



Educational Management Strategies in Improving the Quality of Islamic Educational Institutions

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Abstract

Islamic educational institutions are increasingly challenged to maintain and enhance their institutional quality in the context of globalization, technological change, and rising demands for accountability and educational standards. This study aims to analyze and synthesize effective educational management strategies that contribute to improving the quality of Islamic educational institutions. A qualitative approach was employed using a library research design, involving the systematic review of peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and relevant official documents published within the last five years. Data were collected through documentation techniques and analyzed using thematic content analysis to identify recurring patterns and key strategic dimensions. The findings indicate that transformational leadership, strategic planning and curriculum management, quality assurance systems, and stakeholder engagement are critical factors in strengthening institutional performance. In addition, the integration of modern management practices with Islamic values such as accountability, trustworthiness, and collective responsibility enhances both organizational effectiveness and institutional credibility. These results demonstrate that institutional quality improvement is not solely dependent on technical management processes but also on the alignment of administrative practices with ethical and spiritual principles. In conclusion, a holistic and integrative management approach that harmonizes professional standards with Islamic values is essential for achieving sustainable quality improvement in Islamic educational institutions.

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic educational institutions have long played a central role in shaping the intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions of Muslim societies. Institutions such as pesantren, madrasah, and Islamic universities function not only as centers of knowledge transmission but also as spaces for character formation and value internalization rooted in Islamic teachings. In the contemporary educational landscape, however, these institutions are confronted with increasingly complex challenges driven by globalization, technological transformation, and heightened demands for accountability and quality assurance (Rahimi & Oh, 2024; Rehman, 2025; Ul Hassan et al., 2025). The expectation to produce graduates who are both academically competent and morally grounded has intensified the need for institutional reform and innovation. Consequently, Islamic educational institutions are required to move beyond traditional management practices toward more systematic and strategic approaches that can sustain quality improvement without compromising their religious identity. This transformation underscores the importance of educational management as a key driver in ensuring institutional relevance and competitiveness in the modern era.

Despite their historical significance, many Islamic educational institutions continue to face persistent structural and managerial challenges that hinder optimal performance. Empirical observations indicate that issues such as limited infrastructure, uneven teacher quality, weak governance systems, and misaligned curricula remain prevalent across various institutional levels (Atuhurra & Kaffenberger, 2022; Buabeng & Amo-Darko, 2025; Pak et al., 2020; Spillane et al., 2022). These challenges not only affect internal efficiency but also reduce institutional competitiveness

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within national education systems that are increasingly driven by accreditation standards and performance indicators. Furthermore, disparities in management capacity often lead to inconsistent educational outcomes, particularly in institutions that rely heavily on traditional or informal administrative practices. The gap between institutional potential and actual performance reflects a deeper systemic issue related to the absence of structured and sustainable management strategies. As a result, improving institutional quality is not merely a pedagogical concern but a managerial imperative that requires comprehensive and evidence-based intervention.

The urgency of addressing educational management in Islamic institutions is further amplified by the growing expectations of stakeholders, including students, parents, policymakers, and society at large (Faizin, 2024; Hasan, 2025; Sözeri et al., 2022). In an era characterized by rapid information exchange and digital integration, stakeholders increasingly demand transparency, accountability, and measurable outcomes in educational provision (Al-Thani, 2025; Lindquist & Huse, 2017; Saner et al., 2020). Islamic educational institutions are therefore compelled to adopt modern management frameworks that support strategic planning, data-driven decision-making, and continuous evaluation processes (Adlani et al., 2024; Dahliana & Almuhajir, 2025; Elihami et al., 2024). At the same time, these institutions must preserve their unique religious and cultural identity, which adds a layer of complexity to management practices. This dual demand creates a critical tension between modernization and tradition that must be carefully navigated. Accordingly, exploring contextually appropriate management strategies becomes essential to ensure that institutional reforms are both effective and culturally sustainable.

The importance of this study is also grounded in the recognition that educational management is a multidimensional construct encompassing leadership, organizational governance, curriculum management, and stakeholder engagement. Effective management practices enable institutions to align their vision, resources, and operational processes toward achieving educational excellence (Aithal & Maiya, 2023; Cliniciu, 2023; Liu, 2024). In the context of Islamic education, management must also integrate ethical and spiritual dimensions, such as amanah (trustworthiness), shura (consultation), and accountability, into institutional practices (Abdurrahman, 2025; Setiawan, 2024; Zahiri & Sahal, 2025). This integrative approach distinguishes Islamic educational management from purely secular models and highlights its unique contribution to holistic education. However, the extent to which these principles are systematically implemented in practice remains uneven across institutions. Therefore, a deeper exploration of management strategies that effectively combine modern administrative principles with Islamic values is both timely and necessary.

A growing body of literature has examined the relationship between educational management and institutional quality, with a particular emphasis on leadership, strategic planning, and quality assurance systems (Bush & Glover, 2016; Díez et al., 2020; Manatos et al., 2017). Transformational leadership has been consistently identified as a critical factor influencing teacher performance, organizational culture, and overall institutional effectiveness (Alzoraiki et al., 2024; Nam & Park, 2019; Sun & Henderson, 2017). In addition, studies on strategic management highlight the importance of vision-driven planning, resource allocation, and performance monitoring in achieving sustainable institutional development (Fadhel & Alqurs, 2025; Flori et al., 2025; Kang et al., 2024). Quality management approaches, including Total Quality Management (TQM), have also been widely applied in Islamic educational settings, demonstrating positive impacts on student achievement and institutional reputation (Kurniawan et al., 2024; Norman et al., 2025; Sudir et al., 2025). Furthermore, recent studies emphasize the role of technology integration in enhancing administrative efficiency and supporting data-based decision-making processes (Karina et al., 2025; Nisar et al., 2020; Schildkamp, 2019; Szukits, 2022; Szukits & Móricz, 2024). Collectively, these findings indicate that effective management practices are essential for improving institutional quality.

Nevertheless, existing studies exhibit several limitations that warrant further investigation. Many studies tend to adopt general management frameworks derived from Western contexts without adequately considering the socio-cultural and religious specificities of Islamic educational institutions (Altinyelken & Sözeri, 2019; Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023; Sahin, 2018; Samier, 2017; Utari et al., 2025). Additionally, a significant portion of the literature remains descriptive, focusing on isolated management components rather than examining their interrelationships in a comprehensive framework (Fuertes et al., 2020; Hristov et al., 2021; Laasch et al., 2023; Schulze et

al., 2016; Thomas & Tee, 2022). There is also limited research that systematically integrates leadership, curriculum management, quality assurance, and community engagement into a unified model of institutional quality improvement. This fragmentation reduces the practical applicability of research findings and limits their contribution to policy and institutional reform. Consequently, there is a clear need for a more integrative and contextually grounded analysis that synthesizes diverse management dimensions within Islamic educational settings.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze and synthesize educational management strategies that are most effective in improving the quality of Islamic educational institutions. Specifically, the study seeks to identify key management dimensions, including leadership, strategic planning, quality assurance, and stakeholder engagement, and to examine how these dimensions interact to enhance institutional performance. The study also aims to develop an integrative conceptual framework that aligns modern management principles with Islamic organizational values. Theoretically, this research contributes to the advancement of educational management literature by offering a context-sensitive model tailored to Islamic institutions. Practically, it provides guidance for policymakers, institutional leaders, and educators in designing and implementing effective management strategies that support sustainable quality improvement. Through this synthesis, the study is expected to bridge the gap between theory and practice while reinforcing the relevance of Islamic educational institutions in the contemporary educational landscape.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design using a library research approach to systematically analyze and synthesize existing scholarly literature on educational management strategies in Islamic educational institutions. This design was selected because the study aims to construct an integrative conceptual framework rather than test hypotheses empirically, making it appropriate for consolidating fragmented knowledge and identifying theoretical patterns across prior studies. The qualitative approach allows for interpretive depth and contextual sensitivity, particularly in examining the intersection between modern management principles and Islamic educational values. The research was conducted within an academic research context without a specific physical field site, as it relied on digital and institutional databases as primary sources of data. The data collection process was carried out over a four-month period, from January to April 2026, to ensure sufficient time for comprehensive literature identification, screening, and analysis.

The population of this study consisted of scholarly publications addressing educational management and institutional quality within Islamic educational settings. A purposive sampling technique was employed to ensure that only relevant and high-quality sources were included in the analysis. The inclusion criteria required that selected studies explicitly discuss educational management in Islamic or comparable religious educational contexts, address aspects of institutional quality improvement, be published between 2020 and 2025, and be accessible in full-text form through reputable academic databases. Sources that did not meet these criteria, including non-peer-reviewed materials or publications lacking methodological clarity, were excluded. From an initial pool of approximately 50 identified sources, 30 publications were selected for in-depth analysis following a two-stage screening process involving title-abstract review and full-text evaluation. In this context, the selected literature corpus functioned as the research participants, representing diverse perspectives and empirical findings that informed the study's conceptual synthesis.

Data were collected using a structured documentation technique, which served as the primary research instrument. The documentation guide was designed to systematically extract and organize relevant information from each selected source, focusing on key analytical dimensions such as leadership models, strategic planning practices, curriculum management, quality assurance systems, organizational governance, stakeholder engagement, and technology integration. The instrument was developed based on established frameworks in educational management literature and adapted to the context of Islamic education. To ensure validity, the documentation guide underwent expert review by three academics specializing in educational management and Islamic education, who evaluated its relevance, comprehensiveness, and alignment with the research objectives. Reliability was addressed through consistent application of the instrument across all

sources, as well as cross-checking of coded data on a subset of documents to ensure analytical consistency.

The data collection procedure followed a systematic and replicable sequence. The process began with the identification of research keywords and search strings, including combinations of “educational management,” “Islamic educational institutions,” “institutional quality,” and “quality management.” These keywords were used to retrieve relevant literature from databases such as Google Scholar, ERIC, Scopus, and institutional repositories. The initial search results were then screened based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Subsequently, selected articles were subjected to in-depth reading and data extraction using the structured documentation guide. All extracted data were organized into thematic categories to facilitate analysis. Throughout the data collection process, detailed records were maintained to ensure transparency and replicability of the research procedure.

Data analysis was conducted using a qualitative content analysis approach guided by the framework of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. During the data reduction stage, relevant information from the literature was coded and categorized according to the predefined analytical dimensions. Coding was performed iteratively to identify recurring themes, patterns, and relationships among different management strategies and institutional quality indicators. In the data display stage, thematic matrices and conceptual mappings were developed to visualize the connections between key variables and to support interpretive analysis. The final stage involved synthesizing the findings into a coherent conceptual framework that explains how various management strategies contribute to institutional quality improvement in Islamic educational contexts. The analysis emphasized both frequency and depth of themes, ensuring that dominant patterns as well as nuanced insights were captured comprehensively.

Ethical considerations were carefully observed throughout the research process. Although the study did not involve human subjects in a traditional sense, ethical standards were maintained by ensuring proper citation and acknowledgment of all sources, thereby avoiding plagiarism and intellectual misrepresentation. The selection and interpretation of literature were conducted objectively to minimize bias, and all sources were treated with academic integrity. Transparency in data collection and analysis procedures was maintained to allow for verification and replication by other researchers. By adhering to these ethical principles, the study ensures the credibility and trustworthiness of its findings while contributing responsibly to the academic discourse on educational management in Islamic institutions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This section presents the primary findings derived from the systematic literature analysis on educational management strategies in improving the quality of Islamic educational institutions. The results are organized to highlight key strategic dimensions identified across the reviewed studies, including leadership, strategic planning, quality assurance, and stakeholder engagement. Each subsection elaborates on the nature and role of these management components in shaping institutional performance and quality outcomes. The findings collectively demonstrate that the integration of modern management practices with Islamic values contributes significantly to sustainable institutional improvement. Moreover, the analysis indicates that contextually grounded and value-oriented management approaches provide a strong foundation for enhancing the effectiveness, accountability, and competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions in contemporary educational settings.

Transformational and Islamic Leadership as a Quality Driver

The analysis of the selected literature consistently identified transformational leadership as the most influential management variable in determining institutional quality within Islamic educational institutions. Principals and institutional leaders who demonstrate transformational characteristics, including visionary thinking, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation, are strongly associated with superior organizational outcomes across diverse institutional contexts. Evidence from the literature indicates that institutions led by

transformational leaders experience notable improvements in teacher pedagogical competence as well as reductions in administrative inefficiencies over sustained periods of implementation. These leaders are able to cultivate shared institutional visions that align teacher motivation with quality improvement objectives, thereby fostering organizational cultures characterized by continuous professional growth, collaborative problem-solving, and collective accountability for student learning outcomes.

Beyond conventional leadership dimensions, the findings also reveal that Islamic educational institutions benefit uniquely from leaders who integrate spiritual values into their management practices. This distinctive leadership orientation incorporates principles such as *amanah* (trustworthiness), *shura* (consultative decision-making), and *tawadu* (humility) into daily managerial behavior. Such integration generates higher levels of teacher commitment, organizational citizenship behavior, and institutional loyalty compared to leadership models that rely solely on secular approaches. As a result, a distinctive organizational culture emerges in which quality improvement is perceived not merely as a professional responsibility but as a moral and spiritual obligation. This perspective strengthens institutional commitment to excellence and supports sustained quality improvement efforts across all organizational levels.

Strategic Planning and Curriculum Management

Strategic planning emerged as the second most consistently supported management strategy, with institutions that adopt formal strategic frameworks demonstrating measurably higher levels of institutional quality. Effective strategic planning within Islamic educational institutions involves the articulation of institutional missions, formulation of long-term goals, allocation of resources, development of performance indicators, and implementation of systematic monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Findings indicate that institutions implementing structured strategic management processes tend to achieve higher accreditation outcomes and demonstrate stronger organizational performance compared to those operating without formal planning systems. Importantly, strategic plans are most effective when they authentically integrate religious identity into institutional objectives, ensuring that quality improvement efforts remain aligned with the institution's core values and educational mission.

Curriculum management is identified as an equally critical dimension within strategic planning. The literature demonstrates a strong relationship between coherent curriculum development and improvements in academic quality and graduate competitiveness. Institutions that successfully align their curricula with national standards while maintaining distinctive Islamic content produce graduates who exhibit both strong academic competencies and well-developed religious identity. Effective curriculum management requires careful balancing between regulatory demands and community expectations regarding the depth and authenticity of Islamic education. Institutions that adopt participatory curriculum development processes involving teachers, religious scholars, and community representatives show enhanced educational relevance, increased student engagement, and stronger institutional reputation. These findings confirm that curriculum management serves as a key strategic lever in improving institutional quality.

Quality Assurance Systems and Continuous Improvement

Quality assurance systems, particularly those grounded in Total Quality Management principles and continuous improvement approaches, are identified as essential mechanisms for sustaining institutional quality over time. Unlike short-term reform initiatives, formal quality assurance systems embed evaluation, feedback, and corrective action into routine organizational processes, thereby institutionalizing continuous improvement. The findings indicate that institutions implementing systematic quality management practices demonstrate measurable improvements across various quality indicators, including infrastructure standards, teaching effectiveness, student services, and community trust. Additionally, institutions with established internal quality assurance units exhibit greater responsiveness to identified weaknesses, faster implementation of corrective actions, and more consistent performance improvement trajectories.

A significant finding is the role of Islamic ethical values in strengthening the effectiveness of quality assurance systems. The integration of principles such as *itqan* (excellence), *muraqabah* (self-monitoring), and *masuliyah* (accountability) enhances institutional commitment to quality

standards beyond procedural compliance. When quality assurance is understood as part of religious responsibility toward stakeholders, engagement becomes intrinsically motivated rather than externally imposed. This value-based approach fosters a distinctive institutional culture in which continuous improvement becomes a shared organizational norm. Consequently, quality enhancement efforts are more sustainable and resilient, extending beyond formal evaluation cycles and external accreditation pressures.

Community Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement

Community partnerships and stakeholder engagement are identified as critical yet often underemphasized dimensions of educational management in Islamic institutions. These institutions are deeply embedded within their social environments and depend significantly on community trust, participation, and support for their sustainability. The findings indicate that institutions with structured community engagement programs demonstrate stronger performance across academic, financial, and reputational dimensions compared to those with limited stakeholder interaction. Active involvement of parents in governance, contributions from alumni networks, and partnerships with external stakeholders serve as powerful drivers of institutional development that extend beyond internal management capacity.

Furthermore, community engagement in Islamic educational contexts is most effective when grounded in shared cultural and religious values. Principles such as *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), *ta'awun* (mutual cooperation), and *waqf* (charitable contribution) provide strong motivational foundations for sustained stakeholder involvement. Institutions that strategically cultivate these value-based relationships are able to mobilize social capital, encourage voluntary participation, and strengthen collective accountability. In addition, stakeholder engagement functions as an external accountability mechanism, providing feedback that complements internal quality assurance processes. Institutions that actively incorporate community input into decision-making demonstrate greater adaptability, stronger public trust, and more sustainable quality improvement trajectories. These findings highlight that community engagement is not merely a supporting element, but a central component of effective educational management in Islamic institutions.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that transformational leadership emerges as the most influential factor in improving the quality of Islamic educational institutions. Conceptually, this underscores that institutional quality is not solely determined by structural arrangements, but by leadership capacity in fostering vision, motivation, and collective commitment toward continuous improvement. From the perspective of transformational leadership theory, leaders act as change agents who inspire innovation, build trust, and enhance organizational performance through relational and value-driven approaches (Hidayat & Machali, 2021; Hidayat & Nasution, 2022). This finding is consistent with Kurniawan et al. (2021), who demonstrated that transformational leadership significantly improves teacher competence and institutional effectiveness in madrasah contexts. However, this study extends previous research by emphasizing that, within Islamic educational settings, leadership effectiveness is closely tied to the integration of spiritual values such as *amanah* and ethical responsibility. Therefore, the contribution of this study lies in reinforcing a value-based transformational leadership model that is both contextually relevant and theoretically enriched.

In addition to leadership, strategic planning is identified as a critical determinant of institutional quality. The findings suggest that the transition from informal management practices to structured and systematic planning is essential for achieving measurable educational outcomes. Theoretically, strategic management functions as a mechanism for aligning institutional vision, resource allocation, and performance monitoring within a coherent framework (Prasojo et al., 2022). This aligns with previous studies emphasizing the role of strategic planning in enhancing organizational effectiveness and long-term sustainability (Fadhel & Alqurs, 2025; Kang et al., 2024). However, within Islamic educational institutions, strategic planning is not merely a technical process but involves navigating the tension between modernization and the preservation of religious identity. This study highlights that institutions capable of integrating these dimensions achieve a unique balance between efficiency and authenticity. Thus, the findings contribute to the literature by

demonstrating that effective strategic planning in Islamic education must incorporate both managerial and value-based considerations.

The study further reveals that quality assurance systems, particularly those based on Total Quality Management (TQM), play a pivotal role in sustaining institutional improvement. Conceptually, TQM emphasizes continuous improvement, stakeholder involvement, and systematic evaluation processes to enhance organizational performance (Rohmah & Sukardi, 2022). This finding is consistent with Fahrudin et al. (2022), who reported that TQM implementation positively impacts student achievement and institutional reputation. However, this study offers a critical extension by demonstrating that the effectiveness of TQM in Islamic educational contexts is significantly strengthened when integrated with Islamic ethical principles such as *itqan* (excellence), *amanah* (trustworthiness), and *muraqabah* (self-accountability) (Fitri et al., 2023). This suggests that purely procedural approaches to quality management are insufficient to ensure sustainable improvement. Accordingly, this study contributes to the theoretical development of quality management by incorporating spiritual dimensions as integral components of institutional quality culture.

Another key finding highlights the strategic role of community and stakeholder engagement in enhancing institutional quality. From a theoretical standpoint, community-based approaches emphasize that educational institutions are embedded within broader social systems, and their effectiveness depends on the quality of interactions with stakeholders (Yusuf & Arifin, 2023). This finding supports previous research indicating that stakeholder engagement contributes to institutional legitimacy, resource mobilization, and sustainability (Baharun & Awwaliyah, 2022). However, this study advances the discussion by demonstrating that, in Islamic educational contexts, community engagement is not only instrumental but also normative, grounded in values such as *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) and *ta'awun* (mutual cooperation). This dual function differentiates Islamic institutions from secular counterparts and provides a culturally embedded framework for stakeholder collaboration. Therefore, this study expands existing literature by framing community engagement as both a managerial strategy and a value-based practice.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that leadership, strategic planning, quality assurance, and stakeholder engagement should not be viewed as isolated variables but as interdependent components within an integrated management system. This perspective aligns with systems theory in educational management, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of organizational elements in achieving institutional goals (Aithal & Maiya, 2023; Liu, 2024). The results also reinforce Sulaiman et al. (2023), who argue that contextually integrated management strategies yield more sustainable outcomes compared to fragmented approaches. However, this study contributes further by highlighting that integration must include the incorporation of Islamic values as a unifying element across all management dimensions. In this sense, the study modifies existing theoretical frameworks by positioning value integration as a central mechanism in achieving coherence and effectiveness within Islamic educational management.

From a critical perspective, the findings also reveal that the effectiveness of management strategies is highly contingent upon contextual factors such as human resource capacity, institutional support, and socio-economic conditions. This helps explain the variation in outcomes reported in previous studies (Maulana & Sari, 2022; Wahyudi et al., 2023), where similar management strategies produced different results depending on institutional contexts. Additionally, the use of a qualitative library research approach limits the ability to establish causal relationships between variables, necessitating cautious interpretation of the findings. Nevertheless, the strength of this approach lies in its ability to generate a comprehensive conceptual synthesis that integrates diverse theoretical perspectives. Therefore, this study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how contextual variables shape the implementation and effectiveness of educational management strategies.

Overall, this study offers both theoretical and practical contributions to the field of educational management in Islamic institutions. Theoretically, it develops an integrative framework that combines modern management principles with Islamic values, thereby extending existing models that often overlook contextual and cultural dimensions. Practically, the findings provide guidance for institutional leaders and policymakers in designing management strategies that are not only efficient but also aligned with ethical and spiritual principles. By addressing the fragmentation in previous research, this study fills an important gap in the literature and proposes a holistic model of institutional quality improvement. In the broader global context, the study positions Islamic

educational management as a value-based alternative to dominant technocratic approaches, offering a more humanistic and culturally responsive paradigm for educational development.

CONCLUSION

This study systematically examined educational management strategies for improving institutional quality in Islamic educational institutions using a qualitative library research approach. The findings reveal that four key strategic dimensions transformational leadership, strategic planning and curriculum management, quality assurance systems, and community engagement play a central and interconnected role in enhancing institutional performance. These results indicate that institutional quality improvement cannot be achieved through isolated efforts, but requires a comprehensive and integrative management approach. In particular, leadership emerges as a driving force that shapes organizational culture and commitment, while strategic planning and quality assurance provide the structural foundation for sustainable improvement. At the same time, community engagement strengthens institutional legitimacy and resource support, making it a crucial component in the overall management system.

Furthermore, the study highlights that effective educational management in Islamic contexts is not solely technical in nature, but deeply rooted in moral and spiritual values. The integration of modern management principles with Islamic values such as responsibility, accountability, and collective welfare creates a distinctive model of institutional governance that is both efficient and meaningful. This integrative approach enables institutions to respond to contemporary challenges while maintaining their identity and value orientation. Therefore, the study contributes to the development of a context-sensitive framework that can guide institutional leaders and policymakers in designing sustainable quality improvement strategies. Ultimately, this research reinforces the idea that the future of Islamic educational institutions depends on their ability to balance professionalism with ethical and spiritual integrity in educational management practices

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

YD conceptualized the research framework, formulated the research objectives, and led the overall structure and development of the manuscript, including the introduction, background of the study, and rationale. **AM** was responsible for the methodology design, data collection procedures, and systematic literature analysis, contributing substantially to the results and discussion sections, as well as the thematic synthesis and conceptual framework construction. **IN** conducted the gap analysis, literature review synthesis, and quality assurance of academic references, and was primarily responsible for drafting the conclusion, abstract, and finalizing the manuscript for submission. All three authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript and agreed to be accountable for all aspects of the work presented.

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