

# ENVIRONMENTAL SCHOOL COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT AND ITS ROLE IN ENHANCING EDUCATIONAL QUALITY: A CASE STUDY OF BRAINY BUNCH INDONESIA

## *A GESTÃO AMBIENTAL DA COMUNIDADE ESCOLAR E SEU PAPEL NA MELHORIA DA QUALIDADE EDUCACIONAL: UM ESTUDO DE CASO DA BRAINY BUNCH INDONÉSIA*

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### Abstract

This study examines environmental school community management at Brainy Bunch Indonesia, an Islamic Montessori-based early childhood education institution adopting bilingual instruction. Using a qualitative case study design, data were generated through non-participant observations, semi-structured interviews with school leaders, teachers, staff, and parents, and document analysis. The findings show that interconnected scheduling systems, standardized professional development, and value-based programming strengthen organizational coherence and instructional consistency. At the same time, centralized coordination constrains pedagogical flexibility, teacher agency, and meaningful stakeholder participation. Parental involvement remains largely communicative and symbolic, while stakeholder engagement in programme design is limited by top-down governance. These results indicate that educational quality is shaped not

### Resumo

*Este estudo examina a gestão ambiental da comunidade escolar na Brainy Bunch Indonesia, uma instituição de educação infantil de base montessoriana islâmica que adota o ensino bilíngue. Utilizando um desenho de estudo de caso qualitativo, os dados foram coletados por meio de observações não participantes, entrevistas semiestruturadas com líderes escolares, professores, funcionários e pais, e análise de documentos. Os resultados mostram que sistemas de agendamento interconectados, desenvolvimento profissional padronizado e programação baseada em valores fortalecem a coerência organizacional e a consistência instrucional. Ao mesmo tempo, a coordenação centralizada restringe a flexibilidade pedagógica, a autonomia dos professores e a participação significativa das partes interessadas. O envolvimento dos pais permanece em grande parte comunicativo e simbólico, enquanto o engajamento das partes*



only by managerial coherence but also by participatory governance and relational practices. The study contributes evidence from a value-based early childhood context and argues for hybrid governance models that balance organizational efficiency with inclusive participation to support sustainable educational quality.

**Keywords:** Environmental School Community Management, Educational Quality, Early Childhood Education, Islamic Montessori, Stakeholder Participation.

*interessadas na concepção do programa é limitado pela governança de cima para baixo. Esses resultados indicam que a qualidade educacional é moldada não apenas pela coerência gerencial, mas também pela governança participativa e pelas práticas relacionais. O estudo contribui com evidências de um contexto de educação infantil baseado em valores e defende modelos híbridos de governança que equilibram a eficiência organizacional com a participação inclusiva para apoiar a qualidade educacional sustentável.*

**Palavras-chave:** Gestão Ambiental da Comunidade Escolar. Qualidade Educacional. Educação Infantil. Montessori Islâmico. Participação das Partes Interessadas.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

School education is not merely concerned with the transmission of knowledge, but also with the cultivation of social values, responsibility, and meaningful engagement within the broader community. Schools function as institutional spaces in which students learn to interact with peers, teachers, families, and the surrounding society. In this context, the management of the school community environment plays a critical role in shaping a learning ecosystem that is supportive, inclusive, and conducive to students' holistic development. Effective environmental school community management enables schools to foster collaborative relationships among stakeholders while responding to the evolving social and educational demands of contemporary society.

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of school management in improving institutional effectiveness and educational quality, particularly through systematic planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation of educational resources (Mulyasa, 2017; Firmansyah, 2020). Moreover, research on school–community partnerships emphasizes that meaningful engagement among teachers, parents, and the wider community contributes significantly to students' academic achievement, character formation, and social competence (Kristiawan *et al.*, 2019; Subianto, 2013). However, much of the existing literature tends to conceptualize school community management in general terms, with limited empirical attention to how such management practices are

implemented in specific educational contexts, particularly in faith-based and alternative pedagogical settings.

The increasing complexity of global social change further necessitates adaptive and sustainable approaches to school community management. Rapid transformations in social values, family structures, and educational expectations require schools to go beyond curricular adjustment and to strategically manage relationships among internal and external stakeholders (Tampubolon, 2020). In early childhood education, this challenge is even more pronounced, as learning processes are deeply intertwined with parental involvement, socio-cultural environments, and institutional values. Consequently, understanding how schools organize, coordinate, and sustain collaboration among diverse actors becomes essential for enhancing educational quality.

Despite the growing interest in school management and community engagement, empirical studies examining environmental school community management in Islamic Montessori-based early childhood education institutions remain scarce. Existing research often addresses either Islamic education or alternative pedagogical approaches separately, without sufficiently exploring how management practices operate at the intersection of both frameworks. This gap limits the understanding of how values-based education, language policy, pedagogical methods, and organizational management interact in shaping a school's learning environment and stakeholder relationships.

To address this gap, the present study examines environmental school community management at *Brainy Bunch Indonesia*, an Islamic Montessori-based early childhood education institution that adopts English as the medium of instruction. This study aims to explore how managerial practices are enacted in coordinating teachers, staff, students, parents, and external stakeholders, and how these practices contribute to the enhancement of educational quality. Specifically, this research focuses on (1) strategies of conflict management, (2) patterns of parental involvement in the educational process, (3) stakeholder participation in school programs and activities, and (4) the implementation of inclusive policies to accommodate student diversity. By providing an in-depth case study, this research seeks to contribute to the literature on school community management and to offer practical insights for educational leaders seeking to develop holistic, collaborative, and sustainable learning environments.

## 2 METHODS

### 2.1 Research design

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore in depth the practices of environmental school community management at Brainy Bunch Indonesia. A qualitative approach was selected to capture the complexity of social interactions, managerial processes, and stakeholder relationships within the school context (Creswell, 2014). The case study design enabled a contextualized understanding of how management practices are enacted in a specific institutional setting characterized by Islamic values, Montessori pedagogy, and the use of English as the medium of instruction (Yin, 2018).

In line with interpretivist research traditions in educational studies, this design allows the researcher to examine meanings, experiences, and practices as socially constructed phenomena situated within a particular institutional and cultural context (Sugiono, 2005). Rather than seeking statistical generalization, the case study approach facilitates analytical generalization by generating theoretically informed insights into how environmental school community management operates in value-based early childhood education settings. This approach is particularly relevant for exploring organizational processes and stakeholder interactions that are deeply embedded in local institutional cultures and normative frameworks.

### 2.2 Research site and participants

The research was conducted at Brainy Bunch Indonesia, an early childhood education institution operating under the franchise system of Brainy Bunch International Islamic Montessori School, headquartered in Cyberjaya, Selangor, Malaysia. The school was selected due to its distinctive educational model that integrates Islamic values, Montessori-based learning, and bilingual instruction.

Participants in this study included key stakeholders within the school community, namely the campus manager/principal, teachers, administrative staff, parents, and students. Teachers and staff were selected through purposive sampling based on their roles in school management and daily educational practices. Parents were included to gain

insights into patterns of parental involvement and school–home collaboration. Students were not directly interviewed due to ethical considerations related to age; instead, their participation and engagement were observed in natural classroom and school activity settings.

The selection of participants was guided by the principle of information-rich cases, whereby individuals who were directly involved in managerial processes and daily school operations were prioritized. This sampling strategy enabled the collection of diverse perspectives across hierarchical and functional roles within the institution, thereby providing a more comprehensive understanding of environmental school community management practices (Moleong, 2018). The inclusion of parents as external stakeholders also allowed the study to capture the relational dynamics between the school and families, which are central to community-based educational management in early childhood contexts.

### **2.3 Data collection**

Data were collected through multiple qualitative techniques to ensure depth and credibility. First, non-participant observations were conducted to document daily school routines, classroom interactions, managerial practices, and stakeholder engagement in both instructional and non-instructional activities. Observations focused on scheduling systems, coordination mechanisms among staff, and the enactment of school programs.

Second, semi-structured interviews were carried out with the campus manager/principal, selected teachers, administrative staff, and parents. The interview guides were designed to explore participants' perspectives on school community management, conflict management strategies, parental involvement, stakeholder participation, and inclusive practices within the school. Interviews were conducted in Indonesian and English, depending on participants' preferences, and were audio-recorded with informed consent.

Third, document analysis was conducted to examine institutional documents, including school schedules, organizational structures, program outlines, training materials, and communication records between the school and parents. These documents provided complementary evidence to triangulate observational and interview data.

The use of multiple data sources enabled methodological triangulation, which strengthened the credibility of the findings by allowing cross-verification of emerging patterns and themes. Combining observations, interviews, and document analysis also facilitated a more holistic understanding of both formal managerial structures and everyday practices within the school. This multimodal data collection strategy is consistent with qualitative best practices in educational research, particularly in studies examining organizational and community-based phenomena (Patton, 2002).

## **2.4 Data analysis**

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The analysis process involved several stages: data familiarization, initial coding, theme development, and theme refinement. Codes were generated inductively from the data and then organized into broader themes aligned with the research focus, namely conflict management, parental involvement, stakeholder participation, inclusive policies, and managerial coordination mechanisms. To enhance analytical rigor, data from observations, interviews, and documents were compared and cross-validated through triangulation (Creswell, 2013).

Throughout the analytic process, constant comparison techniques were applied to identify similarities and differences across data sources and participant groups. This iterative approach allowed emerging themes to be refined through continuous engagement with the data, ensuring that interpretations were grounded in participants' accounts and observed practices. Reflexive memo-writing was also employed to document analytic decisions and to support transparency in the interpretation process, thereby strengthening the study's analytical credibility.

## **2.5 Trustworthiness and ethical considerations**

To ensure trustworthiness, this study applied credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability criteria. Credibility was enhanced through data triangulation and prolonged engagement in the research setting. Member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary interpretations with selected participants to verify the

accuracy of interpretations. Thick descriptions of the research context were provided to support transferability. An audit trail documenting data collection and analysis procedures was maintained to ensure dependability and confirmability (Sugiyono, 2018).

Ethical considerations were addressed by obtaining informed consent from all adult participants. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and pseudonyms were used in reporting the findings. Observations involving children were conducted in non-intrusive ways and focused on general behavioral patterns and participation in activities rather than individual identification.

In addition, the study adhered to ethical principles of voluntary participation and the right to withdraw at any stage of the research process without consequence. Particular care was taken to minimize power imbalances between the researcher and institutional participants by emphasizing the non-evaluative nature of the study. This ethical stance was crucial for fostering open communication and trust, especially when discussing managerial practices and institutional challenges.

### **3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **3.1 Structured managerial coordination and scheduling system**

The findings indicate that Brainy Bunch Indonesia implements a highly structured managerial coordination system through interconnected daily, monthly, and annual scheduling mechanisms for teachers, staff, and students. This scheduling system functions not merely as an administrative tool, but as an organizational framework that regulates instructional practices, teacher workload, professional development, and student activities. The presence of tiered class programs (regular, star, and full-day classes) reflects differentiated service provision that accommodates diverse parental needs and students' learning rhythms (School Observation, 2025).

From a management perspective, this structured scheduling system demonstrates the application of fundamental management principles, particularly planning and organizing, as emphasized in educational management literature (Mulyasa, 2017). Clear temporal structuring of activities contributes to institutional efficiency, role clarity among staff, and continuity of learning experiences for students. Moreover, the integration of

religious routines (e.g., Dhuha prayer and Qur'anic memorization) into daily schedules illustrates how organizational management is aligned with the school's value-based educational philosophy. This alignment supports previous findings that value-oriented school management can strengthen institutional identity and coherence in pedagogical practices.

However, while the scheduling system enhances operational orderliness, it may also limit flexibility in responding to unexpected classroom dynamics or individual student needs. This finding suggests a potential tension between standardization and pedagogical adaptability, a challenge commonly observed in structured educational organizations. Future managerial refinement could consider incorporating flexible scheduling mechanisms to accommodate differentiated learning needs, particularly in early childhood education contexts where developmental variability is significant.

Beyond its organizational function, the scheduling system at Brainy Bunch Indonesia also operates as a mechanism of institutional discipline and behavioral regulation. Regularized routines structure children's daily experiences, shaping patterns of time awareness, self-regulation, and compliance with institutional norms. From a socio-educational perspective, such routinization may support the development of early self-discipline and predictability, which are important for young learners' sense of security. However, overly rigid routines may inadvertently constrain opportunities for spontaneous exploration and child-initiated learning, which are core principles of Montessori pedagogy. This tension highlights the need for managerial sensitivity in aligning operational efficiency with child-centered pedagogical philosophies (School's Document, 2025).

The scheduling system further reflects an implicit prioritization of institutional control over individualized pedagogical responsiveness. While standardized schedules facilitate coordination across classes and staff, they may reduce teachers' discretionary space to adapt learning rhythms based on moment-to-moment observations of children's emotional states, attention spans, or socio-developmental needs. In early childhood education, responsiveness to such micro-level dynamics is crucial for fostering meaningful learning experiences (Lillard, 2011). Therefore, the dominance of fixed temporal structures may subtly reorient pedagogical practices toward institutional

convenience rather than learner-centered flexibility, raising important questions about the pedagogical consequences of managerial rationalization in schooling contexts.

At the organizational level, the structured coordination system also functions as a quality assurance mechanism that aligns local school practices with standards set by the international headquarters. The harmonization of daily routines, teacher schedules, and program cycles reflects transnational governance practices commonly found in franchise-based educational institutions. While such standardization enhances brand consistency and perceived quality assurance, it may simultaneously constrain localized innovation (Euis, Teacher interview, 2025). Educational management literature suggests that effective institutional governance requires a balance between centralized standard-setting and decentralized professional autonomy. In this case, managerial coordination could be further strengthened by allowing contextual adaptations that respond to local cultural norms, parental expectations, and regulatory frameworks in Indonesia.

Furthermore, the tiered class system (regular, star, and full-day programs) introduces differentiated service pathways that implicitly stratify educational experiences based on parental availability and socioeconomic resources. While such differentiation enhances institutional accessibility for diverse family needs, it may also generate unequal exposure to learning opportunities and religious enrichment activities. This stratification raises critical equity considerations within school community management. From an educational justice perspective, school leaders may need to reflect on how managerial scheduling structures shape differential learning experiences and to explore compensatory strategies that ensure all students have equitable access to high-quality educational and value-based programs regardless of enrollment category.

### **3.2 Teacher professional development and organizational learning**

Another salient finding concerns the systematic provision of professional development for teachers and staff, including regular English language training, Montessori method workshops, and team-building programs (Euis, Teacher interview, 2025). These initiatives indicate that Brainy Bunch Indonesia emphasizes organizational learning as a core managerial strategy. Continuous professional development contributes

to the standardization of instructional quality and reinforces the school's bilingual and pedagogical orientation.

This finding resonates with literature highlighting the centrality of teacher capacity-building in enhancing educational quality and organizational effectiveness (Kristiawan *et al.*, 2019). By institutionalizing professional development through scheduled training and supervision mechanisms, the school promotes a culture of continuous improvement. The involvement of the international headquarters in supervision further reinforces quality assurance through transnational standardization (Rahmi & Arifah, 2023).

Nevertheless, reliance on centralized managerial oversight from the parent institution in Malaysia may pose contextual challenges. While international supervision promotes quality control, it may not fully account for local socio-cultural dynamics and regulatory frameworks in Indonesia. This raises critical questions regarding the balance between global standardization and local contextualization in franchise-based educational institutions. Adaptive leadership that integrates international standards with local educational realities could strengthen the sustainability and relevance of managerial practices.

Beyond its instrumental function, teacher professional development at Brainy Bunch Indonesia operates as a mechanism for institutional identity formation. Through standardized training in English proficiency and Montessori pedagogy framed within Islamic values, teachers are socialized into a specific professional culture that aligns with the school's brand identity. This process of professional socialization contributes to organizational coherence but may simultaneously limit the recognition of teachers' diverse pedagogical backgrounds and experiential knowledge. From a critical organizational learning perspective, professional development that is overly prescriptive risks positioning teachers as implementers of externally defined standards rather than as reflective practitioners and co-creators of pedagogical knowledge (Grava, 2015).

The dominance of top-down professional development structures may also constrain opportunities for bottom-up knowledge production within the school. While formal training programs enhance technical competencies, they may insufficiently leverage teachers situated expertise derived from daily classroom interactions and local cultural understandings. Organizational learning literature emphasizes the importance of

reflective practice communities, peer mentoring, and collaborative inquiry as mechanisms for fostering distributed leadership and professional agency. The limited institutionalization of such collegial learning spaces may reduce the potential for transformative professional growth that emerges organically from teacher's lived experiences (Denervaud, *et al.*, 2021).

Moreover, the strong emphasis on English language proficiency and standardized pedagogical frameworks reflects broader global educational discourses that valorize internationalization and competitiveness. While such orientations may enhance the school's market positioning and perceived educational quality, they may inadvertently marginalize local linguistic practices and culturally responsive pedagogies. In early childhood education, language practices are deeply intertwined with identity formation and socio-emotional development. Therefore, professional development programs that prioritize globalized competencies without sufficient integration of local cultural-linguistic resources risk creating pedagogical dissonance between institutional expectations and children's socio-cultural realities (Badrudin, 2021).

From an equity standpoint, the intensity of professional development demands may also reproduce differential burdens among teachers. Continuous training, performance monitoring, and transnational supervision can contribute to professional growth, but they may simultaneously intensify workload pressures and emotional labor, particularly in early childhood education settings where care work is central. Without adequate institutional support mechanisms, such as reflective supervision, workload regulation, and psychosocial support professional development initiatives may be experienced as managerial surveillance rather than empowerment. This highlights the need for educational leaders to conceptualize organizational learning not only as skill acquisition, but also as a relational and affective process that attends to teachers' well-being and professional dignity.

### **3.3 Parental involvement: symbolic partnership or substantive collaboration?**

The study found that parental involvement in Brainy Bunch Indonesia is primarily oriented toward communication and support at home rather than direct managerial participation within the school. Communication channels, such as class-based messaging

groups and annual parent conferences, facilitate information sharing between teachers and parents. Parents are also encouraged to reinforce Islamic values and learning routines at home, positioning the family as a foundational educational environment.

While this model reflects a recognition of parents as primary educators in children's moral and religious development, parental participation in school-level decision-making processes remains limited. From a school community management perspective, this pattern suggests that parental involvement is largely symbolic rather than participatory. Previous studies emphasize that meaningful school–family partnerships extend beyond communication and involve parents in consultative or collaborative roles within school governance structures (Subianto, 2013). The limited managerial engagement of parents may constrain the potential for shared ownership of educational processes and school improvement initiatives (Shah, *et al.*, 2022).

This finding highlights an opportunity for institutional development. By expanding parental involvement into structured participatory forums, such as consultative committees, collaborative program planning, or feedback mechanisms the school could strengthen mutual trust and enhance the responsiveness of educational services to family needs. Such participatory approaches align with inclusive school management principles that view stakeholders as co-constructors of educational quality rather than passive recipients of institutional policies.

From a critical partnership perspective, the current pattern of parental involvement reflects a functionalist orientation in which parents are positioned primarily as supporters of institutional agendas rather than as equal partners in educational governance. While the discourse of parents as “primary educators” emphasizes moral responsibility within the family sphere, it simultaneously limits parental agency within the institutional sphere of the school (Snyder, *et al.*, 2022). This division of labor reproduces hierarchical relations between professional educators and families, where authority over educational decision-making remains largely centralized within school management structures.

The reliance on digital communication platforms (e.g., messaging groups) further illustrates how parental engagement is mediated through information dissemination rather than dialogical participation. Although such platforms enhance efficiency and immediacy of communication, they often function as one-directional channels through which institutional expectations are transmitted to parents. Opportunities for deliberative

dialogue, critical feedback, and collective agenda-setting remain limited. Consequently, parental voices may be acknowledged symbolically without being substantively incorporated into managerial decision-making processes. This communicative asymmetry raises important questions about power relations within school–family partnerships.

Socio-cultural factors may also shape the form and intensity of parental participation. In contexts where educational institutions are accorded high moral authority, particularly within faith-based schooling, parents may be culturally predisposed to defer to professional educator’s expertise and institutional norms. While such deference may facilitate institutional stability, it may simultaneously inhibit critical engagement and collaborative problem-solving. From an inclusive management perspective, schools may need to actively cultivate participatory cultures that legitimize parental knowledge and experiential insights as valuable contributions to educational governance (Mavric, 2020).

Furthermore, the emphasis on parental involvement primarily within the domestic sphere risks reinforcing gendered divisions of educational labor. In early childhood education contexts, caregiving and home-based educational support are often disproportionately undertaken by mothers. Without intentional institutional strategies to broaden and diversify parental participation, including engaging fathers and other caregivers in school-based activities and governance school community management practices may inadvertently reproduce existing social inequalities. Addressing these dynamics requires a more reflexive and equity-oriented approach to designing parental involvement frameworks within educational institutions.

### **3.4 Inclusive policies and stakeholder participation in school programs**

The results also demonstrate that Brainy Bunch Indonesia actively involves multiple stakeholders in school programs and extracurricular activities, including field trips, religious camps, sports weeks, and community-oriented events. These programs function as socialization spaces in which students, teachers, and parents interact beyond formal classroom settings. Such activities contribute to the cultivation of social capital

within the school community and reinforce a sense of belonging among participants (Datin, Stake holder interview, 2025).

From an inclusivity perspective, the school's tiered class system and varied program offerings indicate efforts to accommodate diverse parental preferences and student needs. However, inclusivity in this context appears to be primarily operational rather than participatory. While students benefit from diverse learning experiences, stakeholder participation in program design and evaluation remains largely centralized within the managerial structure. This centralized model may limit the incorporation of diverse stakeholder perspectives, particularly those of parents and community members.

In line with contemporary perspectives on inclusive school management, greater stakeholder engagement in program co-design could enhance the relevance and sustainability of school initiatives. Participatory governance models that incorporate feedback from teachers, parents, and staff may strengthen institutional responsiveness and foster a more democratic school culture.

Critically, the notion of inclusivity reflected in school programs appears to be framed predominantly in terms of access to activities rather than meaningful participation in decision-making processes. While diverse programs are made available to students, the criteria for program selection, scheduling, and thematic focus are largely determined by institutional leadership. This managerial framing of inclusivity aligns with technocratic models of educational governance that prioritize efficiency and standardization over deliberative participation. As a result, inclusivity risks being reduced to a procedural category rather than a relational and political practice of shared governance.

The organization of extracurricular and community-oriented programs also reflects a performative dimension of school community engagement. Public-facing events such as field trips, religious camps, and end-of-year performances function not only as educational experiences for students but also as symbolic representations of institutional quality and identity. While such performances may strengthen school branding and parental satisfaction, they may also shift institutional priorities toward visibility and reputation management. This performative orientation raises critical questions about whether stakeholder participation is cultivated primarily for pedagogical enrichment or for institutional image-building within competitive educational markets.

Furthermore, stakeholder participation in school programs is shaped by structural constraints related to time, resources, and social capital. Parents with greater socioeconomic resources and flexible work schedules are more likely to engage in school activities, while those with limited time or precarious employment may be underrepresented. Without intentional strategies to address these structural inequalities, inclusive policies may inadvertently reproduce patterns of differential participation and exclusion. From an equity-oriented management perspective, schools must design participation mechanisms that actively accommodate diverse family circumstances rather than assuming uniform capacity for engagement (Kocabas & Bavli, 2022).

Finally, the limited involvement of external community actors in the co-design of school programs points to a missed opportunity for expanding the educational ecology of the school. Partnerships with local community organizations, cultural institutions, and social service providers could enrich learning experiences and situate schooling within broader community networks. Such collaborations may enhance the social relevance of educational programs and contribute to the development of socially responsive educational institutions. Integrating community-based participatory approaches into school program governance would strengthen the relational dimension of environmental school community management and align it more closely with holistic and sustainable educational development goals.

### **3.5 Implications for educational quality**

Collectively, the findings suggest that environmental school community management at Brainy Bunch Indonesia contributes to educational quality primarily through organizational coherence, professional development, and value-based programming. The integration of Islamic values, Montessori pedagogy, and bilingual instruction within a structured managerial framework creates a distinctive educational environment that supports students' holistic development. However, the managerial model remains predominantly top-down, with limited participatory engagement from parents and external stakeholders in institutional decision-making processes.

This managerial configuration reflects a broader tension in contemporary educational management between efficiency-driven organizational structures and

participatory governance ideals. While centralized management enhances operational consistency and quality control, it may constrain stakeholder empowerment and contextual adaptability. Addressing this tension requires strategic leadership that balances organizational efficiency with inclusive participation, particularly in early childhood education settings where family–school partnerships are integral to developmental outcomes.

From a quality-of-education perspective, organizational coherence and standardized professional development contribute positively to instructional consistency and institutional reliability. Such coherence enhances predictability in pedagogical practices and ensures that core educational values are uniformly enacted across classrooms. However, when quality is conceptualized primarily through standardization and managerial compliance, there is a risk that deeper dimensions of educational quality—such as relational pedagogy, emotional well-being, and culturally responsive teaching—may be underemphasized. Educational quality, particularly in early childhood contexts, is not solely a function of managerial efficiency but is deeply relational and situated within everyday interactions between teachers, children, and families.

The predominance of top-down governance structures may also shape how quality is defined and measured within the institution. When quality indicators are determined primarily by managerial or transnational standards, local interpretations of educational success and community-specific needs may be marginalized. This raises critical epistemological questions about whose knowledge counts in defining “quality education.” A more dialogical approach to quality assurance, one that incorporates teacher reflections, parental perspectives, and community values could generate more contextually grounded and socially responsive understandings of educational quality.

Moreover, the integration of Islamic values, Montessori pedagogy, and bilingual instruction within a single managerial framework highlights the potential of hybrid educational models to support holistic development. However, the effectiveness of such integration depends not only on formal program design but also on the extent to which stakeholders internalize and co-construct these values in practice. Without participatory mechanisms that allow teachers and families to negotiate meanings and pedagogical interpretations, hybrid models risk becoming symbolic amalgamations rather than lived educational practices. Educational quality in such contexts emerges through ongoing

dialogue and reflective practice rather than through managerial prescription alone (Halstead, 2004).

Finally, the tension between efficiency and participation has broader implications for educational sustainability. Managerial systems that prioritize short-term operational effectiveness may achieve immediate organizational stability, yet they may struggle to adapt to evolving community needs and social change over time. Inclusive governance structures, although more complex to manage, can enhance institutional resilience by fostering shared ownership, trust, and collective problem-solving capacities. In this sense, educational quality is closely intertwined with the quality of governance itself, positioning participatory school community management as a strategic investment in the long-term sustainability of educational institutions.

## **4 CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

### **4.1 Conclusion**

This study examined environmental school community management at Brainy Bunch Indonesia within an Islamic Montessori-based early childhood education context. The findings demonstrate that the institution has developed a coherent and structured managerial system characterized by interconnected scheduling mechanisms, standardized professional development, and the integration of value-based programs into daily educational practices. These managerial arrangements contribute to organizational stability, instructional consistency, and the construction of a distinctive institutional identity that supports students' holistic development.

At the same time, the study reveals structural tensions embedded within the current management model. While centralized coordination enhances operational efficiency and quality assurance, it also constrains pedagogical flexibility, teacher agency, and meaningful stakeholder participation. The predominance of top-down governance limits opportunities for parents and community actors to engage substantively in institutional decision-making processes, positioning them primarily as recipients or supporters of school agendas rather than as co-constructors of educational quality. Similarly, standardized professional development structures, although effective in

aligning teachers with institutional goals, risk marginalizing localized pedagogical knowledge and reflective practitioner agency.

These findings highlight a fundamental tension between efficiency-oriented managerial rationality and participatory governance ideals in contemporary educational management. In early childhood education contexts, where learning is deeply relational and context-dependent, educational quality cannot be reduced to managerial coherence alone. Instead, quality emerges from the interplay between organizational structures, pedagogical responsiveness, relational trust, and inclusive governance practices. The integration of Islamic values, Montessori pedagogy, and bilingual instruction demonstrates the potential of hybrid educational models; however, their effectiveness depends on the extent to which stakeholders are meaningfully engaged in interpreting and enacting these values in practice.

From a leadership perspective, the study suggests the need for a strategic shift toward more participatory and reflexive school community management. Educational leaders are encouraged to complement centralized coordination with dialogical governance mechanisms that amplify teacher voice, institutionalize parental participation, and facilitate community-based collaboration. Such hybrid governance models may enhance not only institutional adaptability and stakeholder trust but also the long-term sustainability of educational quality in diverse and rapidly changing socio-cultural contexts.

#### **4.2 Implications for educational leadership and practice**

The findings of this study offer several implications for educational leadership and school management practices. First, school leaders are encouraged to balance organizational structure with pedagogical flexibility by incorporating adaptive management strategies that respond to diverse student needs, particularly in early childhood education settings. Flexible scheduling mechanisms and differentiated instructional approaches may enhance inclusivity and learner-centered practices.

Second, strengthening participatory governance mechanisms can enhance the quality and sustainability of school community management. Establishing structured forums for parental and stakeholder consultation—such as collaborative committees,

regular feedback sessions, and participatory program planning—may foster shared ownership of educational processes and strengthen school–family partnerships. Such approaches align with inclusive management principles and can contribute to improved educational outcomes through enhanced trust and mutual accountability.

Third, for franchise-based or internationally affiliated educational institutions, the balance between global standardization and local contextualization is critical. While transnational supervision and standardized training contribute to quality assurance, greater sensitivity to local socio-cultural and regulatory contexts can enhance institutional relevance and long-term sustainability. Educational leaders are therefore encouraged to adopt hybrid governance models that integrate international standards with localized management practices.

### **4.3 Limitations and directions for future research**

This study is limited by its focus on a single case study, which may constrain the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts. Future research could employ comparative case studies across different types of schools or educational models to examine variations in environmental school community management practices. Additionally, longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into the long-term impact of participatory management strategies on educational quality and stakeholder engagement. Quantitative or mixed-methods approaches may also complement qualitative findings by examining relationships between management practices and measurable educational outcomes.

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## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Andry Setiawan is a Ph.D. Student of Islamic Education field at Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. His research interests include educational management, school–community partnerships, and Islamic education.

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