

Analysis of the Roles and Functions of Islamic Education Leaders in Improving Educational Services

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Abstract:

The main issue underlying this study is the suboptimal role of Islamic educational leaders in carrying out their duties and functions comprehensively, resulting in the quality of educational services in many institutions not meeting the expected standards. Weak leadership in the areas of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling has led to ineffective and unsustainable learning services, administrative services, and character development programs. This study aims to analyze the duties and functions of Islamic educational leaders and their contribution to improving the quality of educational services. The research employs a library research method with a descriptive qualitative approach, analyzing various academic sources such as books, scholarly journals, and relevant research documents. The findings reveal that leaders who understand Islamic values and modern leadership theories are able to carry out managerial and spiritual functions synergistically to enhance educational service quality. Visionary, adaptive, communicative, and integrity-driven leaders are proven to encourage the creation of higher-quality, responsive, and character-oriented educational services. The implications of this study emphasize that improving the quality of Islamic education depends heavily on leadership capacity, thus requiring continuous leadership development, professional management practices, and the integration of Islamic values throughout all educational service processes.

Keyword: *Leadership, Islamic Education, Leader's Duties, Educational Services, Educational Management*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic education is one of the key components in shaping a generation that is morally upright, intellectually capable, and prepared to face the dynamics of the modern era (Aziz, Sahri, & bin Mohd Saufi, 2025; Efeoglu & Ulum, 2017; Hasibuan, Fadly, & Waruwu, 2025). In its implementation, Islamic educational

institutions require effective leadership that is oriented toward service quality (Akhyak, Sujianto, & others, 2025; Asnawi & Setyaningsih, 2020; Syahlarriyadi, 2023). Leaders in Islamic education hold a strategic role in directing, controlling, and developing various educational programs to ensure they run in accordance with the institution's vision and mission. Leadership quality is often a primary indicator of an institution's success in achieving its educational goals (D'íez, Villa, López, & Iraurgi, 2020; Mustajab, Lee, & Jansee, 2021). Moreover, strong leadership is capable of creating a conducive, collaborative, and competitive school environment. In the modern context, the demands placed on educational leaders to be innovative, responsive, and adaptive are increasingly high. Therefore, studying the duties and functions of Islamic educational leaders has become increasingly important. Good leadership is essential for improving sustainable educational quality and services.

Leadership in Islamic education is not only limited to administrative competence but also includes spiritual exemplarity that inspires all members of the school community (Brooks & Mutohar, 2018; Ruhullah & Ushama, 2025). An Islamic educational leader must be able to integrate Islamic values into every aspect of institutional management. Thus, the leader serves not only as a manager but also as an educator and moral guide. The duties and functions of a leader include planning, organizing, actuating, and supervising all institutional activities (Nurhikmah, 2024; Pohan, Anwar, & Shalahudin, 2024). The success of educational management greatly depends on the extent to which leaders understand and carry out these functions. Furthermore, leaders must establish effective communication with teachers, students, staff, and the community. In practice, they must also create a management system that is transparent, accountable, and collaborative. All these aspects strengthen the leader's position as a driving force for high-quality educational services.

Quality educational services are one of the key indicators of the success of Islamic educational institutions in fulfilling their role. High-quality services include the provision of adequate facilities, effective learning processes, administrative services, and guidance and counseling support. Educational leaders play a crucial role in ensuring that all these services operate effectively and meet quality standards. In today's era of technological and informational development, the demands for educational services have become increasingly complex, requiring leaders to present innovation in their service delivery. Leaders must be able to identify the needs of students and society, and then

design relevant and meaningful services. In addition, a leader's ability to manage human resources and institutional resources significantly affects the sustainability of services. This demonstrates that improving educational services cannot be separated from the quality of a leader's duties and functions within Islamic educational institutions.

However, various problems still occur in the implementation of leadership duties and functions in many Islamic educational institutions. Some leaders are unable to perform managerial functions optimally due to limited competencies and insufficient understanding of modern management. Several institutions still face issues such as weak coordination, lack of innovation, and the absence of a continuous service evaluation system. Furthermore, some leaders are unable to balance spiritual and professional responsibilities in daily leadership practices. Challenges also arise when leaders must adapt to rapid technological developments, while facilities and human resources remain unprepared. The gap between expectations and reality often leads to declining service quality in madrasahs and pesantren. Leaders also sometimes face resistance from teachers or staff when implementing change. These conditions highlight the need for in-depth evaluation of the duties and functions of Islamic educational leaders in improving service quality.

Research conducted by Gohar Rahman shows that the transformation of Islamic education can be achieved through value-based leadership that is capable of guiding the vision, culture, and educational practices more effectively. This study also emphasizes that the implementation of core values such as justice, trustworthiness, and empathy in leadership has a significant impact on the quality of learning and the character development of students (Rahman, 2025). Research conducted by Mohamad Sodikin, Parmuji Anto, and Khoirul Anwar shows that improving the quality of education in Islamic institutions is greatly influenced by the implementation of a planned, systematic, and quality-oriented management approach. The study's results also confirm that strengthening planning, implementation, evaluation, as well as effective leadership plays an important role in creating a more professional and competitive educational environment (Sodikin, Anto, & Anwar, 2024).

Based on previous studies, it is evident that there is a research gap that this study seeks to address. Most existing studies focus on leadership styles or their influence on specific aspects, but do not analyze comprehensively the duties and functions of Islamic educational leaders in enhancing educational services.

Additionally, few studies integrate managerial analysis with Islamic leadership values. Research linking leadership task execution directly to the quality of educational services also remains limited. This study offers a novelty through a holistic approach that integrates managerial perspectives, Islamic values, and the demands of service quality improvement. Thus, the research aims to provide deeper conceptual contributions to Islamic educational management. The findings are expected to offer a clearer description of how leaders can effectively optimize their tasks and functions. This is what distinguishes the present study from previous ones.

This study aims to analyze deeply the duties and functions of Islamic educational leaders in improving educational services. Specifically, it seeks to describe how leaders perform managerial roles within Islamic educational institutions. The study also aims to identify the extent to which Islamic values influence leadership practices in service management. Additionally, it attempts to uncover the supporting and inhibiting factors that affect the effectiveness of leadership duties in improving services. This research is expected to provide clearer understanding of strategic steps leaders can take to enhance service quality. Another goal is to offer practical recommendations for educational institutions to strengthen leadership effectiveness. Thus, the study not only provides theoretical contributions but also practical benefits for leaders, teachers, and stakeholders in Islamic education. Ultimately, it is expected to serve as a reference for developing professional and value-based leadership in Islamic educational institutions.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a library research design, in which the entire research process is conducted through the exploration, processing, and analysis of literature without involving field data collection (Muhammad Mustofa, 2023). Library research is chosen because the focus of the study is to analyze concepts, theories, tasks, and functions of leadership in Islamic education, which are extensively discussed in various scholarly works, making this method the most appropriate. The approach used in this library research is descriptive qualitative, where the researcher explains and interprets various sources systematically and in depth. The sources include books on Islamic education management, national and international scholarly journals, research reports, scientific articles, conference proceedings, and other academic documents (Mustofa, 2023). The

researcher also accesses digital references from academic databases such as Google Scholar, DOAJ, and university repositories to obtain relevant and up-to-date sources. All literature is selected based on relevance, credibility, and its contribution to the research topic concerning leadership tasks and functions in improving educational services. Thus, this method provides a strong theoretical foundation for generating a comprehensive analysis of Islamic educational leadership from the perspective of scholarly literature.

The data collection technique in this study is carried out through literature documentation, namely collecting, reading, taking notes, and organizing various written sources related to the research topic. The literature search is conducted in stages, beginning with the identification of keywords such as Islamic educational leadership, leadership in Islamic education, leader's tasks, managerial functions, and educational service improvement. The researcher then establishes inclusion and exclusion criteria, such as a publication year range of the last five to ten years, except for classic or seminal works that remain relevant. The selected literature must also be authored by reputable scholars or researchers to ensure academic quality. Additionally, the researcher sorts the literature based on thematic relevance, depth of discussion, and contribution to understanding leadership in Islamic education. Each source is then noted for its key points and grouped into themes such as leadership theories, leadership functions, leadership types, and educational service management. This process is carried out continuously to help the researcher construct a rich, structured, and valid theoretical framework and scientific argumentation. Thus, the documentation technique in this study not only gathers data but also ensures the methodological and substantive relevance of the selected literature.

The collected data are analyzed using content analysis, conducted through three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Mamik, 2015). In the data reduction stage, the researcher selects essential information from each source, eliminates irrelevant parts, and categorizes the data based on core themes such as leader tasks, leadership functions, leadership theories, and educational services. Next, the data presentation is organized in a structured manner to help the researcher observe relationships among concepts, theories, and findings from various literature sources. The analysis also involves synthesizing different expert opinions to produce new understandings or deeper interpretations of leadership in Islamic education. In the conclusion-drawing stage, the researcher re-examines data

consistency and formulates interpretations related to the contribution of leadership to improving educational services. To maintain research validity, the researcher conducts cross-checks across sources, compares viewpoints from various scholars, and ensures that no bias occurs in the interpretation process. Validity is also strengthened by using authoritative and verified academic sources, ensuring that the results of the study are academically accountable. Therefore, this library research not only reviews literature but also generates critical analysis and scholarly synthesis regarding the role of Islamic educational leaders in enhancing educational services.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

A. Leadership in Islamic Education

Leadership in Islamic education is a fundamental concept that integrates spiritual, moral, and managerial dimensions in the management of educational institutions (Zahiri & Sahal, 2025). Leadership is not merely about holding a structural position, but about the ability to provide positive influence to all members of the school community so they can perform their responsibilities effectively. In Islam, leadership is considered an amanah, a profound trust that must be carried out with full awareness, integrity, and noble character. Leaders in Islamic educational institutions are required to possess the ability to build a strong vision so that the institution has a clear and measurable direction of development (Syahlarriyadi, 2023). Furthermore, leaders must be able to harmonize Islamic values with modern educational management, enabling Islamic institutions to excel not only spiritually but also competitively in academic performance. Thus, leadership in Islamic education must be grounded in a comprehensive understanding of both the educational landscape and Islamic ethical principles.

The concept of leadership in Islam emphasizes the importance of noble qualities that reflect the character of a true leader. Values such as honesty (shiddiq), responsibility (amanah), the ability to convey truth (tabligh), and intelligence (fathanah) are central pillars of Islamic leadership. These values are highly relevant in the context of education because leaders with noble character can serve as role models for teachers, educational staff, and students. Such exemplary behavior is crucial because education involves not only the transfer of knowledge but also the formation of character and adab.

In practice, Islamic educational leaders must internalize these values into every policy and managerial action they take. Thus, leadership becomes not only an administrative function but also a moral and spiritual function that shapes the overall culture of the institution.

Aside from its spiritual dimension, leadership in Islamic education is closely tied to the leader's ability to manage the organization effectively. Leaders must possess managerial competencies such as program planning, task organization, mobilizing human resources, and supervising all organizational activities. These competencies are essential for ensuring that the educational institution operates professionally, systematically, and responsively in the face of various challenges. Leaders with strong managerial skills can guide the institution toward continuous quality improvement. In the context of Islamic education, managerial abilities must be integrated with Islamic values, resulting in leadership that balances professionalism and spirituality. With this integration, leaders can carry out their leadership roles in a proportional, humane, and worship-oriented manner.

Leadership in Islamic education also plays a crucial role in shaping a positive and religious organizational culture. This culture is reflected in the habits, traditions, and interactions within the school community that embody Islamic values such as discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and mutual respect. Leaders hold a key role in cultivating this culture through habituation, exemplary conduct, and policies that support the creation of an Islamic school environment. Additionally, leaders must be able to create a harmonious working atmosphere so teachers and staff can work comfortably and stay motivated. A positive work environment is essential for improving the quality of educational services, as each component of the organization contributes to achieving educational goals.

Overall, leadership in Islamic education is a comprehensive concept involving spiritual, moral, managerial, and social dimensions. Islamic educational leaders are required not only to carry out administrative duties but also to serve as inspiring figures who demonstrate exemplary conduct. Through the combination of Islamic values and managerial skills, leaders can create educational institutions that are excellent, competitive, and grounded in strong character. This makes leadership one of the key determinants of institutional success in delivering quality educational services. Therefore, a

deep understanding of leadership is essential for anyone involved in managing Islamic educational institutions.

B. Leadership Theories

Leadership theory has developed over time as an effort to understand how a leader can influence and mobilize others (Stevenson, 2018). Classical theories such as trait theory argue that leaders possess certain inherent characteristics that distinguish them from ordinary individuals. This theory emphasizes qualities such as courage, decisiveness, intelligence, and responsibility as key factors in leadership. However, criticisms of this theory emerged because not all such traits are innate; many can be developed through experience and education. In the context of Islamic education, this theory remains relevant because Islam also emphasizes the importance of character and morality as the basis of leadership. Core characteristics of Islamic leaders, such as integrity and intelligence, align with the principles of trait theory, making it a suitable approach for understanding leadership in Islamic educational settings.

Behavioral theory emerged as a response to the weaknesses of trait theory. This theory views leadership as the result of behaviors and actions that can be learned, rather than innate characteristics. Leaders are understood as individuals who demonstrate effective behaviors such as giving direction, motivating others, and building interpersonal relationships. In Islamic education, this approach is highly relevant because a leader's behavior can serve as a model for the school community. Leadership is not only about administrative competence but also about how leaders interact with teachers, students, and the broader community in a humane and value-driven manner. Thus, behavioral theory helps explain how a leader's concrete actions can significantly influence the quality of educational services.

Situational and contingency theories explain that there is no single leadership style that is effective in all circumstances. Leaders must be able to adapt their leadership style based on organizational conditions, follower characteristics, challenges faced, and external environmental factors. In Islamic education, leaders must adjust their approach when dealing with senior teachers, younger teachers, students, or community members with diverse backgrounds. Leaders also need the ability to read situations and make appropriate decisions based on contextual analysis. Flexibility is essential, especially in addressing contemporary challenges such as

educational digitalization, increasing competition among schools, and rapidly changing social dynamics.

Modern leadership theories, such as transformational, spiritual, and collaborative leadership, offer approaches that better suit the demands of contemporary educational institutions. Transformational leadership emphasizes motivating, inspiring, and providing vision to followers to achieve shared goals. This approach is highly relevant in Islamic education, which requires leaders to foster both spiritual and professional motivation. Meanwhile, spiritual leadership emphasizes moral, ethical, and religious values as the foundation of leadership. Spiritual leaders model devotion, character, and sincerity, making them role models for teachers and students. Collaborative leadership is also vital in modern education because it promotes participation from all members of the school community in decision-making. Collectively, these modern theories offer more complex and integrative perspectives on Islamic educational leadership.

Understanding leadership theories is essential for leaders in Islamic education to carry out their responsibilities effectively. By mastering various theories, leaders can choose and implement leadership styles that align with institutional needs and organizational conditions. No single theory is universally applicable, so leaders must possess flexibility and adequate knowledge to apply the right approach. In Islamic education, leadership theories must be integrated with Islamic values to produce leadership that balances professionalism with spirituality. Therefore, leadership theories form a crucial foundation for developing adaptive, visionary, and ethically grounded Islamic educational leadership.

C. Duties and Functions of Islamic Education Leaders

Leaders in Islamic education bear significant responsibility in managing educational institutions to ensure the achievement of established goals (Mujib & Ali, 2022). The first task of a leader is to conduct comprehensive planning, which includes formulating the institution's vision, mission, objectives, and strategic programs. Planning is a fundamental management function that determines the direction of the institution in both the short and long term. Leaders must also be able to analyze institutional needs, including the needs of teachers, infrastructure, and educational programs that align with contemporary developments. In Islamic education, planning must integrate Islamic values with modern demands so that institutions can

produce graduates who are both morally grounded and competitive. Thus, the planning function serves as the primary foundation for leaders in improving the quality of educational services.

In the organizing function, leaders are responsible for establishing an effective and efficient organizational structure. Organizing involves distributing tasks to teachers and staff, defining positions, delegating authority, and forming solid work teams. Leaders must also ensure that every member of the organization understands their roles and responsibilities. In Islamic education, organizing must be grounded in the principles of justice, professionalism, and consultation (shura), enabling the institution to operate harmoniously and productively. A clear organizational structure facilitates coordination and prevents task overlap. With effective organizing, educational processes can run smoothly and educational services can be continuously improved.

The directing or actuating function is central to leadership, as it involves motivating and mobilizing all members of the organization to perform their duties effectively (Nurhikmah, 2024). Leaders must be capable of providing motivation through exemplary behavior, effective communication, and recognition of teachers' and staff performance. In Islamic education, motivation can also be strengthened through spiritual approaches, such as reinforcing intentions, reminding staff of the worship-value in their work, and instilling religious meaning in every task. Leaders who are able to mobilize teachers and staff will create a productive, enthusiastic, and quality-oriented work environment. Additionally, leaders' ability to build open and empathetic communication strengthens relationships within the school community, which is essential in achieving optimal educational service delivery.

The supervisory function is equally important in Islamic educational leadership (Posangi, 2024). Leaders must conduct evaluations of all institutional activities, including instructional processes, administrative functions, and other educational services. Supervision ensures that all activities align with established standards, targets, and plans. In Islamic education, supervision is not merely technical but also moral and spiritual, ensuring that all educational practices reflect Islamic values. Leaders must also provide constructive feedback to teachers and staff so they can enhance their performance. Comprehensive evaluation provides essential information

regarding institutional strengths and weaknesses, enabling leaders to implement continuous improvement.

Beyond managerial duties, leaders in Islamic education also have significant spiritual and social responsibilities. Leaders must serve as role models in worship, character, and daily behavior, thereby fostering a religiously grounded school environment. In the social domain, leaders must build strong relationships with the community, school committees, government bodies, and other stakeholders. Effective partnerships bolster institutional support and contribute to improved educational services. When managerial, spiritual, and social duties are carried out harmoniously, they collectively lead to optimal service quality—whether in teaching, administration, or student services. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of the tasks and functions of Islamic educational leaders is essential for building strong, reputable, and high-performing educational institutions.

D. Educational Services and Leadership Roles

Educational services are an essential component in the implementation of education, as they encompass all forms of services provided by an institution to meet the needs of students, teachers, parents, and the community (Gumuliauskienė & Starkutė, 2018). In Islamic education, educational services do not only focus on academic aspects but also include the spiritual, moral, social, and emotional dimensions of learners. Quality educational services reflect the institution's management performance and the effectiveness of its leadership. Therefore, leaders bear significant responsibility in ensuring that educational services are delivered professionally, with high quality, and in accordance with Islamic values. With optimal services, the learning process can run more effectively, students can develop holistically, and the goals of Islamic education can be properly achieved.

Learning services are a core part of educational services that focus on teaching and learning activities (García-Peñalvo et al., 2015). Leaders play a role in ensuring that the learning process aligns with the curriculum, is supported by appropriate methods, and is carried out by competent teachers. In Islamic education, learning must also integrate Islamic values into every subject, so that learners not only gain knowledge but also develop character and morality. Leaders must be able to provide direction, guidance, and

supervision to teachers to ensure the effective implementation of learning. Additionally, leaders need to create a conducive academic environment, provide adequate facilities, and offer opportunities for professional development. This indicates that the quality of learning services is strongly influenced by leadership capabilities.

Aside from learning services, administrative services are also an important component in education. Administrative services include student data management, document archiving, school information systems, and services for parents. Leaders are responsible for ensuring that administrative services run effectively, quickly, and accurately. In Islamic education, administrative services must also reflect the values of discipline, fairness, and transparency. Leaders must be able to develop a modern administrative system, such as the use of information technology in school management. With good administrative services, public trust in the institution will increase and educational processes can proceed more smoothly.

Guidance and counseling services are also a crucial part of Islamic educational institutions (Anwar, DZ, Subasman, & Dewi, 2025). These services help students develop their potential, overcome learning difficulties, and build character that aligns with Islamic teachings. Leaders play a role in ensuring that guidance and counseling services are carried out professionally by competent personnel. Leaders must also ensure that these services are inclusive, friendly, and responsive to students' needs. Furthermore, leaders should collaborate with teachers, homeroom teachers, and parents to provide comprehensive support. With effective guidance and counseling services, students can develop optimally both in academic performance and in character.

The role of leadership greatly determines the quality of educational services within Islamic educational institutions. Visionary, communicative, and responsive leaders are able to develop various educational services effectively. Leaders must also be able to integrate Islamic values into every policy and service program so that the services provided are not only professional but also carry spiritual significance. With strong leadership, Islamic educational institutions can offer the best services to students and society. Therefore, leadership is a key factor in the success of institutions in realizing high-quality and character-based Islamic education.

DISCUSSION

Educational services are a crucial component in the administration of education because they encompass all forms of services provided by an institution to meet the needs of students, teachers, parents, and the community. In Islamic education, educational services do not only focus on academic aspects but also include the spiritual, moral, social, and emotional dimensions of learners. High-quality educational services reflect effective institutional management and leadership performance. Therefore, leaders carry significant responsibility in ensuring that educational services are delivered professionally, with high quality, and in accordance with Islamic values. With optimal services, the learning process becomes more effective, students develop holistically, and the goals of Islamic education can be achieved properly.

Learning services represent the core component of educational services, focusing on teaching and learning activities. Leaders play a role in ensuring that the learning process aligns with the curriculum, is supported by appropriate methods, and is delivered by competent teachers. In Islamic education, learning must also integrate Islamic values into every subject, enabling students not only to acquire knowledge but also to develop character and moral conduct. Leaders must be able to provide direction, guidance, and supervision to teachers so they can conduct learning optimally. Additionally, they need to create a conducive academic climate, provide adequate facilities, and ensure professional development opportunities for teachers. This demonstrates that the quality of learning services is highly influenced by leadership capacity.

In addition to learning services, administrative services are also an important component in education. Administrative services include student data management, document archiving, school information systems, and services for parents. Leaders play a role in ensuring that administrative services run efficiently, quickly, and accurately. In Islamic education, administrative services must also reflect values of discipline, justice, and transparency. Leaders need to develop modern administrative systems, such as utilizing information technology in school management. With strong administrative services, public trust in the institution increases and educational processes can run more smoothly.

Guidance and counseling services are also essential in Islamic educational institutions. These services help students develop their potential, overcome learning difficulties, and shape character in accordance with Islamic teachings. Leaders are responsible for ensuring that guidance and counseling services are

delivered professionally by competent personnel. They must also ensure that these services are inclusive, supportive, and responsive to student needs. In addition, leaders should collaborate with teachers, homeroom advisors, and parents to provide comprehensive support. With effective guidance services, students can grow optimally in both academic achievement and moral character.

Leadership plays a decisive role in determining the quality of educational services in Islamic educational institutions. Visionary, communicative, and responsive leaders are capable of developing various educational services effectively. Leaders must also integrate Islamic values into every policy and service program, ensuring that the services provided are not only professional but also spiritually meaningful. With strong leadership, Islamic educational institutions can offer the best services to students and the community. Thus, leadership becomes a key factor in ensuring the success of institutions in realizing high-quality and character-based Islamic education.

CONCLUSION

Leadership in Islamic education is a fundamental factor that determines the direction, quality, and success of educational services within an institution. Leaders who integrate Islamic values with modern managerial competencies are able to create an educational environment that is effective, productive, and character-driven. Various leadership theories indicate that ideal leadership is adaptive, visionary, collaborative, and grounded in moral and spiritual values. The duties and functions of leaders—which include planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling—serve as the primary pillars for improving the quality of instructional services, administrative management, and character development of students. The analysis shows that strong and inspirational leadership plays a significant role in creating holistic, responsive, and socially relevant educational services, ultimately enhancing the overall quality and competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions.

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