



Innovative Leadership in the Perspective of the Qur'an and Modern Management (Analysis of Leadership Styles, Communication Strategies, and Innovative and Sustainable Organizational Culture)

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Abstract

In the era of globalization and technological development, Islamic education faces major challenges in maintaining Islamic values while adapting to modern managerial strategies. This study aims to analyze the concept of Islamic leadership based on the principles of justice, exemplary, trustworthy, and deliberation, and to compare it with innovative leadership models in modern management. The method used is qualitative research with a literature study approach (library research). Data were obtained from various academic sources, including interpretations of the Qur'an, hadith, and Islamic and modern leadership theories. Content analysis techniques were applied to interpret the meaning of leadership based on Islamic moral principles and their relevance in organizational management. The results of the study indicate that leadership in Islam emphasizes moral and spiritual values, which play an important role in building organizational integrity, trust, and effectiveness. The principle of justice (al-adl) contributes to transparent and ethical decision-making, while exemplary (uswatun hasanah) is key to building a positive work culture. Trustworthy in leadership encourages accountability and responsibility, while deliberation strengthens collective participation in decision-making. Compared to the transformational and innovative leadership models in modern management, Islamic leadership has advantages in the integration of spiritual values with sustainability-oriented leadership practices.

Keywords: Leadership, Innovative, Leadership Style, Communication Strategy, Organizational Culture

Introduction

In the era of globalization and technological development, Islamic education faces challenges in adapting to rapid changes. Leadership in Islamic education is not only aimed at preserving Islamic values but must also be able to adapt modern managerial strategies to enhance the quality of learning. From the perspective of the Qur'an, ideal leadership is that which serves as a model (uswatun hasanah) and applies the principle of consultation (syura) in decision-making (QS. Ali Imran: 159).

On the other hand, the concept of leadership in modern management emphasizes transformative leadership and innovative leadership. Leaders in Islamic education must be able to inspire, provide a clear vision, and create a culture of innovation within the institutions they lead. Recent studies indicate that innovative leadership significantly influences the success of Islamic education in addressing contemporary challenges (Zevas Alif Gibran, 2025). This article will discuss the comparison of innovative leadership concepts from the perspectives of the Qur'an and modern management, as well as how communication strategies, organizational culture, and leadership can promote innovation in Islamic educational institutions.

Leadership is a fundamental concept that continues to evolve alongside social, economic, and cultural changes. In theoretical studies, leadership has undergone significant transformation, shifting from traditional approaches to more complex and multidimensional concepts. A deep understanding of leadership enables the optimization of a leader's role in driving positive change across various organizational contexts (Michael Ba Banutu-Gomez and Ramatoulie Whan Banutu-Gomez, 2024).

The evolution of the concept of leadership is no longer limited to a static approach but has developed into a more dynamic one. Emerging leadership models are oriented toward moral and value-based aspects, including justice, integrity, trustworthiness, and consultation. These four aspects are not only core values in the Islamic leadership system but also contribute to the effectiveness of leadership at the global level.

Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a literature study method (library research) to analyze the concept of leadership in Islam and modern management. Data was obtained from primary and secondary sources, such as the Qur'an, hadith, and Islamic and modern leadership literature. The analysis technique used is content analysis, which aims to interpret the meaning of leadership from various perspectives. A comparative approach is also used to compare Islamic leadership principles with transformative and innovative leadership models in modern management. Additionally, this study highlights the relevance of principles such as justice, exemplary behavior, trustworthiness, and consultation in effective leadership. The research findings are presented systematically by formulating a synthesis between Islamic leadership concepts and modern management theory, as well as how they are applied in Islamic educational institutions.

Results and Discussion

Leadership

Leadership is often equated with leadership and can also be understood as *zi'amah* and *imamah*, which refers to the process of influencing others to achieve a common goal (M. Charis et al, 2024). Leadership in Islam is inseparable from the figure of the Prophet Muhammad as a model and example in setting an example in all aspects of human life, including leadership issues. Islam highly values the presence of leadership within Islam. In a hadith, it is mentioned that if there are three of you traveling, appoint one of you to be the leader. This hadith demonstrates the importance of leadership in Islam.

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Leadership in Islam, as mentioned in the Quran, refers to the concept of a caliph. The term “caliph” appears eight times in the Quran, along with its derivatives. One such instance is found in Surah Shad/38:26. This verse provides guidance for leaders, exemplified by the story of Prophet David, who succeeded Adam as Khalifah on Earth. Through the revelation conveyed to David, he served as a Prophet/Messenger and also as the ruler of the Children of Israel. Allah instructed David to judge among people based on truth (justice) (Zabur) and avoid traits that could bring harm. The harm referred to here is not yielding to one's desires.

Leadership in Islam also has the meaning of imam. The word Imam and its derivatives are repeated twelve times in the Quran, including in the following verses that explain the word Imam found in QS. As-Sajdah/32: 24 and in QS. Al-Qashas/28: 5. Islamic leadership has the meaning of Wali. The term “wali” is repeated 86 times in the Quran with its various derivatives, including in Surah Al-Maidah/5:51, Surah Ali-Imran/3:28, and Surah An-Nisa/4:144. Islamic leadership also carries the meaning of “Ulil Amri.” Islamic leadership in this context is found in Surah An-Nisa/4:59. The terms of leadership in the Quran, according to Wely Dozan, are based on responsibility (masuliyah) and its influence on goodness (Wely Dozan, 2019).

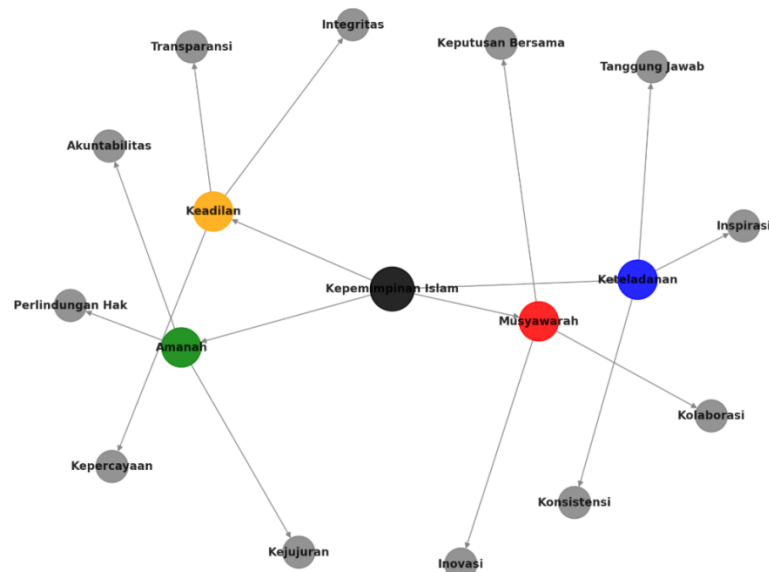


Figure 1 The Four Main Pillars of Islamic Leadership

Innovative Leadership Style That Can Bring About Positive and Sustainable Change

Leadership styles, especially in the field of Islamic education, are not much different. The theories and general explanations of leadership styles and types that exist in the world are natural human characteristics as caliphs. In the context of Islam, leadership styles do not only focus on managerial techniques, but also include moral, ethical, and spiritual aspects. One of the most essential principles of leadership is justice (al-adl), which emphasizes the importance of giving each individual their due rights. In the context of leadership, a leader who is

oriented toward justice will strive to uphold integrity and build trust within the organization. The concept of Adl Relational Global Leadership asserts that fair leadership can be a solution to increasing global complexity. This model is based on the principles of equality, balance, and transparency in organizational management. By applying justice, leaders are able to build strong relationships with their followers, increase trust, and encourage more effective cross-border collaboration (Cheng Zhang, 2024).

Leadership with Good Example (Uswatun Hasanah): Inspiration for Change

One of the distinctive characteristics of leadership in Islam is the concept of Uswatun Hasanah, which refers to setting a good example in attitude, actions, and decisions. Prophet Muhammad SAW is the prime example of a leader who prioritizes integrity, honesty, and compassion in guiding his community. Allah SWT emphasizes this in QS. Al-Ahzab/33: 21.

An innovative leader not only guides but also serves as a role model for their team members. Consistency between words and actions is a key aspect in building trust and respect from subordinates. When a leader demonstrates commitment to Islamic values and organizational goals, team members will be more motivated to follow their lead with enthusiasm. In an Islamic educational environment, leaders who demonstrate exemplary discipline, hard work, and honesty will foster a better academic culture. When teachers, school principals, or madrasah leaders set a positive example, educators and students will be more motivated to emulate such attitudes, thereby creating a healthy, productive, and inspiring organizational culture.

Leadership is not only about the ability to manage an organization, but also about how a leader becomes a role model (uswatun hasanah) for their followers. A good leader must demonstrate behavior that can be emulated, including in terms of ethics, morality, and professionalism. Leaders who set an example are able to inspire those around them to work better, increase work enthusiasm, and build a healthy organizational culture. In leadership studies, the transformational approach emphasizes that a leader with high integrity will be able to create a profound influence on the organization and the individuals within it (B. M. Bass, 2008).

Leadership Oriented Towards Trust: Maintaining Trust and Accountability

In Islam, leadership is not merely a position of power, but a trust or responsibility that must be carried out with complete honesty and integrity (Dian Salshabila Kurnia and Harry Z. Soeratin, 2023). This is explained in QS. An-Nisa/4: 58. Leadership transcends mere authority, embodying deep trust and responsibility toward followers. Effective leaders foster an environment of trust, which is essential for cultivating resilience and ethical behavior within an organization. This perspective emphasizes that leadership is not just about power but about relational dynamics that inspire and motivate individuals to achieve collective goals.

Leaders who fulfill their responsibilities well will always prioritize the common good over personal interests. This creates high levels of trust within the organization and encourages active participation of team members in decision-making processes (S. A. Makruf, 2017).

In practice, trustworthy leaders not only manage resources effectively but also ensure that the rights of every individual in the organization are protected. A responsible leader will always be open to criticism and suggestions, creating an atmosphere of openness and transparency. Furthermore, a trustworthy leader will prioritize problem-solving with a constructive approach. In Islamic educational institutions, this principle is crucial to ensure that every decision made has a positive impact on students, educators, and the broader community.

Consensus-based Leadership: The Foundation of Innovation and Collaboration

Consultation is one of the fundamental principles in Islam that plays a crucial role in the decision-making process. An innovative leader is expected not only to exercise authoritative control but also to accommodate the various perspectives of their team members. In the Qur'an, Allah SWT emphasizes the importance of consultation (QS. Ash-Shura/42: 38). This principle emphasizes that leadership that involves various parties in the decision-making process will result in higher-quality decisions and increase the involvement and sense of ownership of all team members. Consultation is a key principle in Islamic leadership that encourages active participation in decision-making. A decision that involves various parties tends to be more mature, as it takes into account various perspectives and experiences.

Consultation (syura) is an important aspect of leadership, emphasizing collective participation in decision-making. Leadership based on consultation allows for open discussion, exchange of ideas, and the creation of more comprehensive solutions to the challenges faced by an organization. In the modern world, consultative leadership serves as the foundation for innovation and collaboration. Organizations that encourage the involvement of various parties in decision-making will be more adaptive to change, more innovative in creating solutions, and more effective in achieving their long-term goals. Deliberative leadership is also in line with the collective leadership approach, where leadership does not depend on a single individual but is the result of teamwork and community collaboration. This model is particularly relevant in the context of higher education, where innovation and scientific development depend on interdisciplinary and intercultural academic collaboration (Ciaran Sugrue and Tone Dyrdal Solbrekke, 2023).

The Impact of Deliberation in Innovative Leadership

Deliberation in Islamic leadership has been proven to create a stable, fair, and innovative organizational system.

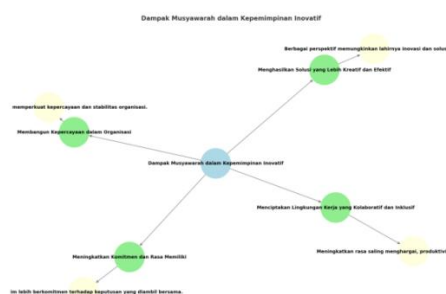


Figure 2 Diagram of the Impact of Deliberation in Innovative Leadership

In a modern context, this approach has an impact on a number of efforts:

1. Increasing Commitment and Sense of Ownership: When team members feel that their voices are heard in the decision-making process, they will be more committed to implementing the agreed-upon policies.
2. Generating More Creative and Effective Solutions: By opening up discussion and accepting various perspectives, leaders can find innovative solutions that were not previously considered.
3. Creating a Collaborative and Inclusive Work Environment: A culture of deliberation encourages mutual respect, strengthens bonds between members of the organization, and increases productivity and job satisfaction.
4. Building Trust in the Organization: When leaders demonstrate openness in listening to team members' opinions, trust in leadership will increase, creating stability within the organization.

From the various concepts that have been examined, it can be concluded that ideal leadership in the era of globalization is leadership that is, first, oriented toward justice, ensuring that each individual receives their rights proportionally. Second, it serves as a good example, inspiring positive change within the organization and society. Third, it upholds trust, maintaining confidence and taking responsibility for every decision made. Fourth, it prioritizes consultation, encouraging collective participation and innovation within the organization.

Communication Strategies for Innovative Leaders in Implementing Change

Communication strategies for innovative leaders include:

1. Engaging in open dialogue: Facilitating productive conversations and encouraging innovative ideas
2. Using storytelling: Using stories to convey complex ideas and inspire action
3. Two-way communication: Listening openly to others' ideas
4. Committing to transparency: Providing clear and transparent information
5. Personalizing messages: Using data and analytics to tailor communication approaches
6. Leveraging technology: Using various digital platforms to communicate
7. Build a culture of experimentation: Implement pilot programs and iterative improvements
8. Leverage cross-disciplinary teams: Combine diverse perspectives and creativity

Leadership is basically related to skills, abilities, and influence. Therefore, leadership can be possessed by anyone (Jarwanto, 2015). Meanwhile, in Islam, leadership is defined as activities that nurture, guide, and lead to the path that Allah SWT approves of. Leadership must possess strategic skills, focusing on internal factors and, of course, external factors that still encompass the organization. Leadership in the Islamic concept is an interaction, relationship, and process in directing, influencing, and coordinating both vertically and horizontally. A leader has an important role in managing an organization or institution. The role of a leader is as a planner and decision-maker, organizer, manager, motivator, supervisor, and more. The concept of leadership is explained in several approaches according to the perspective of the Qur'an, namely: Character Approach: To evaluate the quality of a leader,

one can identify their leadership characteristics. From the perspective of the Qur'an, there are leadership traits that can serve as good examples or “role models” based on QS. al-Ahzab/33:21.

Innovative leadership communication strategies can shape a strong group identity, enhance cooperative relationships, and serve as a model for all individuals to build harmonious, respectful, and caring relationships among group members in order to become a productive group. To that end, leaders must understand the needs, values, and aspirations of each individual to form harmonious and productive relationships between individuals in order to achieve organizational goals and values. This leadership style empowers and involves subordinates in creative and innovative processes that encourage growth and change, rather than merely maintaining the status quo. In fact, this leadership builds individual interests with collective interests to achieve goals through improved morale, motivation, and performance.

Innovative Organizational Culture Capable of Bringing About Change

Organizational culture is a system of shared values and beliefs inspired by a belief and customs that interact with the people of a company, organizational structure, and supervisory system to produce behavioral norms (Alvaro Patricio Carrillo Puninaa et al., 2023). Organizational culture has several functions within an organization, including playing a role in defining boundaries, i.e., creating differences between one organization and another. Organizational culture also serves to convey a sense of identity to organizational members, facilitate the continuation of commitment to achieve broader boundaries, help bind organizational unity by providing appropriate standards regarding what employees should say and do, and fostering employee performance improvement. Characteristics of organizational culture include: learning, mutual sharing, transgenerational, perception of influence, and adaptation. Characteristics of culture in Islam include: work is worship, work considers the principle of benefit and public interest, work is the actualization of intellectual ability, work considers the principle of balance (tawazun), and work considers the principle of halal (permissibility).

Organizational culture serves as a glue that binds members of an organization together. Fundamentally, humans tend to form groups with those who share similar values, norms, customs, beliefs, and other assumptions. These shared values bring together diverse individuals to collaborate in achieving organizational goals. If this sense of unity is lost, the consequence is the fragmentation or even dissolution of the organization.

Innovative Leadership in the Perspective of the Qur'an

The prerequisite for developing innovative approaches is to start with a bold way of thinking that breaks away from habits and thinks outside the box that has shackled public thinking for so long. The next prerequisite is the courage to take risks because it deviates from the norm and is likely to be rejected by the general public. Islam, as a way of life, provides the most perfect guidance in organizing and managing life with great precision, including in managing societal practices in the field of public service. The prophetic concept emphasizes that service must be able to foster creativity and innovation.

Allah also encourages Muslims to have the competence to bring about massive change in the form of creativity and innovation. As inspired in individuals and community groups to participate in change (QS. Ar-Ra'd, Verse 11). Innovation is also highlighted in the story of Prophet Noah, who was commanded to build an ark for self-preservation during the flood, even though no one had ever built or known how to build such a vessel before (QS. Hud, Verse 37).

Allah also encourages humans to think in order to produce something new and innovative, including in service. There are numerous instances in revelatory texts that encourage creative and innovative thinking using the phrases “afalaa ta’qiluun” or “afala tatafakaruun.” The concept of leadership in Islam emphasizes moral integrity and justice. The Qur'an states that leaders must be trustworthy and able to guide change fairly (QS. An-Nisa/4: 58). In the context of innovation, Islamic education leaders are expected to be agents of change without losing the essence of Islamic values (Dewi Hanifah and Ahmad Riady Hasibuan, 2025).

Implementation of Innovative Leadership in Islamic Educational Institutions

Modern management teaches innovative leadership through transformative and participatory approaches. This leadership model requires leaders to have a clear vision, be able to delegate tasks well, and create an environment that supports innovation and creativity. Several studies show that school principals and madrasah leaders who apply innovative leadership styles are able to improve the quality of learning and efficiency in educational management. This involves:

1. Transformative leadership style; which encourages teachers and educators to continue innovating
2. Effective communication strategies, which enable transparency and openness in the management of educational institutions
3. Adaptive organizational culture, which encourages collaboration and flexibility in facing change (Hurul Aini Fatimah and Ana Yatimatur Royani, 2025)

Islamic education has great potential in facilitating the adoption of innovation. With the encouragement of innovative leadership, Islamic educational institutions can become centers of change through the implementation of digital-based curricula, the use of technology in learning, and the improvement of soft skills such as leadership and communication (Iskandar Mirza and Eka Purwanti, 2025).

Conclusion

This study reveals that leadership in Islam has strong moral and ethical dimensions, which can provide solutions to leadership challenges in modern organizations. The four main pillars of Islamic leadership, namely justice, exemplary behavior, trustworthiness, and consultation, form the foundation for effective, innovative, and sustainable leadership. The principle of justice (al-adl) plays a role in creating objective and transparent policies and decisions that ensure the welfare of all parties. A just leader builds trust and loyalty within the organization. Exemplary behavior (uswatun hasanah) serves as a source of inspiration, where leaders with high integrity are able to motivate their subordinates to work better. In addition,

leadership based on amanah emphasizes the importance of accountability and responsibility in managing an organization. A trustworthy leader ensures that every policy taken has a positive long-term impact and is accountable both morally and legally. Musyawarah (syura) in Islamic leadership emphasizes the importance of involving all parties in decision-making. A leadership model based on consultation creates an inclusive work environment, enhances collaboration, and fosters innovation.

Compared to modern leadership theories such as transformational and innovative leadership, Islamic leadership offers a more holistic approach by integrating spiritual values into leadership practices. The Adl Relational Global Leadership model proposed in this study focuses on balancing relational dimensions and Islamic values of justice, making it applicable in organizations seeking to enhance innovation and global reputation.

In the context of Islamic education, the application of Islamic values-based leadership can be a solution to the challenges of globalization. Islamic educational institutions need to adopt leadership strategies that are integrity-based, inclusive, and adaptive, thereby enhancing their competitiveness at the international level. Thus, this study emphasizes that Islamic value-based leadership is not only relevant in a religious context but also has a broad impact on building more just, innovative, and globally competitive organizations. This leadership model can be applied in various sectors, particularly in Islamic education, to ensure that moral and ethical values remain the foundation for managing organizations in the modern era.

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