

Role of Leadership in the Development of Policies in Islamic Educational Organizations

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Abstract: *Leadership is fundamental in enhancing the capability of Islamic educational organizations to effectively navigate change while maintaining their unique educational principles. While the literature extensively explores leadership styles, school effectiveness, organizational culture, and educational quality, relatively little attention has been devoted to understanding how leadership contributes to policy development and organizational development within Islamic educational organizations by incorporating Islamic values, organizational learning, and managerial practices. To bridge this gap, the present study adopts a qualitative methodology to investigate the role of leadership in policy development and organizational development within these institutions. Data were amassed through semi-structured interviews conducted with a purposively selected group of five leaders. These interviews, each spanning approximately 60 minutes, took place on campus between 25 and 28 April, using the Indonesian language and guided by an interview protocol centered on educational leadership. Reflexive thematic analysis was employed to discern prevalent patterns related to leadership, policy development, and organizational development. This method identified three principal themes: understanding leadership, leadership strategies for policy and organizational development, and leadership in managing organizational challenges and building organizational culture. Leadership is conceptualized as amanah, integrating spiritual responsibility, ethical integrity, and professional proficiency. Policy and organizational development are facilitated through shared vision, strategic planning, human capital development, effective communication, organizational commitment, and continuous evaluation. Participants observed that effective leadership practices support ethical policy decision-making, strengthen organizational culture, and guide the implementation of organizational policies through collaborative governance and value-based management. These insights enrich the existing body of knowledge by illustrating how Islamic values, organizational learning, and managerial expertise collectively inform policy development and organizational development within Islamic educational organizations, while also offering practical guidance for leaders seeking to manage organizational challenges and build organizational culture.*

Keywords: *Leadership, Policy Development, Organizations, Islamic Educational.*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic educational organizations are currently operating in an environment characterized by rapid educational transformation, increasing institutional competition, technological advancement, and growing public expectations regarding educational quality. These developments require educational institutions not only to maintain their existence but also to continuously strengthen their organizational capacity in order to remain adaptive, sustainable, and capable of achieving their educational mission. Consequently, policy development and organizational development have become essential processes for improving institutional effectiveness, enhancing organizational performance, and responding to both internal and external changes. In this study, policy development refers to the processes through which organizational leaders formulate, implement, evaluate, and refine institutional policies that guide organizational practices, decision-making, and long-term institutional development. Within this context, leadership is increasingly recognized as one of the most influential factors determining the success of policy development and organizational development, because organizational change is fundamentally driven by people rather than by systems alone.

Policy development and organizational development are not limited to structural or administrative improvements but also encompass continuous efforts to enhance institutional effectiveness through human resource development, organizational culture, and adaptive management practices. But also encompasses continuous efforts to enhance institutional effectiveness through human resource development, organizational culture, and adaptive management practices. In educational institutions, In educational institutions, leadership serves as the primary mechanism for formulating, implementing, and refining organizational policies while integrating organizational elements into a coherent system capable of responding to internal and external challenges. Previous studies have emphasized that effective organizational development requires leaders who are able to formulate strategic directions, empower organizational members, and cultivate a collaborative organizational climate that supports sustainable institutional improvement.(Abijaya, Wildanu, and Jamaludin 2021)

Leadership plays a strategic role in directing policy development and organizational development by establishing institutional vision, formulating organizational policies, mobilizing organizational members, facilitating collaboration, and creating conditions that encourage continuous improvement. Beyond administrative

responsibilities, effective leaders are expected to develop human resources, strengthen organizational culture, encourage innovation, and ensure that organizational goals remain aligned with institutional values. In Islamic educational organizations, these responsibilities become even more significant because leadership is expected not only to achieve organizational effectiveness but also to preserve Islamic values as the foundation for educational processes and institutional development.

In addition, leadership in educational organizations functions as a catalyst for organizational change by encouraging participation, strengthening institutional commitment, and fostering a culture of continuous learning. Leaders who successfully integrate managerial competence with ethical values are better positioned to improve organizational performance and ensure the long-term sustainability of educational institutions. This perspective is particularly relevant to Islamic educational organizations, where organizational development must be aligned with both professional management principles and Islamic moral values. (Sari, Giatman, and Ernawati 2021)

Previous studies have consistently demonstrated the important contribution of leadership to various aspects of educational organizations. Existing research has examined leadership in relation to school effectiveness, educational quality, organizational culture, teacher performance, transformational leadership, instructional leadership, and institutional management. (Sa'adah, Ainol, and Izzah, n.d.) These studies generally conclude that effective leadership contributes significantly to improving organizational performance, strengthening institutional culture, and enhancing educational outcomes. Recent studies have also emphasized that leadership supports maintaining institutional values and organizational continuity through strategic planning, policy formulation, collaborative decision-making, and continuous organizational improvement.

Although previous studies have provided valuable insights into educational leadership, most discussions remain concentrated on leadership styles, school effectiveness, instructional leadership, organizational culture, or educational quality. Comparatively fewer studies have examined leadership from the perspective of policy development and organizational development, particularly within Islamic educational organizations, where institutional development depends not only on managerial effectiveness but also on leaders' ability to formulate, implement, and sustain organizational policies grounded in Islamic values. Existing studies also tend to examine

leadership, organizational development, and policy processes separately, leaving limited understanding of how leadership simultaneously contributes to organizational policy development, organizational development, and the cultivation of organizational culture within Islamic educational organizations.

Addressing this gap, the present study explores the role of leadership in the development of policies and organizational development within Islamic educational organizations. Through the perspectives of organizational leaders The findings are expected to contribute both theoretically and practically.. Rather than focusing solely on leadership styles or managerial functions, this research investigates how leadership is understood, practiced, and experienced in supporting policy development, organizational development, and organizational capacity. Specifically, the study examines leadership meanings, policy and organizational development strategies, and leadership practices that contribute to strengthening organizational capacity within Islamic educational organizations.

Expected contributions of this study extend to both theoretical and practical domains. Theoretically, this study extends current discussions on educational leadership by integrating leadership, policy development, organizational development, and Islamic educational contexts into a comprehensive analytical framework. Practically, the findings provide insights for educational leaders regarding leadership practices that support policy development, organizational development, and the management of organizational challenges while maintaining the distinctive values of Islamic educational organizations.

METHOD

Qualitative research was conducted to explore the role of leadership in policy development and the development of Islamic educational organizations from the perspectives of organizational leaders. Qualitative inquiry was considered appropriate because the study sought to understand participants' experiences, interpretations, and leadership practices within their organizational contexts rather than to measure predetermined variables.

Study involved five leaders from various Islamic educational organizations, each from distinct institutional backgrounds such as an Islamic higher education institution, an Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*), and an Islamic educational foundation (*yayasan*). Each leader served as the principal officer of their respective organization. All participants had over five years of leadership experience and were actively engaged in

institutional governance, strategic planning, policy development and implementation, and organizational development.

Participants were chosen through purposive sampling based on four criteria: holding a formal leadership position within an Islamic educational organization, having at least five years of leadership experience, having direct responsibility for organizational development, institutional policy development, policy implementation, and strategic decision-making, and being willing to participate in an in-depth interview. These criteria ensured that the participants had substantial knowledge and firsthand experience relevant to the research aims.

Qualitative and exploratory nature of this study meant that five participants were sufficient to provide detailed and informative accounts that met the study's analytical goals. The organizations varied in their institutional roles, ranging from higher education to Islamic boarding school education and educational foundation management, thereby offering diverse contexts for exploring leadership practices. The objective was to gain in-depth insights from experienced leaders across different types of Islamic educational organizations rather than achieving statistical representativeness. As such, the findings aim to offer contextual understanding and analytical transferability instead of broad generalizations. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted using an interview guide designed to explore participants' understandings of leadership, organizational policy development, organizational development strategies, leadership practices, and organizational challenges and organizational culture. Semi-structured interviews provided sufficient flexibility for participants to elaborate on their experiences while ensuring consistency across interview sessions. Each interview was audio-recorded with participants' consent and subsequently transcribed verbatim to facilitate systematic analysis.

interview data underwent analysis through reflexive thematic analysis, adhering to the methodological guidelines initially put forth by Braun and Clarke, and subsequently extended by Byrne in 2022. The first author was responsible for the coding and theme development process, which involved rigorous examination of the interview transcripts to cultivate familiarity with the data. This process entailed systematically coding segments of data that were pertinent to the research objectives and organizing them into preliminary themes. These themes were then subjected to iterative reviews, refinements, and precise definitions in order to maintain conceptual coherence and analytical

reliability. Aligned with the foundational principles of reflexive thematic analysis, the researcher maintained a reflexive posture throughout the analytical process. This involved continuous re-evaluation of the interview transcripts, meticulous documentation of analytical reflections, and a critical assessment of how personal interpretations influenced the evolution of codes and themes. The generation of codes, refinement of themes, and their naming were driven by sustained interaction with the data rather than relying solely on objective validation. Regular discussions among the research team served as a means to challenge initial interpretations, enhance conceptual precision, and ensure the resultant themes were deeply rooted in the participants' narratives while acknowledging the interpretive engagement of the researcher as outlined by Byrne in 2022.(Byrne 2022)

Research trustworthiness was enhanced through careful verification of the interview transcripts against the original audio recordings, repeated examination of the data, and regular discussions among the research team throughout the analytical process. Transcript verification was conducted to ensure that all interview data were accurately transcribed and faithfully reflected participants' responses. This verification process did not result in any substantive revisions to the interview data or the emerging themes. In addition, regular discussions among the research team were undertaken to critically review the coding process, challenge emerging interpretations, and refine the thematic structure. These procedures strengthened the credibility, consistency, and interpretability of the findings while ensuring that the analysis remained firmly grounded in the interview data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Understanding Leadership in Policy Development of Islamic Educational Organizations

Leadership constitutes a fundamental element in policy development and organizational development within Islamic educational organizations, as it determines not only how organizational goals are achieved but also how institutional values are translated into policies, maintained, and continuously strengthened. Within the context of Islamic educational organizations, Within the context of Islamic educational organizations, leadership extends beyond managerial and administrative responsibilities to encompass moral responsibility, organizational commitment, and the capacity to

formulate and implement organizational policies that support sustainable organizational growth. The way leaders understand leadership influences their approaches to policy formulation, decision-making, human resource development, organizational culture, and institutional transformation. Exploring leaders' perspectives on the meaning of leadership therefore provides an essential foundation for understanding how leadership practices contribute to policy development and organizational development.

Interview findings highlight that participants consistently viewed leadership as an amanah, anchored in moral and spiritual responsibility, rather than as organizational authority. One participant linked leadership to the prophetic teaching *kullukum rā'in wa kullukum mas'ūlun 'an ra'yyatih*, underscoring the accountability every leader has for those they oversee (I2). This sentiment was echoed by another who described leadership as a significant trust that requires continuous worship, sincere prayer, and reliance on Allah, dismissing the notion of leadership as a personal privilege or a means of exerting power over others (I3). Another participant stressed that leadership also involves recognizing, developing, and utilizing the talents of organizational members to achieve institutional goals (I5). Across participants, the fundamental understanding of leadership as an amanah remained highly consistent despite their different organizational contexts, including Islamic higher education, Islamic boarding schools, and educational foundations. Rather than reflecting contrasting interpretations, participants emphasized different dimensions of the same underlying concept. While some highlighted spiritual accountability before Allah, others placed greater emphasis on ethical responsibility toward organizational members and the development of human potential. These complementary perspectives suggest that amanah functions as a shared normative foundation of leadership across Islamic educational organizations, with contextual differences influencing the aspects that leaders prioritized rather than altering the core meaning of leadership itself. This finding demonstrates that leadership legitimacy within Islamic educational organizations is primarily derived from moral integrity and religious responsibility, regardless of institutional setting. This shared understanding also provides the ethical foundation through which leaders formulate, implement, and evaluate organizational policies consistent with Islamic values and institutional objectives.

Prophetic leadership theory provides an important lens for interpreting these findings by emphasizing that leadership extends beyond managerial authority through

the integration of spiritual values, ethical responsibility, and professional competence.(Asriyah 2024) Likewise, previous studies describe prophetic leadership through the principles of *ṣidq*, *amānah*, *tabligh*, and *faṭānah*, while highlighting justice, compassion, *shūrā*, and wisdom as essential foundations of effective leadership in Islamic educational institutions.(Hakim and Zahra 2024) Research on servant leadership similarly emphasizes service, empathy, collaboration, and member empowerment as key drivers of organizational effectiveness.(Arifandi et al. 2024) current research advances existing theoretical frameworks by illustrating that participants did not view *amanah* as merely one among various desirable leadership traits. Rather, they consistently identified *amanah* as the fundamental principle underpinning leadership duties, organizational decision-making, human resource development, and institutional governance. This shared understanding was evident across diverse organizational contexts, such as Islamic higher education institutions, Islamic boarding schools, and educational foundations. The participants emphasized various practical aspects of *amanah*, which included accountability before Allah and the ethical development of organizational members. This indicates that within Islamic educational organizations, *amanah* transcends an individual moral virtue to serve as a comprehensive Accordingly, these findings extend existing leadership theories by demonstrating that Islamic ethical principles are operationalized not only as normative leadership qualities but also as guiding principles for institutional policy development, policy implementation, organizational governance, and institutional decision-making within Islamic educational organizations.

Participants also consistently emphasized that leadership competence develops through continuous organizational experience rather than emerging spontaneously. One participant explained that effective leadership is formed through gradual involvement in organizational activities, beginning with simple responsibilities before progressing to more complex leadership roles. According to this participant, previous organizational experiences provide opportunities to develop problem-solving skills, decision-making abilities, interpersonal competence, and the capacity to formulate and implement organizational policies that later become essential for leading larger organizations (I1). Another participant strengthened this perspective by explaining that direct experience in establishing and developing an educational institution from its earliest stages served as the most valuable source of leadership maturity. Leadership, Leadership, from this perspective, requires continuous adaptation because organizational needs, institutional

policies, and organizational priorities evolve alongside institutional growth (I4). Similar experiences were expressed by another participant, who recalled that serving as a student council president during high school became an important starting point for learning organizational management, decision-making, and program planning before assuming greater leadership responsibilities (I5). These convergent findings suggest that leadership is regarded as a developmental process shaped through continuous organizational engagement, reflective learning, practical experience, and active involvement in organizational policy development and implementation, rather than through academic achievement or formal authority alone..

Organizational development theory supports this interpretation by emphasizing that development perspective, which emphasizes that effective organizational development depends on recognizing the role of every organizational member and fostering an open, collaborative culture that encourages participation, communication, and shared learning. Such an environment enables individuals to acquire leadership competencies through continuous interaction, collective problem-solving, participation in policy formulation, and organizational experience rather than through formal authority alone.(Lukman Hakim and Sujudi 2024)

Organizational development literature also explains that leadership capacity evolves through systematic developmental processes involving team formation, collaborative discussion, policy formulation, alignment of shared objectives, program implementation, policy implementation, and continuous monitoring and evaluation. These sequential stages reinforce the present findings by demonstrating that leadership competence is gradually constructed through organizational participation, practical experience, and continuous organizational learning rather than emerging instantaneously.(Ananda et al. 2024)

Previous studies conceptualize Islamic educational leadership as the integration of ethical responsibility, organizational learning, and professional management, where leadership effectiveness depends upon balancing spiritual values with organizational competence. Collectively, both the interview findings and previous studies indicate that leadership in Islamic educational organizations is constructed through the integration of prophetic values, organizational experience, and professional management, which together strengthen leaders' capacity to formulate, implement, and refine organizational policies while supporting sustainable organizational development.

course of The thematic analysis identified three overarching themes related to leadership in policy development and organizational development within Islamic educational organizations: Understanding Leadership, Leadership Strategies for Policy and Organizational Development, and Leadership in Managing Organizational Challenges and Building Organizational Culture. This section focuses on the first theme, Understanding Leadership, which is segmented into three interconnected subthemes. The initial subtheme frames leadership as amanah and service, highlighting it as a moral obligation geared towards organizational advancement rather than individual power. The subsequent subtheme underscores organizational experience as the cornerstone of leadership development, demonstrating how active participation in organizational affairs cultivates leadership aptitudes and informed decision-making. The final subtheme delineates the attributes of effective leadership, focusing on integrity, exemplary behavior, communication, collaboration, and the capacity to inspire organizational members. These subthemes collectively illustrate that leadership in Islamic educational organizations is perceived as a comprehensive construct that harmonizes spiritual principles, experiential learning within organizations, and managerial proficiency. This serves as the conceptual groundwork for the leadership strategies and perceived organizational outcomes explored in the ensuing sections.

Characteristics of ideal leadership were consistently articulated by the participants through complementary perspectives on spiritual values and organizational management. One participant explained that ideal leadership integrates spiritual values with professional management by positioning the Prophet Muhammad as the principal role model (*qudwah*), while emphasizing firmness, compassion, clear organizational vision, and harmonious relationships established through consultation and openness to constructive criticism (I4). Another participant reinforced this perspective by emphasizing that ideal leaders should consistently adhere to the Prophet's Sunnah, maintain personal piety through worship and prayer, avoid arrogance and excessive ambition, and simultaneously establish professional organizational systems that remain adaptive to changing organizational circumstances (I3). Taken together, these perspectives illustrate that effective leadership is understood as the integration of exemplary moral character, professional managerial competence, organizational adaptability, and spiritual commitment. Such findings indicate that participants perceive

successful leadership not as the dominance of managerial authority but as the ability to harmonize Islamic ethical principles with effective organizational governance.

Studies on visionary leadership in Islamic education further reinforce this interpretation by arguing that effective leaders integrate strategic vision with professional competence to achieve sustainable institutional development while maintaining Islamic educational values.(Arsyad et al. 2026) Previous studies also emphasize that Islamic educational leadership requires leaders to perform educational, managerial, motivational, and exemplary functions simultaneously in order to achieve institutional goals effectively.(Ramadhani, Efendi, and Aziz 2025)

Leadership in Developing Human Capital and Organizational Quality in Islamic Educational Organizations

Leadership in organizational development is reflected not only in leaders' understanding of leadership but also in their ability to formulate, implement, and refine organizational policies and leadership strategies that strengthen organizational capacity and support institutional development.(Hadi, n.d.) The interview findings indicate that organizational development is carried out through various interconnected leadership practices aimed at improving organizational effectiveness, developing organizational members, and creating an environment that supports continuous improvement. Rather than relying solely on administrative authority, participants described organizational development as a collaborative process requiring clear organizational policies, strategic planning, human resource development, stakeholder engagement, and continuous organizational evaluation. These findings suggest that leadership serves as a driving force that transforms organizational vision into concrete actions supporting long-term organizational growth.

Establishing a shared organizational vision emerged as the starting point of strategic organizational development with establishing a shared organizational vision. One participant explained that all organizational members must first develop a common understanding of the organization's vision and mission before carrying out their respective responsibilities. Individual interests should not override organizational objectives, as collective commitment becomes the foundation for achieving institutional goals (I1). Another participant reinforced this perspective by emphasizing that organizational quality depends on a clearly defined vision that functions as a compass guiding every organizational activity. Leadership, from this perspective, requires

translating the organizational vision into concrete strategies through systematic planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation while ensuring that every program remains aligned with institutional priorities (I4). A complementary perspective was provided by another participant, who highlighted that sustainable organizational development also depends on establishing clear organizational systems, including standard operating procedures, well-defined responsibilities, and structured organizational support. Such systems ensure organizational continuity regardless of leadership succession because institutional performance depends upon standardized organizational mechanisms rather than individual leaders. This finding reinforces the importance of institutionalizing organizational processes to maintain long-term maintaining institutional values and organizational continuity through. (I3). These findings demonstrate that strategic organizational development within Islamic educational organizations is achieved not merely through managerial mechanisms such as shared vision, policy formulation, systematic planning, governance, and continuous evaluation, but through aligning these organizational policies and practices with Islamic ethical values that emphasize amanah, collective responsibility, and institutional service. Rather than functioning solely as managerial tools, these strategies were understood by participants as mechanisms for sustaining the religious mission and moral purpose of the organization alongside its institutional development.

Effective leadership also strengthens organizational performance by improving members' competencies through continuous motivation, supervision, capacity development, and the implementation of institutional policies that support organizational learning and professional growth, demonstrating that organizational effectiveness depends on both institutional systems and human resource quality.(Haqiqy and Muttaqin 2024) Research on organizational culture similarly emphasizes that sustainable organizational development requires continuous learning, innovation, institutional knowledge sharing, and supportive organizational policies to strengthen organizational capacity over time.(Nuha, Rohhani, and Affan 2026)

Previous studies emphasize that successful organizational development depends not merely on implementing organizational programs but on achieving strategic alignment between organizational vision, leadership, and institutional capacity. Effective strategic planning enables leaders to translate organizational goals into coordinated actions through the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of institutional policies,

while ensuring that organizational systems and human resource development remain aligned with long-term institutional objectives.(Nurristianto, Mahmud, and Muaddin 2026) Successful organizational change also requires leaders who possess multidimensional competencies encompassing intellectual, emotional, and spiritual intelligence. These competencies enable leaders to formulate appropriate strategies, develop responsive organizational policies, build effective communication, manage organizational change, and uphold ethical responsibility throughout the organizational development process.(Purwanto and Hasim 2023)

Organizational development was further described effective communication and organizational commitment are widely recognized as essential leadership practices, participants described these processes as being shaped by Islamic organizational values. Participants further indicated that effective communication facilitated the formulation and implementation of organizational policies by promoting mutual understanding, consultation (shūrā), and collective commitment among organizational members. Likewise, organizational commitment extended beyond contractual obligations, reflecting a shared commitment to serving the institution as a form of religious and moral responsibility. One participant explained that commitment is maintained through regular formal evaluations supported by routine reporting mechanisms as well as informal interactions that strengthen interpersonal relationships among organizational members. Such practices enable leaders to monitor organizational performance, evaluate the implementation of organizational policies, identify challenges, and coordinate appropriate solutions (I1). Another participant expanded this perspective by explaining that long-term organizational commitment begins with recruiting individuals who share similar educational backgrounds and organizational values Leadership, in this context, involves delegating authority, avoiding excessive managerial intervention, maintaining structured communication channels, implementing policies that reflect shared organizational values, and ensuring members' welfare to foster long-term loyalty and organizational cohesion (I4). A similar emphasis was expressed by another participant, who identified effective communication as the primary factor supporting organizational development. According to this participant, communication enables leaders to identify members' strengths, understand difficulties encountered during task implementation, provide constructive feedback, refine organizational policies when necessary, and develop appropriate solutions to ensure that organizational objectives continue to be

achieved (15). These convergent perspectives indicate that organizational development extends beyond managerial planning by incorporating leadership practices that strengthen communication, build organizational commitment, empower members, and cultivate collective responsibility throughout the organization.

Previous studies indicate that organizational development aims to improve organizational effectiveness by maximizing the potential of organizational members both individually and collectively as part of a collaborative team. Leadership effectiveness therefore depends not only on managerial direction but also on the leader's ability to understand members' capabilities, respond to changing organizational conditions, and implement management strategies and organizational policies that correspond to organizational needs.(Rahayu et al. 2025) Existing literature further emphasizes that these efforts contribute to the development of a positive organizational culture characterized by effective communication, collaboration, mutual trust, and a strong sense of organizational belonging.(Hindarsih and Ratnaningsih 2025) Such an environment encourages member motivation, facilitates adaptation to organizational change, supports the effective implementation of organizational policies, and creates opportunities for reflective dialogue and constructive feedback as essential mechanisms for continuous organizational learning and improvement.(Rosemaulidya and Rindaningsih 2025)

An analysis of the interview findings revealed two closely related dimensions of leadership in policy development and organizational development within Islamic educational organizations. The first dimension pertains to strategies for organizational development, emphasizing the importance of shared vision, strategic planning, governance, policy formulation, and ongoing evaluation. The second dimension centers on the development of human capital, highlighting the role of leadership in enhancing members' competencies, strengthening organizational commitment, encouraging participation, and fostering continuous learning. Together, these dimensions demonstrate that leadership contributes to organizational development through the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of organizational policies, the strengthening of human capital, and the integration of Islamic values into strategic management practices. Rather than treating policies merely as administrative instruments, participants viewed them as mechanisms for translating institutional vision into organizational action while preserving the religious mission and educational objectives of the institution.

Leadership in Managing Organizational Challenges and Building Organizational Culture

Beyond organizational development strategies, participants characterized leadership as the process of formulating, implementing, and refining organizational policies, addressing organizational challenges, and simultaneously nurturing a culture rooted in Islamic values.(Azzuhri and Nuha 2025) Instead of depending exclusively on managerial authority, leaders highlighted the importance of ethical decision-making, shared responsibility, openness to dialogue, and an emphasis on institutional learning as vital practices for tackling organizational challenges and reinforcing organizational culture. These insights elucidate the manner in which leadership is executed in managing intricate organizational scenarios within Islamic educational institutions.

Ethically grounded decision making represents one of the most significant outcomes of leadership within Islamic educational organizations. One participant emphasized that difficult decisions should never contradict religious principles, social norms, or justice, even when such decisions involve sensitive matters such as dismissing organizational members whose actions cause greater harm to the institution (I2). Another participant reinforced this perspective by explaining that complex organizational problems should first be understood through careful identification of their root causes and comprehensive data collection before appropriate decisions are made, ensuring that every decision is based on objective consideration rather than personal assumptions (I3).

Managing organizational challenge a broader organizational perspective was presented by another participant, who explained that strategic decisions are formulated through collective-collegial leadership in which major organizational issues are resolved through consultation among institutional founders. Experiences such as establishing a women's campus despite financial and administrative limitations and adapting educational activities during the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrate leadership's ability to combine courage, creativity, and collective responsibility in responding to institutional challenges (I4). Similar considerations were expressed by another participant, who described the difficult decision to replace an organizational member whose performance no longer supported institutional objectives. Although such decisions involved emotional challenges, organizational benefit (*maslahah*) remained the principal consideration in determining the final course of action (I5). These convergent perspectives indicate that

leadership decisions, particularly those related to the formulation and implementation of organizational policies, are shaped by ethical accountability, collective deliberation, evidence-based judgment, and commitment to safeguarding the long-term interests of the organization rather than accommodating individual preferences.

Previous studies on transformational leadership indicate that participatory decision-making, collaborative teamwork, and effective conflict resolution strengthen organizational decision-making and collective responsibility. Involving organizational members in important decisions enhances their sense of ownership, increases organizational commitment, and creates a collaborative environment that supports effective organizational governance. Such leadership practices reinforce the present findings by demonstrating that ethical and participatory decision-making provides an important foundation for organizational policy development, collaborative governance, and institutional adaptation within Islamic educational organizations.(Mubasyiroh and Muttaqin 2024)

Organizational culture also emerges as an important outcome of leadership practices within Islamic educational organizations. One participant described efforts to strengthen student engagement through the implementation of the Diploma Supplement (*Surat Keterangan Pendamping Ijazah*), which was successfully integrated into the institutional academic information system. The development of this system required systematic planning, cross-functional collaboration, and continuous evaluation while encouraging students to participate more actively in organizational activities and improve their competencies (15). Another participant emphasized that a healthy organizational culture is cultivated through disciplined communication, routine consultation meetings, openness to criticism, and transparent documentation of organizational decisions and institutional policies. Such practices create opportunities for organizational members to communicate challenges, exchange ideas, and collectively formulate solutions while reinforcing organizational trust and accountability (14). These findings suggest that leadership shapes organizational culture by institutionalizing communication, transparency, collaboration, continuous learning, and value-based organizational policies as essential elements of everyday organizational practice.

Islamic educational leadership literature further indicates that organizational culture becomes stronger when leaders consistently reinforce religious values through daily organizational practices and value-based institutional policies, thereby integrating

institutional culture with moral development.(Muhammad et al. 2026) Total quality management literature also emphasizes that continuous evaluation, quality assurance, and stakeholder participation strengthen organizational culture and institutional performance.(Nuha, n.d.)

Organizational behavior theory explains that organizational effectiveness depends on leaders' ability to cultivate communication, collaboration, problem-solving, decision-making, and motivation throughout the organization. Organizational culture, organizational policies, and organizational structures collectively influence how members behave, implement institutional policies, and contribute to institutional performance. Such an environment strengthens organizational effectiveness while fostering greater organizational commitment and member satisfaction.(Anistianingsih, Anwar, and Jamrizal 2024) Evidence from previous studies further indicates that servant leadership strengthens organizational citizenship behavior by fostering supportive relationships, empathy, emotional intelligence, and job satisfaction among organizational members. Leadership practices characterized by care, trust, and appreciation encourage members to voluntarily contribute beyond their formal responsibilities, thereby reinforcing collaboration, organizational commitment, and collective responsibility.(Saud G Albeshir 2024) These findings extend previous leadership studies by demonstrating that leaders in Islamic educational organizations do not merely address managerial challenges but frame organizational decision-making through Islamic ethical principles such as amanah, shūrā, and maslahah. Consequently, organizational culture and organizational policies are constructed not only through formal organizational systems but also through everyday leadership practices grounded in shared religious values and collective responsibility.(Fikry and Suratman 2026)

Participants highlighted that managing organizational challenges demands leadership that preserves institutional values and ensures organizational integrity. One participant noted that members should be encouraged to express different viewpoints, provided their arguments are grounded in logic and supported by evidence. In this setting, leadership involves being open to constructive disagreement while taking responsibility for final decisions (I5). Another participant highlighted the importance of consistently upholding the institutional vision through objective oversight, steady guidance, and appropriate disciplinary actions when values are compromised. Leadership should remain impartial while ensuring that organizational policies are

implemented fairly through transparent and equitable governance (14). Collectively, these views suggest that participants see effective leadership in handling organizational challenges as a balance of participation, accountability, adaptability, and discipline, all while protecting the institution's core values. They emphasized that these challenges should be addressed through ethical leadership practices and value-based organizational policies rooted in fairness and a strong commitment to the institution's educational mission, rather than being viewed merely as managerial issues.

Previous studies further argue that institutional sustainability depends on maintaining organizational values through sustainable institutional policies and character education, allowing institutions to adapt to changing environments without compromising their core identity.(Nuha and Afandi 2022) also explain that sustainable organizational effectiveness depends on the interaction between leadership, organizational culture, and organizational climate, all of which collectively strengthen organizational adaptability and long-term institutional performance.(Saputra, Pranoto, and Ali 2021)

Overall, these findings indicate that participants perceive effective leadership as the capacity to formulate and implement organizational policies while navigating organizational challenges and fostering a culture rooted in ethical decision-making, collaboration, transparency, and shared responsibility. Rather than viewing policies as merely administrative instruments, participants understood organizational policies as strategic and ethical mechanisms for translating Islamic values into everyday organizational practices. Consequently, leadership was perceived not only as managerial authority but also as the capacity to formulate, implement, and continuously refine value-based organizational policies that reinforce institutional integrity and support the educational mission of Islamic educational organizations.

Figure 1 presents an interpretative conceptual framework that synthesizes the interview findings with theories of leadership, policy development, organizational development, and organizational culture. Rather than representing an empirically tested model, the framework illustrates the conceptual relationships among the three overarching themes identified in this study. It demonstrates how participants understood leadership as the ethical foundation for formulating, implementing, and refining organizational policies, strengthening organizational capacity, managing organizational challenges, and building organizational culture within Islamic educational organizations.

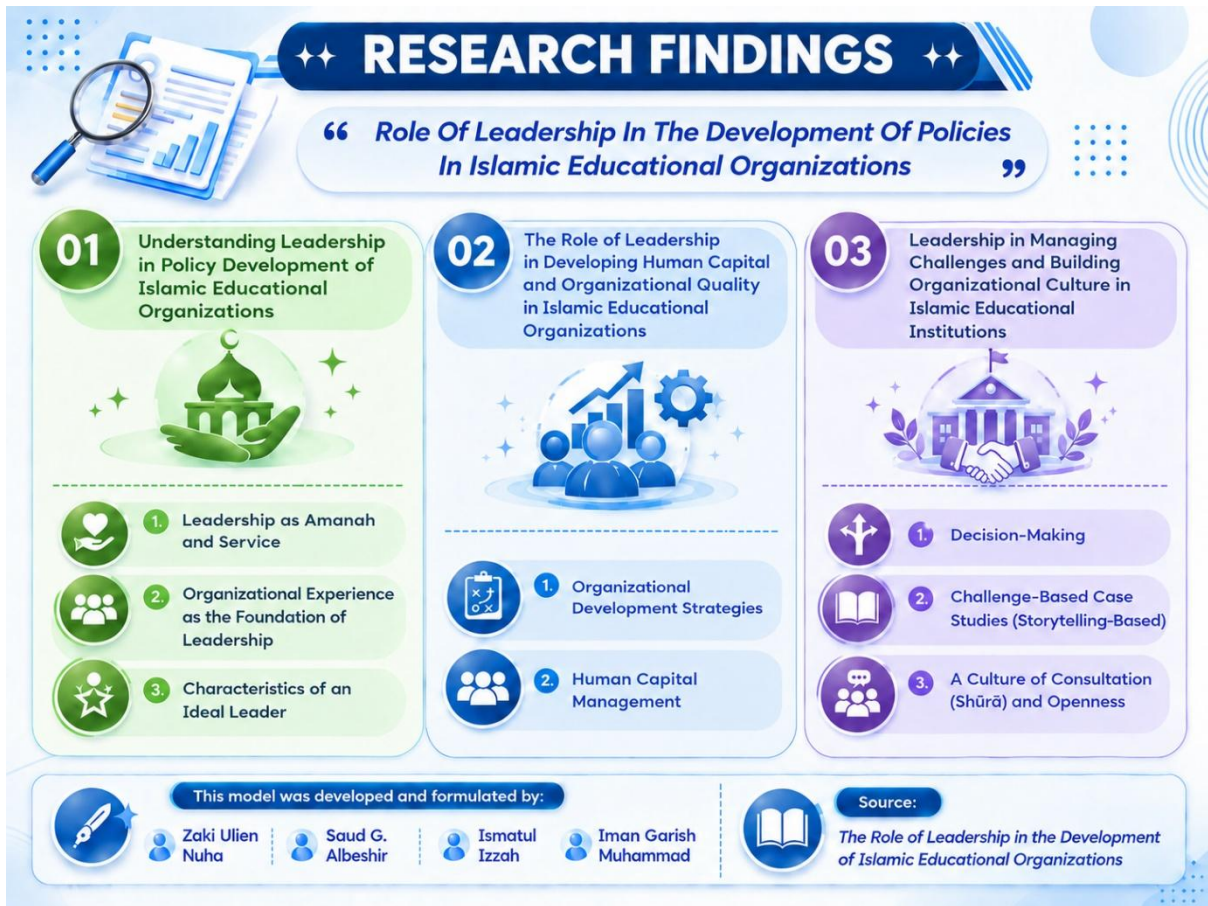


Figure 1. Integrated Framework of Leadership in the Development of Policies in Islamic Educational Organizations

CONCLUSION

Leadership in Islamic educational organizations extends beyond managerial authority to become a value-driven process that integrates spiritual responsibility, organizational competence, professional governance, and organizational policy development. Leadership is understood as an amanah that requires accountability before Allah, commitment to organizational members, and responsibility for achieving institutional goals. Participants also emphasized that leadership competence develops through continuous organizational experience and practical engagement, enabling leaders to formulate and implement organizational policies that remain aligned with Islamic values and institutional objectives.

The findings further indicate that leadership contributes to organizational development through the formulation and implementation of organizational policies that strengthen institutional systems, human capital, and organizational quality. Establishing

a shared vision, strategic planning, human capital development, effective communication, organizational commitment, and continuous evaluation were perceived as interconnected leadership practices that support organizational improvement. Participants also highlighted that leadership plays an important role in managing organizational challenges and building organizational culture through ethical decision-making, collaborative governance, transparency, and shared responsibility. Rather than viewing organizational policies as merely administrative instruments, participants perceived them as mechanisms for translating Islamic values into everyday organizational practices and institutional governance.

The findings of this study suggest that leadership in Islamic educational organizations is perceived as a comprehensive process encompassing ethical and spiritual responsibility, organizational policy development, human capital development, organizational quality improvement, the management of organizational challenges, and the cultivation of organizational culture grounded in Islamic values. These conclusions should be interpreted within the context of the five purposively selected leaders who participated in the study. Accordingly, the findings are intended to provide contextual and analytically transferable insights rather than universally generalizable conclusions. The study is limited by the relatively small number of participants and the specific organizational settings represented. Future research may extend this work by examining leadership and policy development across a broader range of Islamic educational institutions or by employing comparative and mixed-method approaches to further explore how leadership shapes organizational policies and practices in diverse institutional contexts.

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