# COMMUNITY PREFERENCES FOR PRIVATE ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN MASOHI CENTRAL MALUKU

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**Abstract:** This study aims to analyse community preferences regarding private Islamic education in Masohi City, Central Maluku, in the post-conflict socio-religious context. The study uses a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative data were obtained through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation involving school principals, teachers, parents of students, and community leaders, and analysed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model. Quantitative data were collected through a survey using proportional stratified sampling techniques representing 10% of students in each school, namely SD Islam Al-Bina (29 respondents), MIT Nurul Falah (30 respondents), and SD Muhammadiyah Masohi (18 respondents), with a total of 77 respondents and a margin of error of approximately 11–12% at a 95% confidence level. The results showed that community preferences were influenced by five main factors, namely (1) religious motivation, (2) quality of education, (3) school facilities and services, (4) socio-cultural dimensions, and (5) economic factors and accessibility. These findings also reveal the transformation of the role of private Islamic schools as a substitute for Islamic boarding schools in character building, strengthening religious identity, and social reconstruction of post-conflict communities. This study contributes theoretically to the development of Islamic education sociology studies and practically provides an empirical basis for strengthening private Islamic education policies and institutions in Eastern Indonesia.

**Keywords:** Mixed Methods; Preferences of the Masohi Community; Private Islamic Schools.

## INTRODUCTION

The development of public choice towards religious-based education in Indonesia over the past two decades has seen a shift in the educational orientation of Muslim families. Education is no longer understood solely as a means of academic achievement, but also as an instrument for shaping a morally and religiously sound personality. Parents increasingly view schools as strategic spaces for the internalisation of values, the formation of discipline, and the strengthening of children's ethical stability amid rapid and complex social change (Simbolon, 2025). In this context, Islamic education has gained an important position as an alternative that is considered capable of meeting spiritual needs as well as the demands of modern education.

Parents' preferences in choosing schools are increasingly influenced by the ability of educational institutions to integrate religious values with contemporary educational demands. In the context of Muslim society, schools are no longer seen merely as spaces for the transmission of academic knowledge, but

also as institutions for the formation of religious character that is relevant to the times. Educational institutions that are able to combine the strengthening of religiosity, academic learning quality, technological literacy, and the readiness of students to face global challenges tend to be more attractive to parents, as they are considered capable of responding to both the spiritual and pragmatic needs of modern education (Setiawan, 2025).

Within this framework, the transformation of madrasahs and private Islamic schools is perceived as an ideal choice by the community, as these institutions are considered capable of balancing religious piety with modern educational rationality. The transformation of Islamic education is a strategic response to social change and globalisation, so that Islamic educational institutions are not trapped in the dichotomy between religious knowledge and general knowledge (Azra, 2012). For Subhan, the transformation of madrasahs and Islamic schools today reflects the socio-religious dynamics of Muslims, while also demonstrating efforts to integrate Islamic values into the national education system without losing their Islamic identity. (Subhan, 2023).

Cross-country comparative studies also show that preferences for Islamic schools are not only driven by religious motives, but are also related to character building, moral supervision, and perceptions of school safety and social climate (Manjuma Akhtar Mousumi, 2022). In the local context of Masohi City, Central Maluku Regency, the community's preference for private Islamic education has distinctive historical and social characteristics. Early Islamic educational institutions, such as Madrasah Mahasinul Akhlak, Al-Hilal, Al-Khairat, and Nadil Ulum, grew in response to the dominance of colonial education and as a means of strengthening the Islamic identity of the local community (Souisa, 2020). However, the communal conflict in Maluku in 1999 had a serious impact on the continuity of Islamic education, both institutionally and socially. A number of institutions experienced stagnation, a decline in quality, and even physical destruction, which led to a decline in public trust (Idham, 2014 ; Murtadlo 2015).

After the conflict, efforts to revitalise private Islamic education in Masohi City were once again driven by community organisations and religious foundations. However, these institutions still face various challenges, such as limited human resources, funding, education regulations, and increasingly competitive quality demands. Post-conflict social life has experienced segregation, but from an educational perspective, schools are seen as having a strategic role in psychosocial recovery, social cohesion reconstruction, and the formation of a sustainable narrative of peace (Vonhm, 2025). Therefore, private Islamic schools in Masohi serve not only as educational institutions, but also as spaces for social and moral reconstruction in post-conflict communities (Jimerson, 2021).

In addition to historical and social factors, the modernisation of Islamic education has also influenced public preference for private Islamic schools. The integration of general and religious curricula, the professionalisation of teaching staff, the digitisation of learning, and improvements in institutional governance are important indicators in

parents' considerations. Educational models such as Integrated Islamic Schools (SIT), which integrate academic achievement and Islamic character building, are increasingly in demand because they are considered capable of meeting the holistic educational needs of children in the modern era (Setiawan, 2025).

However, empirical studies that specifically discuss public preferences for private Islamic education in post-conflict areas, particularly in Masohi City, are still relatively limited. There have not been many studies that systematically examine the relationship between parents' religious motivations, rational considerations regarding the quality of education, and the institutional challenges of private Islamic schools in a post-conflict social context. Therefore, this study aims to analyse community preferences for private Islamic education in Masohi City, Central Maluku, in order to provide empirical contributions to the development of Islamic education studies and the strengthening of private Islamic education policies in post-conflict areas.

**METHOD**

This study uses a pragmatic paradigm with a mixed methods design to examine community preferences for private Islamic education in Masohi City, Central Maluku. This paradigm was chosen to comprehensively address empirical issues, without qualitative-quantitative dichotomy. (Morgan, 2007). The research took the form of a case study of three private Islamic schools, namely SD Islam Al-Bina, MIT Nurul Falah, and SD Muhammadiyah.

The analytical framework refers to institutional theory (Powell, 1983), Rational choice theory (Becker, 1993) and the sociology of religion (Berger, 1967). To examine the interaction between religious, rational, and institutional dimensions in community educational choices. The qualitative approach involved school principals, teachers, parents, and community leaders selected through purposive sampling. Data was collected through interviews, observations, and document studies, then analysed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model with 16 respondents consisting of 2 school principals, 1 madrasah principal substitute, 4 religious leaders, 6 parents of students, 1 Ministry of Religious Affairs official from Central Maluku, and 4 teachers representing their respective schools.

The quantitative approach uses proportional stratified sampling by taking 10% of the population according to the guidelines (Sugiono, 2017). The sample consisted of 77 respondents, comprising Al-Bina Islamic Elementary School (29), Nurul Falah Islamic Elementary School (30), and Muhammadiyah Elementary School (18). Data were collected through a Likert scale questionnaire and analysed descriptively using percentages. Data validity is maintained through triangulation and member checks on qualitative data, as well as validity and reliability tests and 95% margin of error calculations on quantitative data.

**RESULTS**
**Rational Factors in the Selection of Private Islamic Schools/Madrasahs**

Preference is understood as the tendency of the community to choose private Islamic schools and madrasahs

over other educational alternatives based on a series of considerations that are deemed most beneficial and relevant (Subhan, 2023; Language Centre, 2012). The preferences of the community in Masohi City are formed through rational calculations that consider the quality, benefits, and institutional relevance of education. With this understanding, preferences are not interpreted as emotional attitudes or choices based solely on religious affiliation, but rather as the result of a conscious evaluation of the quality of educational services offered by private Islamic educational institutions.

These preferences are manifested in the community's assessment of rational factors that are considered to determine the success of their children's education. The main factors that shape their choices include the overall quality of education, the professionalism and competence of educators, the integration of general and religious curricula, the discipline of the learning system, institutional legitimacy through accreditation, and the use of educational technology. Thus, the preferences in this study represent a rational selection process that leads the Masohi community to choose private Islamic schools as the institutions that are considered most capable of meeting the academic, moral, and social needs of children in a balanced manner.

In terms of educational quality, teacher competence is the most dominant indicator. Quantitative data shows that 62.34% of respondents strongly agree and 32.47% agree that teachers' pedagogical abilities are the main reason for choosing private Islamic schools. This confirms that the professionalism of educators is the main basis for parental trust. The

integration of general and religious curricula also gained strong legitimacy, with 51.95% of respondents strongly agreeing and 44.16% agreeing, indicating that the integrated curriculum is perceived as a strategic advantage in forming a balance between academic competence and religious guidance.

Discipline and orderliness in the learning system are seen as prerequisites for quality education, as reflected in 62.34% of respondents strongly agreeing with this indicator. Meanwhile, school accreditation as a marker of institutional quality received significant support, with 55.84% of respondents strongly agreeing and 35.06% agreeing. The use of learning media and technology is also considered relevant to the demands of modern education, with 46.75% of respondents strongly agreeing and 42.86% agreeing that technological innovation adds value to the learning process of students.

These quantitative findings are reinforced by qualitative data from in-depth interviews. Parents and community leaders emphasised that most teachers at private Islamic schools in Masohi have at least a bachelor's degree (S1) and demonstrate adequate pedagogical competence (A. H. Patty; S. Pary, 2025). The headmaster also acknowledged that although some teachers are temporary employees, they are considered to have high discipline, work ethic, and commitment to the learning process (A. Wasahua, 2025). This reinforces the perception that the quality of education is more determined by the actual performance of educators.

In addition to the competence of teaching staff, the availability of learning facilities is an important factor that

strengthens the rational considerations of the community in choosing a private Islamic school. Informants assessed that the existence of adequate classrooms, a well-organised learning environment, and supporting facilities such as computer laboratories in one of the private Islamic schools was perceived as an indicator of the institution's readiness to provide quality education (S. Marasabessy, 2025). These facilities are understood as a form of adaptation by Islamic schools to technological developments and contemporary learning demands. The integration of religious education, general knowledge, and the use of technology is perceived as a characteristic of the transformation of Islamic education that is responsive to the needs of modern society.

Public perceptions of school accreditation status vary. Accreditation is not always a major determining factor as long as it does not hinder the continuity of students' education to higher levels, particularly to Madrasah Tsanawiyah and Madrasah Aliyah (E. Hatuina, 2025). Some parents place more emphasis on the quality of learning, which is reflected in the availability of adequate physical facilities, stable institutional management, and the continuity of the teaching and learning process. In this context, adequate school buildings are perceived as an indicator of stable institutional management and relative freedom from internal conflicts often associated with private educational foundations (R. Nuriah, 2025). Thus, the quality of education is understood substantively, not solely determined by formal administrative assessments.

The results of the observation show that SD Islam Al-Bina and MIT Nurul Falah have each obtained B accreditation, while SD Muhammadiyah Masohi has not yet obtained accreditation status because it is still in the assessment process, considering that the institution only began operating in 2018. Despite differences in accreditation status, all three schools consistently enrol a significant number of new students each academic year.

At SD Islam Al-Bina, new student enrolment is adjusted to classroom capacity, and an increase in the number of applicants has prompted the school to build additional classrooms. The school socialisation process is carried out informally through direct interaction between teachers and the community, and this school is also a reference for families of employees from outside the area to send their children to school (R. Ansa; F. Said, 2025).

A similar situation was found at MIT Nurul Falah, where an increase in the number of students prompted the addition of classrooms, particularly in the early grades, which previously had only one classroom but now have two parallel classes (L. Rusman, 2025). Meanwhile, SD Muhammadiyah Masohi still limits new student enrolment to one classroom due to limited facilities, even though parental interest is high. The learning process at this school still utilises a building shared with SMP and SMA Muhammadiyah Masohi (A. Wasahua, 2025).

Sociodemographically, the results of the survey of 77 respondents show that the majority of parents of students have a bachelor's degree (S1) and work as civil servants or other state officials, including the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) and the Indonesian National Police

(POLRI). This profile indicates that the choice of private Islamic schools in Masohi City is dominated by groups of people with relatively stable levels of education, economic stability, and social status. This condition reinforces the finding that the preference for private Islamic schools is based on rational considerations oriented towards the quality of educational services, institutional capacity, and the sustainability of children's education in the future.

**Religious Motivation and Identity Formation**

Religious motivation is the most dominant factor in shaping parents' preferences for private Islamic schools and madrasas in Masohi City. This motivation includes the desire to strengthen children's religious foundations, shape Islamic morals, instil an understanding of the Qur'an and Hadith from an early age and ensure that children are in a religious and controlled educational environment. This preference shows that the choice of Islamic education is not only understood as a pedagogical decision, but also as a strategy for building children's moral and religious identity.

Quantitative data shows a very high level of agreement with the religious motivation indicator. A total of 88.31% of respondents strongly agreed that strengthening religious foundations and shaping Islamic morals were the main reasons for choosing private Islamic schools. Understanding the Qur'an and Hadith from an early age even received the highest approval rating, at 94.81%. A religious school environment is also considered important by 79.22% of respondents, while a balance between religious and general education is supported by 70.13%. In addition, 77.92% of respondents strongly agree that Islamic schools serve as a moral bulwark in the face of the influences of globalisation, digital technology, and changes in modern lifestyles.

Parents of students stated that Islamic schools provide a sense of security due to the control of morals and the instilling of religious values in the daily lives of students (H. Afny, 2025). Religious education is perceived as the main foundation that must be built on a strong moral basis. This view shows that religious motivation operates as a long-term orientation in shaping children's character.

The formation of children's religious identity is also influenced by the post-conflict social context. According to one religious leader, the spatial segregation that is still relatively evident between Muslim and non-Muslim communities shapes parents' perceptions that Islamic schools are safe social spaces for the internalisation of Islamic identity (S. Pary, 2025). Similarly, parents of students stated that as civil servants with limited time to spend with their children, the most effective way to provide basic religious education is through Islamic schools (E Hatuina). Practices such as wearing Muslim clothing, praying in congregation, and social etiquette are not only carried out at school but also have an impact on children's social lives outside of school, said the chairman of the Central Maluku Ulema Council (MUI). "My grandchild is able to explain what he has learned about the Qur'an, fiqh, and Islamic history to me at home (H.R. Sese 2025). Thus, religious motivation in educational

choices functions as a mechanism for shaping the social and cultural identity of the Muslim community in Masohi.

This view is also confirmed by the principal of Al-Bina Islamic School and the Head of Islamic Education at the Central Maluku Ministry of Religious Affairs, who stated that religion-based educational choices are the primary choice for parents seeking to instil Islamic values as the foundation for a new generation facing rapid social change (Y. Wasahua; D.Y. Mulyono, 2025).

**School Services**

Educational facilities and services are rational factors that significantly strengthen parents' preference for private Islamic schools in Masohi City. The quality of infrastructure is seen as an indicator of the credibility and seriousness of the institution in providing education. A total of 51.95% of respondents strongly agreed and 33.77% agreed that the availability of adequate classrooms, libraries, computer rooms, and places of worship were the main considerations in choosing a school.

Religious programmes are the most appreciated component of the services. Tahfiz programmes and regular religious activities received a very high level of approval, with 73.96% of respondents strongly agreeing and 22.08% agreeing. Moral guidance and spiritual counselling services also received strong support, as indicated by 55.84% of respondents who strongly agreed and 37.66% who agreed. These findings confirm that private Islamic schools are perceived not only as educational institutions, but also as institutions for moral and spiritual guidance.

Religious-based extracurricular activities and the school-parent communication system also reinforce public preference. A total of 55.84% of respondents strongly agreed and 40.26% agreed with extracurricular activities, while transparency of information on children's learning progress was supported by 54.55% of respondents who strongly agreed. The comfort and safety of the learning environment were other important factors, with 67.53% of respondents strongly agreeing.

Field observations show that the three private Islamic schools studied have adequate learning spaces and prayer rooms that are consistently used for performing the Duha and Zuhr prayers in congregation before students enter class and leave school. This practice is part of the daily learning routine and serves as a means of familiarising students with worship. At MIT Nurul Falah, there is a computer laboratory that is used for practical learning for grades 5 and 6. The existence of this facility makes MIT Nurul Falah one of the pilot schools in Central Maluku in the implementation of the integration of religious education and the use of educational technology (N. Pe'uma, 2025).

The interviews revealed that the three schools also implement a Qur'an memorisation programme focused on memorising juz 29 and 30. At MIT Nurul Falah, the implementation of the memorisation programme is complemented by a periodic evaluation system involving teachers and parents through communication in a WhatsApp group. In addition, the school holds a tahfiz graduation ceremony before the announcement of grade promotion and graduation for sixth-grade students, with

the participation of parents. One informant said that the tahfiz programme provides psychological encouragement for parents, particularly the hope that their children will have better Al-Qur'an memorisation skills than they themselves (M. N. Wattiheluw, 2025).

Apart from religious aspects, the MIT Nurul Falah school also emphasises character building through a policy prohibiting bullying in any form, including the use of derogatory or insulting language between students. We emphasise the use of polite language and mutual respect from the moment children are accepted as new students, as part of daily character building in the school environment (Rostika, 2025).

Based on informants' statements, the active involvement of parents and the school in the habit of congregational worship, the application of discipline based on religious guidance, and systematic character education are seen as the main advantages of private Islamic schools. The system of reporting on the progress of Al-Qur'an memorisation and student behaviour, which is done directly to parents, also strengthens the community's trust in these educational institutions. These findings indicate that school services that integrate pedagogical, religious, and character-building aspects play an important role in shaping the preferences of the Masohi community towards private Islamic education.

**Preferences for Private Islamic Education in Social Culture**

The socio-cultural dimension plays a significant role in shaping public preferences for private Islamic education in Masohi City. These preferences are mainly related to parents' perceptions of the function of Islamic schools as institutions for moral development, strengthening social values, and providing a religious and relatively safe community environment for children's development. Thus, educational choices are not only understood as individual decisions but also as part of the socio-cultural dynamics of post-conflict society.

Quantitative data shows that 66.23% of respondents strongly agree and 33.77% agree that private Islamic schools contribute to shaping a morally superior generation, both personally and socially. In addition, 55.84% of respondents strongly agree and 41.56% agree that private Islamic schools receive support from the surrounding religious community. These findings indicate that the social legitimacy of Islamic schools does not only stem from their curriculum or institutional management, but also from their connection to the social-religious networks of the community.

Perceptions regarding social status improvement through Islamic education show more varied results. A total of 41.56% of respondents strongly agreed and 40.26% agreed that private Islamic education can improve the social status of families, but 14.29% of respondents strongly disagreed. This variation shows that social status is not a major factor for all parents and that educational preferences are more determined by perceived substantive benefits, particularly in moral and religious aspects. A similar pattern was also seen in the indicator of the influence of religious leaders. A total of 38.96% of respondents strongly agreed and 40.26% agreed that the views of religious leaders influenced school choice, while some respondents considered this

decision to be the personal responsibility of the family.

Interviews with parents revealed that private Islamic schools are perceived as capable of providing students with a balanced education in terms of religious and pedagogical aspects. A number of informants considered the reputation of the school's organising body, such as Muhammadiyah, to be an important consideration because it is understood to have a well-established and nationally proven education system (ABD. Patty, 2025). Observational findings also show that students at Muhammadiyah primary schools do not only come from Muhammadiyah members, but also from Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) families. This condition indicates that private Islamic schools, especially Muhammadiyah primary schools, are inclusive and open to the wider community, even though they still implement Muhammadiyah subjects to strengthen ideology and institutional identity.

The support of religious communities for private Islamic schools is also influenced by the post-conflict social conditions in Masohi City, which still leave patterns of spatial segregation in the social life of the community. In this context, Islamic schools are perceived as social spaces that are relatively safe and homogeneous in terms of religious values. This perception encourages parents' belief that Islamic schools are able to minimise the negative influences of the environment, including the impact of social media on the formation of children's behaviour. This condition reinforces the tendency of parents to choose educational institutions that are within the same religious community circle.

In addition, children's religious achievements, particularly their ability to memorise the Qur'an, are perceived not only as individual achievements but also as a source of social pride within the family. Some parents stated that their children play an active role in reminding them of religious practices at home, thus functioning as a mechanism of moral control in daily life. A number of informants also admitted to seeking long-term advice from religious leaders before deciding on a school, especially educational institutions that emphasise religious practices and memorisation of the Qur'an.

This view is reinforced by a statement from the Chairman of the Central Maluku MUI, who stated that the public's perception of Islamic schools has changed. Islamic schools are no longer seen as having limited prospects in the formal religious sector but are also considered to provide relevant religious competencies for various career paths, including selection for state apparatus such as the TNI and Polri, which pay attention to religious abilities and character building (H. R. Sese, 2025).

Private Islamic schools are perceived as being able to develop students in a balanced manner in terms of religious and pedagogical aspects. Al-Bina Islamic Elementary School and MIT, which use the government curriculum, are considered neutral in their understanding of Islam. For Muhammadiyah Elementary School, the reputation of the school's organising body is an important consideration because it is seen as having a well-established and sustainable education system at the national level (Abd. H Patty, 2025). Observational findings show that

students at Muhammadiyah Masohi Elementary School come not only from Muhammadiyah families but also from Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) communities. This indicates that private Islamic schools are inclusive and open to the wider community, while still maintaining Muhammadiyah subjects as a reinforcement of ideology and institutional identity.

Thus, the socio-cultural dimension in preferences for private Islamic education is multidimensional, involving simultaneous interactions between moral values, community support, perceptions of social status, and religious authority.

## Preferences for Private Islamic Education Economics and Accessibility

Community support for private Islamic schools is also influenced by the post-conflict social conditions in Masohi City, which still exhibit patterns of spatial segregation in community life. In this context, Islamic schools are perceived as safe educational spaces that are relatively homogeneous in terms of religious values. This perception encourages parents to believe that Islamic schools can minimise negative environmental influences, including the impact of social media use on children's behaviour. Therefore, the choice of Islamic schools is not only based on academic considerations, but also on the need for a social environment that is considered conducive to character building.

In addition, children's religious achievements, particularly their ability to memorise the Qur'an, are perceived as indicators of educational success as well as a source of social pride within the family. Some parents stated that their children play an active role in reminding them of religious practices at home, thus functioning as a moral control in their daily lives. A number of informants also admitted to consulting with religious leaders when considering school choices, especially institutions that emphasise religious practices and strengthening the memorisation of the Qur'an.

This view is reinforced by the statement of the Chairman of the Central Maluku MUI, who stated that the public's perception of Islamic schools has changed. Islamic schools are no longer seen as having limited prospects in the formal religious sector but are also considered to provide character building and religious competencies that are relevant to various career paths, including selection for state apparatus such as the Indonesian National Armed Forces and the Indonesian National Police (H. R. Sese, 2025). This confirms that the preference for private Islamic education is shaped by the simultaneous interaction of moral values, community support, social considerations, and religious authority.

## DISCUSSION
### Private Islamic Schools as a Replacement for Islamic Boarding Schools

Significant institutional transformation in Islamic education in Masohi, particularly regarding the role of private Islamic schools in the absence of large Islamic boarding schools. In many regions in Indonesia, Islamic boarding schools function as centres for the transmission of religious knowledge, moral guidance, and the legitimisation of religious authority. However, in Masohi, these functions have been transferred to

private Islamic schools. This confirms that organisations do not only operate based on technical efficiency but also respond to normative pressures and social expectations in order to gain legitimacy. Private Islamic schools in Masohi have adapted their structures, curricula, and religious practices to align with the demands of the post-conflict Muslim community.

These institutional pressures have encouraged private Islamic schools to adopt functions typical of Islamic boarding schools, such as the habit of congregational worship, Qur'an memorisation programmes, and intensive moral guidance. The fact that more than 80-90% of respondents emphasised the importance of religious foundations, morals, and a religious environment shows that private Islamic schools have gained social legitimacy as religious shelters. This transformation is important because it marks the structural substitution of Islamic boarding schools in a non-boarding school local context. Thus, private Islamic schools function as key institutions in maintaining the continuity of Islamic values amid post-conflict social dynamics.

## Religious Motivation Preferences and Educational Rationality

The preference of the Masohi community for private Islamic education is the result of a combination of religious motivation and rational considerations. Educational decisions are understood as a form of long-term investment involving cost and benefit calculations. Parents not only consider the religious identity of the school but also evaluate the quality of education offered. This is reflected in the respondents' attention to teacher competence, a disciplined learning system, the integration of religious and general curricula, and the use of learning technology.

These considerations show that the Masohi community chooses private Islamic schools as a rational strategy to maximise the educational utility of their children, both in academic and moral-spiritual dimensions. This finding is important because it challenges the assumption that the choice of Islamic education is purely emotional or ideological. Instead, private Islamic schools are chosen because they are considered capable of providing comprehensive educational returns, namely mastery of knowledge, 21st-century skills, and the formation of religious character. Private Islamic schools have developed as a model of school-based Islamic education that is adaptive to the demands of modern times without sacrificing religious orientation.

## Reconstruction of Religious Identity After Conflict

Private Islamic schools are important actors in the process of reconstructing the religious identity of the Muslim community after the conflict in Masohi. The choice of private Islamic schools is closely related to the community's need for institutions that can provide moral stability, a sense of security, and clarity of identity after the experience of social conflict. Islamic schools are perceived as social spaces that reinforce Islamic values through daily practices and religious habits.

Private Islamic schools function as arenas for the internalisation of values, moral discipline, and social ethics that

contribute to the cohesion of the post-conflict Muslim community. The emphasis on morals, polite language, avoidance of bullying behaviour, and moral supervision shows that education is carried out as a process of social meaning formation, not merely the transmission of knowledge. This is important because in post-conflict societies, education plays a strategic role in rebuilding collective trust and a stable social order. Thus, private Islamic schools in Masohi are not only educational institutions but also spaces for the reconstruction of religious and social identity that have a long-term impact on the stability of Muslim communities.

## CONCLUSION

Public preference for private Islamic education in Masohi City is shaped by a combination of religious motivation, rational considerations regarding educational quality, and the need for social-religious identity reconstruction in a post-conflict context. These findings answer the research objectives by showing that private Islamic schools are chosen by the community as formal educational institutions, spaces for moral guidance, strengthening religious identity, and substituting the function of Islamic boarding schools in non-boarding school areas. Theoretically, these research results contribute to the sociological understanding of Islamic education choices by integrating institutional, rational choice, and religious sociology perspectives. Practically, these findings provide an empirical basis for strengthening the governance and development of private Islamic schools as strategic institutions in shaping the

Muslim generation and social stability in Eastern Indonesia.

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