

The Role of Monitoring and Evaluation in Strengthening Sustainable Islamic Education

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Abstract

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) holds a crucial position in ensuring that Islamic education is implemented effectively, maintains accountability, and aligns with the broader goals of sustainable development. Within the framework of SDG 4, M&E functions as an essential mechanism that enables educational institutions to measure the quality of teaching and learning, evaluate the relevance of policies, and understand their impact on students' academic and character development. This study adopts a literature review method by analyzing scientific journals, academic books, international reports, and education policy documents to explore how M&E contributes to strengthening Islamic education governance. The findings indicate that incorporating Islamic values such as trustworthiness (*amanah*), justice (*'adl*), and stewardship (*khalifah*) enriches the evaluation process, making it not merely administrative but also ethically grounded. The use of comprehensive evaluation models such as CIPP proves effective because it examines context, input, process, and outcomes in an integrated manner. Despite its potential, M&E in Islamic education still faces several challenges, including limited professional evaluators, restricted financial resources, and the absence of instruments tailored to Islamic educational characteristics. Overall, this study affirms that value-based and sustainability-oriented M&E can serve as a strong foundation for enhancing educational quality, strengthening character formation, and addressing contemporary educational demands.

Keywords: Monitoring and Evaluation, Islamic Education Governance, Sustainable Development (SDG 4)

Introduction

Education is one of the most essential pillars of civilization and plays a significant role in shaping the direction of sustainable development. In the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education), every education system is expected to provide inclusive, equitable, and lifelong learning opportunities for all. This goal requires a governance model capable of ensuring accountability, transparency, and continuous quality improvement. Within this framework, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) becomes an indispensable mechanism for understanding how far educational policies and programs contribute to achieving these targets (United Nations Educational, 2018)

In Islamic education, the mandate to ensure sustainability is not only administrative but also theological. Values such as *amanah*, *khalifah*, *'adl*, and *maslahah* are central to Islamic teachings and perfectly align with sustainability principles. Research shows that Islamic values have the potential to strengthen eco-consciousness, ethical responsibility, and social awareness among learners (Nasrudin et al., 2025). However, embedding these values in educational practice requires more than curriculum development. It demands a governance framework capable of ensuring consistent, measurable, and accountable implementation this is precisely where M&E becomes crucial.

Unfortunately, M&E implementation within many Islamic educational settings often remains limited to technical or administrative reporting. Research by Auf (Auf et al., 2025) emphasize that M&E in Islamic institutions must incorporate spiritual and ethical values to make the evaluation process meaningful. Similarly, research on evaluating Islamic education programs through the CIPP model shows that this approach is highly beneficial because it assesses educational processes holistically from context to product (Wan Azman, 2025). Nevertheless, these studies also highlight obstacles such as insufficient evaluator competency, limited budgets, and the absence of proper guidelines specifically tailored to Islamic educational policies (Rizky Fadillah, Eli Saprihfa, Sahrial Harun Paturahman, Ramanda Aryan Febriadi, 2025).

Parallel to these challenges, scholarly discussions on sustainable Islamic education continue to grow, research with the *library research* by Zuhriyah (Zuhriyah et al., 2024) for instance, notes that madrasah can foster environmental awareness and sustainable lifestyles through proper management practices rooted in Islamic values such as khalīfah. This implies that sustainable Islamic education must be supported by institutions capable of integrating spiritual, social, and ecological perspectives in their governance system.

Considering this background, this article emphasizes the importance of a value-based M&E framework that integrates Islamic principles and sustainability dimensions. Such a framework would enable Islamic education institutions including schools, madrasah, and pesantren to adapt to global challenges such as climate change, social inequality, and ethical dilemmas while maintaining their Islamic identity.

Methods

This research uses the literature review method as explained by Waruwu (Waruwu, 2023). The process involves reviewing existing scientific works such as peer-reviewed journals, academic books, international reports, and policy documents that address the themes of M&E, Islamic education governance, and sustainability. Literature review is a suitable method because the issue under investigation is conceptual, requiring theoretical synthesis rather than field-based data collection.

The literature search was conducted systematically using platforms such as Google Scholar, DOAJ, Moraref, UNESCO repositories, and World Bank reports. The sources were then filtered according to relevance, methodological rigor, and theoretical contribution. After selection, the literature was categorized into thematic clusters M&E systems, Islamic education, and sustainability frameworks to facilitate structured analysis.

To strengthen reliability, triangulation was used through cross-checking various sources, aligning Creswell's (2018) validation approach for qualitative studies. Data analysis was conducted through coding, thematic grouping, and synthesis of key findings to formulate a comprehensive understanding of the role of M&E in sustainable Islamic education

Results

1. The Implementation of Monitoring & Evaluation in Islamic Education Institutions

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) implementation plays a central role in supporting Islamic educational institutions' efforts to maintain quality and accountability. Rather than being treated as mere formality, M&E should function as a strategic practice that bridges spiritual values and modern management principles (Auf et al., 2025) argue that M&E grounded in Islamic values

creates an environment where evaluations become moments of collective reflection and moral commitment.

Operationally, M&E covers monitoring the quality of learning, evaluating student outcomes, and observing institutional performance from a holistic perspective—academic, spiritual, and social. Both quantitative and qualitative data are needed to produce accurate insights. Instruments may include achievement tests, observation sheets, stakeholder interviews, and documentation of students' religious activities.

The CIPP model, which includes Context, Input, Process, and Product, is widely adopted in Islamic education because it allows for a comprehensive evaluation of educational dynamics (Sufyan Suri, 2024). For example, the Process evaluation assesses how well Islamic values are integrated into the teaching–learning cycle, whereas the Product evaluation examines both academic outcomes and improvements in character.

However, practical challenges remain. Many institutions struggle with inadequate technical capacity, limited monitoring budgets, and weak data management systems. Although academic supervision has proven effective in improving teacher performance, it is not consistently applied (Nuraeni & Irawan, 2021). Thus, enhancing HR capacity and embracing technological support is essential for strengthening M&E practices.

2. Benefits of Monitoring & Evaluation to Obtain Continuous Education

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) serves as a foundation for organizational learning and continuous quality improvement in Islamic educational settings. It enables institutions to identify effective practices, minimize inefficiencies, and design interventions tailored to long-term needs. The integration of interactive learning methods, as explained by Seftiani, Hanum, Abdullah, and Kholidah, demonstrates how M&E supports innovation in learning. The use of technology, diverse learning resources, and Islamic value–based curriculum design ensures that learning becomes more engaging and meaningful (Muh Ibn Sholeh, Nur Efendi, 2023)

In addition, M&E strengthens evidence-based decision making. Institutions rely on monitoring data to revise curricula, allocate budgets, and plan training programs. The availability of valid data enhances transparency and increases stakeholder trust. Within the SDG 4 and ESD frameworks, M&E supports the measurement of global citizenship competencies and environmental awareness. A systematic monitoring system helps institutions gauge progress accurately and design strategies aligned with sustainability objectives (Jr et al., 2020)

Ultimately, M&E fosters a culture of consistent reflection and development. When feedback loops are properly integrated into school governance, institutions become more adaptive and better equipped to maintain quality over time (United Nations Educational, 2018). Brief practical recommendations for making M&E a driver of continuing education:

1. Design clear and relevant indicators that combine learning outcomes, process (teaching quality), and contextual (access gap) indicators.
2. Combine quantitative data and a reflective/participatory approach to understand the 'why' behind the numbers.
3. Build the capacity of human resources (teachers, principals, monitors) to conduct M&E regularly and meaningfully.
4. Ensure that M&E findings are used in decision-making mechanisms (budgeting, curriculum, training).
5. Encourage transparency and community engagement to make change more sustainable.

3. Integration of Islamic Values in M&E

Integrating Islamic values into M&E requires a shift from conventional indicators to frameworks that also account for ethical, spiritual, and social dimensions. Principles such as amanah, khalifah, and ihsan must guide evaluation design, ensuring that outcomes reflect not only technical success but also moral development.

The maqāsid al-sharī‘ah framework protecting religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property provides a strong foundation for designing Islamic value-based indicators (H. Z. Mustofa et al., 2025). These indicators may include students’ spiritual discipline, social empathy, environmental care, and ethical behavior.

According to Rizky Fadillah (Rizky Fadillah, Eli Sapriha, Sahrial Harun Paturahman, Ramanda Aryan Febriadi, 2025), evaluation must incorporate moral and spiritual measurements to ensure that Islamic educational goals are achieved holistically. This aligns with the notion that learning success involves the synergy of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains (Reni Dianti Rukmini, Mirzon Daheri, Jumira Warlizasusi, 2024).

To ensure that value integration is effective, the preparation of indicators must consider institutional contexts such as Islamic schools, madrasas, and Islamic boarding schools. Therefore, the participation of teachers, parents, and religious leaders is very necessary so that the indicators formulated reflect the real needs of students and the values that live in their communities. This participatory approach has been proven to increase data accuracy while strengthening the accountability of the evaluation process. Within this framework, the principles of accountability and value-based transparency are also very important. M&E reporting should not only convey findings, but also describe the trust, fairness, and integrity of the evaluator so that the results of the evaluation contribute to improving governance and quality culture in Islamic educational institutions (Yuliyana & Hendrawati, 2025).

To implement value-based M&E effectively, participatory approaches are needed. Teachers, parents, and community leaders must be involved in designing and validating indicators to ensure contextual relevance (Yuliyana & Hendrawati, 2025). Mixed-methods evaluation is suitable for capturing Islamic values because it blends quantitative data with in-depth qualitative insights. Instruments such as moral rubrics, spiritual observation sheets, reflective journals, and EMIS data can be used to generate comprehensive findings (Muh Ibn Sholeh, Nur Efendi, 2023).

At the implementation stage, Islamic educational institutions can start the value-based M&E process by compiling a baseline to map the initial condition of students and identify the core values to be developed. From there, the assessment indicators and rubrics are structured and then combined with training for teachers and supervisors to be able to assess the affective and spiritual dimensions systematically. Periodic monitoring can be carried out with a combination of observations, questionnaires, portfolios, and EMIS data, before finally producing value-based feedback that emphasizes moral development, character strengthening, and institutional governance improvement. Research shows that this value-based M&E approach has proven to be effective in improving the quality of Islamic educational institutions in a sustainable manner (Kurniati et al., 2023)

4. M&E Practical Model for Islamic Education

The practical M&E model for Islamic education can be developed by adapting the CIPP approach to include Islamic values and sustainability elements (Jaya & Hamzah, 2021) The model operates through four stages:

1. **Context** – identifying Islamic and sustainability-oriented goals.
2. **Input** – assessing HR readiness, curriculum content, budget, and resources.
3. **Process** – monitoring learning implementation, Islamic practices, and ecological awareness programs.
4. **Product** – evaluating academic achievement alongside character formation and environmental behavior.

To ensure practicality, institutions may use five core components: clear indicators, routine data collection, triangulative analysis, communicative reporting, and follow-up action planning (M. L. Mustofa, 2012)

Instruments such as behavior observation rubrics, teacher supervision sheets, performance dashboards, and spiritual competency scales make the evaluation easier to apply and interpret. A participatory model is recommended to promote ownership and sustainability.

(Rizka Nur Alfiana , Nasikhin , Aliza Kotrunada , Ibnu Qowi Wibowo, Isti Nusrotal Adila, 2024).

5. Challenges and Opportunities Ahead

Monitoring & evaluation implementation faces various challenges limited HR capacity, insufficient budgets, and incomplete data systems. Some regions experience resistance due to concerns that evaluations might expose institutional weaknesses. Besides, the diverse cultural and geographical context complicates uniform evaluation approaches.

In Islamic education, challenges are intensified by the need to integrate spiritual values into measurable indicators. Many teachers lack training on assessing affective and spiritual competencies. However, opportunities are abundant. Global initiatives under UNESCO and SDGs push institutions to strengthen EMIS-based monitoring. Digital platforms make data collection easier. The growing literature on value-based M&E offers models and tools that institutions can adopt.

Recommendations include developing Islamic value based M&E modules, strengthening evaluator training, and collaborating with universities to validate instruments (United Nations Educational, 2018).

Conclusion

This study affirms that Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is a vital element in ensuring Islamic education remains effective, accountable, and aligned with sustainability goals. Systematic M&E strengthens evidence-based decision making, improves curriculum quality, and supports institutional development. Integrating Islamic values in evaluation frameworks allows M&E to assess not only academic outcomes but also spiritual, moral, and social growth. Models such as CIPP and digital tools like EMIS further enhance transparency and governance. Although challenges such as limited human resources and funding persist, global support and innovations in value-based M&E present promising opportunities. Overall, a well-designed M&E system grounded in Islamic principles and sustainability can significantly enhance the quality and long-term impact of Islamic education.

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