning quality, academic services, and lecturer professionalism. These differences reflect institutional characteristics and priorities, while both confirm that Islamic values can effectively support sustainable quality culture and holistic educational development.

A Suitable Model of Quality Improvement Based on Islamic Values

The findings show that a suitable model of quality improvement based on Islamic values in the two higher education institutions integrates modern quality assurance systems with Islamic values as the ethical foundation, work culture, and orientation of institutional development. In the first institution, the model is formulated by integrating SPMI, PPEPP, internal quality audits, management review meetings, a religious academic culture, value-based learning, Islamic academic services, and tridharma activities directed toward public benefit. In the second institution, the model develops through SPMI-PPEPP, participatory governance, institutional codes of ethics, value-based learning, trustworthy and fair academic services, and a quality culture strengthened by institutional ethics. This means that Islamic value-based quality improvement does not replace formal quality assurance mechanisms but provides them with ethical direction, spiritual meaning, and a stronger value orientation.

The main characteristic of this model is its integrative and systemic nature. Quality improvement is not viewed merely as an administrative process but as the integration of quality standards, institutional policies, academic culture, governance, learning, and spiritual responsibility. The SPMI-PPEPP framework serves as the model's technical structure. At the same time, Islamic values such as *tauhid*, sincerity, *amanah*, *ihsan*, justice, *syura*, *istiqamah*, *itqan*, and adab constitute

its ethical spirit. Through this integration, quality policies, standards, manuals, SOPs, internal audits, and continuous improvement targets are directed not only toward regulatory compliance but also toward the development of responsible, fair, trustworthy, and value-driven institutional practices.

The model is also participatory, observable, sustainable, adaptive, and value-driven. Participation is reflected through management review meetings, internal audits, standard development workshops, student satisfaction surveys, inter-unit coordination, open communication, and collective decision-making. Its implementation can be observed in daily institutional practices, such as trustworthy leadership, transparent governance, sincere work culture, value-based lesson plans, fair assessment, professional services, and ethical academic interaction. The first institution tends to develop an integrative, tridharma, transformative model that connects quality to research, community service, Islamic scholarship, and public benefit. In contrast, the second institution tends to develop a PPEPP-based Islamic quality model strengthened by institutional ethics, academic governance, learning quality, academic services, and ethical culture. These differences show that Islamic value-based quality improvement is contextual, but its foundation remains rooted in *tauhid*, *amanah*, *ihsan*, justice, *syura*, *istiqamah*, and continuous improvement.

Discussion

The findings show that educational quality based on Islamic values extends beyond administrative compliance, accreditation, and quality documents. Quality is understood as a holistic concept integrating academic achievement, moral development, spirituality, governance, services, and social responsibility. This is consistent with previous studies highlighting the role of Islamic values in shaping ethical action and educational outcomes (Ilmi et al., 2023; Sholichah et al., 2025; Sunardi et al., 2025). It also supports Yuliana et al. (2026), who found that values such as *amanah*, *itqan*, *ihsan*, *adl*, and *shura* are increasingly integrated into leadership, governance, curriculum, and quality culture. Thus, educational quality in Islamic higher education should be developed as a multidimensional, value-based system with indicators that cover academic, ethical, spiritual, governance, and social aspects.

The implementation strategy identified in this study confirms that Islamic value-based quality improvement requires a systemic mechanism rather than merely symbolic religious expression. Both institutions use SPMI and the PPEPP cycle as formal quality assurance frameworks. At the same time, Islamic values serve as the ethical spirit guiding standard-setting, implementation, evaluation, control, and continuous improvement. This finding strengthens Yuliana et al.'s review, which identifies SPMI with the PPEPP framework, PDCA, TQM, accreditation, and Islamic value integration as dominant models in Islamic higher education quality assurance (Yuliana et al., 2026). The finding is also in line with Arifin, Hepni, and Anwar's study in Qalamuna. This Sinta 2 journal argues that improving the quality of Islamic higher education management requires holistic and innovative strategies, including quality leadership, curriculum and learning improvement, technology use, human resource development, and external collaboration (Arifin et al., 2024). The difference is that this study shows a more

contextual pattern. The first institution emphasizes a broader tridharma-based strategy involving education, research, community service, and public benefit. In contrast, the second institution focuses more strongly on academic governance, learning processes, services, audits, and internal consolidation. This implies that Islamic value-based quality improvement should be understood as an adaptive model that can be adjusted to institutional character, organizational maturity, and development priorities.

Leadership and human resource capacity appear to be decisive factors in transforming Islamic values into a culture of institutional quality. The results show that top leaders provide strategic direction, value commitment, and institutional legitimacy. In contrast, middle-level leaders and quality assurance units translate these directions into work programs, operational guidelines, evaluation mechanisms, and measurable follow-up actions. This finding is supported by Amtu et al. Moreover, Verschueren et al. argue that leadership and communication are central mechanisms in developing a quality culture because they connect structural-managerial elements with cultural-psychological elements in higher education (Amtu et al., 2021; Verschueren et al., 2023). It is also relevant to Orgianus et al.'s systematic review in *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, a Sinta 2 journal, which shows that Islamic values such as *sidq*, *amanah*, and responsibility can strengthen professional, pedagogical, personal, social, and ethical dimensions of lecturer competence (Orgianus et al., 2024). Theoretically, this finding contributes to the development of value-based leadership and lecturer professionalism in Islamic educational management. Practically, it suggests that quality improvement should be supported by leadership training, lecturer development, ethical performance evaluation, quality literacy, and participatory communication rooted in *amanah*, *ihsan*, justice, and *syura*.

The achievements of Islamic value-based quality improvement in the two institutions show that quality assurance can move beyond documentation toward cultural, behavioral, and organizational transformation. The study found improvements in academic quality, character formation, governance, quality culture, academic services, lecturer professionalism, research, community service, accreditation, and institutional reputation. This finding corresponds with Hasbi et al.'s explanation that quality culture works when structural mechanisms and shared values operate together to support staff commitment, shared ownership, empowerment, teaching-learning improvement, and institutional development (Hasbi et al., 2025). It also supports Yuliana et al.'s finding that the implementation of systematic quality assurance and accreditation can improve academic quality, services, research collaboration, institutional reputation, and graduate competitiveness in Islamic higher education (Yuliana et al., 2026). The distinctive contribution of this study lies in its emphasis on the moral dimension of achievement. Quality improvement is reflected not only in institutional outputs but also in the strengthening of *akhlak*, discipline, responsibility, religious awareness, ethical academic behavior, and professional service. This has the practical implication that institutional evaluation should include both measurable indicators, such as accreditation and performance reports, and value-based indicators, such as ethical conduct, student satisfaction, lecturer responsibility, service fairness, and the consistency of Islamic values in daily academic practices.

Based on these findings, a suitable model of quality improvement grounded in Islamic values can be understood as a value-based PPEPP model that integrates modern quality assurance mechanisms with Islamic ethical and spiritual foundations. This model does not replace formal quality assurance systems, but enriches them with value orientation. *Tauhid* becomes the philosophical foundation; *amanah* guides accountability; *ihsan* drives excellence and improvement beyond minimum standards; justice ensures fairness and objectivity; *syura* strengthens participation; *istiqamah* sustains consistency; and *itqan* encourages disciplined and professional work. This model is consistent with Yuliana et al.'s finding that Islamic values are not only normative foundations but can be embedded in leadership decision-making, academic governance, curriculum quality control, and internal quality culture (Yuliana et al., 2026). It is also supported by Arifin et al.'s argument that quality management in Islamic higher education requires strategies that integrate Islamic values with contemporary demands for relevance, innovation, human resource development, and institutional collaboration (Arifin et al., 2024). The theoretical implication of this model is the formulation of an Islamic value-based quality improvement framework that integrates quality assurance, quality culture, moral formation, leadership, and institutional development into a single, cohesive system. Its practical implication is that Islamic higher education institutions can use this model to strengthen SPMI, implement PPEPP more meaningfully, design value-based SOPs, improve academic services, develop ethical leadership, evaluate learning fairly, and build a sustainable culture of quality rooted in Islamic values.

CONCLUSION

The most important lesson from this study is that quality improvement in Islamic higher education should go beyond administrative compliance and accreditation by integrating *tauhid*, *amanah*, *ihsan*, justice, *syura*, *istiqamah*, and *itqan* into governance, leadership, curriculum, teaching, research, community service, and institutional culture. The study's main contribution is the formulation of a value-based PPEPP model, which redefines quality assurance as a moral, cultural, and spiritual system that promotes ethical leadership, participatory governance, and continuous improvement. Although based on a qualitative multi-site study of two institutions and therefore not intended for statistical generalization, the findings provide a strong conceptual framework for future research to test and refine the model across broader contexts using mixed methods and measurable indicators of Islamic value integration.

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