

Mindhunnur: Character Formation as a Structural Achievement in Islamic Learning

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Abstract

The management of Islamic education remains divided between the rational instruments of modern administration and the moral and spiritual commitments that define its purpose, leaving the field without a unified model in which managerial technique is governed by Islamic values. This study examines the concept of *Mindhunnur*, developed by Qomar, which proposes a synthesis of modern managerial rationality and Islamic moral foundations, yet has not been systematically analyzed or positioned within the wider scholarship on Islamic education management and the integration of knowledge. The objective of the study is to reconstruct the philosophical foundation of *Mindhunnur*, to examine its expression across the principal typologies of Islamic educational institutions, and to specify the level at which it integrates managerial and Islamic knowledge. Employing a qualitative library research design adapted to a PRISMA-guided selection of Scopus-indexed sources, the study analyzes the primary articulation of *Mindhunnur* against a contemporary corpus through content analysis and descriptive-analytical interpretation. The findings establish that *Mindhunnur* rests on a coherent foundation integrated at the axiological rather than the epistemological core, that its realization depends on the structural position of embodied moral leadership, and that this leadership, rather than administrative reform, is the decisive carrier of character formation. The implication is that *Mindhunnur* offers a framework for transformative education and learning, in which character formation becomes a structural achievement of moral leadership and a foundation for genuinely transformative institutional change.

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INTRODUCTION

The management of Islamic education has long been caught in a tension that neither side has fully resolved, namely whether to adopt the rational, efficiency-oriented instruments of modern management or to preserve the moral and spiritual commitments that give Islamic education its distinctive purpose. As Islamic educational institutions across the Muslim world, and in Indonesia in particular, have come under pressure to professionalize, they have increasingly borrowed managerial models, digital systems, and governance frameworks developed in secular and Western contexts (Haddade, 2024; Mahsusi, 2024). This borrowing has improved administrative capacity, yet it has also raised a deeper question that administrative gains alone cannot answer, which is whether the soul of Islamic education survives its own modernization. The most consequential work in this field therefore lies not in adopting management techniques as such, but in determining how managerial rationality can be reconciled with, and ultimately subordinated to, the moral ends that define the enterprise.

Scholars and practitioners have responded to this tension through a range of efforts to integrate modern knowledge with Islamic values, and these efforts form the immediate backdrop

to the present study. A substantial body of work has examined the integration of knowledge in Islamic higher education and *madrasah* settings, proposing curricular and institutional designs that bring secular and religious learning into a single frame (Suwendi, 2024; Warisno, 2026; Syukron, 2026). Others have documented the reform of Islamic educational institutions through digital transformation and governance restructuring, demonstrating that modernization, when guided by institutional values, need not dissolve them (Haddade, 2024; Mahsusi, 2024; Adiyono, 2025). These contributions are valuable, yet they tend to proceed along parallel lanes, treating integration as a matter of curriculum, or of governance, or of technology, without arriving at a unified model of management in which the moral foundation governs the entire process from end to end. The literature, in other words, has assembled many of the necessary parts without yet articulating the whole.

This absence becomes sharper when set against the long and unresolved debate over how, and indeed whether, modern knowledge ought to be Islamized at all. That debate has divided scholars for decades. On one side stands a tradition of skepticism, articulated forcefully by Tibi (1995), who criticized the project of Islamizing knowledge as a postmodern claim to de-Westernization that risked substituting assertion for analysis, a concern echoed in later examinations of the philosophical incoherences that have attended the concept (Dzilo, 2012). On the other side stands a constructive tradition that defends the Islamization of disciplines as a route to an authentically indigenous educational system rather than a defensive reflex (Dangor, 2005; Niyozov, 2011), a position recently reframed by Laabdi (2024) as a decisive shift from the older language of Islamization toward a more conciliatory language of integration. This movement from Islamization to integration is significant, for it signals a search for a third position that neither purifies knowledge of its foreign content nor surrenders the distinctiveness of the Islamic contribution. It is precisely at this unsettled point in the debate that a concrete model capable of specifying where integration should occur becomes both necessary and absent.

It is against this background that the concept of *Mindbunnur*, developed by Qomar (2022), acquires its significance, and that the gap addressed by this study comes into view. *Mindbunnur* proposes a model of Islamic education management that synthesizes modern managerial rationality with Islamic moral and spiritual values, absorbing the former while subordinating it to the latter. Despite the promise of this synthesis, the concept has not yet been subjected to systematic scholarly analysis, reconstruction, or positioning within the wider literature on Islamic education management and the integration of knowledge. The gap is therefore threefold. It is conceptual, in that *Mindbunnur* has been articulated as an original idea but not yet analyzed as a coherent management construct. It is integrative, in that no study has shown how its synthesis answers the unresolved debate between the Islamization and the integration of knowledge. And it is institutional, in that the variation in how such a model might be realized across different types of Islamic educational institution has not been examined. Closing this gap is the task the present study sets for itself.

This study addresses that task through a conceptual analysis grounded in library research, reading *Mindbunnur* as articulated in its primary source against a corpus of contemporary Scopus-indexed scholarship, and reconstructing it into an integrative model that can be positioned within current debates. The novelty of the study lies not in proposing yet another framework for integrating Islamic and modern knowledge, of which the field already has many, but in subjecting an existing and original Indonesian concept to rigorous analytical reconstruction, clarifying its philosophical foundation, tracing its expression across institutional types, and specifying the level at which its integration of knowledge takes place. In doing so, the study treats *Mindbunnur* not as a settled prescription to be summarized but as a theoretical construct to be interrogated, extended, and tested against the scholarly conversation it enters. This analytical and reconstructive orientation distinguishes the study from descriptive accounts of Islamic education management and positions it as a contribution to theory rather than a report of practice.

Accordingly, this study pursues three objectives that structure the analysis that follows. The first is to reconstruct the philosophical and epistemological foundation of *Mindhunnur*, clarifying the commitments on which the model rests. The second is to examine how that foundation finds expression, and meets resistance, across the principal typologies of Islamic educational institution, from the *pesantren* to the *madrasah*, the Islamic school, and the Islamic university. The third is to specify the model's theoretical contribution, particularly the level at which it integrates managerial and Islamic knowledge and the mechanism through which its moral foundation is carried into institutional practice. Through these objectives, the study aims to offer both a theoretical contribution, by advancing the debate on the integration of knowledge in Islamic education, and a practical one, by clarifying the conditions under which *Mindhunnur* can be actualized in the institutions that might adopt it.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs library research within a qualitative paradigm, designed as a conceptual analytical inquiry rather than an empirical field investigation. The approach is appropriate to the object of study, since the central concern is not to measure behavior in a particular setting but to reconstruct and interrogate a body of ideas, namely the concept of *Mindhunnur* in Islamic education management as articulated by Qomar (2022). Library research enables the researcher to engage directly with the conceptual architecture of a theory, to trace its intellectual lineage, and to position it in dialogue with the wider scholarly literature, all of which are necessary when the aim is theoretical construction rather than empirical generalization (Ary et al., 2013). The conceptual-analytical orientation adopted here follows the logic of recent library-based studies that treat published scholarship itself as the unit of analysis, subjecting it to systematic identification, selection, and interpretation (Bsoul, 2022; Nurbayani, 2022).

To ensure that the selection of sources was systematic and traceable rather than impressionistic, the study adapted the search and screening logic of the PRISMA protocol to a conceptual review. Sources were identified through the Scopus database, chosen for its indexing rigor and its coverage of peer-reviewed scholarship in Islamic education. The search was conducted across several thematic keyword sets corresponding to the principal dimensions of the study, including Islamic education management, integration of knowledge, institutional typologies of Islamic education, and educational reconstruction, with the search restricted to publications between 2015 and 2025 in order to foreground contemporary scholarship while retaining the foundational primary source. The primary source of the study remained the original articulation of *Mindhunnur* by Qomar (2022), around which the Scopus-indexed corpus functioned as a supporting and comparative framework.

The selection of sources proceeded through explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria applied across the successive stages of identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and final inclusion. Sources were included when they addressed Islamic education management, the epistemology of knowledge integration, the leadership and governance of Islamic educational institutions, or the reconstruction of curriculum and evaluation, and when they were peer-reviewed and accessible in full text. Sources were excluded when they fell outside the thematic scope, when they predated the 2015 to 2025 window without foundational status, when they were duplicated across keyword sets, or when they had been retracted. This staged filtering moved from a large initial pool of identified records to a focused corpus suitable for analysis, as depicted in the PRISMA flow presented in **Figure 1**.

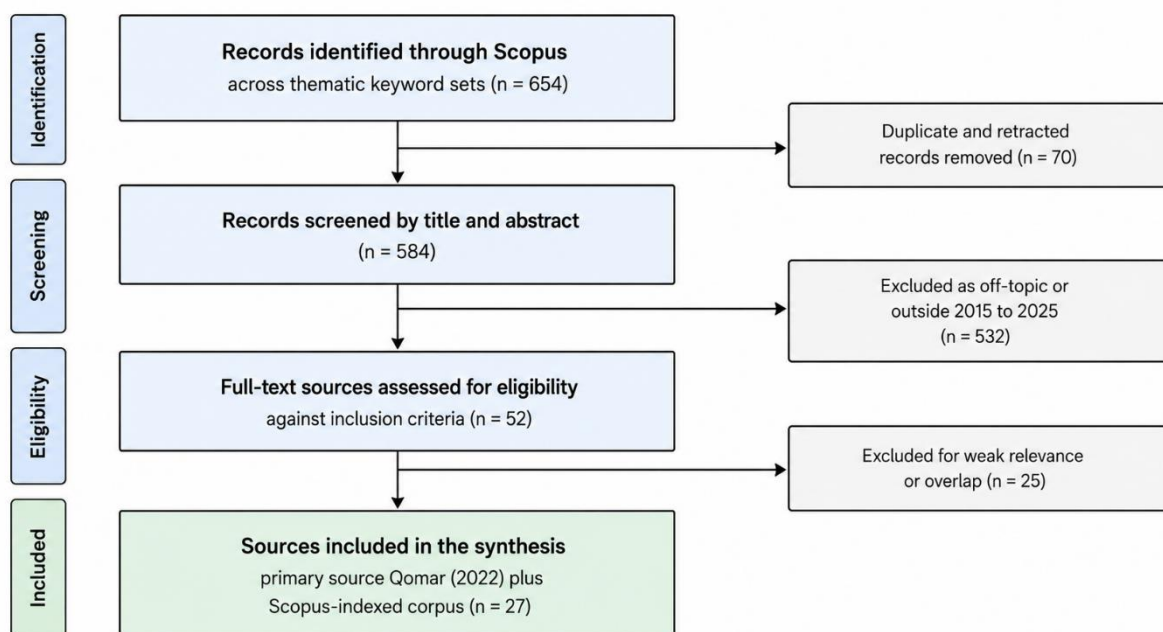


Figure 1. PRISMA flow of the source selection process

Source: Authors' elaboration.

The analysis combined two complementary techniques, content analysis and descriptive-analytical interpretation, applied in sequential phases. Content analysis was used to identify, code, and categorize the recurring themes across the corpus, following the systematic logic by which manifest and latent content is reduced to analytical categories (Krippendorff, 2018). The descriptive-analytical technique was then used to elaborate those categories into a coherent account, describing the concept of Mindhunnur in depth and relating it to its practical expression across institutional typologies. In practice, the analysis moved through four stages: familiarization with the full corpus, open coding of conceptual units, grouping of codes into thematic categories, and theoretical synthesis in which the categories were integrated into the study's interpretive model. The phases and their procedures are summarized in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Phases of the analytical procedure

Phase	Stage	Procedure	Output
1	Familiarization	Repeated reading of the primary source and corpus	Annotated source map
2	Open coding	Identification of conceptual units across sources	Initial conceptual codebook
3	Categorization	Grouping of codes into thematic clusters	Intermediate thematic categories
4	Theoretical synthesis	Integration of categories into an interpretive model	Foundation, typology, and reconstruction framework

Source: Authors' elaboration based on the cited literature.

The trustworthiness of a conceptual study of this kind rests not on statistical representativeness but on the transparency and defensibility of its interpretive procedure, and several strategies were applied to secure it. Source triangulation was achieved by reading the primary articulation of Mindhunnur against a diverse Scopus-indexed corpus, so that no single claim rested on one text alone. An explicit audit trail was maintained through the documented search strategy and the staged selection criteria depicted in **Figure 1**, allowing the path from identification to inclusion to be reconstructed by another reader. Interpretive consistency was

strengthened by returning repeatedly to the primary source to check that derived themes remained faithful to Qomar's (2022) original formulation. The criteria governing inclusion, exclusion, and triangulation are set out in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Selection criteria and trustworthiness strategies

Dimension	Criterion or Strategy	Application in This Study
Inclusion	Thematic relevance and peer-reviewed status	Sources on Islamic education management, integration, leadership, reconstruction
Exclusion	Off-topic, pre-2015, duplicate, or retracted	Removed at screening and eligibility stages
Triangulation	Primary source read against diverse corpus	Qomar (2022) tested against Scopus-indexed scholarship
Audit trail	Documented search and selection path	Reproducible flow shown in Figure 1

Source: Authors' elaboration based on the cited literature.

Finally, the limitations of the approach are acknowledged in the interest of methodological candor. As a conceptual study, the analysis does not claim empirical confirmation of Mindhunnur in practice; its conclusions are interpretive rather than evidential, and they invite subsequent field testing. The reliance on a single database, although justified by Scopus's indexing rigor, may have excluded relevant scholarship indexed elsewhere, and the restriction of Mindhunnur to a single primary source reflects the genuine novelty of the concept rather than a selective reading. These limitations do not undermine the analysis but rather delineate its proper scope, positioning the study as a theoretical foundation on which empirical inquiry can subsequently build.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

This section reports the findings of a systematic reading of the Mindhunnur corpus, anchored on Qomar's (2022) foundational articulation and placed in dialogue with the wider Scopus-indexed literature on Islamic education management. Rather than summarizing each source sequentially, the analysis isolates the philosophical commitments that recur across the corpus, establishes them once as the conceptual foundation, and then traces how that single foundation is expressed differently across the four institutional types that structure Indonesian Islamic education. The foundation is presented first; its institutional variation follows as the organizing spine of the analysis, and the reconstruction of educational components closes the section as the logical consequence of that variation.

The Philosophical and Epistemological Foundation of Mindhunnur

The concept of Mindhunnur was introduced by Mujamil Qomar as a synthesis between modern management theory and the moral and spiritual principles long held within traditional Islamic education, treating institutional management not merely as administration but as an instrument oriented toward intellectual, emotional, and spiritual formation (Qomar, 2022). A cross-textual reading reveals that this synthesis does not rest on a single proposition but on three interlocking commitments that recur consistently across the corpus. The first is ontological: education is framed as a movement toward proximity to God, which positions the learner as a moral subject rather than an administrative input. The second is epistemological: Mindhunnur refuses the dichotomy between revealed and rational knowledge, treating the two as complementary registers of a single truth rather than as competing domains. The third is axiological: managerial decisions are evaluated against spiritual ends, so that efficiency is never permitted to become an end in itself.

This refusal of dichotomy situates Mindhunnur within a longer intellectual lineage. The debate over the Islamization of knowledge, as Chande (2023) and Laabdi (2024) show, has gradually shifted from the assertive program associated with al-Faruqi toward a more measured

language of integration, and Mindhunnur can be read as an Indonesian expression of that shift. Muslih (2024) frames al-Faruqi's project as a paradigmatic reorientation rather than a supplement to existing knowledge, while Kosim (2020) traces the relevance of al-Attas's thought to Islamic education in Indonesia specifically. Read against this literature, the three commitments explain why Mindhunnur cannot be reduced to a localized adaptation of Western management theory: it begins from a different account of what knowledge and leadership are for. These commitments and their managerial implications are synthesized in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Synthesis of the Three Foundational Commitments of Mindhunnur

Dimension	Core Proposition	Basis in the Corpus	Implication for Management
Ontological	Education is a movement toward proximity to God; the learner is a moral subject.	Qomar (2022); Kosim (2020)	Management serves formation, not throughput
Epistemological	Revealed and rational knowledge are complementary, not competing	Chande (2023); Muslih (2024); Laabdi (2024)	Curriculum and policy integrate rather than separate domains
Axiological	Decisions are measured against spiritual ends	Qomar (2022); Arroisi (2023)	Efficiency is subordinated to moral purpose

Source: Authors' elaboration based on the cited literature.

The significance of this foundation is sharpened, not weakened, by the criticism the integration project has attracted. Paya (2023) questions whether the Islamization of knowledge is a viable epistemological program or an aspiration that struggles to specify its own method, and the policy evidence from Indonesian higher education suggests the concern is not merely abstract. Irham (2025), surveying patterns of science-religion integration across Indonesian Islamic universities, finds that integration is realized unevenly and often remains at the level of declared policy rather than embedded practice, a finding echoed in Toisuta's (2024) review of knowledge integration in state Islamic institutes. The philosophical coherence of Mindhunnur therefore does not guarantee its institutional realization. The foundation is best demonstrated not in the abstract but in the way a single set of commitments produces visibly different managerial forms, with uneven success, across the institutions that carry it.

Institutional Expression Across Four Typologies

The same foundation acquires a different shape in each institutional setting, because each type carries a distinct authority structure, regulatory environment, and relationship to modern knowledge. Before examining each in turn, the overall pattern of variation is set out in **Table 4**.

Table 4. Institutional Expression of Mindhunnur Across Four Typologies

Typology	Primary Carrier of the Foundation	Dominant Mechanism	Representative Literature
<i>Pesantren</i>	Moral authority of the <i>kiai</i>	Integration of spiritual and managerial roles in one figure	Ma'arif (2025); Futaqi (2022); Karim (2025)
<i>Madrasah</i>	Formal value-based governance	Administrative systems aligned to Islamic principles	Haddade (2024); Thoah (2022)
Islamic Schools	Disciplined integration of technology	Modern curriculum framed by religious values	Effendi (2020); Shaleh (2024)
PTKI	Transformative curricular design	Critical and reflective integration of science and faith	Irham (2025); Fatmawati (2024)

Source: Authors' elaboration based on the cited literature.

Typology of Islamic Boarding Schools

In the *pesantren*, the foundation of Mindhunnur is carried above all by the figure of the *kiai*, whose authority is simultaneously administrative and moral. The *kiai* does not merely regulate

operations but functions as a spiritual guide for the entire community, a duality that Western managerial categories struggle to name but that is entirely coherent once the underlying epistemology is accepted (Qomar, 2022). This is not an incidental feature of *pesantren* culture; it is the predictable expression of an epistemology that refuses to separate the spiritual from the operational. Empirical work on *pesantren* leadership supports this reading. Futaqi (2022) characterizes the leadership of the *kiai* as a multicultural integration of spiritual, intellectual, and social dimensions, precisely the convergence that Mindhunnur names at the level of theory, while Ma'arif (2025) shows that *kiai* leadership strategies actively shape institutional values rather than merely administering them. Karim (2025) extends this further, demonstrating that spiritual leadership behaviors in the *pesantren* workplace produce measurable effects on conduct, and that the *kiai* can shape value orientations as durable as anti-corruption commitment without recourse to formal rules (Karim, 2023). At institutions such as the Al-Ikhlas Islamic Boarding School in Bandung, this surfaces as a leadership style in which every decision is filtered through moral considerations, so that the formation of student character becomes inseparable from the management of the institution itself.

The transformational leadership tradition offers a useful comparative frame here, since it describes leaders who drive change by inspiring and empowering their followers rather than by directing them. Studies of transformational leadership in Indonesian Islamic education show that principals who anchor their authority in local moral wisdom strengthen student character more effectively than those who rely on positional power alone (Effendi, 2020), and that *pesantren*-based transformational leadership can be deliberately cultivated as an institutional strategy (Subandi, 2021). The leadership of the *kiai*, however, exceeds the transformational model in one respect: where transformational leadership locates the source of change in the leader's vision, Mindhunnur locates it in a shared orientation toward transcendent ends, so that the *kiai* inspires not as a charismatic individual but as the embodiment of a value system the whole community already recognizes.

Madrasah Typology

In the madrasah, the same foundation is carried not by a singular charismatic figure but by formal governance. Here Mindhunnur expresses itself through administrative systems, the selection of competent teaching staff, and a curriculum that binds general knowledge to religious teaching, so that value orientation is built into the structure rather than residing in a person. The Madrasah Aliyah exemplifies this value-based managerial system, in which attention to academic quality and attention to the moral formation of teachers and students are treated as a single task rather than as competing priorities. Evidence from Indonesian madrasah reform supports the workability of this model. Haddade (2024) shows that structured madrasah management strategies, pursued through coordinated reform programs, can raise institutional quality without displacing religious identity, while Thoha (2022) documents how *pesantren* and madrasah communities in Madura have modernized governance through what he terms an accelerative paradigm, adapting administrative form while preserving substance. Mahsusi (2024) adds that digital transformation in madrasah management, when framed by Islamic culture rather than imposed against it, becomes a vehicle for excellence rather than a threat to identity. The principal of school-based management reinforces this typology, since it grants institutions the autonomy to make curricular and policy decisions independently, an autonomy that aligns closely with the Mindhunnur emphasis on locally grounded value-based judgment.

Typology of Islamic Schools

In the Islamic school, the foundation must keep pace with rapid social and technological change, and Mindhunnur expresses itself through the disciplined integration of a modern curriculum with religious teaching. The aim is not to instill academic competence alongside religious value as two separate deposits, but to frame contemporary knowledge within a religious horizon of meaning. The Integrated Islamic Junior High School illustrates this: it deploys technology fully in the learning process while keeping the formation of character at the center,

demonstrating that an Islamic institution can remain relevant to its era without surrendering its founding principles. The development of a holistic and integrative curriculum in integrated Islamic schools, as Shaleh (2024) documents, is precisely the mechanism through which this framing is achieved, ensuring that religious values are not confined to religious subjects but distributed across the whole program of study. Here the integration of technology functions as a test of the epistemology: if revealed and rational knowledge are genuinely complementary, then digital tools should extend rather than dilute the moral purpose of education, and the evidence from integrated schools suggests they can.

Typology of PTKI

At the level of Islamic higher education, the foundation is carried by transformative curricular design capable of joining intellectual rigor to spiritual depth. The Islamic university must prepare graduates who are proficient in their disciplines and grounded in a moral foundation robust enough to meet contemporary challenges. The State Islamic University exemplifies this through the integration of religious teaching across its study programs and the application of value-based management to institutional policy. Yet this is the typology where the gap between aspiration and realization is most visible. Irham (2025) finds that science-religion integration across Indonesian Islamic universities remains uneven and frequently rhetorical, and Fatmawati (2024) shows that the move toward good university governance in Islamic religious universities is constrained by the demands of external mandates and institutional change management. Mindhunnur at the PTKI level is therefore best understood as a transformative project in the sense described by reflective and critical learning theory, one that reorients students' relationship to knowledge and life, while remaining, on the current evidence, more fully achieved in design than in practice.

Reconstruction of Islamic Education Management

If the foundation of Mindhunnur is realized unevenly across institutions, the implication is that its components must be deliberately reconstructed rather than left to emerge on their own. Componential reconstruction means making fundamental changes to the structure, stages, and components of education so that it becomes more adaptive to contemporary needs without abandoning the substance of Islamic values. This is not merely technical restructuring but a philosophical and practical transformation oriented toward the formation of a whole human being of spiritual, moral, and intellectual integrity. The elements requiring reconstruction, and the direction each must take, are summarized in **Table 5**.

Table 5. Reconstruction of Islamic Education Components Under Mindhunnur

Component	Conventional Form	Reconstructed Direction	Supporting Literature
Educational stages	Discrete levels with value gaps	Continuous moral and scientific progression	Sumanti (2024)
Curriculum	Religious and general subjects separated	Integrated subjects with explicit character indicators	Shaleh (2024); Miftahuddin (2024)
Learning methods	Lecture-centered transmission	Participatory, project-based, collaborative	Mariyono (2024)
Evaluation	Cognitive achievement only	Cognitive, affective, and behavioral growth	Obaid (2024)

Source: Authors' elaboration based on the cited literature.

Reshuffle of Islamic Education Stages

The overhaul of educational stages begins with a systematic rearrangement of levels. At the basic level, the process must instill core Islamic values such as faith, worship, and noble character alongside foundational literacy and numeracy, introducing students not only to religious knowledge but to the moral dispositions that underpin positive conduct throughout life. Secondary education must then combine general subjects with Islamic character education so that cognitive skill is never separated from a settled value orientation. Crucially, the reconstruction must create

continuity between levels, from primary to secondary and onward to the Islamic university, so that students do not encounter a value gap at each transition but experience a gradual and coherent formation of skill, character, and knowledge. The evolution of Indonesian Islamic educational institutions traced by Sumanti (2024) underscores why this continuity matters: where institutional levels develop in isolation, the formative project fragments.

Components of the Mindhunnur-Based Curriculum

The curriculum is the core of the system, and a Mindhunnur-based curriculum must integrate religious and general knowledge rather than juxtapose them. It should contain not only *fiqh*, tafsir, and creed but also science, mathematics, and digital literacy, all delivered with Islamic values as the frame of meaning-making. Beyond content, the curriculum must build in explicit character development, so that each subject carries learning indicators measuring moral and spiritual dimensions alongside cognitive ones. The Islamic character education model elaborated by Miftahuddin (2024) demonstrates how such indicators can be made concrete rather than aspirational, and the integration of Islamic values with locally grounded knowledge, as Arizona (2025) shows in the higher-education context, strengthens character formation precisely by refusing to treat values as an add-on to disciplinary content.

Learning Methods and Educational Interactions

Learning methods require comparable reconstruction. Islamic education can no longer rely on the lecture alone but must adopt interactive and participatory methods, including discussion, project-based learning, simulation, and problem-based learning, that draw students into active engagement and enable them to reflect Islamic values in daily conduct. Methods that foster social collaboration deserve particular emphasis, since values such as tolerance, cooperation, and social care are acquired less in the classroom than through real experience in cross-disciplinary and community activity. The case for this shift is strengthened by work on multicultural and value-oriented Islamic pedagogy, which finds that collaborative, experientially grounded learning internalizes character more durably than transmission alone (Mariyono, 2024).

Evaluation Within the Mindhunnur Framework

Evaluation must be redesigned to measure not only academic achievement but the development of moral and spiritual character. This entails a range of techniques, including behavioral observation, attitude assessment, self-assessment, and portfolios of student work that reflect Islamic values. Value-oriented evaluation of this kind helps educators gauge how far students have internalized Islamic moral commitments, and it functions less as a final score than as continuous feedback supporting self-reflection and growth. Obaid's (2024) account of how a hidden curriculum forms student character is instructive here, since it shows that much of what shapes moral conduct operates below the level of explicit instruction, which is exactly why evaluation must attend to disposition and behavior and not to cognition alone.

The Effectiveness of the Reconstructed Structure

Taken together, these reconstructed components are expected to raise the overall effectiveness of Islamic education. A structure attentive to value continuity, curricular relevance, interactive method, and comprehensive evaluation produces a more meaningful learning process, and the broader evidence on character-based curricula indicates that this holistic approach deepens the internalization of moral values and the development of social competence. Such a structure also equips Islamic institutions to meet the pressures of globalization and technological change, since students formed in this way are better able to think critically, act creatively, and conduct themselves ethically in complex settings. The linkage between integrated curricular components and holistic evaluation offers a measure of assurance that Islamic education functions not merely as the transmission of religious knowledge but as a continuous process of character transformation, the very outcome the Mindhunnur paradigm was conceived to secure.

The three layers of analysis developed above can be drawn together into a single integrative model, presented in **Figure 2**, which traces how the philosophical foundation of *Mindhunnur* is carried through institutional expression into componential reconstruction.

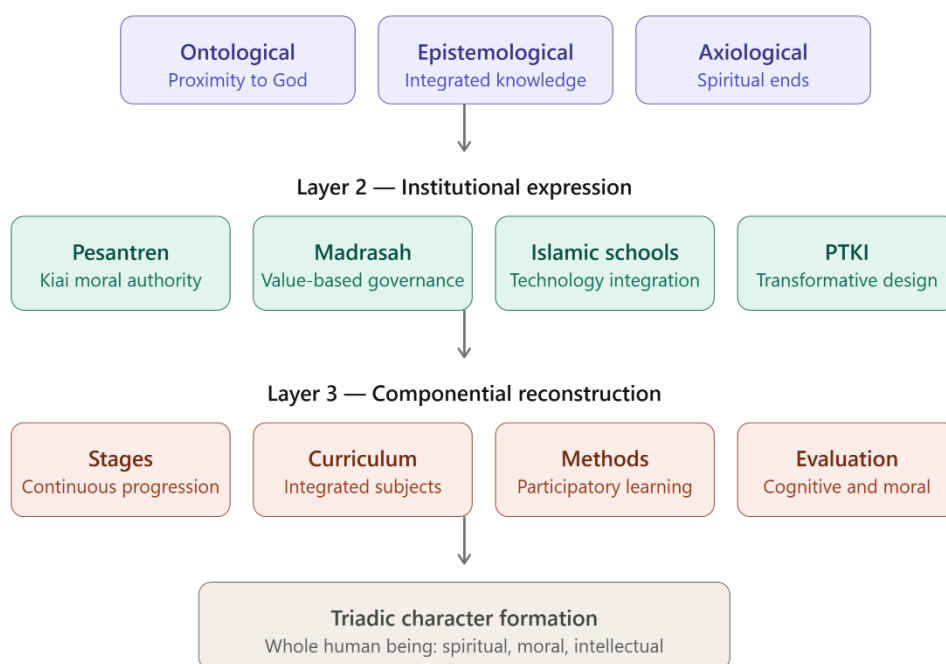


Figure 2. The integrative model of *Mindhunnur* in Islamic education management
Source: Authors' elaboration.

Figure 2 makes visible what the preceding analysis established in stages: that *Mindhunnur* operates not as a set of parallel prescriptions but as a single logic propagating downward through three levels of educational reality. The directional arrows are deliberate. They assert that institutional form is not an arbitrary design choice but a derivation from epistemological commitment, and that the reconstruction of components is in turn a derivation from institutional form rather than an independent reform agenda. This is the model's central claim and its principal contribution: it specifies a chain of entailment that most accounts of Islamic education management leave implicit. Where the existing literature tends to treat leadership, governance, curriculum, and evaluation as discrete domains to be improved one by one, the model holds that they are expressions of a common foundation, and that interventions which ignore this dependency will remain superficial.

The empirical evidence assembled earlier lends this reading weight, since the studies that report the most durable outcomes are precisely those in which structural design and moral purpose are treated as one, while the cases of uneven or rhetorical integration are those in which a lower layer has been addressed without reference to the layer above it. The model therefore functions less as a summary than as a diagnostic. It predicts that the convergence point, the formation of a whole human being of spiritual, moral, and intellectual integrity, becomes attainable only when all three layers are aligned, and it locates the failure of fragmented reform in the breaking of that vertical chain. In this sense *Figure 1* does not merely organize the findings; it advances the proposition that character formation in Islamic education is a structural achievement, contingent on the coherence of the system that produces it rather than on the strength of any single component within it.

Discussion

The central argument advanced in this discussion is that the significance of *Mindhunnur* lies not in any single component of its design but in the way it reconfigures the relationship between

managerial rationality and moral-spiritual purpose in Islamic education. The preceding analysis established three things: that *Mindhunnur* rests on a coherent philosophical foundation, that it expresses itself unevenly across four institutional typologies, and that it offers a componential reconstruction of the management process. Read together, these findings raise three larger issues that this discussion takes up in turn, namely the tension between philosophical coherence and institutional realization, the place of *Mindhunnur* within the global debate over the integration of knowledge, and the role of moral leadership as the mechanism through which the foundation is either carried into practice or quietly abandoned. Each issue positions the study within an existing scholarly conversation and clarifies where its contribution departs from what is already known.

The first issue concerns the gap between the conceptual coherence of *Mindhunnur* and the difficulty of realizing it in institutional practice. The analysis showed that while the philosophical foundation is internally consistent, its expression weakens as it moves from the *pesantren*, where moral authority is embodied in the *kiai*, toward more bureaucratized settings where managerial routines tend to displace spiritual purpose. This finding resonates with a recurring concern in the literature that Islamic educational reform often founders not at the level of ideas but at the level of implementation. Niyozov (2011) observed that the agenda of Islamizing education has repeatedly produced sophisticated conceptual frameworks whose translation into classroom and institutional practice remained partial and contested. Lukens-Bull (2001) similarly documented how Indonesian Islamic education lives in a permanent negotiation between modernity and tradition, in which institutional modernization can hollow out the very values it claims to serve. The present study extends these observations by locating the gap not in a deficit of resources or political will but in the structural position of moral authority within each institutional type. Where the carrier of the foundation is personal and embodied, coherence survives; where it is diffused into procedure, coherence erodes. This is a more precise diagnosis than the literature has so far offered, and it reframes the implementation problem as a question of who or what sustains moral purpose rather than whether modernization has gone too far.

The second issue situates *Mindhunnur* within the long and unresolved debate over the integration or Islamization of knowledge. The analysis presented *Mindhunnur* as a model that refuses the dichotomy between Western managerial science and Islamic moral tradition, absorbing the former while subordinating it to the latter. This positions the study directly within a contested field. Tibi (1995) criticized the project of Islamizing knowledge as a postmodern claim to de-Westernization that risked replacing analysis with assertion, while Dzilo (2012) examined the philosophical incoherences that have dogged the concept since its inception. Dangor (2005) defended a more constructive reading, arguing that the Islamization of disciplines could yield an indigenous educational system rather than a merely defensive posture. *Mindhunnur* speaks to this debate in a distinctive way. Rather than Islamizing knowledge by purifying it of foreign content, as the stronger versions of the thesis demand, it integrates managerial knowledge instrumentally and reserves the Islamic contribution for the level of ends and values. The present study therefore suggests a third path between Tibi's skepticism and the maximalist Islamization thesis, one in which the integration occurs at the axiological rather than the epistemological core. This is a contribution to the theory of knowledge integration, not merely an application of it, because it specifies where in the structure of a discipline the integration can defensibly take place.

The third issue concerns moral leadership as the mechanism that carries the philosophical foundation into institutional life. The analysis repeatedly returned to the figure of the *kiai* and to the moral authority vested in leadership as the decisive variable distinguishing institutions that realize *Mindhunnur* from those that merely adopt its vocabulary. This finding engages the literature on educational leadership in Islamic settings, which has often borrowed the language of transformational leadership from Western theory. Halstead (2004) argued that the Islamic concept of education is inseparable from a vision of the teacher as a moral exemplar, a role that exceeds the motivational repertoire of transformational leadership. Ahmed (2018) reconstructed al-Attas's notion of education as *Taibi*, the instilling of right disposition, which locates the leader's task in

the formation of character rather than the optimization of performance. The present study extends this line of thought by showing that, within *Mindbunnur*, leadership functions not as one managerial input among others but as the indispensable carrier of the entire moral architecture. Where Western transformational theory treats moral influence as a means to organizational ends, *Mindbunnur* inverts the relation and treats organizational effectiveness as a means to moral ends. This inversion is the study's principal theoretical departure from the leadership literature it draws upon.

Taken together, these three issues clarify the theoretical contribution of the study, which can be stated explicitly rather than left implicit. *Mindbunnur* contributes a model in which managerial rationality is integrated at the level of technique while moral and spiritual commitments govern at the level of purpose, carried into practice through embodied moral leadership and realized unevenly according to the structural position of that leadership within each institutional type. This configuration is not reducible to any of the theories with which it is in dialogue, and the table below summarizes, for each body of literature, what it already holds and how the present study extends or challenges it.

Table 6. Theoretical contribution of the study in relation to existing literature

Body of literature	What it already holds	How this study extends or challenges it
Islamization of knowledge (Tibi, 1995; Dzilo, 2012; Dangor, 2005)	Integration of Islamic and modern knowledge is either a defensive de-Westernization or a constructive indigenization	Integration in <i>Mindbunnur</i> occurs at the axiological core, not the epistemological one, offering a defensible middle path
Implementation of Islamic education reform (Niyozov, 2011; Lukens-Bull, 2001)	Reform frameworks falter in translation from concept to practice	The gap is structural, determined by whether moral authority is embodied or diffused into procedure.
Islamic educational leadership (Halstead, 2004; Ahmed, 2018)	Teachers and leaders function as moral exemplars beyond transformational influence	Leadership is the indispensable carrier of the whole moral architecture, inverting the means-ends relation of Western theory
Philosophy of Islamic education (Halstead, 2004; Hefner, 2009)	Islamic education rests on a distinctive concept of the human being and society.	<i>Mindbunnur operationalizes that philosophy into a concrete management process, not only an educational aim.</i>

Source: Authors' elaboration based on the cited literature.

This study contributes to education management by conceptualizing *Mindbunnur* as a values-based management framework in which modern managerial techniques function as operational instruments while Islamic values guide institutional goals, governance, and decision-making. The findings demonstrate that organizational effectiveness in Islamic educational institutions is determined less by procedural or administrative reforms than by the capacity of moral leadership to align governance structures, organizational culture, and educational objectives. By identifying the *keiai* as the central integrative actor within the *pesantren* system, this study extends contemporary educational management theory through a contextually grounded model of leadership and governance that explains how character formation and institutional coherence can be sustained in Islamic educational organizations.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that *Mindbunnur* represents a coherent framework for Islamic education management that integrates modern managerial practices with Islamic moral and spiritual principles. The analysis demonstrates that the framework rests on three interrelated foundations, namely ontological, epistemological, and axiological commitments, which shape educational governance, leadership, curriculum, learning processes, and evaluation. The findings further reveal that the expression of *Mindbunnur* varies across institutional typologies, including *pesantren*, *madrasah*, Islamic schools, and Islamic higher education institutions, according to their

respective structures of authority and governance. While the philosophical foundation of *Mindhunnur* remains consistent, its institutional realization is uneven, with the strongest alignment occurring where moral leadership remains closely connected to organizational practice. The study also shows that the reconstruction of educational components must be grounded in the philosophical foundation of the framework rather than pursued as isolated reforms. As a conceptual study based on library research, the findings are interpretive and do not provide empirical verification of the framework in practice. Future research is therefore needed to examine the implementation of *Mindhunnur* across different Islamic educational settings and to assess its influence on leadership, governance, institutional effectiveness, and character formation outcomes.

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