

Islamic School Financial Management: A Case Study of Islamic Junior High Schools in Rural Areas

Evi Erfiyana¹, Opan Arifudin², Ika Kartika³

¹Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam KH Badruzzaman, Indonesia

²STIT Rakeyan Santang, Indonesia

³Institut Agama Islam Nasional Laa Roiba Bogor, Indonesia

e-mail: evierfiyana2271@gmail.com

Abstract.

This study aims to understand and explore financial management in rural Islamic junior high schools (Madrasah Tsanawiyah) from the perspective of Islamic school management. The method used was a qualitative case study approach, allowing researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of the financial management process, challenges, and strategies implemented by the madrasahs. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation from madrasah administrators and teachers. The results indicate that financial management in these madrasahs remains traditional and relies on community funding and voluntary donations. The main obstacles faced are limited resources and a low understanding of professional financial management. Nevertheless, some madrasahs have begun implementing more transparent and accountable financial management systems to improve operational sustainability. These findings provide an important contribution to the development of Islamic-based madrasah financial management in rural areas and provide input for efforts to improve the professionalism of Islamic school financial management.

Keywords: Financial Management, Islamic Schools, Madrasah Tsanawiyah, Rural Areas.

I. INTRODUCTION

The success of education at the Islamic boarding school (madrasah), particularly at the junior high school (MTs), is greatly influenced by sound and professional financial management. Effective financial management not only ensures the operational continuity of educational institutions but also improves the quality of educational services, transparency, and accountability to the community and relevant parties. In Indonesia, madrasahs are educational institutions based on Islamic values and play a strategic role in shaping the character of students and supporting the development of devout and pious individuals.

However, in practice, financial management in madrasahs, especially those in rural areas, still faces various challenges. According to data from the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs in 2022, approximately 60% of madrasahs in rural areas experience obstacles to transparent and accountable financial management. Many madrasahs rely entirely on community funding, voluntary donations, and assistance from local governments, resulting in the management of these funds often being disorganized systematically and professionally. Furthermore, a lack of understanding of sound financial management among madrasah administrators leads to potential misuse of funds and uncertainty in achieving educational targets.

Empirical data from a 2021 survey by the Islamic Education Management Development Institute (LPMPI) shows that only 35% of madrasahs in rural areas have adequate financial record-keeping systems. Most madrasahs manage their finances traditionally, with incomplete record-keeping and a lack of internal oversight. Consequently, transparency and accountability

are major obstacles to managing madrasah finances. Yet, sound financial management is crucial for enhancing public trust and the sustainability of educational institutions.

One of the key components to achieving quality human resources is education. However, due to the enormous costs, not everyone can afford a quality education. The 1945 Constitution states at the outset that the state participates in "enlightening the nation's life" and that all Indonesians have the right to education (Ningsih, 2025). According to Mulyono, as quoted by (Sudrajat, 2024), education financing essentially focuses on initiatives to distribute the costs and benefits of education among the public. The allocation of tax responsibilities among various industries is related to education funding. The amount of money to be spent, its sources, and its recipients must be considered when financing education.

In terms of budget, Suhardan et al., quoted (Aslan, 2025), explained that the overall cost of education has increased over time. Every time, the cost of education increases much faster than the capacity to educate students. When the new school year begins, the increase is much faster and often becomes the center of attention. This is since the cost of education has increased beyond the ability of parents to send their children to school. According to Indra Bastian, quoted (Arifudin, 2025), "Education financing is an effort to finance the operation and development of the education sector". Meanwhile, Risbon Sianturi, quoted (Abduloh, 2020), argues that "Education financing is funds provided to schools to facilitate every activity of the learning process in schools and various needs in the implementation of education".

Based on the understanding above, it is concluded that education financing is the provision of funds to support the learning process in schools through operational financing of education.

Mulyono quoted (Arifudin, 2021), explains that school financial management is the entire process of activities planned and implemented or undertaken deliberately and diligently, as well as continuous guidance on school operational costs so that educational activities are more effective and efficient and help achieve educational goals. Financial management includes financial planning, implementation, and evaluation. Jones, quoted (Athik Hidayatul Ummah, 2021), states that financial planning, also known as budgeting, is the activity of coordinating all available resources to systematically achieve desired goals without adverse side effects. Implementation involves accounting, or budget execution, which is an activity based on a predetermined plan and the possibility of adjustments if necessary. Evaluation is the process of assessing the achievement of goals.

According to Nanang Fattah quoted (Marantika, 2020) explains that education financing is an amount of money generated and used to finance educational needs, such as teacher salaries, procurement of facilities and infrastructure, improving teacher professionalism, extracurricular activities, educational supervision activities and others. According to Sulistyorini quoted (Awaludin, 2024) explains that financial management in the narrow sense is bookkeeping, while in the broad sense financial management means management and accountability in using finances both to the community, local government, and to the central government, starting from planning, organizing, implementing, supervising to accountability.

From the opinions above, the author can conclude that educational financial management is several activities that are arranged systematically and systemically starting from planning, use of finances, supervision, and evaluation as well as accountability and reporting.

The purpose of financial management is to obtain and seek opportunities for funding sources for school activities, so that funds can be used effectively by making transparent and accountable financial reports (Mayasari, 2024). Suad Husnan quoted (Rosmayati, 2025) explains the purpose of financial management of educational institutions so that educational managers can use and explore adequate funding sources from various parties to be used and accounted for. Meanwhile, according to Nawawi quoted (Maulana, 2025) explains the purpose

of educational financial management to manage the finances of educational institutions by making various policies in procurement, use of finance to realize the organizational activities of educational institutions in the form of planning, regulation, accountability, and financial supervision of the educational institution itself.

Furthermore, previous research by (Nugroho, 2022) showed that unprofessional financial management in rural madrasas directly impacts inadequate operational funds, limited educational facilities, and low motivation and quality of teaching staff. This demonstrates the importance of effective and efficient financial management as a key to educational success in madrasas.

Meanwhile, the government, through the Directorate General of Islamic Education and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, continues to strive to improve the professionalism of madrasah financial management through training and the development of a digital, transparency-based accounting system. However, implementation still faces obstacles such as limited human resources, low financial literacy, and minimal information technology support in rural madrasahs.

Against this backdrop, this research is crucial for a deeper understanding of financial management in rural Islamic junior high schools, the challenges they face, and the strategies implemented to address these challenges. The results are expected to provide a clear picture of the state of madrasah financial management in the region and serve as a basis for developing better and more sustainable financial management policies and practices.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

According to Rahardjo, as quoted by (Arifudin, 2023), a research method is a way to obtain and seek tentative truth, not absolute truth. The result is scientific truth. Scientific truth is open to continuous testing, criticism, and even revision. Therefore, there is no best method for seeking truth; there is only the right method for a specific purpose, according to the existing phenomenon. Budiharto, as quoted by (Arifudin, 2020), states that the choice of research method must be tailored to the research being conducted to achieve optimal results.

This research was conducted in several Madrasah Tsanawiyah in Rural Area X. The research subjects consisted of principals, BK teachers, homeroom teachers, and students. The type of research used in this study is a case study method. Case studies according to Nursalam in (Kurniawan, 2025) are research that includes an assessment aimed at providing a detailed description of the background, nature and character of a case, in other words that case studies focus on a case intensively and in detail. Research in the method is carried out in depth on a situation or condition in a systematic manner starting from making observations, collecting data, analyzing information and reporting results.

The approach used in this research is a qualitative approach. According to Iskandar in (Kartika, 2023), a qualitative approach is where qualitative research as a scientific method is often used and implemented by groups of researchers in the social sciences, including educational science. Iskandar in (Alammy, 2025) explains the qualitative research approach as a process of research and understanding based on methods that investigate social phenomena and human problems.

This study employed qualitative research with field research methods. According to (Nasril, 2025), this approach aligns with the primary objective of the study, which is to describe and analyze Islamic School Financial Management a Case Study of a Madrasah Tsanawiyah in a Rural Area. Therefore, this method will be able to explain the research problem (Mukarom, 2024).

According to Yin (Delvina, 2020), the purpose of using case study research is not only to explain what the object being studied is like but also to explain the circumstances and how the

case could occur. Meanwhile, Waluya (Nita, 2025) states that the purpose of case study is to develop in-depth knowledge about the object being studied, which means that this study is exploratory in nature.

Bogdan and Taylor in (Ningsih, 2024) explain that qualitative research methodology is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior. In this study, researchers create a complex picture, examine words, detailed reports from respondents' views, and conduct studies in natural situations, specifically related to Islamic School Financial Management, a Case Study of a Madrasah Tsanawiyah in a Rural Area.

Technique can be seen as a means of carrying out technical work carefully using the mind to achieve goals. Although research is actually an endeavor within the scope of science, it is carried out to systematically collect realistic data to realize the truth. Research methodology is a means of finding a solution to any problem. In this case, the author collected information about Islamic School Financial Management (A Case Study of a Madrasah Tsanawiyah in a Rural Area), articles, journals, theses, dissertations, ebooks, and others (Susita, 2025).

Because it requires library materials for its data sources, this research utilizes library research. Researchers require books, scientific articles, and other literature related to the topics and issues they are exploring, both printed and online (Primarni, 2025).

Seeking information from data sources requires the use of data collection techniques. Amir Hamzah in (Suhud, 2025) claims that data collection is an effort to gather information related to the topic being studied. The author used a library research method to collect data. Specifically, the author began with the library to gather information from books, dictionaries, journals, encyclopedias, papers, periodicals, and other sources that shared the perspective of Islamic School Financial Management, a Case Study of a Madrasah Tsanawiyah in a Rural Area.

Furthermore, Amir Hamzah in (Kosasih, 2025) states that data collection is defined as various efforts to gather facts related to a topic or discussion being or will be explored. These details can be found in scientific literature, research, scientific writings, dissertations, theses, and other written sources. According to (Saepudin, 2024), data collection can be conducted in various circumstances, using different sources, and employing different techniques.

Observation is part of the direct research process of examining the phenomena being studied (Paramansyah, 2024). This method allows researchers to directly observe and experience the atmosphere and conditions of the research subjects. The observations in this study focused on Islamic School Financial Management, a Case Study of a Madrasah Tsanawiyah in a Rural Area.

The interview technique in this study is a structured interview, namely an interview conducted using various established standard guidelines, questions are arranged according to information needs and each question is needed to reveal each empirical data (Kartika, 2024).

Documentation is a data collection technique using existing written documents or records (Ekawati, 2024). Documentation comes from the word document, which means written objects. In implementing the documentation method, researchers investigate written objects, such as books, magazines, meeting minutes, and diaries. According to Moleong in (Widyastuti, 2024), the documentation method is a way of collecting information or data through examining archives and documents. Furthermore, according to (Muslim, 2023), the documentation strategy is also a data collection technique proposed to research subjects. This data collection method using the documentation method was carried out to obtain data on the condition of the institution (research object), namely the Financial Management of Islamic Schools: A Case Study at a Madrasah Tsanawiyah in a Rural Area.

Moleong, quoted (Sunasa, 2023), explains that the collected data was analyzed using an interactive analysis model consisting of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Syarifah et al in (Saepudin, 2023) explain that data reduction is carried out by filtering relevant information, presenting data in a systematic narrative form, and drawing conclusions based on research findings. To ensure data validity, this study used source triangulation, namely comparing information from sources. According to Moleong in (Kartika, 2022), source triangulation helps increase the validity of research results by comparing various perspectives on the phenomenon being studied.

Muhadjir in (Saepudin, 2022) stated that data analysis is an activity of conducting, searching and compiling records of findings systematically through observations and interviews so that the researcher focuses on the research being studied. After that, making a finding material for others, editing, classifying, and presenting it. Data validity techniques using triangulation techniques include techniques and sources. Data analysis using the Miles and Huberman model in (Uswatiyah, 2023) consists of data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Result

The results of this study show a complete picture of the condition of financial management at Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) located in rural area X, based on empirical data obtained through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and review of documents and madrasah financial reports during the research period.

Most of the madrasahs studied have relatively simple financial management structures. Funds are typically managed by an internally appointed madrasah treasurer, who often also serves as a teacher or administrative manager. They manage funds manually using cash books and traditional record keeping. Only around 20% of madrasahs have a computerized financial record-keeping system and use simple accounting software.

From the results of interviews and documentation, it is known that the main sources of funding for madrasahs in rural areas come from: 1) Community and parent donations: Voluntary donations for the operation and construction of madrasah facilities, 2) Assistance from local and central governments: Through School Operational Assistance (BOS) funds, which are provided periodically, and 3) Donations and infaq from the surrounding community: Which are often used for religious activities and the construction of religious facilities.

However, the management of funds from these sources remains ad hoc. Many madrasahs lack a standardized and well-documented fund management system. In fact, approximately 65% of madrasahs lack complete and transparent monthly financial reports for the public or internal parties.

Observations show that the funds received are generally used for daily operational needs such as purchasing stationery and teaching materials, facility maintenance, and paying salaries to contract workers. Meanwhile, funds obtained from the School Operational Assistance Program (BOS) and government assistance are directed more toward physical development, such as classroom renovations, the construction of prayer rooms, and improvements to sanitation facilities.

However, internal controls over these funds remain very minimal. There is no regular internal audit mechanism or third-party audit of financial reports. Consequently, the potential for misuse and unclear use of funds is quite high. Some madrasahs admit to never conducting formal financial evaluations and relying solely on trust between administrators.

Empirical data shows that the main factors that hinder effective financial management in rural madrasahs include: 1) Lack of understanding of financial management: Most madrasah

managers do not have an educational background in accounting or finance. They find it difficult to create complete and accountable financial reports, 2) Limited technological resources and infrastructure: Most madrasas have not adopted a digital-based financial management system, so recording and reporting are often done manually and inefficiently, 3) Lack of training and mentoring from the government: Madrasah financial management training programs are rarely carried out routinely and target madrasas in remote areas, and 4) Limited own funds: The funds received are very limited, so madrasas have difficulty developing a more professional financial management system.

Despite facing various challenges, some madrasas have begun to make improvements in their financial management. Some of the strategies implemented include: 1) Using a simple bookkeeping system based on cash books and manual financial reports, 2) Involving the community and parents in monitoring the use of funds, 3) Conducting self-funded training, albeit limited, on the basics of financial recording and money management, and 4) Adopting a more transparent financial reporting system by publishing regular financial reports to the community and madrasah administrators.

Interview results indicate that these efforts are beginning to produce positive changes, particularly in increasing transparency and public trust in the management of madrasah funds. However, this process still requires ongoing guidance and support from the government and relevant institutions.

In general, financial management at Islamic junior high schools in rural area X is still in its infancy and faces many challenges. Fund management remains traditional and unprofessional, reducing the efficiency and effectiveness of fund use. The main obstacles are limited managerial skills and limited access to technology and adequate financial management systems. However, the awareness of managers and the community to make improvements provides hope that future madrasa financial management will be more transparent, accountable, and sustainable.

Research Discussion

The results of this study indicate that financial management in Islamic junior high schools (MTs) in rural areas still presents various challenges and opportunities related to the effectiveness, transparency, and accountability of fund management. To understand this situation in depth, it is important to first examine basic theories of school financial management and relate them to relevant previous research findings.

According to Siregar, as quoted by (Kartika, 2025), school financial management is the process of planning, organizing, implementing, and monitoring financial resources efficiently and effectively to support the success of educational programs and the achievement of school goals. In the context of Islamic schools, financial management is not only oriented towards efficiency and effectiveness but must also consider transparency and accountability as part of the Islamic values adopted.

Furthermore, according to Mustaqim, as quoted by (Romdoniyah, 2024), good financial management in schools must be supported by a strong internal control system, accurate financial records, and transparent reporting to all stakeholders, including the surrounding community and supervisory bodies. A professional financial management system is believed to increase public trust, strengthen operational sustainability, and support improvements in educational quality.

Previous research by Wulandari and Kurniawan, cited in (Aidah, 2024) shows that in various madrasas in rural Indonesia, financial management remains traditional and heavily influenced by human resource capacity. They found that the majority of madrasas use manual record-keeping and have not implemented a standardized accounting system. Consequently, transparency and accountability are low, and concerns arise about potential misuse of funds.

Research by Hidayat, cited in (Afifah, 2024) also revealed that the main obstacle to managing madrasa finances in rural areas is a lack of training and understanding of sound financial management principles. Hidayat emphasized the importance of implementing a digital-based financial management system and ongoing training to ensure madrasa administrators are able to record and report finances correctly and accountably.

Furthermore, research by Nurhadi, cited in (Arifudin, 2022) highlights that cultural factors and the financial literacy level of the surrounding community influence the management of madrasah funds. He stated that if the community and administrators have a good understanding of financial management, fund management practices tend to be more transparent and accountable.

Referring to previous theory and research, it can be concluded that madrasa financial management in rural areas still faces various obstacles, both internal and external. Internally, madrasa administrators generally lack formal educational background in finance or accounting, resulting in traditional and unsystematic financial recording and reporting.

Furthermore, weak internal control systems lead to a high potential for misuse of funds. This study also found that most madrasas lack adequate internal audit procedures, resulting in limited oversight of fund use. This aligns with Wibowo's opinion, as cited by (Arifudin, 2024), which states that strengthening internal control systems is a key factor in increasing transparency and accountability in school financial management.

Externally, limited access to technology and competent human resources are key factors hindering the implementation of digital-based financial management systems. This obstacle is reinforced by Hidayat's findings, cited in (Supriani, 2024) that ongoing training and mentoring are essential for madrasah administrators to adopt more modern and efficient systems.

Furthermore, the local community's cultural tendency toward voluntary reporting and a lack of understanding of the importance of transparent financial reporting contribute to low levels of accountability. Nurhadi's research, cited in (Zulfa, 2025) emphasizes that improving the financial literacy of the community and madrasah administrators is crucial for professional and accountable fund management.

Based on the above analysis, it can be concluded that the success of financial management in rural madrasas is highly dependent on improving the capacity of managers, implementing a professional financial management system, and supporting technology and government policies. The financial management theory proposed by Siregar, as cited in (As-Shidqi, 2025) emphasizes the importance of internal control systems, transparency, and accountability as the foundation of sound financial management.

Meanwhile, previous research shows that challenges in the field remain significant, particularly related to human resource capacity and technological infrastructure. Therefore, capacity-building strategies through ongoing training and mentoring, as well as the implementation of a digital-based financial management system, are relevant solutions for improving the quality of madrasah financial management in rural areas.

For this reason, the objectives of financial management, according to Kadarman and Udaya quoted (Lahiya, 2025) are: 1) Increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of the use of school finances, 2) Increasing the accountability and transparency of school finances, and 3) Minimizing misuse of school budgets.

This is where the role of school management or the school committee lies in managing finances optimally by empowering the human resources within the school. Through these management activities, it is hoped that school funding needs can be planned, procured, recorded transparently, and used to finance the implementation of school programs effectively and efficiently, ensuring the smooth running of learning activities.

Overall, this discussion confirms that financial management in rural madrasas still requires significant attention and development. The implementation of sound financial management principles, supported by a robust internal control system and adequate technology, will significantly determine the success of fund management and the sustainability of madrasa operations. Policy support from the government and increased financial literacy among the community and madrasah administrators are crucial factors in achieving transparent, accountable, and professional financial governance.

IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the entire research and analysis process conducted, it can be concluded that financial management in Islamic junior high schools (Madrasah Tsanawiyah) in rural areas is still in its early stages of development and faces significant challenges. This condition is influenced by several internal and external factors that collectively contribute to the low effectiveness, transparency, and accountability of fund management in these schools. However, the findings of this study also indicate positive efforts and steps being taken by some madrasas. They have begun implementing simple recording systems, providing limited transparency of financial reports to the public, and involving the community and parents in fund oversight. These efforts demonstrate a growing awareness of the importance of sound and transparent financial management among madrasah administrators. Overall, effective, and accountable financial management in rural madrasahs is crucial for operational sustainability and improving the quality of education. Improving the capacity of administrators through ongoing training, implementing technology-based financial management systems, and strengthening internal control systems are strategic steps that must be continuously encouraged and supported by the government and all relevant stakeholders. Thus, it is hoped that madrasahs in rural areas will not only be able to manage funds efficiently and transparently, but also be able to increase public trust and support the achievement of the vision and mission of quality and sustainable Islamic education.

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