

The Role of Spiritual Leadership in Improving Organizational Culture in Islamic Educational Institution

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Article history

Submitted: 2026/04/16; Revised: 2026/05/07; Accepted: 2026/06/30

Abstract

Spiritual leadership is an important approach in Islamic educational management to build a strong organizational culture based on Islamic values. However, leadership practices in many Islamic educational institutions still tend to be administrative and have not fully integrated the spiritual dimension into organizational management. This study aims to analyze the role of spiritual leadership in improving organizational culture in Islamic educational institutions and to formulate a relevant conceptual model. The research method used is library research with a qualitative descriptive-analytical approach through analysis of various scientific literature from the last five years. The data analysis technique uses content analysis with the stages of data reduction, classification, and interpretation. The results show that spiritual leadership plays a significant role in shaping a religious, disciplined, collaborative, and quality-oriented organizational culture through the internalization of Islamic values and the exemplary behavior of leaders. In conclusion, spiritual leadership is a key factor in building a strong, character-based, and sustainable organizational culture in Islamic educational institutions.

Keywords

Educational Management, Islamic Education, Islamic Values, Organizational Culture, Spiritual Leadership



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INTRODUCTION

The development of Islamic educational institutions in the modern era demands the strengthening of values-based management, oriented not only toward academic achievement but also toward the development of a strong and character-based organizational culture. In this context, leadership plays a strategic role as a primary driver of change and the formation of organizational culture. A strong organizational culture will create a conducive work environment, improve teacher performance, and strengthen the identity of Islamic educational institutions as values-based institutions. Therefore, leadership that is not only administrative but also spiritual is an urgent need in the management of Islamic education today.

However, reality shows that many Islamic educational institutions still face weak organizational cultures, such as low work discipline, lack of collaboration, and weak

internalization of Islamic values in institutional practices. This situation indicates that the leadership implemented has not been fully capable of building a strong and sustainable organizational culture. Effective leadership should be able to integrate spiritual values into the organizational system, thus creating a religious, professional, and quality-oriented work culture.

Theoretically, spiritual leadership is a leadership approach that emphasizes transcendental values, the meaning of work, and a harmonious relationship between leaders and organizational members. This leadership is not only oriented towards achieving organizational goals, but also on the formation of spiritual awareness and work ethics. From the perspective of Islamic education, spiritual leadership is very relevant because it is based on the values of the Qur'an and Hadith such as *siddiq*, *amanah*, *tabligh*, and *fathanah* which are the foundation in building an Islamic organizational culture. In addition, organizational culture in Islamic educational institutions is a system of values, norms, and habits that develop within the institutional environment and influence the behavior of all organizational members. Research shows that leadership has a significant influence on the formation of organizational culture, including in increasing discipline, cooperation, and work enthusiasm in the madrasah environment. Thus, there is a close relationship between spiritual leadership and organizational culture in creating quality Islamic educational institutions.

Various studies have examined leadership and organizational culture in Islamic education. Research by (Kurma, 2024) found that the spiritual-transformational leadership model can strengthen a culture of quality in Islamic educational institutions. However, this study was limited to integrating the two leadership models and did not specifically examine the role of spiritual leadership independently. This research gap highlights the need for studies that focus more on spiritual leadership as a primary variable.

Furthermore, research (Ramadhan et al., 2025) revealed that transformational leadership has a significant influence on the performance and quality of Islamic education, but has not yet deeply linked it to the spiritual dimension of leadership. Meanwhile, research (Erlina et al., 2024) shows that transformational leadership based on Islamic values can encourage changes in organizational behavior, but has not yet explicitly examined the relationship between spiritual leadership and organizational culture directly.

Another study by Dewi and Munthe (2024) found that Islamic leadership contributes to building a disciplined and responsible work culture, but still focuses on aspects of work culture, not the overall organizational culture. Furthermore, research by Ruba'i et al. (2025) shows that spiritual leadership influences religious organizational culture and performance, but this study emphasizes the mediating aspect of spiritual motivation, rather than developing a comprehensive concept of organizational culture.

Based on these various studies, several research gaps can be identified, namely: (1) there are still limited studies that specifically discuss spiritual leadership as a main variable in forming the organizational culture of Islamic education, (2) most studies still integrate spiritual leadership with other models such as transformational, so that they lack focus, (3)

there is no comprehensive conceptual model regarding the relationship between spiritual leadership and organizational culture, and (4) there is a lack of studies that place Islamic values as the core in forming organizational culture. Therefore, the novelty of this study lies in its focus on examining in depth the role of spiritual leadership as a main factor in building organizational culture in Islamic educational institutions systematically and holistically.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the role of spiritual leadership in improving organizational culture in Islamic educational institutions, identify the implementation of spiritual leadership in managerial practice, and formulate a conceptual model that can be used as a reference in developing an organizational culture based on Islamic values. This research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of Islamic educational management science and practical contributions for educational institution leaders in creating a superior, religious, and sustainable organizational culture.

METHODS

The research method used in this study is a library research with a qualitative descriptive-analytical approach, which aims to examine in depth the concept and role of spiritual leadership in improving organizational culture in Islamic educational institutions. The data sources in this study consist of primary data in the form of articles from national scientific journals indexed by SINTA and reputable international journals published in, as well as secondary data in the form of reference books, proceedings, and academic documents relevant to the research topic. Data collection was carried out through documentation techniques by searching various scientific databases such as Google Scholar, Garuda, and Scopus using the keywords "spiritual leadership", "organizational culture", "Islamic education management", and "Islamic educational leadership". The data analysis technique uses a content analysis model with stages of data reduction, categorization, comparison, and interpretation to find patterns of relationships, theoretical tendencies, and research gaps from the various literatures analyzed. To ensure the validity of the data, a source triangulation technique was used by comparing various research results that have high relevance and prioritizing credible and indexed sources. The results of the analysis were then synthesized to formulate the concept and role model of spiritual leadership in building a strong, religious, and sustainable organizational culture in Islamic educational institutions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The Role of Spiritual Leadership in Improving Organizational Culture in Islamic Educational Institutions

The study's findings indicate that spiritual leadership plays a fundamental role in shaping and strengthening organizational culture in Islamic educational institutions. Spiritual leadership serves not only as an organizational director but also as a source of inspiring values capable of instilling work meaning, moral commitment, and spiritual awareness in all

members of the organization. In this context, leaders act not only as managers but also as role models in internalizing Islamic values such as honesty, trustworthiness, responsibility, and sincerity in daily organizational activities. The results of the study indicate that spiritual leadership contributes to building an organizational culture grounded in religious values. The resulting organizational culture not only reflects professional work norms but also contains a strong spiritual dimension, such as a culture of discipline based on a sense of worship, a culture of sincere work, and a culture of collaboration grounded in Islamic brotherhood. This makes the organization not only oriented towards achieving worldly goals but also towards transcendental values that provide deeper meaning to work.

Spiritual leadership has been shown to increase organizational commitment among teachers and education personnel. Leaders who integrate spiritual values into their leadership tend to create a harmonious and trusting work environment. This results in increased loyalty and a sense of belonging to the institution, thus motivating members to perform optimally and contribute to achieving shared goals. The analysis also shows that spiritual leadership plays a role in fostering a culture of open and humanistic communication. In a spiritually driven organization, communication is not only formal and structural but also grounded in the values of empathy, justice, and mutual respect. This creates a conducive work environment and strengthens interpersonal relationships among members, ultimately supporting a healthy organizational culture. Spiritual leadership also plays a role in improving the quality of decision-making within the organization. Leaders with high spiritual awareness tend to consider ethical aspects and Islamic values in every decision they make. This results in the creation of fair, transparent, and mutually beneficial policies, thereby strengthening members' trust in the leadership.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that spiritual leadership is a key factor in building a strong, religious, and sustainable organizational culture in Islamic educational institutions. This role is not limited to symbolic aspects but also encompasses concrete implementation across various organizational dimensions, from individual behavior to institutional systems. Thus, spiritual leadership can be a key foundation in developing Islamic educational management that is oriented toward values and quality.

Implementation of Spiritual Leadership in Managerial Practice and Development of a Conceptual Model of Islamic Organizational Culture

The results of this study indicate that the implementation of spiritual leadership in managerial practices at Islamic educational institutions is carried out through the integration of spiritual values into management functions, such as planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating. In the planning stage, leaders prioritize a vision and mission based on Islamic values and oriented towards the formation of religious character and organizational culture. This serves as the main foundation in determining the direction of the institution's policies and work programs. In the organizing stage, spiritual leadership is reflected in the fair and proportional division of tasks, as well as the strengthening of teamwork based on the

principles of togetherness and collective responsibility. Leaders play a role in creating an organizational structure that is not only administratively effective but also able to support the internalization of spiritual values in every organizational activity. Thus, each member of the organization has a clear role and spiritual awareness in carrying out their duties.

In the implementation phase, spiritual leadership is manifested through the leader's exemplary behavior in daily behavior. Leaders serve as role models in implementing values such as discipline, integrity, and sincerity, thus directly influencing the behavior of organizational members. Furthermore, religious activities such as habituating worship, Islamic studies, and spiritual reflection are also part of the spiritual leadership implementation strategy to strengthen organizational culture. In the evaluation phase, spiritual leadership emphasizes the importance of reflection and continuous improvement that is oriented not only to work results, but also to the processes and underlying values. Evaluations are conducted objectively and transparently, taking into account moral and ethical aspects, thus encouraging the creation of an honest and responsible organizational culture. This also strengthens accountability in the management of Islamic educational institutions.

The results of this study produce a conceptual model of spiritual leadership in building an Islamic organizational culture consisting of three main components, namely: (1) spiritual values as a foundation, (2) leadership practices as a process, and (3) organizational culture as an outcome. This model shows that the success of forming an organizational culture is highly dependent on the leader's ability to integrate spiritual values into managerial practices consistently and sustainably. The implementation of spiritual leadership in managerial practices has been proven to be able to create an organizational culture that is not only structurally effective, but also strong in Islamic values and identity. The conceptual model produced in this study is expected to be a reference for leaders of Islamic educational institutions in developing an organizational culture that is superior, religious, and adaptive to changing times, so as to improve the quality of education as a whole.

Discussion

The results of the study indicate that spiritual leadership plays a strategic role in building organizational culture in Islamic educational institutions, which aligns with the theory of values-based leadership. From a theoretical perspective, Louis W. Fry explains that spiritual leadership focuses on creating vision, hope, and compassion (altruistic love) that can increase the commitment and meaning of the work of organizational members. The findings of this study support this theory, where spiritual leadership has been proven to be able to instill religious values and build a work culture oriented towards meaning and blessings, not merely the achievement of organizational targets. The results of this study are also in line with the theory of organizational culture proposed by Edgar H. Schein, which states that organizational culture is formed through the values, norms, and basic assumptions instilled by leaders. In the context of Islamic educational institutions, spiritual leadership plays a key role in transforming Islamic values into a living organizational culture that is internalized in the behavior of

members. This is evident in the formation of a culture of discipline, sincere work, and brotherhood-based collaboration found in the research results.

Compared to previous research, such as that by Kurma (2024), which integrated spiritual and transformational leadership in building a culture of quality, this study demonstrates a more focused approach by placing spiritual leadership as the primary variable. A gap in Kurma's research is the lack of in-depth study of the spiritual dimension as an independent factor, while this study presents novelty by specifically examining the contribution of spiritual leadership in shaping organizational culture as a whole. Furthermore, research by Ramadhan (2025) emphasized the influence of transformational leadership on educational quality but did not explicitly integrate the spiritual dimension. This study addresses this gap by demonstrating that the spiritual aspect plays a crucial role in building commitment and loyalty among organizational members. Similarly, research by Erlina (2024), which examined Islamic values-based leadership, still focused on changing individual behavior, while this study expands on the systemic formation of organizational culture.

Research by Dewi and Munthe (2024) shows that Islamic leadership contributes to a disciplined work culture, but does not yet comprehensively cover the dimensions of organizational culture. Meanwhile, research by Ruba'I (2025) highlights the influence of spiritual leadership on performance through the mediation of spiritual motivation, but has not yet produced an integrative conceptual model. This study provides novelty by constructing a conceptual model that connects spiritual values, leadership practices, and organizational culture within a unified framework. This discussion emphasizes that spiritual leadership serves not only as an alternative approach but as a primary foundation for building a strong, religious, and sustainable organizational culture in Islamic educational institutions. These findings strengthen and expand previous theory and research by emphasizing the integration of spiritual values into all managerial aspects. The practical implication is the need to strengthen spiritual leadership competencies for principals or leaders of Islamic educational institutions to be able to create an organizational culture that is not only structurally effective but also spiritually meaningful and has long-term impact.

This study has several limitations that require careful consideration when interpreting its results. First, the study used a desk study approach, so the findings are conceptual in nature and have not been empirically tested in the field. Therefore, the actual effectiveness of spiritual leadership in improving organizational culture still requires validation through quantitative and qualitative field research. Second, the literature sources used were limited to publications from the last five years, so there may be classic studies or other relevant research that has not been optimally accommodated. Third, this study did not specifically differentiate the context of Islamic educational institutions based on level, organizational characteristics, or geographic conditions, so the generalizability of the results remains limited. Furthermore, external variables such as other leadership styles, local culture, and educational policy factors were not analyzed in depth in this study.

The novelty of this research lies in the development of a conceptual framework that positions spiritual leadership as a key variable in building organizational culture in Islamic educational institutions in a holistic and integrated manner. Unlike previous studies that tend to combine spiritual leadership with other models such as transformational or only highlight partial aspects such as work culture or motivation, this study specifically examines the direct relationship between spiritual leadership and organizational culture and produces a model that integrates spiritual values, managerial practices, and organizational culture outcomes into a unified system. Thus, this research makes a new contribution both theoretically to the development of Islamic educational management science and practically as a reference for educational institution leaders in building a religious, strong, and sustainable organizational culture.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study indicate that spiritual leadership plays a significant role in enhancing organizational culture in Islamic educational institutions through the internalization of religious values, exemplary leadership, and the integration of spiritual values into managerial practices that create a harmonious, disciplined, and quality-oriented work environment. These findings confirm that spiritual leadership not only influences individual behavior but is also capable of forming a collective value system that forms the basis of a strong and sustainable organizational culture. Based on this, it can be concluded that spiritual leadership is a key factor in building a religious, professional, and adaptive organizational culture in Islamic educational institutions. Therefore, it is recommended that leaders of Islamic educational institutions develop spiritual leadership competencies through continuous training and coaching, integrate Islamic values into every managerial policy and practice, and create programs that support the internalization of a values-based organizational culture. Meanwhile, future researchers are advised to conduct empirical research with a quantitative or mixed approach to more deeply examine the influence of spiritual leadership on various aspects of organizational performance in a broader context.

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