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Transformative Management of Religious Programs in Islamic Elementary Education

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Abstract

The transformation of Islamic elementary education requires educational institutions to strengthen not only academic achievement but also students' religious character through sustainable and value based educational management. This study aimed to analyze the transformative management of religious programs in Islamic elementary education, particularly regarding strategic planning, participatory implementation, continuous supervision, and institutional religious culture transformation in strengthening students' Islamic character at MI Miftahul Mlokorejo Jember. This research employed a qualitative approach using a case study design to obtain an in depth understanding of managerial practices and institutional dynamics underlying the implementation of religious programs within the madrasah environment. Data were collected through in depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation studies involving the madrasah principal, vice principal, teachers, religious program coordinators, students, and parents. The collected data were analyzed using interactive thematic analysis through data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing, while data validity was ensured through triangulation, member checking, and prolonged engagement. The findings revealed that the transformative management of religious programs was implemented systematically through collaborative planning, participatory implementation, continuous supervision, and sustainable institutional culture transformation. Religious programs such as congregational prayer, Qur'anic recitation, tahfidz activities, Islamic speech training, and charity programs were integrated into the daily culture of the madrasah and contributed significantly to strengthening students' religious discipline, spiritual awareness, empathy, social responsibility, and Islamic identity. The study further found that teachers' exemplary behavior, parental collaboration, and institutional religious culture played crucial roles in supporting the sustainability and effectiveness of religious programs. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on transformative management of religious programs at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level through an integrative framework combining leadership transformation, institutional culture development, participatory governance, and sustainable religious habituation. This study also contributes theoretically to the discourse of Islamic educational management by offering a comprehensive perspective on transformative religious program management in Islamic elementary education. Practically, the findings provide strategic insights for madrasah leaders, teachers, and policymakers in developing sustainable religious programs capable of strengthening Islamic character formation and institutional transformation within contemporary Islamic educational contexts.

Keywords: transformative management, religious programs, Islamic elementary education, religious culture, Islamic character education, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah

Introduction

The transformation of Islamic education in the contemporary era requires educational institutions to strengthen not only academic achievement but also students' moral, spiritual, and religious character through systematic educational management. Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI), as an institution of Islamic elementary education, holds a strategic position in shaping students' Islamic identity from an early age through the integration of religious values into institutional culture and learning practices. In this regard, religious programs are not merely complementary activities but constitute an essential component of Islamic educational development aimed at fostering students' spirituality, discipline, ethical awareness, and social responsibility.

The urgency of strengthening religious programs in Islamic elementary education has become increasingly significant amid rapid technological development, cultural transformation, and the growing challenges of moral degradation among children. Contemporary educational discourse emphasizes that schools must function not only as centers of academic instruction but also as environments for character formation and value internalization (OECD, 2021). Islamic educational institutions are therefore required to develop educational systems capable of integrating religious values, institutional culture, and innovative management practices within sustainable educational frameworks. Consequently, the management of religious programs in madrasah contexts must move beyond technical administration toward transformative management that creates meaningful religious experiences and sustainable Islamic culture.

Recent studies in educational leadership indicate that transformative leadership significantly influences institutional effectiveness, organizational culture, and character development. Research conducted by Hallinger (2020) demonstrated that leadership practices emphasizing collaboration, shared vision, and institutional learning positively affect school improvement and student development. Likewise, educational transformation studies highlight that adaptive leadership and organizational innovation are essential for responding to educational changes in the twenty first century (Harris & Jones, 2020). Within Islamic educational institutions, transformative leadership becomes particularly important because religious programs require visionary leadership capable of integrating managerial effectiveness with Islamic moral values and institutional culture.

In the discourse of Islamic educational management, transformative leadership has increasingly become an important approach for strengthening institutional quality and religious culture. Research on Islamic educational leadership revealed that transformative leadership practices contribute significantly to curriculum innovation, teacher collaboration, and Islamic character development within school environments (Abidin et al., 2025). Furthermore, studies on transformational leadership in madrasah contexts found that adaptive leadership supported by Islamic ethical values positively

affects institutional effectiveness and educational sustainability (Nifasri, 2025). These findings suggest that religious programs in Islamic schools require management systems that are not only administratively effective but also transformative in shaping institutional culture and students' religious character.

The development of religious culture in educational institutions has also been widely discussed in contemporary studies on Islamic education and character education. Religious culture is understood as a system of values, habits, symbols, and institutional practices that collectively shape students' behavior and moral consciousness within educational settings. Research on Islamic school culture demonstrated that sustainable religious habituation programs contribute significantly to strengthening students' discipline, empathy, spiritual awareness, and social ethics (Rahmawati, 2024). Similarly, studies on hidden curriculum strategies in Islamic boarding schools found that institutional religious culture effectively develops students' moderate character and moral responsibility through continuous religious practices embedded in daily educational activities (Salim et al., 2024).

Several recent studies within Islamic educational management have also highlighted the importance of integrating leadership, institutional culture, and religious values in strengthening students' character formation. One study revealed that religious culture development in Islamic educational institutions plays a substantial role in internalizing Islamic values through habituation and exemplary educational practices (Fauzi et al., 2024). Another study demonstrated that teacher competence, commitment, and motivation significantly influence the success of educational transformation and institutional quality improvement within pesantren based educational institutions (Fauzi et al., 2022). These findings indicate that transformative educational management requires synergy between leadership, human resource development, institutional culture, and sustainable religious programs.

Moreover, recent discussions on Islamic education increasingly emphasize the necessity of aligning religious programs with the broader goals of holistic education and sustainable character formation. UNESCO (2021) explained that educational transformation in the twenty first century should prioritize humanistic values, ethics, social responsibility, and intercultural understanding as essential dimensions of quality education. In Islamic educational institutions, these dimensions can be strengthened through transformative religious programs that integrate worship practices, moral habituation, social engagement, and Islamic ethical values into the institutional culture of madrasah.

Despite the increasing number of studies discussing Islamic leadership, character education, and religious culture, research specifically focusing on transformative management of religious programs at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level remains limited. Existing studies predominantly examine pesantren, secondary Islamic schools, or general Islamic leadership issues without

comprehensively analyzing how transformative management processes shape sustainable religious culture within Islamic elementary education. In addition, many previous studies discuss religious activities descriptively while paying limited attention to managerial dimensions such as strategic planning, institutional collaboration, supervision, evaluation, and organizational transformation underlying the sustainability of religious programs.

This study therefore seeks to examine the transformative management of religious programs in MI Miftahul Mlokorejo Jember through an analysis of planning, implementation, supervision, and institutional culture transformation in strengthening students' religious character. This research is theoretically important because it contributes to the development of contemporary Islamic educational management discourse, particularly regarding transformative leadership and religious culture management in Islamic elementary education. Practically, the findings are expected to provide strategic insights for madrasah leaders, teachers, and policymakers in developing sustainable religious programs capable of strengthening Islamic character formation and institutional transformation in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah.

Method

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a case study design to examine the transformative management of religious programs in Islamic elementary education. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because this study aimed to explore deeply the processes, meanings, institutional dynamics, and managerial practices underlying the implementation of religious programs within the madrasah environment. The case study design enabled the researchers to investigate comprehensively the phenomenon of transformative management within its real-life context, particularly regarding how religious values, leadership, institutional culture, and educational management interact in shaping students' religious character in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. According to Yin (2018), case study research is highly relevant for examining contemporary social phenomena in natural settings where the boundaries between context and phenomenon are not clearly evident. Similarly, qualitative case studies allow researchers to obtain holistic and contextualized understandings of educational transformation processes occurring within institutions (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

This research was conducted at MI Miftahul Mlokorejo Jember because the institution actively develops various religious programs integrated into the culture of the madrasah. The selection of this research site was based on purposive considerations, including the existence of sustainable religious activities, the institutional commitment to strengthening Islamic character education, and the implementation of religious habituation programs involving school leaders, teachers, students, and parents. This institutional context provided an important setting for examining how transformative management practices are implemented within Islamic elementary education.

The participants in this study were selected using purposive sampling techniques to ensure that the collected data reflected the perspectives of individuals who were directly involved in the planning, implementation, supervision, and evaluation of religious programs. The research participants consisted of the madrasah principal, vice principal, Islamic education teachers, classroom teachers, program coordinators, students, and parents. The inclusion of multiple participants was intended to obtain comprehensive data regarding managerial processes, institutional culture, leadership practices, and students' religious development within the madrasah environment. Purposive sampling is widely used in qualitative research because it enables researchers to identify information-rich participants who possess direct experiences relevant to the research focus (Palinkas et al., 2015).

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation studies. In-depth interviews were conducted semi-structurally to allow flexibility in exploring participants' experiences, perspectives, and interpretations related to transformative management practices in religious programs. Observation techniques were employed to examine directly the implementation of religious activities, institutional interactions, habituation practices, and the overall religious culture within the madrasah environment. Documentation studies included the analysis of institutional documents such as religious program schedules, school regulations, curriculum documents, evaluation reports, and other supporting administrative materials. The integration of multiple data collection techniques was intended to strengthen data richness and enhance research credibility through triangulation processes. Methodological triangulation is considered essential in qualitative educational research because it allows researchers to validate findings from different sources and perspectives (Fusch et al., 2018).

The data analysis process employed an interactive analysis model consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The analysis process was conducted continuously throughout the research activities to ensure that emerging themes and patterns could be explored comprehensively. Data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation studies were transcribed, categorized, coded, and interpreted thematically according to the focus of transformative management, including planning, implementation, supervision, leadership practices, institutional culture, and character formation processes. Thematic analysis enabled the researchers to identify recurring patterns and construct meaningful interpretations regarding the management of religious programs within the madrasah context. Braun and Clarke (2021) explained that thematic analysis is a flexible and systematic method for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns of meaning in qualitative data.

To ensure data validity and trustworthiness, this study applied several validation strategies, including source triangulation, technique triangulation, prolonged engagement, member checking, and peer debriefing. Source

triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from school leaders, teachers, students, and parents, while technique triangulation involved comparing findings derived from interviews, observations, and documentation studies. Member checking was implemented by confirming preliminary interpretations and findings with participants to ensure data accuracy and interpretive consistency. In qualitative educational research, trustworthiness procedures are essential for enhancing the credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability of research findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Ethical considerations were also prioritized throughout the research process. The researchers obtained institutional permission before conducting the study and ensured that all participants voluntarily agreed to participate. Participants were informed about the objectives of the study, data confidentiality, and their right to withdraw from the research process at any time. To maintain confidentiality and ethical integrity, participants' identities were anonymized in the research reporting process. Ethical principles in qualitative research are fundamental for maintaining participants' trust and ensuring the integrity of the research process (Tracy, 2019).

Results and Discussion

Results

The findings of this study revealed that the transformative management of religious programs at MI Miftahul Mlokorejo Jember was implemented systematically through four major dimensions, namely strategic planning, participatory implementation, continuous supervision, and institutional culture transformation. These dimensions collectively contributed to strengthening students' religious character, discipline, spiritual awareness, and Islamic social behavior within the madrasah environment.

The results demonstrated that religious programs in the madrasah were not positioned merely as supplementary activities but had become the central foundation of institutional culture and educational orientation. The implementation of transformative management was reflected in the integration of religious values into daily school activities, leadership practices, learning environments, and collaborative relationships among teachers, students, and parents.

Strategic Planning of Religious Programs

The planning of religious programs at the madrasah was conducted collaboratively at the beginning of each academic year through coordination meetings involving the principal, vice principal, teachers, religious program coordinators, and representatives of parents. The planning process focused on aligning religious activities with the institutional vision of strengthening Islamic character and creating a religious school culture.

Based on interview findings, the principal explained: "*Religious programs in this madrasah are designed not only as ceremonial activities but as long-term strategies for building students' Islamic character. Every program is planned collectively so that all teachers have the same commitment and understanding.*" (Interview with Principal, February 12, 2026)

The planning process included identifying students' religious needs, determining program objectives, scheduling activities, allocating responsibilities, and designing evaluation mechanisms. Religious programs implemented at the madrasah included daily congregational prayer, Qur'anic recitation before learning, tahfidz programs, Friday charity programs, Islamic speech training, dhuha prayer habituation, and commemoration of Islamic holy days.

Table 1. Main Religious Programs at MI Miftahul Mlokorejo Jember

No	Religious Program	Implementation Frequency	Main Objective
1	Qur'anic Recitation Before Class	Daily	Strengthening Qur'anic literacy and spiritual readiness
2	Dhuha Prayer	Daily	Developing worship habituation
3	Congregational Dzuhur Prayer	Daily	Strengthening discipline and religious awareness
4	Tahfidz Al-Qur'an Program	Weekly	Improving memorization and Islamic identity
5	Friday Charity Program	Weekly	Developing empathy and social care
6	Islamic Speech Training	Monthly	Improving Islamic communication skills
7	Islamic Holiday Commemoration	Periodic	Strengthening Islamic values and historical awareness

Observational findings showed that planning documents for religious programs were formally documented through annual work plans, activity schedules, teacher assignments, and evaluation reports. Researchers also observed that teachers actively participated in planning discussions and contributed ideas regarding students' religious development needs.

Participatory Implementation of Religious Programs

The implementation of religious programs reflected participatory and transformative management practices involving all institutional stakeholders. Religious activities were integrated into daily educational routines and supported through exemplary leadership, teacher collaboration, and parental involvement.

Observations conducted during the research indicated that students routinely participated in Qur'anic recitation activities before lessons began. Teachers supervised students directly and guided pronunciation corrections during recitation sessions. The atmosphere of religious habituation was

strongly reflected in students' discipline, classroom interactions, and respectful communication patterns.

One classroom teacher stated: "*The success of religious programs depends on consistency. Teachers must become role models because students imitate what they see every day*." (Interview with Classroom Teacher, February 15, 2026)

Similarly, the coordinator of religious programs explained: "*We try to integrate religious values into all school activities, not only during Islamic subjects. Religious character must become part of students' daily behavior*." (Interview with Religious Program Coordinator, February 17, 2026)

The implementation process also emphasized collaboration between the madrasah and parents. Parents were encouraged to monitor students' worship practices at home and support religious habituation outside school hours. Several parents reported positive behavioral changes among students after participating in religious programs consistently.

A parent stated: "*My child has become more disciplined in praying and reading the Qur'an at home after participating in the school programs*." (Interview with Parent, February 20, 2026)

Table 2. Observational Findings on Students' Religious Behavior

Observed Aspect	Observation Results
Prayer Discipline	Most students participated punctually in congregational prayers
Qur'anic Literacy	Students demonstrated gradual improvement in recitation fluency
Respectful Communication	Students used polite language toward teachers and peers
Social Awareness	Students actively participated in charity activities
Worship Habituation	Students independently performed voluntary worship activities

The findings indicated that the implementation of religious programs successfully created a religious atmosphere that influenced students' daily attitudes and behaviors both inside and outside the classroom.

Supervision and Evaluation of Religious Programs

The supervision of religious programs was conducted continuously through direct observation, teacher coordination meetings, student behavior monitoring, and parental communication. The principal played an active role in supervising the consistency of program implementation and evaluating program effectiveness.

The vice principal explained: "*Evaluation is conducted regularly to identify obstacles and improve the implementation of religious programs. We monitor students' participation, discipline, and behavioral changes*." (Interview with Vice Principal, February 22, 2026)

Supervision mechanisms included attendance monitoring during worship activities, evaluation of students' Qur'anic memorization progress, classroom behavioral observation, and teacher reflection meetings. Researchers observed that teachers documented students' participation and behavioral development through monitoring sheets and informal reports.

Table 3. Evaluation Indicators of Religious Programs

Evaluation Aspect	Indicators
Worship Participation	Attendance and punctuality in religious activities
Qur'anic Memorization	Improvement in memorization achievement
Religious Discipline	Consistency in worship practices
Moral Behavior	Respectful interaction and responsibility
Social Character	Participation in charity and cooperation activities

The evaluation findings showed that most students demonstrated positive development in religious discipline and moral behavior after participating in the programs consistently. Teachers also reported increased student motivation in participating in Islamic activities.

Transformation of Institutional Religious Culture

The findings further revealed that the management of religious programs contributed significantly to transforming the institutional culture of the madrasah. Religious values became embedded in daily routines, teacher interactions, classroom environments, and institutional norms.

Researchers observed that Islamic symbols, Qur'anic verses, motivational Islamic messages, and worship reminders were displayed throughout the school environment. Teachers consistently modeled Islamic behavior through greetings, polite communication, and worship participation alongside students.

One student explained: "*Teachers always remind us to pray, speak politely, and help friends. We feel happy participating in religious activities together.*" (Interview with Student, February 24, 2026)

The transformation of institutional culture was also reflected in stronger relationships among school members, improved student discipline, and the development of collective religious awareness. The findings demonstrated that transformative management practices successfully positioned religious programs as an integral component of institutional identity rather than isolated ceremonial activities.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that transformative management of religious programs at MI Miftahul Mlokorejo Jember was implemented through collaborative planning, participatory implementation, continuous supervision, and sustainable religious culture transformation. These managerial practices contributed substantially to strengthening students' religious character, discipline, social responsibility, and Islamic identity within the context of Islamic elementary education.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the transformative management of religious programs at MI Miftahul Mlokorejo Jember was implemented systematically through strategic planning, participatory implementation, continuous supervision, and the transformation of institutional religious culture. These findings indicate that religious programs in Islamic elementary education can function not merely as ritual activities but as strategic instruments for strengthening Islamic character formation and institutional transformation. The results confirm that transformative management in Islamic educational institutions requires the integration of leadership, organizational culture, religious habituation, and stakeholder collaboration within sustainable educational practices (Hallinger, 2020; Rahman, 2025).

The collaborative planning of religious programs found in this study reflects the principles of participatory educational leadership and strategic institutional management. The involvement of school leaders, teachers, program coordinators, and parents in planning religious activities indicates that institutional transformation in Islamic education cannot be achieved through centralized leadership alone but requires collective commitment and organizational collaboration. This finding supports previous studies emphasizing that transformative leadership contributes significantly to institutional effectiveness through shared vision, participatory decision-making, and collaborative school culture (Hallinger, 2020). Furthermore, research on transformative leadership in Islamic educational institutions explains that leadership based on Islamic values strengthens institutional trust, organizational commitment, and the sustainability of educational transformation processes (Prasetyowati et al., 2025).

The strategic integration of religious programs into daily school activities also demonstrates that religious values were institutionalized as part of the madrasah culture rather than being positioned as additional ceremonial activities. The implementation of daily Qur'anic recitation, congregational prayers, tahfidz programs, and charity activities reflects the process of value internalization through continuous habituation. This finding aligns with the concept of culture based character education, which emphasizes that students' moral development is shaped through repetitive social and religious experiences embedded within institutional culture (Nasution, 2026). Recent studies on Islamic school culture revealed that sustainable religious practices create a moral ecology integrating worship routines, teacher role modeling, school leadership, and family collaboration into students' daily educational experiences (Halimah, 2024).

The participatory implementation of religious programs further indicates that teachers played an essential role not only as instructors but also as moral exemplars within the educational environment. Teachers' consistency in guiding worship activities, supervising Qur'anic recitation, and modeling Islamic behavior contributed significantly to strengthening students' religious discipline and social ethics. This finding supports previous research stating that transformative Islamic education depends heavily on exemplary

leadership and ethical educational practices capable of fostering meaningful behavioral change among students (Iskandar et al., 2026). Research on Islamic leadership management also found that principals and teachers function as moral and spiritual role models whose behaviors influence the internalization of Islamic values among students (Rahman, 2025).

The findings additionally demonstrate that the transformation of institutional culture was strengthened through the integration of religious values into both formal and informal school environments. Islamic symbols, worship reminders, polite communication patterns, and collective religious activities contributed to creating a religious atmosphere that shaped students' daily behaviors. This finding confirms that institutional culture plays a substantial role in reinforcing educational transformation and students' moral development. According to recent studies on Islamic educational transformation, religious culture becomes effective when Islamic values are integrated systematically into institutional norms, leadership practices, and social interactions within the school environment (Halimah, 2024; Hakim, 2025).

Another important finding of this study is the significant role of parental collaboration in supporting the sustainability of religious programs. Parents were actively involved in monitoring students' worship practices and reinforcing religious habituation at home. This finding indicates that transformative religious education requires synergy between school culture and family environments to ensure the continuity of character formation processes. Previous studies have similarly shown that collaborative relationships between schools and families positively influence students' moral behavior, religious awareness, and emotional development within Islamic educational contexts (Nasution, 2026).

The continuous supervision and evaluation mechanisms identified in this study further demonstrate that transformative management in Islamic education requires systematic monitoring to ensure program sustainability and institutional effectiveness. The implementation of regular evaluations, behavioral monitoring, and teacher coordination meetings enabled the madrasah to identify obstacles and improve program implementation continuously. This finding supports educational management theories emphasizing that institutional transformation depends on adaptive evaluation systems capable of supporting organizational learning and continuous improvement (Hallinger, 2020). Recent studies on Islamic educational management similarly explain that sustainable transformation requires responsive governance systems, participatory supervision, and institutional adaptability in responding to educational challenges (Rahman, 2025).

The findings of this study also reveal that religious programs contributed significantly to strengthening students' discipline, empathy, social responsibility, and Islamic identity. Students demonstrated positive behavioral changes, including increased worship discipline, respectful communication, and active participation in social religious activities. These

findings support previous studies indicating that religious habituation and hidden curriculum strategies are effective approaches for strengthening students' moral awareness and moderate character within Islamic educational institutions (Salim et al., 2024). In this regard, transformative management successfully positioned religious programs as practical instruments for holistic character education rather than merely symbolic religious activities (Fauzi et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the findings indicate that transformative management within Islamic elementary education should be understood as a multidimensional process involving leadership transformation, institutional culture development, value internalization, and collaborative governance. The success of religious programs at MI Miftahul Mlokorejo Jember illustrates that Islamic educational institutions can develop adaptive and sustainable educational models capable of responding to contemporary moral and social challenges while preserving Islamic values as the foundation of institutional identity. This perspective is consistent with recent discussions on the transformation of Islamic educational leadership, which emphasize that modern Islamic educational institutions require adaptive, value based, and culturally responsive management models to maintain their relevance in the era of globalization and digital transformation (Prasetyowati et al., 2025; Rahman, 2025).

Overall, the findings of this study strengthen the argument that transformative management of religious programs constitutes a strategic approach for developing sustainable Islamic educational culture and strengthening students' religious character in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. Through collaborative planning, participatory implementation, continuous supervision, and institutional cultural transformation, religious programs can function as an integrated educational system that shapes students' spirituality, morality, discipline, and social responsibility within the broader framework of contemporary Islamic education (Hallinger, 2020; Hakim, 2025).

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the transformative management of religious programs at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level, an area that has received relatively limited attention in previous Islamic educational management studies. Existing research predominantly examines religious culture, character education, or transformational leadership within pesantren and secondary Islamic education contexts, while studies specifically analyzing how transformative management processes shape religious culture in Islamic elementary education remain scarce. This study offers a more comprehensive perspective by integrating strategic planning, participatory implementation, continuous supervision, and institutional culture transformation into a unified framework of transformative religious program management. In addition, this research highlights how religious programs are institutionalized not merely as ceremonial worship activities but as sustainable cultural practices embedded within daily educational interactions, leadership systems, and collaborative relationships among schools, teachers, students, and parents. The integration of managerial transformation and Islamic character

formation within the context of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah therefore constitutes a significant conceptual contribution to the contemporary discourse of Islamic educational management (Hallinger, 2020; Prasetyowati et al., 2025).

The contribution of this study is both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of Islamic educational management studies by proposing a transformative management model that emphasizes the integration of leadership, religious culture, value internalization, and collaborative governance within Islamic elementary education. The findings strengthen the argument that transformative management in Islamic educational institutions should not focus solely on administrative effectiveness but also on the development of sustainable religious culture and holistic character formation. Practically, this study provides strategic insights for madrasah leaders, teachers, and policymakers regarding the implementation of effective religious programs capable of strengthening students' spirituality, discipline, empathy, and Islamic identity. Furthermore, the findings may serve as a reference for other Islamic educational institutions in developing adaptive and sustainable religious culture programs that respond to contemporary educational challenges while maintaining Islamic values as the core foundation of institutional identity (Rahman, 2025; Salim et al., 2024).

Conclusion

This study concludes that the transformative management of religious programs at MI Miftahul Mlokorejo Jember plays a significant role in strengthening students' religious character, institutional culture, and the sustainability of Islamic educational practices within the context of Islamic elementary education. The findings reveal that the integration of strategic planning, participatory implementation, continuous supervision, and institutional religious culture transformation produced a greater impact than initially expected in shaping students' discipline, spiritual awareness, empathy, social responsibility, and Islamic identity. Religious programs were not merely implemented as ritual or ceremonial activities but became an integral part of the madrasah culture embedded within daily educational interactions, leadership practices, and collaborative relationships among teachers, students, and parents. These findings challenge the conventional assumption that religious programs in elementary Islamic education function only as supplementary activities and instead demonstrate that transformative management can position religious programs as strategic instruments for institutional and character transformation.

This study also contributes theoretically to the development of Islamic educational management discourse by strengthening previous findings regarding the importance of transformative leadership, religious culture, and value internalization in Islamic educational institutions. At the same time, the study questions the tendency of earlier research that primarily examined religious programs descriptively without comprehensively analyzing the

managerial transformation processes underlying their sustainability and institutional impact. Furthermore, this research introduces a more integrative perspective by emphasizing that transformative management in Islamic elementary education involves multidimensional processes, including collaborative governance, institutional culture development, participatory leadership, and sustainable religious habituation. The findings therefore enrich contemporary scientific discussions concerning the transformation of Islamic educational institutions, particularly within the context of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. The research was conducted within a single institutional setting and involved a relatively limited number of participants, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to broader Islamic educational contexts. In addition, the study focused specifically on one madrasah with distinctive institutional characteristics and religious culture, meaning that different institutional contexts may produce different managerial patterns and educational outcomes. Therefore, further studies involving larger samples, multiple institutional settings, and comparative approaches are necessary to develop a more comprehensive understanding of transformative religious program management in Islamic elementary education. Future research is also recommended to explore the integration of digital technology, parental engagement models, and innovative Islamic leadership approaches in strengthening sustainable religious culture and character education within contemporary madrasah environments.

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