

Research Article

# Understanding Leadership Concepts in Enhancing the Quality of Islamic Education

Muhammad Rijal Achsanudin

<sup>1</sup> Master of Islamic Religious Education, University of Muhammadiyah Malang, Indonesia

\* Corresponding Author: [rijalmuhammad1411@webmail.um.ac.id](mailto:rijalmuhammad1411@webmail.um.ac.id)

**Abstract:** Islamic Education Management is a process of utilizing every facility owned by Islamic educational institutions, so that the quality of Islamic educational institutions needs to be continuously improved in accordance with the development of the times. This study aims to describe and analyze factors related to leadership management and improving the quality of Islamic education. The research method used is a literature study, namely conducting a review process on books, existing theories to be connected with the topic of leadership and quality of education, especially Islamic Education. The results of this study indicate that leadership and improving the quality of Islamic education as mandated by the national education goals require management that requires full support from various parties ranging from the government, school students, parents and the community. An improvement in the quality of education requires strengthening in several components, namely effective leadership, customer satisfaction, organizational culture, performance of educators and education personnel, curriculum and quality of graduates.

**Keywords:** Education; Islam; Leadership; Management; Quality.

## 1. Background

The main factor in the progress or decline of the Educational Institution depends on the human resources within it (Masykur & Sunarto, 2025). These human resources are influenced by the leadership held by a principal supported by the capacity possessed by the Educational Institution. Meanwhile, in the field of education, leaders must be able to influence as role models for the community they lead, in addition to mastering leadership strategies in various normal conditions or in various practical situations in the field (Fazillah, 2023). Leadership is defined as the ability of a person who gets respect, recognition, trust, obedience, and loyalty to lead his group in life together towards ideals (Masykur & Sunarto, 2025).

Leadership in Islam is based on the principles found in the Qur'an and Hadith. These teachings form solid values for a leader. By adhering to the rules of the Qur'an and Hadith, a leader makes Islamic law the foundation of their leadership (Pratiwi, 2025). Effective leadership can lead an organization to success and ensure its long-term survival. Effective leaders are able to direct, inspire, and guide their members to achieve organizational goals.

The importance of leadership in education includes guiding a group to achieve its shared goals. Good leadership is the ability to manage educational resources to achieve these goals. As a leader in the organization of Islamic education and human resources, one should be able to create a positive organizational climate so that all components of the Islamic educational institution can play their part collectively to achieve the goals and objectives of the institution (Syam, 2017). Therefore, a leader must possess both innate and acquired abilities through education and experience as a foundation for leadership.

A quality educational institution can be established if supported by a leader who is aware of management principles, as leadership and quality management are two aspects that influence the quality of an educational institution. Islamic educational leaders who have the ability to influence all elements within their institution will more easily direct them toward the desired goals (Syam, 2017).

Received: November 23, 2025

Revised: December 27, 2025

Accepted: January 10, 2026

Published: January 12, 2026

Curr. Ver.: January 12, 2026



Copyright: © 2025 by the authors.

Submitted for possible open

access publication under the

terms and conditions of the

Creative Commons Attribution

(CC BY SA) license

(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>)

The quality of education, including Islamic education, can be viewed in two ways: the educational process and educational outcomes. A quality educational process occurs when all components of the educational system are involved, while educational outcomes refer to the achievements of a school over a specific period of time (Noor & Islamiya, 2023).

Given these functions and responsibilities, madrasah principals are required to possess strong management and leadership skills to make decisions and take initiatives to improve school quality (Hamid, 2023). Success in implementing Islamic education is something that a leader must pay attention to and strive to achieve, because the success or failure of Islamic education in Islamic educational institutions is greatly influenced by the extent to which a leader's leadership skills in organizing and developing the educational institution.

## 2. Theoretical Study

Etymologically, it comes from the word "pimpin", with the prefix "me" becoming "pimpin", which means to lead, show the way and guide. Starting from the word leader, the word leadership also developed, in the form of adding the prefix "ke" and the suffix "an" to the word leader. The word leadership refers to all matters of leading, including the activities (Fazillah, 2023).

Leadership is the process of influencing or setting an example for followers in an effort to achieve group or organizational goals. The natural way to learn leadership is through practical work experiences, such as internships with lecturers, practitioners, and others. In this context, the leader is expected to provide a teaching or instructional role (Sahardjo, 2021).

It can be interpreted that leadership is a person's ability to move, direct, and influence the mindset and working methods of each member to be independent in working, especially in decision-making for the sake of accelerating the achievement of predetermined goals (Sanusi & Astuti, 2018).

Furthermore, leadership is a process of influencing others to carry out their work in accordance with the objectives, not just following the wishes of superiors but in accordance with the process with a full sense of responsibility both to people as the driving force of the organization or institution and to Allah SWT in the hereafter (Syahril, 2019).

Leadership theory aims to explain how a leader's behavior can influence the performance, motivation, and work achievement of subordinates in different situations, depending on their circumstances. The ability to control resources and other factors to achieve organizational goals is a collaborative effort between the leader and all members involved (Abijaya et al., 2021).

Based on several definitions and theories of leadership explained, the basic principle of a leader is that each individual is capable of motivating, influencing, mobilizing, and directing others toward achieving mutually agreed-upon goals. Likewise, a person's leadership style and methods significantly influence the quality and work ethic of each individual within the educational environment. Therefore, a leader is required to continually innovate and update their leadership management practices.

## 3. Research Method

This study employed a qualitative approach with a library research method. The researcher collected, read, reviewed, and analyzed a number of literature relevant to the topic of Islamic educational leadership in Indonesia. The purpose of this library research was not only to obtain information on similar research and deepen the theoretical study, but also to utilize other library sources to obtain research data.

## 4. Results and Discussion

### Characteristics of a Leader

Leadership in Islam is based on the principles contained in the Koran and Hadith. These teachings form solid values for a leader. By adhering to the rules in the Al-Qur'an and Hadith, a leader makes Islamic law the basis of his leadership (Pratiwi, 2025).

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is known as a role model in all aspects of life, including leadership. Everything related to him holds noble values. Islam depicts the Prophet Muhammad as the ultimate role model and the best leader, and no one doubts his leadership (Jaelani & Suharyat, 2022).

Many concepts and characteristics of ideal leadership are explained and described in the Quran and Hadith, at least the characteristics that a leader must have include:

### 1) Prophetic Leadership

The characteristics of prophetic leadership emphasize prophetic qualities in their leadership. In this context, at least four basic prophetic qualities serve as the foundation for leadership. The characteristics that Islamic educational leaders must possess refer to the leadership characteristics of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him): shiddiq (righteousness), amanah (trustworthiness), fathonah (faithfulness), and tabligh (preaching) (Masykur & Sunarto, 2025).

Shidiq (honesty) is a value that refers to the correctness of thinking, behaving and acting. The Shidiq characteristics of a leader here are being able to say the truth and what is true, being sincere and fair, respecting other people's opinions and honesty, and not feeling the most right.

Trustworthiness is a characteristic of a leader who is responsible for the tasks and trust entrusted to them. The trustworthiness of an Islamic educational leader will have a significant impact on the success of an educational institution's goals. Conversely, if a leader is reluctant to deliver what should be delivered, it will gradually impact the educational institution they lead.

The tabligh (communicative) trait means that an Islamic educational leader must be able to establish good communication with everyone, or what can be called preaching to convey good messages. The tabligh trait applied in Islamic educational leadership will prevent divisions within the educational institution, as a leader is able to provide evaluation and motivation, enabling subordinates to work effectively without any divisions.

The characteristic of fathonah (intelligent), which is a leader who can provide guidance, advice, guidance, opinions, and perspectives to his subordinates, enabling them to solve problems with the best solutions. The characteristic of fathonah in Islamic educational leadership will directly ensure that the Islamic educational institution he leads operates according to its agreed-upon principles. An intelligent leader naturally understands the institution he leads, enabling him to address any problems that arise appropriately.

### 2) Strong Leadership Spirit

Leadership is a person's character, mental attitude, and innate or honed ability to influence, direct, and motivate other individuals or groups to work willingly and enthusiastically toward achieving common goals. Certainly, the statement that leaders must possess a strong leadership spirit is fundamental and true. Leadership is at the core of a leader's role: the ability to inspire, guide, and motivate others toward a common goal.

Leadership is the driving force behind all the resources and tools available to an organization. Education itself is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to possess spiritual and religious strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the skills needed by themselves, society, the nation, and the state (Abnisa, 2016).

### 3) Professional

Leadership is a mandate that must be carried out with full responsibility. A good leader is one who possesses the necessary competencies and always prioritizes the interests of those they lead. Their authority should be used to serve, not to dominate (Pratiwi, 2025).

Professionalism in leadership is a high standard of behavior and practice that reflects a leader's integrity, competence, and responsibility. It's not just about the position held, but about how one carries out that role every day. In short, professionalism in leadership is the foundation that transforms potential into sustainable and ethical performance.

### 4) Able to Carry Out Tasks

A leader must act as a shield or protector for his people, safeguarding their security and well-being. Leadership should not be used as a tool of aggression or oppression, but as a protector who provides a sense of security, justice, and support. An ideal leader protects his people from threats, both internal and external, and fosters a just and prosperous environment (Pratiwi, 2025).

Executing leadership effectively involves more than simply giving orders. It's a combination of managerial skills and personal qualities to guide a team or organization

toward its goals. Leadership skills are a journey of continuous development, not a static list of abilities. The best leaders are constantly learning and adapting.

#### 5) Prioritizing Discussion and Deliberation

Prioritizing deliberation in leadership is a crucial practice with numerous benefits. This means a leader doesn't make decisions unilaterally, but rather involves team or community members in deliberation, exchange ideas, and reach a mutual agreement.

In the context of leadership, deliberation is often interpreted as a form of democracy, involving public participation in the election of leaders. Although the Prophet Muhammad did not explicitly explain the mechanism for appointing leaders, the concept of deliberation is extensively explained in the Qur'an and Hadith (Pratiwi, 2025).

### Leadership Style

A person's leadership in Islamic education includes behavior, forms of leadership attitudes, how to influence subordinates, the work enthusiasm of subordinates, the relationship between leaders and subordinates, and the quality of the performance results of the subordinates they lead.

Leadership style is more visible from the patterns or policies implemented by leaders in running their leadership. Various forms of leadership styles are implemented in carrying out all educational policies which include providing guidance for all educational personnel, implementing educational programs, and various forms of realization of the program itself (Masykur & Sunarto, 2025).

Based on the concepts, characteristics and ways in which leaders carry out and develop educational activities in the work environment they lead, educational leadership can be classified into several leadership styles as follows:

#### 1) Autocratic

The autocratic style is known for its harshness in directing subordinates in carrying out their work. This principle ultimately leads authoritarian leaders to believe that every idea they generate is the most appropriate, making it absolutely essential to implement it to achieve organizational goals. An autocratic leadership style is characterized by a dominant leader in all actions and decisions made. The leader's power is absolute, leaving almost no room for subordinates to provide input. This leadership style is common in military organizations, where the leader's power is absolute and there is a clear separation between superiors and subordinates (Masykur & Sunarto, 2025).

#### 2) Democratic and participatory

Participatory leadership, also known as democratic leadership, emphasizes the leader's efforts to involve followers in decision-making. Democratic leaders interpret leadership not as dictatorial, but as a leader among their group members (Masykur & Sunarto, 2025).

Their relationship with their members is not that of a boss over their workers, but rather that of an older sibling over their brothers and sisters. Democratic leaders always strive to stimulate their members to work productively to achieve common goals. Their training and efforts are always based on the interests and needs of the group, while considering their capabilities and abilities (Mardia & Mukhtar S, 2022).

A participative leader will be liked and respected, not feared. Their behavior will encourage high levels of innovation and creativity in their followers. Participative leaders will give their followers the freedom to be creative and reward those who participate.

#### 3) Laissez faire

The laissez-faire leadership style is the opposite of autocratic leadership. While autocratic leaders consistently dominate the organization, laissez-faire leaders give full authority to members or subordinates. Subordinates can develop their own suggestions, solve their own problems, and receive little or no direction (Mardia & Mukhtar S, 2022). Laissez-faire leadership positions itself as a facilitator. This is based on the assumption that organizational members are knowledgeable and mature enough to comply with all established rules of achievement. Individuals with this leadership style tend to be passive and allow the organization to progress at its own pace without significantly interfering in the organization's direction and development (Masykur & Sunarto, 2025).

#### 4) Transformative

The transformational leadership style is characterized by transparency and cooperation. The characteristics of the transformational leadership style are: a) the most

important similarity, namely that the organization's operations are not driven by bureaucracy, but by shared awareness, b) actors prioritize the interests of the organization over personal interests, and c) there is active participation from followers or those they lead (Nengsih et al., 2020). The transformational leadership style is the ability of a leader to work with and/or through others to optimally transform organizational resources in order to achieve goals according to predetermined achievement targets. The resources in question are human resources, infrastructure, funding, and external factors (Masykur & Sunarto, 2025).

### Quality of Education

The quality of education should produce graduates who are skilled, competent, and honest, and most importantly, possess good morals. Improving the quality of education includes developing and improving the curriculum and evaluation system, improving educational facilities, developing and providing teaching materials, and providing training for teachers and other educational personnel (Hamid, 2023).

Functionally, the goal of education is essentially to prepare humans for the future so that they can live more successfully as individuals or as groups such as society, countries or between countries, but the results of Indonesian education have not yet fully resulted in people being able to enjoy decent and quality education (Nurhuda, 2022).

Educational management, or educational administration, is an activity or series of activities involving methods for organizing a group of people within an educational organization to achieve predetermined educational goals effectively and efficiently. Islamic educational management is the process of utilizing all available resources, both by Muslims and Islamic educational institutions. This utilization is achieved through effective, efficient, and productive collaboration with others to achieve prosperity and happiness in this world and the hereafter (Noor & Islamiya, 2023).

Several components of factors that improve the quality of education can be reflected through the following analysis:

#### 1) Leadership

Leadership plays a crucial role in improving the quality of an educational institution, including Islamic education. Leaders mobilize all the resources and tools an institution possesses. An institution is considered successful in achieving quality when its leaders possess the ability to foster a positive climate of cooperation and mobilize resources to operate effectively and efficiently (Ushansyah, 2016).

#### 2) Customer satisfaction

Educational institutions are said to have good quality, one of which is success in providing services according to customer expectations, such as students being satisfied with school services, parents being satisfied with services for their children, users or recipients of graduates being satisfied because they receive graduates with high quality and according to expectations, and teachers and employees being satisfied with school services (Noor & Islamiya, 2023).

#### 3) Organizational culture

Organizational culture is an invisible social force that can motivate people within an organization to carry out work activities. Unconsciously, each person within an organization learns the prevailing culture within their organization. This involves learning what is prohibited and what is required, what is good and what is bad, what is right and what is wrong, what is permissible and what is not. Organizational culture socializes and internalizes values among its members. Organizational culture is central to all aspects of organizational life, especially in relation to building a culture of quality within it (Noor & Islamiya, 2023).

#### 4) Curriculum

The curriculum is a crucial component in the delivery of education, ensuring the achievement of quality educational goals. The curriculum is a plan and arrangement of objectives, content, learning materials, and methods used, serving as a guideline for teaching and learning activities to achieve educational goals. In line with changing times, the curriculum has also evolved to meet educational demands. Furthermore, these changes are an effort to improve the quality of education and create a generation of qualified human resources who can compete with other countries (Martin & Simanjorang, 2022).

#### 5) Performance of Educators and Education Personnel

Educators and educational staff are human resources available in schools and represent a significant input that significantly influences the learning process and student academic achievement. Empowering educators and educational staff is an effort to provide them with opportunities to utilize and develop their scientific, professional, and experiential potential to achieve high-quality performance (Hulmiati, 2021).

The quality of educators can be reflected, among other things, in their success in the teaching and learning process. This is a key benchmark because educators' teaching abilities are closely linked to the effectiveness of teaching and learning activities in educational institutions. This implementation, among other things, is reflected in the ability to formulate teaching objectives in lesson plans.

#### 6) Graduate Quality

Quality national education can be seen, among other things, from its quality output, namely, from qualified graduates recognized at the national, regional, and international levels. In this context, national education with quality graduates is a necessity because without producing quality graduates, educational programs are not seen as investments in human resources that can increase national competitiveness, but rather as wasteful in terms of costs, effort, and time (Noor & Islamiya, 2023).

Management of improving the quality of education in schools is a method of improving quality that is based on the school's education itself, applying a set of techniques, based on the availability of quantitative and qualitative data, and empowering all school components to continuously increase the capacity and capabilities of the school organization to meet the needs of students and the community (Noor & Islamiya, 2023).

The quality of a graduate's education will be influenced by the extent to which an institution is able to optimally manage all potential, starting from educational staff, students, educational facilities, learning processes, finances, and including its relationship with the community. Achieving and improving the quality of education is a hope, desire, demand, and perspective that not everyone can fulfill. In this case, a professional madrasah principal is needed. A madrasah principal who is able to serve and satisfy all parties, including students, parents, the community, and the government.

## 5. Conclusion and Suggestions

Leadership demonstrates that leadership skills, strategic planning, and creative idea formulation are crucial for improving educational quality. Furthermore, customer satisfaction is a key factor in quality, as high levels of customer satisfaction demonstrate optimal service delivery to meet the needs of students, parents, and the community. Organizational culture is a key factor in quality improvement, as the climate and values implemented reflect organizational performance. Implementing positive values will lead to improved institutional development. Improving the quality of Islamic education, as mandated by the national education goals, requires management that requires full support from various stakeholders, including the government, students, parents, and the community. Improving educational quality requires strengthening several components: effective leadership, customer satisfaction, organizational culture, the performance of educators and education personnel, the curriculum, and the quality of graduates. Furthermore, the performance of educators and education personnel is crucial for quality improvement, as human resources are the executors of the delivery of an educational institution's quality plan.

## References

- Abijaya, S., Wildanu, E., & Jamaludin, A. (2021). The role of leadership in organizations. *Journal of Social and Humanities Incentives*, 4(1), 17–26. <https://doi.org/10.36787/jsi.v4i1.442>
- Abnisa, A. P. (2016). Leadership in education. *Asy-Syukriyyah Journal*, 17(1), 32–53. <https://doi.org/10.36769/asy.v17i1.61>
- Fazillah, N. (2023). The concept of leadership in an Islamic perspective. *Intellectuality*, 12(1). <https://doi.org/10.22373/ii.v12i1.19261>
- Hamid, A. (2023). Madrasah principal leadership in efforts to improve the quality of Islamic education. *Aktualita: Journal of Social and Religious Research*, 13(2). <https://doi.org/10.54459/aktualita.v13iII.610>
- Hulmiati, M. A. I., & H. (2021). Principal's strategy in empowering teachers and education personnel at SMAN 1 Narmada. *Jurnal Cahaya Mandalika*, 2(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.36312/jcm.v2i1.318>
- Jaelani, J., & Suharyat, Y. (2022). Leadership in the Qur'an and Hadith. *Religion: Journal of Religion, Social, and Culture*, 1(6), 85–96. <https://doi.org/10.55606/religion.v1i6.28>
- Mardia, M., & Mukhtar S., M. (2022). Analysis of typology and leadership style in Islamic educational institutions. *Educational Leadership: Journal of Educational Management*, 1(2), 208–225. <https://doi.org/10.24252/edu.v1i2.26601>

- Martin, R., & Simanjorang, M. (2022). The importance of an appropriate curriculum in education in Indonesia. *MAHESA Research Center*.
- Masykur, A. D. A., & Sunarto, S. (2025). Leadership in the context of Islamic education. *Character: Journal of Islamic Education Research*, 2(2), 269–280.
- Nengsih, S., Gusfira, R., & Pratama, R. (2020). Transformative leadership in Islamic educational institutions. *Produ: Prokurasi Edukasi Journal of Islamic Education Management*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.15548/p-prokurasi.v2i1.2247>
- Noor, T. R., & Islamiya, I. (2023). Analysis of management factors for improving the quality of Islamic educational institutions. *EDUSLANA: Journal of Islamic Management and Education*, 10(2), 124–138. <https://doi.org/10.47077/edusiana.v10i2.437>
- Nurhuda, H. (2022). National education problems: Factors and proposed solutions. *Dirasab: Journal of Islamic Thought and Basic Education*, 5(2), 127–137. <https://doi.org/10.51476/dirasab.v5i2.406>
- Pratiwi, F. R. (2025). The concept of Islamic leadership: A comparative study of the Qur'an and Hadith. *Karakter: Journal of Islamic Education Research*, 2(2), 294–306.
- Sahardjo, H. P. (2021). Developing a servant's leadership and a leader's ministry. *TE DEUM: Journal of Theology and Ministry Development*, 7(1), 35–62. <https://doi.org/10.51828/td.v7i1.101>
- Sanusi, H. P., & Astuti, A. (2018). Madrasah principal leadership model. *Isema: Journal of Islamic Educational Management*, 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.15575/isema.v3i1.3288>
- Syahril, S. (2019). Leadership theories. *Ri'ayah: Social and Religious Journal*, 4(2), 208. <https://doi.org/10.32332/riayah.v4i02.1883>
- Syam, A. R. (2017). The concept of quality leadership in Islamic education. *At-Ta'dib*, 12(2), 49. <https://doi.org/10.21111/at-tadib.v12i2.1214>
- Ushansyah, U. (2016). Leadership of Islamic educational institutions. *Ittihad*, 14(26). <https://doi.org/10.18592/ittihad.v14i26.872>