

Analysis of the Implementation of Pasundan Characteristics of Education in Improving School Image and Competitiveness

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ABSTRACT

This research is motivated by the issue of the ineffectiveness of school management in implementing Pasundan-style character education for Pasundan Junior High School students in Bandung City in order to improve the school's image and competitiveness. The results of the observation show that Pasundan-style character education has not been well absorbed by Pasundan Junior High School students in Bandung City, which is indicated by the public's perception of the school's image and competitiveness which is still low compared to other leading schools in Bandung City. The focus of the research is to examine the implementation of educational management, especially regarding Pasundan-style character education based on religion and culture at Pasundan Junior High School. The formulation of the problem is how the implementation of Pasundan-style character education management in Pasundan Junior High School in Bandung City, how the performance achieved in the implementation of Pasundan-style character education, what are the obstacles faced in the implementation of Pasundan-style character education, and what are the strategies to increase the effectiveness of Pasundan-style character education implementation in improving the school's image and competitiveness. The research uses a qualitative approach with a case study research method. The data analysis technique uses an interactive model analysis. Data collection techniques are carried out through literature studies and field studies by means of observation, and in-depth interviews with informants who are considered representative. The results of the study indicate that the management of Pasundan Characteristics Education in Pasundan Middle Schools in Bandung City has been implemented quite well, however, its implementation has not been optimal and still experiences various obstacles, obstacles in the implementation of Pasundan education can be classified into several large categories that interact with each other, namely obstacles originating from the dimensions of human resources, curricular and pedagogical obstacles, structural and managerial obstacles, cultural and social obstacles, obstacles originating from external pressures and environmental changes, as well as obstacles related to limited material and financial resources, the competitiveness performance of Pasundan Middle Schools in Bandung City shows a relatively good condition in all dimensions studied and finally the strategy to increase the effectiveness of the implementation of Pasundan Characteristics education management in improving the image and competitiveness of schools is prepared by maximizing and elaborating the parameters of educational management functions, namely planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling which are associated with the characteristics of Pasundan Middle Schools in Bandung City.

Keywords: Educational management; typical Pasundan education; school image; competitiveness

INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental right of every Indonesian citizen and one of the primary goals of the Indonesian state, as affirmed in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which emphasizes the importance of educating the life of the nation. This commitment is further reinforced in Article 31 of the Constitution, which states that every citizen has the right to education. Operationally, the national education system is regulated by Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which defines education as a conscious and planned effort to create learning conditions and learning processes that enable students to actively develop their potential in spiritual, personal, intellectual, moral, and practical dimensions.

In this context, schools occupy a strategic position as formal institutions that not only transfer knowledge but also shape students' character, morality, and skills so that they are able to function effectively in society (Carmeli & Dothan, 2024; Liu et al., 2025). Based on their management status, schools in Indonesia are broadly categorized into public and private schools. Private schools generally have greater flexibility to develop their own policies, institutional culture, and distinctive learning models in accordance with the needs of students and the expectations of the community. However, this flexibility also requires strong managerial capacity so that schools can survive and remain competitive amid social change and the rising public demand for quality education (Bodziany et al., 2021; D'Angelo et al., 2023; Dutton et al., 2019; Pereira & Farias, 2023).

The increasingly intense competition among schools requires educational institutions, especially private schools, to continuously revitalize their strategies in order to remain relevant to community needs and compete effectively based on their internal strengths (Feijoo-Quintas et al., 2024; López-Meneses et al., 2025). In such a situation, schools cannot rely solely on implementing the national curriculum; they must also build distinctive advantages, improve the quality of educational services, and strengthen their institutional image in the eyes of the public. School image is an important factor because it shapes public perceptions of the quality, values, and advantages of an educational institution. From a management perspective, image is an integral part of institutional marketing strategy (Azadegan et al., 2019; Dayangan & Aykol, 2024; Vo Thai & Thu, 2026). An educational institution's inability to respond to external opportunities and threats may ultimately reduce its competitiveness and hinder its organizational performance (Wang et al., 2024; Wijaya et al., 2023).

One private educational institution with a long historical role in Indonesian education is the Pasundan Primary and Secondary Education Foundation (Yayasan Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah Pasundan or YPDM Pasundan). As part of the Paguyuban Pasundan organization, YPDM Pasundan manages schools at various levels across West Java and Banten, with a vision of developing human resources who excel in science, Sundanese cultural values, and Islamic values. This distinctive orientation has been formulated in the concept of Pasundan Characteristic Education, which is expected to become both the identity and distinguishing feature of Pasundan schools. Conceptually, Pasundan Characteristic Education has strong potential to serve as a competitive advantage because it integrates religious, cultural, and academic dimensions within the educational process.

However, internal data from YPDM Pasundan indicate a declining trend in student enrollment over the last ten years. The total number of students across all levels decreased from 44,545 in the 2016/2017 academic year to 36,684 in the 2025/2026 academic year. At the junior secondary level (SMP/MTs), the decline is also substantial, from 17,948 students in 2016/2017 to 10,915 students in 2025/2026. This decline suggests the existence of problems related to school competitiveness and public trust. One possible cause is the suboptimal implementation of

Pasundan Characteristic Education, which has not yet been able to establish a strong and distinctive school image compared with other schools.

Based on this condition, it is necessary to conduct a more in-depth study of how Pasundan Characteristic Education is implemented and managed at the school level, particularly in Pasundan junior high schools in Bandung, and how this implementation contributes to improving school image and institutional competitiveness. This issue is particularly important because junior high school students are at a highly strategic stage for the strengthening of character education, religious values, and cultural internalization. Therefore, this study is expected to provide empirical insights into the relationship between the management of Pasundan Characteristic Education, the formation of school image, and the improvement of private school competitiveness in an increasingly dynamic educational environment.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research design using a descriptive-analytical approach. The qualitative approach is selected to obtain an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the concepts, principles, and implementation of Islamic financial management from theoretical and normative perspectives. The descriptive-analytical method is applied to systematically describe various characteristics and phenomena related to Islamic financial management as documented in relevant scholarly literature (C. Creswell et al., 2021; J. W. Creswell & Clark, 2017).

This research is classified as library research. All data sources are secondary in nature, collected from a wide range of academic literature, including textbooks on Islamic economics and finance, indexed national and international journal articles, previous empirical studies, relevant regulations in Islamic financial governance, and policy documents issued by relevant authorities. All sources are selected based on their relevance to the topic of Islamic financial management.

Data collection is conducted through documentation study techniques, involving the identification, inventory, and critical review of written materials related to the research topic. The collected data are then analyzed through several stages, including thematic classification, comparison of perspectives among scholars, and systematic critical interpretation of the findings.

The results of the analysis are presented in a narrative form that describes the fundamental concepts, core principles, and practical implementation of Islamic financial management in modern economic contexts. Accordingly, this study is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of Islamic financial management in supporting a fair, ethical, and sustainable financial system.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The results of the study show that the general description of the research object focuses on four Pasundan Junior High School units in Bandung City, namely Pasundan Junior High School One, Pasundan Junior High School Two, Pasundan Junior High School Three, and Pasundan Junior High School Twelve. These four schools are under the auspices of the Pasundan Elementary and Secondary Education Foundation which historically carries a major mission from its parent organization, namely the Pasundan Association, to integrate the national curriculum with strong local Pasundan content. These schools operate in urban areas with very high dynamics of socio-economic heterogeneity of the city community, thus facing the challenge of

tight competition with leading state schools as well as religious or international-based private schools. Empirical conditions show fluctuations in the number of students in recent years, which reflects the dynamics of the attractiveness of educational institutions amidst competitive competition, so that each school unit strives to formulate tactical steps in maintaining its existence.

Research findings on the implementation of the planning function indicate that these schools have strived to align their vision and mission with Islamic spiritual values derived from the Quran, mastery of science and technology through the independent curriculum, and the development of noble morals that refer to the character profile of Pancasila students with nuances of *nyunda*. In the planning stage, the strategic architecture of the Pasundan school was designed by affirming the institution's identity in writing and conducting a comprehensive mapping of the current state of its image and competitiveness in the eyes of the public. The curriculum structure was designed in an integrative and progressive manner, where local content no longer stands alone as a supplementary subject but is woven into the learning implementation plan for various relevant disciplines. Program planning was also compiled with a hierarchical timeline, ranging from daily, weekly, monthly, to annual programs, so that the direction of the institution's development can be systematically measured by the foundation's management and the principal.

In terms of organization, the school built a structured work ecosystem by forming a cross-disciplinary Sundanese development team tasked with driving innovation. This organizational step was followed by a massive teacher capacity development program, considering that teachers are the main pillars and behavioral models for students in absorbing local values. School management also organized the physical and symbolic environment in concrete ways, such as installing school signs with Sundanese script, displaying aesthetic ethnic ornaments, and using polite communication language as an effort to present a cultural atmosphere within the school environment. In addition, the organization of the partnership ecosystem outside the school was built through collaborations with various arts communities, traditional preservation institutions, universities, and Sundanese community leaders to enrich learning instruments and resources in the field.

Through the mobilization function, the implementation of the distinctive characteristics of Sundanese education is brought to life in the daily lives of all school members through various concrete activities. The foundation for internalizing values is carried out through daily habits such as greeting using polite Sundanese etiquette and conducting religious services together to strengthen the religious dimension. The Wednesday *Nyunda* program is optimized as a flagship program with a broad impact, where all students and teachers are required to wear traditional clothing, communicate fully in the regional language, and explore a variety of traditional culinary delights. The learning process is carried out actively, creatively, and contextually by positioning students as direct cultural actors through mastery of traditional arts such as *degung*, *rampak kendang*, *angklung*, and regional dances. Aspects of Islamic spirituality are also linked to local wisdom through religious literacy programs and guidance in reading the Quran before teaching and learning activities begin, while a digital branding strategy is consistently deployed to disseminate documentation of these cultural activities to the public through social media.

In the supervision and control phase, the school implements a continuous and constructive implementation monitoring system to ensure all programs are running according to the foundation's strategic corridor. The monitoring process is carried out not only to assess the administrative aspects of teachers but also to evaluate the extent to which the values of Pasundan are internalized in students' daily social behavior. Evaluation of the school's image is reviewed periodically from various perspectives, involving feedback from parents, the school committee, and the general public surrounding the institution. Data-based competitiveness measurements are carried out by monitoring new student enrollment trends and graduate absorption rates at the

favorite high school level, complemented by external benchmarking activities against competing schools to spur continuous organizational quality improvement.

Regarding the performance of school image, the research findings divide it into three main dimensions: cognitive image, affective image, and conative image. Cognitive image relates to the public's understanding and knowledge that views Pasundan schools as educational institutions that consistently maintain local cultural roots amidst the onslaught of urban modernization. The public recognizes the school's visual identity, its distinctive local curriculum, and the institution's historical closeness to the West Java community. The affective image demonstrates the emotional bond, trust, and positive appreciation of parents who feel secure entrusting their children to the school because of the guarantee of instilling noble morals and good manners based on the values of cageur, bageur, bener, singer, and pinter. Meanwhile, the conative image is reflected in the actual behavior of the community who recommend this school to their relatives and the decision of alumni to send their children back to Pasundan institutions as a form of strong institutional loyalty.

In the dimension of school competitiveness, the research results show competitive performance achievements in both academic and non-academic excellence. Academic excellence is characterized by students' ability to master general subject matter combined with local cultural insights and graduates who are well absorbed in quality public and private high schools. Non-academic excellence is the most prominent main differentiator, where students of Pasundan Middle School have succeeded in achieving various prestigious achievements, such as first place in the West Java provincial level kacapi suling competition, first place in the pencak silat competition category of the Army Chief of Staff Cup, victory in the regional futsal competition, and winning the flag-raising team trophy with the best costume at the West Java level. These achievements directly improve the school's bargaining position and prove that preserving traditional values can go hand in hand with achieving proud modern achievements.

Increased competitiveness is also driven by improvements in the quality of human resources and the school's ongoing development of differentiated innovations. Teachers at SMP Pasundan possess dual competencies: national pedagogical qualifications and a deep understanding of Sundanese values, which are applied in guidance and counseling and extracurricular activities. Differentiation-based learning innovations are realized through the use of digital Sundanese cultural content independently produced by students, the integration of modern teaching methods with local philosophy, and the annual Pasundan festival, which serves as a platform for talent expression and a magnet for prospective new students. This creates a unique identity that distinguishes SMP Pasundan from other secondary education institutions in Bandung, thus giving the school a high market value.

However, this study also identified a number of significant obstacles in the implementation of Pasundan-style education. In terms of human resources, challenges arise from varying teacher understandings of the profound Pasundan values, with some new teachers or teachers from outside the region requiring considerable adjustment time to fully absorb the organization's philosophy. Curricular and pedagogical obstacles relate to limited time allocated within the weekly lesson schedule, where teachers often struggle to balance the demands of a dense national curriculum with in-depth enrichment of local Pasundan material without overwhelming students.

Structural and managerial barriers were also identified in the form of suboptimal standardization of detailed written operational procedures in several school units, resulting in program implementation sometimes being situational and highly dependent on the individual commitment of the principal in charge. On the other hand, cultural and social barriers constitute the biggest external challenge, stemming from the strong penetration of global popular culture through social media, which is slowly eroding the younger generation's interest in their own traditional languages and arts. This external pressure is exacerbated by limited material and

financial resources in several school units to update cultural support facilities, such as adequate traditional musical instruments or dedicated cultural laboratory space, as well as the absence of standard evaluation instruments that can measure the long-term impact of the internalization of cultural values on the behavior of graduates after they complete their education at SMP Pasundan.

Overall, the strategic impact of implementing this distinctive Pasundan educational management has succeeded in forming an educational ecosystem that has a strong differentiator in the Bandung City education market. Through the alignment of mature planning functions, inclusive organization, participatory mobilization, and measured supervision, SMP Pasundan has proven capable of transforming internal and external challenges into high-value differentiation opportunities. The success of combining the spiritual dimension of Islam with the nobility of Sundanese culture has not only succeeded in boosting the cognitive, affective, and conative image of the institution in the eyes of the wider community, but also significantly strengthens the foundation of the school's competitiveness through distinctive, independent, and sustainable academic and non-academic achievements for the future of regional civilization.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the implementation of Pasundan Characteristic Education in the four Pasundan junior high schools in Bandung has become a strategic instrument for strengthening both school image and institutional competitiveness. The results show that the management of Pasundan-based education is not merely symbolic or complementary, but has increasingly been positioned as an institutional strategy embedded in planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling processes. This confirms that school competitiveness in the contemporary educational environment is influenced not only by academic performance, but also by the school's ability to construct a distinctive identity that is socially meaningful and culturally relevant.

From the perspective of the planning function, the study demonstrates that the schools have attempted to align institutional vision, mission, and program design with Islamic values, Sundanese cultural identity, and the demands of the national curriculum. This finding suggests that Pasundan schools are aware that educational differentiation must begin at the strategic level rather than only at the level of extracurricular activity. The incorporation of local cultural values into formal planning documents indicates that the schools are not treating Sundanese identity as an ornamental addition, but as a core foundation of institutional development. This is important because strategic clarity helps schools respond to increasing competition and changing public expectations, as educational institutions are required to continuously adapt and renew their strategies in order to remain relevant and competitive (Sholihin et al., 2026; Suyanto et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2024; Wijaya et al., 2023).

In terms of organizing, the formation of cross-disciplinary development teams, teacher capacity-building efforts, and the structuring of the school environment reveal that the implementation of Pasundan Characteristic Education requires institutional support rather than individual initiative alone. The findings imply that cultural education can only be sustained when schools establish organizational mechanisms that distribute responsibility and create a shared sense of purpose among school members. The use of Sundanese script, ethnic ornaments, and polite local language in school communication also shows that school culture is intentionally constructed through visible and everyday practices. This strengthens the argument that institutional identity is produced not only through curriculum content but also through the symbolic and social environment of the school.

The actuating or mobilization function appears to be the most visible and influential dimension in practice. The study found that Pasundan values are internalized through daily

routines, the Wednesday Nyunda program, religious literacy, and student participation in traditional arts. These findings indicate that local culture becomes meaningful for students when it is experienced directly through habitual, embodied, and participatory activities. In this regard, the implementation of Pasundan Characteristic Education moves beyond knowledge transmission toward value internalization. The integration of Islamic spirituality with Sundanese local wisdom also shows that the schools are not constructing culture and religion as separate domains, but as mutually reinforcing foundations of student character formation. This is particularly relevant in junior high school, where students are in a developmental stage that is highly responsive to identity formation, moral socialization, and behavioral modeling.

The findings on supervision and control further show that the success of Pasundan-based education depends on sustained evaluation and feedback. Monitoring is conducted not only in administrative terms but also in relation to student behavior, public perception, and enrollment trends. This suggests that the schools are increasingly aware that educational management must be evidence-based and responsive to stakeholder perceptions. The use of parental feedback, benchmarking, and student recruitment data reflects an understanding that competitiveness cannot be measured solely by internal assumptions, but must be assessed through external recognition and institutional outcomes. This supports the view that educational institutions that fail to respond to environmental opportunities and threats risk weakening their performance and competitiveness (Bakker & Bal, 2010; Ismail et al., 2023; Pyöriä, 2007; Vokshi & Xhemajli, 2022).

The study also confirms that the implementation of Pasundan Characteristic Education contributes significantly to the formation of school image across three dimensions: cognitive, affective, and conative. The cognitive image of Pasundan schools is strengthened through public recognition of their distinctive local curriculum, visual identity, and historical connection to the Sundanese community. The affective image is reflected in parental trust and emotional attachment to the schools as places that cultivate noble morals, discipline, and cultural rootedness. The conative image, meanwhile, is visible in actual community behavior, such as recommending the schools to others and alumni choosing to send their children to Pasundan schools. These findings support the view that institutional image is not merely a matter of public relations, but a strategic asset formed through consistent organizational behavior and perceived value (Karanika-Murray et al., 2023; Urmila et al., 2025; Zhou & Zhang, 2025).

Another important finding is that Pasundan schools' competitiveness is not based solely on conventional academic achievement, but on a combination of academic quality, cultural distinction, and non-academic excellence. The schools' achievements in arts, sports, and ceremonial competitions demonstrate that the preservation of local cultural identity does not hinder modern educational success; instead, it can become a source of differentiation and added value. This is a significant finding because private schools often face the challenge of distinguishing themselves from public schools and other private institutions. In this study, Pasundan Characteristic Education appears to function as a competitive advantage by offering something that other schools may not provide: a coherent integration of religion, culture, character, and achievement.

The role of teachers is especially central in this process. The findings show that teachers in SMP Pasundan are expected to possess not only pedagogical competence but also cultural understanding and value-based mentoring capacity. This suggests that educational competitiveness is closely tied to the quality and identity of human resources within the school. Where teachers are able to translate local philosophy into learning practices, counseling, and extracurricular guidance, the school's vision becomes more authentic and persuasive. At the same time, the study also reveals that variation in teacher understanding remains one of the major constraints, especially for new teachers or those without a strong Sundanese cultural background.

This indicates that the sustainability of Pasundan Characteristic Education depends heavily on continuous professional development and stronger standardization of cultural orientation for school personnel.

The study further identifies several structural and contextual obstacles that limit the optimization of Pasundan-based educational management. First, the limited time allocation within the formal curriculum creates tension between meeting national academic demands and deepening local cultural content. Second, the absence of uniform and detailed operational procedures across school units means that implementation may depend too heavily on the initiative of individual principals. Third, external cultural pressures, especially the influence of global popular culture through digital media, reduce student interest in traditional language and arts. These findings suggest that the challenge facing Pasundan schools is not merely managerial, but also civilizational: they are attempting to preserve and transmit local cultural values within a rapidly changing urban and digital environment. This requires not only school-based programs, but also broader ecosystem support from families, communities, cultural institutions, and the foundation itself.

Despite these constraints, the overall findings show that Pasundan schools have been relatively successful in transforming their distinctive educational identity into a strategic resource. The combination of Islamic spirituality, Sundanese values, and institutional innovation has enabled the schools to build a recognizable image and sustain competitiveness in a crowded educational market. In this sense, the study implies that local wisdom-based education can serve as an effective model of school differentiation, particularly for private schools seeking relevance, legitimacy, and public trust. The case of SMP Pasundan demonstrates that when cultural identity is managed systematically rather than nostalgically, it can become a dynamic source of institutional strength.

This study shows that the management of Pasundan Characteristic Education has a meaningful role in enhancing school image and competitiveness in Bandung City. The strategic integration of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling has allowed these schools to develop a distinctive educational ecosystem rooted in local culture and Islamic values. However, for this model to remain sustainable, greater attention must be given to teacher capacity, operational standardization, resource support, and long-term evaluation. Thus, the discussion suggests that the future strength of Pasundan schools lies not only in preserving tradition, but in managing tradition as a living and adaptive educational advantage.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research on educational management at Pasundan Junior High School in Bandung, it can be concluded that the implementation of the Pasundan Characteristics Education management has been running quite well. Through the application of management functions including planning, organizing, mobilizing, and monitoring, the school has successfully integrated Sundanese religious and cultural values into the curriculum, learning activities, student activities, and school culture. However, the implementation of this program is considered less than optimal because it still faces various complex and interacting obstacles. These obstacles include limitations in the dimensions of human resources, curricular and pedagogical constraints, structural and managerial issues, cultural and social resistance, external pressures from environmental changes, and limitations in material and financial resources.

On the other hand, the competitiveness of SMP Pasundan in Bandung City demonstrated relatively good performance across all dimensions studied. This institution's excellence is evident through student academic achievement and the quality of learning, non-academic character development, leadership, and student talent. These qualities are supported by competent teachers

and adequate supporting facilities. The school's innovation is realized through differentiated character education based on local values, while its reputation and attractiveness are strengthened by a strong institutional history and high public trust. These findings confirm that competitiveness is built not only through academic achievement but also through the ability to deliver unique added value relevant to public needs. Therefore, a strategy to increase effectiveness is formulated by collaborating basic management functions and institutional characteristics to produce continuous quality improvement supported by a continuous evaluative feedback system.

To optimize these achievements, researchers formulated several operational recommendations for stakeholders. For the Pasundan Elementary and Secondary Education Foundation, it is recommended to establish this unique education policy as a binding long-term strategy, establish a dedicated development center, allocate a proportional budget, and establish a recruitment system based on local cultural competencies. Furthermore, the foundation needs to facilitate strategic collaboration networks and establish internal accreditation. For school principals, as management implementers, leadership priorities must be realized by building a solid development team, investing funds in teacher competencies, creating consistent values, and proactively involving parents. Teacher performance assessments and school evaluations must also be integrated with constructive Pasundan values, accompanied by systematic documentation of best practices. Finally, for future researchers, it is recommended to develop validated image measurement instruments, conduct longitudinal studies, explore student perspectives, and conduct empirical comparative and causal studies to enrich the scientific body.

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