

Exploring Financial Sustainability in Islamic Secondary Schools: Importance of Good Facilities in Improving Learning Process

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ABSTRACT

This research explores financial sustainability of Islamic secondary schools, which is critical to ensure adequate facilities and improving the learning process. This study employs qualitative meta-analysis and documentary research approaches to improve the existing literature on financial sustainability from an Islamic perspective. The existing body of literature suggests that the prevailing discourse of financial sustainability in schools circles around capitalist perspectives. It treats schools as business enterprises, which shifts the true goal of education from educating to profit-making. Financial sustainability is critical to the school management's capacity to fulfil their responsibilities in providing necessary learning facilities. Good facilities may help the learning process. In relation to Islamic secondary schools, it is found that expensive facilities and equipment are not always necessary, as long as they are provided in acceptable shape for both students and teachers. The presence of such facilities may directly or indirectly enhance the learning process. Ultimately, it improves the quality of education for students. Examples are taken from NAMA Foundation's sponsorships for selected Islamic secondary schools, which are used to provide good facilities. It demonstrates that financial sustainability is critical for sustaining good facilities, which directly or indirectly improve the learning process.

Keywords: Financial sustainability, Education, Learning process, Islamic secondary school.

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INTRODUCTION

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were unveiled by the United Nations in 2015, incorporate the quality of education as a component of their agendas. These SDGs exhibit a more pronounced focus and more ambitious objectives. The assertion that “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote opportunities for lifelong learning for all” (Shields, 2023: 97) is clearly evident in the renowned slogan advocating for education quality. SDG No.4 emphasises the significance of education quality through the establishment of ten (10) specific objectives that member states are obligated to accomplish by 2030 (United Nations, 2023). The summarised ten targets outlined in SDG No.4 (United Nations, 2023) highlighted that member states are obligated to ensure that all children have equal access to primary and secondary education, technical and vocational training, literacy development in the context of lifelong learning among youth and adults, secure learning environments, and secure employment of qualified and well-trained educators.

Nevertheless, depending on the economic stability and advancement of the countries, it is obvious that the quality of education is varied from one country to another country. Due to different standards, policies and regulations which are relevant to educational sectors, it is almost impossible to have a definite measurement to make the quality of education as the same for all countries. One cannot expect to see similar quality of education in developed countries as compared to developing or underdeveloped countries. This is a long-standing issue that yet to be solved even prior to the introduction of SDGs by the United Nations. Nevertheless, the gap on the quality of education between those countries need to be overcome and this makes SDG No.4 relevant for all. The unpredicted global phenomena that caused by the COVID-19 pandemic shows the importance of closing the gap on the quality of education. It leads to unprecedented education disruptions around the world, which includes historic prolonged closures of educational institutions, schools and universities.

It is reported by the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund or UNICEF that, “between March 2020 and July 2022, schools were fully closed for an average of 20 weeks and partially closed for an additional 22 weeks globally. The impacts of school closures were wide-ranging, affecting not only children’s schooling and learning, but also their health and nutrition, mental wellbeing, and protection against child labour, gender-based violence and more” (Alejo et al., 2023: 2). While there are negative impacts as results of domino effects of the global pandemic; positively, it pushes forwards the adoption of technology in educational sectors across countries. Online or remote learning opens up the possibility of having developments of digital literacy, tools and skills

among students. It also allows flexibility in learning through the connection of internet and helps self-directed learning environment which requires independence of students in seeking knowledge. At the same time, educators (including teachers) require to find innovative solutions in their delivery of teachings that foster creative thinking and problem-solving skills among their students. Nevertheless, not all communities obtained such positive consequences during the pandemic. In general, the impacts of the pandemic on education have multifaceted and intricate effects on education as a whole, which varies from a country to another country.

Arriving to the post-normal time, there is still a significant endeavour ahead in achieving SDG No.4 on the quality of education. While continuous efforts are made, this research looks closely on the existence of financial sustainability in relation to Islamic secondary schools. The objective of this research is to examine the significance of well-maintained or good facilities in enhancing the learning process. Such maintenance or improvement of facilities can only be done when the schools have a certain degree of financial sustainability. This research is structured into sections to effectively present the ideas. After this introductory section, it follows with a section on literature review relating to financial sustainability in schools. In the third section, a brief discussion on the research methodology is presented. Subsequently, the discussion follows with the suggested model of *Shariah*-compliant financial sustainability and financial sustainability from Islamic perspective. Next section provides traces of financial sustainability practiced by NAMA Foundation through their selected supported schools, with recommendation(s). Finally, it follows with a conclusion.

Financial Sustainability in Islamic Secondary Schools: Good Facilities and Improvement of Learning Process

The discussion of this section is systematically divided based on the identified themes as found from the collected literature which are considered suitable and relevant for this research. These themes are: (i) understanding the concept of financial sustainability; (ii) financial sustainability in schools; and (iii) good facilities in improving learning.

Understanding The Concept of Financial Sustainability

From a conventional perspective, financial sustainability is often discussed in association to the performance of a company and its operation in generating profits. According to Gleißner et al. (2022), financial

sustainability concerns with companies' financial management must ensure present financial success without jeopardising future financial success, including the success of future generations. This understanding on financial sustainability is derived by applying the basic idea from the Brundtland Commission (1987), which can be considered as the modern document that introduced the concept of sustainable development and sustainability. While the concept of sustainability remains complex (Salas-Zapata and Ortiz-Muñoz, 2019; DesRoches, 2021), financial sustainability researches emerge rapidly based on discussions about companies (Gleißner et al., 2022; Kong et al., 2023), organisations (Günther et al., 2020; Wiedemann et al., 2022), managements (Mahmood et al., 2023; Herman and Zsido, 2023), investments (Manaswi et al., 2023) and entrepreneurship (Wahyuni et al., 2023). However, it is still considered as underrepresented due to the scarcity of available literature (Günther et al., 2020; Gleißner et al. 2022). Moreover, it is considered unique to have research that looks closely on financial sustainability of Islamic secondary schools.

Based on previous researches, financial sustainability is defined based on identified criteria which are suitable to be referred to in identifying the financial health of certain entities (which can either be companies, organisations, investment, or management). Here, financial health can be understood as the fundamental assessment of the stability and strength of an individual's or entity's financial situation. According to a report titled "Financial sustainability of schools in England" which recorded as the 42nd report of session 2021 to 2022, the House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts under the UK Parliament, recognises financial sustainability as the approaches that are undertaken to maintain financial health in managing schools in England (House of Commons, 2021). While, based on a research done by Kakati and Roy (2021), financial sustainability is considered achieved when the established entity (i) earns enough resources for its management, (ii) has the ability to repay obligations or debts, and (iii) possesses suitable asset maintenance and renewal.

Financial Sustainability in Schools

It is reported by Kakati and Roy (2021), from 2005 to 2019, there are nine (9) identified researches which published relating to financial sustainability in educational institutions. Majority of these researches gave a focus on the existence of financial sustainability in higher learning institutions or universities, instead of primary or secondary schools. These identified researches provided a closer look on financial sustainability of educational institutions in Europe and North America. Financial

sustainability is associated with personal finance and lifelong learning, as can be seen from the conceptual works as done by Wurzburg (2005), Lucianelli and Citro (2017), Hira (2016), and Modugno and Di Carlo (2019). While, observations from empirical studies relevant to financial sustainability on learned societies are made by Johnson and Fosci (2015) and Harlow (2018). Based on a research done by Alonso-Cañadas et al. (2017), they went to 45 universities in Spain to investigate their financial sustainability and found suitable determinants by using multiple linear regression.

In expanding this literature review, the researchers feel that it is not enough just by looking into researches that cover only on financial sustainability in the universities. Available literature leads to a discussion of financial sustainability in church-affiliated schools. It is identified that financial sustainability is a concern when it is related to financial stability for the management of the schools. Romano and Zeisner (2022) formulated their opinion on financial sustainability and the relationship between sponsors and Catholic schools that received the sponsors. They viewed that:

Schools operate at the behest of their sponsoring parish to fulfil the educational mission of the church. With the financial stability of Catholic schools under significant financial stress, Catholic schools and affiliated parishes must have a realistic understanding of the school's vitality. School financial viability is a substantial factor in determining a school's sustainability, and a parish's capacity to support its school is foundational to school viability. Diocesan support helps ease Catholic schools' organizational and financial strain; however, the ongoing decline of enrolment remains a significant threat to school viability (Romano & Zeisner, 2022: p. 134).

In the discourse of Islamic schools (either primary or secondary schools), the discussion is placed more on the financial management, instead of financial sustainability, such as can be seen from Aini et al., (2023), Izzati et al. (2023), and Barus and Guchi (2023). Indirectly related to financial sustainability, Barus and Guchi (2023) highlight the importance of financial management in sustaining the school's management. They said:

With the existence of management, school financial management will help the funding process from carrying out activities in schools that have been planned, trying to procure it, recording the financial management process in a transparent manner, and then using it for various events or activities in schools in an effective and efficient manner.

The purpose of the existence of school financial management is: (1) develop and increase the value of effectiveness and efficiency in managing school finances; (2) develop and improve transparency and accountability for the use of school finances; and (3) avoiding mistakes in school budget matters. To be able to achieve the above objectives, it requires awareness and creativity of the school in knowing the sources of existing funds, placing treasurers who understand and have the ability to take care of school financial management, especially in terms of bookkeeping and financial accountability and are able to use it properly and honestly as already enacted in the law (Barus & Guchi, 2023: p. 4671).

By reading the available literature, it is obvious that financial sustainability is rarely discussed when it relates to Islamic primary or secondary schools. It is indirectly touched by the previous researches when it is related to management of the schools, financial management or accounts, or financial reporting. Relevant to good facilities of the Islamic schools, it is mentioned briefly by Barus and Guchi (2023: 4671) where, the main objective of school financial management is to be able to guarantee that existing funds are used in the daily activities of the school and that more funds are used for reinvestment, maintenance and maintenance of goods/assets in the school, and also to be able to keep the regulations intact and school financial receipts, records, and expenses can be known clearly and carried out.

Good Facilities in Improving Learning

Establishing and upholding high-quality facilities is crucial for improving the learning environment and bolstering the entire educational experience. Effective education is characterised by its ability to facilitate students' learning process, making it enjoyable and enabling them to successfully attain their desired objectives. Hence, it is imperative to enhance the efficacy of learning in order to ensure the practicality of the taught learning content. In order to enhance the efficacy of education and optimise the learning experience, it is imperative that the facilities utilised by both teachers and students are of good quality and provide safety. In schools that have consistent flows of fundings, they may effort to provide advanced facilities. These can be seen from available classrooms, libraries, laboratories, recreational area, and etc.

For an example, by incorporating modern technology into the classroom, such as interactive whiteboards, projectors, and audio-visual aides, classrooms can be enhanced to foster student engagement and

facilitate a more dynamic learning environment. It is also necessary to furnish classrooms with convenient seating. Refined and comfortable seating setups have the potential to enhance concentration and promote overall comfort. Modern schools are often equipped with fully stocked laboratories that contain a wide range of science materials, computers, and other technologies that facilitate hands-on learning and experimentation. At the same time, ensuring safety protocols in laboratories is crucial for the welfare of students, while conducting efficient experiments that may enhance educational experiences. Learning facilities play a role in the educational process by encompassing many components and being utilised in the execution of the educational process. Devoid of these amenities, the educational process will encounter obstacles that must be evaded by individuals engaged in education. The use of facilities in learning is an integral component of a teacher's instructional strategy, involving the use of appropriate facilities in conjunction with teaching objectives.

Availability of good facilities in improving learning among students is also important when it involved e-learning. Despite technological advancement in e-learning, it will disturb the process of learning if both teachers and students do not know how to utilise the facilities in a proper way. Not everyone knows how to use high technological facilities, thus it warrants trainings especially among teachers. According to Singh et al. (2023), parental supports will be required for students in using e-learning facilities when they are online. Equipment can be expensive and may cause hindrance in learning process to students who cannot afford them. Underprivileged students depend on their schools to get access to good facilities that can assist them in learning experience. This brings the importance of financial sustainability into the picture. When the schools have their own financial sustainability in their considerations, good facilities can be provided and may directly or indirectly assist in learning process.



Figure

1.0:

Interlink between financial sustainability with good facilities that encourages improvement in learning process. (Authors' own).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Documentary research methodology and qualitative meta-analysis are selected in this study. To begin with, locating previous research that establishes a connection between financial sustainability and well-maintained facilities in Islamic secondary institutions with the aim of enhancing the learning process is remarkably difficult due to its scarcity. Additionally, a substantial portion of the data that researchers can access originates from secondary sources. It is considered appropriate to utilise secondary sources as a foundation for this type of investigation. Empirical research data, on the other hand, are derived from a previous survey conducted by NAMA Foundation. Other documents such as reports and information are technically obtained from the official website of NAMA Foundation.

Documentary research is a type of inquiry that obtains precise information about a specific subject through the use of recordings that may come in a variety of forms. It entails the methodical examination and evaluation of pre-existing documents or records (Mogalakwe, 2009). These documents may take the form of written materials, audiovisual materials, photographs, videos, novels, and so forth. The quality of the material employed is a critical factor to bear in mind when conducting documentary research; thus, there is a risk of encountering the single-story phenomenon. To prevent this from occurring, the documents under review must be rigorously evaluated prior to use. Utilising documentary research can be regarded as normal in the social science field (Fitzgerald, 2012), such as to investigate historical events, cultural phenomena, and societal trends in order to gain a thorough understanding of a subject, topic, or research question. Comparable in some ways to content analysis, documentary research also involves the examination of pre-existing information or documents.

Meanwhile, the fundamental concept underlying qualitative meta-analysis is to present a succinct and all-encompassing summary of the results obtained from qualitative investigations pertaining to a shared overarching research subject (Timulak and Creaner, 2023). Qualitative meta-analysis is distinguished by the consolidation of a collection of studies to identify the fundamental components and extrapolate the findings into a final product that introduces a fresh conceptualization of the initial results. It is recommended by Levitt (2018) that meta-analysts

should take into account the methodological soundness of their investigations with regard to fundamental research procedures, such as identifying a collection of previous research studies, converting results into initial data or useful information for a meta-analysis, constructing categories or themes, and communicating findings. This is accordingly followed by the researchers. Thus, the utilisation of documentary research methodology is carried out at the first phase, and qualitative meta-analysis are taken at the second phase in completing this research. The details of these phases are provided in Table 1.0 below.

First Phase: Documentary research methodology	
<p>It is systematic analysis and assessment of existing documents, reports or records.</p>	<p>Materials which are referred to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) a collection of literature relating to financial sustainability, Islamic secondary schools, advantages of good facilities in improving learning process; (ii) a collection of data from NAMA Foundation from their surveys, reports, and website's information.
Second Phase: Qualitative meta-analysis	
<p>It is a concise and comprehensive synthesis of the findings derived from qualitative studies related to a common overarching study topic.</p>	<p>Steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Evaluate collected literature from documentary research methodology; (ii) Set inclusion and exclusion criteria based on selected theme, objectives and scope of the research. (iii) Identify relevant literature and useful information, especially from NAMA Foundation; (iv) Analyse and evaluate useful information and relevant

	knowledge to reach research objectives.
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Table 1.0: Details of Research Methodology

Shariah-Compliant Financial Sustainability: A Suggested Model

Before a further discussion is put forwards here, it is necessary to have a clear understanding that the notion of sustainability itself is a modern concept which was introduced through the Brundtland Report in 1987, together with its well-known associated term, sustainable development. However, the practices of sustainability can be traced back to earlier civilizations. It is noted here that this short section focuses on a financial sustainability model which the researchers attempt to introduce, while providing a brief discussion on financial sustainability from Islamic perspective.

In Islam, the understanding of sustainability is obviously different from Western perspective. According to Prof. Mohammad Hashim Kamali (2018), there are four main concepts validly derived from Shariah which are important to sustainability discourse. They are: (i) *Wasatiyyah*, (ii) *Khalifah*, (iii) *I’mar al-Ard*, and (iv) *al- ‘Adl wa’l Ihsan* (see Table 2.0 for a brief explanation). When finance is discussed, it should be closely deliberated in relation to the concept of wealth (*al-Mal*) creation in Islam. In its dynamic scope of Islamic jurisprudential discussion, it may bring to a bigger concept of *Maqasid Al-Shariah* (the objectives behind the revelations of laws), specifically focusing on *Hifz al-Mal* (preservation and protection of wealth).

Shariah-Related Concept of Sustainability

<i>Wasatiyyah</i>	It is an Islamic principle of moderation, middle path or justly balanced where in relation to financial sustainability, the decision maker needs to strive for a justly balanced decision in utilising resources, without inclining towards miserly or prodigal. It is introduced by Dr. Yusuf Al-Qaradawi and expanded further by Dr. Kamal Hassan (Mohd. Zain et al., 2018).
<i>Khalifah</i>	It is an Islamic principle of trusteeship, where humankind is the trustees and vicegerents appointed by Allah the Exalted to fulfil a mandate and obligation of establishing a fair socio-economic system (Kamali, 2018).
<i>I'mar al-Ard</i>	It is also known as <i>umran</i> (Yahya, 2013), a societal principle established by Ibnu Khaldun through his book, <i>Muqaddimah</i> , which indicates the establishment of a compassionate and ethical society on Earth according to Shariah (Kamali, 2018).
<i>Al-'Adl wa'l Ihsan</i>	It is an Islamic principle of justice and benevolence towards others (Bhuiyan et al., 2020).

Table 2.0: *Shariah*-related concepts of sustainability

Based on the understanding of financial sustainability, it includes financial management, financial health and approaches or methods that may lead to sustaining resources for the organizational structures or their activities that can be impactful to those who receive benefits with such organization or entities. Through this research, it is found that Islam has nothing against financial sustainability, provides that it confirms with the applicable principles of Shariah and not contrary to it. The essence of financial sustainability can be found from the discussion of wealth creation, where it is explained by Shirazi et al. (2022: 4-5) as follows:

According to Islamic jurisprudence, if anything has material form and has value known as wealth, the constraint is that the rules of Shariah must be followed. Islam recommends that someone use his abilities, productive capacities, and also appreciates Muslims to earn wealth for themselves, for their families, and for other needy members of the society. However, priority should be given to the needs of the family. As Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said, ...leaving your heir in wealth (owning enough wealth) is better than leaving them in shortage, begging from others.... (5408 Sahih Bukhari). However, the most critical aspect is the way of earning. It

should be through the legitimate way. (Known *halal* in Islamic jurisprudence), avoid hoarding and spending in the way of Allah (SWT). If wealth is managed in this way, that will be better for their worldly life and the life hereafter. As a vicegerent of Allah (SWT) in this world, man is accountable for all of his actions, and he is also responsible for the earning and spending of his wealth. Therefore, he should keep balance in returns of this worldly life and the life hereafter. Islam encourages everyone to work hard in this world and earn as much as possible. However, wealth must be for the benefit of human life and not for destruction (Shirazi et al., 2022: pp. 4-5).

Moreover, the treatment of new emerging concept such as financial sustainability here can be referred to the Islamic legal maxim *Al-Ashlu Fil Asy-Yaai Al-Ibahah* which indicates the original status of everything is permissible until there is evidence that warrants a departure from such status and leads to a new rule or *hukm* (Hasbullah et al., 2018; Uluyol and Abdullah, 2016; Kamali, 2015).

All individuals are entitled to engage in economic activities and strive for earnings as much as they want, as can be seen from this Quranic verse, “Is it they who apportion thy Lord's mercy? We have apportioned among them their livelihood in the life of the world, and raised some of them above others in rank that some of them may take labour from others; and the mercy of thy Lord is better than (the wealth) that they amass” (Al-Quran, Surah Az-Zukhruf: 32). However, the process of wealth accumulation, its usage, and its distribution must accordingly follow the comprehensive principles of Islamic law by fulfilling certain rights and obligations. This can be seen from another Quranic verse that mentioned, “That which Allah giveth as spoil unto His messenger from the people of the townships, it is for Allah and His messenger and for the near of kin and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer, that it become not a commodity between the rich among you. And whatsoever the messenger giveth you, take it. And whatsoever he forbiddeth, abstain (from it). And keep your duty to Allah. Lo! Allah is stern in reprisal” (Al-Quran, Surah Al-Hashr: 7).

The extant body of literature indicates that the prevailing discourse regarding financial sustainability in schools is rooted in capitalist perspectives, as found by Shapiro (1982), Miller (1997), Gee (2005), and Baltodano (2023). It has a tendency to consider schools as if they were businesses, thereby distorting the true purpose of education from educating to generate profits (Witesman et al., 2023). However, undeniably, the flow of funds is necessary in financing the management of schools, supporting teachers, and providing necessary facilities to

students that may assist their learning process. In order to improve their financial sustainability, schools should prioritise enrolment fees and explore avenues for generating new sources of donations, seek out a variety of revenue streams and not rely on a single one, and prioritise cost management (Kakati and Roy, 2021). Kakati and Roy (2021) identified three key dimensions for evaluating financial sustainability. They are based on (i) generating sufficient money to cover all expenditures and expenses, (ii) meeting current and future obligations, and (iii) preserving and maintaining assets. In this research, by following the understanding of financial sustainability from Islamic perspective, the researchers add another additional key dimensions of financial sustainability, i.e., Shariah compliance in accumulating source of incomes and preserving it (see Figure 2.0).

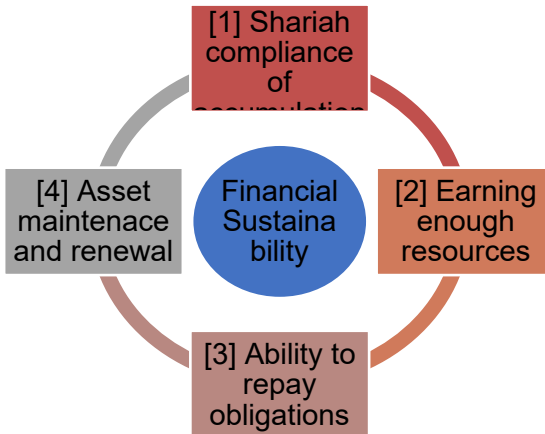


Figure 2.0: *Shariah*-compliant financial sustainability model

NAMA Foundation Sponsored Islamic Secondary Schools: Traces of Financial Sustainability in Providing Good Facilities to Improve Learning Experiences

NAMA Foundation is a company limited by guarantee, which was founded in Malaysia in 2004. NAMA aspires to establish itself as the preeminent provider of grants for sustainable development on a global scale. They hold a strong belief that this goal can be achieved by strengthening the education sector and enhancing the capacities of civil society by placing particular emphasis on promoting youthful development and volunteerism. NAMA Foundation asserts unequivocally that philanthropy is a critical component in cultivating a resilient society.

Recently, NAMA Foundation issued their latest 2019-2023 Strategic Planning in their philanthropic educational grants, where 63 schools are selected from Tanzania, Indonesia, and Kyrgyzstan (NAMA Report, 2022).

They introduce their Institutional Development Programme (IDP), where the chosen schools voluntarily participate a comprehensive transformation that affected the instructors, leaders, the method of managing school operations, and the whole school environment. The primary goals of IDP are as follows: (i) enhance educators' capabilities; (ii) enhance the leadership skills of school leaders; (iii) enhance management effectiveness; (iv) improve the facilities and materials utilised for teaching and learning. Thus, in order to archive such primary goals, they provide four sub-programmes (NAMA, 2023) as can be seen below (Table 3.0):

NAMA Foundation’s 2019-2023 Strategic Planning		
Institutional Development Programme (IDP)	Roadmap of Outstanding Educators (ROOTS)	ROOTS is to enhance educators’ proficiencies in areas that are particularly pertinent to 21 st century education. The ROOTS consultants have expertise in facilitation and gamification, as well as coaching and mentoring abilities.
	Transforming School Leaders (EDULEAD)	EDULEAD provides school leaders with an abundance of skills and knowledge that allow them to carefully analyse the difficulties and opportunities that schools confront in the current conditions. They will be recognised as master trainers.
	School Management	implements School Network Management Systems (SNMS) in the institutions that have been selected. It is software designed to enhance the administration of academic and overall school operations (students, faculty, staff support, inventory, fees, alumni, parents, and so forth). It is anticipated that the educational institutions will fully implement this software to enhance the effectiveness of its administration and operations.
	School Improvement	targets and enhances the infrastructure of NAMA Foundation sponsored schools, thereby directly influencing the educational atmosphere and academic progress inside these institutions. Examples of potential enhancements that could be taken into account include internet connectivity, library resources such as books and academic literature, as well as computer equipment. This project aims to foster the engagement of school communities in actively contributing to the implementation of the proposed improvement plan for the schools.

Table 3.0: Sub-programmes offered organized by NAMA Foundation

From these sub-programmes, NAMA Foundation gives an emphasis on financial sustainability of their supported schools through (i) School Management, and (ii) School Improvement. Based on a report, 59 from the selected schools implemented SNMS by migrating their data to the system which make the data management better, including information relating to fees (NAMA Report, 2022). Under School Improvement, they conduct an analysis on the selected 58 schools' needs for facilities. By doing so, they are able to identify the most needed facilities required by the schools and improve such facilities. All 58 schools according received restoration of facilities and new equipment to improve the schools (NAMA Report, 2022). Thus, it is believed that the improvement of schools' facilities may direct or indirectly influences learning process and experiences among students. It is found that expensive facilities and equipment are not always necessary. Well-equipped facilities in acceptable shape are needed for both students and teachers, which directly and indirectly contribute to the improvement of learning process.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on *Shariah*-compliant financial sustainability model, there are four key dimensions that can be applied for Islamic secondary schools, which are: (i) *Shariah* compliance of accumulation and preservation of resources, (ii) earning enough resources, (iii) maintaining the ability to repay obligations such as debts and salaries for staffs/teachers, and (iv) asset maintenance and renewal, which may include good facilities. By following the proposed model, *Shariah*-compliant financial sustainability can be traced from NAMA Foundation's practices in supporting the selected Islamic secondary schools from Tanzania, Indonesia, and Kyrgyzstan (NAMA Report, 2022). This practice is important in ensuring good facilities for their students, which have potentials in increasing students' experiences in learning process and experiences (see Figure 3.0).

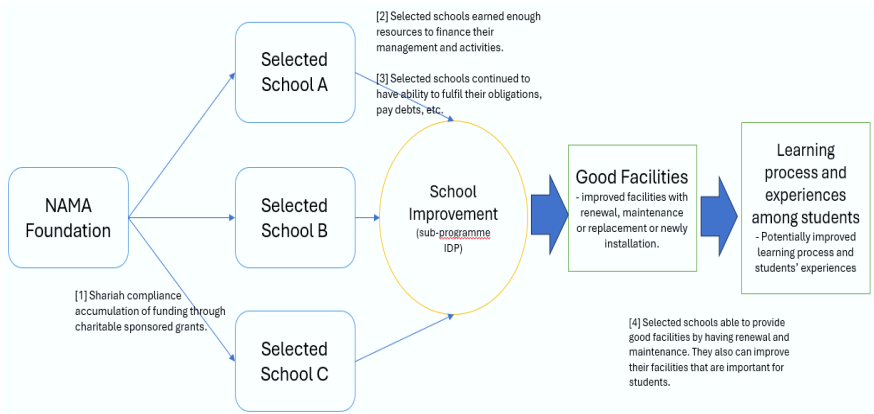


Figure 3.0: Traces of *Shariah*-compliant financial sustainability from NAMA Foundation’s practices.

As provided in Figure 3.0, three stages can be seen from the practices of NAMA Foundation which applies key dimensions of the proposed model. These stages are:

Stage I: when the selected Islamic secondary schools received charitable sponsored grants from NAMA Foundation, the first key dimension of the proposed model can be traced. By receiving such grants, it helps the accumulation of fundings by the selected schools which Shariah compliance in nature.

Stage II: when the selected schools adopted School Improvement, i.e. one of the sub-programmes of IDP by NAMA Foundation, two of key dimensions can be traced. The selected schools earned enough resources to finance their management and educational activities. They also have abilities to fulfil their obligations, such as paying debts, salaries for teachers, and other relevant costs.

Stage III: under School Improvement, the selected schools are encouraged to improve their facilities with renewal, maintenance or replacement or newly installation of relevant facilities or equipment. Under the IDP’s sub-programme, acquisition of such facilities is not random, and based on a prior analysis on what exactly required by the selected schools. This practice can prevent any unnecessary expanses and renewal of facilities will be driven based on what exactly important for the students,

especially to increase their learning process and experience.

Here, it is recommended for such best practice to be adopted by all selected schools that received supports from NAMA Foundation, especially in identifying the required facilities that are essential for their students. It is also recommended to those schools to teach or train their students to appreciate the existing facilities by using them properly, especially when it involves expensive facilities. This may prevent any cost for repairing or renewal in the future. Such cost may be used for other beneficial educational activities.

CONCLUSION

Financial sustainability of educational institutions is essential for their continuous improvement or maintenance of good facilities. Focusing to schools, it empowers the management of schools to fulfil their responsibilities, such as to attract and retain highly talented professionals as teachers, and provide students with a complete and outstanding education and well-equipped facilities that may prepare them for the future. By considering *Shariah*-compliant financial sustainability, schools' managements have the capacity to allocate resources efficiently and they can improve the required facilities. Adequate funding allows schools to dedicate resources towards purchasing modern technology, updating infrastructure, and maintaining a secure and suitable learning environment. This optimises the educational experience for students, rendering it to be more effective and engaging. Schools can also offer a diverse range of educational programmes, extracurricular activities, and support services when they have the means to maintain their financial stability. This ensures a thorough education that caters to the many needs and interests of students. Consequently, this has a significant impact on the overall standard of education delivered to students, resulting in improved academic achievements. Ultimately, resulting in the improvement of overall quality of education, as targeted under SDG No.4. In accessing their financial sustainability of their schools, they may refer to the suggested model of *Shariah*-compliant financial sustainability which is established by the researchers in this research.

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Mohd. Zain, Md. Sidek & Hasbullah: Exploring Financial Sustainability in Islamic Secondary Schools.....

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