

Islamic Educational Leadership: Concepts, Styles and Its Implications for Improving the Quality of Education

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Abstract

Islamic educational leadership plays a strategic role in determining the direction and quality of educational institutions amidst the challenges of globalization and the digital era. Effective leadership requires not only managerial competence but also the integration of spiritual and moral values into leadership practices. This study aims to analyze the concept of Islamic educational leadership, identify emerging leadership styles, and examine their implications for improving educational quality. The method used is qualitative research with a library research approach through the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) model of scientific articles relevant to the research topic. The data analysis technique uses content analysis with the stages of data reduction, categorization, and synthesis. The results show that Islamic educational leadership is based on the values of trust, justice, deliberation, and exemplary behavior, and integrates transformational, democratic, and situational leadership styles. This leadership has positive implications for improving teacher performance, organizational culture, and student character formation. In conclusion, effective Islamic educational leadership can improve educational quality holistically through the integration of spiritual values and modern managerial approaches.

Keywords

Educational Management, Islamic Educational Leadership, Leadership Style, Quality of Education



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INTRODUCTION

Leadership in Islamic education is a strategic factor that determines the direction, quality, and success of educational institutions in achieving holistic learning goals. In the context of globalization and digital transformation, Islamic educational institutions face complex challenges that demand leadership that is not only managerially competent but also strong in spiritual and moral values. Islamic educational leadership goes beyond simply managing the organization; it also guides, exemplifies, and internalizes Islamic values in all aspects of education. Therefore, the study of Islamic educational leadership is crucial for understanding how its concepts, styles, and implications can contribute to improving the quality of education.

Theoretically, Islamic educational leadership is rooted in the values of the Qur'an and Hadith, which emphasize the principles of trustworthiness, justice, deliberation, and exemplary behavior. This leadership concept also relates to the roles of the caliph, imam, and ulil amri as representatives of moral and social responsibility in leadership. In practice, Islamic educational leadership integrates transformational, participatory, and prophetic approaches that emphasize service (*khidmah*), exemplary behavior (*uswah*), and collective decision-making (*shura*). Thus, Islamic educational leadership possesses unique characteristics that distinguish it from conventional leadership models.

Previous research shows that Islamic educational leadership has a significant influence on the quality of education. A study by (Warisno, 2021) revealed that leadership based on the values of monotheism, morality, and collective responsibility can improve teacher motivation and organizational culture. However, this research is still conceptually descriptive and has not comprehensively linked the relationship between leadership style and indicators of educational quality. Therefore, there is a research gap in integrating leadership concepts, styles, and implications within a coherent analytical framework. Other research by (Hasanah & Sururi, 2025) emphasizes that Islamic educational leadership is based on the values of trustworthiness, honesty, responsibility, and deliberation, which are derived from the Qur'an and Hadith. Although this research provides a strong normative basis, it has not yet examined how these values are translated into concrete leadership styles in educational institutions. This research gap indicates the need for studies that connect normative values with applicable leadership practices. Furthermore, research by (Aliyah et al., 2023) Research shows that leadership models play a significant role in determining the quality of Islamic education. However, this research focuses more on leadership models without examining variations in leadership styles and their implications for aspects of educational quality such as teacher performance, school culture, and student learning outcomes. Therefore, research that examines the multidimensional relationship between leadership styles and educational quality is needed.

Study (Mubarak et al., 2024); this study identifies various leadership problems in Islamic educational institutions, such as authoritarian styles, weak communication, and internal conflict. This research contributes to identifying leadership challenges, but does not yet offer an integration of the concept of ideal Islamic-based leadership with systematic, practical solutions. This gap demonstrates the importance of research that not only identifies problems but also formulates a solution-oriented and relevant leadership model. (Dr. Muh. Hambali & Dr. Mu'alimin, 2020) on contemporary leadership in Islamic education highlights the importance of adapting to global and technological changes. In addition, research (Efrina, 2022) explains the characteristics of Islamic leadership, including the qualities of *shidiq* (righteousness), *amanah* (trustworthiness), *fathonah* (faithfulness), and *tabligh* (prophetic service). Research on leadership competency development emphasizes the importance of enhancing leaders' capacity to face modern challenges. However, these studies are generally

partial, failing to integrate leadership concepts, styles, and implications into a comprehensive study. This is the primary gap that underpins this research.

Based on these various studies, the novelty of this research lies in its attempt to integrate three main aspects: the concept of Islamic educational leadership, typologies of leadership styles, and their implications for improving educational quality, within a comprehensive analytical framework based on literature studies. This research not only examines normative and theoretical aspects but also connects them with practical implications for educational quality, thus providing a new contribution to the development of more integrative and contextual studies of Islamic educational management.

The objectives of this study are to (1) analyze the concept of Islamic educational leadership based on classical and contemporary literature, (2) identify various leadership styles in Islamic education, and (3) examine the implications of Islamic educational leadership for improving the quality of education. Thus, this study is expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions to the development of effective, adaptive, and Islamic-value-based Islamic educational leadership.

METHODS

The research method in this study uses a qualitative approach with a literature study type (library research) that aims to comprehensively examine the concept, style, and implications of Islamic educational leadership for improving the quality of education. This study adopts the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) model with systematic stages including identification, selection, evaluation, and synthesis of data from various relevant scientific sources. The data collection process was carried out through searching academic databases such as Google Scholar, SINTA, DOAJ, and other reputable journals using keywords such as "Islamic educational leadership", "Islamic educational leadership", "leadership style", and "quality of education". The inclusion criteria in this study include scientific articles, having direct relevance to the research topic, and originating from indexed and fully accessible journals, while the exclusion criteria include articles that lack methodological clarity, data duplication, and do not match the focus of the study. The data analysis technique was carried out using content analysis with steps of data reduction, theme categorization, and inductive conclusion drawing, so that a clear mapping of the concept of Islamic educational leadership, typology of leadership styles, and their implications for the quality of education was obtained. To ensure data validity, this study employed source triangulation techniques and credibility checks through comparisons with previous research findings. The analysis results were then presented descriptively and analytically to produce a comprehensive, in-depth synthesis that is relevant to the development of Islamic education management in the modern era.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Concept and Style of Islamic Educational Leadership

Based on a literature review of various scientific sources over the past five years, it was found that the concept of Islamic educational leadership is firmly rooted in normative values derived from the Qur'an and Hadith. Leadership is not merely understood as the process of managing an institution, but as a mandate that must be carried out with full moral and spiritual responsibility. Key principles such as justice (al-'adl), honesty (shidiq), responsibility (amanah), intelligence (fathonah), and the ability to convey (tabligh) form the main foundation for building effective leadership. This concept demonstrates that Islamic educational leadership is holistic because it encompasses spiritual, ethical, and professional dimensions simultaneously.

The study results show that Islamic educational leadership also has characteristics of prophetic leadership, which emulates the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. This model emphasizes exemplary behavior (uswah hasanah), service (khidmah), and deliberation (shura) in decision-making. This prophetic leadership is not only oriented towards results, but also towards processes that are in accordance with Islamic values. In practice, leaders are not only policy makers but also spiritual guides and motivators for all school members. In the context of leadership styles, the results show that there are several dominant styles applied in Islamic education, namely transformational, democratic, and situational styles. The transformational style is characterized by the leader's ability to inspire, motivate, and encourage positive change in educational organizations. The democratic style is seen in the involvement of teachers and education personnel in the decision-making process, while the situational style demonstrates the leader's flexibility in adapting the leadership approach according to the conditions and needs of the institution.

Furthermore, it was found that the Islamic leadership style has a unique characteristic compared to conventional leadership styles, namely the integration of spiritual values and managerial practices. Leaders are not only oriented towards achieving organizational targets, but also on developing the morals and character of students. This indicates that Islamic educational leadership has a transcendental dimension not found in secular leadership models. This integration is a key strength in building a religious and productive educational environment. Several literatures also reveal challenges in implementing the Islamic educational leadership style, such as the continued dominance of authoritarian leadership styles in some institutions, a lack of leadership competency, and weak organizational communication. These challenges indicate that although the concept of Islamic leadership is ideal, its implementation in the field is not fully optimal. Therefore, efforts are needed to simultaneously strengthen leadership capacity based on values and competency.

The results of this study confirm that the concept and style of Islamic educational leadership are a complementary combination of normative values and modern managerial approaches. Effective leadership in Islamic education is leadership that integrates spiritual values, adaptive leadership styles, and managerial skills to manage educational institutions professionally and sustainably.

Implications of Islamic Educational Leadership for Improving the Quality of Education

Islamic educational leadership has significant implications for improving the quality of education, both academically and non-academically. Effective leadership can create a conducive learning environment, improve teacher performance, and foster a positive school culture. Leaders grounded in Islamic values tend to build harmonious interpersonal relationships, fostering a collaborative and productive work environment. Another implication found is increased teacher professionalism as a result of inspirational and supportive leadership. Leaders who adopt a transformational and participatory style can motivate teachers to continuously develop their competencies, whether through training, collaboration, or learning innovation. This has a direct impact on the quality of the learning process, making it more effective and oriented toward student needs.

Islamic educational leadership also has implications for strengthening student character. Leaders who emphasize moral values in managing educational institutions will create an environment that supports the development of religious, disciplined, and responsible character. This demonstrates that the quality of education from an Islamic perspective is measured not only by academic achievement but also by the development of students' noble personalities. From a managerial perspective, effective leadership can improve the efficiency and effectiveness of educational institution management. Leaders with a clear vision and strong planning skills will be able to optimally direct all resources to achieve educational goals. Furthermore, transparency and accountability in institutional management are also important indicators in increasing public trust in Islamic educational institutions.

The research findings also indicate that the positive implications of Islamic educational leadership are highly dependent on the leader's competence and commitment. Weak or inconsistent leadership can negatively impact educational quality, such as declining teacher performance, low student motivation, and a weak organizational culture. Therefore, strengthening leadership capacity is a key factor in sustainably improving educational quality. Overall, the results of this study demonstrate that Islamic educational leadership plays a strategic role in improving educational quality as a whole. Effective leadership not only improves organizational performance but also shapes the character, culture, and values that serve as the primary foundation of Islamic education. Therefore, developing Islamic educational leadership based on values, competence, and innovation is an urgent need to address the challenges of modern education.

Discussion

The concept of Islamic educational leadership has holistic characteristics that integrate spiritual, ethical, and professional values. This finding aligns with theoretical studies.(Verawati et al., 2025)Islamic leadership emphasizes the principles of trust, justice, and deliberation as the primary foundations of leadership. From a theoretical perspective, Islamic educational leadership is not only oriented toward achieving organizational goals, but also toward the formation of character and moral values.(Tambunan, 2018). These results

strengthen the research(Solihin, 2024)which states that leadership based on Islamic values can create an educational environment that is not only academically effective but also spiritually meaningful. Thus, the concept of Islamic educational leadership has advantages over conventional leadership models, which tend to focus solely on administrative aspects.

Research on leadership styles indicates the dominance of transformational, democratic, and situational styles in Islamic educational leadership practices. These findings are consistent with modern leadership theory, which positions transformational leadership as the most effective style in driving organizational change.(Hutahaeen & SE, 2021). Study(Putri et al., 2024)also revealed that the transformational style can significantly improve teacher motivation and performance. However, in the context of Islamic education, this style has an additional dimension in the form of integrating spiritual values that strengthen the meaning of leadership. This demonstrates a synthesis between Western leadership theory and Islamic values, resulting in a more comprehensive and contextual leadership model.

The findings of this study also confirm that Islamic educational leadership has significant implications for improving the quality of education, particularly in terms of teacher performance, organizational culture, and student character development. This is in line with the results of other studies.(Maolana et al., 2023)which shows that effective leadership contributes to improving the quality of learning and student learning outcomes. However, this study places greater emphasis on the dimensions of character and values as indicators of educational quality, which have often received less attention in previous research. Thus, this study broadens the perspective on educational quality within the framework of Islamic education.

On the other hand, research results also show a gap between the ideal concept of Islamic educational leadership and practice in the field.(Novra et al., 2024)revealed that there is still a tendency to use an authoritarian leadership style that is not in line with the principles of deliberation and participation in Islam. This finding indicates that the implementation of Islamic educational leadership still faces various challenges, both in terms of leader competence and organizational culture. Therefore, efforts are needed to strengthen leadership capacity through training, coaching, and ongoing professional development.

Compared with previous studies, which tended to be fragmentary, this study offers a more integrative approach by simultaneously examining the concepts, styles, and implications of Islamic educational leadership. This is a significant contribution to the development of Islamic educational management studies, as it provides a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding. Previous research generally focused on only one aspect, such as leadership style or leadership values, without directly linking these to their implications for educational quality. Thus, this study fills this gap and provides a new, more comprehensive perspective.

Islamic educational leadership has significant potential to improve educational quality if applied consistently and contextually. The integration of Islamic values with modern leadership theory is a key force in creating effective leadership that is relevant to the demands of the times. However, successful implementation depends heavily on the commitment and

competence of leaders in translating these values into practical practice. Therefore, developing Islamic educational leadership based on values, competence, and innovation is key to achieving quality and competitive education.

This study has several limitations that need to be considered when interpreting the results. First, this study uses a literature review approach, which is highly dependent on the availability and quality of the reference sources analyzed. Therefore, there may still be a selection bias in the articles accessed, thus not fully accommodating the broader historical development of the concept of Islamic educational leadership. Third, this study is descriptive-analytical in nature without involving empirical field data, so it cannot directly describe the practice of Islamic educational leadership in the specific context of a particular educational institution. Furthermore, variations in the social, cultural, and institutional contexts of previous studies are also factors that may influence the generalizability of the findings in this study.

The novelty of this research lies in its integrative approach, which comprehensively combines three main aspects: the concept of Islamic educational leadership, typologies of leadership styles, and their implications for improving educational quality, within a unified analytical framework based on literature studies. Unlike previous studies, which tended to be partial and only focused on one aspect, this study presents a conceptual synthesis that connects the normative dimension (Islamic values) with the practical dimension (leadership style and its impact on educational quality). Furthermore, this study emphasizes the importance of integrating spiritual values and modern leadership theory as a relevant leadership model in the digital and disruptive era. Thus, this research provides a new contribution to the development of more comprehensive, contextual, and applicable Islamic educational management studies.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that Islamic educational leadership is a key factor in improving the quality of education through the integration of spiritual, ethical, and professional values into effective leadership practices. Leadership concepts based on the principles of trust, justice, deliberation, and exemplary behavior have been proven to be able to form adaptive leadership styles such as transformational, democratic, and situational, which ultimately have positive implications for improving teacher performance, strengthening organizational culture, and building student character. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that effective Islamic educational leadership is leadership that is not only oriented towards achieving academic goals, but also on the continuous development of moral and spiritual values. Therefore, it is recommended that leaders of Islamic educational institutions develop leadership competencies based on values and innovation, increase the participation of all school members in decision-making, and optimize the use of technology in educational management. Furthermore, further research is recommended to conduct field-

based empirical studies to directly test the effectiveness of Islamic educational leadership models in various educational institution contexts.

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