



MADRASAH BASED ISLAMIC EDUCATION MODEL EXCELS IN INCREASING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN BANTEN PROVINCE

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to formulate a model of Islamic Education based on excellent madrasahs for improving the competitiveness of Islamic education in Banten Province. The study employed a qualitative approach with a library research design. Data were collected through documentation techniques by identifying, selecting, classifying, and reviewing relevant scholarly sources, particularly articles indexed in Scopus and Sinta 2, as well as supporting books and policy documents. The data were analyzed using content analysis through data reduction, data display, comparative analysis, synthesis, and conclusion drawing. The validity of the data was ensured through source triangulation and peer debriefing. The findings reveal that the competitiveness of Islamic education in madrasahs is shaped by the integration of institutional quality, Islamic identity, innovative learning, and public trust. The study further identifies the main components of an Islamic Education model based on excellent madrasahs in Banten Province, namely visionary and adaptive leadership, sustainable teacher empowerment, autonomous and participatory school-based management, innovative learning culture, technological integration through the Madrasah Reform program, and competitiveness strategies based on local and global excellence. The study concludes that improving the competitiveness of Islamic education in Banten requires an integrative, contextual, and sustainable Islamic Education model that places Islamic Education not merely as a subject, but as the core value, culture, and strategic orientation of the institution. This study contributes theoretically to the discourse on Islamic Education and practically to the development of excellent madrasahs in Banten Province.

Keywords: Islamic Education, excellent madrasah, competitiveness, Islamic education, Banten Province

INTRODUCTION

Madrasah as a formal educational institution with Islamic characteristics has occupied a strategic position in the national education system since the enactment of Law Number 2 of 1989. This position emphasizes that madrasahs are not only responsible for the transmission of Islamic sciences, but are also required to be able to produce graduates who have academic competence, religious character, and strong competitiveness in the midst of increasingly complex educational competition. In this context, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is the main element that distinguishes madrasahs from other educational institutions, because PAI does not only function as a subject, but also as the basis for values, institutional culture, and orientation for the formation of students' character. However, madrasahs still face serious challenges in the form of stigma as second-class educational institutions and the assumption that their quality and competitiveness are below public schools (Muhajir, 2016). Despite facing these challenges, in the last two decades the madrasah has shown significant development. The increase in the number of institutions, the increase in students, and the achievement of student achievements in various fields show that



madrasas are increasingly gaining public trust. The emergence of superior madrassas in various regions shows that Islamic education has the capacity to grow competitively and adaptively. The excellence of madrasas is not born instantly, but is formed through a long process involving institutional governance, teacher empowerment, learning innovation, and the ability to respond effectively to the needs of the community (Fauzi, 2016). In this case, the success of a superior madrasah is actually determined not only by the managerial aspect, but also by how Islamic Religious Education is developed as the basis for the formation of the identity, quality, and excellence of the institution.

Banten Province is a relevant context to study this problem. As an area that borders DKI Jakarta, Banten is in a relatively high flow of educational competition. On the other hand, Banten has a strong Islamic boarding school base and Islamic scientific traditions that have long been rooted in the social life of the community. This condition makes Banten have distinctive characteristics, namely the meeting between Islamic education traditions based on Islamic boarding schools with the demands of modernity, institutional competition, and the need to improve the quality of education. In addition, the strengthening of madrassas in Banten has also received policy support through *the Madrasah Reform* program supported by the World Bank since 2020, where Banten Province is included in the 12 target provinces of the program (Haddade et al., 2023). With these characteristics, Banten is an important space to study how the Islamic Religious Education model can be developed based on superior madrasah practices to strengthen the competitiveness of Islamic education.

A number of previous studies have shown that studies on superior madrassas are generally more directed at aspects of institutional management, leadership, service quality, and human resource management. In Banten Province, Fauzi (2016) researched the management of teacher empowerment in three MANs, while Muhajir (2016) examined the implementation of Madrasah-Based Management in MAN Serang City. These studies make an important contribution to understanding the institutional management of madrasas, especially in the managerial and institutional governance aspects. However, these findings have not specifically formulated Islamic Religious Education as the main conceptual basis in building madrasah excellence. In fact, as an educational institution with Islamic characteristics, the competitive strength of madrasas should not only rely on institutional governance, but also on the effectiveness of the PAI model which is the core of its identity and educational orientation.

Thus, there is an important research gap, namely there have not been many studies that comprehensively discuss and formulate a model of superior madrass-based Islamic Religious Education in the local context of Banten Province. Previous studies tend to place the excellence of madrassas in the general management framework, while the dimension of PAI as the foundation of excellence, character building, and increasing the competitiveness of Islamic education has not been constructed more completely. This is where the novelty of this research lies, namely in an effort to formulate a model of Islamic Religious Education based on superior madrasas that not only emphasizes managerial aspects, but also integrates Islamic values, pesantren traditions, learning innovation, and competitiveness orientation in one analytical framework. Based on this description, this study aims to analyze and formulate a model of superior madrass-based Islamic Religious Education in improving the competitiveness of Islamic education in Banten Province. The results of this research are expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of PAI studies



and Islamic education, as well as a practical contribution to strengthening madrasas as superior, adaptive, and competitive Islamic educational institutions.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with the type of library research. This approach was chosen because the research aims to analyze, review, and synthesize various research results and relevant scientific sources in order to formulate a model of madrasah-based Islamic Religious Education that is superior in increasing the competitiveness of Islamic education in Banten Province. Literature studies allow researchers to examine in depth various concepts, empirical findings, and trends of previous studies related to superior madrasas, Islamic Religious Education, and the competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions. The research data is sourced from relevant scientific documents, especially journal articles indexed by Scopus and Sinta 2, and is supported by books, proceedings, and policy documents that are related to the research focus. The selection of data sources was carried out purposively based on several criteria, namely the relevance of the theme to Islamic Religious Education, superior madrasas, and the competitiveness of Islamic education; academic quality of resources; as well as the proximity of the study context to Indonesia, especially Banten Province. The data collection technique is carried out through documentation, namely by identifying, selecting, classifying, and inventorying various literature that is in accordance with the focus of the research. At this stage, each document is reviewed to find important information, key ideas, and findings that contribute to the formulation of the research model.

Data analysis is carried out using *content analysis*. The analysis process begins with data reduction, which is selecting and simplifying relevant information from various sources that have been collected. Furthermore, the data is presented in the form of a matrix and descriptive description to make it easier to read the patterns, themes, and tendencies of the findings. The next stage is comparative analysis, which is comparing the results of previous research to identify the similarities, differences, and characteristics of each model that has been developed. Based on the results of the comparison, a conceptual synthesis was carried out to formulate a comprehensive and contextual model of superior madrasah-based Islamic Religious Education for Banten Province. The final stage of analysis is the drawing of conclusions that are systematically compiled according to the focus and objectives of the research. The validity of the data is maintained through triangulation of sources, namely by comparing information and findings from various different literature to obtain consistency of meaning and accuracy of interpretation. In addition, this study also uses *peer debriefing* by involving academic colleagues to examine the results of the analysis, minimize interpretation bias, and strengthen the accuracy of the resulting model construction. With this procedure, the research results are expected to have an adequate level of credibility and academic validity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that superior madrasas are educational institutions that have received recognition from the government and the community. Government recognition is seen in the quality of education, accreditation values, and achievements of madrasas, while public recognition is reflected in the high preference of parents to send



their children to madrasas, especially because of the belief that religious education from the elementary level is very important (Suprpto, 2017). This excellence does not only refer to academic achievements, but also to the success of madrasas in maximizing all students' potential intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually, as affirmed by Syuhud in Nawawi et al. (2026). In this context, superior madrasas are supported by the professionalism of teachers, relevant curriculum, extracurricular programs, and collaborative networks with various parties.

The findings also show that the superiority of madrasas lies in their ability to integrate Islamic identity with the demands of modern education. Nawawi et al. (2026) found that MI Afkaruna Yogyakarta was able to combine the Cambridge international curriculum, the national curriculum, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs curriculum, while maintaining the tradition of pesantren through learning the yellow book with the pegon script in a *horizontal* manner. These findings show that superior madrasas can develop an integrative educational model between global standards and local wisdom. In the aspect of educational competitiveness, the results of the study show that the competitiveness of educational institutions can be seen from the ability of institutions to maintain existence and attract public interest in the midst of competition between institutions. The study on MIN 1 Pati shows that the competitiveness of madrasas is reflected in the increasing number of registrants and the satisfaction of school residents (in Suprpto, 2017). Meanwhile, research at MIN 1 Madiun City shows that madrasas that have competitive advantages are characterized by resources that are *valuable*, *rare*, *imperfectly imitable*, and *non-substitutable*, in accordance with the *Resource-Based View* approach (RBV) (Zajuli, t.t. in Cholid et al., 2024). Cholid et al. (2024) emphasized that the competitive advantage of madrasas is largely determined by the ability to manage resources professionally, transparently, and accountably.

The results of the next study show that Madrasah Based Management (MBM) is an important foundation in the development of the quality and competitiveness of madrasas. MBM gives autonomy to madrasas to manage resources and determine priorities according to local needs in order to improve the efficiency, quality, and equity of education (Mulyasa, 2012 in Muhajir, 2016). In a comparative study in MAN 1 and MAN 2 Serang City, Muhajir (2016) found that the success of the implementation of MBM is greatly influenced by the role of the madrasah head, the support of committees and parents, the participation of teachers and education personnel, government support, and the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation. MAN 2 Serang City is considered more optimal in the implementation of MBM, which can be seen from A accreditation, improved achievements, and the development of *the boarding school* system.

Other findings show that the leadership of madrasah heads is an important factor in the success of madrasah management. Rosmaniar (2016) found that the instructional leadership of madrasah heads has a very strong relationship with the quality of madrasah ($r = 0.965$) and the quality of graduates ($r = 0.978$). Such instructional leadership includes the ability to define the goals of the madrasah, manage the learning program, and create a positive learning climate. Muhammad et al. (2015) also found a significant relationship between the leadership of madrasah heads and madrasah quality ($r = 0.487$), while leadership, teacher performance, and learning culture were simultaneously strongly related to madrasah quality ($R = 0.596$). Shulhan (2018) added that the leadership strategy of



madrasah heads in improving teacher performance includes motivating, mobilizing, directing, and evaluating systematically. In the context of the crisis, Hanafi et al. (2021) show that charismatic and *top-down* traditional leadership is no longer adequate, so a distributive, collaborative, and *networked approach is needed*.

In the dimension of human resources, the results of the study show that teacher empowerment is a strategic element in superior madrasahs. Fauzi (2016) found that teacher empowerment in three MAN Banten was carried out through increasing academic qualifications and strengthening four teacher competencies, namely pedagogic, professional, personality, and social. These efforts include aligning academic qualifications, further study, improving the ability to compile learning tools, implementing evaluations, and analyzing learning outcomes. Shulhan (2018) added that teacher empowerment is also carried out through involvement in decision-making, teamwork development, and the creation of a conducive school culture.

Furthermore, the results of the study show that learning culture has an important relationship with the quality of madrasahs. Muhammad et al. (2015) define learning culture as a set of values, norms, assumptions, beliefs, principles, and rules that direct the behavior of teachers and students in the learning process. His research found that learning culture has a significant relationship with the quality of madrasahs ($r = 0.483$), especially in the aspect of emphasis on learning and the role of teachers. Hanafi et al. (2021) also showed that changes towards *blended learning* during the pandemic require a more adaptive and flexible learning culture.

At the policy level, studies show that the Madrasah Reform program is an important instrument in improving the quality of madrasahs. The program, which was launched by the Directorate General of Islamic Education of the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia in 2020 with the support of the World Bank, includes strengthening electronic-based planning and budgeting systems, assessment of learning outcomes, continuous professional development, and EMIS development (Haddade et al., 2023). A study by Haddade et al. (2023) at Madrasah Madani Gowa shows that this program has a positive impact on improving the quality of madrasah heads, teacher competence, and the development of technology-based learning. However, its implementation still faces obstacles in the form of delays in the disbursement of the budget and limited technological capabilities of educators and education personnel.

Finally, the results of the study show the importance of inclusive and multicultural education in the development of superior madrasahs. Sali and Marasigan (2020), in a study on the implementation of *the Madrasah Education Program* in Quezon City, Philippines, found that madrasahs in multi-religious areas face challenges of *cultural variances*, such as limited understanding of Islam, misunderstandings of communication, and low awareness of madrasah programs. Nevertheless, the program also contributes positively to strengthening the understanding of Islamic values, promoting peaceful coexistence, and spreading cultural diversity.

Based on the synthesis of all these findings, this study formulated a model of superior madrasah-based Islamic Religious Education for Banten Province which consists of six main components. First, visionary and adaptive leadership, namely the leadership of madrasah heads who are instructional, participatory, transformational, and able to read changes in the strategic environment, including in crisis situations. Second, sustainable



teacher empowerment, through improving academic qualifications, strengthening pedagogic and professional competencies, and developing skills in learning technology and integrated curriculum. Third, the implementation of an autonomous and participatory MBM, through the active involvement of the madrasah committee, parents, teachers, and the community in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of madrasah programs. Fourth, the development of an innovative learning culture, which integrates the tradition of Islamic boarding schools with modern learning innovations based on technology and contextual experiences. Fifth, technology integration through the Madrasah Reform program, especially in planning, learning evaluation, professional development, and strengthening institutional information systems. Sixth, the strategy of increasing competitiveness based on local and global excellence, namely combining Islamic boarding school traditions, local Banten culture, strengthening foreign languages, mastery of technology, as well as superior programs such as *boarding schools*, *life skills*, and environment-based curriculum.

The findings of this study confirm that the excellence of madrassas cannot be reduced solely to academic achievements or administrative indicators, but must be understood as the result of integration between institutional quality, Islamic identity, and public trust. In this context, public recognition of madrassas is an important indicator because it shows that the attractiveness of Islamic educational institutions is not only built by formal results, but also by perceptions of their ability to shape the religious character of students. Therefore, superior madrasas need to be positioned as institutions that are able to answer the community's needs for quality education while being rooted in Islamic values.

Findings on the integration of international, national, and pesantren curricula show that superior madrasas have adaptive and integrative characteristics. The findings of Nawawi et al. (2026) show that excellence does not arise from abandoning tradition, but from the ability to synergize global demands with Islamic scientific heritage. In the context of Banten Province, this is very relevant because Banten has a strong pesantren base while facing high educational competition. Thus, the model of Islamic Religious Education based on superior madrasas needs to be built on the principle of integration between Islamic values, local traditions, and modern educational innovations.

From the perspective of competitiveness, the results of the study show that the excellence of madrasas rests on the ability to build distinctive resources that are valuable, unique, and difficult to imitate. The *Resource-Based View framework* explains that the competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions will be stronger if madrasas are able to make Islamic Religious Education a source of strategic excellence. In this case, PAI is not enough to be placed as a formal subject, but must be the basis of values, culture, and institutional orientation. Thus, the competitiveness of Islamic education is built through differentiation that comes from the peculiarities of the identity of the madrasah itself.

The findings on MBM show that institutional autonomy is an important prerequisite for the development of superior madrasas. The successful implementation of MBM in MAN 2 Serang City shows that participatory, responsive, and supported by effective monitoring-evaluation governance is able to strengthen the quality of madrasas. The implication is that the model of Islamic Religious Education based on superior madrassas cannot develop optimally without the support of an institutional system that provides space for innovation, collaboration, and adjustment to local needs. In the context of Banten, this means that the



development of PAI needs to be accompanied by strengthening madrasah governance that is able to integrate local potential, pesantren culture, and quality orientation.

The leadership of the head of the madrasah has also proven to be a key factor in directing the quality of the institution. Data from Rosmaniar (2016), Muhammad et al. (2015), and Shulhan (2018) show that madrasah heads play the role of instructional leaders who not only manage administration, but also build vision, learning climate, teacher motivation, and quality culture. In the context of change and crisis, collaborative and distributive leadership is becoming increasingly important as revealed by Hanafi et al. (2021). Therefore, the superior madrasah-based PAI model must place the head of the madrasah as the central actor who orchestrates the direction of institutional development, while ensuring that PAI values are internalized in educational practice.

On the other hand, teacher empowerment and the formation of a learning culture show that the quality of madrasahs is highly dependent on the internal capacity of human resources. Fauzi (2016) and Shulhan (2018) show that teachers who continue to develop their competencies, are involved in decision-making, and work in a collaborative culture will be better able to encourage the quality of learning. The findings of Muhammad et al. (2015) further strengthen that learning culture has a real contribution to the quality of madrasahs. Thus, a superior madrasah-based Islamic Religious Education model must be built through a learning ecosystem that empowers teachers, strengthens academic culture, and fosters quality orientation collectively.

The Madrasah Reform program shows that strengthening the quality of madrasahs requires systematic policy support. The findings of Haddade et al. (2023) show that digital-based reforms, continuous professional development, and institutional evaluation can accelerate the transformation of madrasahs. However, implementation barriers show that good policies still require adequate resource readiness and technical support. For Banten Province, this indicates that the development of a superior madrasah-based PAI model needs to be connected to the madrasah reform agenda, especially in the aspects of digitalization, teacher capacity building, and data-based governance.

In addition, the relevance of inclusive and multicultural education confirms that superior madrasahs cannot close themselves off from plural social realities. The findings of Sali and Marasigan (2020) show that Islamic education developed in a pluralistic environment needs to display an inclusive, communicative face, and support peaceful coexistence. In the context of Banten, this dimension is important because competitive Islamic education is not only strong internally, but also must be socially relevant. Therefore, the superior madrasah-based Islamic Religious Education model needs to integrate the values of moderation, tolerance, and the ability to live together in a diverse society.

The synthesis of the superior madrasah-based Islamic Religious Education model for Banten Province produced in this study shows that the six components formulated are actually intertwined and inseparable. Visionary and adaptive leadership is the driving force that determines institutional direction, builds networks, and responds to change. Continuous teacher empowerment ensures that the quality of learning does not stop at the policy level, but is manifested in professional pedagogical practices. An autonomous and participatory MBM provides an institutional space for contextual and responsive decision-making. Innovative learning culture is a medium for internalizing values and shaping students' learning character. The integration of technology through Madrasah Reform



strengthens the efficiency, accountability, and innovation capacity of madrasas. Meanwhile, a competitiveness strategy based on local and global excellence shows that madrasas in Banten need to build differentiation based on the tradition of pesantren as well as openness to global quality standards.

Within such a framework, the formulated model is not only theoretically relevant, but also has practical implications. For madrasah heads, the results of this study emphasize the importance of strengthening instructional and managerial leadership competencies through training, *workshops*, and comparative studies, accompanied by the development of a solid work team, the involvement of teachers in decision-making, the optimization of the role of madrasah committees, and the implementation of regular monitoring and evaluation. For the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of Banten Province, this finding indicates the need to facilitate the dissemination of best practices, accelerate the disbursement of the Madrasah Reform budget, provide technology training for teachers and education personnel, develop a curriculum that combines local excellence and national-international standards, and strengthen monitoring the implementation of MBM. As for the Banten Provincial Government, this model requires policy support through the allocation of companion budgets, synergy between institutions, the provision of scholarships to improve teacher qualifications, and the facilitation of cooperation between madrasas and the business and industrial worlds.

Nevertheless, the findings of this study need to be read proportionately considering the limitations of the study. This study only reviewed nine articles so it does not necessarily cover all relevant research results regarding superior madrasah management. In addition, although some of the literature discusses the context of Banten, a number of articles come from outside Banten Province, so the generalization of the results must be done carefully. This study also did not conduct direct field verification, so the validity of the synthesis is highly dependent on the quality of the sources reviewed. In addition, the time span of article publication varies, namely 2015–2023, needs to be considered in the interpretation of the findings because Islamic education policies continue to change. Therefore, advanced research based on *field research*, case studies, and quantitative approaches or *mixed methods* are needed to test the effectiveness of the formulated model, deepen aspects that have not been reached, and produce more contextual formulations for superior madrasas in Banten Province.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that superior madrasas are Islamic educational institutions that are able to build competitiveness through the integration of institutional quality, Islamic identity, learning innovation, and public trust. The excellence of madrasas is not only determined by academic and administrative achievements, but also by its ability to develop Islamic Religious Education as the basis of values, culture, and institutional orientation. The results of the synthesis show that the competitiveness of Islamic education in madrasas is formed by several main elements, namely visionary and adaptive leadership of madrasah heads, sustainable teacher empowerment, implementation of autonomous and participatory Madrasah-Based Management, development of innovative learning culture, technological integration through *the Madrasah Reform program*, and competitiveness improvement strategies that combine local excellence and global standards. In the context



of Banten Province, the superior madrasah-based Islamic Religious Education model formulated in this study emphasizes the importance of synergy between pesantren traditions, local culture, and the demands of educational modernization. Thus, madrasahs in Banten need to place Islamic Religious Education not just as a subject, but as a basis for institutional development that is able to strengthen religious character, improve the quality of learning, and produce competitive graduates. Therefore, this study emphasizes that increasing the competitiveness of Islamic education in Banten Province can only be achieved through an integrative, contextual, and sustainable madrasah management model.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the strengthening of the study of Islamic education by placing superior madrasahs not only in a managerial perspective, but also as an institutional construction that relies on Islamic Religious Education as the core of identity and a source of strategic excellence. These findings expand the discourse on the competitiveness of Islamic education by showing that the excellence of madrasahs is shaped by the interaction between leadership, governance, learning culture, teacher empowerment, reform policies, and local socio-religious contexts. Practically, this research provides implications for madrasah heads, teachers, and policy makers in Banten Province. Madrasah heads need to strengthen instructional and adaptive leadership, build internal and external collaboration, and ensure the implementation of continuous monitoring and evaluation. Teachers need to be encouraged to continue to improve their academic qualifications, pedagogic competence, and learning technology capabilities in order to be able to carry out innovative and integrated learning. At the policy level, the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religion of Banten Province and local governments need to strengthen support for the implementation of *Madrasah Reform*, increase the capacity of human resources, develop a curriculum that combines local and global excellence, and expand partnership networks with universities, the business world, and the community. In addition, this study also has methodological implications that literature studies are able to produce conceptual models that are relevant for the development of superior madrasahs, but still require further testing through field research. Therefore, the next research needs to be directed to case studies in superior madrasahs in Banten Province, model testing through a quantitative approach or *mixed methods*, as well as deepening the effectiveness of technology integration, innovative learning culture, and integrated curriculum development in improving the quality of madrasah graduates.

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