

Vol. 4, No. 2, 2024  
71-82

# JAIEM

## August Comte's Positivism in Educational Decision Making

Journal of Advanced Islamic  
Educational Management

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DOI: 10.24042/jaiem.v4i2.24637

Received: 4 July 2024

Accepted: 10 september 2024

Published: 30 December 2024

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### Abstract:

This research aims to examine the application of Auguste Comte's principles of positivism in decision-making in education management at SDN 02 Aur Kuning. Using descriptive qualitative methods, this study describes the impact of a data-driven approach to education policy. The results show that applying positivism enhances objectivity, accountability and transparency in decision-making and supports continuous improvement in academics and student character building. However, challenges such as limited resources, access to accurate data and integration of religious values with the scientific approach still need to be overcome. This research emphasizes the importance of commitment from all parties to ensure the implementation of positivism can optimally improve the quality of education.

**Keywords:** Auguste Comte; Decision making; Positivisme.

## Introduction

Positivism is a school of philosophy that emphasizes the importance of knowledge based on empirical evidence and observable phenomena. One of the main figures who introduced positivism was Auguste Comte, a French philosopher who is considered the father of social science. Comte introduced the view that scientific knowledge can be achieved through observation and experimentation, as well as the rejection of metaphysical or religious speculation (Fikri et al., 2024). His thinking provides the basis for the development of social science, including in education management, where decision-making must be based on objective and measurable data. In education management, positivism makes an important contribution to more rational and data-based decision-making. Education management, which includes planning, implementing and evaluating education policies, requires a systematic and accountable approach (Akhyar et al., 2023). Through positivism, decision-making in education management does not rely solely on intuition or personal beliefs, but is based on the results of objective analysis of phenomena that occur in the field. Decisions taken can be reviewed, tested, and verified using measurable data, both from the results of research, evaluation, and direct observation of the learning process (Ibrahim et al., 2023).

August Comte, with his theory that suggested the application of the scientific method to understand society, viewed education as one of the important pillars in society that should be managed with a scientific approach. In his famous book, *Cours de Philosophie Positive* (1830-1842), Comte proposed the concept that society should be understood based on social laws that can be discovered through empirical research and scientific observation. In education, this can be interpreted as the need to use concrete data and facts to manage education effectively (Adnan, 2020). The application of positivism in education management demands a structured and methodological evaluation system. This also has implications for systematic decisions, where every policy and decision made by education managers, from school managers to the government, must be accountable with objective evidence (Silfia, 2013). For example, in making curriculum-related decisions, an education manager will prefer to use survey results or student learning achievement data as a reference, rather than decisions based on subjective views that are not supported by evidence.

Positivism also emphasizes the importance of universalism, which is the use of principles and methods that can be applied generally. In education management, this is reflected in the importance of implementing education policies that can be applied across a wide range or educational institutions (Akhyar et al., 2024). For example, a study on the effectiveness of a particular learning method conducted in one school can be used to formulate a broader education policy at the regional or national level. In other words, decisions made based on positivism should be general and applicable to the entire education system.

Effective, data-driven decision-making is critical to improving the quality of education. However, in many educational institutions, including SDN 02 Aur Kuning, decision-making is often still based on subjective considerations and intuition, which do not always support the achievement of optimal educational outcomes. This leads to the need to apply a more rational and evidence-based scientific approach to education management. One relevant approach is positivism, initiated by Auguste Comte, which emphasizes the importance of empirical data and observation to form rational and objective decisions. At SDN 02 Aur Kuning, despite

efforts to manage education effectively, challenges arise when decisions are not always based on reliable data analysis, as well as difficulties in integrating religious values with scientific approaches to education management.

The main objective of this research is to explore how the application of Auguste Comte's positivism influences decision-making in education management at SDN 02 Aur Kuning. This research seeks to analyze the extent to which the principles of positivism are applied in education policy at the school and identify the benefits and challenges that arise from a data-driven approach in the decision-making process. In addition, the research aims to examine the factors that influence the successful implementation of positivism, especially in the context of Islamic education that must maintain religious values. With this understanding, the research is expected to contribute to improving the quality of education management, both at SDN 02 Aur Kuning and in other educational institutions, through a more objective, systematic and data-based approach.

## Metode

The methodological approach used in this research is descriptive qualitative. This approach aims to provide an in-depth description of the application of Auguste Comte's positivism principles in the decision-making process in education management. With this approach, the research focuses on understanding phenomena holistically based on empirical data obtained directly from the field.

Data collection techniques were conducted through several methods. First, in-depth interviews with principals, teachers and other relevant parties were conducted to explore their views on the application of positivism in education policy. Second, direct observation was conducted to monitor how data and facts are used in decision-making, both in academic and administrative contexts in schools. Third, document analysis was used to review annual reports, learning evaluation records and results of education management meetings relevant to the implementation of positivism principles.

Through a combination of these techniques, the data obtained can provide a rich and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study. This approach also allows the research to explore the benefits, challenges and factors that influence the successful implementation of positivism in the context of Islamic education, especially at SDN 02 Aur Kuning.

The data collection process in this study was conducted systematically to ensure the validity of the data obtained. First, in-depth interviews were conducted with principals, teachers and other relevant parties, such as curriculum managers and parents. These interviews were designed with a semi-structured guide, allowing in-depth exploration of informants' views and experiences regarding the application of positivism principles in educational decision-making. Information collected included how data is used in the decision-making process, perceived benefits and challenges faced in implementing a data-driven approach.

Second, direct observation was conducted to understand how decisions are actually made in the academic and administrative contexts in schools. This included observing the use of data in management meetings, education policy planning and the implementation of daily activities. With this approach, researchers can see how empirical data is considered in decision-making and whether the process is consistent with the principles of positivism.

Third, document analysis involves examining relevant records, such as school annual reports, learning evaluation records and management meeting outcomes. These documents provided secondary data that supported the results of interviews and observations and enabled triangulation of data to enhance the validity of the research.

The data analysis process was conducted using an inductive approach to find key themes relevant to the research objectives. Data from interviews, observations, and documents were analyzed qualitatively through stages such as data coding, theme grouping, and interpretation of findings. Coding was done by identifying keywords and patterns that frequently emerged from the raw data, while theme grouping helped summarize the data into main categories. Interpretation of the results was done by relating the findings to the theoretical framework of positivism and the context of Islamic education, thus providing a comprehensive picture of the application of positivism principles at SDN 02 Aur Kuning. This triangulation approach ensures that the data obtained can be verified and produces valid and reliable findings.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Applying the Principles of Positivism in Educational Decision-Making at SDN 02 Aur Kuning**

Positivism, first developed by Auguste Comte, emphasizes the importance of applying the scientific method in viewing social phenomena, including education. In education management at SDN 02 Aur Kuning, the application of the principles of positivism can be seen in the data-based approach to decision-making taken by the school. Positivism demands that decisions must be based on empirical facts that can be tested and analyzed objectively. Therefore, in education management, the application of positivism principles is expected to increase effectiveness and efficiency in the management of the teaching and learning process, education policy, and student character development.

First, the principle of positivism, which emphasizes objectivity in decision-making, is reflected in how SDN 02 Aur Kuning develops education policies based on reliable data and information. The data is obtained from various sources, such as academic evaluation results, observations of student activities, and feedback from parents and the community. In this application, the data collected is used to identify strengths and weaknesses in the learning process and to formulate policies that are more targeted and based on students' needs. For example, the results of end-of-year exam evaluations can be used to formulate decisions on more effective teaching methods, or curriculum changes that better suit students' academic needs and character development. (Nugroho, 2016).

Secondly, the application of positivism at SDN 02 Aur Kuning also emphasizes the principles of verification and replication in positivism. In this case, decisions made must be scientifically testable and replicable to ensure that the policy or approach implemented actually has a positive impact on educational achievement. For example, if a new learning method is implemented to improve students' understanding of the material, then the results should be systematically evaluated through objective measurements, such as tests or observations to observe changes in student behavior and learning outcomes. This kind of continuous evaluation allows the school to monitor and adjust the decisions made, ensuring that the educational process is in line with the desired goals. (Astini & Arsadi, 2021).

Third, the data-driven approach to decision-making that is at the core of positivism is also reflected in the use of information technology at SDN 02 Aur Kuning. As technology develops, the school makes use of various learning management applications and information systems to collect and analyze data relevant to students' academic performance, behavior and participation in extracurricular activities. For example, the digital platform used by the school allows teachers and principals to monitor students' progress in real-time and spot trends that may not be visible to the naked eye. In this way, decisions regarding learning needs or appropriate interventions can be better targeted, based on objective data analysis rather than unverified assumptions or predictions.

Fourth, in making decisions related to student character development, the principle of positivism is also applied through empirical observation and objective assessment of student behavior. Student character management at SDN 02 Aur Kuning is not only seen in terms of academic achievement, but also through the attitudes and values applied in their daily lives. Therefore, the principle of positivism invites the school to systematically observe and collect data on student behavior, such as the discipline, sense of responsibility, and cooperation they show in various situations. With this data, schools can design educational interventions that are more measurable and based on real results, such as character building programs designed to strengthen the desired positive values (Alfiandrizar et al., 2023).

However, while the application of positivism provides significant benefits in decision-making in education management, there are some challenges faced by SDN 02 Aur Kuning in implementing this principle. One of the main challenges is the limited access to complete and valid data, especially in collecting data related to external factors such as students' socio-economic conditions and parents' involvement in their children's education. In addition, continuous data collection and analysis require human resources skilled in managing information technology and conducting data analysis, which are not necessarily available in all schools. In addition, there are challenges in integrating empirical data with religious values, given that SDN 02 Aur Kuning is an Islamic educational institution. In the principles of positivism that focus on objective science, there is sometimes difficulty in considering the spiritual and religious dimensions in the data-based decision-making process. Therefore, schools need to ensure that although decisions are scientific and objective, they maintain a balance between the positive values taught by Islam and the academic needs of students (Kholifah, 2019).

The successful application of positivism in decision-making at SDN 02 Aur Kuning depends on the school's ability to optimize the collaboration between data and religious values. In this case, education policy makers, such as principals and teachers, need to have a deep understanding of the importance of a data-driven approach, while also understanding ways to keep religious values at the forefront of educational decisions. In other words, positivism should be seen as a tool that can be used to improve education management, but still within the framework of values that are in accordance with Islamic principles. The application of the principles of positivism in decision-making in education management at SDN 02 Aur Kuning has proven to have a positive impact, both in terms of academics and student character building. With an objective and measurable data-based approach, the school is able to design education policies that are more targeted and reliable. Although challenges remain, such as limited resources and

the need to maintain a balance with religious values, the application of positivism remains a strategic step to improve the quality of education in this school. Thus, the application of positivism in education management at SDN 02 Aur Kuning can be a good model in dealing with the dynamics of modern education that is increasingly dependent on data and technology.

### **The Benefits and Challenges of Applying a Positivist Approach to Educational Decision-Making at SDN 02 Aur Kuning**

The positivist approach, developed by Auguste Comte, emphasizes the use of scientific methods and the collection of empirical data in decision-making. In education, the application of this approach provides significant benefits but also presents challenges that need to be overcome to achieve optimal results. In schools, especially those focusing on Islamic education such as SDN 02 Aur Kuning, the application of positivism in decision-making is becoming increasingly important, as it allows education management to make evidence-based decisions that can be tested and verified. However, behind the great benefits it offers, there are several obstacles that schools, teachers and education policy makers have to face.

#### **1. The benefits of applying a positivist approach to educational decision-making at SDN 02 Aur Kuning**

One of the main benefits of applying positivism in educational decision-making is the increased objectivity and accuracy in the policies taken. A data-driven approach allows decisions to be made more free from subjectivity and personal bias (Sarumpaet, 2024). For example, in determining classroom policies or learning strategies, data on student evaluation results and exam results can be used to formulate appropriate measures to improve academic achievement. When policies are based on facts and figures, the possibility of errors in decision-making can be minimized. In other words, educational decisions are no longer based on mere intuition or assumptions, but on objective and measurable data analysis.

In addition, the application of positivism also provides benefits in monitoring and evaluation that are more systematic and structured. In the positivism approach, evaluation is carried out continuously using valid data to assess the effectiveness of an educational program. This allows the school to make continuous improvements based on the findings obtained from the evaluation (Triono et al., 2020). For example, if a learning method is not producing the desired results, a data-driven evaluation can point out areas for improvement or even replace the method with another more effective approach. Therefore, positivism-based approaches support the improvement of educational quality through organized feedback loops.

The application of the positivist approach also leads to transparency and accountability in decision-making. Because decisions are based on data that can be checked and verified, schools and other educational institutions can more easily account for these decisions to stakeholders, such as parents, communities and governments. Data-driven decisions not only increase the credibility of education institutions but also provide clear evidence of the steps taken to improve the quality of education. This is crucial in creating public trust in the existing education system. In addition, the positivism approach supports the development of more inclusive and participatory policies. By collecting data from various parties, such as students, teachers, parents and communities, education policies can cover a wider range of perspectives and needs. For example, data collected through surveys or interviews can provide a clearer picture of

the challenges faced by students or parents, which can then be used to formulate policies that better suit their needs. With a data-driven approach, education management can more easily identify differences in needs between students and design more targeted programs.

## **2. Challenges in Applying the Positivist Approach to Educational Decision-Making at SDN 02 Aur Kuning**

While the application of positivism provides many benefits, there are also several challenges that can hinder its effectiveness in education. One of the biggest challenges is limited resources in terms of time, manpower and technology. Collecting valid and detailed data requires considerable resources, including experts in data processing and the use of technological tools needed to collect and analyze information. Not all schools, especially those in resource-limited areas, have the capacity to implement this data-driven approach to its full potential (Ulpah et al., 2024). The data required for positivism-based educational decision-making must be complete, accurate and up-to-date. In many schools, especially in certain areas, the collection of reliable data is often hampered by infrastructure limitations or even the unavailability of the required data. For example, in measuring students' academic achievement, not only test scores are required but also data related to students' socio-economic conditions, level of parental involvement and other environmental factors. This kind of data incompleteness can make the analysis invalid, which in turn can affect the quality of decisions made.

The difficulty in combining religious values with a data-driven approach is also an important challenge, especially in schools that emphasize faith-based education, such as SDN 02 Aur Kuning. A positivist approach that focuses heavily on empirical data can conflict with an educational approach that emphasizes spiritual and moral aspects. Too rigid application of a data-driven approach can neglect non-empirical dimensions of education, such as character development and fostering religious values. Therefore, schools need to develop ways to integrate a data-driven approach with character building efforts and teaching religious values, which are the main foundations of Islamic education.

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Another challenge relates to the acceptance of the data-driven approach itself. Some, especially more experienced teachers, may feel that the positivism-based approach pays less attention to the subjective aspects of education, such as the interpersonal relationship between teachers and students, or the more intuitive ways of educating. Education that focuses more on numbers and statistics may decrease attention to the more human and social aspects of education (Haikal et al., 2024). Therefore, a considerable mindset shift is needed among educators to accept and apply a data-driven

approach to decision-making. The data-driven approach often requires a change in the work culture in schools. Decisions that have been made based on experience or subjective considerations must be replaced with more structured and evidence-based decisions. This may cause resistance from those who are used to the old way of working. To overcome this, adequate training is needed for educators and education management personnel on effective ways to collect, analyze and use data in decision making (Islami & Sauri, 2022).

The application of the positivist approach to educational decision-making has many benefits, such as increasing objectivity, accountability and transparency in the policies taken, and supporting continuous improvement in the educational process. However, the challenges faced in its application cannot be ignored. Limited resources, access to accurate data and difficulties in integrating religious values and subjective aspects in education are obstacles that need to be overcome to ensure that this data-driven approach can be implemented effectively. For this reason, there needs to be a commitment from all education stakeholders to adapt to this change, so that the maximum benefits of the positivism approach can be felt in improving the quality of education in schools.

### **Factors Influencing the Implementation of Positivism in Education at SDN 02 Aur Kuning**

Positivism, as a school of philosophy that prioritizes the use of scientific methods and empirical data in decision-making, has become the basis for many modern educational policies. In Islamic education at SDN 02 Aur Kuning, the application of the principles of positivism certainly faces various factors that can influence its implementation. These factors include internal and external aspects related to school policies, available resources and the integration of religious values in the education process. To understand more deeply, we can identify some of the main factors that influence the success or challenges in the implementation of positivism in the school.

#### **1. Available Infrastructure and Resources**

One of the key factors affecting the implementation of positivism in education is the infrastructure and resources available at the school. SDN 02 Aur Kuning, as an Islamic education institution, needs adequate technological tools to collect and analyze data effectively. This includes a school management information system, software for data analysis and training for teachers and staff in using the technology. Without adequate infrastructure, it is difficult for schools to collect valid and accurate data needed for the application of positivism principles in educational decision-making. In addition, the quality and quantity of human resources in schools also affect the implementation of positivism. Existing teachers must have the ability to understand and apply data-driven approaches in teaching and decision-making processes (Maulana, 2022). Therefore, adequate training is needed so that educators can use data to analyze and improve student performance, formulate more effective learning policies, and assess evaluation results with greater objectivity. If human resources are not trained or do not have adequate skills in using data scientifically, the application of positivism in education may suffer.

#### **2. Managerial and leadership support**

Another factor that strongly influences the implementation of positivism is managerial and leadership support at the school level. Implementing a positivism-based approach



requires a strong commitment on the part of school management, especially the principal, in creating an environment that supports data-based decision-making. The principal must be able to provide clear direction on the importance of data collection and use in formulating education policies and ensure that all teachers and staff are involved in the process. Visionary and supportive leadership also plays a role in providing teachers with the time and space to process and analyze data, as well as to evaluate and reflect. Without a strong commitment from the principal, the implementation of positivism will be hampered by unsupportive policies or even a lack of attention to data collection and utilization in the decision-making process (Karmillah, 2020).

### 3. Parental Involvement and Understanding

The application of positivism in education depends not only on internal school factors but also on parental involvement and understanding. In SDN 02 Aur Kuning, where religious education has a central role, parents should have a good understanding of how data and scientific approaches can be used to improve the quality of their children's education without overriding religious values. Parents who are actively involved in the education process will support the successful implementation of positivism because they understand the importance of data-based evaluation in improving the quality of their children's learning. However, challenges arise when parents have a limited view of education that emphasizes religious and moral values without realizing the importance of data in making better decisions in their children's education.

### 4. Data limitations and educational evaluation

The application of positivism in education relies heavily on the existence of accurate, complete and accessible data. In many schools, including SDN 02 Aur Kuning, the main challenge is the limitation in collecting comprehensive data on students' performance, their socio-economic conditions and other factors affecting learning. More holistic and multidimensional data is needed to be able to correctly identify problems and formulate more effective solutions. In addition, educational evaluation in schools also needs to be designed in such a way as to produce data that can be used for analysis and decision-making. Without proper evaluation tools, whether in the form of formative, summative tests or direct observation of the learning process, the data collected will not provide a clear and comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of a learning method. Poor or invalid evaluation will result in inaccurate and ineffective decisions (Silfia, 2013).

### 5. Integration of Religious Values in Decision-Making

One of the aspects that distinguishes SDN 02 Aur Kuning from other schools is the emphasis on Islamic religious education. Therefore, the integration of religious values in the positivism approach is an important factor in its successful implementation. Positivism emphasizes the use of data and scientific methods in decision-making, while Islamic education in this school prioritizes morals, morality and religious values sourced from the Qur'an and Hadith. Using empirical data to make decisions related to character education and moral formation must take religion into account. Schools need to design approaches that combine scientific data with Islamic education principles to ensure that decisions still reflect Islamic moral and ethical values and do not contradict religious teachings.

#### 6. School Social and Cultural Conditions

Finally, the social and cultural conditions of the school also affect the successful implementation of positivism in education. SDN 02 Aur Kuning, as part of a Muslim community that has certain social and cultural values, must ensure that the implementation of positivism does not conflict with the local culture. This includes how the school manages the relationship between teachers and students, as well as how the learning process is implemented while maintaining a harmonious and loving relationship, which is the essence of Islamic education. If the data-driven approach is only implemented in a rigid and technocratic way, it may lead to dehumanization in education and neglect the emotional and social aspects of the teaching-learning process. Therefore, social and cultural conditions that value relationships between individuals and communities must be considered to ensure that the implementation of positivism goes well without damaging the existing social and religious integrity.

The application of positivism principles at SDN 02 Aur Kuning promotes objectivity in decision-making, especially in evaluating student learning outcomes and managing educational resources. Data-based policies allow teachers to adjust learning strategies based on students' individual needs. In addition, this approach increases transparency in school management processes, such as in education budget allocation and teacher performance evaluation. However, it faces challenges including limited technological infrastructure, lack of teacher training in data analysis and concerns over aligning religious values with scientific approaches. Proposed solutions include intensive training for teachers, increased cooperation with parents and the development of policy guidelines that take into account Islamic values.

#### **Conclusion and suggestion**

The application of the principles of positivism in decision-making in the education process at SDN 02 Aur Kuning has proven to have a positive impact, both in terms of academics and student character building. With an objective and measurable data-based approach, the school is able to design education policies that are more targeted and reliable. Although challenges remain, such as limited resources and the need to maintain a balance with religious values, the application of positivism remains a strategic step to improve the quality of education in this school.

The application of the positivism approach in educational decision-making provides many benefits, such as increasing objectivity, accountability and transparency in the policies taken and supporting continuous improvement in the educational process. However, the challenges faced in its application cannot be ignored. Limited resources, access to accurate data and difficulties in integrating religious values and subjective aspects in education are obstacles that need to be overcome to ensure that this data-driven approach can be implemented effectively.

For this reason, there needs to be a commitment from all education stakeholders to adapt to these changes, so that the maximum benefits of the positivism approach can be felt in improving the quality of education in schools. The implementation of positivism in education at SDN 02 Aur Kuning is influenced by various factors, both internal and external. These factors include available infrastructure and resources, managerial and leadership support, parental involvement, the availability of accurate data and the integration of religious values in decision-making. By understanding these factors, schools can design more effective policies to

integrate data-driven scientific approaches in education, while still maintaining the moral and religious principles on which Islamic education is based.

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