

THE TRANSFORMATION OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION LEADERSHIP FROM THE TIME OF THE PROPHET TO THE MODERN ERA PERSPECTIVE OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION HISTORY

Muwafiqus Shobri¹, Ansharuddin M²

^{1,2}Institut Agama Islam Hasan Jufri Bawean

dosensukses@gmail.com¹ ansharuddinm@inhafi.ac.id²

Abstract: The transformation of Islamic education leadership is a historical process that takes place along with changes in social, political, institutional, scientific development, and the demands of the times. The leadership of Islamic education during the time of the Prophet (saw) was not only oriented to the delivery of knowledge, but also the formation of morals, community development, example, deliberation, justice, and service to the ummah. In the next development, this pattern underwent institutionalization through mosques, halaqah, kuttah, madrasahs, and various Islamic educational institutions until it entered a modern phase characterized by bureaucratization, professionalization, curriculum modernization, and digitalization. This study aims to analyze the transformation of Islamic education leadership from the time of the Prophet (saw) to the modern era and identify the continuity of values and changes in the form of leadership. The research uses the library research method with a historical-interpretive approach and thematic analysis. Data were obtained from primary sources in the form of the Qur'an, hadiths, historical works and classical literature, as well as secondary sources in the form of academic books and scientific journal articles. The results of the study show that the transformation of Islamic educational leadership is not a simple move from the traditional model to the modern model, but a negotiation process between moral-spiritual authority, scientific authority, social authority, and managerial rationality. The values of trust, justice, exemplary, deliberation, compassion, and welfare orientation remain the foundations, while the structure, decision-making mechanism, professionalism, and use of technology have changed. These findings offer a prophetic-adaptive leadership perspective as a synthesis between the continuity of Islamic values and the demands of modern education governance.

Keywords: Islamic educational leadership; history of Islamic education; prophetic leadership; educational transformation; modern leadership

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is one of the fundamental factors in the sustainability of education because the quality of educational institutions is not only determined by the curriculum, human resources, financing, and facilities, but also by how a leader directs all these resources towards educational goals. In an Islamic perspective, leadership even has a broader dimension than the administrative function. Leaders are positioned as parties who carry the mandate, set an example, maintain justice, direct humans to goodness, and account for their leadership before Allah SWT. Therefore, the leadership of Islamic education cannot be reduced to the ability to manage the organization alone.

The Qur'an provides a normative basis regarding trust and justice in leadership. QS. al-Nisa' [4]: 58 emphasizes the obligation to fulfill the mandate to those who are entitled and establish the law fairly. QS. Ali 'Imran [3]: 159 also displays the principles of gentleness, forgiveness, deliberation, and firmness of decisions as leadership characteristics. Meanwhile, QS. al-Ahzab [33]: 21 places the Prophet (peace be upon him) as *uswah hasanah*. Thus, Islamic leadership from the beginning has a close relationship between the morality of leaders, the educational process, and the development of social life.

The leadership of the Prophet (saw) became an important point in the history of Islamic education. The Prophet not only played the role of a messenger of revelation, but also as *a mu'allim*, *murabbi*, moral guide, community builder, conflict mediator, and community leader. In the Makkah phase, education was more oriented towards the formation of faith, character, and moral resilience of the Muslim community. After migrating to Medina, education developed in a more complex community environment. The Prophet's Mosque became a center of worship as well as learning, social development, and community formation. This educational model shows that educational leadership from the beginning has an integrative character between spiritual, intellectual, social, and political dimensions.

The change in the structure of Muslim society after the death of the Prophet (saw) brought consequences for leadership and educational patterns. During the time of Khulafa al-Rashidin, the principles of deliberation, justice, public responsibility, and the development of scientific institutions continued to develop. In later times, the transmission of knowledge took place through halaqah, mosques, kuttabs, scholars' houses, and various scholarly patronages. Berkey points out that medieval Islamic education took place through personal

relationships between teachers and students and networks of scholars, and was not entirely dependent on formal institutions¹.

Subsequent developments gave birth to madrasah institutions that were increasingly structured. Historical studies show that there was a development from halaqah in mosques to mosque-khan complexes and then madrasas as more organized educational institutions. These developments became an important part of changing the governance of educational authorities in the Islamic world².

In the Indonesian context, the transformation of Islamic education has a different historical path and is connected to the development of the Islamic world more broadly. Islamic boarding schools, suraus, langgars, and madrassas became important institutions in the transmission of Islamic knowledge. The development of madrassas in the early 20th century showed a response to modernization, colonialism, the needs of society, and the emergence of the Islamic reform movement. Studies on the development of madrassas in Indonesia show that educational reform involved figures such as KH Ahmad Dahlan and KH Hasyim Asy'ari as well as Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama organizations³.

In the modern phase, change is increasingly complex. Leaders of Islamic educational institutions are no longer only dealing with the problem of the transmission of religious knowledge, but also accreditation, institutional governance, professionalization of educators, national curriculum, quality management, digital technology, the demands of globalization, and changes in the character of students. Recent studies of Islamic educational leadership show that contemporary Islamic leadership moves on the intersection of spiritual values such as *piety* and *sincerity* with administrative principles such as trust, honesty, compassion, patience, justice, and deliberation⁴.

The existing literature shows that research on Islamic educational leadership has developed in several directions. First, there is a study of prophetic leadership that emphasizes the example of the Prophet (peace be upon him),

¹ Jonathan Porter Berkey, "The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo: A Social History of Islamic Education" (2014).

² Burhan Fındıklı, "Rethinking Ancient Centers of Higher Learning: Madrasa in a Comparative-Historical Perspective," *British Journal of Educational Studies* 70, no. 2 (2022): 129–144.

³ Harits Harifan Alfikri, "Perkembangan Lembaga Pendidikan Madrasah Di Indonesia Pra Kemerdekaan Tahun 1908-1942," *Periode: Jurnal Sejarah dan Pendidikan Sejarah* 6, no. 1 (2024): 76–99.

⁴ Khalid Arar et al., "Islamic Educational Leadership: A Systematic Review of Empirical Evidence and a Conceptual Framework," *Journal of Educational Administration and History* (2026): 1–33.

including the value of *shiddiq*, *amanah*, *tabligh*, and *Fathanah*⁵. Second, there is a study that examines the application of prophetic leadership in Islamic boarding schools and universities⁶. Third, cutting-edge research is beginning to link the values of Islamic leadership with transformational, adaptive, visionary, and managerial leadership⁷.

However, there is still an important research gap. Some studies discuss the leadership of the Prophet normatively, while others focus on contemporary leadership models. As a result, the historical relationship between the change in the form of Islamic educational leadership from the time of the Prophet, the development of classical Islamic educational institutions, the renewal of Islamic education in Indonesia, and the leadership of modern education has not always been understood as a continuous transformation process. Studies on Islamic educational leadership also often place "traditional" and "modern" as two opposite categories, even though the history of Islamic education shows a process of adaptation, negotiation, and hybridization.

Recent research on the leadership of Islamic education systematically also shows that existing studies can be mapped to the spiritual and administrative dimensions. However, the research focuses more on the characteristics and practices of contemporary leadership than on the reconstruction of its historical transformations⁸. Similarly, studies of the change in Islamic boarding schools show that modernization does not necessarily mean the elimination of traditions, but can be an integration between the tradition of Islamic education and the demands of modern institutions⁹.

Based on this gap, this study offers novelty in the form of reading Islamic educational leadership as a historical transformation process that has continuity of values as well as structural changes. This article does not place the Prophet's model as a form that must be copied literally into modern organizations. Instead, this study argues that prophetic leadership values need to be

⁵ Mentari Bela Wahyudienie et al., "Islamic-Based Leadership in Education: A Literature Review of Urgency, Concept, and Implementation," *Jurnal Pendidikan Progresif* 14, no. 3 (2024): 2088–2111.

⁶ Muhammad Iqbal Juliansyahzen, "Prophetic Leadership in Pesantren Education: Study at Pondok Pesantren Universitas Islam Indonesia," *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* (2017).

⁷ Uswatun Hasanah, M Nur Efendi, and Abdul Aziz, "Strategi Pengembangan Kepemimpinan Profetik-Transformasional Di Lembaga Pendidikan Islam: Narrative Review Menuju Model Kepemimpinan Islam Adaptif," *Al Irfan: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Dan Penelitian* 2, no. 1 (2026): 103–119.

⁸ Arar et al., "Islamic Educational Leadership: A Systematic Review of Empirical Evidence and a Conceptual Framework."

⁹ Muhammad Saefullah et al., "The Transforming Traditional Islamic Boarding Schools into Modern Educational Institutions: A Systematic Literature Review," *Indonesian Journal of Educational Management and Leadership* 4, no. 1 (2026): 335–357.

transformed into governance principles that are relevant to the complexity of contemporary education. With this perspective, history is not only used to remember past leadership models, but also as a source of reflection to build adaptive Islamic educational leadership.

This research aims to: (1) analyze the leadership character of Islamic education during the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him); (2) explain its transformation in the development phase of classical Islamic educational institutions; (3) analyze changes in the leadership of Islamic education in the context of modernization and development of Islamic education in Indonesia; (4) identify the continuity and change in leadership values; and (5) formulate conceptual implications for the development of Islamic education leadership models in the modern era.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses library research with a historical-interpretive approach and thematic analysis. Library research was chosen because the object of research is in the form of ideas, practices, institutions, and leadership transformations of Islamic education as recorded in historical sources, academic literature, Islamic documents, and previous research. This research does not conduct interviews, observations, surveys, or field data collection.

The historical approach is used to understand the leadership of Islamic education in the passage of time, while the interpretive approach is used to read the meaning of such changes in different social and institutional contexts. Thematic analysis is used to identify patterns of leadership values and practices that emerge repeatedly in different periods.

Research data sources are classified into two groups, First, primary sources, including the Qur'an, hadiths related to leadership and education, Islamic historical works, and classical literature on the development of Islamic education. These primary sources are used mainly to identify the normative foundation and character of Islamic leadership in the early period, and second, secondary sources, including academic books, *peer-reviewed journal articles*, Islamic education journals, historical journals, Islamic education management studies, and cutting-edge research on Islamic educational leadership.

Fundamental historical literature such as the works of Hodgson, Makdisi, Berkey, and Arjomand is used because it provides an academic basis for the development of Islamic society, science, and educational institutions. Makdisi, for example, specifically discusses the development of Islamic learning

institutions and madrasah structures, while Berkey analyzes the transmission of Islamic knowledge through teacher-student relations and social networks¹⁰.

Literature is selected based on several criteria, namely: 1). has direct relevance to leadership, Islamic education, history of Islamic education, Islamic boarding schools, madrasas, or educational modernization; 2). comes from academic journals, scientific books, or credible publishers/institutions; 3). has verifiable bibliographic information; 4). for contemporary research, publication is prioritized around 2016–2026; 5). classical sources are maintained if they have a fundamental position in explaining historical developments; and 6). articles that are only popular opinion or do not have an academic basis are not used as the main source.

Literature search was carried out through a combination of keywords in Indonesian and English, including *Islamic educational leadership*, *prophetic leadership*, *Islamic leadership*, *history of Islamic education*, *madrasa*, *pesantren leadership*, *Islamic educational institutions*, *educational transformation*, and *Islamic education modernization*. The search was carried out using databases and journal publisher pages that provide bibliographic information, including Islamic educational journals, historical journals, and international publications. Relevant articles were then compared with historical sources and fundamental academic works.

Selection is carried out through three stages. First, selection based on titles and abstracts. Second, examination of the relevance of the substance and quality of the source. Third, verification of bibliographic information and the suitability of the content with the research argument. The analysis is carried out through thematic coding by grouping literature based on the theme: (1) exemplary; (2) trust; (3) justice; (4) deliberation; (5) scientific authority; (6) service; (7) institutional formation; (8) professionalization; (9) organizational transformation; and (10) adaptation to modernity and technology. The synthesis is carried out by comparing historical trajectories with contemporary research. The research does not present sources individually, but integrates the findings of various sources to find continuity and change.

Thus, the central question of the research is not simply "how was leadership in each period?", but rather "what values persisted, what forms changed, why changes occurred, and how can those values be translated into modern educational leadership?"

This study has limitations because it uses secondary and historical sources that have different contexts, perspectives, and levels of interpretation.

¹⁰ George Makdisi, *Rise of Colleges* (Edinburgh University Press, 2019).

Moreover, the concept of "Islamic educational leadership" is not always used explicitly in classical sources. Therefore, some interpretations are the result of the researcher's conceptual synthesis based on the historical context of education, rather than the claim that the term modern educational leadership has been used in the same form in the early days of Islam.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Leadership of Islamic Education in the Time of the Prophet (saw).

The leadership of the Prophet (saw) is a historical as well as a normative foundation for the development of Islamic leadership. However, the leadership of the Prophet is not appropriate if it is only understood through the category of modern management. The Prophet is in a unique position as a Prophet, educator, community leader, judge, and builder of social order. Therefore, his leadership model must be read in the context of the integration of religion, education, social, and public life. One of the most prominent characters is example. QS. al-Ahzab [33]: 21 places the Prophet as *uswah hasanah*. In the context of education, exemplary means that educational authority is not only built through the ability to impart knowledge, but also through the conformity between the values taught and the behavior of the leader.

This is different from the administrative leadership paradigm which tends to separate personal competence from position functions. In prophetic leadership, personal integrity is part of leadership competence itself. The second value is trust. Leadership is not a privilege, but a responsibility. Educational leaders are responsible to students, teachers, institutions, society, and theologically to God. Consequently, the management of educational institutions cannot be justified if it only pursues efficiency but sacrifices justice, human dignity, or integrity.

The third value is deliberation. QS. Ali 'Imran [3]: 159 describes the Prophet as a leader who deliberates with the companions. Deliberation shows that authority is not always synonymous with unilateral decisions. In the context of education, this principle can be translated into the participation of teachers, education staff, students, parents, and stakeholders in the decision-making process.

The fourth value is rahmah or compassion. Education led with a prophetic approach does not make students just administrative objects. They are seen as human beings who have potential, needs, weaknesses, and dignity.

Contemporary research on Islamic educational leadership also places compassion or *Rahmah* as one of the main characters of Islamic leadership¹¹.

The fifth value is human empowerment. The Prophet did not build a community that was completely dependent on him. The companions were educated to be individuals who had the capacity, responsibility, and courage to make decisions. From an educational point of view, this shows that leadership success is not only measured by how strongly the leader controls the organization, but also by how much the leader is able to produce new leaders.

Table 1 Five Dimensions of the Prophet's Educational Leadership

Dimensions	Manifestations of Prophetic Leadership	Relevance of Education
Morals	Trust, Trust, and Integrity	Culture of integrity
Pedagogical	Teach, guide, lead by example	Example-based learning
Social	Grace and service	Inclusive education
Organizational	Deliberation and division of responsibilities	Participatory governance
Transformative	Shaping individuals and communities	Social change through education

Studies of prophetic leadership also show that these values are constantly being re-read in the context of contemporary education. Research on *Nūrul Mubīn*, for example, finds three dimensions of the Prophet's leadership relevant to education: moral integrity, social empathy, and pedagogical exemplarity¹². The important thing that needs to be emphasized is that the Prophet's leadership is not "traditional" in a simple sense. It is transformative because it changes society through changes in ways of thinking, values, social relations, and life orientation.

From Personal Example to Leadership Institutionalization

After the Prophet's death, the Muslim community faced a new question: how were the principles of leadership and education passed on when the figure of the Prophet was no longer present in person? The period of the Khulafa al-Rashid became an important phase in the process. Leadership began to show a stronger institutional dimension. Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali faced increasingly complex political, social, administrative, legal, and educational

¹¹ Arar et al., "Islamic Educational Leadership: A Systematic Review of Empirical Evidence and a Conceptual Framework."

¹² Renaldi Habib Baskara and Imam Sopingi, "Implementasi Nilai Kepemimpinan Nabi Muhammad Saw. Dalam Pendidikan Islam: Kajian Kitab Nūrul Mubīn," *Ahdaf: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 3, no. 2 (2025): 87–101.

problems. The literature on this period shows a close relationship between leadership, community development, and education¹³.

This transformation shows an important pattern: personal example begins to translate into social and institutional mechanisms. If during the time of the Prophet the authority of education was very strong based on the figure of the Prophet, then after his death the authority was distributed through scholars, friends, teachers, judges, and learning institutions. This is where the history of Islamic education shows that the sustainability of education cannot depend solely on personal charisma. An education system requires a mechanism for knowledge transmission, teacher regeneration, the formation of a scientific community, and institutions that support the sustainability of learning.

This change is one of the starting points of the transformation of Islamic education leadership: from person-centered leadership to knowledge-centered and institution-supported leadership.

Halaqah, Mosques, Kuttabs and Scientific Authorities

The development of classical Islamic education shows that educational leadership is indirectly in the form of schools or universities as they are known today. Mosques play a central role as a space of worship as well as learning. Halaqah is a mechanism for the transmission of knowledge through direct relationships between teachers and students.

The study of the history of Islamic education shows the gradual development of halaqah in mosques towards a more complex learning structure. Makdisi identifies the development of learning institutions from the circle of studies in mosques, then mosque-khan complexes, to madrassas as more organized educational institutions¹⁴.

In this phase, scientific authority becomes the main source of legitimacy of educational leaders. A teacher does not get authority mainly because of an administrative position, but because of mastery of knowledge, moral reputation, scientific network, and community recognition. Berkey points out that medieval Islamic education relied heavily on the personal relationship between teacher and student. *Degree*, a network of scholars, and scientific relations are important mechanisms in maintaining the continuity of knowledge transmission¹⁵.

¹³ Mufarrohah Mufarrohah, "The Dynamics of Leadership, Education, and Islamic Civilization during the Era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs," *Maliki Interdisciplinary Journal* 4, no. 8 SE-Articles (June 10, 2026): 500–505, <https://urj.uin-malang.ac.id/index.php/mij/article/view/26438>.

¹⁴ Findıklı, "Rethinking Ancient Centers of Higher Learning: Madrasa in a Comparative-Historical Perspective."

¹⁵ Berkey, "The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo: A Social History of Islamic Education."

The advantage is that education becomes personal. Teachers know students and the learning process is not solely administratively standardized. However, the disadvantage is that the system can be highly dependent on the personal qualities of teachers. Thus, there is a need to build institutions that are able to support the transmission of knowledge more widely.

The Emergence of Madrassas and the Transformation of the Education Authority

The emergence of madrassas is one of the most important transformations in the history of Islamic education. Madrassas did not appear suddenly, but were part of the institutional development of Islamic education. Historical studies show that in the 11th century madrassas developed into more organized educational institutions, including through patronage and *the waqf system*. The Nizamiyyah madrassas in Baghdad are one of the most important examples of the institutionalization of Islamic higher education. This transformation changed the position of the educational leader. The leader is no longer solely the teacher who manages the halaqah, but is increasingly related to: institutional management; financing; patronage; appointment of teaching staff; curriculum; student management; relationship with the government; and institutional sustainability.

This means that the history of madrassas shows that education management is not a foreign concept in the Islamic tradition. The form is indeed different from modern administration, but the issues of resource management, legitimacy, funding, scientific authority, and organization have emerged in the history of Islamic education. This is important because the narrative that opposes "traditional Islamic education" and "modern management" too sharply has the potential to ignore the historical fact that Islamic education has always undergone institutional innovation.

Leadership Transformation in the Period of Islamic Civilization Development

The development of Islamic civilization brought education into an increasingly complex social structure. The development of religious science went hand in hand with linguistics, philosophy, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, and various other disciplines. Hodgson shows that the development of classical Islamic civilization cannot be understood only through political history, but also through the formation of intellectual networks and social

institutions that underpin the development of science¹⁶. In this context, education leaders are not just guardians of tradition. They are also knowledge managers.

This gave birth to important changes: Educational leadership evolves from community formation leadership to knowledge production, transmission, and legitimacy leadership. Education leaders must be able to maintain the authority of tradition while providing space for the development of knowledge. Thus, the history of Islamic education shows that the conflict between "tradition" and "innovation" is not a new problem. What has changed is the form and context.

Leadership of Islamic Education in the Indonesian Context

The transformation of Islamic education leadership in Indonesia has its own characteristics. Islamic education develops through mosques, suraus, Islamic boarding schools, and madrasas. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, kiai figures have strong authority because of their mastery of knowledge, moral example, social networks, and community trust. However, colonialism introduced a different educational structure. Islamic education had to deal with colonial education systems, regulations, modernization, and social changes. Historical studies show that pesantren and madrassas were able to survive while adapting to colonial pressures¹⁷.

These changes resulted in an increasingly complex leadership model. Islamic education leaders not only serve as religious teachers, but also as managers of institutions, community leaders, organizers, and in many cases as socio-political actors. In the early 20th century, the development of madrassas increasingly showed the process of modernization. Research on Indonesian madrassas in the period 1908–1942 shows that the emergence of madrassas was influenced by the reform of Islamic thought, nationalism, socio-economic changes, and the need for reform of the learning system¹⁸.

Thus, the modernization of Islamic education in Indonesia cannot be understood as an imitation of the West alone. It is also a strategy to maintain the relevance of Islamic education in a changing social situation. The study of Jam'iyatul Washliyah in the colonial period shows how Islamic educational

¹⁶ Marshall G S Hodgson, "The Venture of Islam, Volume 1: The Classical Age of Islam," in *The Venture of Islam, Volume 1* (University of Chicago press, 2009).

¹⁷ Oby Ara Afima, Muhammad Fazli, and Ellya Roza, "Kondisi Pendidikan Islam Pada Era Penjajahan Belanda Di Indonesia," *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* 10, no. 04 (2025): 382–406.

¹⁸ Alfikri, "Perkembangan Lembaga Pendidikan Madrasah Di Indonesia Pra Kemerdekaan Tahun 1908-1942."

institutions negotiated against modernism and colonialism while maintaining their Islamic orientation¹⁹.

The most significant change in modern Indonesian Islamic education is the shift from highly personal leadership to organizational leadership. In traditional Islamic boarding schools, the legitimacy of leaders is often very strong based on the figure of the *kiai*. This model has advantages in building loyalty, example, and community cohesion. However, the model that is too personal also presents problems of succession, distribution of authority, professionalization, and institutional sustainability.

In modern Islamic educational institutions, leadership increasingly involves structure: The Foundation → led → deputy leaders → heads of → units, teachers → education staff → committees/stakeholders. This change resulted in what can be termed the hybridization of leadership. Leaders are still required to have integrity and example like *kiai* figures, but at the same time must have managerial competence, strategic planning skills, data literacy, human resource management, organizational communication, and network building skills.

Recent studies on Islamic boarding schools even show that there is a productive tension between the charismatic authority of the *kiai* and managerial rationality²⁰. Thus, the change should not be understood as the removal of the authority of the *kiai*, but as a reconstruction of the source of leadership legitimacy. The former legitimacy mainly comes from: Knowledge + Morals + Charisma, Growing into: Science + Morals + Charisma + Professional Competence + Accountability + Adaptive Capacity.

Modernization and Leadership Paradigm Shift

Modernization brought great changes in Islamic education. Educational institutions are required to produce graduates who not only understand religious science, but also have academic, professional, social, technological, and entrepreneurial competencies. At this stage, the leadership of Islamic education began to interact with modern leadership theories, such as: *transformational leadership*; *distributed leadership*; *serving leadership*; *instructional leadership*; *visionary leadership*; *adaptive leadership*; and *entrepreneurial leadership*.

¹⁹ Solihah Titin Sumantri, Nia Deliana, and Yusmicha Ulya Afif, "Pendidikan Islam, Modernisasi Dan Kolonialisasi: Transformasi Lembaga Pendidikan Jam'iyatul Washliyah Tahun 1930-1942," *TADRIS: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 16, no. 1 (2021): 157–174.

²⁰ Indi Aunullah, "Reconstructing Islamic Educational Leadership: Negotiating Modern Managerial Rationality and Charismatic Authority in Indonesian Pesantren," *DAAR EL-MAKRIFAH: Journal of Islamic Religious Education* 2, no. 01 (2026): 230–245.

Contemporary research shows that transformational leadership is increasingly relevant in Indonesian Islamic educational institutions because it can encourage institutional change, motivation, innovation, and organizational capacity building²¹.

However, the adoption of modern leadership theories should not be done mechanically. Theories born from certain social contexts must be contextualized with Islamic values. This is where it is important to distinguish between leadership techniques and leadership orientation. Techniques can change with the times, while moral orientation can be maintained. For example, the Prophet used direct deliberation. Modern education leaders can use senate meetings, teacher forums, stakeholder surveys, *e-participation* systems, or *data dashboards*. *The form changes, but the principles of participation and deliberation can still be maintained.*

Prophetic and transformational leadership have common ground in terms of change, example, vision, and empowerment. However, they both have different epistemological foundations. Transformational leadership generally emphasizes organizational change through vision, motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual attention²². Meanwhile, prophetic leadership departs from the theological and moral dimensions. Research on *Islamic-Oriented Educational Leadership* shows that Islamic-based educational leadership is not only related to organizational effectiveness, but also to Islamic outlook on life and the formation of holistic education²³. Thus, the two do not need to be placed as a paradigm that negates each other. Its synthesis can be formulated as follows:

Table 2 Synthesis of Prophetic Leadership Dimensions and Transformational Leadership in Islamic Education

Prophetic Leadership	Transformational Leadership	Synthesis of Islamic Education
Example	Idealized influence	Leader as <i>a role model</i>
Trust	Responsibility	Moral accountability

²¹ Melinda Nur Ekawati and Tasman Hamami, “Kepemimpinan Transformasional Pada Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia,” *Paedagogie* 21, no. 1 (2026): 519–532.

²² Muwafiqus Shobri and Nurul Huda, “Kepemimpinan Transformatif Ketua Program Studi Dalam Pengembangan Program Studi Manajemen Pendidikan Islam,” *AKSI: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 3, no. 1 (2024): 37–49, <https://doi.org/10.37348/aksi.v3i1.564>.

²³ Ayesha A Alazmi and Tony Bush, “An Islamic-Oriented Educational Leadership Model: Towards a New Theory of School Leadership in Muslim Societies,” *Journal of Educational Administration and History* 56, no. 3 (2024): 312–334.

Deliberation	Participation	Collaborative decision-making
Rahmah	Individual consideration	Human Assistance
Fathanah	Intellectual stimulation	Innovation and critical thinking
Tabligh	Inspirational motivation	Vision communication
Benefits	Organizational change	Benefit-oriented transformation

This synthesis is one of the conceptual contributions of the research: modern leadership theory can be used as an analytical and managerial instrument, but its moral orientation needs to be determined by Islamic values.

The Digital Era and the New Transformation of Islamic Education Leadership

The digital era brings more radical changes than previous modernization. Technology is not only a learning tool, but it is changing the way organizations obtain information, communicate, make decisions, manage data, and build reputations. Today's Islamic education leaders are facing issues such as: digitization of learning; artificial intelligence; disinformation; changes in communication patterns of the younger generation; data security; job transformation; global competition; personal branding agencies; flexible learning; and demands for public accountability.

Therefore, the leadership of Islamic education is not enough to just be "technologically literate". Leaders must have digital wisdom, namely the ability to use technology ethically and strategically. The transformation of modern pesantren shows that technological integration can go hand in hand with the maintenance of Islamic identity. Recent studies on pesantren transformation show that modernization takes place multidimensional through changes in education, institutions, governance, quality, and student welfare, without having to completely replace Islamic traditions²⁴. This shows that the main issue of digital leadership is not "is technology used?", but Who controls the technology, for what purpose, at what value, and with what kind of moral consequences? This question is very much in line with the perspective of Islamic leadership that places technology as a means, not an end.

From Traditional Leadership to Prophetic-Adaptive Leadership

²⁴ Saefullah et al., "The Transforming Traditional Islamic Boarding Schools into Modern Educational Institutions: A Systematic Literature Review."

Based on historical synthesis and contemporary literature, the transformation of Islamic educational leadership can be described through the following model:

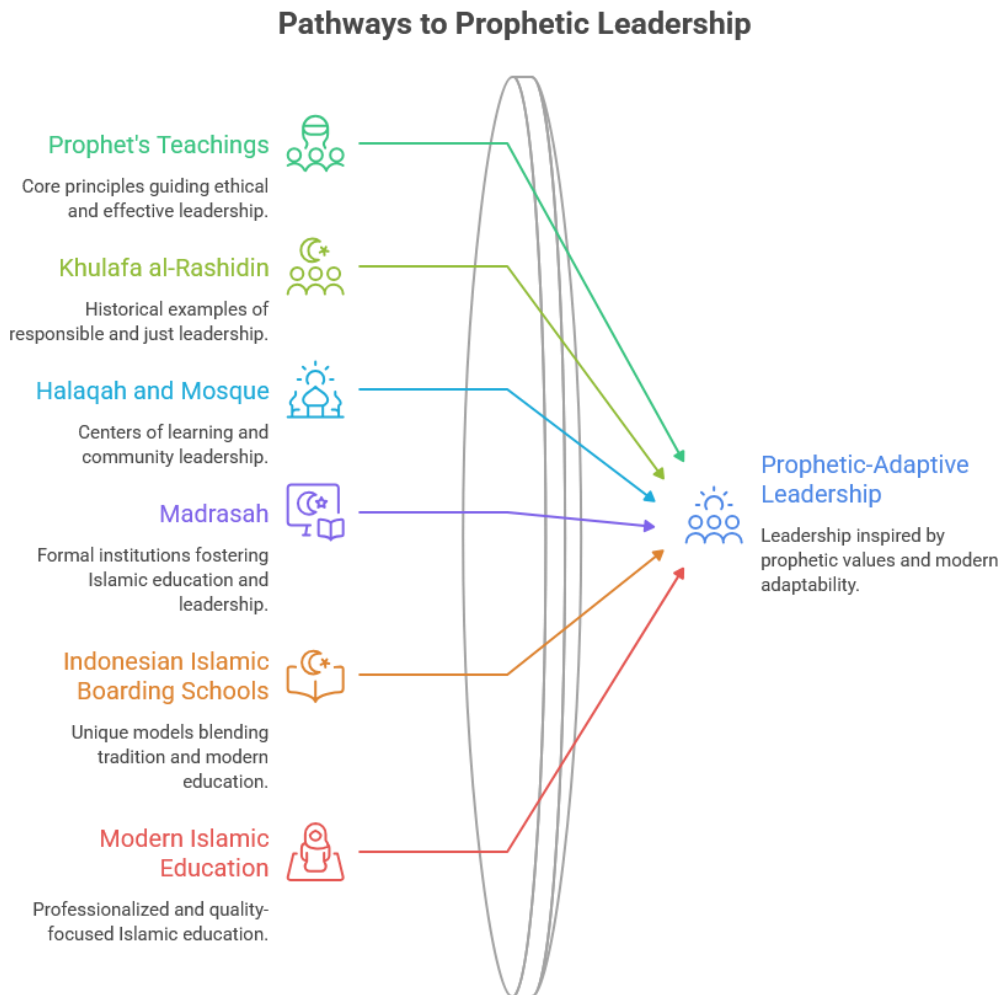


Figure 1 Pathways to Prophetic Leadership

The model shows that transformation does not mean abandoning the past. On the contrary, history provides basic values, while modernity provides new instruments.

Prophetic-adaptive leadership has six main characters: 1. Value-based: Leaders have integrity, trust, justice, and moral responsibility, 2. Vision-based: Leaders have the ability to formulate the future of the institution and move education citizens towards the vision, 3. Science-based: Decisions are not based solely on intuition or charisma, but also on knowledge and evidence, 4. Participatory: Deliberation translates into collaboration and distribution of leadership, 5. Adaptive: Leaders are able to respond to social, technological, economic, and policy changes without losing identity, and 6. Transformative:

Leaders not only maintain the sustainability of the institution, but improve human quality and provide social benefits.

Continuity and Discontinuity of Islamic Education Leadership

One of the important findings of this study is that the history of Islamic education leadership shows continuity of values as well as discontinuity of form. Continuity, Relatively surviving values include: trust; justice; exemplary; science; deliberation; service; responsibilities; and benefits. Discontinuity, His form of leadership changed in: organizational structure; source of legitimacy; division of authority; financing system; evaluation mechanisms; curriculum system; relationship with the government; technology; and ways of communication.

Thus, transformation cannot be explained through the theory of "traditional versus modern" in a binary way. It is more appropriate if the transformation is understood as: the negotiation process between value continuity and structural change. The argument is in line with contemporary research that has found that Islamic educational institutions face demands to integrate tradition with modern managerial rationality²⁵.

Table 3 Synthesis of Periodization of Leadership Transformation

Period	Authority Base	Leadership Character	Forms of Education	Key Challenges
The Prophet	Revelation, example, morals	Prophetic-transformational	Mosque, halaqah, community	Formation of the ummah
Khulafaa al-Rashidin	Moral, scientific, social legitimacy	Participatory	Mosques and assemblies of knowledge	Community expansion
Classic	Science, Scholars, Patronage	Scientific-institutional	Halaqah, kuttah, madrasah	Institutionalization of knowledge
Medieval	Scholars, waqf, institutions	Scientific-administrative	Madrasah	Institutional management
Traditional Indonesia	Guard, knowledge, charisma	Personal-communal	Pesantren, surau	Colonialism and social change

²⁵ Aunullah, "Reconstructing Islamic Educational Leadership: Negotiating Modern Managerial Rationality and Charismatic Authority in Indonesian Pesantren."

Modern Indonesia	Professionalis m + moral authority	Organizational	Madrasah, school, PT	Modernization
Digital age	Competency + data + value	Adaptive- transformatio nal	Hybrid/digit al	AI, disruption, globalization

The table shows that the history of Islamic educational leadership does not run linearly from "traditional" to "modern". Each phase develops a response to its social context.

Theoretical and Practical Implications for Leaders of Islamic Educational Institutions

Theoretically, this study provides three implications. First, the leadership of Islamic education should not be understood only as a derivative of Western leadership theories which are then labeled Islamic. It has its own epistemological roots that come from the concepts of *amanah*, *uswah*, *shura*, *adl*, *rahmah*, and *maslahah*. Second, Islamic values do not have to be contradicted by modern leadership theories. Modern theories can be a tool for translating these values in contemporary organizational structures. Third, the history of Islamic education shows that adaptability is part of the tradition of Islamic education itself. Madrasahs, Islamic boarding schools, and various Islamic educational institutions flourished because they were able to respond to change without completely losing their identity.

For madrasah heads, pesantren leaders, rectors, deans, heads of study programs, and leaders of other Islamic educational institutions, the results of this study have several implications. First, integrity must be placed above popularity. Educational leaders should not use an image as a substitute for moral quality. Second, deliberation must be translated into real governance. Forums for consultation, evaluation, and collective decision-making must become an organizational culture. Third, professionalization must not eliminate spirituality. The use of performance indicators, quality audits, information systems, and evaluations must still be directed to the goal of human education.

Fourth, charisma needs to be converted into a system. A good leader does not just generate followers, but builds a mechanism for leadership regeneration and distribution. Fifth, technology must be placed within the framework of Islamic ethics. The use of AI, for example, must take into account academic honesty, privacy, justice, copyright, and human responsibility. Sixth, leaders must be lifelong learners. The history of Islamic education shows that scientific authority is one of the important foundations of the leader's legitimacy.

CONCLUSION

The transformation of Islamic education leadership from the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to the modern era shows that leadership change takes place through a long process involving changes in society, institutions, knowledge, politics, technology, and educational needs. During the time of the Prophet, educational leadership was rooted in example, trust, knowledge, deliberation, compassion, and orientation in the formation of people and society. After his death, these values underwent an institutionalization process through a network of ulama, mosques, halaqah, kuttab, madrasahs, and various Islamic educational institutions. In the Indonesian context, transformation took place through the dynamics of Islamic boarding schools, suraus, madrasahs, renewal movements, colonialism, modernization, professionalization, and the development of the national education system. The modern era then brought Islamic education leadership into a more complex environment through quality management, professionalization, digitalization, global networks, and artificial intelligence.

The main findings of this study confirm that the transformation of Islamic education leadership is not a process of replacing traditional leadership with modern leadership. The transformation is more accurately understood as a negotiation between the continuity of values and the change of form. The values of trust, justice, example, deliberation, rahmah, knowledge, and benefits remain relevant, while organizational structures, decision-making mechanisms, professionalism, technology, and managerial instruments have changed. On the basis of this synthesis, this research offers the concept of prophetic-adaptive leadership, which is a leadership model that maintains the moral-spiritual foundation of Islamic leadership while integrating professional competence, transformational leadership, collaboration, data literacy, innovation, and digital skills. This model emphasizes that the modernization of Islamic education does not have to result in the secularization of values, while the preservation of Islamic traditions does not necessarily mean a rejection of innovation.

Therefore, the main challenge for Islamic education leaders in the modern era is not to choose between "tradition" or "modernity", but to translate prophetic values into professional, adaptive, innovative, and responsible educational governance. The follow-up research can test the prophetic-adaptive leadership model through empirical research on Islamic boarding schools, madrasahs, Islamic universities, and digital-based Islamic educational institutions.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Afima, Oby Ara, Muhammad Fazli, and Ellya Roza. "Kondisi Pendidikan Islam Pada Era Penjajahan Belanda Di Indonesia." *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* 10, no. 04 (2025): 382–406. <https://journal.unpas.ac.id/index.php/pendas/article/view/39718>
- Alazmi, Ayesah A, and Tony Bush. "An Islamic-Oriented Educational Leadership Model: Towards a New Theory of School Leadership in Muslim Societies." *Journal of Educational Administration and History* 56, no. 3 (2024): 312–334. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220620.2023.2292573>
- Alfikri, Harits Harifan. "Perkembangan Lembaga Pendidikan Madrasah Di Indonesia Pra Kemerdekaan Tahun 1908-1942." *Periode: Jurnal Sejarah dan Pendidikan Sejarah* 6, no. 1 (2024): 76–99. <https://doi.org/10.21009/periode.061.1>
- Arar, Khalid, Ramazan Cansoy, Muhammed Emin Türkoğlu, and Recep Utku. "Islamic Educational Leadership: A Systematic Review of Empirical Evidence and a Conceptual Framework." *Journal of Educational Administration and History* (2026): 1–33. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220620.2026.2671907>
- Aunullah, Indi. "Reconstructing Islamic Educational Leadership: Negotiating Modern Managerial Rationality and Charismatic Authority in Indonesian Pesantren." *DAAR EL-MAKRIFAH: Journal of Islamic Religious Education* 2, no. 01 (2026): 230–245. <https://e-journal.ibama.ac.id/index.php/jpai/id/article/view/398>
- Baskara, Renaldi Habib, and Imam Sopingi. "Implementasi Nilai Kepemimpinan Nabi Muhammad Saw. Dalam Pendidikan Islam: Kajian Kitab Nūrul Mubīn." *Abdāf: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam* 3, no. 2 (2025): 87–101. <https://doi.org/10.47766/ahdf.v3i2.6119>
- Berkey, Jonathan Porter. "The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo: A Social History of Islamic Education" (2014). <https://www.torrossa.com/en/resources/an/5580084>
- Ekawati, Melinda Nur, and Tasman Hamami. "Kepemimpinan Transformasional Pada Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia." *Paedagogie* 21, no. 1 (2026): 519–532. <https://doi.org/10.31603/paedagogie.v21i1.16189>
- Fındıklı, Burhan. "Rethinking Ancient Centers of Higher Learning: Madrasa in a Comparative-Historical Perspective." *British Journal of Educational Studies* 70, no. 2 (2022): 129–144. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2021.1901853>
- Hasanah, Uswatun, M Nur Efendi, and Abdul Aziz. "Strategi Pengembangan Kepemimpinan Profetik-Transformasional Di Lembaga Pendidikan Islam: Narrative Review Menuju Model Kepemimpinan Islam Adaptif." *Al Irfan: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan Dan Penelitian* 2, no. 1 (2026): 103–119. <https://journal.sgt.ac.id/index.php/AlIrfan/article/view/92>

- Hodgson, Marshall G S. "The Venture of Islam, Volume 1: The Classical Age of Islam." In *The Venture of Islam, Volume 1*. University of Chicago press, 2009.
- Juliansyahzen, Muhammad Iqbal. "Prophetic Leadership in Pesantren Education: Study at Pondok Pesantren Universitas Islam Indonesia." *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* (2017). <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpi.2017.62.349-369>
- Makdisi, George. *Rise of Colleges*. Edinburgh University Press, 2019.
- Mufarrohah, Mufarrohah. "The Dynamics of Leadership, Education, and Islamic Civilization during the Era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs." *Maliki Interdisciplinary Journal* 4, no. 8 SE-Articles (June 10, 2026): 500–505. <https://urj.uin-malang.ac.id/index.php/mij/article/view/26438>.
- Saefullah, Muhammad, Raharjo Raharjo, Fihris Fihris, Muammar Sabiq Mulsyah, and Satria Kharimul Qolbi. "The Transforming Traditional Islamic Boarding Schools into Modern Educational Institutions: A Systematic Literature Review." *Indonesian Journal of Educational Management and Leadership* 4, no. 1 (2026): 335–357.
- Shobri, Muwafiqus, and Nurul Huda. "Kepemimpinan Transformatif Ketua Program Studi Dalam Pengembangan Program Studi Manajemen Pendidikan Islam." *AKSI: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 3, no. 1 (2024): 37–49. <https://doi.org/10.37348/aksi.v3i1.564>.
- Sumantri, Solihah Titin, Nia Deliana, and Yusmicha Ulya Afif. "Pendidikan Islam, Modernisasi Dan Kolonialisasi: Transformasi Lembaga Pendidikan Jam'iyatul Washliyah Tahun 1930-1942." *TADRIS: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 16, no. 1 (2021): 157–174. <https://doi.org/10.19105/tjpi.v16i1.4659>
- Wahyudienie, Mentari Bela, Hasan Hariri, Atik Rusdiani, and Sunyono Sunyono. "Islamic-Based Leadership in Education: A Literature Review of Urgency, Concept, and Implementation." *Jurnal Pendidikan Progresif* 14, no. 3 (2024): 2088–2111. <https://doi.org/10.23960/jpp.v14.i3.2024142>