



الجامعة الإسلامية العالمية ماليزيا
INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA
يُونَيْتِسْتِي اِسْلَام اِنْتَارَا اِيْحْسَانِ مِلَيْسِيَا

Garden of Knowledge and Virtue

Kulliyyah of Economics and Management Sciences

IIUM Journal of Case Studies in Management

VOL. 17 NO. 3 AUGUST 2026

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IIUM Journal of Case Studies in Management (IJCSM)

Department of Business Administration

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Website: <https://journals.iium.edu.my/ijcsm/index.php/jcsm>

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Published by

IIUM Press, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM).

P.O. Box 10, 50728 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Telephone: +6 03 6421 5014

Fax: +6 03 6421 6298

ISSN: 2810-2327 e-ISSN: 2710-7175

Cases published in the Journal present the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Journal.

Published: 13 AUGUST 2026

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PT. Amal Husnul Maad: Building BATAFA, Spreading Qur'anic Goodness

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Abstract

This case study examines PT. Amal Husnul Maad and its development of BATAFA (Bina Tahfidz Lil Athfal), a collaborative ecosystem for early childhood Qur'anic education in Indonesia. BATAFA emerged from concerns that Tahfidz education should extend beyond memorisation towards cultivating love for the Qur'an, understanding, character, righteous action, and service. The social enterprise integrates educator development, parental engagement, standardised curricula, quality assurance, educational resources, and collaborative learning among participating centres. Its commercial activities are designed to sustain rather than displace its *da'wah* mission, reflecting the principles of *niyyah* (intention), *amanah* (trust), *ihsan* (excellence with integrity), and *barakah* (Divine blessings). Rapid demand, investor interest, and opportunities for digital expansion subsequently created a strategic dilemma between nationwide scaling and quality-controlled growth. The case illustrates how Tawhidic governance can guide social enterprises in balancing commercial sustainability, educational quality, social impact, and spiritual accountability while preserving their founding mission.

Keywords: Islamic social enterprise; Tahfidz education; Tawhidic governance

Introduction

Several months before PT. Amal Husnul Maad was formally established, both founders attended one of the annual public sermons (Khutbatul 'Arsy) at Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor, Indonesia. As alumni and lifelong beneficiaries of the institution's educational philosophy, they regarded the occasion not merely as an alumni gathering but as an opportunity for spiritual renewal and reflection. Thousands of students, teachers, alumni, parents, and community members filled the vast assembly hall, listening attentively as senior kyai reminded everyone of the pondok's mission in educating future Muslim leaders.

Among the messages that deeply resonated with them was a recurring reminder from the late founders of Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor, affectionately known as the Trimurti (Three Founding Kyai). Their educational philosophy had long shaped generations of graduates, emphasizing that the Qur'an was never meant to become merely an object of memorisation.

One senior kyai narrated the advice often attributed to the Trimurti. "Memorising the Qur'an is noble, but memorisation alone is merely a technical achievement. With discipline and repetition, many people can memorise."

He paused before continuing. *"There are non-Muslim scholars, professors, linguists, researchers, and professionals who have memorised significant portions—even the entirety—of the Qur'an. Some study its remarkable linguistic rhythm. Others analyse its literary structure. Some memorise it to understand Arabic rhetoric. Others, regrettably, seek to critique or challenge Islam through academic research."* The audience remained silent. The kyai continued gently, "If a graduate of Gontor memorises the Qur'an but never understands its meanings, never reflects upon its guidance (tadabbur), never embodies its values, and never struggles to spread its teachings, then what distinguishes that graduate from anyone else who has merely memorised the text?"

His words were not intended to diminish the immense virtue of hifz al-Qur'an. Rather, they emphasised that memorisation is the beginning of a lifelong journey rather than its final destination. The Qur'an was revealed to be understood, contemplated, lived, and conveyed to humanity.

He then reminded the audience of the educational vision inherited from the founders. "This pondok was never established to produce people who simply memorise the Qur'an from childhood until old age. Our mission is to nurture mujahid who struggle in the cause of Allah, murabbi who educate generations, leaders who build civilisation, and servants of Allah who make the Qur'an visible through their character, decisions, and service."

Another Kyai then elaborated on the profound concept of becoming Jil al-Qur'ān (جيل القرآن)—the Qur'anic Generation. Looking around the room, he spoke with quiet conviction. *"The Qur'anic Generation was not simply a group of people who memorised the Qur'an. They were the first generation of Muslims who lived alongside Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and whose hearts, minds, and entire lives were transformed by its revelation. Throughout the twenty-three years in which the Qur'an was revealed, the Companions did not regard it merely as words to be committed to memory. Rather, they received every verse as Allah's living guidance to be understood, reflected upon, and immediately put into practice. They would not proceed beyond a small number of verses until they had fully comprehended their meanings and implemented them in their daily lives. Under the Prophet's ﷺ guidance, the Qur'an shaped every aspect of their lives—their faith, character, leadership, relationships, and service to society. As a result, the Qur'an did not merely produce expert reciters; it produced teachers, scholars, judges, governors, merchants, military commanders, reformers, and community leaders whose conduct became a living reflection of its teachings. That," he concluded, "is what it truly means to become Jil al-Qur'ān—not merely to carry the Qur'an in one's memory, but to carry it in one's character, decisions, and every action throughout life."*

The Kyai added, "The greatest success is not that people say, 'He has memorised the Qur'an.' The greatest success is when people say, 'When we deal with him, we remember the teachings of the Qur'an.'"

These words lingered in the minds of Ustazah Afife Rahma Ahsanti and Dr. Rakhmad Agung Hidayatullah long after the sermon ended.

As thousands of attendees slowly dispersed across the pondok grounds, the two founders chose to remain seated for a while beneath the shade of large trees near the mosque. Neither spoke immediately. Both reflected on the responsibility that accompanied knowledge.

Finally, Ustazah Afife broke the silence. "Perhaps we have been asking the wrong question."

Dr. Rakhmad looked at her. "What do you mean?"

"For years," Ustazah Afife replied, "many institutions have asked, 'How many children have memorised the Qur'an?' Maybe we should begin asking, 'How many children have grown to love the Qur'an, understand its guidance according to their level, practise it in daily life, and eventually teach it to others?'"

Dr. Rakhmad nodded slowly. "Exactly. Memorisation should become the gateway to transformation, not the finish line."

The conversation continued during their journey home. *"If our children memorise thirty juz' but grow up without compassion, integrity, discipline, and service," Afife reflected, "have we truly succeeded?"*

Dr. Rakhmad answered, "The Qur'an must move from the tongue to the heart, from the heart to character, from character to leadership, and from leadership to civilisation."

Several weeks later, they sought further guidance from respected senior *asatizah* and *kyai* whom they trusted. Rather than presenting a business proposal, they presented a concern. *"How can we ensure that early childhood tahfidz education does not become merely a race to complete memorisation?"* Dr. Rakhmad asked.

One senior kyai responded thoughtfully. *"Children must first fall in love with Allah before they compete in memorisation. If love disappears, memorisation becomes a burden. If love grows, memorisation becomes worship."*

Another scholar added, *"Parents often celebrate the number of surahs memorised, but they should celebrate equally when a child begins to speak truthfully, shows respect to parents, loves prayer, shares with friends, and displays mercy. These are also fruits of the Qur'an."*

The discussions continued over several follow-up meetings. They consulted specialists in early childhood education, Qur'anic teachers, experienced *murabbi*, and alumni who had spent decades building Islamic educational institutions. A common theme consistently emerged.

Tahfidz education should not be evaluated solely by the quantity of memorisation but by the holistic transformation of the child. The curriculum should integrate memorisation (hifz), understanding appropriate to the child's developmental stage (fahm), reflection (tadabbur),

righteous action ('amal), noble character (akhlaq), and eventually da'wah and service (khidmah).

One elderly kyai concluded with advice that would later become the philosophical foundation of PT. Amal Husnul Maad. *"Never measure your success by the number of huffaz you produce. Measure it by how many servants of Allah carry the Qur'an into society through their lives. The Qur'an was revealed to illuminate civilisation, not merely to be stored in memory."*

These conversations profoundly reshaped the founders' vision. They no longer aspired merely to establish another *tahfidz* institution. Instead, they envisioned building an integrated ecosystem that nurtured children who would memorise the Qur'an with love, understand it progressively, embody its teachings through noble character, and one day become *murabbi*, leaders, and contributors to the ummah.

This conviction became the philosophical foundation for PT. Amal Husnul Maad and the BATAFA (Bina Tahfidz Lil Athfal/ تَحْفِيزُ لِلْأَطْفَالِ) network. Its purpose was not simply to increase the number of young memorizers, but to cultivate future generations whose lives reflected the living guidance of the Qur'an, where memorisation, understanding, character, family education, and service to humanity formed an inseparable whole.

Bina Tahfidz Lil Athfal (BATAFA)

Bina Tahfidz Lil Athfal (BATAFA) is envisioned as a comprehensive educational movement and collaborative network dedicated to nurturing a generation of children whose hearts, minds, and lives are guided by the Qur'an. Derived from the Arabic phrase *Tahfīz lil-Aṭfāl* (تَحْفِيزُ لِلْأَطْفَالِ), meaning Qur'anic memorization for children, BATAFA embraces a much broader educational philosophy than memorization alone. It is founded on the conviction that the Qur'an was revealed not merely to be committed to memory but to be understood, loved, embodied, and lived throughout one's life. Consequently, BATAFA seeks to cultivate children who grow into *Jil al-Qur'an*—a generation whose faith, character, and service to humanity reflect the guidance of the Qur'an.

In contemporary Islamic education, *Tahfīz lil-Aṭfāl* refers to programmes specifically designed to guide young children in memorizing the Qur'an through methods that are developmentally appropriate, engaging, and nurturing. BATAFA extends this concept by integrating six inseparable dimensions of holistic Qur'anic education: fostering a deep love for Allah and His Book; mastering correct Qur'anic recitation (*tajwīd*); establishing disciplined habits of *murāja'ah* (systematic revision); developing age-appropriate understanding of Qur'anic meanings; nurturing adab and noble character (*akhlaq*); and actively involving parents—particularly mothers as the child's first *murabbiyah*—in creating a Qur'an-centred home environment. Learning is intentionally designed to be joyful, play-based, interactive, and rooted in the natural developmental needs (*fiṭrah*) of young children, allowing memorization to emerge from love rather than coercion.

Beyond facilitating early *ḥifẓ* (memorization), BATAFA aspires to build a sustainable ecosystem that integrates curriculum development, educator empowerment, family engagement, institutional quality assurance, and collaborative community learning. The network develops standardized curricula, memorization milestones, *tajwīd* standards, *murāja'ah* schedules, assessment instruments, certification processes, and character development frameworks to ensure educational consistency and excellence across all participating centres. By establishing common quality standards while encouraging contextual

innovation, BATAFA enables local institutions to preserve educational integrity without sacrificing creativity or responsiveness to community needs.

Recognizing that the quality of children's Qur'anic education depends fundamentally upon the competence and spirituality of educators, BATAFA invests continuously in the professional and spiritual development of murabbī and muḥaffīz. Teachers receive ongoing training in Qur'anic pedagogy, early childhood education, developmental psychology, classroom management, mentoring, and effective memorization methodologies suited to different stages of child development. They are nurtured not merely as instructors of memorization but as role models who exemplify Qur'anic values through their character, compassion, sincerity, and commitment to lifelong learning.

Equally central to the BATAFA philosophy is the recognition that parents are indispensable partners in children's Qur'anic development. The network therefore empowers families through parenting seminars, home-based murāja'ah programmes, family mentoring circles, practical educational resources, and guidance for cultivating a home atmosphere where the Qur'an is recited, reflected upon, and practised in everyday life. Particular emphasis is placed on strengthening the role of mothers as the child's first teacher and primary nurturer of faith, while encouraging fathers to provide leadership, encouragement, and spiritual support within the family.

Grounded in the Tawhidic worldview, BATAFA views memorization as the beginning rather than the culmination of Qur'anic education. Its ultimate objective is to cultivate children whose memorization naturally develops into understanding (fahm), reflection (tadabbur), righteous action (ʿamal), noble character (akhlāq), and service to society (khidmah). Inspired by the Prophetic model of becoming a "living Qur'an," the network strives to nurture children who embody sincerity, honesty, discipline, compassion, humility, resilience, responsibility, and excellence (ihsan) in every aspect of their lives.

To sustain educational quality and institutional credibility, BATAFA implements a comprehensive quality assurance system encompassing periodic munaqashah (memorization assessments), educator mentoring, institutional accreditation, competency certification, benchmarking, continuous monitoring, and evidence-based programme evaluation. Rather than functioning as isolated institutions, member centres participate in an active community of practice where educators exchange curricula, teaching materials, digital innovations, research findings, and best practices while collaborating through seminars, camps, Qur'anic festivals, educator conferences, and family engagement programmes that strengthen relationships among teachers, parents, students, and local communities.

Ultimately, BATAFA aspires to become far more than a network of Tahfidz centres. It seeks to establish a national movement for Qur'anic civilization-building by developing future ḥuffāz, murabbī, mujāhid, ethical leaders, and responsible citizens whose personal and professional lives are guided by the Qur'an. Through the integration of educational excellence, institutional sustainability, family empowerment, and community engagement, BATAFA aims to contribute meaningfully to the flourishing of the ummah and the realization of maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah, ensuring that every child nurtured within the network grows not only as a memorizer of the Qur'an but also as a faithful servant of Allah, a compassionate member of society, and a lifelong ambassador of Qur'anic values.

Background

Indonesia, home to one of the world's largest Muslim populations, possesses an extraordinary social and educational infrastructure for Qur'anic learning. Across cities, villages, mosques, pondok pesantren, and community-based learning centres, millions of children encounter the Qur'an from an early age. This widespread commitment creates significant potential for developing a generation whose relationship with the Qur'an begins during the formative years of childhood. Yet the scale of participation does not automatically guarantee consistency in educational quality. Early childhood Tahfidz education continues to face challenges related to teacher capability, parental involvement, learning materials, institutional coordination, and the developmental suitability of memorisation methods.

The concern became particularly apparent in conversations among educators, parents, Tahfidz practitioners, and leaders of Islamic educational institutions. Many Tahfidz centres depended heavily on committed volunteer teachers who possessed sincerity and Qur'anic knowledge but had received limited professional preparation in early childhood pedagogy. Parents likewise demonstrated strong aspirations for their children to memorise the Qur'an, yet many were uncertain about how memorisation should be encouraged at different developmental stages. In some cases, the desire to accelerate achievement risked turning what should be a loving relationship with the Qur'an into a demanding performance exercise. Learning materials and teaching approaches also differed considerably between institutions. More fundamentally, individual centres frequently operated independently, leaving few systematic opportunities to exchange experience, compare practices, learn from failures, or undertake continuous quality improvement.

For Ustazah Afife Rahmah Ahsanti, these challenges could not be addressed simply by increasing the number of Tahfidz classes. Her years of engagement with mothers and early childhood education had convinced her that the home was as important as the classroom. She repeatedly observed that children who progressed consistently were often those whose learning continued naturally within their family environment. She therefore reminded educators, *"Mothers are the first murabbiyah. If mothers understand how children naturally learn, memorisation becomes an act of love rather than pressure."* Her argument shifted attention from the amount memorised to the environment in which memorisation occurred. A young child should not experience the Qur'an merely as another academic target; listening, repeating, recognising, and memorising verses should become part of an affectionate relationship involving the child, parents, teachers, and the Qur'an.

This observation generated an important question in her discussions with Dr. Rakhmad Agung Hidayatullah: *If mothers are the first murabbiyah and teachers are their educational partners, who develops the capabilities of the adults surrounding the child? The problem was therefore larger than curriculum design. Parents required guidance, teachers required professional development, and institutions required mechanisms through which good practices could be identified, shared, evaluated, and improved.*

Dr. Rakhmad approached the same issue from the perspective of institutional development, governance, strategic management, and organisational quality. Where Afife saw the importance of the child–mother–teacher relationship, Dr Rakhmad saw the organisational architecture necessary to sustain that relationship. In their discussions, he argued that fragmentation itself represented a major constraint. *"The ummah does not need another isolated programme,"* he explained. *"The ummah needs an integrated system where every teacher learns from another*

teacher, every parent receives guidance, every child follows a structured pathway, and every centre continuously improves.”

Their dialogue gradually reframed the issue. The central question was no longer simply, How can children memorise the Qur'an more effectively? Instead, it became: How can an ecosystem be created in which children, parents, teachers, Tahfidz centres, and Islamic educational institutions learn together? Afife emphasised the human and developmental dimension: *“We cannot begin with how many surahs the child must complete. We must begin with the child—how the child listens, imitates, plays, remembers, and develops love for the Qur'an.”* Dr Rakhmad responded from an organisational perspective: *“And once we understand that process, we have to make sure good practice does not remain with one excellent teacher or one successful centre. It must become organisational knowledge that others can learn from.”* [Reconstructed dialogue based on the perspectives described in the case.]

These concerns also resonated with conversations involving kyai and educators associated with Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor and other pondok pesantren. From the pesantren perspective, Qur'anic education could not be reduced to memorisation techniques because education ultimately concerns the formation of the whole person. One kyai expressed the principle in terms of *tarbiyah*: *“The child may memorise many verses, but the greater responsibility is to nurture the Qur'an within character, discipline, adab, and daily life.”* Another pesantren educator similarly cautioned that institutional expansion should never separate knowledge from adab: *“A system is useful when it strengthens the teacher, the family, and the child. But the system must serve tarbiyah; tarbiyah must not become the servant of the system.”*

This pesantren perspective introduced an important counterbalance into the emerging model. Professionalisation was necessary, but professionalisation could not mean commercialising Qur'anic achievement or treating children as production targets. Standardisation was useful, but it could not eliminate the individual developmental differences among children. Technology could facilitate monitoring and learning, but it could not replace the *murabbiyah*, *murabbi*, teacher, parent, or *kyai*. Growth was desirable, but expansion without amanah, adab, and educational quality could undermine the very mission the initiative sought to advance.

A dialogue with a kyai from another pondok sharpened this concern. *“If you establish many centres,”* the kyai asked, *“how will you know that the spirit of Qur'anic education remains the same in every place?”* Dr Rakhmad's response reflected his quality-management orientation: *“That is precisely why the centres cannot operate independently. We need common standards, teacher development, monitoring, feedback, and continuous improvement.”* Ustazah Afife added another qualification: *“But the standard must recognise the nature of children. Two children of the same age may not memorise at the same speed. Quality cannot mean forcing them to produce the same result at the same time.”*

The interaction of these perspectives produced a more comprehensive understanding of quality in early childhood Tahfidz education. Quality could not be measured solely through the number of verses, surahs, or juz memorised. It also concerned whether children developed affection for the Qur'an, whether parents understood their educational responsibilities, whether teachers possessed appropriate pedagogical capabilities, whether institutions maintained reliable standards, and whether the entire network learned from experience. In this sense, quality was simultaneously spiritual, educational, familial, and organisational.

This reasoning also influenced an important strategic decision. Ustazah Afife and Dr Rakhmad did not want the initiative to depend permanently on donations or voluntary enthusiasm. Charitable contributions remained valuable, particularly in supporting communities unable to afford educational services, but dependence on charity alone could make institutional development vulnerable to fluctuating funding. Dr Rakhmad therefore raised a practical question: *“If the mission is expected to continue for generations, what will sustain the teachers, training, materials, technology, administration, and improvement of the system?”* Ustazah Afife's concern complemented his: *“And sustainability must never make us forget why we began. Income is necessary to support the mission; the mission cannot become merely a means to generate income.”*

They consequently decided to develop the initiative as a social enterprise rather than relying exclusively on a charitable foundation model. This decision reflected an attempt to reconcile *da‘wah* with organisational sustainability. A professionally managed enterprise could generate revenue from appropriate educational services, training, materials, institutional partnerships, and related activities while reinvesting resources into teacher development, parental education, educational innovation, and wider access to Qur’anic learning. Commercial discipline, in this conception, was not an alternative to *da‘wah* but an organisational mechanism intended to sustain it.

The convergence of these voices provided the intellectual and practical foundation for the social enterprise. Its purpose was not simply to produce younger huffaz, nor merely to establish additional Tahfidz centres. Rather, it sought to create a sustainable Qur’anic learning ecosystem in which children learn with love, parents participate with understanding, teachers serve with competence, institutions operate with amanah, and centres improve through collective learning. In this model, organisational sustainability and *da‘wah* are not competing objectives. When properly governed, professional management becomes a means through which the educational mission can be protected, strengthened, and extended to future generations.

Founding with Intention (Niyyah)

Before registering the company, the two founders deliberately sought counsel from senior asatizah, Islamic scholars, kyai, and respected community leaders. This consultation was important because they understood that establishing a company to advance Qur’anic education raised a fundamental question: could commercial organisation, revenue generation, and professional management coexist with *da‘wah* without allowing financial objectives to dominate the educational and spiritual mission? For the founders, legal registration was therefore not merely an administrative step. It required clarity of *niyyah*, accountability, and agreement about what the enterprise would ultimately serve.

During one consultation, an elderly ustaz listened quietly as Ustazah Afife and Dr. Rakhmad explained their intention to develop a professionally managed organisation capable of supporting Qur’anic education on a sustainable basis. Rather than immediately endorsing the proposal, he asked a simple but penetrating question: *“Why establish a company rather than another foundation?”* His question went directly to the tension at the heart of the proposed enterprise. Foundations were commonly associated with charitable and religious activities, whereas companies were expected to generate income and potentially profit. Why, then, should a Qur’anic educational mission be organised through a business entity?

Ustazah Afife responded by explaining that the choice was driven primarily by sustainability rather than commercial ambition. *“Because sustainability requires professional management.*

We wish to generate resources continuously rather than depend only upon donations.” Her response reflected lessons from educational and community initiatives that could begin with considerable enthusiasm but later struggle when donations, volunteer participation, or external assistance declined. For her, financial sustainability was therefore not separate from the educational mission. Without reliable resources, teachers could not be continuously developed, educational materials could not be improved, and programmes for children could become dependent on uncertain funding.

The elderly ustaz understood the argument but immediately introduced a spiritual qualification. He smiled and advised, *“Then protect your intention. A company may seek profit, but profit must never become your master.”* His statement became an important principle in the founders’ thinking. Islam did not prohibit enterprise or profit, but the pursuit of income had to remain subordinate to a higher purpose. The real danger was therefore not profit itself, but the possibility that financial success could gradually redefine organisational priorities. A company established to serve Qur’anic education could eventually begin serving revenue targets instead unless its original intention was continuously protected.

Dr. Rakhmad responded by returning the discussion to the meaning they had attached to the organisation itself. *“That is why we named it Amal Husnul Maad. Every activity is intended for Allah alone.”* The name was therefore more than organisational branding. It represented a statement of purpose and a reminder of accountability beyond conventional business performance. Revenue, organisational growth, professional management, and operational efficiency could be pursued, but these were understood as means rather than ends. The ultimate measure of the organisation was whether its activities contributed to beneficial knowledge, Qur’anic education, and service to the ummah while remaining oriented toward Allah.

The discussion continued for some time. Different participants raised questions about governance, financial discipline, educational quality, the responsibilities of the founders, and how the organisation could protect its original purpose as it expanded. One senior community member reminded them that “good intention must be supported by a good system.” Another participant added that an organisation working with the Qur’an carried a responsibility greater than ordinary commercial reputation: “People may forgive a business mistake, but when you carry the name of Qur’anic education, people place an amanah upon you.” These observations reinforced the founders’ recognition that sincerity alone would not be sufficient. The organisation required structures capable of translating its values into recurring organisational practices.

Following the extended consultation, the scholars recommended that the founding principles should make the social and educational commitment explicit rather than leaving it dependent upon the founders’ personal generosity. This led to what they understood as a blessing agreement: a continuing commitment that a portion of enterprise proceeds would support the development of the BATAFA network, early childhood Qur’anic education, teacher development, educational publications, and learning resources for children. By establishing this commitment from the beginning, the founders sought to prevent social contribution from becoming something considered only after commercial objectives had been achieved.

This distinction was fundamental. The allocation was not conceived as conventional corporate philanthropy conducted after profit, nor as an occasional charitable activity used to strengthen organisational reputation. It was treated as an inseparable component of the enterprise model. In other words, the organisation would generate resources partly because resources were

required to sustain its educational mission. Commercial activity and social contribution were therefore deliberately connected. The stronger the enterprise became, the greater its potential capacity to strengthen teachers, families, children, and the wider Tahfidz ecosystem.

Ustazah Afife expressed the underlying philosophy simply: *“If Allah gives more through the company, then more people should benefit from it.”* From her perspective, organisational growth would have little meaning if its benefits remained concentrated among the owners. Teachers needed opportunities for development, parents required guidance, children needed appropriate learning materials, and smaller Tahfidz centres required access to knowledge and resources. Growth consequently carried an obligation to widen benefit.

Dr. Rakhmad approached the same principle through the language of institutional sustainability. *“We cannot build a programme that helps people for one year and disappears in the second year,”* he argued. *“If the mission is long-term, the organisation supporting the mission must also be sustainable.”* His argument connected professional management with amanah. Financial planning, governance, quality management, teacher development, documentation, and organisational learning were not merely corporate techniques; when directed toward a beneficial purpose, they became mechanisms for protecting continuity.

Yet the scholars repeatedly reminded the founders that organisational systems alone could not protect the enterprise. One kyai cautioned, *“You may write the intention in the document, but you must also write it repeatedly in your heart.”* The statement captured an important tension. Formal governance could institutionalise commitments, but *niyyah* remained a human and spiritual responsibility. As the organisation expanded, the founders and future leaders would have to continually ask whether particular decisions strengthened the mission or merely increased revenue.

Toward the end of the consultation, a senior kyai connected their discussion to the Prophetic teaching concerning *ṣadaqah jāriyah*, which is continuous charity whose benefit continues beyond the immediate act. He looked at the founders and said, *“Every child who memorises one verse because of your effort may become your companion until Husnul Khotimah.”*

The room fell silent.

The statement shifted the meaning of the proposed enterprise. Until that moment, much of the discussion had concerned organisational form, sustainability, professional management, educational programmes, and financial resources. The kyai’s words redirected attention toward the ultimate beneficiary: the child learning the Qur’an. A teacher trained through the organisation might teach hundreds of children. A learning resource developed once might be used repeatedly by families. A mother who learned how to accompany her child in memorisation might continue doing so for years. A Tahfidz centre strengthened through the network might subsequently educate generations of children. The potential impact therefore extended beyond a single transaction, programme, or accounting period.

For Ustazah Afife and Dr. Rakhmad, this was the moment when the meaning of the proposed company became clearer. They were not simply accepting a business opportunity. They were accepting an amanah. Profit could sustain the organisation, but it could not define its purpose. Professional management could strengthen the institution, but it could not replace sincerity. Growth could increase organisational reach, but growth would only be meaningful when it increased beneficial impact.

The consultation therefore shaped an organisational philosophy in which *niyyah* provides direction, professional management provides sustainability, profit provides resources, and amanah governs their use. The commitment to Qur'anic education was embedded into the enterprise rather than attached to it as an additional social responsibility. Under this understanding, commercial success and *da'wah* were not inherently contradictory. The critical question was which one served the other. For Amal Husnul Maad, the answer established during those early consultations was explicit: the business must sustain the mission; the mission must never become a servant of the business.

Building the BATAFA Network

The founders envisioned BATAFA (Bina Tahfidz Lil Athfal) as far more than a collection of Tahfidz learning centres. From the beginning, their ambition was to create a collaborative educational ecosystem in which children, educators, parents, and participating institutions could learn and improve together. Rather than allowing each centre to develop its own practices independently, BATAFA sought to provide a shared foundation through standardised and age-appropriate curricula, engaging learning materials, educator training, parental mentoring, competency certification, and systematic knowledge sharing. The underlying argument was that sustainable early childhood Qur'anic education required more than effective classroom teaching; it required an interconnected system capable of developing teachers, empowering parents, sharing practical knowledge, and continuously improving the learning experience. As one educator observed during the early discussions, "When teachers learn alone, the benefit stays in one classroom. When teachers learn together, the benefit can reach many children." This collaborative approach enabled experiences from individual centres, including difficulties, innovations, and successful practices, which is to become collective knowledge for the wider BATAFA community.

This philosophy distinguished BATAFA from a conventional franchise model primarily concerned with multiplying outlets and expanding market presence. The founders did not want participating centres to compete for recognition or operate merely as branches implementing instructions from a central organisation. Instead, each unit was expected to contribute its experiences, innovations, challenges, and lessons learned to strengthen the entire network. A successful teaching technique discovered in one centre could be shared with others, while difficulties experienced elsewhere could become opportunities for collective reflection and improvement. The founders therefore repeatedly reminded prospective partners, "*We are not building branches. We are building brothers and sisters who strengthen one another.*" The statement captured the organisational identity they hoped to institutionalise: BATAFA would grow not simply by increasing the number of centres, but by deepening ta'awun (mutual assistance), strengthening relationships, and creating a learning community in which the improvement of one centre contributed to the improvement of all.

Commercial Activities Supporting Social Mission

PT. Amal Husnul Maad developed a diversified income model through several complementary educational and professional activities, including teacher manuals, children's memorisation journals, educational flashcards, assessment instruments, digital applications, operational consulting, educator training, and family development programmes. This diversification was important because the founders did not want the sustainability of the organisation to depend on a single product, programme, or source of donation. More importantly, these activities were designed around actual needs within the Tahfidz ecosystem rather than being treated simply as commercial products. As one educator explained, "*A teacher needs guidance, a child needs*

suitable materials, and parents need to know what to do at home. If we can provide all three, the learning process becomes stronger.” Another staff member similarly observed that the publications were valuable because *“we are not selling books only; we are giving teachers something they can immediately use with the children.”* Revenue generation was therefore connected directly to solving practical educational problems.

Management deliberately resisted separating commercial activities from religious and educational responsibilities. Instead, the organisation developed a reinforcing cycle in which each income-generating activity was expected to create further educational benefit. Every publication sold could finance additional teacher development; every training programme could strengthen the capability of educators and participating communities; and every consultation could contribute knowledge, experience, or resources to another BATAFA centre. Dr. Rakhmad described the principle as one of sustainability through productive activity: “If we continuously depend on donations, we continuously ask what others can give us. But when we create useful knowledge, training, and educational products, we can ask what more we can give to others.” Afife reinforced the educational purpose behind this approach, explaining, “The income is important because the teachers, children, and families need continuous support. But the value is not in how much we sell; the value is in what happens after the product reaches them.” Commercial performance, from this perspective, was meaningful only when it expanded the organisation’s capacity to educate and serve.

This integration gradually shaped how employees themselves understood PT. Amal Husnul Maad. Rather than seeing a contradiction between business and *da‘wah*, staff described commercial discipline as a mechanism for sustaining beneficial activities, provided that *niyyah* and *amanah* remained central. Employees frequently characterised the organisation as “a business whose products continuously create opportunities for worship.” One staff member explained the idea more practically: “When a journal helps a child memorise the Qur’an, the benefit does not stop when somebody buys the journal.” Another reflected on the wider organisational purpose: “We work like a company—we have targets, programmes, customers, and responsibilities—but we always have to remember why the company exists.” The resulting model therefore challenged the assumption that commercial sustainability and religious purpose must occupy separate organisational domains. At PT. Amal Husnul Maad, publications, training, consulting, and digital services generated income, but the income sustained capability development, while capability development strengthened Qur’anic education. Business activity consequently became not the endpoint of the organisation but a recurring mechanism through which educational service, *da‘wah*, and opportunities for *‘ibadah* could be continuously reproduced.

A Strategic Crossroads

What happened during the first six months surprised almost everyone involved. The founders had anticipated gradual acceptance of BATAFA, yet enquiries began arriving from different directions much faster than expected. Islamic schools wanted to adopt the methodology, educational publishers proposed licensing arrangements, technology companies offered to digitise the curriculum, and private investors saw an opportunity to accelerate the model nationally. “We thought we would spend the first few years convincing people about the idea. Suddenly, people were coming to convince us to grow faster,” one team member recalled. Even some senior educators were astonished by the response: “We knew parents wanted Tahfidz education, but we did not realise how strong the demand was for a structured system.” Excitement reached its height during a board meeting when a consultant presented an ambitious projection: “If we move aggressively, we can establish one thousand BATAFA units within

three years.” Another adviser added, “Digital licensing alone could become the company’s primary revenue source.” The figures impressed many in the room, and one investor urged the founders not to allow caution to become a lost opportunity: “Growth always creates imperfections. Scale first; improve later.” Yet Afife appeared increasingly concerned. Looking beyond the financial projections, she interrupted with a simple question: “What happens if expansion becomes faster than teacher preparation?” The room became quiet. Dr. Rakhmad walked to the whiteboard and wrote three words: Quality. Amanah. Barakah. Turning to the board, he said, “If children receive inconsistent guidance, we may achieve impressive numbers while failing our amanah.” Another board member immediately supported the concern: “But we are shaping children’s relationship with the Qur’an. Educational trust is easier to lose than financial capital.” What had begun as an exciting conversation about extraordinary growth unexpectedly became a much deeper debate about what the organisation was willing—or unwilling—to sacrifice in order to achieve scale.

The discussion continued late into the evening, but the founders deliberately postponed the decision. The following morning, before returning to financial projections and expansion targets, they performed Salat al-Duha and convened a shūrā with senior educators and asatizah. The change of setting also changed the nature of the conversation. One respected scholar reminded the group, “Allah will not ask how many centres you established. He will ask whether every child entrusted to you was served with ihsan.” For several people in the room, the statement was unexpected because it challenged the conventional assumption that greater scale necessarily represented greater impact. One educator reflected, “One thousand centres sounded extraordinary yesterday. This morning we realised that one thousand centres also mean one thousand amanah.” Another participant added, “Perhaps barakah is not how quickly we become large, but how carefully we protect what Allah has entrusted to us.” The founders consequently rejected the simple logic of scale first, improve later and developed a more balanced framework in which educational quality, teacher competence, family engagement, organisational sustainability, social impact, financial responsibility, and spiritual accountability before Allah would collectively determine success. Expansion remained important because more centres could bring Qur’anic education to more children, but growth would no longer be pursued merely because capital, technology, or market demand made it possible. Every new BATAFA centre would first have to demonstrate readiness against established quality standards. As Dr. Rakhmad concluded, “We are not against growth. We are against growth that makes us forget why we were allowed to grow.” The decision surprised some investors and advisers, but it clarified a principle that would subsequently define BATAFA’s Tawhidic governance: growth was desirable, quality was obligatory, amanah was non-negotiable, and barakah could never be reduced to numbers.

The Strategic Dilemma

By early 2025, PT. Amal Husnul Maad had reached a defining moment that few within the organisation had anticipated so quickly. Demand for BATAFA programmes was beginning to exceed organisational capacity. Communities were requesting the immediate establishment of new centres, while potential investors encouraged the founders to take advantage of the momentum and pursue aggressive nationwide expansion. Yet growth generated pressures of its own. Teachers required continuous training and mentoring, parents expected affordable and accessible learning resources, and every additional centre created new responsibilities for quality assurance and organisational support. The opportunity was substantial, but so was the amanah. What appeared externally to be a promising moment for expansion was internally becoming a fundamental test of whether the organisation could grow without weakening the educational quality and values that had made BATAFA distinctive.

The founders therefore confronted several competing strategic priorities. Should the organisation pursue rapid national expansion while demand and investor interest were strong, or continue with gradual, quality-controlled growth? Should scarce resources be directed towards opening new centres or deepening investment in educator development? Could digital transformation extend BATAFA's reach without weakening the relationships among teachers, parents, children, and mentors that were central to its educational philosophy? At the same time, financial sustainability could not be ignored. Without sufficient revenue, the organisation could not continuously develop teachers, produce affordable educational materials, improve technology, or support the wider BATAFA ecosystem. Yet an equally important concern remained: as the organisation became larger and commercially stronger, could it preserve the *niyyah*, *amanah*, *ihsan*, and pursuit of *barakah* upon which it had originally been established? The strategic challenge was therefore not simply choosing between growth and quality, but determining how commercial sustainability, educational excellence, technological development, social impact, and spiritual accountability could remain aligned.

As the next board meeting approached, Dr. Rakhmad stood for a moment before the organisation's guiding statement displayed prominently on the meeting-room wall: "Producing Goodness, Spreading the Light of Knowledge." The words had been easy to embrace when the organisation was small; they carried a different weight now that investors, communities, educators, parents, and potentially thousands of children depended upon the decisions being made. Looking at the statement, he quietly reflected, "Can a social enterprise remain commercially sustainable while ensuring that every strategic decision remains an act of worship?" The question captured the central dilemma confronting PT. Amal Husnul Maad. Its future would not ultimately be determined by how rapidly it could multiply BATAFA centres or maximise revenue, but by whether it could transform growth itself into responsible service. The answer would shape not only the future of the enterprise, but also the teachers and families it supported and, most importantly, the thousands of children who might one day carry the Qur'an in their hearts.

Discussion Questions

1. Should PT. Amal Husnul Maad prioritise rapid nationwide expansion to maximise social impact, or pursue slower, quality-controlled growth to preserve educational excellence and organisational culture? What strategic framework should guide this decision?
2. How can PT. Amal Husnul Maad balance commercial sustainability with its founding commitment that all activities and a portion of profits remain dedicated to Allah's cause through the development of the BATAFA network?
3. From the perspective of Tawhidic Epistemology and Islamic strategic management, how should the founders evaluate organisational success beyond conventional financial performance? Propose a balanced performance measurement framework integrating spiritual, social, educational, and economic dimensions.