International Journal of Education, Vocational and Social Science
https://e-journal.citakonsulindo.or.id/index.php/IJEVSS
E-ISSN : 2963 4954
IJEVSS

Strategy For Success: Best Practices Of Islamic Education Institution HSG Khoiru Ummah

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Abstract

This study examines the best practices of non-formal Islamic education management at Homeschooling Group (HSG) Khoiru Ummah Samarinda. Employing a qualitative approach with a single case study design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observation, and document analysis involving the principal, three teachers, administrative staff, and two parents selected purposively. Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, with source and method triangulation applied to ensure credibility. Findings reveal five integrated dimensions of best practices: (1) a dual curriculum model combining the Kurikulum Merdeka framework with Islamic content including tahfizh, tahsinul Qur'an, hadith memorization, and Arabic language; (2) a structured Islamic school culture habituation system spanning daily to annual activities; (3) teacher competency development through routine supervision, weekly teacher working groups, and In-House Training; (4) strategic external partnerships with community health centers, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and the City Library; and (5) diversified self-sustaining financing managed with transparency and accountability. These findings affirm that the institutional success of HSG Khoiru Ummah is not incidental, but rather the outcome of deliberate governance that positions Islamic values as both the operational foundation and the enduring quality orientation of the institution.

Keywords: best practices, integrative curriculum, Islamic homeschooling, institutional governance, non-formal education

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INTRODUCTION

Growing dissatisfaction with the formal education system—often criticized for its overloaded curriculum, limited character development rooted in religious values, and rising parental concerns over negative influences in conventional school environments—has driven the expansion of alternative education models across Indonesia. One rapidly developing trend is Islamic-based homeschooling, which serves not merely as a substitute for formal schooling, but as a response to the fundamental need for holistic integration of general knowledge and Islamic theological values. Asbar (2022) notes that many Indonesian families choose homeschooling due to dissatisfaction with schools that burden students with overly dense curricula, alongside safety concerns such as minimizing the risk of bullying. This trend establishes institutions like Homeschooling Group (HSG) Khoiru Ummah in Samarinda as highly relevant subjects for in-depth analysis regarding best practices in non-formal Islamic education administration (Norman et al., 2024).

Legally, non-formal education institutions such as Community Learning Centers (PKBM) have received strong recognition through Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, which positions non-formal education as an educational pathway equal and complementary to formal education. Within this policy framework, HSG Khoiru Ummah implements equivalency education programs (Package A and Package B) while integrating an Islamic theological curriculum covering tahfizh, tahsinul Qur'an, hadith memorization, and Arabic language. The broader landscape of Islamic education policy in Indonesia has undergone a significant shift—from a domestication-oriented approach to one of accommodation—an evolution that has opened space for non-formal Islamic education institutions to develop and thrive (Kosim et al., 2023).

Existing research in this field covers various dimensions. Hasnahwati et al. (2023) studied Islamic Religious Education curriculum development in informal homeschooling institutions and identified curriculum flexibility as the primary advantage of Islamic-based non-formal institutions. Research on service quality management in Islamic homeschooling at PKBM Ahsani in Bandung, using the Malcolm Baldrige framework, further highlights that structured governance is a core determinant of educational service quality (Yulia et al., 2025). On a broader scale, Arifin & Sanjani (2024) confirm that curriculum management based on Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah principles forms a solid foundation for best practices in Islamic education. Meanwhile, studies on curriculum management transformation within the Kurikulum Merdeka implementation in Samarinda show that internalization of Islamic values in learning, shifting teacher roles, and assessment system transformation are three central themes shaping institutional success (Makmun et al., 2026).

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Nevertheless, significant research gaps remain. Existing studies typically focus on isolated dimensions—whether curriculum management, learning strategies, or character development—without comprehensively examining all institutional components as an integrated system. Furthermore, almost no research has specifically analyzed best practices in community-based homeschooling groups in East Kalimantan that combine the Kurikulum Merdeka and Islamic theological curricula simultaneously. The novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive documentation and analysis of HSG Khoiru Ummah Samarinda as a cohesive non-formal Islamic education ecosystem that unites national competency standards, strengthening of the Profil Pelajar Pancasila (Pancasila Student Profile), and the development of generations knowledgeable in Islamic jurisprudence (mutafaqqih fid-diin) within a unified institutional framework.

Based on this background, the research problem is formulated as: What strategies and best practices does HSG Khoiru Ummah Samarinda implement to administer holistic and sustainable non-formal Islamic education? The objectives of this study are to identify, describe, and analyze the institution's best practices across curriculum, learning, school culture, partnership, and funding dimensions. Theoretically, this research aims to expand the body of knowledge on non-formal Islamic education management in Indonesia. Practically, its findings serve as a reference for similar PKBM institutions in designing effective, adaptive, and Islamically rooted education models.

METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a single case study design, selected to enable deep exploration of real-world phenomena without manipulating existing conditions. This approach is deemed most suitable for investigating best practices in non-formal Islamic education at HSG Khoiru Ummah Samarinda in a holistic manner, covering curriculum, learning, school culture, partnership, and funding dimensions. Research subjects were selected through purposive sampling, consisting of the school principal (Desy Ariani, M.Pd.), three class teachers representing different levels (from 14 total educators), one administrative staff member, and two parents of students. The research object encompasses the entire operational practice of HSG Khoiru Ummah, which served 87 students in the Package A program during the 2025/2026 academic year. The primary data collection technique was semi-structured interviews supplemented by observation and documentation studies. The interview guide was structured into five main questions, as shown in the following table.

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Table 1. Interview Guide

No	Interview Questions
1	How do institutions design and integrate the national equivalency curriculum with Islamic faith-based curricula such as tahfizh, tahsinul Qur'an, and Arabic within a cohesive learning framework?
2	What strategies does the institution employ to build Islamic school culture through daily, weekly, monthly, and annual activities, ensuring internalization of character values among students?
3	How does the institution manage educator competence to enable the implementation of diverse learning methods aligned with both the Profil Pelajar Pancasila and Islamic values?
4	What partnership patterns are established between institutions and external parties such as Community Health Centers, the Ministry of Religion, and City Libraries to support the quality of educational services?
5	How does the institution manage funding sources derived from the participation of learning citizens, foundations, and independent businesses so that learning operations continue to run optimally and sustainably?

Data analysis followed Miles et al. (2014)'s interactive model, comprising four stages: data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data condensation involved sorting, focusing, and simplifying raw data from interviews and observations into themes aligned with the research focus. Data validity was ensured through source triangulation (cross-comparing accounts from different informants) and method triangulation (cross-verifying interview findings with field observations and official institutional documents such as the 2025/2026 Institutional Curriculum). All processes were conducted systematically to produce an in-depth analytical description of HSG Khoiru Ummah's best practices as a non-formal Islamic education institution (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

FINDINGS

Integration of National Equivalency Curriculum and Islamic Theological Curriculum

HSG Khoiru Ummah implements a dual curriculum model that runs in parallel without negating one another. On the formal side, the institution applies the Kurikulum Merdeka for Package A and Package B equivalency programs, covering subjects including Islamic Religious

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Education, Indonesian Language, Mathematics, Natural and Social Sciences, Arts and Culture, and Physical, Sports, and Health Education. On its distinct institutional side, it incorporates Islamic theological content: tahfizh Al-Qur'an, tahsinul Qur'an, hadith memorization, and Arabic language. As the principal and key informant (DA) emphasized: "We do not separate general knowledge and religious knowledge. Both operate as one. Students learn mathematics, but they also memorize Quranic verses and hadith within the same day." This finding demonstrates that the integrative approach is not merely an additive combination of two curricula, but a learning design that positions Islamic values as the core spirit of the entire educational process. A senior-level teacher (RI) added: "In every teaching module we develop, we always embed Islamic values. For example, when teaching the water cycle in Natural Sciences, we connect the material to Quranic verses regarding creation." This pattern reflects the institution's effort to build coherence between national learning outcomes and Islamic character formation, achieved simultaneously.

Strategies for Building Islamic School Culture

School culture at HSG Khoiru Ummah is constructed through a structured habituation system implemented progressively across daily, weekly, monthly, and annual activities. Daily practices include student greeting ceremonies, one day one surah (memorization of one Quranic verse per day), morning literacy activities, and the TSP Movement—an initiative encouraging students to avoid littering, dispose of waste properly, and collect scattered waste. Weekly activities include Asmaul Husna (Divine Names) recitation every Thursday and charity collection every Friday. Monthly activities are realized through the Majelis Khoiru Ummah gathering, Market Day events, and swimming activities, while annual programs include Ramadan Berbagi (Ramadan Sharing) and animal sacrifice practice. A junior-level teacher (SH) stated: "This habituation is not just routine. Over time, students internalize these values naturally. Some students who were initially shy to greet teachers are now the most active in saying hello." This statement reinforces that consistent, meaningful habituation can shift student behavior organically not through coercion, but through deep internalization of values formed through repeated, purposeful practice.

Management of Educator Competence

The institution employs 14 educators, most of whom hold academic qualifications relevant to their assigned fields. To maintain and improve learning quality, HSG Khoiru Ummah optimizes internal professional learning communities through three core mechanisms: routine supervision

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by the principal (at least once monthly), weekly Teacher Working Group meetings, and In-House Training (IHT) conducted at least twice annually. The tahsin-tahfizh coordinator (MI) explained: "Internal workshops are extremely valuable. We share teaching methods and provide constructive feedback to one another. The principal actively visits classes and offers direct, practical input." This finding illustrates a culture of professionalism emerging from within, where competence development is not merely an administrative obligation, but a collective need recognized and upheld by the institution's entire educational community.

External Partnership Models

HSG Khoiru Ummah actively builds collaborative networks with diverse external stakeholders. Partnerships with the Loa Janan Ilir Community Health Center focus on routine student health examinations. The Ministry of Religious Affairs of Palaran Subdistrict is involved in mentoring Quranic education programs and evaluating munaqasah (oral assessment) for Quran reading and writing skills. The Samarinda City Public Library supports the institution through mobile library services and library development guidance. A parent informant (RD) remarked: "I greatly appreciate the routine health checks from the Community Health Center. We can identify potential health issues in our children early. This level of care is something not every educational institution provides." This partnership model confirms that HSG Khoiru Ummah does not operate as an isolated entity, but as a community hub that actively leverages external resources to enrich educational services for its students.

Management of Independent and Sustainable Funding

Operational sustainability at HSG Khoiru Ummah is supported by a diversified funding structure, avoiding reliance on a single income source. Primary sources include student participation fees, funding from the managing foundation, charitable donations from parents, and independent institutional income generated through a school store and supplementary tutoring services. Budget allocation prioritizes learning operations, tutor honoraria, facility maintenance, and teaching module development. An administrative staff member (DI) stated: "We manage finances transparently. Every incoming rupiah is recorded and allocated according to program priorities. No funds are diverted from either teachers' entitlements or students' learning needs." This statement reflects accountable financial governance oriented toward sustainable service quality an established practice that serves as one of the key pillars for the long-term survival of community-based non-formal Islamic education institutions.

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DISCUSSION

Integration of National Equivalency Curriculum and Islamic Theological Curriculum

The findings confirm that HSG Khoiru Ummah has successfully designed a curriculum architecture that cohesively integrates national competency standards with distinct Islamic theological content. This model transcends a simple combination of two systems, instead creating a learning ecosystem where Islamic values are embedded as the core spirit of every subject. This aligns with Zaelani & Muzakki (2025), who argue that quality-oriented Islamic education management requires innovative curriculum development rooted in student needs, rather than mere administrative compliance with regulations.

Furthermore, Romzi & Idawati (2025) emphasize that digital transformation in Islamic education must preserve spiritual essence while leveraging contemporary methodological strengths a principle implicitly embedded in this integrative curriculum design. Implementing the Kurikulum Merdeka alongside strengthened tahfizh, tahsinul Qur'an, hadith memorization, and Arabic language reflects the institution's commitment to producing generations who are both knowledgeable in Islamic jurisprudence and academically competent. This coherence is not accidental, but the result of systematic planning that positions knowledge integration as a sustained institutional vision.

Strategies for Building Islamic School Culture

Islamic school culture development at HSG Khoiru Ummah operates through a structured habituation system, implemented progressively from daily to annual activities. This approach aligns with Syadzili (2022), who argues that Islamic education institutions must go beyond cognitive knowledge transmission to build a religious foundation through consistent, programmed habituation. Practices such as one day one surah, Asmaul Husna recitation, weekly charity, and annual sacrifice ceremonies are not merely ceremonial activities, but functional instruments for value internalization that work organically.

Sitompul et al. (2025) add that effective Islamic education organization management requires an inclusive work culture rooted in Islamic values, ensuring that all members of the school community not only understand but embody these Islamic identities in daily life. Consequently, the school culture built at HSG Khoiru Ummah functions as a sustainable character-building space far exceeding the role of ceremonial tradition alone.

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Management of Educator Competence

Educator professionalism at HSG Khoiru Ummah is managed through In-House Training, principal supervision, and weekly Teacher Working Group meetings. This model reflects the principle of sustainable internal capacity development. Sulthon & Sulanam (2024), in their research on Best Practices Series programs for Islamic Religious Education teachers in East Java, demonstrate that significant competence improvement occurs when teachers are engaged in regular forums for sharing innovative practices, rather than only participating in ad-hoc training.

Similarly, Khunaifi (2024) confirms that visionary school leadership rooted in internalized Islamic values creates a professional climate that drives structured improvements in academic performance. HSG Khoiru Ummah's success in building internal learning communities embodies what Annas et al. (2026) term capacity upskilling for educators: a strategic pillar of institutional success. Sustained collaboration among teachers transforms competence development from an administrative burden into a shared professional necessity.

External Partnerships and Sustainable Funding Management

Partnerships with the Community Health Center, Ministry of Religious Affairs, and Samarinda City Library demonstrate that the institution operates as an open community hub, rather than an isolated educational entity. Fitriana (2023), in benchmarking research on Islamic education institutions, identifies multi-stakeholder collaboration as a key instrument for strengthening institutional competitiveness, guided by the principle: "Preserve the valuable heritage of the past, while adopting the best innovations of the present." Adiba & Jabbar (2026) further confirm that active engagement with communities and parents is a core strategy for building adaptive, sustainable quality in Islamic education. Regarding funding, diversification through student contributions, parental charity, foundation support, and independent income represents a strategic model of financial independence.

Saputra et al. (2023), in research on best practices in pesantren entrepreneurship, prove that economic independence through institutional business development has a significant impact on operational sustainability and resilience amid environmental changes. Muddin, Rudi, & Suban (2025) add that collaboration between governments, communities, and zakat-waqf management institutions forms a critical foundation for sustainable strategic programs in Islamic institutions. Transparent, accountable financial governance at HSG Khoiru Ummah provides concrete evidence that non-formal Islamic education institutions can operate professionally, efficiently, and with long-term orientation without compromising the core values that define their identity.

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CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

HSG Khoiru Ummah Samarinda proves that non-formal Islamic education institutions can go beyond merely serving as an alternative to formal education, by establishing a cohesive and holistic educational ecosystem. The institution's success is built upon five mutually supportive pillars: the integration of the Independent Curriculum with Islamic theological content, structured habituation to instill Islamic school culture, the development of educator competence through internal learning communities, strategic external partnerships, and a diversified and accountable funding system. These five dimensions do not operate independently; instead, they form a unified management framework that positions Islamic values as both the foundation of its operations and the guiding principle for ensuring sustainable educational quality.

Based on the research findings, several strategic recommendations are proposed. First, similar institutions should adopt a planned, systematic model for value-based curriculum integration, rather than implementing it in an ad-hoc or improvised manner. Second, local governments need to strengthen regulations that accommodate the unique characteristics of non-formal Islamic education institutions within the national quality evaluation framework. Third, further research using a multi-site comparative approach in the East Kalimantan region is highly recommended, to test whether these best practices can be replicated and applied elsewhere. Fourth, partnerships with zakat and waqf institutions should be optimized as a sustainable alternative funding mechanism, ensuring that quality Islamic education remains accessible to all segments of society.

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