



Islamic Educational Management and Innovation: A Comparative Study of Al-Attas and Fullan

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Received: July 2025; September 2025; December 2025

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.33852/jurnalin.v9i4.639>

Abstract:

This study comparatively examines the educational management perspectives of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas and Michael Fullan to formulate an integrative framework that responds to contemporary educational challenges shaped by globalization, digital transformation, and socio-cultural change. Employing a qualitative library research design, the study analyzes primary works of both thinkers alongside relevant secondary literature using descriptive-comparative analysis. The findings indicate that al-Attas provides a robust moral and epistemological foundation through the concepts of Islamization of knowledge and *ta'dib*, positioning ethical and spiritual character formation as the core objective of education. In contrast, Fullan offers a systemic and practice-oriented model of educational innovation grounded in transformational leadership, collaboration, and continuous improvement. Despite their differing philosophical foundations, both perspectives converge on the centrality of moral purpose in sustaining meaningful and long-term educational change. The study argues that integrating al-Attas's value-based educational philosophy with Fullan's innovation-driven management approach enables educational institutions, particularly within Islamic contexts, to adapt to modern reforms without compromising ethical integrity, thereby fostering holistic, adaptive, and sustainable educational management models.

Key Words: *Islamic Educational Management; Ta'dib; Educational Innovation; Transformational Leadership*

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini secara komparatif mengkaji perspektif manajemen pendidikan Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas dan Michael Fullan untuk merumuskan kerangka kerja integratif yang merespon tantangan pendidikan kontemporer yang dibentuk oleh globalisasi, transformasi digital, dan perubahan sosial budaya. Menggunakan desain penelitian perpustakaan kualitatif, penelitian ini menganalisis karya primer kedua pemikir bersama literatur sekunder yang relevan menggunakan analisis deskriptif-komparatif. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa al-Attas memberikan landasan moral dan epistemologis yang kuat melalui konsep Islamisasi pengetahuan dan *ta'dib*, memposisikan pembentukan karakter etis dan spiritual sebagai tujuan inti pendidikan. Sebaliknya, Fullan menawarkan model inovasi pendidikan yang sistemik dan berorientasi pada praktik yang didasarkan pada kepemimpinan transformasional, kolaborasi, dan peningkatan berkelanjutan. Terlepas dari landasan filosofis mereka

yang berbeda, kedua perspektif menyatu pada sentralitas tujuan moral dalam mempertahankan perubahan pendidikan yang bermakna dan jangka panjang. Studi ini berpendapat bahwa mengintegrasikan filosofi pendidikan berbasis nilai al-Attas dengan pendekatan manajemen berbasis inovasi Fullan memungkinkan lembaga pendidikan, terutama dalam konteks Islam, untuk beradaptasi dengan reformasi modern tanpa mengorbankan integritas etis, sehingga mendorong model manajemen pendidikan yang holistik, adaptif, dan berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: *Manajemen Pendidikan Islam; Ta'dib; Inovasi Pendidikan; Kepemimpinan Transformasional*

INTRODUCTION

Education constitutes a fundamental instrument for shaping the quality of human resources and sustaining the civilization of a nation. In the contemporary global landscape, education faces increasingly complex challenges arising from rapid globalisation, digital transformation, and accelerated socio-cultural change (Stevi Hlean, 2021; Spatar-Kozachenko, 2024). These dynamics require educational management models that not only respond to technological and economic demands but are also grounded in universal and transcendent values. Empirical studies indicate that while educational innovation has improved efficiency and access, it has also contributed to ethical erosion, identity confusion, and the instrumentalisation of education as a market-oriented enterprise. Such conditions suggest that education cannot be viewed merely as a technical process of knowledge transmission. Rather, it must be understood as a holistic endeavor aimed at cultivating intellectual competence, moral integrity, and social responsibility. Consequently, research on educational management is critically important to society at large, as it shapes the philosophical orientation, ethical direction, and transformative capacity of educational institutions. This study is significant because it seeks to address the growing need for educational management frameworks that harmonize innovation with moral and spiritual foundations.

Despite substantial progress in modern educational reform, persistent structural and philosophical problems continue to challenge educational systems worldwide. One major issue is the widening gap between intellectual advancement and moral development among learners. Contemporary education systems often prioritise efficiency, competitiveness, and measurable academic outcomes, frequently at the expense of ethical formation and spiritual awareness. Conversely, value-based education, particularly Islamic education, is often criticised for its limited responsiveness to global change, technological advancement, and innovation-driven environments. This polarisation has resulted in a dichotomy between modernisation and moral preservation. Educational management practices are therefore frequently confined to partial approaches: innovative yet value-neutral, or value-oriented but institutionally rigid. Such fragmentation undermines the transformative mission of education and weakens its capacity to address complex global challenges. These conditions

underscore the urgency of rethinking educational management paradigms that can integrate innovation with ethical responsibility. Without such integration, education risks losing its essential purpose as a means of human development and social transformation rather than mere economic productivity.

From an academic perspective, contemporary educational challenges are not solely practical but also deeply epistemological and philosophical. Divergent assumptions about the purpose of education, the nature of knowledge, and the role of human beings significantly shape educational management models. Modern education is predominantly grounded in a rational-instrumental paradigm that emphasizes adaptability, efficiency, and systemic reform to meet socio-economic demands. In contrast, Islamic education conceptualizes education as a process of cultivating *adab*, positioning knowledge within a theocentric worldview. These paradigmatic differences are rarely addressed through integrative dialogue, resulting in parallel yet disconnected discourses. Consequently, educational innovation often progresses without a strong moral foundation, while value-based education lacks adaptive managerial strategies. This conceptual disjunction highlights the need for comparative and interdisciplinary inquiry into educational management paradigms. Such inquiry is essential for developing holistic frameworks that reconcile ethical orientation with institutional effectiveness. Addressing this gap contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of how educational systems can remain both innovative and value-driven in an increasingly complex global context.

Existing scholarship on Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas predominantly situates his contributions within the domain of Islamic educational philosophy. Studies emphasise his concepts of Islamization of knowledge and *ta'dib* as foundational principles for Islamic education (Hu, M., 2023; Nuryanti & Hakim, 2020). Al-Attas argues that education is not merely the transmission of information but a process of instilling proper order, justice, and moral consciousness in the learner. Previous research highlights the relevance of these ideas in addressing secularisation and epistemological fragmentation in modern education (Kitching, K., & Gholami, R., 2023; Trivedi, C., 2023). However, much of the literature remains largely normative and philosophical, offering limited engagement with contemporary educational management practices. The operationalisation of al-Attas's ideas in areas such as leadership, institutional governance, and innovation management remains underexplored (Riwanda, A., 2023). As a result, his educational philosophy is often perceived as theoretically rich but practically distant from the realities of modern educational systems.

In contrast, research on Michael Fullan extensively explores educational change, transformational leadership, and collaborative reform. Fullan's theory emphasises that sustainable educational improvement depends on collective capacity building, adaptive leadership, and systemic coherence (Özen, H., & Yavuz, P., 2024). Numerous studies demonstrate the effectiveness of his

framework in enhancing school performance, teacher professionalism, and policy implementation (Sims, S. et al., 2025; Patfield, S. et al., 2023). In the Indonesian context, Fullan's ideas have been associated with curriculum reform initiatives and professional development programs aligned with national educational transformation agendas (Yulianti et al., 2024; Hunaepi, H., & Suharta, I., t2024). Nevertheless, these studies largely focus on managerial efficiency and institutional change, with limited attention to moral, ethical, or spiritual dimensions of education. Consequently, while Fullan's framework is practically robust, it tends to operate within a value-neutral paradigm that insufficiently addresses the deeper purposes and moral responsibilities of education.

The literature review reveals a significant gap in educational management studies. On one hand, al-Attas's thought offers a strong moral and epistemological foundation but lacks sufficient engagement with contemporary management and innovation discourse. On the other hand, Fullan's educational change theory provides powerful tools for reform and leadership but remains relatively detached from ethical and spiritual considerations. Few studies attempt to bring these two paradigms into a comparative or integrative framework (Triwulandari et al., 2024; Rachmadiani & Haryanto, 2025). This fragmentation limits the development of educational management models capable of addressing both value orientation and systemic adaptability. Addressing this gap is crucial, as education today demands frameworks that are simultaneously innovative, ethical, and contextually grounded. Without such integration, educational reform risks becoming either morally shallow or operationally ineffective. Therefore, a comparative analysis of al-Attas and Fullan represents a necessary and timely scholarly endeavour.

The novelty of this study lies in its attempt to establish a conceptual dialogue between Islamic educational philosophy and modern educational change theory through a comparative analysis of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas and Michael Fullan. Rather than treating these paradigms as oppositional, this research seeks to identify their points of convergence and potential complementarity. By integrating the concepts of *ta'dib* and the Islamization of knowledge with the principles of transformational leadership and systemic innovation, this study proposes a holistic framework for educational management. This approach offers an alternative perspective to dominant Western-centric discourses by incorporating spiritual and ethical dimensions into contemporary management theory. Such an integrative framework is essential for addressing current educational challenges that demand both adaptability and moral direction. The state-of-the-art contribution of this research lies in bridging philosophical depth with managerial relevance, thereby enriching global discussions on educational reform and sustainability.

Based on the preceding discussion, this study addresses the following research problem: how do the educational management perspectives of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas and Michael Fullan differ and converge, and how can their ideas be synthesised to respond to contemporary educational challenges? The central argument of this research is that integrating spiritual-ethical values with innovation-oriented management is neither contradictory nor mutually exclusive but rather mutually reinforcing. Educational management, therefore, should not merely focus on efficiency and change, but also on cultivating moral purpose and human dignity. By offering a comparative and integrative framework, this study contributes to educational management scholarship both theoretically and practically through policy and institutional development. It argues that sustainable educational reform requires both ethical grounding and adaptive leadership, particularly in societies navigating rapid global transformation.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach using a library research (literature-based) design. This design is appropriate because the study focuses on critically examining and interpreting the educational management ideas of prominent scholars through their written works, rather than on generating numerical or empirical field data. Library research is widely recognized as an effective method for philosophical, theoretical, and conceptual investigations that aim to explore meanings, assumptions, and paradigmatic foundations of scholarly thought (Abdurrahman, 2024; Chali, M. T., 2022). The qualitative approach enables the researcher to engage deeply with texts, interpret underlying values, and contextualize ideas within broader educational management discourse. Given that this study seeks to compare and synthesize the educational philosophies of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas and Michael Fullan, qualitative inquiry provides the analytical flexibility required to capture epistemological depth, normative orientations, and theoretical implications relevant to contemporary educational management (Kelly, G. J., 2023; Islam, M. S., 2025).

The data sources for this study include primary and secondary literature. Primary sources include the original works of both scholars that directly articulate their perspectives on education and educational management. For Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, the main references are *Islam and Secularism* and *The Concept of Education in Islam*, which emphasize the Islamization of knowledge and the centrality of *ta'dib* as the core of Islamic education. For Michael Fullan, the principal works include *Change Forces* and *Leading in a Culture of Change*, which elaborate his theories of educational change, innovation, and transformational leadership within school reform contexts. Secondary sources comprise peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books,

conference proceedings, and critical commentaries that examine, contextualise, or critique the ideas of both thinkers from Islamic and modern educational perspectives. Data collection was conducted through systematic document analysis involving comprehensive reading, note-taking, coding, and thematic mapping of relevant concepts across the selected literature (Ahmed, S. K., 2025; Fuchs, K., 2023).

Data analysis was conducted using a descriptive-comparative analytical method (Maulinas et al., 2024). The analytical process began with identifying key concepts and core arguments in each scholar's work. These concepts were then categorised into major analytical themes, including philosophical foundations of education, educational objectives, managerial and leadership strategies, approaches to innovation, and implications for contemporary educational contexts. Subsequently, a comparative analysis was undertaken to examine similarities, differences, and conceptual intersections between the educational management paradigms proposed by al-Attas and Fullan. This comparative phase aimed to reveal how each thinker addresses educational challenges from distinct epistemological, ethical, and managerial perspectives (Mohamed, M. S., & Hao, T. Z., 2025). The final stage of analysis involved conceptual synthesis, in which selected elements from both frameworks were integrated to formulate a coherent, theoretically grounded model of educational management.

The research procedure was implemented through a systematic and iterative process to ensure analytical rigour and theoretical coherence. First, relevant texts were selected based on their academic credibility, theoretical significance, and relevance to educational management discourse. Second, critical reading and open coding were employed to extract central ideas, assumptions, and conceptual relationships embedded in the texts. Third, comparative interpretation was applied to assess convergences, divergences, and complementarities between al-Attas's value-oriented educational philosophy and Fullan's innovation-driven change theory. Finally, a synthetic framework was constructed by integrating the spiritual-ethical principles derived from al-Attas's concept of *ta'dib* with Fullan's emphasis on transformational leadership, collaboration, and systemic change. This methodological approach enables the study not only to provide a comprehensive and balanced analysis of both perspectives but also to offer a substantive theoretical contribution to the development of an integrative, adaptive, and value-based educational management model relevant to contemporary educational challenges.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The Concept of Islamization of Knowledge

Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas argues that the Islamization of knowledge is a process of purifying knowledge of foreign elements that contradict the Islamic worldview and, subsequently, of instilling Islamic concepts derived from revelation and the Islamic intellectual tradition. According to him, the crisis faced by the Muslim ummah is not merely social or political, but fundamentally a crisis of knowledge contaminated by Western secularism (Chande, A., 2023; Al-Ghazali, M., 2022). Islamization, therefore, does not simply involve changing labels but requires the purification of fundamental terms such as *din*, *insan*, *'ilm*, *hikmah*, and *kulliyyah jami'ah* so that education operates upon an Islamic epistemological foundation (Lubis, 2022). Consequently, Islamic educational management must be structured on an Islamic worldview rather than adopting Western paradigms that tend to be secular and materialistic.

Al-Attas rejects the use of *tarbiyah* or *ta'lim* as the primary representations of education. He argues that the most appropriate concept is *ta'dib*, as it encompasses the formation of *adab*, understood as the recognition and proper placement of things according to the hierarchy of existence. Education, in this sense, is not merely the transfer of knowledge, but a process of disciplining the soul, intellect, and behavior so that they conform to Islamic values (Islamic et al., 2024; Pallathadka et al., 2023). The concept of *ta'dib* carries significant implications for educational management, as its orientation extends beyond academic output to include the quality of learners' moral conduct. Recent studies affirm the relevance of *ta'dib* as a strategic framework for strengthening character education amid the moral crisis affecting contemporary youth (Nadiah, 2025).

From al-Attas's perspective, the objective of Islamic education is the formation of *insan adabi*, namely individuals who are morally upright, ethically grounded, and firmly rooted in *tawhid*. Genuine education should guide human beings to recognise God, position themselves appropriately within the cosmic order, and fulfil their role as *khalifah* on earth (Hendawi et al., 2024). This objective differs significantly from modern educational paradigms that emphasise pragmatic skills aligned with labour market demands. By prioritising moral and spiritual dimensions, al-Attas's conception of Islamic educational management provides a comprehensive philosophical foundation for responding to global challenges while preserving Islamic identity (Rahman, 2021).

The thought of Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, particularly his concepts of Islamization of knowledge, *ta'dib*, and *insan adabi*, has far-reaching implications for Islamic educational management. These concepts emphasize that education is not merely a process of knowledge transmission or academic achievement, but a holistic transformation of human beings encompassing spiritual, moral, social, and intellectual dimensions. Accordingly, Islamic

educational management must position the integration of Islamic values as the foundational principle across all aspects of educational implementation (HU, 2023).

In this framework, curriculum design must be grounded in a comprehensive Islamic worldview. Every subject, whether religious or modern scientific, should be integrated with Islamic principles. For example, science education should not focus solely on empirical facts but should also relate scientific knowledge to divine creation, Islamic causality, and human moral responsibility toward nature. This approach aligns with al-Attas's assertion that knowledge must be framed by Islamic epistemology so that education does not lose its value orientation and spiritual purpose (Habibi, H., 2024; Lubis, 2022). Consequently, educational management must emphasise curriculum development that fosters not only academic competence but also moral and spiritual awareness among learners.

Furthermore, teaching methods must be directed toward the internalisation of *adab* (*ta'dib*). Teachers and educational staff are not merely responsible for transmitting knowledge, but also for shaping students' character and behavior through exemplary conduct, guidance, and the habituation of Islamic values in daily life. The implementation of *ta'dib* includes cultivating discipline, responsibility, ethical social interaction, and spiritual consciousness, all of which are integral components of the learning process. This approach differs fundamentally from secular educational methods that prioritise cognitive achievement and technical skills alone. Therefore, Islamic educational management must involve teacher training, *adab*-based quality assurance, and holistic evaluation systems that assess students' moral, spiritual, and intellectual development (Syarif, 2023).

Educational institutions, within al-Attas's framework, should function as civilizational institutions rather than mere centers of knowledge transmission. Al-Attas emphasises that the purpose of education is to cultivate civilised human beings who possess a comprehensive awareness of themselves, society, and God. Consequently, educational management must align institutional vision and mission with character formation, moral development, and the dissemination of Islamic values. This strategy includes managing school culture, ethical academic governance, and integrating extracurricular activities that support the formation of *adab*. Through this model, schools and universities are expected to produce graduates who are not only intellectually competent but also socially and morally responsible (Rahman, 2021).

Leadership and organisational structures within Islamic educational management must also reflect Islamic values. School principals, deans, and educational leaders are expected to demonstrate not only administrative competence but also exemplary conduct in *adab*, ethics, and spiritual leadership. Leadership grounded in Islamic values fosters institutional cultures that support

holistic learning, innovation, and adaptability to contemporary challenges while maintaining moral and spiritual integrity in every managerial decision and policy (Lubis, 2022).

Adaptation to contemporary challenges such as globalisation, secularisation, and digitalisation is equally essential. Al-Attas emphasizes that Islamic educational management must not lag behind developments in modern science and technology, but must remain firmly anchored in fundamental Islamic values. Effective educational management requires institutions to adopt educational technologies and innovative learning methods, such as e-learning and the integration of digital literacy, while consistently embedding Islamic principles into curriculum design, pedagogy, and school culture (Syarif, 2023; Rahman, 2021).

Thus, the implications of al-Attas's thought for Islamic educational management are multidimensional, encompassing curriculum design, teaching methodology, character development, institutional culture and governance, leadership, and adaptation to global challenges. This model offers a strategic alternative for education in Indonesia, enabling the formation of generations who are intellectually capable, innovative, morally upright, and spiritually conscious, thereby allowing Islamic education to contribute meaningfully to national civilization building and global competitiveness.

Michael Fullan's Thought on Modern Educational Innovation

Michael Fullan developed a theory of educational change that emphasises a deep understanding of the dynamics underlying change processes within educational systems. In *Change Forces: Probing the Depths of Educational Reform*, Fullan explains that educational change is not a linear process but involves complex interactions among multiple factors, including policy, school culture, leadership, and instructional practices. He argues that effective reform requires the involvement of all elements within the educational system and must be grounded in a thorough understanding of local contexts and the specific needs of educational communities (Gericke, N., & Torbjörnsson, T., 2022; Mincu, M., 2022). This perspective aligns with broader change theory in education, which views reform as a socially constructed and context-sensitive process rather than a technical intervention (Mincu, M., 2022). Fullan also highlights the importance of "moral purpose" in any change effort, defined as a commitment to improving learning outcomes for all students without exception, particularly in addressing issues of equity and inclusion (Gericke, N., & Torbjörnsson, T., 2022; Kallio, 2024).

Fullan adopts the concept of transformational leadership in educational contexts, focusing on leaders' ability to inspire and empower school staff throughout the change process. In *The Principal: Three Keys to Maximizing Impact*, he identifies three essential leadership components: leaders must function as "lead learners" who continuously grow alongside their staff; they

must create conditions that support collaboration and professional learning among teachers; and they must possess a clear vision that is effectively communicated to all members of the school community (Harris et al., 2023). This conception of leadership resonates with contemporary research on instructional and transformational leadership, which emphasizes capacity building, shared responsibility, and collective efficacy as drivers of school improvement (Nadeem, M., 2024). Fullan asserts that effective leaders do not merely manage change but embody change itself by motivating and facilitating innovation and professional growth among educators (Harris et al., 2023; Sliwka et al., 2024).

In Fullan's view, both teachers and school principals play crucial roles as agents of change within the educational system. Teachers are expected to act not only as curriculum implementers but also as active innovators who develop, test, and refine effective instructional practices in response to students' learning needs (CG, M. 2024; Hadisaputra et al., 2024). Principals, meanwhile, serve as instructional leaders who facilitate and support teachers throughout the change process by fostering professional learning communities and ensuring coherence between policy, practice, and school culture (Harris et al., 2023; Wang'ombe, T., 2023). Fullan emphasizes collaboration between teachers and principals as a key factor in creating school cultures that support innovation and continuous improvement. He further underscores that successful change requires long-term commitment, consistency in implementation, and adequate support from all relevant stakeholders, including policymakers, school communities, and parents (Murugi, R. M., & Mugwe, M., 2023; McLure, F. I., & Aldridge, J. M., 2023).

Fullan's perspective on modern educational innovation offers strategic implications for educational management in Indonesia, particularly in the context of school reform. His framework emphasises the importance of context-based reform strategies, transformational leadership, the empowerment of teachers and principals as change agents, and the integration of innovative learning approaches and educational technology (Harris et al., 2023; Agestinarsih, V. S., & Suwandari, L., 2025). Schools are encouraged to adopt active learning strategies, utilise digital tools such as learning management systems, and design adaptive curricula that respond to students' needs while remaining aligned with institutional values and national education goals (Chergui et al., 2025).

Continuous monitoring and evaluation are central to Fullan's approach. Educational reform must be accompanied by clearly defined indicators of success, data-driven evaluation processes, and feedback mechanisms that enable real-time improvement and sustained innovation (Secreto et al., 2025). In Islamic educational contexts, Fullan's ideas can be integrated with Islamic values to produce holistic educational management models. Innovative curricula can remain grounded in *ta'dib* and character formation, teachers can serve as moral as well as instructional agents of change, and school leadership can reflect ethical

integrity while supporting innovation and technological advancement. This integration enables Islamic educational institutions to engage constructively with modern reform agendas without losing their moral and spiritual foundations.

Comparative Analysis of al-Attas and Fullan

Both Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas and Michael Fullan conceptualise education as a comprehensive process of human transformation rather than a mere mechanism for knowledge transmission. Al-Attas emphasises individual transformation through the internalisation of *ta'dib*, which encompasses moral, ethical, and spiritual formation rooted in an Islamic worldview (Jaelani, R., 2025; Hendawi et al., 2024). His educational objective is to develop morally upright individuals who are firmly grounded in tawhid and capable of appropriately positioning themselves within the cosmic and social order. Fullan, in contrast, views education as a process of social and professional transformation, in which teachers, principals, and students function as agents of change within the educational system (Gericke, N., & Torbjörnsson, T., 2022; Harris et al., 2023). His focus lies in improving learning quality, fostering innovation, and sustaining continuous change in educational practice. Despite their different emphases, both thinkers converge on the view that education fundamentally aims to transform human behaviour, character, and competence holistically (Kallio, 2024).

The fundamental difference between these thinkers lies in their epistemological foundations. Al-Attas grounds education in spiritual and transcendental principles, asserting that all forms of knowledge must align with tawhid and Islamic moral values. Educational success, therefore, is measured not only by cognitive achievement but also by the quality of adab, ethical conduct, and spiritual consciousness among learners (al-Attas, 1991; Lubis, 2022). This perspective responds critically to the dominance of secular and materialistic paradigms in modern education, which al-Attas identifies as a source of epistemological confusion and moral disorientation (Rahman, 2021). Fullan, on the other hand, operates within a modern, pragmatic framework, in which educational change is evaluated on the basis of effectiveness, innovation, and empirically measurable learning outcomes (Fullan, 2006; Leithwood, 2015). In this sense, al-Attas prioritizes values and moral orientation as the core of education, whereas Fullan emphasizes performance, adaptability, and systemic improvement as key indicators of educational success.

Despite these epistemological differences, both perspectives converge on the strategic necessity of integrating values with innovation in education. Al-Attas stresses the integration of spiritual and moral values across all educational dimensions to prevent education from becoming value-neutral or instrumentalised solely for economic purposes (Hendawi et al., 2024; Syarif, 2023). Fullan similarly argues that sustainable educational change must be driven

by moral purpose, emphasising equity, collective responsibility, and long-term commitment to student learning (Gericke, N., & Torbjörnsson, T., 2022; Kallio, 2024). This convergence indicates that innovation in education cannot be detached from ethical considerations and that effective educational management requires a balance between moral orientation and adaptive change (Triwulandari et al., 2024).

Synthesizing the ideas of al-Attas and Fullan enables the development of a holistic educational management model that integrates spiritual-moral foundations with modern innovation and leadership practices. Such a synthesis allows educational institutions, particularly in Islamic contexts, to pursue academic excellence and technological advancement while simultaneously fostering character, ethical awareness, and spiritual depth (Lubis, 2022; Rahman, 2021). Through integrated curricula, value-based transformational leadership, and adab-oriented active learning, and holistic evaluation systems, educational institutions can respond effectively to globalisation, digitalisation, and reform pressures without compromising their moral and religious identity (Harris et al., 2023; Syarif, 2023). This integrated framework thus provides a robust conceptual foundation for contemporary Islamic educational management that is adaptive, transformative, and ethically grounded.

CONCLUSION

The most important finding of this study is the insight that ethical-spiritual values and modern educational innovation are not inherently contradictory but can be mutually reinforcing when approached through an integrative management framework. The comparative analysis demonstrates that Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas offers a profound moral and epistemological foundation for education through the concepts of Islamization of knowledge and *ta'dib*, emphasising character formation, moral consciousness, and spiritual orientation as the ultimate aims of education. Meanwhile, Michael Fullan provides a robust and operationally effective framework for educational change through transformational leadership, collaborative professionalism, and systemic innovation. The key lesson derived from this research is that sustainable educational reform requires a balance between moral purpose and adaptive leadership. Educational management that prioritises innovation without ethical grounding risks becoming instrumental and value-neutral, while value-based education without adaptive management strategies risks institutional stagnation. Therefore, integrating a spiritual-ethical orientation with innovation-driven management is a strategic necessity for contemporary education systems, particularly in contexts facing rapid global and technological transformation.

The primary strength of this study lies in its conceptual contribution to educational management scholarship through an original comparative and integrative framework that bridges Islamic educational philosophy and modern

educational change theory. By placing al-Attas and Fullan in a structured analytical dialogue, this research enriches the existing literature, which has previously treated these paradigms in isolation. The study advances theoretical discourse by demonstrating how philosophical depth can be aligned with managerial relevance, offering a holistic, ethically grounded, contextually adaptive, and institutionally effective model of educational management. However, this research is limited by its reliance on library-based qualitative analysis, which does not empirically test the proposed integrative framework in real educational settings. Future research is therefore recommended to operationalise and validate this conceptual model through empirical studies, such as case studies, mixed-methods research, or policy analysis in Islamic and non-Islamic educational institutions. Further inquiry could also explore how this integrative framework responds to emerging challenges such as digital ethics, artificial intelligence in education, and global citizenship, thereby extending its relevance and applicability in an increasingly complex educational landscape.

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