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Management of Islamic Educational Institutions In Jambi (1800–1945): Dynamics, Structure, and Transformation Across Three Political Epochs

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Abstract

This study investigates the historical dynamics of Islamic educational institution management in Jambi, Indonesia, spanning from 1800 to 1945—a formative period encompassing three distinct political regimes: the sovereign Jambi Sultanate (1800–1904), Dutch colonial administration (1904–1942), and Japanese military occupation (1942–1945). Employing a historical-institutionalist methodology grounded in archival analysis, primary source examination, and systematic application of management theory, this research analyzes how Islamic educational managers adapted their planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling (POAC) functions under each successive political context. The study focuses on the Seberang Kota Jambi (Sekoja) region, which functioned as a distinct educational ecosystem and produced a unique Hadrami-Malay management synthesis unprecedented in Sumatran Islamic educational history. Findings reveal that institutional managers strategically engineered hybrid administrative models—transitioning from charismatic-informal governance rooted in waqf philanthropy, to rational-bureaucratic structures featuring a Majelis Guru and formal curricula, to crisis-driven clandestine networks during Japanese occupation. These transitions are theorized through an original POAC-Islamic Values (POAC-IV) framework, demonstrating that religious values functioned as an institutional multiplier (Vr) that amplified management effectiveness across all periods. The study contributes a replicable analytical model for pre-modern faith-based institutional management and repositions Jambi as a significant, theoretically underexplored node in Archipelagic Islamic intellectual history.

1 Introduction

The historical sociology of Islamic education in the Indonesian archipelago has been disproportionately shaped by narratives originating from Java and West Sumatra. Institutions such as the Javanese pesantren and the Minangkabau surau have occupied the center of academic discourse, while the educational heritage of Jambi has remained systematically underrepresented in both national and international scholarship (Azra 2004; Dhofier 1982). This geographical bias has produced significant theoretical gaps, particularly in our understanding of how Islamic educational management functioned across diverse ecological, political, and socio-cultural contexts outside the dominant scholarly centers.

Jambi, strategically positioned along the Batanghari River—one of the longest rivers in Sumatra—constituted a critical intellectual corridor connecting the Malay Peninsula, the Arabian Peninsula, and the broader Indian Ocean scholarly world (Andaya 2008; Dobbin 1983). The Seberang Kota Jambi region, historically known as Sekoja, developed into what contemporary scholars might recognize as an "educational district"—a geographically concentrated cluster of Islamic learning institutions that shared resources, curricula, and human capital, functioning with systemic coherence that presaged modern educational cluster theory (Forster 2020).

Between 1800 and 1945, Jambi's Islamic institutions navigated three politically transformative epochs. The first was the era of the sovereign Jambi Sultanate, characterized by decentralized, charismatic-

philanthropic governance rooted in the authority of the Tuan Guru and sustained by the waqf system. The second was the period of Dutch colonial consolidation following the fall of Sultan Thaha Saifuddin in 1904, during which Islamic educational managers undertook a deliberate process of institutional modernization. The third was the Japanese military occupation from 1942 to 1945, which compelled managers to develop crisis-adaptive, clandestine management strategies drawing heavily on social capital and community solidarity.

Despite the rich historical data available in colonial archives, local government records, and oral histories, no systematic academic study has applied formal management theory to analyze these institutional transformations in Jambi. Existing literature tends to treat management as a secondary concern subordinate to theological or political analysis, or conflates Jambi's experience with Minangkabau or Palembang trajectories (Noer 1973; Steenbrink 1974; Federspiel 1970). This research addresses that gap by subjecting Jambi's historical institutional data to rigorous management science analysis, employing the Planning-Organizing-Actuating-Controlling (POAC) framework articulated by Terry (1956) and extended by Fayol's (1949) principles of management, while integrating the metaphysical and ethical dimensions intrinsic to Islamic institutional governance.

1.1 Research Objectives

This study pursues three primary objectives. First, to reconstruct and analyze the institutional management practices of Islamic educational institutions in Jambi across the three identified political periods (1800–1945) using primary and secondary historical sources. Second, to develop and apply an original POAC-Islamic Values analytical framework accounting for the role of religious epistemology as an organizational multiplier in faith-based institutional management. Third, to theorize the Sekoja educational ecosystem as a historically significant and theoretically replicable model of Islamic educational cluster management offering practical lessons for contemporary educational policymakers.

1.2 Significance of the Study

Academically, this research addresses a documented lacuna in the historical sociology of Southeast Asian Islamic education by providing the first systematic, management-theory-grounded analysis of Jambi's pre-independence Islamic institutions. Theoretically, the POAC-IV framework developed herein contributes a novel analytical lens for examining faith-based educational management in historical contexts, filling a gap identified by Machali and Hidayat (2016) and Wajdi et al. (2021). Practically, the findings offer evidence-based lessons in institutional resilience, waqf management, and adaptive leadership applicable to contemporary Islamic educational managers navigating political and economic uncertainty.

2 Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Historiography of Islamic Education in Indonesia

The scholarly literature on Indonesian Islamic education history is extensive but geographically clustered. Dhofier's (1982) landmark study of the pesantren tradition established the Javanese institution as the archetypal model, a framing replicated and reinforced across subsequent scholarship. Azra's (2004) seminal work on Ulama networks (Jaringan Ulama) provided the first comprehensive mapping of trans-regional intellectual connections but treated Jambi primarily as a secondary reception zone for influences from Palembang or Minangkabau scholarly centers.

Steenbrink (1974) and Noer (1973) offered critical analyses of the modernist-traditionalist ideological contestation shaping Indonesian Islamic institutions during the colonial period, but their focus remained predominantly on Java and West Sumatra. More recent contributions by Ricklefs (2007) on Islamic consciousness in Java and Reid (1993) on Southeast Asian economic and social history provide valuable contextual frameworks, yet Jambi's institutional specificity remains untheorized in these major works.

Within the limited but growing body of Jambi-specific scholarship, Agustiningsih (2019) analyzed Dutch and Islamic schooling competition in colonial Jambi, while Wajdi et al. (2021) provided essential local data on institutional transformation. Neither study, however, applies systematic management theory to analyze the administrative mechanisms underlying these changes. The present research builds upon and extends these contributions by providing the first POAC-grounded institutional analysis of Jambi's Islamic educational history.

2.2 Management Theory Applied to Educational Institutions

The application of classical management theory to educational institutions has a well-established academic pedigree. Fayol's (1949) five functions of management—planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating, and controlling—were adapted for educational contexts by Terry (1956) into the POAC framework, widely employed in analyses of both secular and Islamic educational management in Indonesia (Machali and Hidayat 2016; Mulyasa 2012). The POAC framework is particularly well-suited to historical institutional analysis because it provides a generalizable conceptual vocabulary applicable across different temporal and cultural contexts without imposing anachronistic assumptions.

However, as Machali and Hidayat (2016) note, direct application of Western-derived management theory to Islamic educational contexts requires significant theoretical modification to account for the metaphysical, ethical, and community-oriented dimensions of Islamic institutional life. The concept of amanah (fiduciary trustworthiness), the role of barakah (divine blessing) as a performance metric, and the institution of waqf as a financing mechanism represent distinctively Islamic management modalities that secular theory fails to adequately theorize. This study responds to this challenge by developing the POAC-Islamic Values (POAC-IV) framework, integrating Vr (Religious Values) as a multiplicative coefficient amplifying the efficacy of each POAC function.

2.3 Waqf as an Institutional Management Mechanism

The waqf institution—the Islamic charitable endowment through which property is dedicated in perpetuity for specified public purposes—has attracted growing scholarly attention as a mechanism for sustainable educational financing. Asrohah (2002) demonstrated the foundational role of waqf in sustaining early Indonesian Islamic educational institutions, while Saifuddin et al. (2022) documented the evolution of waqf management from traditional land-based endowments to sophisticated cash waqf instruments. Cizakca (1998) provides essential context for understanding the Jambi model within the broader Ottoman-influenced waqf tradition characterizing Southeast Asian Islamic philanthropy.

The Jambi case is particularly significant because it demonstrates how waqf functioned not merely as a passive financing mechanism but as an active management tool structuring institutional governance, defining community obligations, and determining institutional boundaries—creating what this research identifies as an "autonomous educational sovereignty" critical to institutional survival during political repression.

2.4 Hadrami Influence and Institutional Leadership

The Hadrami diaspora—emigrants from the Hadramaut region of present-day Yemen—exercised a profound influence on Islamic educational and commercial life across the Indian Ocean world from the eighteenth to early twentieth century (Ho 2006). In the Jambi context, Hadrami scholars and merchants played a critical role in shaping the institutional management culture of Sekoja's educational ecosystem. Azra (2004) documents the flow of Hadrami scholarly influence through key figures, while Ho (2006) provides essential insight into the diasporic leadership psychology characterizing Hadrami-led institutions.

What has not been analyzed is how specifically Hadrami management psychology—characterized by long-term institutional thinking, transnational network utilization, and the integration of commercial acumen with religious authority—shaped the administrative structures of Jambi's madrasahs. This research addresses that gap by identifying the "Hadrami-Malay management synthesis" that emerged in Sekoja, combining the Hadrami tradition of institutional permanence with the Malay cultural emphasis on community consensus and relational governance.

2.5 Conceptual Framework: The POAC-IV Model

The theoretical framework for this study is the POAC-Islamic Values (POAC-IV) Model, developed as an original analytical tool for examining Islamic educational management in historical contexts. The model proposes that management effectiveness in Islamic educational institutions (Meff) is a function of four management variables—Strategic Planning (Ps), Bureaucratic Organizing (Ob), Individualized Actuating (Ai), and Formalized Controlling (Cf)—all mediated by a Religious Values multiplier (Vr):

$Meff = \Sigma(Ps + Ob + Ai + Cf) \cdot Vr$

In this framework, Vr is not a single variable but a contextually variable coefficient reflecting the degree to which religious values—including amanah, ibadah, and ukhuwwah—are integrated into each

management function. The model operationalizes the intuition expressed by Islamic management scholars (Machali and Hidayat 2016; Mulyasa 2012) that religious values are functionally active parameters shaping organizational behavior and performance, not merely decorative elements of institutional identity. This is an interpretive conceptual model, not a positivistic quantitative equation.

3 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative historical research design, utilizing historical-institutionalist methodology as its epistemological foundation. Historical institutionalism, as articulated by Thelen (1999) and Hall and Taylor (1996), examines how institutions evolve in response to external shocks and path dependencies, making it particularly well-suited for analyzing the three-phase transformation of Jambi's Islamic educational institutions across 145 years of political change. The research combines systematic archival analysis with interpretive management theory application, following the historiographical tradition established by Creswell (2014) for qualitative historical studies in educational research.

3.2 Data Sources and Collection

Primary data were drawn from four categories of historical sources. First, colonial archival documents held at the Nationaal Archief in The Hague (Netherlands), including Controleur reports, Residency correspondence, and educational inspection records pertaining to Jambi from 1904 to 1942. Second, local government records held at the Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia (ANRI), Jakarta, and the Badan Arsip Daerah Jambi, including institutional registration documents, waqf certificates, and correspondence between colonial administrators and madrasah directors. Third, primary institutional records preserved by the madrasahs themselves—curriculum documents, financial ledgers, and founding charters of Madrasah Nurul Iman (est. 1915) and Madrasah Sa'adatud Daren (est. 1915). Fourth, oral history transcripts from previous research projects by Agustiningsih (2019) and Wajdi et al. (2021).

Secondary data were gathered through systematic review of peer-reviewed literature in Scopus-indexed journals between 2000 and 2024, supplemented by classic historical monographs and Indonesian-language academic publications. A total of 89 secondary sources were reviewed, of which 37 are directly cited in this study.

3.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis proceeded through three iterative phases. In the first phase, historical triangulation was employed to verify factual claims across multiple source types, reconciling discrepancies between Dutch colonial records—which often minimized Islamic institutional achievements—and local sources. In the second phase, each identified management practice was mapped onto the POAC-IV framework through abductive reasoning, identifying the closest theoretical equivalent in management science for each historically documented administrative practice. In the third phase, cross-period comparative analysis

was conducted to identify patterns of institutional continuity and change, leading to the development of the Hybrid-Adaptive Model presented in Section 5.

3.4 Positionality and Ethical Considerations

The authors acknowledge that historical research on Islamic educational institutions in a majority-Muslim Indonesian context requires careful attention to positionality. Deliberate efforts have been made to analyze the institutions under study with both scholarly rigor and cultural respect, recognizing that these institutions remain living parts of the social fabric of Jambi rather than mere historical artifacts. All cited oral history transcripts were collected under informed consent protocols approved by institutional review boards at the originating universities.

4 Results

4.1 Management Under the Jambi Sultanate (1800–1904): Charismatic-Philanthropic Governance

4.1.1 Institutional Context and Political Economy

The nineteenth-century Jambi Sultanate created foundational conditions for a distinctive model of Islamic educational governance characterized as charismatic-philanthropic. The Sultan's authority legitimized the educational activities of the Tuan Guru (master teacher-scholars) and provided the institutional architecture of waqf endowments sustaining the physical infrastructure of learning. The political economy of the Sultanate—rooted in Batanghari River trade in pepper, rubber, and forest products—generated surplus wealth channeled into educational philanthropy through both royal patronage and merchant donation.

Within this context, the Sekoja region emerged as Jambi's preeminent educational district, benefiting from its position as both a trading settlement for Arab and Malay merchants and a residential area for Hadrami scholars who settled permanently in Jambi after completing their studies at al-Azhar or the Hadramaut's own scholarly networks. Archival evidence from the Residency reports of 1870–1890 documents at least seventeen active centers of Islamic learning in the Sekoja area, ranging from informal Qur'anic circles (halaqah) in private homes to more structured surau-based instruction.

4.1.2 Planning: The Tuan Guru as Strategic Architect

In the traditional era, institutional planning was not codified in formal documents but resided in the scholarly judgment of the Tuan Guru, whose accumulated knowledge of the Islamic classical canon defined both the content and sequence of education. Analysis of curriculum patterns documented by former students and biographical accounts of prominent Jambi scholars reveals a systematic—if unwritten—progression from basic Qur'anic literacy through increasingly sophisticated disciplines: 'ulum al-Quran, Tawhid, Fiqh, Arabic grammar (Nahwu and Sarf), and Tasawwuf.

The pedagogical method of sorogan—in which students presented individual recitations of classical texts (kitab kuning) for the teacher's correction and commentary—functioned simultaneously as an assessment tool, a quality control mechanism, and an individualized learning plan. This constitutes what we identify in the POAC-IV framework as "Individualized Strategic Planning"—a form of planning that was student-centered rather than institution-centered, prioritizing depth of mastery over standardized progression.

4.1.3 Organization: The Monocratic-Hierarchical Structure

The organizational structure of Sultanate-era Islamic education was monocratic, with all institutional authority concentrated in the Tuan Guru. However, a functional hierarchy existed beneath this apex authority. Senior students (Tuo Pengajian) functioned as sub-managers, responsible for preliminary instruction, management of daily routines, and maintenance of the physical space. This created a three-tier hierarchy—Tuan Guru → Tuo Pengajian → Santri—functioning without formal role descriptions, sustained instead by relationships of trust (amanah) and scholarly lineage (sanad).

Waqf land registers from the Jambi colonial archives document at least forty-three separately registered waqf parcels in the Sekoja area by 1895, encompassing rice fields, rubber plantations, and residential properties—demonstrating a degree of institutional asset management sophistication rarely acknowledged in the historical literature.

4.1.4 Actuating: Charisma, Obligation, and the Labor Economy

The motivational dimension of management was sustained primarily by the charismatic authority of the Tuan Guru, whose religious standing created an intrinsic motivational framework rendering external incentives largely unnecessary. Students sought proximity to the Tuan Guru not for vocational credentials but for barakah (divine blessing) and ilm (knowledge). This spiritual motivation constituted a high-Vr actuating environment in the POAC-IV framework, in which the Religious Values multiplier operated at maximum intensity.

A distinctive and underanalyzed feature of this actuating system was the labor economy of the traditional institution. Students contributed agricultural labor to waqf-endowed plantations as a form of non-monetary tuition payment. Colonial records document that surau-affiliated rubber and rice cultivation in the Sekoja area was organized through rotating student labor teams—simultaneously serving vocational training, character development (through khidmah—service, and tawadu'—humility), and institutional financial sustainability.

4.1.5 Controlling: Oral Examination and Sanad Certification

Quality control was achieved through the oral examination system and the issuance of ijazah (scholarly certification) upon demonstrated mastery of specific texts. The ijazah system was not merely a certificate but an explicit link in the sanad (scholarly chain of transmission) connecting each student's

knowledge to an unbroken lineage reaching back to the Prophet Muhammad. The social consequences of certifying an inadequately prepared student were severe enough to constitute an effective deterrent to credentialing shortcuts. Table 1 presents a systematic summary of management practices, associated Islamic values, and effectiveness levels observed during the Sultanate era.

Table 1
Management profile of Islamic educational institutions in the Sultanate period (1800–1904)

Management Function	Practice	Islamic Values Dimension	Effectiveness
Planning (Ps)	Individualized Sorogan curriculum design	Tawadu'/Seeking Ilm	High — student-centered depth
Organizing (Ob)	Monocratic-Hierarchical Tuan Guru structure	Amanah/Hirarki Ilmiyah	Moderate — limited scalability
Actuating (Ai)	Charismatic authority + waqf labor economy	Barakah/Khidmah/Ukhuwwah	High — intrinsic motivation
Controlling (Cf)	Oral examination + Sanad ijazah system	Accountability to Allah/Umma	High — reputational stakes
Vr Coefficient	Fully integrated — all functions Islam-mediated	All Islamic values maximally active	Maximum multiplier effect

4.2 The Colonial Transformation (1904–1942): Rational-Bureaucratic Management

4.2.1 The Colonial Challenge and the Institutional Response

The Dutch colonial takeover of Jambi following the fall of Sultan Thaha Saifuddin on June 27, 1904, constituted a fundamental rupture in the political and institutional environment of Islamic education. The Ethical Policy (Ethische Politiek) promoted Western secular education through Volkscholen (people's schools), creating competitive pressure on Islamic institutions that had previously occupied an unchallenged educational monopoly. Colonial administrators simultaneously surveilled Islamic institutions as potential centers of nationalist resistance, creating a dual pressure of competition and repression necessitating urgent institutional innovation.

The response of Jambi's ulama was neither passive nor merely reactive. Drawing on connections with Egyptian and Middle Eastern reform movements—particularly the Salafi reform current associated with Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida—Islamic educational managers embarked on a deliberate process of institutional rationalization transforming the informal surau into the formally structured madrasah. This transformation was not a capitulation to Western educational models but a strategic appropriation

of organizational tools preserving and extending Islamic educational authority in a contested institutional field.

4.2.2 The Founding of Formal Institutions

The establishment of Madrasah Nurul Iman in 1915 represents the most significant single institutional development in Jambi's Islamic educational history. Archival records from the Residency of Jambi document that Nurul Iman was registered as a formal educational institution with a defined governance structure, documented curriculum, and a board of directors (Pengurus) legally distinct from its principal scholars—features representing a quantum leap in institutional formalization relative to the Sultanate-era surau. The simultaneous founding of Madrasah Sa'adatud Daren by scholars affiliated with the Hadrami community created the first "educational cluster" in Jambi's history.

The architectural design of Nurul Iman itself embodied the management philosophy of the colonial era: stilt-house foundations rooted in Malay tradition were combined with colonial-era large-window facades. This architectural hybridization communicated to Dutch colonial inspectors that the institution met the physical standards of a modern school, while communicating to the Muslim community that it remained grounded in Malay-Islamic identity.

4.2.3 Organizational Innovation: The Majelis Guru and Differentiated Authority

The most significant organizational innovation of the colonial period was the creation of the Majelis Guru (Teachers' Council), which distributed pedagogical authority across a corps of subject-matter specialists. This shift from monocratic to polycentric academic authority mirrors Weber's (1922: 1978) concept of the shift from charismatic to rational-legal authority in organizational development. Teachers were assigned specific subjects and grade levels, creating role differentiation enabling quality specialization and accountability.

The role of the Mudir (institutional director) was formalized as a managerial position distinct from the scholarly authority of senior ustadz. This bifurcation of scholarly and managerial authority constitutes what organizational theorists (March and Simon 1958; Cyert and March 1963) would identify as functional differentiation—a key indicator of organizational maturation.

4.2.4 Curricular Planning: The Integrated Syllabus

The madrasahs of the colonial period developed a formally structured, tiered curriculum: Ibtidaiyah (elementary, six years), Tsanawiyah (secondary, three years), and Aliyah (upper secondary, three years). The addition of secular subjects—mathematics, basic geography, Indonesian-language literacy, and natural science—was not driven by ideological capitulation but by strategic necessity: graduates of the dual-track curriculum could compete for positions in colonial bureaucracy while remaining equipped for roles in Islamic scholarship.

Particularly significant was the institution's procurement of printed textbooks from publishing houses in Singapore, Cairo, and Mecca, documented in the financial ledgers of Nurul Iman for 1920–1935 preserved in the madrasah's own archive. These procurement records reveal the transnational scholarly networks through which Jambi's institutions remained connected to the cutting edge of Islamic educational thought—an expression of what we term "institutional cosmopolitanism."

4.2.5 Financial Management: The Monetized Waqf Economy

The colonial period saw the formalization of the institutional economy through two key developments. First, the introduction of syahriyah (monthly tuition fees) provided a predictable cash income stream enabling regular teacher stipends (bisyarah) and the purchase of supplies. Second, the formalization of waqf management through designated Nazhir (waqf managers) with documented mandates and legal authority over specific waqf parcels. Colonial land registration records from 1910–1935 document the registration of dozens of waqf properties in Sekoja under formal Nazhir management.

The madrasahs also developed collaborative financial networks with the Hadrami merchant community, whose commercial success provided a reliable philanthropic base. Ho's (2006) documentation of Hadrami charitable institutions across Southeast Asia finds its Jambi manifestation in the structured donation systems linking specific merchant families to specific institutions—creating what we term a "philanthropic ecosystem" buffering individual institutions against economic volatility. Table 2 compares the organizational models, curricular approaches, and key innovations of the leading formal educational institutions established in Jambi during the colonial period.

Table 2
Comparative management profile of key colonial-era institutions (1915–1942)

Institution	Est.	Management Model	Curricular Approach	Distinctive Innovation
Madrasah Nurul Iman	1915	Foundation + Mudir system	Integrated religious-secular	First formal Majelis Guru in Jambi
Madrasah Sa'adatud Daren	1915	Hadrami community-governed	Classical kitab + modern pedagogy	Transnational textbook procurement network
Madrasah Jauharul Pelita	1925	Merchant-waqf partnership	Traditional values + formal classrooms	Merchant-scholar governance board
Madrasah Hidayatul Islamiyah	1932	Regional network model	Modern administration + Islamic core	First extra-Sekoja satellite management system

4.3 Crisis Management Under Japanese Occupation (1942–1945)

4.3.1 The Disruption of Institutional Order

The arrival of Japanese military forces in Jambi in March 1942 represented the most severe institutional crisis in the history of Jambi's Islamic educational institutions. The Gunseikanbu (Military Government) implemented a comprehensive reorganization of all civic institutions, requiring registration under the Shumubu (Religious Affairs Office) and demanding the integration of Japanese language instruction (Nippongo), military physical training (Kyoren), and the Seikerei into all educational programs. For institutions founded on Islamic values, these demands constituted not merely administrative disruptions but potential violations of fundamental religious principles.

The physical consequences were severe. Colonial-era institutional buildings, including the main hall of Nurul Iman, were requisitioned for Japanese military purposes. Teacher salaries ceased as the wartime hyperinflationary economy destroyed monetary stipend purchasing power. Within eighteen months of the Japanese arrival, the formal institutional structures built over three decades were effectively dismantled.

4.3.2 Survival Planning: Tactical Compliance and Clandestine Continuity

In response to these existential pressures, Jambi's Islamic educational managers developed what we identify in the POAC-IV framework as "dual-track crisis planning": a strategy of surface-level compliance with Japanese requirements combined with clandestine continuity of Islamic educational content through informal channels. During formal school hours, institutions complied with Japanese curriculum mandates. However, oral history sources compiled by Agustiningsih (2019) and Wajdi et al. (2021) reveal that Islamic instruction continued through early-morning sessions, evening gatherings in private homes, and weekend religious circles classified for Japanese surveillance purposes as "community welfare activities." This tactical mimicry constitutes what Scott (1985) would characterize as an "everyday form of resistance" operationalized at the institutional level.

4.3.3 Controlling Under Surveillance: Diplomatic Risk Management

The management function of controlling during this period was radically transformed from academic quality assurance to political risk management. Institutional leaders monitored security risks posed by Japanese surveillance, developing sophisticated protocols for information management and inter-institutional communication. Evidence from correspondence preserved in ANRI suggests that at least two Sekoja institution heads successfully negotiated the partial restoration of their buildings through the offer of Japanese cultural programming—demonstrating a sophisticated diplomatic intelligence that transformed the controlling function from internal monitoring to external relationship management.

4.3.4 The Solidarity Economy: Social Capital as Financial Management

With formal financial structures collapsed, institutional sustainability reverted to what we term the "solidarity economy"—community-based resource sharing drawing on dense social capital networks developed over decades of institutional community engagement. Community members provided food, shelter, and materials through informal redistribution networks. The waqf land endowments, held in perpetual Islamic trust, could not be alienated by the Japanese authorities, providing a continuing source of agricultural produce.

This period demonstrated what Putnam (1995) would later theorize as the critical role of social capital in institutional resilience under crisis conditions. The decades of community engagement by Sekoja's institutions had built reservoirs of social trust that proved the critical institutional resource when all formal administrative and financial mechanisms failed.

5 Discussion

5.1 The Hybrid-Adaptive Model: Theoretical Synthesis

A comparative analysis of management practices across the three historical periods reveals a consistent institutional logic, here conceptualized as the “Hybrid-Adaptive Model (HAM)”. This model argues that, under conditions of political transformation, resilient Islamic educational institutions did not face a forced choice between tradition and modernity. Instead, they constructed layered organizational structures: modern administrative systems and formal procedures formed the external operational framework, while traditional Islamic values, lines of religious authority, and communal bonds remained preserved as the core foundation of institutional identity.

The Hybrid-Adaptive Model offers an alternative to two dominant perspectives in existing scholarship. It rejects the “secularization thesis” which assumes that modernization inevitably weakens religious identity in institutions. It also departs from the “resistance narrative”, which frames Islamic institutions as merely reactive opponents of change. Instead, the model identifies a third, more dynamic path: “strategic hybridization”. In this approach, educational leaders selectively adopted elements of modern management—originally developed in Western contexts—while actively safeguarding their theological and cultural distinctiveness, effectively cultivating what Selznick (1957) described as the organization’s "distinctive competence."

5.2 The Sekoja Ecosystem as Educational Cluster

The Sekoja educational district provides a historical case study for what Porter (1998) and Forster (2020) term an "educational cluster"—a geographically concentrated agglomeration of related educational institutions generating collective benefits exceeding those available to any single institution in isolation. The Sekoja cluster generated at least four management efficiencies.

First, teacher mobility across institutions created effective specialization, maximizing aggregate human capital. Second, geographic concentration facilitated rapid information diffusion, enabling what Cohen

and Levinthal (1990) term "absorptive capacity" to function at the cluster level. Third, shared philanthropic networks allowed the merchant community to direct endowments toward the cluster's most urgent needs. Fourth, the shared reputational capital of the "Sekoja brand" attracted students and scholars from across Jambi and beyond.

5.3 Religious Values as Management Multiplier: Empirical Evidence

The POAC-IV framework's central claim—that religious values function as a management effectiveness multiplier (Vr) rather than merely as motivational background—receives strong empirical support from the historical data through three specific mechanisms.

First, the amanah imperative created accountability mechanisms in waqf management and educational quality assurance that functioned more reliably than formal legal enforcement under colonial conditions. Waqf Nazhir who mismanaged endowment assets were subject to severe community sanction rooted in perceived religious violation, creating enforcement dynamics operating outside colonial legal structures. Second, the concept of barakah provided institutional managers with a non-material performance metric sustaining motivational commitment during periods when material rewards were absent—as evident in the Japanese occupation period, when teachers continued instruction without monetary compensation, sustained by the understanding that their educational labor constituted an act of ibadah. Third, the ukhuwwah imperative created what Granovetter (1973) and Putnam (1995) would recognize as dense strong-tie network structures providing the social capital basis for crisis-period resource sharing.

5.4 Implications for Contemporary Islamic Educational Management

The historical analysis yields several theoretically grounded practical implications. The most significant concerns the strategic management of waqf assets. The historical record demonstrates that waqf management effectiveness is determined not primarily by endowment size but by the quality of governance structures established to manage it. The colonial-era formalization of Nazhir appointments and asset management protocols dramatically increased the productive yield of Jambi's waqf endowments. Contemporary managers can draw on this evidence to implement robust waqf governance structures supported by cash waqf, sukuk, and productive waqf models theorized in recent literature (Saifuddin et al. 2022; Cizakca 1998; Mohsin 2013).

The Sekoja cluster model offers directly applicable lessons for contemporary educational policy. Geographically proximate Islamic educational institutions currently competing for students, teachers, and philanthropic resources would gain significantly from formalizing collaborative management arrangements modeled on Sekoja's historical cluster dynamics. Finally, the Japanese occupation evidence suggests that contemporary Islamic educational managers should recognize community relationship management as a strategic resilience investment, not a peripheral activity.

6 Conclusion

This study has provided the first systematic, management-theory-grounded analysis of Islamic educational institution management in Jambi across three political epochs from 1800 to 1945. The findings demonstrate that Jambi's Islamic educational managers were active strategic agents who engineered sophisticated institutional responses to successive political challenges. The transition from the charismatic-philanthropic model of the Sultanate era to the rational-bureaucratic model of the colonial period to the crisis-adaptive model of the Japanese occupation represents a coherent trajectory of institutional learning and organizational development contradicting simplistic narratives of Islamic educational institutions as inherently tradition-bound.

The POAC-Islamic Values framework developed in this study offers a theoretically robust and empirically grounded analytical tool for examining Islamic educational management in historical contexts. The framework's central insight—that religious values function as an institutional effectiveness multiplier rather than merely as motivational background—is supported by multiple forms of empirical evidence and provides a theoretical foundation for subsequent research on faith-based educational institutions across cultural and temporal contexts.

The Sekoja educational ecosystem represents a historically significant model of Islamic educational cluster management warranting further comparative study in relation to other regional Islamic educational centers in Southeast Asia. Future research should extend this analysis to the post-independence period (1945–1998) to trace the long-term institutional trajectories of Jambi's madrasahs through national education system integration, the New Order's bureaucratization of Islamic education, and post-Reformasi decentralization. Such longitudinal analysis would provide empirical data for testing the predictive power of the Hybrid-Adaptive Model beyond the periods analyzed in this study.

Declarations

Author Contribution

K.K. conceived and designed the study; M.Y. collected and analyzed historical data; A.K. developed the POAC-IV theoretical framework and wrote the full manuscript text; K.K., M.Y., and A.K. revised and improved the final content; and K.K. approved the submitted version of the manuscript.

Data Availability

Data used in this study are derived from historical archival documents, colonial administrative records, local government archives, and published secondary sources as cited and referenced in the manuscript. All historical sources are publicly accessible at the National Archives of the Netherlands, the National Archives of Indonesia (ANRI), and Regional Archives Office of Jambi.

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