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Integrating Spirituality, Ethics, and Innovation in Islamic Educational Leadership: A Holistic Model from Indonesian Secondary Education

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ABSTRACT

This study advances Islamic educational leadership theory by examining the integration of spirituality, ethics, and innovation as a holistic leadership model in Islamic secondary education. Using an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, the research was conducted at MAN 1 Bandar Lampung. Quantitative data were collected from 120 teachers and staff to measure leadership practices across spiritual, ethical, and innovative dimensions. Regression analysis showed that spirituality and ethics were the strongest predictors of leadership effectiveness, while innovation, although positively perceived, had a relatively weaker influence. To deepen these findings, qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews, complemented by document analysis. Thematic analysis revealed that leadership practices are strongly rooted in spiritual awareness, moral integrity, and participatory decision-making, reflecting fundamental Islamic values. Innovation was mainly evident in instructional practices, such as blended learning and the use of digital platforms, but was less integrated into administrative and organizational leadership. Identified challenges included limited technological infrastructure, uneven digital literacy, and resistance to organizational change. This study proposes a holistic and transferable framework of Islamic educational leadership in which spirituality provides moral orientation, ethics ensures accountability and justice, and innovation supports adaptive responses to contemporary challenges. The findings contribute to leadership theory by highlighting that transformational change in Islamic educational settings is primarily guided by spiritual and ethical accountability rather than managerial efficiency alone, offering valuable insights for leadership development and policy formulation in Islamic education beyond the local context.

Keywords: *Islamic Educational Leadership; Spiritual Leadership; Ethical Leadership; Innovation in Education*

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengembangkan teori kepemimpinan pendidikan Islam dengan mengkaji integrasi spiritualitas, etika, dan inovasi sebagai suatu model kepemimpinan holistik dalam konteks pendidikan menengah Islam. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain *mixed methods* sekuensial eksplanatori dan dilaksanakan di MAN 1 Bandar Lampung. Data kuantitatif dikumpulkan dari 120 guru dan tenaga kependidikan untuk mengukur praktik kepemimpinan pada dimensi spiritual, etis, dan inovatif. Hasil analisis regresi menunjukkan bahwa spiritualitas dan etika merupakan prediktor terkuat terhadap efektivitas kepemimpinan, sementara inovasi, meskipun dipersepsikan secara positif, memiliki pengaruh yang relatif lebih lemah. Untuk memperdalam temuan tersebut, data kualitatif diperoleh melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur yang dilengkapi dengan analisis dokumen. Analisis tematik mengungkapkan bahwa praktik kepemimpinan berakar kuat pada kesadaran spiritual, integritas moral, serta pengambilan keputusan yang partisipatif, yang mencerminkan nilai-nilai dasar Islam. Inovasi terutama tampak dalam praktik pembelajaran, seperti penerapan pembelajaran bauran (*blended learning*) dan pemanfaatan platform digital, namun belum terintegrasi secara optimal dalam kepemimpinan administratif dan organisasi. Tantangan yang teridentifikasi meliputi keterbatasan infrastruktur teknologi, ketimpangan literasi digital, serta resistensi terhadap perubahan organisasi. Penelitian ini mengusulkan kerangka kepemimpinan pendidikan Islam yang holistik dan dapat ditransfer, di mana spiritualitas berfungsi sebagai orientasi moral, etika menjamin akuntabilitas dan keadilan, serta inovasi mendukung kemampuan adaptif dalam menghadapi tantangan kontemporer. Temuan ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan teori kepemimpinan dengan menegaskan bahwa perubahan transformatif dalam konteks pendidikan Islam terutama dipandu oleh akuntabilitas spiritual dan etis, bukan semata-mata oleh efisiensi manajerial, serta memberikan wawasan penting bagi pengembangan kepemimpinan dan perumusan kebijakan pendidikan Islam di luar konteks lokal.

Kata Kunci: *Kepemimpinan Pendidikan Islam, Kepemimpinan Spiritual, Kepemimpinan Etis, Inovasi dalam Pendidikan*

INTRODUCTION

Educational leadership is widely recognized as a critical factor influencing institutional effectiveness, organizational culture, and student outcomes (Lambrecht et al., 2022). Within Islamic education, leadership assumes a broader mandate that extends beyond academic performance to include the cultivation of spiritual awareness, ethical character, and moral responsibility (Kosim et al., 2023). This dual orientation distinguishes Islamic educational leadership from conventional models, as it integrates managerial competence with the principles of *tarbiyah*, *akhlak*, and *ibadah* (Arar et al., 2022). In the context of rapid social change and digital transformation, however, Islamic educational leaders face increasing pressure to balance enduring religious

values with demands for innovation and institutional adaptability (Ahmed, 2024; Zulfikar et al., 2024).

Contemporary leadership literature highlights various models, such as transformational, servant, and distributed leadership, that emphasize change, empowerment, and collaboration. While these frameworks offer valuable managerial insights, leadership in Islamic educational settings is inherently value-laden and normatively grounded in the Qur'an and Sunnah (Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023). Core Islamic leadership principles, such as *uswah ḥasanah* (exemplary conduct), *amānah* (trust), and *shūrā* (consultation), position ethics and spirituality not as supplementary attributes, but as foundational elements of leadership practice (Humphreys & Rigg, 2020).

The leadership of the Prophet Muhammad serves as a paradigmatic reference, demonstrating the integration of moral integrity, compassion, justice, and visionary guidance (Saeed al-Olaqi, 2014). This prophetic model provides enduring ethical principles while remaining responsive to contextual change, making it particularly relevant for contemporary Islamic educational leadership (Mirzal & Ninglasari, 2021). Nevertheless, translating these ideals into institutional leadership practices remains a persistent challenge.

Empirical studies suggest that many Islamic schools and madrasahs demonstrate strength in nurturing spiritual and ethical values, yet often encounter difficulties in embedding innovation within leadership structures and decision-making processes (de Jong et al., 2020). Existing research tends to examine these dimensions in isolation—focusing on spirituality without systematically addressing innovation or discussing ethical leadership without sufficient empirical grounding in organizational practices (Mayhew, 2018; Sahin, 2018). As a result, there is limited conceptual clarity on how spirituality, ethics, and innovation can be coherently integrated into a unified leadership framework.

This gap is particularly significant in the Indonesian context, where Islamic educational institutions, including pesantren, madrasahs, and Islamic secondary schools, play a central role in national education (Mas'ud et al., 2019; Riyadi et al., 2021). Despite strong policy support through the National Education System Law and initiatives by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, leadership challenges persist, especially in aligning ethical-spiritual orientations with adaptive and innovative management practices (Herdiana et al., 2021). MAN 1 Bandar Lampung exemplifies this tension, reflecting both the strengths and constraints of Islamic educational leadership in responding to contemporary demands.

Theoretically, leadership in Islamic education can be understood as a

process of guiding individuals and institutions toward holistic success—intellectual, moral, and spiritual (Hakiem et al., 2023). Practically, this requires leaders to function simultaneously as moral exemplars, ethical decision-makers, and agents of innovation (Zhou et al., 2020). However, few studies have systematically conceptualized leadership as an integrative framework that connects spirituality, ethics, and innovation within a single, operational model, particularly at the level of Islamic secondary education.

Accordingly, this study aims to examine how Islamic educational leaders integrate spirituality, ethics, and innovation in their leadership practices, using MAN 1 Bandar Lampung as a case study. Specifically, the study seeks to: (1) identify the core dimensions of Islamic educational leadership as practiced by school leaders; (2) analyze how these dimensions interact to enhance institutional effectiveness; and (3) formulate a holistic leadership model grounded in prophetic values and responsive to contemporary educational challenges.

The novelty of this study lies not merely in its mixed-methods design but in its conceptual integration of spirituality, ethics, and innovation as a unified leadership framework, its contextual contribution to Islamic secondary education in Indonesia, and its practical output in the form of a usable leadership model for Islamic schools (Alazmi & Bush, 2024).

METHOD

This study employed a mixed-methods approach using an explanatory sequential design, as outlined by Creswell and Poth (2018), to examine leadership models in Islamic education through the integration of spirituality, ethics, and innovation. This design was selected to allow quantitative findings to identify dominant leadership dimensions and their relationships with educational outcomes, followed by qualitative inquiry to explain and contextualize these statistical patterns (Ivankova & Stick, 2007).

The quantitative phase involved a structured survey administered to 120 teachers and staff members at MAN 1 Bandar Lampung. Participants were selected through simple random sampling from a population of 145 teachers and staff, based on an official administrative list. Everyone was assigned a unique identification number, and selection was conducted using a computerized random number generator to ensure equal selection probability and reduce sampling bias.

The questionnaire consisted of standardized measurement scales assessing three leadership dimensions: spiritual leadership, ethical leadership, and

innovative leadership. These variables were selected based on their relevance to Islamic educational leadership and prior empirical validation (Gumusluolu & Ilsev, 2009). Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were used to summarize respondent characteristics and leadership patterns. Inferential analysis employed multiple linear regression to examine the predictive relationships between the independent variables—spiritual leadership (X_1), ethical leadership (X_2), and innovative leadership (X_3)—and teachers' professional commitment (Y). The regression model was specified as:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon$$

Before analysis, assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity were tested. Statistical significance was determined at $p < 0.05$, and all quantitative analyses were conducted using SPSS version 26.

The qualitative phase consisted of semi-structured interviews with the school principal, five senior teachers, and three student representatives to explore lived experiences related to leadership practices in daily school management. Additional data were collected through non-participant observation and document analysis, including school strategic plans and policy guidelines (Yin, 2018).

To enhance credibility, data triangulation was applied by integrating survey results, interview data, and document evidence (Fusch et al., 2018). Quantitative and qualitative data were analyzed separately and then integrated through a joint display matrix, enabling thematic comparison and the development of meta-inferences that linked statistical findings with contextual narratives. This integrative approach provided a comprehensive understanding of leadership models in Islamic education at MAN 1 Bandar Lampung.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the empirical findings derived from both quantitative and qualitative phases of the study. The results are organized sequentially, beginning with survey-based statistical analyses, followed by qualitative insights obtained from interviews, observations, and document analysis.

Quantitative Results

Understanding respondents' demographic characteristics is essential for contextualizing the findings on Islamic educational leadership. Table 1 summarizes the demographic profile of the respondents, including gender, age, educational background, and teaching experience, demonstrating the representativeness of the sample.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 120)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	58	48.3
	Female	62	51.7
Age	21–30 years	24	20.0
	31–40 years	36	30.0
	41–50 years	38	31.7
	51 years and above	22	18.3
Educational Level	Bachelor’s degree (S1)	82	68.3
	Master’s degree (S2)	38	31.7
Teaching Experience	< 5 years	19	15.8
	5–10 years	37	30.8
	11–20 years	41	34.2
	> 20 years	23	19.2

Source: Data processed using SPSS version 26

As shown in Table 1, most respondents held a bachelor’s degree (68.3%), while 31.7% had completed a master’s degree. In terms of teaching experience, more than half of the respondents had over ten years of professional experience, indicating a mature and professionally established teaching workforce at MAN 1 Bandar Lampung.

A total of 120 valid responses were collected, yielding a response rate of 92.3%. Descriptive statistics were calculated to examine general trends in leadership practices and teacher professionalism. Table 2 presents the mean scores and standard deviations for each construct.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Leadership Dimensions

Leadership Dimension	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Spiritual Leadership	4.21	0.56	3.10	5.00
Ethical Leadership	4.05	0.61	2.80	5.00
Innovative Leadership	3.89	0.64	2.50	5.00
Teacher Professionalism	4.12	0.52	3.00	5.00

Source: Data processed using SPSS version 26

The findings indicate that spiritual leadership received the highest mean score (M = 4.21), followed by teacher professionalism (M = 4.12). Ethical leadership also demonstrated a high mean (M = 4.05), while innovative leadership showed a comparatively lower mean (M = 3.89). These results suggest that spiritual and ethical leadership practices are strongly embedded in

the school culture, whereas innovation, although present, is implemented less consistently.

To assess the internal consistency of the measurement instruments, a reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Reliability of Leadership Dimensions and Teacher Professionalism

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Items	Reliability Level
Spiritual Leadership	0.87	8	High
Ethical Leadership	0.84	7	High
Innovative Leadership	0.81	6	Acceptable-High
Teacher Professionalism	0.89	9	High

Source: Data processed using SPSS version 26

All constructs demonstrated satisfactory reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha values ranging from 0.81 to 0.89, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2021). This confirms that the instruments used to measure leadership dimensions and teacher professionalism were internally consistent and suitable for further analysis.

Correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships between leadership dimensions and teacher professionalism. The results are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4. Correlations among Leadership Dimensions and Teacher Professionalism (N = 120)

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Spiritual Leadership	1			
2. Ethical Leadership	0.62***	1		
3. Innovative Leadership	0.54***	0.57***	1	
4. Teacher Professionalism	0.68***	0.59***	0.49***	1

** $p < 0.001$

Source: Data processed using SPSS version 26

The results reveal that all leadership dimensions were positively and significantly correlated with teacher professionalism. Spiritual leadership demonstrated the strongest association ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.001$), followed by ethical leadership ($r = 0.59$, $p < 0.001$), and innovative leadership ($r = 0.49$, $p < 0.001$). Based on Cohen's (1988) criteria, these correlations range from moderate to strong, indicating that leadership quality is closely associated with teachers' professional attitudes and behaviors.

To further examine the predictive influence of leadership dimensions on teacher professionalism, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted. The regression results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Regression Results: Leadership Dimensions on Teacher Professionalism

Predictor Variable	B	t	p-value	Significance
Spiritual Leadership	0.41	4.85	0.000	***
Ethical Leadership	0.29	3.42	0.001	**
Innovative Leadership	0.17	2.05	0.043	*

$R^2 = 0.54$; $F(3,116) = 46.21$; $p < 0.001$

*Significance levels: * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Source: Data processed using SPSS version 26

The regression analysis indicates that all three leadership dimensions significantly predict teacher professionalism. Spiritual leadership emerged as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$), followed by ethical leadership ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.01$), while innovative leadership showed a smaller but still significant effect ($\beta = 0.17$, $p < 0.05$). The model explains 54% of the variance in teacher professionalism, suggesting a substantial combined influence of leadership practices.

Diagnostic tests confirmed that the regression assumptions were met. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values ranged from 1.32 to 1.76, indicating no multicollinearity among predictor variables. Residual analysis further confirmed normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity, supporting the robustness of the regression model.

Overall, these quantitative findings highlight the importance of integrating spiritual, ethical, and innovative leadership practices to strengthen teacher professionalism in Islamic secondary education settings.

Qualitative Results

The qualitative phase was designed to explain and contextualize the quantitative findings by examining how key stakeholders experience leadership practices in everyday school life. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with the principal, senior teachers, and student representatives, supported by observation and document analysis. Thematic analysis produced three dominant themes that correspond directly to the leadership dimensions examined in the quantitative phase.

Table 6. Summarizes the Main Themes, Illustrative Quotations, and Interpretive Insights Drawn from the Qualitative Data

Theme	Illustrative Quote	Interpretive Commentary	Stakeholder
Spiritual Leadership	"The principal always begins meetings with Quranic reflections and reminds us that teaching is part of our <i>ibadah</i> (worship). This makes us feel spiritually connected to our work."	This quote illustrates how spiritual leadership in Islamic education embeds faith-based motivation into everyday practice. The principal's approach reflects the Islamic principles of <i>niyyah</i> (intention) and <i>ta'dib</i> (moral cultivation), fostering a culture where teaching is perceived as an act of devotion rather than mere obligation.	Teacher
Ethical Leadership	"Decision-making is always transparent. For example, financial matters are discussed openly, and teachers are involved in every major decision."	Ethical leadership here reflects the Qur'anic values of <i>amanah</i> (trustworthiness) and <i>shura</i> (consultation). Transparency and inclusivity reinforce moral accountability and strengthen professional trust among educators, which are essential for just governance in Islamic institutions.	Staff
Innovative Leadership	"The school has started integrating digital tools, but not all teachers are comfortable yet. Training is ongoing, but we need more practical support."	This reflects the school's early stage of embracing innovation, showing a transition from traditional pedagogies toward digital competency. The challenge of adaptation underscores the need for <i>ijtihad</i> (continuous effort) and capacity-building within progressive Islamic leadership in a modern context.	Student Representative

Source: Interviews and Observations, 2025

The findings indicate that spiritual leadership is strongly reflected in daily school practices. Participants frequently mentioned religious reflections in meetings, reminders about intention in teaching, and leadership behaviors that emphasize spiritual meaning in professional activities.

Ethical leadership was reported through transparent decision-making processes and participatory involvement of teachers and staff. Respondents highlighted the importance of openness in financial management and collective discussions in institutional decision-making. In contrast, innovative leadership appeared less consistently implemented. While participants acknowledged efforts to introduce digital tools and modern teaching approaches, they also noted uneven levels of readiness among teachers and the need for additional training and practical support.

To further describe conditions affecting leadership practices, Table 7 presents supporting and hindering factors identified from the qualitative data.

Table 7. Supporting and Hindering Factors in Leadership Implementation (Qualitative Data)

Leadership Dimension	Supporting Factors	Hindering Factors
Spiritual Leadership	Integration of Qur'anic values in meetings; leaders as moral exemplars	Limited systematic training on Islamic leadership principles
Ethical Leadership	Transparent financial management; participatory <i>shura</i> -based decision-making	Occasional tension in balancing fairness with efficiency
Innovative Leadership	Introduction of digital tools; openness to curriculum integration	Teachers' limited digital literacy; insufficient technological infrastructure

Source: Interviews and Observations, 2025

Analytically, Table 7 reveals a clear asymmetry between internal, value-based factors and external, structural constraints. Spiritual and ethical leadership are primarily supported by internalized Islamic values, moral exemplarity, and communal commitment, making them relatively resilient to material limitations. In contrast, innovative leadership is disproportionately weakened by external factors such as limited infrastructure, insufficient training, and uneven policy support. This explains why innovation lags spirituality and ethics despite leaders' positive intentions.

To illustrate the relationship between qualitative and quantitative findings, a joint display is presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Joint Display: Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Leadership Dimension	Quantitative Findings (Survey & Regression)	Qualitative Insights (Themes & Quotes)	Integrated Interpretation
Spiritual Leadership	Highest mean (M = 4.21); strongest predictor of professionalism ($\beta=0.41$)	Teachers note Qur'anic reflections and ibadah-orientation in meetings	Spirituality is both statistically and culturally central to leadership.
Ethical Leadership	Significant positive predictor ($\beta = 0.29, p < 0.01$)	Staff confirm transparent governance and inclusive decision-making	Ethics strengthens trust and professionalism in the institution.
Innovative Leadership	Lowest mean (M = 3.89); weaker predictor ($\beta = 0.17, p < 0.05$)	Students highlight digital gaps and the need for training	Innovation is emerging but requires stronger institutional support.

Source: Authors' analysis

The joint display demonstrates strong convergence between statistical patterns and lived experiences. Spiritual leadership, which emerged as the strongest predictor of teacher professionalism in the regression analysis, is also culturally entrenched through faith-based practices and shared religious meaning. Ethical leadership similarly shows alignment between its statistical significance and qualitative evidence of transparent governance and participatory decision-making. Conversely, innovative leadership—while statistically significant—appears qualitatively fragile, constrained by structural and capacity-related challenges.

Overall, the integrated findings illustrate that leadership in Islamic education is inherently multi-layered. Spirituality and ethics form the normative and moral foundation of leadership, while innovation represents the adaptive frontier that requires deliberate institutional investment.

Discussion

The findings confirm that spirituality constitutes the foundational dimension of Islamic educational leadership rather than a peripheral attribute. Quantitative results indicate strong agreement among respondents regarding key spiritual indicators, such as sincerity (*ikhlas*), intention to serve for the sake of Allah, reliance on prayer, and moral exemplarity, with mean scores consistently in the high range, reflecting their perceived influence on leadership effectiveness. These results reinforce Beekun & Badawi's (1999) assertion that spirituality forms the moral and motivational core of Islamic leadership,

guiding leaders through *taqwā* (God-consciousness) and *ihsān* (excellence).

Unlike servant leadership models rooted in humanistic service to others (Laub, 2005). Islamic leadership is inherently theocentric, grounding leadership responsibility in servitude to Allah and divine accountability (Beekun, 2012). This distinction positions spirituality not merely as a personal belief system but as a purpose-driven framework that aligns organizational leadership with transcendent values. Leadership, therefore, is understood not only as managerial responsibility but as an extension of worship (*ibadah*).

Qualitative findings further illustrate how spirituality is institutionalized within daily leadership practices. School leaders described routine practices such as collective supplication and Qur'anic recitation as intentional mechanisms for cultivating shared values and moral discipline across the school community. These practices function as cultural anchors that align institutional norms with spiritual objectives, embedding spirituality into governance, decision-making, and conflict resolution.

The novelty of this study lies in its empirical demonstration of spirituality at the institutional level, rather than merely as an individual leadership trait. While previous studies have often conceptualized spirituality abstractly or personally (Houghton et al., 2016). This study shows how spiritual values are operationalized within organizational culture and leadership structures, positioning spirituality as a collective resource that strengthens institutional coherence and resilience.

Ethical Dimensions and Decision-Making in Islamic Education Leadership

Ethics emerged as a distinct yet complementary pillar of Islamic educational leadership. Quantitative findings reveal high scores on indicators such as integrity, fairness, transparency, and participatory decision-making, indicating that ethical considerations significantly shape leadership behavior. These findings align with the Islamic principle of *'adl* (justice) and the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* framework, which emphasizes moral responsibility in safeguarding both human welfare and institutional integrity (Kasdi, 2019).

While closely connected, ethics and spirituality operate at different analytical levels. Spirituality provides the inner moral consciousness (*taqwā*), whereas ethics represent its outward expression through concrete policies and decisions. In this sense, ethical leadership functions as the practical manifestation of spiritual commitment. This relationship is consistent with Qur'anic guidance emphasizing justice and excellence as inseparable moral imperatives (Qur'an 16: 90).

Qualitative data highlight how ethical leadership is enacted through

transparent financial management, consultative decision-making (*shūrā*), and fairness in academic assessment. These practices demonstrate that ethical governance in Islamic education balances administrative efficiency with moral accountability, reflecting the principles of *amānah* (trustworthiness) and stewardship (*khilāfah*) (Chapra, 2008). Ethical decision-making is thus framed not merely as compliance with institutional rules, but as a form of religious responsibility.

While prior studies have shown that ethical leadership fosters trust and organizational commitment (Brown & Treviño, 2006). This study extends the discourse by situating ethics within a framework of divine accountability. Ethical behavior is understood as an act of worship rather than solely a rational or utilitarian choice. The study's contribution lies in demonstrating how Islamic educational leaders translate ethical values into everyday institutional practices, where integrity and transparency are pursued not only for organizational effectiveness but also to attain moral legitimacy and spiritual accountability.

Innovation and Transformational Approaches in Islamic Educational Leadership

The third dimension highlighted in this study concerns innovation and adaptive leadership within Islamic educational institutions. Quantitative findings suggest that innovation is perceived positively, although its influence is weaker than that of spirituality and ethics. This suggests that, while innovation is recognized as important, its implementation remains constrained by institutional factors such as limited technological infrastructure, uneven digital literacy, and resistance to organizational change. As a result, innovation in Islamic educational settings tends to be context-dependent rather than fully institutionalized.

Qualitative findings provide further insight into how innovation is enacted under these conditions. Participants described selective adoption of e-learning platforms alongside traditional *ḥalāqah* practices, the development of hybrid curricula integrating religious sciences and STEM subjects, and incremental leadership development initiatives. These patterns indicate that innovation is largely evolutionary, reflecting a deliberate effort to balance modernization with institutional stability and the preservation of religious values.

Theoretically, these findings align with transformational leadership theory, which emphasizes vision, adaptability, and organizational change (Bass & Riggio, 2006). However, Islamic educational leadership extends this framework by situating innovation within the normative boundaries of *ijtihad*

and ethical-spiritual accountability. Unlike secular transformational leadership, where change is often driven by performance or competitiveness, innovation in the Islamic context is guided by *maṣlahah* (public good) and constrained by *Shari'ah* principles. Innovation thus functions as a morally regulated process rather than a value-neutral strategy.

Importantly, this study demonstrates that Islamic educational leadership is neither resistant to innovation nor uncritically modernist. Contrary to portrayals of Islamic education as inherently conservative (Tan, 2012), the findings reveal a leadership model that is value-driven yet future-oriented, where innovation supports institutional sustainability and educational mission within a framework of divine accountability.

Policy Implications and Transferability

The findings of this study have important implications for leadership development and institutional governance in Islamic education. Empirical evidence indicates that leadership effectiveness is closely linked to the integration of spiritual orientation, ethical governance, and adaptive innovation. This suggests that leadership frameworks in Islamic education should move beyond technical or administrative competencies and explicitly incorporate moral and spiritual dimensions as core elements of leadership practice.

Accordingly, this study recommends that policymakers and educational authorities institutionalize spiritual and ethical leadership components within leadership training programs. Consistent with prior research on values-based leadership (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Bush, 2018), leadership effectiveness is enhanced when moral frameworks are embedded within professional standards rather than treated as informal or personal attributes. In the Islamic context, this entails aligning leadership development with principles of *amānah*, *'adl*, and spiritual accountability, while encouraging pedagogical and organizational innovation.

In terms of transferability, the integrated leadership model proposed in this study is not limited to MAN 1 Bandar Lampung but may be adapted to other Islamic educational contexts with appropriate contextualization. While spirituality, ethics, and innovation emerge as universally relevant dimensions, their application is shaped by institutional culture, policy environments, and organizational readiness. In more pluralistic settings, spiritual principles may be articulated through broadly shared ethical values such as integrity, stewardship, and social responsibility, while maintaining their Islamic epistemological grounding.

Overall, the findings support a coherent model of Islamic educational leadership in which spirituality provides moral direction, ethics safeguards integrity, and innovation enables adaptive responses to contemporary challenges. These dimensions operate as interdependent processes, offering a leadership paradigm that balances tradition and transformation within a value-driven and context-sensitive framework.

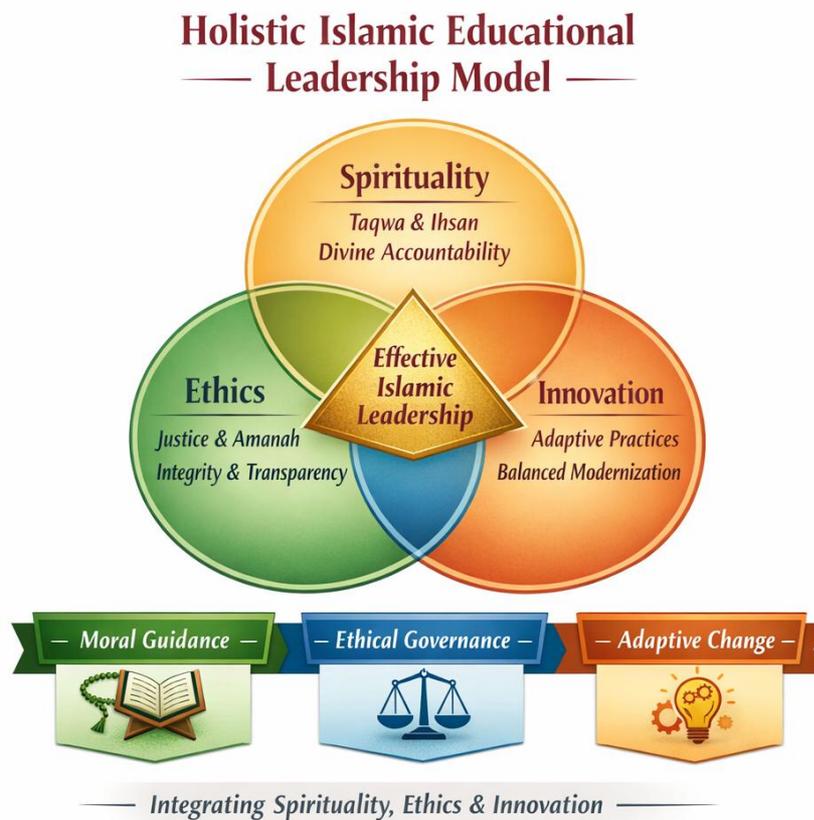


Figure 1. Holistic Model of Islamic Educational Leadership Integrating Spirituality, Ethics, and Innovation

This figure illustrates the integrated leadership model developed in this study. Spirituality forms the moral and motivational foundation of leadership, grounding institutional practices in divine accountability and spiritual consciousness. Ethics operationalizes these values through principles of justice, integrity, transparency, and participatory governance. Innovation functions as an adaptive mechanism that enables educational institutions to engage with change while remaining aligned with Islamic moral and spiritual frameworks. The intersection of these three dimensions represents effective Islamic educational leadership, where tradition and transformation are balanced within a value-driven and context-sensitive leadership paradigm.

CONCLUSION

This study explored Islamic educational leadership through the integration of spirituality, ethics, and innovation using a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design at MAN 1 Bandar Lampung. The quantitative results indicate that all three dimensions contribute significantly to leadership effectiveness, with spirituality and ethics exerting a stronger influence, while innovation—although positively perceived—shows comparatively lower strength due to institutional and structural constraints. These patterns are reinforced by qualitative findings that illustrate how leadership values are enacted in daily practices, decision-making processes, and the development of school culture.

The findings indicate that spirituality serves as the foundational dimension of Islamic educational leadership, shaping leaders' vision, motivation, and sense of divine accountability. Ethical leadership emerges as a closely connected dimension that translates spiritual commitments into concrete practices of fairness, transparency, and participatory governance. Innovation functions as an adaptive dimension that supports responsiveness to contemporary educational challenges, particularly digital transformation and curriculum integration; however, its implementation remains uneven and context-dependent.

The principal contribution of this study lies in demonstrating the institutional-level interdependence of spirituality, ethics, and innovation. Rather than treating these dimensions as isolated leadership attributes, the findings reveal their dynamic interaction within organizational structures and leadership practices. In doing so, this study extends transformational leadership theory by showing that, within Islamic educational contexts, change and innovation are normatively guided by ethical responsibility and spiritual accountability rather than managerial efficiency alone.

Overall, this study contributes to the discourse on values-based leadership by offering an empirically grounded model of Islamic educational leadership that balances moral integrity, spiritual purpose, and adaptive capacity. While context-specific, the model provides a conceptual reference that may inform leadership development and governance in comparable Islamic educational institutions. Future research is encouraged to test this model across different educational levels and regional contexts to further assess its transferability.

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