



SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW: SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP AS A PILLAR OF ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the role of spiritual leadership as a central pillar in the management of Islamic education. The research was conducted using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, analyzing five relevant journal articles. The findings indicate that spiritual leadership integrates core Islamic values—honesty, trustworthiness, responsibility, justice, and exemplary conduct—into managerial practices. These values are not only normative principles but also serve as strategic tools for institutional transformation. Leaders who embody spiritual values foster character development and create meaningful, value-based educational environments. The study concludes that spiritual leadership significantly contributes to enhancing the quality, integrity, and competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions.

Keywords: Spritual Leadership; Islamic Values; Educational Leadership; Character Development

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education is a system derived from the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith, which fundamentally aims to shape the whole human person (*insan kamil*), namely individuals who reflect perfection in spiritual, intellectual, emotional, and social aspects (Syarifudin & Yudhyarta, 2019). In this context, Islamic educational management cannot be narrowly understood as an administrative activity that merely emphasizes efficiency and effectiveness; rather, it must be interpreted as a transcendental instrument that directs all educational processes toward divine (*ilahiyah*) values. Therefore, leaders in Islamic educational institutions are expected not only to master technical and managerial competencies, but also to possess profound and authentic spirituality. Spiritual leadership emerges as a relevant approach because it emphasizes the importance of moral integrity, exemplary character, and the internalization of Islamic values in all dimensions of leadership. This approach is believed to strengthen the holistic characteristics of Islamic educational management and its orientation toward profound character development (Safutri et al., 2022).

In contemporary leadership discourse, the concept of spiritual leadership has gained broad attention as a response to modern organizational needs for ethical values, existential meaning in work, and inner balance (Millah & Far'ia, 2020). Various studies have shown that this approach can positively impact organizational performance, enhance individual engagement, and foster a conducive work environment. Within the field of Islamic education, spiritual leadership has also been examined in

various contexts, such as its implementation by school principals in Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) and its correlation with the formation of an Islamic work culture. Nevertheless, most of these studies remain descriptive and contextual in nature, and have not yet presented a comprehensive and systematically integrated conceptual framework within Islamic educational management.

From the literature review that has been conducted, a knowledge gap can be identified in terms of the integration and synthesis of scholarship concerning spiritual leadership and Islamic educational management. Existing studies remain fragmented in terms of theoretical approaches, scope of substance, and analytical frameworks. To date, there has been no systematic literature review specifically designed to compile, classify, and critically analyze the conceptual contributions of spiritual leadership toward strengthening the governance of Islamic educational institutions. It is within this context that the urgency of this study becomes relevant, namely to develop a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) capable of comprehensively mapping and synthesizing the discourse on spiritual leadership in Islamic educational management.

This study aims to identify, classify, and synthesize various scholarly findings related to spiritual leadership within the context of Islamic educational management. In addition, this research seeks to uncover research gaps that may serve as the foundation for developing leadership models that are more adaptive and contextual in addressing the challenges of contemporary Islamic education. Practically, the findings of this study are expected to make a significant contribution to the

development of academic literature in the fields of leadership and Islamic educational management. The results of this study are also expected to serve as a strategic reference for policymakers, educational practitioners, and academics in formulating leadership policies and strategies that are more meaningful, progressive, and transformative in responding to the educational challenges of the 21st century.

Spiritual leadership emerged as an alternative to conventional leadership approaches that tend to be overly technocratic and rational (Bustamam, 2023). This model developed in response to the need for leaders who not only perform administrative functions, but are also capable of inspiring enthusiasm, providing spiritual guidance, and instilling meaning in every organizational activity. In this sense, spiritual leadership offers an approach that emphasizes the inner dimension and meaningfulness of work. The concept of spiritual leadership itself can be understood as a process of influence carried out by leaders through the instillation of spiritual and moral values among organizational members in order to achieve shared goals that are not merely worldly in nature, but also transcendental in dimension (Syarifudin & Yudhyarta, 2019). From this perspective, spiritual leaders strive to develop the internal potential of individuals, including aspects of self-awareness, meaningfulness of life, and spiritual relationships with God. This understanding underscores that the primary objective of leadership lies not solely in the final outcomes, but also in processes that are spiritually meaningful.

The main characteristics of spiritual leadership lie in the consistent application of noble values in leadership

practices (Laily Faridhatun Nikmah et al., 2024). Values such as honesty, empathy, sincere devotion, and the pursuit of meaning in work serve as the foundation for acting and making decisions. Thus, spirituality is not positioned merely as a complement, but rather as the core of sustainable and meaningful organizational management. Spiritual leadership also developed as a response to the limitations of transactional and transformational approaches, which are considered to remain focused on external achievements. These models have not fully addressed the existential and spiritual needs of individuals. Therefore, spiritual leadership offers a more holistic approach by integrating psychological, emotional, and spiritual aspects comprehensively within organizational dynamics.

In the context of Islamic education, leadership possesses a deeper dimension because it is not only oriented toward academic or administrative achievement, but also toward the formation of students' character and spirituality (Afandi, 2013). Islamic educational management must be grounded in religious values that serve as pillars in every learning process. Leaders in Islamic educational institutions are expected to act as guardians and transmitters of these values in all institutional policies and practices. Educational management in Islam is positioned as a means of moral transformation and a medium of *da'wah* aimed at producing *insan kamil*. Therefore, leaders of Islamic educational institutions must possess high spiritual integrity and be capable of guiding their institutions toward a divine (*ilahiyyah*) vision (Ratu Amalia Hayani et al., 2024). In this position, leaders not only carry

out managerial roles, but also act as spiritual figures who provide moral direction for all members of the institution.

The legitimacy of leadership in Islamic education cannot rely solely on structural positions, but must also be supported by moral exemplarity and personal credibility. Effective leaders are individuals who are capable of implementing Islamic teachings in their daily behavior and becoming role models for students, teachers, and all institutional staff. Honesty, justice, patience, and wisdom are qualities that build trust and collective commitment. Theoretically, several approaches have been developed to explain and strengthen the practice of spiritual leadership. One influential theory is spiritual leadership developed by Fry, which emphasizes the importance of three main components: meaning, membership, and calling. These three elements play significant roles in creating emotional engagement and strong spiritual bonds within organizations.

The value-based management approach also serves as an important reference in explaining the significance of integrating values into leadership. In this approach, values are viewed as the foundation for formulating organizational policies, directing decision-making, and creating a work culture aligned with moral principles (Saripudin & Wijaya, 2021). Leaders who are grounded in values are able to guide their institutions toward a more meaningful and character-oriented direction. The theory of holistic leadership adds a perspective that broadens the understanding of leadership by balancing intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions. Holistic leadership seeks to establish harmonious relationships among human beings, with nature, and with God (Millah & Far'ia, 2020).

This model is considered capable of creating a healthy and balanced work environment that supports the spiritual growth of all organizational members.

In the study of Islamic educational management, managerial approaches based on Islamic values constitute a central element. Managerial processes such as planning, organizing, mobilizing, and supervising cannot be separated from Islamic values (Supriani et al., 2022). Consequently, all educational processes are directed not only toward the transfer of knowledge, but also toward spiritual self-perfection and the strengthening of students' faith. The literature on leadership in Islam further reinforces the importance of spiritually grounded leadership. The leadership principles exemplified by Prophet Muhammad SAW, such as amanah (trustworthiness), sidik (truthfulness), fathanah (wisdom/intelligence), and tabligh (communicativeness), serve as the primary models in building leadership that is not only administratively effective, but also morally and spiritually strong. These values are highly relevant in shaping Islamic educational leadership with integrity.

Nevertheless, the researcher observes that many previous studies have focused more on the application of spiritual leadership in the business and governmental sectors. Studies that discuss spiritual leadership comprehensively within the context of Islamic education remain limited. Therefore, a more comprehensive review is needed to compile, classify, and synthesize existing literature in order to obtain a holistic understanding of the strategic role of spiritual leadership in the management of Islamic educational institutions.

METHOD

This study employs the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to explore, evaluate, and synthesize various scholarly sources related to spiritual leadership in Islamic educational management. This approach is used to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the topic under study through a structured, systematic, and accountable literature review process. The research design is descriptive-analytical, encompassing stages such as the identification of research issues, literature searching, source selection based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, extraction of essential data, content analysis, and the preparation of a narrative synthesis as the final form of interpretation of the findings.

This study does not utilize variables as commonly found in quantitative approaches; rather, it focuses on two main aspects: spiritual leadership as a form of leadership grounded in ethical and spiritual values, and Islamic educational management as the sphere for the actualization of these values within Islamic-based educational institutions. The population of this study includes various scholarly works such as journal articles, dissertations, and academic publications discussing spiritual leadership and Islamic educational management, both theoretically and empirically. The sample selection was conducted purposively, with inclusion criteria consisting of publications issued within the last ten years, available in full-text format, written in either Indonesian or English, and relevant to the focus of the study.

Data collection was conducted through literature searches across various academic databases such as Google

Scholar, Scopus, DOAJ, and ResearchGate, using keywords including “kepemimpinan spiritual,” “spiritual leadership,” “manajemen pendidikan Islam,” and “Islamic educational leadership.” All collected literature was carefully screened based on quality and substantive relevance. The analytical technique employed was content analysis, beginning with the extraction of key information from each source, such as research objectives, approaches used, findings, and contributions to the development of theory or practice. This information was then categorized into major themes that consistently emerged, such as spiritual principles in leadership, the strategic role of leadership in Islamic educational institutions, as well as challenges and solutions in its implementation.

To ensure the validity of the findings, this study applied several data validation techniques, including source triangulation by comparing literature from different authors and methodological approaches, as well as an audit trail that thoroughly documented the entire process of literature searching and selection. These measures were taken to ensure the validity of interpretations and objectivity in drawing conclusions. Through this approach, the study is expected to present a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the contribution of spiritual leadership to the holistic and contextual management of Islamic education.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

As a result of an in-depth analysis conducted through the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, the synthesis of several scholarly articles on spiritual

leadership in Islamic educational management is presented in the following table:

No	Journal Identity	Analysis Results
1	Faishol, L. (2020). Kepemimpinan profetik dalam pendidikan islam. <i>Eduprof: Islamic Education Journal</i> , 2(1), 39-53.	The literature review conducted indicates that spiritual leadership in Islamic education integrates values such as honesty, trustworthiness (amanah), and wisdom into institutional management. Spiritual leaders create a harmonious and meaningful educational environment, focusing on character development among students and strengthening an educational vision grounded in Islamic values.
2	Millah, N. I. A. I. Q. (2020). Kepemimpinan Spiritual dalam Lembaga Pendidikan: Analisis Maqasid Syariah. <i>IQ (Ilmu Al-qur'an): Jurnal Pendidikan Islam</i> , 3(01), 103-122.	The results of the Systematic Literature Review indicate that spiritual leadership in Islamic educational management prioritizes the integration of religious values into institutional governance. Spiritual leaders emphasize honesty, trustworthiness (amanah), and responsibility, create a meaningful educational environment, and support the character development of students in accordance with Islamic principles..

- 3** Syarifudin, S., & Yudhyarta, D. Y. (2019). Pengembangan Spiritual Leadership Dan Pengaruhnya Terhadap Lembaga Pendidikan Islam. *AL-LIQQ: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 4(1), 108-120.

The results of the Systematic Literature Review indicate that spiritual leadership promotes the transformation of Islamic educational institutions through exemplary conduct, service, and divine values. This approach enhances human resources, students, as well as facilities and infrastructure, enabling Islamic institutions to become high-quality and competitive alongside public schools and Islamic boarding schools (pesantren).
- 4** Hayani, R. A., Yanto, S., Rahmat, A., Purnawirawan, A. C., & Aslan, A. (2024). Efektivitas Kepemimpinan Dalam Manajemen Pendidikan Islam. *Jurnal Ilmiah Edukatif*, 10(2), 136-148.

The effectiveness of leadership in Islamic educational management is influenced by the integration of Islamic values such as honesty and justice with managerial competence. Leaders who combine these elements are able to establish institutional governance that is fair, efficient, and grounded in integrity.
- 5** Nikmah, L. F., Aziz, A., & Efendi, N. (2024). Pemimpin Spiritual dalam Pengembangan Pendidikan Islam. *Reflection: Islamic*

Spiritual leadership in Islamic education is a strategy that emulates the values exemplified by Prophet Muhammad SAW, such as loyalty, honesty, trustworthiness (amanah), and effective communication.

Education Journal, 1(4), 78-86. Madrasah leaders act as spiritual motivators who not only fulfill administrative duties, but also devote themselves to serving Allah SWT..

The table presented contains information regarding the journal identities as well as the analysis results of each reviewed article. This analysis is focused on the implementation of the concept of spiritual leadership within the context of Islamic educational management. The primary emphasis in each finding lies in the fundamental values of Islam, such as honesty, trustworthiness (*amanah*), responsibility, and exemplary conduct. Thus, this synthesis provides a concise yet comprehensive overview of how these values serve as the foundation for leadership practices implemented in Islamic educational institutions.

The main objective of this study is to explore and compare the theoretical and practical contributions offered by each article in developing the concept of spiritual leadership based on Islamic values. Through the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, each analyzed study provides diverse and distinctive perspectives, particularly in explaining the integration between religious values and managerial practices in managing educational institutions. By emphasizing values such as justice, honesty, and *amanah*, spiritual leadership is positioned not only as an ethical dimension, but also as a strategic approach to educational management.

Through this literature mapping, a more comprehensive understanding has been obtained regarding the relevance

and effectiveness of spiritual leadership in shaping excellent governance within Islamic education. Spiritual leadership is not merely a normative aspect, but also functions as a managerial instrument capable of encouraging the achievement of educational goals grounded in divine (Ilahiyah) values. Therefore, this study provides a significant contribution to the development of leadership theory and its application within Islamic institutional contexts in a more systematic and directed manner.

Discussion

The study conducted by Faishol (2020) in *Eduprof: Islamic Education Journal* highlights the importance of prophetic leadership as a model in Islamic educational management. The findings indicate that spiritual leadership based on prophetic values such as honesty, trustworthiness (*amanah*), and wisdom plays a strategic role in creating a harmonious and meaningful educational environment. Leaders who adopt this leadership style not only focus on administrative tasks, but are also oriented toward the character development of students. This approach emphasizes the important role of leaders in strengthening the vision of educational institutions grounded in Islamic values, positioning them as centers for moral and spiritual development (Faishol, 2020).

Millah (2020), in an article published in *IQ (Ilmu Al-Qur'an): Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, examines spiritual leadership through the lens of *Maqasid Sharia*. The study demonstrates that spiritual leaders in Islamic educational institutions strive to comprehensively integrate religious values into institutional management processes. Values

such as honesty, trustworthiness (amanah), and responsibility become the primary principles implemented in various institutional policies and activities. Through this approach, leaders function not only as managers, but also as moral role models and agents of Islamic character formation among students. The findings confirm that spiritual leadership is closely related to the achievement of the overall goals of Islamic education.

The research conducted by Syarifudin and Yudhyarta (2019), published in *AL-LIQO: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, discusses the development of spiritual leadership and its impact on Islamic educational institutions. The study shows that spiritual leadership encourages institutional transformation through approaches emphasizing exemplary conduct, service, and divine values. Leaders who consistently apply spiritual principles contribute to the improvement of human resources, including both educators and students. In addition, positive impacts are also evident in the enhancement of educational facilities and infrastructure. Such a leadership approach enables Islamic educational institutions to compete effectively with public educational institutions as well as established Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) (Hidayat et al., 2023).

The study conducted by Hayani et al. (2024) in *Jurnal Ilmiah Edukatif* discusses the effectiveness of leadership in Islamic educational management. This research highlights that leadership effectiveness is determined not only by managerial competence, but also by the extent to which leaders are able to integrate Islamic values such as

honesty and justice into decision-making processes. Effective leadership is characterized by governance that is fair, efficient, and grounded in integrity, ultimately creating a conducive and sustainable educational climate. Therefore, leaders in Islamic education are ideally expected to combine professional competence with spirituality in order to address managerial challenges while maintaining the fundamental values of Islam.

Nikmah, Aziz, and Efendi (2024), through their article in *Reflection: Islamic Education Journal*, portray spiritual leaders as exemplary figures who emulate the leadership values of Prophet Muhammad SAW. The study emphasizes the importance of loyalty, honesty, trustworthiness (*amanah*), and effective communication skills in building a healthy educational climate. Spiritual leaders in Islamic education are described not merely as administrators, but also as spiritual motivators capable of guiding, inspiring, and nurturing all elements within educational institutions. They not only carry out worldly responsibilities, but also fulfill religious roles, making devotion to Allah SWT the primary orientation in every leadership action.

When viewed comprehensively, the five analyzed articles demonstrate similarities in positioning spiritual values as the core of leadership in Islamic education. Each author emphasizes that the success of educational institutions depends not only on structural management, but also on the moral and spiritual qualities of their leaders. Honesty, trustworthiness (*amanah*), responsibility, and exemplary conduct emerge as common threads connecting all findings, while also serving as key indicators in measuring the effectiveness of spiritual leadership. This reflects the

idea that religious orientation cannot be separated from the technical aspects of educational management.

Furthermore, the spiritual leadership approaches presented in these studies function not only as normative guidelines, but also as transformational strategies capable of shaping a religious and progressive organizational culture. By embedding divine (Ilahiyah) values into the systems and structures of educational organizations, spiritual leaders provide clear direction toward achieving institutional visions and missions. Such leadership not only strengthens the identity of institutions as Islamic organizations, but also enhances public trust in the quality and integrity of these educational institutions.

Thus, the results of this literature mapping affirm that spiritual leadership constitutes a fundamental foundation in the development of excellent Islamic educational management. Spiritual values are not merely complementary elements, but rather pillars that support all dimensions of leadership, ranging from institutional vision and interpersonal relationships to strategic decision-making. This study enriches both theoretical and practical insights into how spiritual leadership can be effectively implemented within educational contexts, while also serving as an important instrument in realizing Islamic educational institutions that are dignified, competitive, and oriented toward the hereafter.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion through the Systematic Literature Review approach, it can be concluded that spiritual leadership constitutes the primary foundation of Islamic educational management,

functioning not only as an ethical dimension but also as a strategic one. This form of leadership emphasizes Islamic values such as honesty, trustworthiness (*amanah*), responsibility, justice, and exemplary conduct as core elements in the management of educational institutions. Spiritual leaders play a significant role in creating a meaningful and transformative educational environment, in which students' character is shaped through role modeling and the application of divine (*Ilahiyah*) values in every managerial aspect.

In addition to serving as moral exemplars, spiritual leaders also function as driving forces in establishing institutional governance that is adaptive, high-quality, and competitive. By making spiritual values the foundation of policies and decision-making processes, leaders are able to enhance institutional integrity while simultaneously strengthening the quality of human resources within the institution. Therefore, spiritual leadership can be positioned not only as a dimension of religious teaching, but also as a relevant and effective managerial approach within the context of contemporary Islamic education.

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