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The Contribution of Islamic Values to the Dynamics of Consumer Behavior: A Qualitative Study of the Selection of Islamic Elementary Education Institutions

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the influence of Islamic values on consumer behavior, particularly on parents' decisions in choosing an Islamic elementary school. Focusing on the Burhanul Abror Islamic Elementary School (MI) in Situbondo, this case study aims to understand how religious values influence parents' preferences and actions. A qualitative approach was used to collect data through observation, in-depth interviews with parents, teachers, and madrasah administrators, and documentation studies. Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña for condensation, presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results indicate that values such as faith, role models, trust, and moral orientation are primary considerations. Furthermore, the institution's religious image, the role of religious leaders, and emotional closeness to the pesantren community reinforce this decision. This study concludes that strengthening Islamic identity and communicating religious values are crucial in the marketing strategies of Islamic educational institutions to meet the spiritual and social needs of the community.

Keywords : Islamic Values, Consumer Behavior, Islamic Education.



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INTRODUCTION

The choice of Islamic elementary education institutions is not solely based on academic considerations but is also influenced by the institution's inherent Islamic values (Selvia, 2024). In Indonesia, Islamic elementary education institutions, such as Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Islamic elementary schools), have experienced significant growth, both in quantity and quality (Baitiyah et al., 2024). Data from the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (2023) recorded more than 28,000 Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Islamic elementary schools) spread throughout the country. This phenomenon demonstrates the complex social dynamics in the decision-making process of Muslim parents, where conformity to Islamic values is a primary consideration (Ma'arif et al., 2025). Therefore, it is important to academically examine how Islamic values shape and influence educational consumer behavior.

Unlike the consumption of commercial goods or services, the choice of Islamic elementary education institutions by Muslim parents represents an ideological and spiritual choice that reflects their religious identity (Nasir et al., 2024). While conventional consumer behavior studies typically focus on price, quality, and availability, in the context of Islamic

education, factors such as the institution's spiritual integrity, the morals of the teaching staff, the religious environment, and a curriculum based on the Quran and Hadith are key considerations (Mukhlis, 2023). This suggests that the theoretical approach used must be able to capture the nuances of values, such as those offered by the theory of value-based consumer behavior and the Theory of Reasoned Action, which states that behavioral intentions are influenced by subjective norms and personal beliefs (Maruly & Darmawan, 2025).

Although previous studies, such as those by Gupta (2021) and Faizuddin (2016), have identified the influence of Islamic values on consumer decisions in services and education, these studies still have significant gaps. These studies predominantly use quantitative approaches and tend to focus on general factors such as service quality and facilities, without delving into the subjective meanings and value narratives internalized by parents. Specifically, few studies have deeply explored how specific Islamic values, such as sincerity, trust (taqwal), trustworthiness (amanah), and blessings, become primary considerations in the decision-making process. This study aims to fill this conceptual and methodological gap by examining the dynamics of Islamic values in education consumer behavior through an in-depth qualitative approach.

The novelty of this research lies in its exploratory phenomenological approach, which places Islamic values at the center of the analysis. This research not only identifies the variables of choice but also theoretically constructs how values such as sincerity, trustworthiness, and blessings are interpreted and internalized in parents' decisions. This approach allows researchers to uncover subjective experiences that have been largely overlooked in previous studies. Thus, this research offers a new perspective on Muslim consumer behavior, one that is not merely rational but also spiritually and transcendently nuanced.

This research aims to deeply understand how Islamic values influence the behavior of Muslim parents in selecting Islamic primary education institutions for their children. This objective is important because it can provide a theoretical and practical foundation for developing strategies that are both value-authentic and academically competitive for managers of Islamic educational institutions.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. The qualitative approach was chosen because it aims to deeply and holistically understand the dynamics of consumer behavior influenced by Islamic values, a complex phenomenon rich in subjective meaning (Akbar, 2024). The case study method was chosen to intensively explore this phenomenon in a specific location, namely the Burhanul Abror Elementary Madrasah (MI). This location was chosen based on the consideration that the madrasah represents the pattern of educational institution selection by the Muslim community that prioritizes religious values, making this locus highly relevant for examining these dynamics in depth.

Data collection was conducted through three main techniques: Field observations; observations were conducted to directly observe interactions, culture, and the religious environment at the madrasah, providing a rich contextual understanding of how Islamic values are implemented in daily practice. In-depth interviews; in-depth interviews were conducted with parents, teachers, and madrasah administrators. This technique was chosen to explore the perspectives, experiences, and motivations underlying their decisions. Interviews allowed researchers to capture personal narratives and subjective understandings of Islamic values that influence educational choices. Finally, a documentation study was conducted to collect data from various official documents, such as the curriculum, the madrasah's vision and mission, and activity reports. This technique complemented data from observations and interviews by

providing supporting evidence and structured information about the values espoused by the institution.

Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). This model was chosen because it allows for a systematic and continuous analysis process, in line with the nature of qualitative research (Kholik et al., 2025). The analysis stages included: Data condensation; raw data from interviews, observations, and documents were simplified and focused on key themes relevant to the research objectives. Data presentation; the condensed data were presented in narrative and thematic form to identify patterns and relationships between concepts. Conclusion drawing and verification; conclusions were drawn through in-depth interpretation of emerging patterns. The verification process was repeated to ensure that the conclusions were accurate and reliable.

To increase the validity and credibility of the research, triangulation was conducted (Jailani, 2020). Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information from various informants (parents, teachers, and administrators) to gain a comprehensive perspective. Technical triangulation was conducted by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documents. This strategy made research findings more robust, contextually rich, and accountable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the research results, several important aspects related to the focus of this study can be identified. These aspects will be outlined to provide a comprehensive overview of the dynamics that occur in the context of selecting Islamic primary education institutions, as follows:

The Influence of the Social Environment and Recommendations from Religious Figures

The influence of the social environment and recommendations from religious figures refers to the impact of interactions with the community and religious figures on the decision-making process, particularly in choosing an educational institution (Rohman & Rachmah, 2025). Parents often obtain information and advice about educational institutions from family, friends, or trusted religious figures. Recommendations from religious figures, such as ustaz (Islamic teachers) or community leaders, are considered important because they are perceived to have a deep understanding of the Islamic values implemented in educational institutions (Sihite, 2023). According to an interview with the principal of MI Burhanul Abror, the influence of the social environment, such as family and friends, is significant in parents' choice of educational institution.

Many parents choose this school based on recommendations from close individuals who have had positive experiences. Furthermore, recommendations from religious figures also play a significant role. Parents tend to trust educational institutions recommended by ustaz (Islamic teachers) or religious leaders more because they feel more confident in the integrity and quality of the education based on Islamic values implemented at the school (Tina et al., 2023). These findings indicate that parents' decisions in selecting Islamic primary education institutions are heavily influenced by social proximity and trust in religious figures in their communities (Apriliani et al., 2025). Recommendations from religious figures with moral legitimacy serve as a primary source of validation in the educational institution selection process.

This aligns with the findings of Rahmawati & Prasetyo (2021), who revealed that religious considerations and social references are dominant factors in selecting Islamic schools. Furthermore, a study by Nizar & Fatimah (2020) confirmed that local religious figures play a role in shaping opinion, influencing public perceptions of the quality and integrity of Islamic educational institutions. These decisions are not solely rational but also emotional and spiritual,

as they concern long-term expectations for children's character development. Thus, social relations and religious authority are crucial factors in the dynamics of educational consumer behavior (Wasik & Islam, 2023).

Table 01. External Factors Influencing the Selection of Islamic Elementary Education Institutions

External Factor	Form of Influence	Impact on Parents' Decision
Social Environment	Recommendations from family, friends, and neighbors with positive experiences	Shapes initial perceptions and strengthens confidence in choosing a particular educational institution
Religious Leaders	Advice and recommendations from ustadz, kyai, or religious study group leaders	Provides moral legitimacy and assurance of strong Islamic values
Collective Experience	Success stories from alumni or testimonials from experienced parents	Reinforces parents' belief that the school is a worthy choice

Based on these findings, it is clear that parents' decisions in selecting an Islamic primary education institution are a complex process involving social, cultural, and spiritual dimensions. External factors such as the influence of the social environment and religious leaders serve as important determinants that shape parents' mindsets and preferences. These decisions are based not only on rational considerations of the institution's academic quality but also on trust in the moral legitimacy of sources of information deemed credible. This reflects a collective orientation in society, where children's educational decisions are not individual but are also influenced by social and symbolic authority. Therefore, mapping the social actors that influence educational preferences is crucial for Islamic educational institution managers in formulating communication strategies, promoting their children's education, and strengthening their institutional image based on Islamic values recognized by the community.

The Relationship between Curriculum and Islamic Values

The relationship between the curriculum and Islamic values refers to a functional relationship in which the curriculum is designed, developed, and implemented based on Islamic principles to shape the personality, morals, and intelligence of students as a whole. The curriculum is not only focused on mastering cognitive aspects, but also directed to instill the values of faith, piety, and noble morals in the entire educational process. Islamic values serve as a normative foundation that guides the formulation of objectives, selection of materials, application of methods, and implementation of learning evaluations to align with sharia provisions. In an interview conducted by the researcher with the Deputy Principal of Curriculum at MI Burhanul Abror, who stated that the curriculum at MI Burhanul Abror is designed based on Islamic values, with a focus on the formation of faith, piety, honesty, and noble morals. He said that these values are implemented through various activities, such as the habit of congregational prayer, reading the Qur'an before lessons, the habit of daily etiquette, and weekly moral studies. According to him, this approach plays a significant role in shaping students' character and is a key factor in consumer behavior, with parents preferring institutions that prioritize Islamic character education over solely pursuing academic achievement.

These findings underscore that a curriculum that integrates Islamic values comprehensively contributes to the creation of a holistic educational environment (Nafsaka et al., 2023). The emphasis on strengthening spirituality and morality through structured activities reflects the institution's commitment to developing a generation of character. This aligns with research by Suyadi & Ulfatin (2017), which states that a curriculum based on religious values

can shape students' behavior with integrity and religiousness. Furthermore, a study by Fitriyani (2020) adds that parents tend to choose schools that implement a religious approach to learning because it is considered more effective in shaping children's personalities from an early age. Thus, the synergy between Islamic values in the curriculum structure and parents' expectations for their children's education provides a strong foundation for building public trust in Islamic elementary educational institutions such as MI Burhanul Abror.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the integration of Islamic values into curriculum design plays a strategic role in shaping the institutional image while simultaneously meeting parental expectations regarding children's education (Hafid & Purnomo, 2024). A holistically designed curriculum that places spiritual, moral, and social aspects as an integral part of the learning process not only reflects the institution's orientation toward character development but also addresses the community's need for educational institutions capable of producing a generation with morals. The success of this approach demonstrates the alignment between institutional values and the preferences of education consumers, in this context, parents. Thus, an Islamic-based curriculum is not merely a normative framework but also a strategic instrument in building institutional competitiveness, strengthening public trust, and creating an educational ecosystem aligned with the community's social and cultural values.

Consistency in the Implementation of Islamic Law

Consistency in the application of Islamic law refers to the ongoing effort to systematically and structuredly implement the principles of Islamic teachings contained in the Quran and Hadith in various dimensions of life, both individually, socially, and institutionally. This consistency includes the alignment between concepts and practices, where the teachings of sharia are applied consistently without deviation, whether in the realm of worship, muamalah, morals, or social regulations. In a statement given by the principal of MI Burhanul Abror during an interview, he stated that this institution implements a curriculum that incorporates Islamic values, such as honesty, discipline, and compassion, in every learning process. For example, the value of honesty is implemented through strict exam supervision and the habit of speaking honestly. Furthermore, the implementation of rewards is also carried out to encourage good deeds, such as giving awards to students who demonstrate honesty or good behavior in daily life, as a form of appreciation for their noble character. Activities such as regular religious study and the habit of daily etiquette are an integral part of education. He stated that many parents choose this school because of its approach that aligns academic aspects with Islamic character building. Parents tend to choose this institution because they recognize the importance of education grounded in religious values in their children's development.

The consistent application of Islamic values in students' daily activities reflects a transformative educational approach, where character is formed through direct experience, not simply through the teaching of moral concepts. This approach aligns with the findings of Hasanah & Raharjo (2019), who confirmed that internalizing values through habituation is effective in shaping students' Islamic personalities. Furthermore, research by Syamsuddin (2021) shows that parents tend to choose educational institutions that prioritize honesty and discipline as indicators of learning success, rather than solely academic achievement. An environment that supports comprehensive character formation strengthens public trust in the institution and demonstrates that the affective and spiritual dimensions have a unique appeal in the dynamics of educational consumer behavior. Thus, MI Burhanul Abror has established a solid institutional positioning based on values, not just intellectual achievement.

Based on the findings obtained, it can be concluded that the success of educational institutions in building public trust is largely determined by their ability to integrate fundamental Islamic values into their educational practices as a whole (Haq et al., 2025). MI Burhanul Abror demonstrates an educational model that is not only oriented towards academic

achievement but also prioritizes personality development through a systematic habituation approach. This contributes significantly to parents' perceptions as the primary decision-makers in choosing their children's educational institutions. When moral and religious values become an integral part of the learning process, the institution functions not only as a teaching institution but also as an agent for shaping social character. This approach positions Islamic education in a strategic position as a solution to the needs of a society seeking meaningful education, while also reflecting the synergy between educational, affective, and spiritual functions in an integrated manner.

Exploring Dimensions of Islamic Education

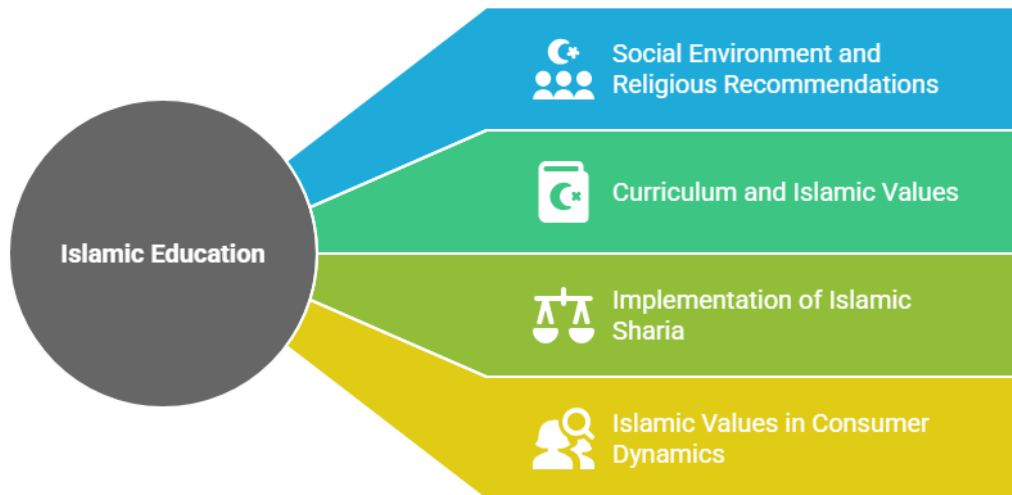


Figure 01. Islamic Values in Consumer Dynamics

The figure above demonstrates that the contribution of Islamic values to the dynamics of consumer behavior at Islamic primary education institutions is influenced by several key interacting factors. The first factor is the influence of the social environment and recommendations from religious leaders. In the context of Islamic society, religious leaders possess strong moral authority and serve as a reference in decision-making, including in determining the choice of educational institution. Recommendations or support from religious leaders for an educational institution can increase the legitimacy and level of public trust in that institution (Destiana et al., 2025). The second factor is the link between the curriculum implemented by the educational institution and Islamic values. Consumers, in this case parents of students, tend to choose institutions that integrate Islamic values holistically into their curriculum. A curriculum that not only teaches general knowledge but also shapes students' Islamic character is considered more capable of meeting societal expectations for education oriented toward Islamic values (Umam & Hamami, 2023). The third factor is the consistency in the application of Islamic law in the educational environment. Consumers demonstrate a tendency to choose institutions that explicitly implement Islamic sharia principles in various aspects of school life, such as dress code, social behavior, religious observance, and overall school culture (Yanti et al., 2024).

Overall, these three factors indicate that Islamic values significantly influence consumer behavior in selecting Islamic primary education institutions. These values serve not only as symbolic identity but also as a primary foundation for consumer decision-making, strengthening their loyalty to institutions that consistently and comprehensively represent Islamic principles.

CONCLUSION

This study yields important findings: Islamic values are a dominant factor in the dynamics of consumer behavior, particularly among parents, in selecting Islamic elementary education institutions. Parents' decisions are not solely based on academic aspects, but are further influenced by considerations of religious values, character development, and a religious social environment. Recommendations from religious leaders have also been shown to strengthen parents' trust in an educational institution. The lesson learned from this study is the importance of Islamic elementary education institutions consistently maintaining the integrity of Islamic values to meet the evolving expectations of society.

This research contributes to scholarship by enriching perspectives on consumer behavior in the context of Islamic values-based education. This study updates the approach to educational institution selection variables, emphasizing that religious and social values are more influential than conventional factors such as physical facilities or academic achievement alone. Furthermore, this study demonstrates the important role of communities and religious leaders in shaping consumer perceptions, broadening understanding in consumer behavior studies, which have previously focused primarily on the commercial sector. Methodologically, the use of a qualitative approach allows for deeper understanding of consumer motivations and considerations.

While this study provides in-depth insights, it does have limitations that should be acknowledged. This study focused on only one case, MI Burhanul Abror, so the findings cannot be generalized to all Islamic elementary educational institutions in Indonesia. Furthermore, limitations in the qualitative method make the results subjective, depending on the informants interviewed. This study also did not take into account the parents' age in detail. Therefore, further research with a broader scope, involving various types of institutions, using a quantitative approach, and considering age segmentation is recommended to obtain a more comprehensive picture.

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