

## Islamic Management Principles in the Abbasid Caliphate: Qur'anic Foundations and Historical Practices

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### Abstract

This study examines the concept and practice of management in Islamic civilization during the Abbasid Caliphate by analyzing its relationship with Qur'anic principles. The Abbasid period is widely recognized as the golden age of Islamic civilization, marked by significant achievements in governance, economic administration, and intellectual development. Using a qualitative library-based approach, this research analyzes classical and contemporary scholarly sources to explore how Islamic management values such as *amanah* (trust), *'adl* (justice), *itqan* (professionalism), and *shura* (consultation) were implemented in various institutional settings. The study focuses on governance structures, fiscal and economic management, and the organization of educational institutions such as *Bayt al-Hikmah*. The findings indicate that management practices during the Abbasid period were systematic, professional, and ethically grounded, integrating administrative efficiency with moral and spiritual accountability. These practices contributed significantly to political stability, economic growth, and sustained intellectual advancement. Overall, this study highlights the relevance of Abbasid management models as a historically grounded reference for contemporary Islamic management discourse and practice.

**Keywords:** Islamic Management, Abbasid Caliphate, Qur'anic Values.

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji konsep dan praktik manajemen dalam peradaban Islam pada masa Kekhalifahan Abbasiyah dengan menganalisis keterkaitannya dengan prinsip-prinsip Al-Qur'an. Periode Abbasiyah secara luas diakui sebagai masa keemasan peradaban Islam, yang ditandai oleh pencapaian signifikan dalam tata kelola pemerintahan, administrasi ekonomi, dan perkembangan intelektual. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif berbasis studi pustaka, penelitian ini menganalisis sumber-sumber ilmiah klasik dan kontemporer untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana nilai-nilai manajemen Islam seperti *amanah* (kepercayaan), *'adl* (keadilan), *itqan* (profesionalisme), dan *shura* (musyawarah) diterapkan dalam berbagai setting kelembagaan. Kajian ini berfokus pada struktur pemerintahan, pengelolaan fiskal dan ekonomi, serta pengorganisasian lembaga pendidikan seperti *Bayt al-Hikmah*. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa praktik manajemen pada masa Abbasiyah bersifat sistematis, profesional, dan berlandaskan etika, dengan mengintegrasikan efisiensi administrasi dan akuntabilitas moral serta spiritual. Praktik-praktik tersebut berkontribusi secara signifikan terhadap stabilitas politik, pertumbuhan ekonomi, dan keberlanjutan perkembangan intelektual. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini menegaskan relevansi model manajemen Abbasiyah sebagai rujukan historis yang berlandaskan nilai bagi pengembangan wacana dan praktik manajemen Islam kontemporer.

**Kata kunci:** Manajemen Islam, Kekhalifahan Abbasiyah, Nilai-nilai Al-Qur'an

## **Introduction**

Management is a fundamental element in the development and sustainability of any civilization, shaping how authority is exercised, resources are allocated, and institutions are organized. In the Islamic worldview, management is not merely a technical or administrative activity, but a value-laden process rooted in ethical, moral, and spiritual principles derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah. Concepts such as amanah (trust), 'adl (justice), itqan (professional excellence), and shura (consultation) form the normative foundation of Islamic management, emphasizing accountability, balance, and social responsibility in organizational and governance practices.

The Abbasid Caliphate (750–1258 CE) represents one of the most significant periods in Islamic history, often regarded as the golden age of Islamic civilization. During this era, the Abbasids established complex administrative systems, advanced fiscal and economic management, and developed educational and intellectual institutions that supported scientific and cultural flourishing. Institutions such as Bayt al-Hikmah (House of Wisdom), the organized diwan system, and structured mechanisms of governance demonstrate a high level of managerial sophistication that integrated religious values with practical administrative needs. These developments highlight how Qur'anic principles were operationalized within historical governance and organizational contexts.

Despite the growing body of literature on Islamic management, much of the contemporary discussion tends to focus on modern organizational settings, often overlooking the rich historical experiences that shaped Islamic administrative thought and practice. As a result, the Abbasid model of management is frequently underexplored as a systematic framework grounded in both revelation and historical application. Understanding how management principles were implemented during the Abbasid period can provide valuable insights into the ethical and functional dimensions of Islamic management, offering a historically grounded perspective that complements modern theoretical approaches.

Management is a fundamental aspect of human life that plays a crucial role in organizing, directing, and optimizing resources to achieve specific objectives effectively and efficiently. In the context of civilization, management is not merely a technical activity but also involves moral, social, and spiritual dimensions that shape systems of governance, economic organization, and educational development.<sup>1</sup>

From an Islamic perspective, management has a broader meaning because it is not solely oriented toward worldly success but also toward accountability in the hereafter. Islamic management emphasizes values such as amanah (trust), 'adl (justice), itqan (professionalism), shura (consultation), and ihsan (excellence), which function as both ethical principles and practical guidelines in social, political, and economic life.<sup>2</sup>

One of the most significant historical examples of the application of Islamic management principles can be found during the Abbasid Caliphate (750–1258 CE). This period is widely recognized as the Golden Age of Islamic civilization, marked by remarkable achievements in governance, economic administration, education, and intellectual

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<sup>1</sup> Abdul Goffar, "Manajemen Dalam Islam (Perspektif Al-Qur'an Dan Hadits)," *Islamic Akademika* 3, no. 1 (2016): 33–58.

<sup>2</sup> Fauziah Nasution, "Konsep Dasar Manajemen Islam," *Tadbir: Jurnal Manajemen Dakwah FDIK IAIN Padangsidempuan* 1, no. 2 (2019): 191–208, <https://doi.org/10.24952/tad.v1i2.2032>.

development.<sup>3</sup> The success of the Abbasid state was closely related to its ability to implement systematic management practices grounded in Qur'anic values.

The Abbasid government developed a well-organized bureaucratic structure with a clear division of authority among the caliph, wazir, judiciary, and various administrative departments (diwan). In addition, educational institutions such as Bayt al-Hikmah in Baghdad functioned as centers of knowledge production, translation, and research, reflecting advanced educational management practices.<sup>4</sup>

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the concept and practice of management in Islamic civilization during the Abbasid Caliphate and to examine how Qur'anic principles shaped governance, economic administration, and educational institutions.

## **Literature Review**

The concept of Islamic management has been widely discussed in contemporary scholarly literature as an alternative framework to conventional management theories that are often value-neutral and profit-oriented. Islamic management is generally understood as a system of organizing and directing human activities based on ethical principles derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah, emphasizing accountability to God (hisbah), social justice, and moral responsibility. Scholars argue that Islamic management integrates material efficiency with spiritual objectives, positioning management as both a functional and ethical endeavor rather than a purely technical process.

Several studies highlight key Qur'anic values that underpin Islamic management principles, including amanah (trust), 'adl (justice), itqan (excellence and professionalism), and shura (consultation). These values are repeatedly emphasized in Islamic governance and organizational literature as foundational norms guiding leadership, decision-making, and institutional accountability. For instance, amanah is viewed as the moral basis of leadership, requiring managers to act responsibly and transparently, while 'adl ensures fairness in policy implementation and resource distribution. Meanwhile, itqan promotes competence and continuous improvement, and shura encourages participatory decision-making as a means of achieving collective welfare and legitimacy.

In addition to normative discussions, a growing body of historical scholarship examines how these Qur'anic principles were translated into administrative practices in classical Islamic civilizations. Studies on early Islamic governance often focus on the Rashidun and Umayyad periods, emphasizing the formation of basic administrative institutions such as the diwan system and public treasury (bayt al-mal). However, fewer studies offer in-depth analyses of the Abbasid Caliphate as a mature model of Islamic management, despite its significant advancements in bureaucratic organization, fiscal administration, and institutional specialization.

Historical analyses of the Abbasid period reveal a highly structured administrative system characterized by specialized departments, professional bureaucrats, and formalized procedures. Scholars note that the Abbasids expanded and refined governance mechanisms through institutions such as the diwan al-kharaj (land tax administration), diwan al-rasail (state correspondence), and diwan al-barid (postal and intelligence service). These institutions reflect a sophisticated understanding of management functions such as planning, coordination,

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<sup>3</sup> Siti Syaidariyah Hasibuan, "PERKEMBANGAN ISLAM ZAMAN KEEMASAN BANI ABBASIYAH (650 M – 1250 M)," *EDU-RILIGIA: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Islam Dan Keagamaan* 5, no. 4 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.47006/er.v5i4.12934>.

<sup>4</sup> Diyah Andini Kusumastuti and Abdul Khobir, "Baitul Hikmah Pusat Keemasan Ilmu Pengetahuan Dinasti Abbasiyah," *Hikmah: Jurnal Studi Pendidikan Agama Islam* 2, no. 1 (2025): 226–41, <https://doi.org/10.61132/hikmah.v2i1.597>.

supervision, and control, implemented within an ethical framework shaped by Islamic values. The presence of accountability mechanisms, including judicial oversight and moral supervision (*hisbah*), further demonstrates the integration of ethics and administration.

Islamic management has been widely discussed in academic literature as a system that integrates administrative effectiveness with ethical and spiritual accountability. Scholars generally agree that Islamic management differs from conventional management paradigms because it places moral responsibility and divine accountability at the center of leadership and organizational practices.<sup>5</sup>

Ardani and Mahmud argue that Islamic management principles are derived directly from Qur'anic teachings that emphasize justice, professionalism, consultation (*shura*), and trust (*amanah*).<sup>6</sup> These principles are not merely normative ideals but serve as operational guidelines in organizational and governmental contexts. Similarly, Nasution explains that Islamic management combines material efficiency with spiritual values, positioning leadership as both an administrative duty and a moral obligation.<sup>7</sup>

Historical studies highlight that these principles were practically implemented during the Abbasid period. Hasibuan's research on the Abbasid Golden Age demonstrates that the Abbasid administration developed a highly organized bureaucratic system characterized by clear division of labor, hierarchical authority, and effective supervision.<sup>8</sup> This structure reflects early forms of systematic planning and organizational management.

In the economic sphere, Kamilla notes that the Abbasid fiscal system was based on transparency and justice through regulated taxation mechanisms such as *kharaj*, *jizyah*, and *zakat*.<sup>9</sup> Salman further emphasizes that Abbasid financial administration employed systematic record-keeping practices, indicating a high level of managerial accountability and administrative professionalism.<sup>10</sup>

Educational management during the Abbasid era has also received scholarly attention. Kusumastuti and Khobir describe Bayt al-Hikmah as a well-managed intellectual institution that applied merit-based recruitment, structured workflows, and systematic documentation.<sup>11</sup> This institution played a central role in knowledge production and cross-cultural scholarly collaboration.

In addition to institutional practices, classical Muslim thinkers contributed significantly to the theoretical foundations of management. Al-Farabi emphasized ethical leadership and social harmony, Al-Ghazali stressed moral responsibility and sincerity in leadership, and Ibn Khaldun introduced the concept of *'asabiyyah* (social cohesion) as a foundation for political

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<sup>5</sup> Abdul Goffar, "Manajemen Dalam Islam (Perspektif Al-Qur'an Dan Hadits)."

<sup>6</sup> Baharudin Ardani and Hamidullah Mahmud, "Konsep Dan Prinsip-Prinsip Manajemen Perspektif Al-Qur'an," *Karakter: Jurnal Riset Ilmu Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 4 (2024): 137–48, <https://doi.org/10.61132/karakter.v1i4.170>.

<sup>7</sup> Nasution, "Konsep Dasar Manajemen Islam."

<sup>8</sup> Syaidariyah Hasibuan, "PERKEMBANGAN ISLAM ZAMAN KEEMASAN BANI ABBASIYAH (650 M – 1250 M)."

<sup>9</sup> Dieke Husna Kamilla Dieke, "Sistem Ekonomi Islam Pada Masa Bani Abbasiyah Dan Potensinya Dalam Ekonomi Masa Kini: The Islamic Economic System in the Abbasid Period and Its Potential in Today's Economy," *Nirwasita: Jurnal Pendidikan Sejarah Dan Ilmu Sosial* 4, no. 2 (2023): 117–26, <https://doi.org/10.59672/nirwasita.v4i2.2938>.

<sup>10</sup> Salman Salman, "Salman LITERATUR KEISLAMAN TENTANG SEJARAH AKUNTANSI: LITERATUR KEISLAMAN TENTANG SEJARAH AKUNTANSI," *JURNAL ISLAMIKA* 8, no. 01 (2025): 69–79, <https://doi.org/10.37859/jsi.v8i01.9165>.

<sup>11</sup> Kusumastuti and Khobir, "Baitul Hikmah Pusat Keemasan Ilmu Pengetahuan Dinasti Abbasiyah."

stability and organizational strength.<sup>12</sup> Contemporary scholars regard Ibn Khaldun's ideas as foundational to modern organizational and leadership theories.<sup>13</sup>

### **Method**

This study employs a qualitative approach using library research methods, focusing on the exploration of scholarly journals as the primary sources. All data and references were obtained from various academic journals relevant to the research topic, particularly those discussing philosophy of science, accessed through platforms such as Google Scholar and digital libraries.

To facilitate the process of collecting and managing references, Zotero software was utilized to ensure that all sources were systematically organized and well integrated. After identifying relevant journals, the author conducted descriptive analysis and content interpretation to examine various scholarly perspectives. The results of this analysis were then compiled into this article to support the achievement of the research objectives.

### **Results and Discussion**

#### **Islamic Management from a Qur'anic Perspective**

In Islamic terminology, the concept closest to management is *tadbir*, which refers to the act of organizing, directing, and regulating affairs through careful planning, foresight, and wisdom. The Qur'an employs this term to describe divine governance, particularly in illustrating how Allah manages the universe with precision, balance, and purposeful order. This usage underscores that management in the Islamic worldview is not merely a technical or administrative function, but a value-driven process grounded in responsibility, intentionality, and ethical consideration. By portraying *tadbir* as a divine attribute, the Qur'an establishes an ideal model of management that integrates efficiency with moral accountability. Consequently, Islamic management principles emphasize harmony between planning and execution, authority and responsibility, as well as material objectives and spiritual values. This conceptual foundation later influenced administrative and managerial practices within Islamic civilizations, including governance, economic administration, and institutional organization, where management was understood as a trust (*amanah*) that must be exercised with justice, competence, and accountability. (Qur'an 32:5).<sup>14</sup>

From this perspective, management in Islam is not merely a technical activity but also a form of worship when carried out with sincerity, responsibility, and ethical commitment. Management functions such as planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling are inseparable from moral accountability and spiritual intention.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Hafijur Rahman, "From Al-Farabi to Ibn Khaldun: The Perception of State in the Early Muslim Intellectual's Writings," *Liberal Düşünce Dergisi* 26 (October 2021): 237–58, <https://doi.org/10.36484/liberal.743630>.

<sup>13</sup> Haris Alibašić, "Administrative Legacy of Ibn Khaldūn: A Comparative Study of Historical Influences in Contemporary Governance Practices," *Institutiones Administrationis - Journal of Administrative Sciences* 5, no. 1 (2025): 25–49, <https://doi.org/10.54201/iajas.142>.

<sup>14</sup> Nursaima Harahap et al., "Konsep Manajemen Islami Berdasarkan Al-Qur'an," *Tadbir: Jurnal Manajemen Dakwah FDIK IAIN Padangsidempuan* 6, no. 1 (2024): 143–60, <https://doi.org/10.24952/tadbir.v6i1.12521>.

<sup>15</sup> Ardani and Mahmud, "Konsep Dan Prinsip-Prinsip Manajemen Perspektif Al-Qur'an."

One of the core principles of Islamic management is shura (consultation), as emphasized in the Qur'an (Qur'an 42:38). This principle encourages participatory decision-making and collective responsibility in leadership and organizational management.<sup>16</sup>

### **Management Practices during the Abbasid Caliphate Governance and Administration**

The Abbasid Caliphate developed a highly structured and sophisticated administrative system characterized by the establishment of specialized institutions, including Diwan al-Kharaj, Diwan al-Barid, and Diwan al-Jund. Each of these institutions was designed to perform distinct managerial functions that supported the effective governance of a vast and diverse empire. Diwan al-Kharaj was responsible for fiscal administration, particularly the assessment and collection of land taxes and state revenues, ensuring financial sustainability and equitable resource distribution. Diwan al-Barid functioned as an organized communication and information network, facilitating the transmission of official correspondence while also serving as a mechanism for administrative oversight and intelligence gathering. Meanwhile, Diwan al-Jund managed military organization, including personnel administration, payroll, logistics, and strategic coordination.

The existence of these specialized diwans demonstrates an early application of systematic planning, division of labor, and hierarchical organization—core principles of modern management theory. Responsibilities were clearly delineated, procedures were formalized, and officials were appointed based on competence and experience, reflecting the principle of itqan (professional excellence). Moreover, these institutions operated within an ethical framework informed by Qur'anic values such as amanah (trust) and 'adl (justice), emphasizing accountability in the management of public resources and authority. Through this integrated administrative structure, the Abbasid Caliphate was able to maintain political stability, ensure efficient governance, and support economic and military effectiveness, illustrating how Islamic management principles were practically implemented in a historical context.<sup>17</sup>

The caliph functioned as the highest authority in the Abbasid administrative system, serving not only as the political leader but also as the ultimate guardian of religious and moral order. In carrying out these responsibilities, the caliph was supported by wazirs who acted as chief administrators overseeing various governmental departments and ensuring the effective implementation of state policies. The wazir played a central managerial role, coordinating between the caliph and the specialized diwans, supervising bureaucratic performance, and facilitating decision-making processes. This hierarchical yet coordinated system allowed for a clear distribution of authority and responsibility, reducing administrative overlap while enhancing accountability, moreover, the Abbasid administrative hierarchy was designed to balance centralized authority with operational delegation, enabling efficient governance across a vast territorial domain. While ultimate decision-making power remained with the caliph, day-to-day administrative functions were managed by professional officials with technical expertise, reflecting the principles of itqan (professional competence) and amanah (trust). Such an arrangement fostered administrative efficiency, consistency in policy execution, and responsiveness to regional needs, which in turn contributed to long-term political stability and institutional continuity within the Abbasid Caliphate.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Faozan Amar et al., "The Relationship Between Strategic Management Implementation and Decision-Making Style in Enhancing Employee Satisfaction: Evidence from Islamic Cooperatives," *Jurnal Manajemen Bisnis* 16, no. 2 (2025): 508–25, <https://doi.org/10.18196/mb.v16i2.27076>.

<sup>17</sup> Salman, "Salman LITERATUR KEISLAMAN TENTANG SEJARAH AKUNTANSI."

<sup>18</sup> Harahap et al., "Konsep Manajemen Islami Berdasarkan Al-Qur'an."

### **Economic Management**

Economic management during the Abbasid period emphasized justice, transparency, and accountability as core principles guiding fiscal policy and financial administration. The Abbasid government developed regulated taxation systems such as *kharaj* (land tax), *jizyah* (poll tax), and *zakat* (obligatory almsgiving) to ensure a balanced relationship between state revenue and public expenditure. These fiscal instruments were administered through well-organized bureaucratic mechanisms that aimed to prevent arbitrary taxation and minimize corruption, while also safeguarding the economic rights of various social groups. Revenue collection was accompanied by detailed record-keeping and supervision, reflecting an early commitment to financial transparency and administrative control.

These economic practices were closely aligned with Qur'anic principles that emphasize fairness, honesty, and accuracy in trade, measurement, and financial transactions. The Qur'an repeatedly condemns fraud, exploitation, and unjust enrichment, and such moral directives informed Abbasid fiscal governance by promoting equitable distribution of resources and social welfare. *Zakat*, in particular, functioned not only as a religious obligation but also as a socio-economic tool to reduce inequality and support vulnerable populations. Through the integration of ethical norms and systematic financial management, the Abbasid Caliphate was able to sustain economic stability, encourage commercial activity, and reinforce public trust in state institutions, demonstrating a holistic model of economic management rooted in Islamic values, economic management during the Abbasid period emphasized justice, transparency, and accountability. Fiscal policies were designed to balance state revenue and expenditure through regulated taxation systems such as *kharaj*, *jizyah*, and *zakat*. These practices aligned with Qur'anic principles regarding fairness in trade and measurement (Qur'an 17:35).<sup>19</sup>

The Abbasid Caliphate developed a highly structured administrative system with specialized institutions, including *Diwan al-Kharaj* (finance), *Diwan al-Barid* (communication), and *Diwan al-Jund* (military affairs). These institutions were responsible for managing state finances, postal services, and army organization, reflecting early applications of systematic planning, organizational management, and bureaucratic specialization. At the apex of this administrative framework, the caliph functioned as the highest authority, supported by *wazirs* who supervised daily administrative affairs and ensured that policies were implemented effectively. This hierarchical yet coordinated structure not only promoted administrative efficiency but also enhanced political stability, demonstrating a sophisticated integration of governance, delegation, and oversight.

Economic management during the Abbasid period emphasized justice, transparency, and accountability. Fiscal policies were carefully designed to balance state revenue and expenditure through regulated taxation systems such as *kharaj* (land tax), *jizyah* (poll tax on non-Muslims), and *zakat* (alms tax). These practices were consistent with Qur'anic principles emphasizing fairness in trade, equitable taxation, and ethical conduct in financial matters. Baghdad's strategic position as a hub of international trade further necessitated effective logistical management and regulatory oversight. The Abbasid administration implemented market regulations and supervision mechanisms to prevent fraud, regulate pricing, and ensure economic fairness, reflecting a practical application of Islamic management values such as *'adl* (justice) and *amanah* (trustworthiness), overall, the Abbasid governance model demonstrates that management principles in Islamic civilization were both theoretically grounded in the Qur'an and practically implemented through institutional structures, hierarchical coordination,

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<sup>19</sup> Asep Sutarnin et al., "The Principle of Economic Justice in the Qur'an: A Legal Analysis of Shrinkage in Weights and Measures in Trade According to Qur'an 2:275 in Wahbah al-Zuhaili's *Tafsir al-Munir*," *JOURNAL EKONOMI, KEUANGAN, PERBANKAN DAN AKUNTANSI SYARIAH* 3, no. 1 (2025): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.54801/w9d01r56>.

and ethical economic policies. This historical experience provides valuable insights for contemporary discussions on Islamic management and organizational ethics..<sup>20</sup>

**Educational Management**

The establishment of Bayt al-Hikmah in Baghdad represents a major achievement in educational management during the Abbasid era. As a center for translation, research, and knowledge development, it operated through structured planning, merit-based recruitment, and systematic documentation.<sup>21</sup>

Scholars from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds were recruited based on competence rather than ethnic or religious affiliation, demonstrating inclusive and professional management practices grounded in Islamic values.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Dieke, "Sistem Ekonomi Islam Pada Masa Bani Abbasiyah Dan Potensinya Dalam Ekonomi Masa Kini."

<sup>21</sup> Kusumastuti and Khobir, "Baitul Hikmah Pusat Keemasan Ilmu Pengetahuan Dinasti Abbasiyah."

<sup>22</sup> Kusumastuti and Khobir, "Baitul Hikmah Pusat Keemasan Ilmu Pengetahuan Dinasti Abbasiyah."

### **Conclusion**

This study concludes that management practices during the Abbasid Caliphate were deeply rooted in Qur'anic values and Islamic ethical principles, reflecting a governance system that combined practical efficiency with moral responsibility. The Abbasid administration successfully integrated systematic organizational structures, hierarchical coordination, and specialized institutions with spiritual and ethical accountability in areas such as governance, fiscal management, trade regulation, and education. Economic policies emphasized justice, transparency, and fairness, while institutions like Bayt al-Hikmah exemplified the promotion of knowledge and intellectual development under structured management, the Abbasid experience demonstrates that Islamic management is not only procedural but also value-based, showing a model where efficiency, accountability, and ethical considerations coexist. This historically grounded framework provides a relevant reference for contemporary Islamic management theory and practice, highlighting how organizational success can be achieved when guided by both professional standards and moral principles. Overall, the study underscores that lessons from Abbasid management can inform modern institutions seeking to integrate ethical leadership, systematic administration, and strategic planning within an Islamic framework.

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