



## Applying Blue Ocean Strategy to Drive Innovation in the Tahfidz Entrepreneur Program

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### Abstract :

This study aims to examine the implementation of the Blue Ocean Strategy through the innovation of the Tahfidz Entrepreneur Program, focusing on creating new market space in the competitive landscape of Islamic educational institutions. The research emphasizes a value differentiation strategy that integrates Quran memorization with fostering students' entrepreneurial skills. A qualitative case study approach was employed, with data collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis, and analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that the Tahfidz Entrepreneur Program generates value innovation by combining religious competencies with economic productivity, enhancing institutional competitiveness, strengthening public perception, and attracting broader community engagement. The study implies that applying the Blue Ocean Strategy can serve as a strategic alternative for Islamic educational institutions to develop superior programs that are adaptive, sustainable, and aligned with community needs, demonstrating that the integration of educational and entrepreneurial innovation provides a distinctive advantage in a competitive educational environment.

## INTRODUCTION

The quality of education has become a critical societal concern, as public expectations extend beyond academic performance to include the development of moral character, religious values, and practical life skills (Bigovic et al., 2024). Communities increasingly demand educational models that prepare students not only for exams but also for ethical, social, and economic challenges in the modern world. Islamic educational institutions, in particular, are expected to integrate spiritual development with competencies relevant to contemporary society. Evidence shows that students who receive holistic education demonstrate higher engagement, improved moral reasoning, and better adaptability in professional contexts. Therefore, studies that explore innovative educational strategies are crucial to ensuring that Islamic schools can meet evolving societal needs while fostering

comprehensive student development. In this context, analyzing strategies that combine religious and entrepreneurial competencies can provide insights for broader educational policy and practice. Ultimately, addressing these educational challenges contributes to creating a more capable, ethical, and economically prepared generation, highlighting the societal relevance of research on strategic educational innovation (Addo et al., 2021; Al-Kfairy et al., 2023).

Despite increasing societal demands for holistic education, many Islamic Senior High Schools still employ conventional competitive strategies centered on cost reduction, facility expansion, and student enrollment numbers. This traditional focus often limits their capacity to differentiate themselves meaningfully or achieve sustainable competitive advantage (Fitriyah et al., 2022). Consequently, these institutions struggle to respond to community expectations for educational programs that integrate Islamic values with entrepreneurial skills, leaving graduates inadequately prepared for the demands of the workforce and economic independence. The lack of innovative, value-driven educational strategies prevents schools from creating distinct institutional identities and capturing public interest in a competitive educational market. Moreover, this conventional approach fails to address the broader social and economic roles that Islamic schools can play in community development (Algharabat & Rana, 2020; Alshater et al., 2022). Recognizing these limitations underscores the necessity of strategic interventions that enable schools to transcend standard competition. Research examining novel approaches, such as combining religious instruction with entrepreneurship, is essential for identifying mechanisms that can generate long-term institutional relevance and societal impact.

In practice, Islamic Senior High Schools have begun experimenting with integrated programs, yet the implementation of initiatives that simultaneously emphasize Quran memorization (Tahfidz) and entrepreneurship remains limited. While communities increasingly seek educational institutions capable of preparing students for spiritual, social, and economic challenges (Ao et al., 2023), most programs operate in isolation, focusing either on religious instruction or entrepreneurial skill development. This phenomenon highlights a gap between public expectations and the available educational offerings (Awaliyah et al., 2025). Observations reveal that students enrolled in schools that combine Tahfidz with entrepreneurship display higher motivation, a stronger sense of purpose, and practical economic skills, demonstrating the potential value of integrated approaches. Nevertheless, these programs are still rare, fragmented, and lack formal strategic frameworks that ensure sustainability and scalability. Such a situation indicates both a demand-driven opportunity and a need for systematic study, particularly in understanding how strategic innovations like the Blue Ocean Strategy can guide program design, institutional differentiation, and community engagement. Consequently, there is a pressing need to examine the implementation and outcomes of integrated educational models in the context of Islamic schools (Amar et al., 2024).

Previous studies have shown that the Blue Ocean Strategy is widely applied in business, higher education, and school management to create uncontested market spaces and institutional differentiation (Sholikhin, 2023). Kim and Mauborgne (2022) highlight that organizations capable of developing innovative value propositions can achieve sustainable competitive advantage, transcending conventional competition. In Islamic education,

research indicates that flagship programs such as boarding schools, Tahfidz programs, and digital learning platforms increase institutional attractiveness and community engagement (Suyatman et al., 2025). Additionally, entrepreneurship education is recognized for fostering independence, creativity (Husain, 2025), and leadership among students. However, most prior research treats religious education and entrepreneurship separately, failing to investigate the synergistic potential of integrating both as a strategic innovation. This gap limits understanding of how Islamic schools can develop distinctive programs that respond to societal needs while achieving differentiation in a competitive market (Rofiqi & Kolis, 2020). Therefore, a study that examines the integrated implementation of Tahfidz and entrepreneurship within a strategic framework addresses a significant research need.

While international studies over the past five years have demonstrated that spiritual-based entrepreneurship education enhances leadership, creativity, and readiness to face global challenges, research specifically exploring the Tahfidz Entrepreneur Program in Islamic Senior High Schools remains scarce (Rofiqi & Kolis, 2020; Nasor et al., 2026). The novelty of this research lies in positioning the program as a value innovation strategy capable of creating new, uncontested educational market spaces, consistent with the Blue Ocean Strategy framework. This approach goes beyond incremental improvements, emphasizing differentiation through the simultaneous development of religious and entrepreneurial competencies. Addressing this research gap is critical because it offers insights into designing educational programs that are socially relevant, economically viable, and spiritually enriching. By exploring integrated strategies that enhance institutional competitiveness, this study contributes to the literature on strategic innovation in Islamic education while providing a model that other institutions can adapt to meet evolving community expectations and labor market demands.

The primary research problem examines how Islamic Senior High Schools can move beyond conventional competition and adopt strategic differentiation that adds value to both students and the broader community. Specifically, this study investigates three interrelated questions: (1) How is the Tahfidz Entrepreneur Program implemented as a strategic innovation? (2) How does this program enhance institutional competitiveness? (3) How do communities respond to the integration of religious and entrepreneurial education? The research focuses on the intersection of spiritual and economic development, recognizing that effective educational programs should simultaneously address academic, social, and economic dimensions. This perspective highlights the potential of the Tahfidz Entrepreneur Program not only as a curriculum innovation but also as a strategic instrument for positioning Islamic schools in competitive educational landscapes.

The central argument is that the Tahfidz Entrepreneur Program constitutes a form of value innovation capable of implementing the Blue Ocean Strategy in Islamic Senior High Schools. By integrating Quran memorization with entrepreneurial development, schools can achieve strong differentiation compared to conventional learning models. This program

strengthens the public image of madrasas, enhances educational relevance to workforce needs, and fosters student economic independence. Moreover, spiritual-based entrepreneurship education has been shown to improve leadership, creativity, and global readiness, positioning graduates to contribute meaningfully to society. Consequently, schools adopting this integrated model can build public trust, expand educational market share, and secure sustainable competitive advantage, providing a replicable strategy for educational innovation in Islamic contexts. This study contributes by offering empirical insights into the practical application of strategic educational innovation that aligns spiritual, social, and economic objectives.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to examine the implementation of the Blue Ocean Strategy through the innovative Tahfidz Entrepreneur program at Madrasah Aliyah Nurul Jadid. The case study method was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of complex educational phenomena within their real-life context, focusing on how the integration of Quran memorization and entrepreneurship is used as a strategy for institutional differentiation. Qualitative research is considered appropriate for this study as it enables a comprehensive understanding of the processes, strategies, and meanings constructed by educational practitioners, capturing social realities based on the lived experiences of key stakeholders (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2020). This approach supports detailed insights into the creation of new market space in Islamic education, which cannot be fully understood through quantitative measures alone.

The research was conducted at Madrasah Aliyah Nurul Jadid, which has implemented the Tahfidz Entrepreneur program as a flagship initiative. The site was purposively selected due to its innovative integration of religious education and entrepreneurship, its demonstrated institutional competitiveness, and the accessibility of relevant informants and documentation. The selection of this location also ensured the availability of empirical data that is directly relevant to the research objectives. The sources of information included primary informants such as the school principal, vice principal for curriculum, Tahfidz and entrepreneurship teachers, students, and parents, who were directly involved in program implementation. Secondary sources comprised institutional documents, including madrasah profiles, curricula, program reports, flagship program documentation, and relevant academic literature and online publications.

Data collection involved observation, in-depth interviews, documentation, and desk review to ensure triangulation and data richness. Observations captured learning activities and institutional culture, while semi-structured interviews allowed flexible but focused exploration of informants' perspectives. Documentation provided supporting evidence through archives, photos, curricula, and program reports, complemented by desk reviews of scientific literature and policy documents. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña

(2020), including data condensation (selecting, simplifying, and grouping relevant information), data display (descriptive narratives, matrices, and thematic categorization), and verification or drawing conclusions. Content and interpretative analyses were applied to interpret findings within the framework of Blue Ocean Strategy and the social context of Islamic education, producing systematic, logical, and empirically grounded conclusions.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

The implementation of the Tahfidz Entrepreneur Program at Madrasah Aliyah Nurul Jadid represents a strategic effort to create new value by integrating Quran memorization with entrepreneurial skill development. This program not only reinforces students' religious identity but also strengthens business skills, economic independence, and problem-solving abilities. Operationally, it involves structured memorization learning, practice-based entrepreneurship training, mentoring student businesses, and fostering a productive school culture. Interviews with the principal and entrepreneurship teachers indicate that the program addresses community demands for education that prepares students for both spiritual and economic challenges. The integration of religious and entrepreneurial competencies is interpreted as a form of value innovation aligned with the Blue Ocean Strategy, creating a differentiation that is not easily replicated by other institutions.

Observations confirm that the program is systematically embedded in the madrasah's daily routines. Activities such as Murojaah and memorization recitations occur every morning, while entrepreneurship training includes student bazaars, classroom business management, and practical business simulations. Institutional support, including dedicated business spaces, teacher mentoring, and boarding school guidance, strengthens discipline and work ethic. This synergy between religious values, practical learning, and institutional support ensures that the program becomes a living educational culture rather than a mere administrative initiative.

The program has significantly increased the madrasa's competitiveness by creating value innovation and new market space. By offering a unique combination of religious excellence and entrepreneurial skills, the madrasah attracts new students, builds parental trust, strengthens its institutional image, and positions itself as a relevant and distinctive educational option. Institutional documents and reports confirm differentiation in educational services, increased enrollment, stronger economic networks, and effective implementation of practice-based entrepreneurship. This demonstrates that competition is no longer based solely on facilities or tuition fees but on superior programs that meet contemporary societal needs.

Community response plays a crucial role in reinforcing institutional trust and image. Parents and community leaders report that the program is a primary reason for choosing the madrasah, as it prepares students to be religiously competent and economically independent. Observations indicate active participation in student business activities, moral support, and

collaboration between students, parents, alumni, and small business partners. These interactions show that the program not only improves educational outcomes but also strengthens social legitimacy and collective trust.

Overall, the Tahfidz Entrepreneur Program functions as both an academic innovation and a strategic institutional tool. It expands the madrasa's role from purely religious instruction to a holistic educational institution that addresses contemporary socio-economic needs. By integrating religious and entrepreneurial education, the program builds public trust, establishes a strong institutional identity, and creates sustainable competitive advantage, exemplifying the successful application of the Blue Ocean Strategy in Islamic education.

## Discussion

The research results show that the implementation of the Blue Ocean Strategy in Madrasah Aliyah through the Tahfidz Entrepreneur program creates a strong differentiation compared to other educational institutions that still focus on conventional academic competition. This program not only emphasizes Quran memorization but also integrates entrepreneurial skills, thus generating unique added value for students (Nurani et al., 2024). This finding aligns with the concept of Kim and Mauborgne (Attar et al., 2022), who emphasize that the Blue Ocean Strategy focuses on creating new market space through value innovation, rather than simply winning competition in an already crowded market. The literature on Islamic education management also shows that institutions that are able to offer distinctive advantages tend to be more attractive amidst increasingly fierce competition (Tihami, 2025). Thus, the Tahfidz Entrepreneur program is a concrete form of strategic innovation relevant to the needs of modern society.

Other findings indicate that the integration of tahfidz and entrepreneurship increases public interest in madrasahs because parents consider not only the religious aspects but also the economic prospects and future independence of their children (Lufyana, 2025). This aligns with previous research, which found that the success of Islamic educational institutions is strongly influenced by their ability to address the social and economic needs of the community (Razak, 2023). However, this contrasts with previous studies that positioned the tahfidz program solely as a superior spiritual program without a direct connection to strengthening life skills. In this study, the integration of these two aspects is the primary factor creating a new positioning for madrasahs. Consequently, madrasahs are no longer viewed solely as traditional institutions, but as institutions that adapt to changing times (Aziz & Naima, 2021).

These results demonstrate the strategic function of the Tahfidz Entrepreneur program as an instrument for increasing madrasah competitiveness, both in terms of institutional image and increasing the number of new students (Ansari, 2025; Amar). Another function is to produce graduates with a balance between spiritual intelligence and economic competence. However, if dysfunctional, the implementation of this program also presents challenges in the form of the need for competent human resources in both areas: tahfidz and entrepreneurship. If not managed properly, this innovative program can become a burden on institutions,

requiring greater operational costs, teacher training, and infrastructure support than regular programs. Therefore, innovation is not merely conceptual; it must be supported by a strong managerial system (Pratiwi, 2024).

The success of this program stems from a shift in the structure of society's need for Islamic education. Today's society demands not only religious-based education but also education that ensures the economic sustainability of students. This socioeconomic structure serves as the underlying structure that drives madrasas to undertake strategic innovation. The correlation between increasing job market demands and low interest in education deemed less applicable is the primary reason for the emergence of the Tahfidz Entrepreneur program (LEFF, 2015). In other words, madrasas respond to changes in the external environment by reconstructing a more relevant curriculum. This reinforces the theory that educational innovation arises from environmental pressures as well as the need for institutional sustainability.

Overall, this research confirms that the Blue Ocean Strategy in the form of the Tahfidz Entrepreneur program is not only an educational marketing strategy but also an institutional paradigm transformation (Ali & Siregar, 2024). Islamic senior high schools (Madrasah Aliyah) that are able to integrate Islamic values with contemporary economic needs will have a greater chance of survival and growth. These findings expand the study of Islamic education management by demonstrating that strategic innovation must be based on the real needs of society, not simply following trends. Therefore, the practical implication is that madrasah leaders need to build a culture of sustainable innovation, strengthen collaboration with the business world, and ensure that flagship programs truly provide substantive benefits to students and the wider community (Jidan et al., 2025).

## CONCLUSION

The study on the Blue Ocean Strategy in Islamic Senior High Schools through the Entrepreneurial Tahfidz Program demonstrates that the most significant finding lies in the school's ability to differentiate its educational services by integrating Quran memorization with entrepreneurial skills, creating new market space while enhancing institutional competitiveness, building public trust, and strengthening its image as an adaptive Islamic educational institution. The key lesson is that Islamic schools can move beyond conventional academic-focused competition and develop value innovations that address the social, economic, and spiritual needs of the community, contributing to sustainable education. This research contributes to the scholarly discourse by extending the application of Blue Ocean Strategy to Islamic education management, highlighting the tahfidz program not only as spiritual development but also as a strategic instrument for institutional differentiation, linking program innovation, school competitiveness, community response, and institutional image in a comprehensive framework. However, the study is limited to a single madrasah, primarily reflecting the perspectives of leaders, teachers, and parents, without broader demographic representation or quantitative measurement. Future research should employ multiple sites, more diverse respondents, and mixed or quantitative methods to provide a more generalizable and evidence-based foundation for adaptive and sustainable Islamic education policies.

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