

Assessing Sustainability of Tahfiz Education: Governance and Management Perspectives

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Abstract

Tahfiz education plays an important role in preserving Islamic knowledge and values within Malaysia's broader educational landscape. However, many tahfiz institutions face growing challenges in achieving financial sustainability due to their dependence on irregular funding sources such as donations, zakat, and community contributions. This study examines the financial sustainability of tahfiz education providers in Malaysia, focusing on the relationship between governance practices, funding strategies, and institutional performance. A quantitative research design was adopted, involving questionnaire distributed to the founders and management from selected tahfiz schools across several Malaysian states. The findings reveal that financial sustainability among tahfiz institutions is closely linked to the quality of governance, diversification of income sources, and the presence of structured financial management systems. Schools with clear accountability frameworks and professional management practices demonstrated stronger financial resilience compared to those relying solely on ad hoc donations. The study highlights the urgent need for capacity building in financial planning, transparent reporting mechanisms, and collaborative support from government and religious authorities. By addressing these structural issues, tahfiz institutions can enhance their financial independence, ensure operational continuity, and strengthen their contribution to Malaysia's Islamic education sector.

Keywords: Tahfiz Education, Financial Sustainability, Islamic Schools, Governance Practices, Accountability, Faith-Based Education, Institutional Management

Introduction

Tahfiz education has long played a significant role in the Malaysian Islamic education landscape. These institutions, traditionally based on memorization and understanding of the Quran, have evolved into a more structured system that often integrates both religious and academic curricula (Abdullah, Sabbri, & Isa, 2021; Effendi, Hairunnisa, & Jamaliah 2025). In recent decades, tahfiz schools have experienced significant growth across the country,

increasing awareness and demand from parents for holistic Islamic education for their children.

However, issues relating to governance efficiency, financial stability, administrative capability, and educational quality continue to affect sustainability tahfiz institutions. Existing studies largely focus on curriculum and student development, while research on governance and management still lack. Therefore, this study importance because tahfiz institutions cannot remain effective and long term sustain without good governance and proper management practices. In addition, the need for this study arises from the increasing challenges faced by tahfiz education institutions in maintaining financial sustainability. Thus, this study important for tahfiz institutions, governments, students, parents, teachers, and the Muslim community because it provides insights into the factors influencing these educational institutions' sustainability.

In the context of Malaysia, most tahfiz schools operate privately and rely on tuition fees, public donations, zakat (charity), and waqf (endowment) contributions. While these funds can help tahfiz schools in terms of operational sustainability. However, the funds receive uncertain and sometimes insufficient to ensure consistent development and stability of tahfiz schools (Yusof, Akhir, Islami, Ismail, & Ghazali, 2022). Financial management challenges such as insufficient financial resources to cover operating costs, unsystematic financial planning, and over-reliance on external donations have led to operational weaknesses in many tahfiz schools across Malaysia. The issue of financial sustainability, rising operating costs, evolving educational standards, and increasing expectations from parents and regulatory authorities, pose challenges for private tahfiz schools.

Despite the growing importance of tahfiz education in Malaysia, the financial sustainability of many tahfiz schools remain uncertain. The majority of tahfiz schools operate as private entities that rely on donations, student fees and community support rather than structured government funding (Haz, 2007). This reliance on irregular sources of income often results in unstable financial conditions, delayed salaries, inadequate teaching resources and inadequate infrastructure maintenance. Furthermore, most tahfiz institutions do not have standardized financial management systems or trained staff capable of implementing effective budgeting, auditing and long-term planning practices (Sapari, Abdullah & Mohamed, 2025).

The Malaysian government through agencies such as the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (JAKIM) and state Islamic religious departments have introduced various initiatives to improve the governance and quality of tahfiz institutions. This includes the obligation for designated tahfiz schools to be registered with Islamic religious authorities. However, the majority of private tahfiz school owners and management continue to face difficulties in maintaining a stable flow of financial resources, ensuring accountability in financial reporting, and building institutional capacity for long-term sustainability. The imbalance between educational mission and financial affordability remains a concern among private tahfiz schools which directly affects the quality and continuity of tahfiz education and impact on the performance of tahfiz students(Dain, Ahmad, & Noor, 2024).

Previous studies on tahfiz education in Malaysia have largely focused on pedagogical approaches, curriculum development, and memorization outcomes. Comparatively, there has been little scholarly research on the financial dimensions of tahfiz management, despite its important role in the performance and sustainability of the institution. Understanding the financial sustainability of tahfiz schools is important not only to improve governance and accountability but also to ensure that Islamic educational institutions, particularly tahfiz schools, are aligned with national educational development goals and sustainable management practices. Therefore, this study aims to what extent main sources of funding contribute to the financial sustainability of tahfiz education providers in Malaysia.

Literature Review

Tahfiz education is increasingly significant in the Islamic education system in Malaysia through the approach of learning to memorize and understand the Quran (Bani, H., Jaafar, Katan, Mohd Noor, 2017). Historically, the Islamic education system including tahfiz was established informally through community-based initiatives and mosques (Aziz, & Huda, 2024). However, over time, this education system has developed into a structured institution that integrates both religious and academic curriculums that aim to produce students who are proficient in religious knowledge and memorization of the Quran (Yusuf, Noh, & Razak, 2019).

The development of tahfiz schools is growing and receiving support from various stakeholders including government (Bani, Mohd Noor, Abdul Fatah, 2014). However, the majority of tahfiz schools are still privately owned. According to previous estimate, over 91% of tahfiz schools in Malaysia are privately owned (Haz, 2007). Some are registered with the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) or State Islamic Religious Departments and some are not registered. The diverse ownership and management structures contribute to variations in terms of quality, governance and financial management across tahfiz schools in Malaysia (Yusuf, et al., 2022; Aman, Sanusi, & Awaludin, 2024).

Financial sustainability in educational institutions depends on the ability of an institution to maintain operations, meet institutional objectives, and be able to provide quality services without financial stress or over-reliance on short-term financial resources (Pepurah, 2020). In Islamic education that is more religious-oriented, financial sustainability is often more complex as this type of institution is not based on profit and the context is highly dependent on voluntary donations, endowments, and zakat contributions (Rawashdeh, Azid, & Qureshi, 2017).

Previous studies have highlighted that the sustainability of religious schools, especially tahfiz schools, is influenced by three main issues including financial management practices, diversity of income sources, and institutional governance (Zain, Sidek, & Hasbullah, 2024). Institutions with transparent financial reporting, accounting management systems, and receiving diverse revenues such as tuition fees, business ventures, and endowment income tend to exhibit higher resilience (Supriatna, 2025). On the other hand, tahfiz schools that rely solely on public donations are more vulnerable to financial instability that can affect school operations and performance (Yusop, Mahmud, Sabli, Awang, & Ghazalie, 2020).

Existing studies show that although religious factors and community involvement are driving the establishment of tahfiz schools, these are not sufficient to ensure the sustainability of tahfiz schools without a sound financial stability (Abdullah, Mohd Zain, Juahir, Che Haron, Ismail, Islam, & Sheikh Ahmad Tajuddin, 2025). Many tahfiz schools still struggle to carry out their religious mission with the practical need to manage operating costs and comply with regulatory guidelines from Islamic religious authorities at both the state and federal (Nur, 2019; Bani, Jaaffar, Muhammad, & Fatah, 2023). In addition, there is empirical evidence that some tahfiz schools remain financially prosperous while others face financial difficulties due to poor financial management (Dain et al., 2024).

Previous studies on tahfiz schools in Malaysia revealed that there is a wide variation in the financial management practices adopted by schools (Sapari et al., 2025). Although some schools demonstrate good financial governance practices by implementing budgeting and third-party auditing systems, and maintaining proper financial and accounting records. In addition, there are still many tahfiz schools that still operate on a management model that does not adhere to accounting standards. These poor financial management practices are often due to a lack of competent human resources (Yusop, Mahmud, Sabli, Awang, & Ghazali, 2023), limited exposure to financial governance frameworks (Kadir & Sarif, 2015), and tahfiz schools rely heavily on volunteer staff to reduce operating costs (Misba, Isa, Salleh, Gajah, & Alam, 2024).

The absence of trained financial officers or standard accounting procedures increases the risk of inefficiency and weaknesses in the internal control system (Pahlawan, 2025). Some tahfiz schools have successfully used the approach of diversifying income sources not only through tuition fee collection, zakat assistance, Muslim donations including also through small-scale businesses to cover and meet the school's operating expenses (Anas, Samori, Hamid, Zulkipli, & Noor, 2019). However, this situation and practice do not involve most private tahfiz schools in Malaysia.

Good governance and accountability are essential components to ensure management in any educational organization including private tahfiz schools (Bani et al., 2017). For tahfiz schools, governance is not only about financial control but also about how to ensure management embodies Islamic values, transparency, and stewardship of public funds (Tahir, Muhsyanur, & Tang, 2022). A good governance framework can help maintain donor confidence, enhance the credibility and reputation of the tahfiz institution, and support compliance with regulatory requirements (Bani et al., 2017).

The registration of tahfiz schools by JAKIM and state religious departments is an important step towards standardizing governance and monitoring (Bani et al., 2017). However, there are still tahfiz schools that are not registered with JAKIM and state religious departments, especially among smaller and rural institutions with limited resources. Weak governance structures can lead to inconsistent reporting, inadequate strategic planning and weak financial controls which can ultimately affect the long-term sustainability of tahfiz schools (Huber-Grabenwarter, & Boehm, 2009).

Most previous studies have examined the curriculum, pedagogy, and student success in tahfiz school education (Ismail, Saad, & Alias, 2024; Effendi et al., 2025). This includes research on

financial management and governance practices in tahfiz schools (Anas et al., 2019; Abdullah et al., 2025). Most of the existing studies are descriptive and focus on operational challenges rather than the mechanisms of the financial system that supports the operation of these institutions. Furthermore, several studies have analyzed how governance, accountability, and financial management practices can influence the management of different Islamic schools (Yasin, & Mokhtar, 2022; Kamaruddin, & Auzair, 2023; Akhyar, 2024).

Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative research approach through the use of closed-ended questionnaires to collect data from respondents. The quantitative design enables the systematic measurement of patterns and trends in financial management practices among registered private tahfiz schools in Malaysia. The unit of analysis comprises registered private tahfiz schools under the purview of the Malaysia Islamic Development Department (JAKIM) and respective state Islamic authorities. These schools are categorized into primary and secondary tahfiz schools, with some institutions operating both levels.

The population for this study includes all 1,189 registered private tahfiz schools listed in the official JAKIM directory. The study aims to include schools from all states in Malaysia, including the Federal Territories, to ensure comprehensive national coverage. The respondents are founders or members of the school management teams, as they possess the most accurate knowledge regarding school operations, funding, and financial practices. The questionnaire was distributed to all registered private tahfiz schools using the WhatsApp application, ensuring efficient and wide-reaching dissemination.

Prior to the main survey, a pilot study was conducted to assess and refine the questionnaire. This process followed the recommendations of Sekaran (2003), Cooper and Schindler (2003), and Hussey and Hussey (1997) to ensure the instrument's clarity, reliability, and measurement effectiveness. The pilot study involved 50 registered private tahfiz schools across Malaysia, resulting in 21 responses. This sample size meets the recommended threshold for pilot studies (Johanson & Brooks, 2010). Feedback from the pilot allowed for improvements to the questionnaire's design and wording, enhancing its suitability for the main data collection.

The final questionnaire was distributed via WhatsApp to all schools listed in the JAKIM directory. This approach facilitated rapid data collection while accommodating the geographic spread of schools across Malaysia. Collected data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The analysis primarily involved descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, to summarize the data and provide insights into the demographic profiles and institutional characteristics of registered private tahfiz schools in Malaysia.

The use of descriptive statistics enabled a structured interpretation of the collected information and helped identify trends, patterns, and commonalities in financial management practices across schools. This analytical approach provided a clear overview of the data, supporting the study's objective of understanding the profiles, funding mechanisms, and management strategies of private tahfiz schools.

Results and Discussion

Overview of Sample Demographic and Characteristics

The study involved 109 respondents, comprising 87 males (79.8%) and 22 females (20.2%). Regarding age distribution, half of the respondents (50%) were aged between 36 and 45 years, followed by 25.5% aged 46 years and above, 22.7% aged 26 to 35 years, and a small proportion (1.8%) aged 25 years and below. With respect to school registration, the majority of respondents (107, 98.2%) represented tahfiz institutions registered with both JAKIM and the State Islamic Religious Authority. Only 2 respondents (1.8%) were from schools registered solely with the State Islamic Religious Authority.

Table 4.1
Demographic and Characteristics

Name	Item	Frequency	Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Gender	Female	22	20.9	20.9
	Male	87	79.1	100.00
Age	25 years old and below	1	1.8	1.8
	26-35 years old	25	22.7	24.5
	36-45 years old	55	50	74.5
	46 years old and above	28	25.5	100.00
Category Tahfiz	Registered with JAKIM and State Government Islamic Religious Authority	107	98.2	98.2
	Registered with State Government Islamic Religious Authority only	2	1.8	100.0

Dependence on Students' Tuition Fees

Table 4.2
Students' Tuition Fees

Item	Frequency	Percent (%)
Depends on tuition fees	69	62.4
Not depends on tuition fees	40	37.6
Total	109	100.0

Table 4.2 shows that a total of 109 responses were collected, which aimed to assess whether the the registered private tahfiz schools depends on students' tuition fees to finance its management and administrative expenses. The findings indicate that the majority of respondents (62.4%) believe the school heavily relies on students' tuition fees to sustain its management and administrative operations. This suggests that tuition fees remain a primary source of financial stability for the tahfiz schools. However, 37.6% of respondents not rely on students' tuition fees. Some perceive the registered private tahfizz schools to have alternative funding sources such from government, parent and Muslim community donations, or private sponsorships. This diversity in perception highlights the need for greater transparency regarding the school's funding mechanisms.

Overall, these results emphasize the need to diversify income sources to reduce overreliance on tuition fees. Such measures would help the tahfiz schools achieve greater financial resilience while minimizing the burden on students and their families. Strengthening these alternative funding mechanisms will help reduce dependency on tuition fees and ensure financial sustainability while maintaining the tahfiz school's educational quality. This finding aligns with prior research highlighting that financial sustainability in religious schools is complex, as many institutions rely on voluntary contributions and cannot operate solely on tuition income (Rawashdeh et al., 2017; Yusop et al., 2020).

Received of Government Grants

Table 4.3

Government Grants

Item	Frequency	Percent (%)
Received government grant	65	59.6
Not received government grant	44	40.4
Total	109	100.0

Table 4.3 shows that a total of 109 responses were recorded which aimed to determine whether the school receives financial grants from the government. This distribution suggests that slightly more than half of the respondents acknowledged the receipt of government assistance. The findings shows that a majority of respondents (59.6%) have received government grants, indicating that public financial support plays an important role in sustaining the school's needs. However, the relatively large proportion of respondents (40.4%) who reported not receiving any grants or being uncertain about such support highlight the difference in financial assistance among tahfiz schools.

Overall, while more than half of the respondents acknowledged receiving government grants, the findings underline that grants alone are not adequate to ensure full financial stability. Strengthening both government support mechanisms and alternative income sources remains contribute factors for sustainable tahfiz schools. Despite this, more of the respondents indicated no regular government funding, reflecting the broader pattern of Malaysia's tahfiz schools being privately owned (Haz, 2007; Bani et al., 2014). This reliance on diverse funding sources supports that tahfiz schools with multiple revenue sources such as tuition, grants, and donations are better positioned for financial resilience (Supriatna, 2025).

Land and Building of the School as Public Endowment (Wakaf)

Table 4.4

Wakaf (Land and Building)

Item	Frequency	Percent (%)
Land and Building Wakaf	100	91.7
Land and Building Not Wakaf	9	8.3
Total	109	100.0

Table 4.4 shows to determine whether the school's land and building was obtained through public endowment (wakaf) a common form of charitable donation in which assets are permanently dedicated for educational or Islamic religious purposes. A total of 109 responses were collected. The results clearly indicate that only a small percentage of schools

(8.3%) reported having their land and buildings established not through public endowment (wakaf). In contrast, the vast majority (91.7%) stated that their tahfiz schools property are wakaf, suggesting that most schools operate on land and buildings owned by the Islamic Authority that manage wakaf property in each state.

This finding reflects role of wakaf contributions in the ownership and development of tahfiz school infrastructure. While the concept of wakaf has historically been an important means of supporting religious and educational institutions in Malaysia, the data show that its application to tahfiz schools' establishment relatively high. Tahfiz schools operating on wakaf land often enjoy long-term asset security and reduced financial burden for infrastructure, as the property is permanently dedicated to education.

School Income Generation Through Entrepreneurial Activities

Table 4.5

Students' Tuition Fees

Item	Frequency	Percent (%)
Entrepreneurial activities	9	8.3
No entrepreneurial activities	100	91.7
Total	109	100.0

Table 4.5 indicates that most tahfiz schools do not yet have structured entrepreneurship programs or business initiatives to supplement their income. Instead, they remain largely dependent on tuition fees, grants, or donations, as seen in earlier findings. Tahfiz schools that do generate income through entrepreneurship such as renting out facilities, running cooperatives, or conducting fundraising sales demonstrate initiative and financial creativity. These activities can provide a valuable supplementary income stream that supports tahfiz schools' operation, student activities, and maintenance projects.

Encouraging entrepreneurship within tahfiz schools could play a key role in strengthening financial sustainability. It would allow tahfiz schools to become less reliant on tuition fees or inconsistent government grants, while also fostering a culture of innovation, creativity, and self-reliance among students and staff. Similarly, entrepreneurial activities as a funding source were limited, with most schools not actively engaging in income-generating business ventures. This suggests that diversification of income remains underutilized among private tahfiz schools, which could be a key strategy to enhance financial sustainability (Anas et al., 2019).

Sufficiency of Donations and Sponsorships from the Public

Table 4.6

Donations and Sponsorships

Item	Frequency	Percent (%)
Donations and sponsorships sufficient	32	29.4
Donations and sponsorships insufficient	77	70.6
Total	109	100.0

Table 4.6 shows that a majority of tahfiz schools (70.6%) reported that donations and sponsorships received from the public insufficient to finance their operational costs. Only 29.4% of schools stated that public contributions are sufficient. This suggests that community support plays a significant role in maintaining school operations, complementing other funding sources such as tuition fees, grants, and entrepreneurial income for registered private tahfiz schools. Donations and sponsorships can help schools cover recurring costs such as utilities and facility maintenance, teaching and learning materials, and others

Tahfiz schools that effectively engage with their communities can significantly benefit, but diversification of funding sources remains important to ensure sustainability operation og the tahfiz schools. This aligns with the previous research emphasizing that over-reliance on public donations exposes schools to financial vulnerability (Yusop et al., 2020; Peprah, 2020). The findings underscore the importance of strategic financial planning and active engagement in fundraising. Although public donations and sponsorships are critical for many religious schools, their variability and unpredictability necessitate the adoption of supplementary income sources to ensure sustainability (Pahlawan, 2025; Misba et al., 2024).

Encouragement of Teachers and Students to Engage in Entrepreneurial Activities

Table 4.7

Encourage Teachers and Students in Entrepreneurial Activities

Item	Frequency	Percent (%)
Encourage teachers and students in entrepreneurial activities	7	6.4
Not encourage teachers and students in entrepreneurial activities	102	93.6
Total	109	100.0

Table 4.7 shows that a significant majority of schools (93.6%) not encourage both teachers and students to engage in entrepreneurial activities to generate additional income. Only a small minority (6.4%) encourage such participation. By involving teachers and students in entrepreneurship, schools can simultaneously enhance their financial sustainability, reducing dependence on tuition fees, grants, or donations. In addition, it provides practical learning experiences, integrating real-world business knowledge into the school environment.

Despite this strong encouragement, the effectiveness of these initiatives depends on adequate training, resources, and oversight. Schools that successfully implement entrepreneurial programs often see long-term benefits, such as increased school revenue and improved student engagement. This practice reflects an emerging trend in tahfiz school management to adopt self-sustaining financial strategies beyond traditional tuition and donation-based funding (Anas et al., 2019). Despite this, only a small fraction of registered private tahfiz schools actively engages in large-scale business operations, indicating that while awareness exists, practical implementation remains limited. Other previous research suggests that schools which effectively combine tuition income, donations, and entrepreneurial revenue are able to maintain operational stability and fulfill their educational mission (Zain et al., 2024; Supriatna, 2025).

Transparency of School Funds to Stakeholders

Table 4.8

Transparency of School Funds

Item	Frequency	Percent (%)
School funds information discloses to stakeholders	103	94.5
School funds information not discloses to stakeholders	6	5.5
Total	109	100.0

Table 4.8 indicate that an overwhelming majority of schools (94.5%) report that all information regarding funds generated and school expenditures discloses to stakeholders, including parents, school boards, and community members. Only a small minority (5.5%) do not fully disclose this information. Transparency in financial matters is crucial for building trust and credibility between schools and their stakeholders. It also encourages community support and engagement, as stakeholders are more likely to contribute or invest in schools that demonstrate responsible financial management. Moreover, transparent reporting can help schools identify areas for improvement in budget planning and resource utilization, and it fosters a culture of accountability among school administrators. The adoption of transparent reporting mechanisms aligns with prior studies emphasizing that sound governance frameworks help mitigate financial risks and improve institutional credibility (Huber-Grabenwarter & Boehm, 2009).

Implementation of Free Tuition Policy

Table 4.9

Free Tuition Fees Policy

Item	Frequency	Percent (%)
Free tuition fees	26	23.9
No free tuition fees	83	76.1
Total	109	100.0

Table 4.9 shows that the majority of schools (76.1%) have not implemented a policy of free tuition for all students, while only 23.9% have implemented policy free tuition fees for all students in tahfiz schools. However, the majority of tahfiz schools that do not offer free tuition may face challenges related to funding and sustainability, as operational costs still need to be covered. These schools may rely more heavily on tuition fees, grants, donations, and entrepreneurial activities, as seen in previous findings.

The implementation of free tuition fees also requires careful financial planning and resource management to ensure that the registered private tahfiz schools can continue to operate effectively without compromising quality. Combining free tuition fees with other income sources, such as donations, grants, and entrepreneurial activities, is therefore essential for sustainability. While this reflects a commitment to social and Islamic religious objectives, it potentially increases reliance on external funding sources such as donations, zakat, and government grants. This practice support previous studies that emphasizing the tension between religious missions and financial sustainability in tahfiz schools (Abdullah et al., 2025; Nur, 2019). Tahfiz chools that offer free tuition fees must carefully balance their operational costs with diversified income to avoid financial instability.

Received Zakat from the State Islamic Religious Authority

Table 4.10

Received Zakat

Item	Frequency	Percent (%)
Received zakat	72	66.1
Not received zakat	37	33.9
Total	109	100.0

Table 4.10 indicate that only about one-third of schools (33.9%) reported not receiving zakat from the State Islamic Religious Authority, whereas two-thirds (66.1%) receive such support. This suggests that zakat contributions are major or consistent source of funding for the majority of tahfiz schools. For those tahfiz schools that do receive zakat, it can provide important supplementary funding to cover operational costs or assist students in need. However, the limited access to zakat for other tahfiz schools highlights the need for diversified funding sources. This reinforces the importance of financial planning and multiple income to ensure the sustainability of tahfiz schools' operation, especially for tahfiz schools serving students from diverse economic backgrounds.

Financial Constraints in Covering School Operational Costs

Table 4.11

Financial Constraints

Item	Frequency	Percent (%)
Facing financial constraints	88	80.7
No financial constraints	21	19.3
Total	109	100.0

The results in table 4.11 shows that the majority of tahfiz schools (80.7%) face frequently financial constraints, while 19.3% of tahfiz schools report do not have financial difficulties. This suggests that most registered private tahfiz schools are generally unable to manage operational costs through a combination of tuition fees, government grants, donations, zakat, and entrepreneurial activities, as seen in previous findings. Tahfiz schools facing challenges may need targeted financial support or strategies to diversify income sources further. This finding is consistent with previous research indicating that many privately owned tahfiz schools in Malaysia struggle to sustain operations due to insufficient financial resources, reliance on donations, and limited exposure to formal financial management systems (Kadir & Sarif, 2015; Misba et al., 2024).

Sharing School Funding Strategies and Vision with Stakeholders

Table 4.12

Disclose Funding Strategies and Vision with Stakeholders

Item	Frequency	Percent (%)
Disclose funding strategies and vision with stakeholders	101	92.7
Not disclose funding strategies and vision with stakeholders	8	7.3
Total	109	100.0

The results in table 4.12 indicate that only a small proportion of registered private tahfiz schools (7.3%) not share their funding strategies and vision with stakeholders, whereas the vast majority (92.7%) have been disclosed it. This suggests that while tahfiz schools may practice transparency regarding financial reporting, most schools actively communicate their strategic plans or vision to generate income. The finding highlights a gap between financial transparency and strategic communication. Similarly, 92.7% reported that strategic goals and funding strategies are communicated to stakeholders. These findings suggest that good governance practices are being implemented in many private tahfiz schools, reinforcing the link between accountability and donor confidence (Tahir et al., 2022; Bani et al., 2017).

Conclusion

Overall, the results highlight three factors influencing financial sustainability in private tahfiz schools. First, diversified income sources, including tuition, donations, zakat, and entrepreneurial activities. Second, strong governance and transparency practices. Third, financial planning to manage operational costs and minimize over-reliance on unstable income received.

These findings support previous studies emphasizing that a combination of sound governance, income diversification, and accountability is essential for long-term sustainability of an organization (Zain et al., 2024; Supriatna, 2025). Therefore, the findings may assist management of tahfiz in improving governance and management practices, while government may use the study to strengthen educational policies and support systems for private tahfiz institutions for the benefit of tahfiz students.

Limitations of this study include the reliance on information from school management and limited information from stakeholders. Additionally, the study focused only on registered private tahfiz schools listed under JAKIM and state Islamic authorities, potentially excluding smaller or unregistered private tahfiz schools. Future research could extend this study to unregistered private tahfiz schools. Comparative studies between registered and unregistered tahfiz schools could provide a deeper understanding of governance and sustainability challenges in the private tahfiz schools.

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