

## Islamic School Leadership Model: The Challenge in Digital Era

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to obtain a leadership model in Islamic schools in the digital era. The principal's leadership must be able to face today's global challenges and be by the character of Islamic schools. The gap in this study related to the role of the leader is very influential on the sustainability of all activities in school institutions, and the needs of the current context provide different demands. The research method uses descriptive qualitative through surveys. Data collection techniques using observation and interviews. The research was conducted in 5 Islamic elementary schools in Ampenan Mataram District. Data analysis uses three stages, namely 1) the reduction stage is carried out by the process of data categorization and data collection. 2) The stage of presenting data, articles and observations that have been obtained is entered into a work table that has been prepared and then analyzed. 3) The conclusion drawing stage is carried out after the data analysis process is complete. The results of the study indicate that the leadership model in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in the digital era has a character that is quite by the needs in the context of globalization. The leadership characteristics possessed are transformative, managerial, collaborative, democratic, participatory, upholding morals and religious values. Leadership is also open to various changes in science and technology so that schools lead schools according to the context of the needs of the global era and digital technology

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The global environment, which is characterized by increasingly complex situations, conditions, challenges and demands, is always changing, full of uncertainty and often even unfriendly, demands solid leaders and leadership, and can anticipate future developments. Therefore, organizational development in educational institutions or non-academic organizations is the task of a leader and his leadership. In other words, a leader's leadership is very instrumental in developing the organization and can meet the challenges of the millennial century. The leadership factor is important and dominant

for the organization in determining the success or failure of the organization. Leaders also become the right barometer or guide for a change that has been planned or carried out by the organization.

Moreover, with the increasingly changing times and changes in technology and science, the organization demands a qualified leadership concept. An understanding of leadership leads to using the power or power that a person has in an association in society or organization and causes changes in the way of life of the community concerned. Thus, the dynamics of leadership can change and develop according to the dynamic situation of human life. In addition, the components in leadership, in the form of styles, attitudes and others, become supporters of the running of organizational processes.

Leadership is a unique human problem. This is because leadership problems are not only related to human life as individuals but as social beings. Therefore, each leadership process has its uniqueness and cannot be separated from human conditions and values. The uniqueness of the leadership problem is related to the uniqueness of the human being himself, many issues that need to be understood if someone wants to be a good and effective leader. Especially for educational institutions, the principal as the top leader has a big role.

The era of globalization with advances in science, technology, and changes in the demands of the quality of resources has given challenges to leaders or principals in meeting these needs. Observations and discussions with teachers and the committee of 5 Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Ampenan District in the period January - May 2021 show that the principal, as the top leader, faces major challenges to the needs of education. Principals must demonstrate their leadership model in positioning schools for the future and supporting and empowering staff and students in the pursuit of teaching and learning excellence. This means that the principal at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah must be able to demonstrate a leadership style that is relevant to the concept of an Islamic educational institution but can deal with changes and advances in science with technology.

Therefore, this research focuses on studying leadership models in Islamic schools that can be relevant and harmonious in dealing with advances in digital technology. Leadership is not only about carrying out the wheels of organizational management by the duties and responsibilities but leadership that can have different characteristics according to the times. Moreover, Islamic educational institutions have a vision and mission that is oriented to scientific progress in general and produces graduates who have Islamic beliefs or religious values relevant to today's global needs. This is a form of novelty that wants to be studied from the perspective of the principal as the main leader and the perspective of teachers and school committees. This means that the leadership model that you want to study is appropriate to the background and character of Islamic schools as well as digital challenges. Currently, a leader must have the ability to plan and organize digital leadership programs and can help improve student academic performance, despite the COVID-19 pandemic crisis (Hafiza Hamzah, Khalid, & Wahab, 2021)

Previous research shows that leaders in schools must be able to have the skills to face the present and the future (Adams, Yoon Mooi, & Muniandy, 2020). It means that pesantren leaders (kyai) and school principals must pay attention to the competency needs of teachers to carry out learning activities (Hanafi et al., 2021). The kyai's leadership model puts forward a balanced value between general knowledge and religion (Alam, 2018; Ezzani et al., 2021). Kyai also often demonstrate a democratic leadership style (Salis, 2020). Early and contemporary ideas about educational leadership from an Islamic perspective suggest visionary leaders, servant leaders, guide leaders, influential leaders and educative leaders (Jubran, 2015)

However, the leadership model can also be influenced by the developmental age of each leader (Rudolph, Rauvola, & Zacher, 2018). Leadership is not only limited to positions (Sharar & Nawab, 2020). A good principal must positively influence all school members by encouraging them to work together to develop the school. The role of the principal as a leader is very important, especially in helping school residents improve the quality of education and shape the religious character of school residents. Effective principals not only act as successful teachers who can be imitated by others but also as leaders who are respected for their leadership and good behaviour (Novebri & Oktarina, 2021). Even today, leaders have also been shown a lot through social media (Matthews, Matthews, Wang, & Kelemen, 2021) and also often collaborate with the use of digital technology (Parsons et al., 2015).

Previous research has explained that the gap in this study related to the role of the leader is very influential on the sustainability of all activities in school institutions, and the needs of the current context provide different demands. Therefore, this research raises novelties related to examining more deeply the leadership model in Islamic schools. This leadership model is analyzed in the context of digital challenges that have dominated and influenced education delivery. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to obtain a model of leadership in Islamic schools related to the context of digital technology. Thus, this research is expected to provide benefits and contributions to the development of leadership models in Islamic educational institutions. This model can be a reference for school principals to become leaders relevant to the development of social life in society, science and technology.

## 2. METHODS

The research method uses descriptive qualitative through surveys. Qualitative descriptions are labels used in qualitative research for descriptive studies. The features that describe descriptive qualitative research are that researchers generally draw from a naturalistic perspective and examine a phenomenon in its natural state, facilitating flexibility in commitment to a theory or framework when designing and conducting research. Data collection strategies typically involve individual and/or focus group interviews. with a minimal semi-structured interview guide (Kim, Sefcik, & Bradway, 2017). This study focuses on analyzing phenomena related to the concept of leadership models in Islamic schools in the era of advances in digital technology.

Data collection techniques using observation and interviews. Observations were made through observing the attitudes and behaviour of school principals in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah in Ampenan District, Mataram. There are 5 Madrasah Ibtidaiyah which are the objects of research. Meanwhile, interviews were conducted with 5 principals related to their leadership model in the current digital era, teacher and school committee (M=27 and F=23). Data analysis used three stages, namely 1) the reduction stage was carried out by the process of data categorization and data collection. 2) The stage of presenting data, articles and observations that have been obtained is entered in a work table prepared and then analyzed. 3) The conclusion drawing stage is carried out after completing the data analysis process (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results of observational data at 5 Madrasah Ibtidaiyah indicate that the principal can determine correctly what must be done. Each of their leadership processes has its uniqueness and cannot be separated from conditions that are human in nature and value. The relationship in the

leadership of the principal at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah has created an effective human relationship. This means that the principal has behaved and behaved dynamically to develop the provision of education by the context of the times and the demands of the quality of education. Furthermore, the principal carries out his duties as a leader with democracy and is in the rules of character values both in Islam and in general. This also creates an effective and dynamic collaboration between fellow school members.

The results of interviews with five principals at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah are described as follows;

*Principal 1: "I try to carry out all my duties and responsibilities in a democratic manner and complete all work by building cooperation among all madrasa residents and on the rules of school management."*

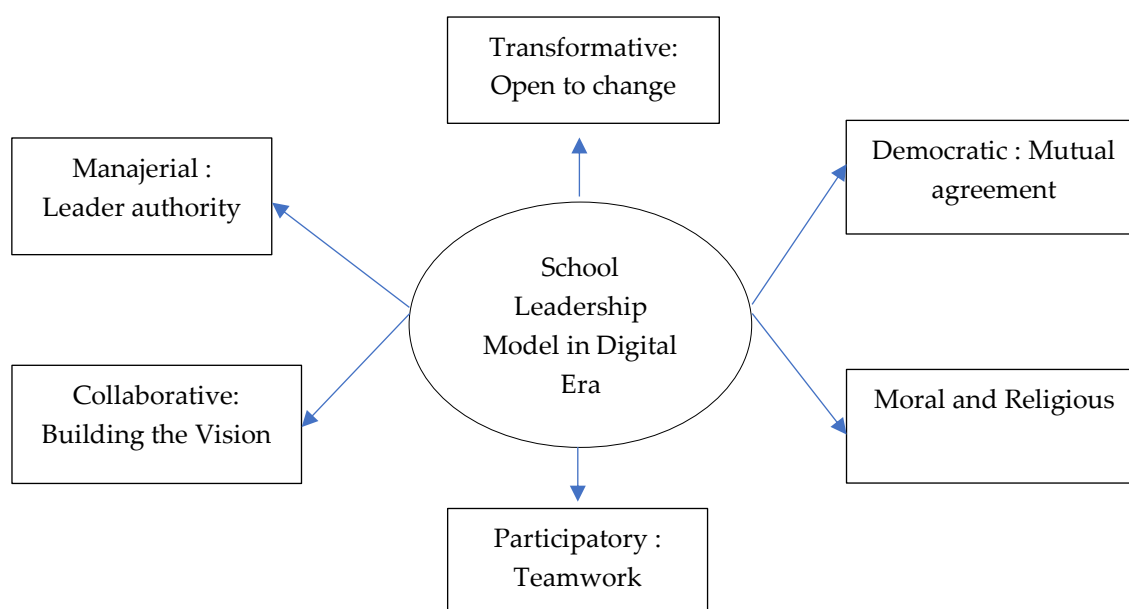
*Principal 2: "I carry out various school leadership activities by the rules that apply at school and participate directly in every job or activity held at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah so that quality education can be implemented according to the demands of the current global era. I am learning to follow the development of scientific knowledge and technology to bring the implementation of education in schools more advanced."*

*Principal 3: "I always strive to be a transformative person in leading Madrasah Ibtidaiyah and following all changes in life in society, the demands of the business world on graduates, and the skills that must be possessed by students. I also complete various teaching and learning implementation facilities with technological devices that are appropriate today, especially in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic."*

*Principal 4: "I designed various competency improvement programs for the quality of teaching staff and education staff by consensus. This means that as a leader, I make decisions based on democratic principles, effective participation of all parties, adhere to religious values and harmony between the values of public knowledge and religious values."*

*Principal 5: "I have built a school's vision and goals that are balanced between public and religious according to the concept of education in madrasas. However, I also continue to support every individual in the school through the practice of important organizational values and by creating a productive school culture. "*

From the results of the digest of interview data, the leadership model in Islamic schools is illustrated in figure 1. Figure 1 shows that the leadership model found by the principals of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah varies, and each leader shows the concept of leadership that follows the changing times so that the schools they lead can compete. In addition, school principals also continue to show moral values in the teachings of Islam. This means that they are aware of kyai leadership in pesantren, which balances general and religious education.



**Figure1. Framework Leadership Model in Islamic Schools**

In managerial leadership, the leader focuses on functions, tasks and behaviour. The principal shows the management of education in an orderly and structured manner. Leaders have authority legitimized by their formal position in the organization and are accountable. Transformative leadership shows a high personal commitment to achieving school goals and progress. They accept and make changes to various educational activities to suit current needs. The leaders also demonstrate the concept of harmonious collaboration with all parties so that various decisions related to the implementation of education are by common interests and environmental needs. This means that school principals have and apply democracy in carrying out their leadership in schools. In addition, the principal's leadership always participates. The schools are participatory oriented in increasing school effectiveness, applying democratic principles, and the context of location-based management. Apart from these characters, schools also remain individuals who uphold moral and religious values. They do this as a bulwark in accepting and making changes from advances in science and technology. Moreover, technological advances have made it easier for schools to access school management information. Schools always use various applications of technology to develop various educational programs.

From these findings, it can be seen that the leadership model in Islamic schools that is relevant to the advancement of digital technology is a leader who can transform and accept change, has a religious personality and understands the context of moral values as an exemplary leader (Hartono, Udin, & Riyanto, 2021). In every move, word, and deed, a good school principal must uphold Islamic values that have been imitated by the Prophet Muhammad through his teachings and sunnah. A good principal must have a positive influence on all school members by encouraging them to work together to develop the school. The role of the principal as a leader is very important, especially in helping school residents improve the quality of education and shape the religious character of school residents. Effective principals not only act as successful teachers who can be imitated by others but also as leaders who are respected for their leadership and good behaviour (Novebri & Oktarina, 2021)

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The data that has been analyzed concludes that the leadership model of Islamic Elementary School in Ampenan Regency in the digital era must be a transformative leader. They are able to own and accept the changing times. In addition, leaders also always manage educational institutions with open, collaborative, democratic, participatory concepts, upholding morals and religious values. So, leaders who are relevant to the advancement of digital technology today have a transformative and democratic nature. However, they also have religious personalities and uphold moral values in carrying out their duties. Thus, they can carry out various collaborations and participate in the organisation's management. The existence of a leader in every institution, including educational institutions, in their duties and functions, is required to have broad wisdom and insight and be skilled in various disciplines. The pattern of leadership will also influence and even determine the progress of an educational institution. Especially in Islamic educational institutions, in addition to having insight and wisdom, a leader is required to be skilled in religious knowledge, able to instil attitudes and views and must be a role model for a good leader. The results of this study have implications for understanding the concept of leadership in the era of globalization. Leaders must accept and adapt to advances in knowledge and technology. So, madrasa principals must be able to make changes to the development of knowledge, especially for the advancement of education. The results of this study can be forwarded by further researchers so that they can explore the context of the quality of education

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