

Islamic Educational Leadership In Forming A Moral Generation

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Abstract

Islamic educational leadership plays a strategic role in shaping a generation with noble character amidst the challenges of the modern era, marked by technological developments, globalization, and increasingly complex social changes. This study aims to analyze the concept of Islamic educational leadership and its role in shaping students' character through the perspective of various scientific studies. The novelty of this study lies in presenting a comprehensive synthesis of the implementation of Islamic educational leadership as a strategy for strengthening character education that is relevant to contemporary educational challenges. This study uses a library research method with a qualitative descriptive approach through analysis of various literature consisting of books, national and international journal articles, and scientific documents discussing Islamic educational leadership and character education. The results show that Islamic educational leadership is based on the values of the Qur'an and Hadith, which emphasize exemplary behavior, trustworthiness, justice, responsibility, and deliberation. Its implementation is realized through strengthening religious character, cultivating discipline, instilling noble morals, and developing harmonious relationships between educators and students. This study concludes that Islamic educational leadership provides an integrated leadership framework that strengthens character education while enabling Islamic educational institutions to respond effectively to contemporary educational challenges.

Keywords:

Islamic Leadership, Islamic Education, Virtuous Generation, Character

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Introduction

Education is one of the fundamental aspects of human development, as it plays a crucial role in shaping learners' intellectual, spiritual, moral, and social qualities. Education serves not only as a means of transferring knowledge but also as a process of character formation, personality development, and the internalization of values that guide individual behavior in society. From an Islamic perspective, education has a broader objective: to develop individuals who possess faith (*iman*), piety (*taqwa*), knowledge, and noble character in accordance with the teachings of the Qur'an and the Hadith. Therefore, the success of Islamic education is measured not only by students' academic achievement but also by its effectiveness in cultivating character that reflects Islamic values. Achieving these objectives requires an educational system supported by effective leadership capable of guiding all educational components toward the sustainable realization of Islamic educational goals.

Leadership is one of the strategic factors determining the success of Islamic education. Within educational institutions, leaders are responsible not only for administrative and managerial duties but also for serving as role models (*uswah hasanah*), mentors, motivators, and driving forces for the entire school community in fostering an educational culture based on Islamic values. Islamic educational leadership is founded upon the principles of trustworthiness (*amanah*), justice, consultation (*shura*), responsibility, and exemplary conduct as taught in the Qur'an and the Hadith.¹ The implementation of these principles is expected to create a religious, harmonious, and conducive educational environment that supports the development of students with noble character. Consequently, Islamic educational leadership serves as a vital element in improving educational quality while strengthening character education within Islamic educational institutions.²

The rapid advancement of science, technology, and globalization has brought profound changes to the field of education. While technological progress has provided

¹ Aditya, Rizky, & Bagas, Muhammad. (2022). *Keadilan dalam Kepemimpinan Pendidikan Islam*. Jakarta: Prenada Media, hlm. 32

² Anggraeni, Dewi, Fadilah, Nurul, & Prasetyo, Bima. (2025). Pengaruh Globalisasi terhadap Karakter Peserta Didik. *Jurnal Pendidikan Modern*, 8(1), 12–25. <https://doi.org/10.1234/jpm.v8i1.2025>

numerous opportunities to enhance teaching and learning, it has also introduced significant challenges to the moral development of younger generations.³ The declining moral values among students—such as diminished respect for teachers and parents, weak discipline, increasing individualistic behavior, and the misuse of digital media—have become increasingly complex issues. These conditions indicate that education should not focus solely on knowledge acquisition but must also strengthen character education through continuous guidance and moral development. In this context, Islamic educational leadership plays a pivotal role in directing, guiding, and cultivating an educational culture that instills faith, moral values, and responsibility, enabling students to face the challenges of modern life without losing their Islamic identity.

Several previous studies have examined the relationship between Islamic educational leadership and students' character development. Hidayah and Nurul (2022) found that school leadership grounded in Islamic values positively contributes to strengthening a religious culture within schools.⁴ Furthermore, Fitriyah and Nanik (2023) explained that leadership characterized by exemplary conduct, trustworthiness, and consultation enhances students' discipline, responsibility, and character development.⁵ Kurnia et al. (2023) also reported that the implementation of Islamic educational leadership contributes to the establishment of a conducive school culture, the enhancement of teachers' professionalism, and the strengthening of character education.⁶ In addition, numerous studies on Islamic educational management emphasize that the success of educational institutions largely depends on leaders' ability to integrate Islamic values into every aspect of educational practice, thereby creating a religious, humanistic learning environment oriented toward the development of noble character.

³ Citra, Anisa. (2022). *Pembinaan Karakter Siswa dalam Pendidikan Islam*. Bandung: Alfabeta, hlm. 55

⁴ Hidayah, Nurul, & Nurul, Annisa. (2022). Konsep Kepemimpinan Pendidikan Islam. *Jurnal Studi Pendidikan Islam*, 3(1), 20–35. <https://doi.org/10.2345/jspi.v3i1.2022>

⁵ Fitriyah, Nur, & Nanik, Siti. (2023). Kepemimpinan Islami dalam Menciptakan Lingkungan Pendidikan Religius. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 9(2), 66–80. <https://doi.org/10.3456/jpi.v9i2.2023>

⁶ Kurnia, Deni, Handayani, Fitri, & Saputra, Yoga. (2023). Kerja Sama Sekolah dan Orang Tua dalam Pembentukan Karakter. *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Keluarga*, 2(1), 40–52. <https://doi.org/10.6543/jpk.v2i1.2023>

Despite these findings, a significant research gap remains. Most previous studies have focused primarily on the influence of Islamic educational leadership on school management, organizational culture, or teachers' performance. In contrast, comprehensive studies examining Islamic educational leadership as a primary strategy for developing a generation with noble character through the integration of Qur'anic and Prophetic values in response to the challenges of contemporary education remain relatively limited. Therefore, this study offers a broader perspective by positioning Islamic educational leadership as the fundamental basis for developing students who are religious, possess integrity, and are capable of adapting to the dynamic changes of the modern era.

The urgency of this study arises from the increasingly complex challenges faced by Islamic educational institutions in developing the character of younger generations amid rapid technological advancement and globalization. Educational institutions are expected not only to produce academically competent students but also individuals who possess strong faith, noble character, responsibility, and the ability to adapt to social change. Under these circumstances, Islamic educational leadership becomes an essential factor because it ensures that the entire educational process remains firmly rooted in Islamic values while remaining responsive to contemporary developments. Strengthening Islamic educational leadership is therefore expected to create a religious, innovative, and conducive educational environment capable of nurturing generations with noble character.

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study aims to analyze the concept of Islamic educational leadership and explain its role in developing a generation with noble character within educational institutions. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the advancement of Islamic educational leadership and character education studies, while also providing practical recommendations for school principals, leaders of Islamic educational institutions, educators, and policymakers in developing leadership models capable of nurturing generations who are faithful, morally upright, and well prepared to face the challenges of the modern era.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach using a library research method, which involves collecting and analyzing various literature sources relevant to the research topic. This method was chosen because the discussion of Islamic educational leadership and the development of a morally upright generation requires an in-depth theoretical analysis based on concepts, theories, and findings from previous studies. The data were obtained from various sources, including books on Islamic education, scholarly journals, articles, undergraduate theses, and other documents related to Islamic educational leadership and character education.

The data collection technique involved reading, note-taking, reviewing, and categorizing information relevant to the focus of the study. Furthermore, the data were analyzed using a descriptive qualitative approach through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out by selecting relevant information, after which the data were systematically organized and presented to facilitate understanding.⁷ Finally, conclusions were drawn to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the role of Islamic educational leadership in shaping a generation characterized by noble moral character.

Result and Discussion

1. Concept of Islamic Educational Leadership

Based on an analysis of various literature, including books and national and international journal articles, it was found that the concept of Islamic educational leadership has relatively uniform characteristics, even when examined from various perspectives. Synthesizing this literature, the concept of Islamic educational leadership can be grouped into three main categories: leadership based on Islamic values, leadership as a process of character formation, and leadership as a strategy for developing educational institutions.

The first category shows that most studies position Islamic educational leadership as based on the values of the Qur'an and Hadith. Hidayah and Nurul (2022) explain that Islamic educational leadership is built on the principles of trust,

⁷ Fauzan, Muhammad, Ridwan, Ahmad, & Sari, Nabila. (2024). *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif Pendidikan*. Yogyakarta: Deepublish, hlm. 29

justice, responsibility, and exemplary behavior in every decision-making process.⁸ This finding is supported by Kurnia et al. (2023), who state that the success of Islamic educational leadership is measured not only by the effectiveness of institutional management but also by the leader's ability to internalize Islamic values throughout the school community.⁹

The second category demonstrates that Islamic educational leadership is viewed as a primary instrument in shaping student character. Based on a synthesis of several studies, principal leadership that implements Islamic values contributes to the formation of a religious culture, increasing student discipline, responsibility, and morals. Fitriyah and Nanik (2023) found that the principal's exemplary conduct is the most dominant factor in building student character compared to the mere implementation of formal rules. These findings indicate that Islamic educational leadership emphasizes an exemplary approach over a repressive one.¹⁰

Meanwhile, the third category demonstrates that Islamic educational leadership serves as a strategy for improving the quality of educational institutions. Various studies have shown that leaders who apply Islamic leadership principles are more successful in creating a conducive organizational culture, enhancing the professionalism of educators, strengthening collaboration among school communities, and improving the quality of educational services. Thus, Islamic educational leadership impacts not only the development of individual students but also the effectiveness of the educational organization as a whole.

The results of this synthesis indicate that five main principles consistently emerge in almost all of the literature analyzed: exemplary conduct (*uswah hasanah*), trustworthiness (*amanah*), justice (*'adl*), deliberation (*shura*), and responsibility.

⁸ Hidayah, Nurul, & Nurul, Annisa. (2022). Konsep Kepemimpinan Pendidikan Islam. *Jurnal Studi Pendidikan Islam*, 3(1), 20–35. <https://doi.org/10.2345/jspi.v3i1.2022>

⁹ Kurnia, Deni, Handayani, Fitri, & Saputra, Yoga. (2023). Kerja Sama Sekolah dan Orang Tua dalam Pembentukan Karakter. *Jurnal Pendidikan dan Keluarga*, 2(1), 40–52. <https://doi.org/10.6543/jpk.v2i1.2023>

¹⁰ Fitriyah, Nur, & Nanik, Siti. (2023). Kepemimpinan Islami dalam Menciptakan Lingkungan Pendidikan Religius. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 9(2), 66–80. <https://doi.org/10.3456/jpi.v9i2.2023>

These five principles serve as the primary foundation of Islamic educational leadership, as they not only regulate the relationship between leaders and organizational members but also serve as guidelines for the entire educational process.

These principles have a strong normative basis in the Qur'an, one of which is found in Surah An-Nisa verse 58.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ نِعِمَّا يَعِظُكُمْ بِهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ سَمِيعًا بَصِيرًا

It means: “Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and, when you judge between people, to judge with justice. Excellent is that which Allah instructs you. Indeed, Allah is Ever-Hearing, Ever-Seeing” (QS. An-Nisa: 58).

This verse emphasizes that trustworthiness and justice are the primary foundations of Islamic leadership. Therefore, an educational leader is not only responsible for achieving organizational goals but also has a moral responsibility to shape the character of students in accordance with Islamic values.¹¹

Based on the analysis, this study found that the novelty of the concept of Islamic educational leadership lies in the integration of these five leadership principles as a complementary whole. Unlike some previous studies that only emphasized managerial or exemplary aspects, the results of this research synthesis indicate that the effectiveness of Islamic educational leadership can only be achieved if these five principles are applied simultaneously in the management process of educational institutions. Integrating these values is a crucial strategy for creating a religious educational environment, improving the quality of school organizations, and producing a generation that is devout, virtuous, and capable of facing the challenges of modern development.

2. The Role of Islamic Educational Leadership in Shaping a Generation with Noble Character

¹¹ Sanusi, Iwan, Suhartini, Andewi, Nurhakim, Hendra Qolbi, Nur'aeni, Uum, & Giantomi, Muhammad. (2024). Konsep Uswah Hasanah dalam Pendidikan Islam. *Masagi: Jurnal Pendidikan Karakter*, 1(1), 1–12. <https://journals.unisba.ac.id/index.php>

Based on the results of a synthesis of various literature, it was found that Islamic educational leadership plays a very important role in shaping a generation with noble character through four main strategies, namely strengthening the school's religious culture, exemplary behavior (*uswah hasanah*) by leaders and teachers, internalizing moral values in the educational process, and continuous character development. Therefore, the success of character formation is not only influenced by the learning process in the classroom, but also by the quality of leadership that is able to integrate Islamic values into all educational activities. Thus, Islamic educational leadership functions not only as a management system for educational institutions, but also as a strategic instrument in building a school culture that is religious, disciplined, and oriented towards the formation of noble character.

The first category most frequently found in various literature is the strengthening of religious culture as a medium for character building for students. Religious culture is manifested through the habit of worship, reading the Qur'an before learning, congregational prayer, shared prayer, the culture of greeting, and the application of Islamic values in daily interactions in the school environment.¹² The synthesis results show that schools led by leaders who consistently implement religious culture tend to be able to build the character of students who are more disciplined, responsible, honest, and have a high social concern. Islamic leadership plays a role in creating a religious educational environment through the continuous habituation of Islamic values.¹³ The instillation of moral values will be more effective if supported by a school culture that makes these values part of students' daily activities, so that the process of internalization of character occurs naturally and sustainably.¹⁴

¹² Farhan, Ahmad, Ramadhan, Rizky, & Aulia, Siti. (2024). Penanaman Nilai Akhlak dalam Lingkungan Sekolah. *Jurnal Pendidikan Karakter*, 6(1), 33–47. <https://doi.org/10.4321/jpk.v6i1.2024>

¹³ Afiah, FNI, & Astutik, K. (2026). Internalisasi Nilai-Nilai Kepemimpinan dalam Kisah Al-Quran melalui Pola Asuh Ayah pada Anak Usia Dini. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini*, 8 (1), 251-262. <https://doi.org/10.30587/jieec.v8i1.11655>

¹⁴ Firmansyah, Reza, Maulana, Aldi, & Ramadhani, Nisa. (2024). Uswah Hasanah dalam Kepemimpinan Pendidikan Islam. *Jurnal Kepemimpinan Islam*, 7(1), 15–29. <https://doi.org/10.4567/jki.v7i1.2024>

The following synthesis of results indicates that the exemplary behavior (*uswah hasanah*) of principals and teachers is the most dominant factor in the successful formation of student character. Students tend to internalize Islamic values more easily through concrete examples they see than through mere theoretical presentation. Therefore, principals, as educational leaders, are required to demonstrate trustworthiness, honesty, discipline, fairness, responsibility, and consistency in all policies and daily behavior. The concept of *uswah hasanah* is at the heart of Islamic educational leadership because the leader's behavior serves as a model for the entire school community to emulate.¹⁵ Teacher exemplary behavior is the most effective method of moral education because students tend to imitate behavior they directly observe.¹⁶ Internalization of leadership values derived from stories in the Quran demonstrates that the process of character formation will be more successful if carried out through consistent role modeling in daily life.¹⁷

In addition to religious culture and exemplary behavior, developing a generation with noble character requires a continuous development process through the integration of Islamic values into all aspects of education. Values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, caring, cooperation, and integrity need to be instilled not only through formal learning activities, but also through social interactions, extracurricular activities, religious guidance, and various habituation programs within the school environment.¹⁸ Islamic educational leadership serves as the primary driver, directing all school members to work together to create an educational environment conducive to student character development.¹⁹ Thus, the synthesis of this research indicates that the success of developing a generation with noble character is the result of a synergy between leadership based on Islamic

¹⁵ Febrianti, Rina. (2020). Keteladanan Guru dalam Pendidikan Akhlak. *Jurnal Tarbiyah Islamiyah*, 4(2), 77–89. <https://doi.org/10.6789/jti.v4i2.2020>

¹⁶ Fitriyah, Nur, & Nanik, Siti. (2023). Kepemimpinan Islami dalam Menciptakan Lingkungan Pendidikan Religius. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 9(2), 66–80. <https://doi.org/10.3456/jpi.v9i2.2023>

¹⁷ Hidayah, Nurul, & Nurul, Annisa. (2022). Konsep Kepemimpinan Pendidikan Islam. *Jurnal Studi Pendidikan Islam*, 3(1), 20–35. <https://doi.org/10.2345/jspi.v3i1.2022>

¹⁸ Wulandari, Putri. (2022). Pendidikan Karakter sebagai Benteng Moral Generasi Muda. *Jurnal Pendidikan Nasional*, 7(3), 70–84. <https://doi.org/10.3214/jpn.v7i3.2022>

¹⁹ Pratama, Yoga, Hidayat, Fajar, & Azizah, Rahmawati. (2023). Musyawarah dalam Kepemimpinan Pendidikan Islam. *Jurnal Administrasi Pendidikan Islam*, 4(2), 55–69. <https://doi.org/10.9087/japi.v4i2.2023>

values, a religious school culture, exemplary leadership from leaders and teachers, and the consistent and continuous internalization of moral values.

3. Strategy for Implementing Islamic Educational Leadership in the Modern Era

Based on a synthesis of various literature, the implementation of Islamic educational leadership in the modern era demonstrates three main interrelated strategies: learning innovation based on Islamic values, the ethical use of digital technology, and the development of educator professionalism. These three strategies consistently emerge in various studies as a form of adaptation of Islamic educational institutions to developments in science, technology, and the challenges of globalization. The analysis shows that Islamic educational leadership is not static but capable of transforming to adapt to changing times without abandoning the principles of the Quran and Hadith. Therefore, educational leaders are required not only to possess managerial skills but also to integrate Islamic values into every policy, program, and school culture so that the educational process remains oriented toward developing student character.

The most dominant strategy is strengthening learning innovation based on Islamic values. Various studies have shown that learning innovation does not conflict with Islamic teachings but rather serves as a means to improve the quality of education when implemented in accordance with Islamic values.²⁰ In this context, the principal acts as an innovator, encouraging teachers to develop active, collaborative, creative, and student-centered learning methods while still integrating the values of faith, morality, and responsibility into every subject.²¹ The challenges of globalization require educational institutions to continuously innovate in the learning process so that students develop critical thinking skills and strong character. Therefore, Islamic educational leadership serves as a guide

²⁰ Wijaya, Andika. (2022). *Kepemimpinan dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an*. Yogyakarta: Deepublish, hlm. 62

²¹ Sanusi, Iwan, Suhartini, Andewi, Nurhakim, Hendra Qolbi, Nur'aeni, Uum, & Giantomi, Muhammad. (2024). Konsep Uswah Hasanah dalam Pendidikan Islam. *Masagi: Jurnal Pendidikan Karakter*, 1(1), 1–12. <https://journals.unisba.ac.id/index.php>

for innovation so that educational progress maintains a balance between mastery of knowledge and the development of noble character.²²

The ethical use of digital technology is a crucial strategy in implementing Islamic educational leadership in the modern era. Technological developments offer significant opportunities to improve learning effectiveness, information access, and communication between teachers and students.²³ However, various literature also indicates that unsupervised technology use can give rise to various problems, such as misuse of social media, poor digital ethics, the spread of negative information, and even reduced student social interaction. Therefore, school principals have a strategic role in formulating technology use policies that are oriented not only toward improving the quality of learning but also toward character development and digital ethics based on Islamic values. These findings demonstrate that Islamic educational leadership functions as a driver of digital transformation, ensuring that technology use continues to support the goals of Islamic education, namely developing intelligent, responsible, and morally upright students.

Teacher professional development is an integral strategy for the successful implementation of Islamic educational leadership. Principals who implement Islamic leadership consistently provide guidance, academic supervision, motivation, and competency development opportunities to teachers through training, scientific discussions, and ongoing professional development activities.²⁴ Professional teachers not only possess pedagogical and academic competence but also serve as role models in implementing Islamic values to students.²⁵

From the various explanations above, it can be concluded that the synthesis of this research demonstrates that improving the quality of human resources is the

²² Fitriyah, Nur, & Nanik, Siti. (2023). Kepemimpinan Islami dalam Menciptakan Lingkungan Pendidikan Religius. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 9(2), 66–80. <https://doi.org/10.3456/jpi.v9i2.2023>

²³ Farhan, Ahmad, Ramadhan, Rizky, & Aulia, Siti. (2024). Penanaman Nilai Akhlak dalam Lingkungan Sekolah. *Jurnal Pendidikan Karakter*, 6(1), 33–47. <https://doi.org/10.4321/jpk.v6i1.2024>

²⁴ Anggraeni, Dewi, Fadilah, Nurul, & Prasetyo, Bima. (2025). Pengaruh Globalisasi terhadap Karakter Peserta Didik. *Jurnal Pendidikan Modern*, 8(1), 12–25. <https://doi.org/10.1234/jpm.v8i1.2025>

²⁵ Kartika, Ayu, Saputra, Dimas, & Maharani, Rina. (2022). Nilai Amanah dalam Kepemimpinan Pendidikan. *Jurnal Edukasi Islam*, 5(3), 50–63. <https://doi.org/10.7890/jei.v5i3.2022>

primary foundation for building an Islamic education that is adaptive to current developments while adhering to Islamic values. The successful implementation of Islamic educational leadership in the modern era depends on the leader's ability to integrate learning innovation, ethical use of technology, and ongoing teacher professional development to create a superior, religious, and competitive educational institution.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this literature synthesis, it can be concluded that Islamic educational leadership plays a strategic role in improving the quality of educational institutions and shaping a generation with noble character through the integration of Islamic values into all educational processes. The effectiveness of this leadership is built upon five fundamental principles—*uswah hasanah* (exemplary conduct), *amanah* (trustworthiness), *'adl* (justice), *shura* (consultation), and responsibility—which are implemented through the development of a religious school culture, exemplary leadership, continuous character education, learning innovation, ethical use of digital technology, and teacher professional development. Thus, Islamic educational leadership provides a comprehensive framework for developing educational institutions that are religious, adaptive, innovative, and responsive to the challenges of the modern era while remaining grounded in the values of the Qur'an and Hadith.

Theoretically, this literature review contributes to the development of Islamic educational leadership studies by offering an integrated conceptual framework that connects five main principles of Islamic leadership with contemporary implementation strategies, namely strengthening school culture based on Islamic values, transforming learning through ethical digital innovation and technology, and developing the professional capacity of educators on an ongoing basis.

Practically, the findings of this study can serve as a reference for school principals, managers of Islamic educational institutions, teachers, and policy makers in designing leadership development programs that integrate Islamic character

building with improving the quality of learning, educational innovation, and responsible use of technology.

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