

## Teachers' Perceptions of Islamic Leadership Values Implementation in Secondary Schools During Management Reform

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**Abstract:** This phenomenological study explored teacher perceptions of Islamic leadership values implementation in Islamic-based secondary schools (MTS) during management reform. Research involved ten teachers from three MTS in Pandeglang, Banten, Indonesia. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews (60-90 minutes) and analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis with ATLAS.ti software. The study examined five key dimensions: exemplary leadership (*qudwah hasanah*), interpersonal relations (*ukhuwah Islamiyah*), participatory decision-making (*shura*), management reform effectiveness, and teacher competency development. Findings reveal that teachers perceive Islamic leadership as a holistic integration of spiritual and operational dimensions. Notably, management reform synergizes with Islamic values when implemented gradually with cultural sensitivity, enhancing both operational efficiency and spiritual purposes (*dakwah* and *tarbiyah*). Teacher development integrates formal training with mentoring and peer support, fostering simultaneous professional competency and spiritual growth. This study provides empirical evidence from teacher perspectives—frontline implementers—demonstrating that modern management innovation and Islamic principles can effectively align in educational practice.

**Keywords:** Islamic leadership; teacher perceptions; management reform; secondary schools; *qudwah hasanah*

Islamic education in the contemporary era faces complex challenges in integrating Islamic values with the demands of educational system modernization. Islamic values-based educational leadership has become a crucial factor in shaping learning ecosystems that are not only academically excellent but also spiritually and morally strong (Hammad and Hallinger, 2024). Global research indicates that faith-based schools, including Islamic schools, face unique challenges in balancing the preservation of religious identity with adaptation to constantly evolving modern educational standards (Shah, 2021; Maslowski and Darmawan, 2023). In Indonesia, as the world's largest Muslim-majority country, Islamic-based schools play a vital role in shaping the character of young generations rooted in Islamic values while equipping them with 21st-century competencies (Noor and Hamdan, 2022).

Leadership from an Islamic perspective is not merely administrative authority but an *amanah* (trust) that carries moral and spiritual responsibility to guide, serve, and develop all members of the educationa

community (Hassan and Ahmed, 2021; Al-Alawi, Al-Marzooqi and Mohammed, 2023). The concept of Islamic leadership is grounded in fundamental principles such as *qudwah hasanah* (exemplary role modeling), *shura* (consultation), *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), and *amanah* (trust and responsibility) that distinguish it from conventional leadership models (Ibrahim and Al-Taneiji, 2023; Mustafa and Lines, 2023). Implementing these principles in educational institutions requires a deep understanding of how these values translate into daily leadership practices, including decision-making, resource management, and organizational culture development (Alkahtani et al., 2021; Beekun and Badawi, 2022).

Although theoretical literature on Islamic leadership in education has developed rapidly, significant gaps exist in understanding how Islamic leadership values are implemented and perceived in contemporary educational practice (Ahmad and Owoyemi, 2023; Khan, Bushra and Ahmad, 2024). Previous studies tend to focus on normative and prescriptive aspects of Islamic leadership, with limited attention to the lived experiences of educators implementing these values in the field (Fadhil and Hassan, 2022; Sahin and Kumru, 2023). Most studies examine what Islamic leadership *should be rather than how teachers experience it* in their daily work (Minsih and Hidayat, 2022). Qualitative research exploring teacher perceptions and experiences of Islamic leadership implementation remains very limited, especially in secondary schools undergoing transition in modern management system adaptation (Azmi and Ahmad, 2021; Yusof and Hashim, 2024). This gap is important to fill, considering teachers are frontline implementers who directly experience the impact of leadership policies and practices in their daily professional lives (Mohammed and Ali, 2023).

The context of school management reform adds complexity to Islamic leadership implementation that remains underexplored (Wan and Sirat, 2023; Ahmad, Yusof and Ismail, 2024). Islamic schools in Indonesia increasingly adopt modern management systems to improve efficiency and quality, creating tension between preserving Islamic traditions and integrating contemporary innovations (Lukens-Bull, 2021; Parker and Raihani, 2023). Research exploring this intersection remains rare, leaving significant knowledge gaps about how teachers experience and navigate these changes (Ali and Ahmed, 2023; Rosli and Daud, 2024). Beycioglu and Kondakci (2021) observe that organizational change in schools is context-dependent, yet little is known about how this principle applies in Islamic educational contexts. In particular, how do teachers navigate the transition from traditional to formal organizational structures? Do they perceive modern management systems as compatible with Islamic principles, or as contradictory? How do schools balance efficiency improvements with maintaining spiritual purposes?

In Pandeglang, Banten—a region with predominantly Islamic educational institutions—schools increasingly face this exact challenge. Multiple secondary Islamic schools (MTS) have recently undergone management reforms, introducing formal systems for scheduling, task allocation, performance monitoring, and documented procedures. Yet little is known about whether these reforms align with or contradict the Islamic leadership values that teachers believe should guide their professional lives. This creates a critical tension at the practical level: how can schools implement hierarchical organizational structures and systematic procedures—hallmarks of contemporary management—without diluting Islamic principles such

as consultative decision-making, brotherhood, and exemplary leadership? Understanding this intersection between modern organizational management and Islamic educational principles is essential for both practical implementation and theoretical development.

Teachers represent the critical perspective to examine this challenge. As frontline implementers, they directly experience the consequences of leadership decisions and organizational changes. They navigate daily tensions between following new management procedures and upholding Islamic values. They observe whether school leaders embody Islamic principles through concrete actions or merely espouse them rhetorically. Yet teacher voices remain conspicuously absent from research on Islamic educational leadership. Their perceptions—grounded in lived experience rather than abstract theory—are essential for understanding whether management reform genuinely supports or undermines Islamic educational purposes. Research consistently demonstrates that teacher perceptions shape implementation outcomes (McLure and Aldridge, 2023) and that organizational change readiness depends heavily on how employees interpret and accept change initiatives (Bagga, Gera and Haque, 2023). In the Indonesian context specifically, Dacholfany, Baharun and Ulfatin (2024) emphasize that educational management improvements depend on understanding teacher perspectives and their responses to organizational modifications. Furthermore, Kurtay and Kondakci (2020) found that teachers' affective and attitudinal reactions to organizational change significantly influence whether reforms achieve their intended goals.

This study is urgent for multiple reasons. First, context specificity: Pandeglang's Islamic schools represent a significant but understudied context where the tension between Islamic values and modern management is actively unfolding. This region's strong Islamic educational heritage, combined with recent management reforms, creates an ideal research setting. Second, practical utility: Understanding teacher perspectives during organizational transition provides actionable insights for school leaders attempting similar reforms elsewhere in Indonesia and beyond. The findings can inform how educational administrators design and implement management reforms while honoring institutional values. Third, theoretical clarification: This research can clarify whether perceived incompatibilities between Islamic values and modern management are genuine conflicts or false dichotomies—a distinction with profound implications for how Islamic institutions design their futures. Marlia *et al.* (2025) note that leadership and change management in educational contexts require understanding both structural and cultural dimensions.

By centering teacher voices and examining their lived experiences during management reform, this phenomenological study offers empirical evidence from a perspective rarely represented in academic literature. The study contributes not just theoretical knowledge but practical understanding of how Islamic leadership can be authentically implemented within modern organizational contexts. It addresses identified research gaps by providing empirical evidence about micro-level implementation of Islamic leadership values (Ali and Owaygen, 2024) and explores how teachers experience the synergy or conflict between Islamic principles and management innovation. In an era where Islamic schools globally seek to maintain their distinctive values while adopting contemporary management practices, insights from teachers' experiences in Pandeglang offer valuable lessons for educational leadership theory and practice.

## **METHOD**

This phenomenological study employed a descriptive interpretive design to explore teacher perceptions of Islamic leadership values implementation during management reform. The research was conducted in three secondary Islamic schools (MTS) located in Pandeglang, Banten, Indonesia. These schools were purposefully selected based on two criteria: (1) implementation of formal management systems (documented procedures, systematic scheduling, task allocation protocols) within the past two years, and (2) ongoing organizational transition from traditional to structured management approaches (Beycioglu and Kondakci, 2021). Ten teachers were selected through purposive sampling from the three MTS in Pandeglang. Selection criteria included: (1) active teaching status with minimum one academic year experience at the school, (2) regular direct interaction with school leadership, (3) teaching roles (Islamic studies, general subjects, or academic coordination) allowing observation of leadership practices, (4) willing to provide informed consent, and (5) available for in-depth interviews. Teachers represented varying tenure at their schools (ranging from 1-15 years) and had directly experienced the recent management reforms (Minsih and Hidayat, 2022).

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted between March and June 2024. Each interview lasted 60-90 minutes and was conducted individually with each teacher in a private school setting. Interviews used a standardized interview guide with eight open-ended questions addressing: (1) perceptions of Islamic leadership values in the school, (2) observable leadership practices (qudwah hasanah, shura, ukhuwah), (3) teacher-leadership relationships, (4) experiences of management reform implementation, (5) alignment or conflict between Islamic values and formal management systems, (6) impact of reforms on dakwah and tarbiyah (Islamic education and character development), (7) teacher professional development support, and (8) suggestions for better integration of Islamic values with modern management (Dacholfany, Baharun and Ulfatin, 2024). All interviews were audio-recorded with participant consent and transcribed verbatim within 48 hours. Transcripts were returned to participants for member checking to verify accuracy and completeness (McLure and Aldridge, 2023). Interview data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework Braun and Clarke (2022): (1) familiarization with data through repeated listening and reading of transcripts, (2) systematic coding of meaningful units, (3) organization of codes into preliminary themes, (4) review and refinement of theme definitions, (5) naming and finalizing themes, and (6) synthesis into analytical narrative. ATLAS.ti version 23 software facilitated systematic coding, theme organization, and audit trail documentation. Coding was conducted inductively, identifying features meaningful to participants without imposing predetermined frameworks. Analysis revealed five key dimensions reflecting teacher experiences: Exemplary Leadership and Islamic Values (qudwah hasanah), Ukhuwah Islamiyah and Interpersonal Relations, Participatory Decision-Making (shura), Management Reform Effectiveness, and Teacher Competency and Spirituality Development. Methodological rigor was maintained through: (1) persistent engagement with data (repeated coding and interpretation), (2) member checking (participant verification of findings), (3) detailed documentation of analytical procedures, (4) reflexive attention to researcher

assumptions and potential biases, and (5) transparent reporting enabling readers to evaluate research quality (Kurtay and Kondakeci, 2020). All data were stored in encrypted format with anonymity protocols, adhering to research ethics standards.

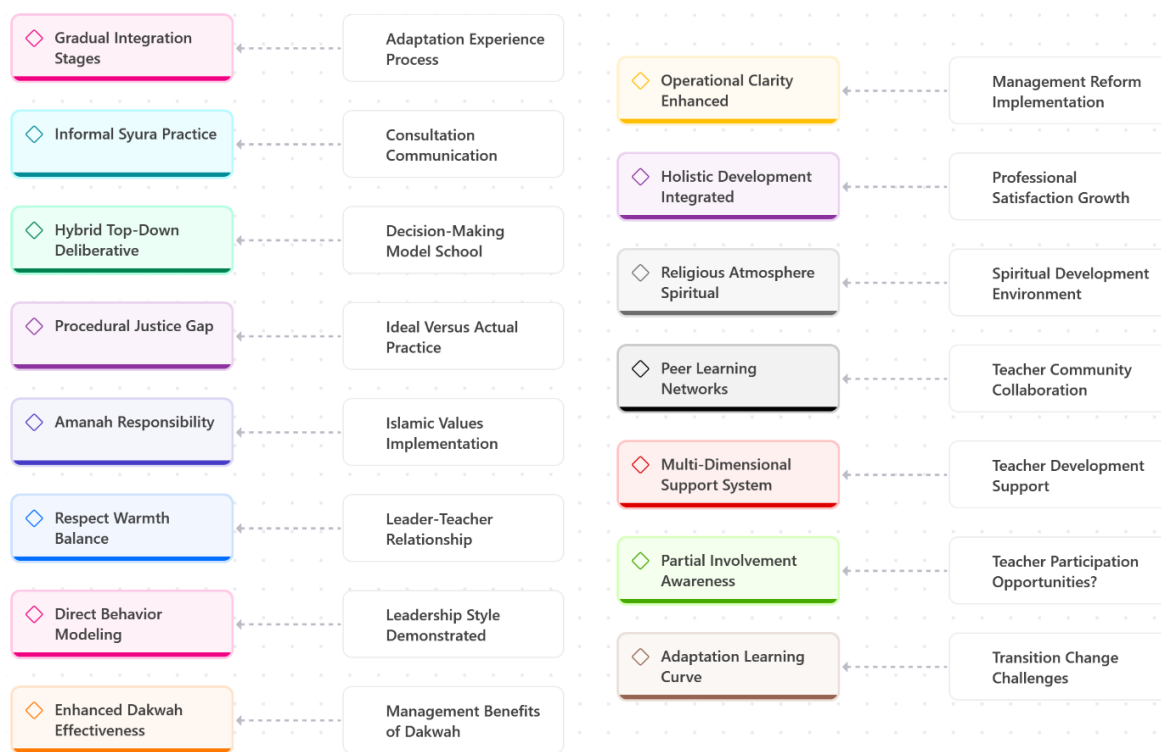
## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### RESULTS

#### Research Setting and Participant Characteristics

#### ATLAS.ti Thematic Structure: Eight Sub-Themes, Eight Integration Mechanisms, and Nine Outcomes

Reflexive thematic analysis using ATLAS.ti version 24 identified eight core sub-themes representing initial codes from interview data. These eight themes integrate through middle-level mechanisms (processes and relationship-building) to produce nine key outcomes.



**Figure1.** ATLAS.ti Thematic Analysis Map showing  
Source: Researcher, 2025

#### Eight Sub-Themes from Coding Analysis

Theme 1: Gradual Integration Stages. Teachers observed that schools implemented management reform gradually, not abruptly. Leaders deliberately paced transitions, introduced procedures incrementally, and contextualized formal systems within Islamic frameworks, creating psychological safety for teachers to adapt new structures while preserving Islamic practices.

Theme 2: Informal Syura Practice. Despite formal management systems, Islamic consultation (shura) persisted as an embedded practice. Teachers described regular consultative moments where leaders actively solicited input, considered diverse perspectives, and made decisions collaboratively within formal

organizational structures.

Theme 3: Hybrid Top-Down Deliberative. Decision-making combined hierarchical clarity (necessary for management function) with Islamic deliberation (required by Islamic principles). Leaders communicated clear directions while creating deliberative spaces for teacher input.

Theme 4: Procedural Justice Gap. While formal procedures were implemented, teachers noted that sometimes procedures were applied without adequate consultation or compassion, creating tension between management formality and Islamic values of mercy.

Theme 5: Amanah Responsibility. School leaders understood their authority as a sacred trust (amanah) requiring accountability to Islamic principles. Teachers described leaders who treated the position as moral stewardship, demonstrating genuine concern for teachers' spiritual and professional development.

Theme 6: Respect Warmth Balance. Teachers valued that leaders maintained professional respect and clear authority while demonstrating genuine warmth and personal care. This balance created conditions for both accountability and spiritual growth.

Theme 7: Direct Behavior Modeling. Teachers learned Islamic leadership primarily through observing leaders' actual behaviors—how they handled conflicts, treated struggling staff, and responded to crises. Concrete actions demonstrated Islamic commitment more powerfully than directives.

Theme 8: Enhanced Dakwah Effectiveness. Teachers perceived that management reforms, when implemented thoughtfully, strengthened the school's capacity for dakwah (Islamic mission) and tarbiyah (character development), creating systematic opportunity for intentional Islamic education.

### **Eight Integration Mechanisms Linking Sub-Themes to Outcomes**

The eight sub-themes integrate through middle-level processes: (1) *Adaptation Experience Process* enabled teachers to experience change as manageable evolution; (2) *Consultation Communication* ensured Islamic consultation persisted within formal structures; (3) *Decision-Making Model School* maintained hierarchical clarity with deliberative input; (4) *Ideal Versus Actual Practice* highlighted gaps requiring leadership attention; (5) *Islamic Values Implementation* provided explicit frameworks for management purposes; (6) *Leader-Teacher Relationship* built trust enabling change acceptance; (7) *Leadership Style Demonstrated* embodied Islamic leadership through visible action; and (8) *Management Benefits of Dakwah* demonstrated how efficiency served Islamic purposes.

### **Nine Key Outcomes: Teacher-Reported Effects**

Teachers reported nine key outcomes. (1) *Operational Clarity Enhanced*: Management systems created clear organizational functioning. (2) *Holistic Development Integrated*: Teachers experienced simultaneous professional competency and spiritual growth. (3) *Religious Atmosphere Spiritual*: Institutional prioritization of spiritual development strengthened. (4) *Peer Learning Networks*: Teacher collaboration deepened around shared understanding. (5) *Multi-Dimensional Support System*: Teachers received integrated formal training, relational mentoring, peer learning, and spiritual guidance. (6) *Partial*

*Involvement Awareness*: Teachers noted expanded participation opportunities, though some areas needed strengthening. (7) *Adaptation Learning Curve*: Teachers identified transition challenges requiring continued leadership attention. (8) *Management Reform Implementation*: Teachers actively supported changes perceived as serving Islamic purposes. (9) *Enhanced Islamic Educational Capacity*: Management reform strengthened dakwah and tarbiyah when properly contextualized.

### **Five Main Dimensions: Synthesis of Findings**

The eight sub-themes and nine outcomes are integrated into five main dimensions. *Dimension 1—Exemplary Leadership and Islamic Values (Qudwah Hasanah)* integrated Direct Behavior Modeling and Amanah Responsibility, showing that leadership authority is derived from demonstrated Islamic commitment. *Dimension 2—Ukhuwah Islamiyah and Interpersonal Relations* synthesized Respect, Warmth, Balance, and Informal Syura Practice, reflecting that Islamic brotherhood transcended formal structures. *Dimension 3—Participatory Decision-Making (Shura)* integrated Hybrid Top-Down Deliberative and Procedural Justice Gap, showing consultation principles embedded in formal decisions with ongoing challenges. *Dimension 4—Management Reform Effectiveness* synthesized Gradual Integration Stages and Enhanced Dakwah Effectiveness, demonstrating that modern management aligned with Islamic values when implemented gradually with cultural sensitivity. *Dimension 5—Teacher Competency and Spirituality Development* emerged as an integrating outcome showing professional competency and spiritual growth as mutually reinforcing.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **The Synergy Mechanism: Islamic Values and Modern Management Integration**

The central finding reveals that Islamic values and modern management are not inherently contradictory but can synergize. Three conditions enable this synergy: (1) Gradual implementation pacing changes incrementally, allowing psychological integration, (2) Explicit Islamic contextualization explaining how procedures serve Islamic purposes, and (3) Relational trust foundation where leaders' demonstrated Islamic commitment makes teachers willing to embrace new systems. This finding aligns with recent scholarship on values-based leadership in religious institutions (Brooks and Ezzani, 2022).

### **Exemplary Leadership as Foundation**

Teachers consistently emphasized observable leadership behaviors as more influential than formal authority. This reflects Islamic leadership theory positioning qudwah hasanah (exemplary conduct) as fundamental to legitimacy (Brooks and Ezzani, 2022).

### **Consultation Within Formal Structures**

Contrary to assumptions that formalization eliminates authentic consultation, teachers experienced Islamic consultation (shura) persisting alongside formal structures. However, the procedural justice gap

highlighted that procedures can be applied mechanically without Islamic compassion, pointing to the need for conscious leadership intention to maintain values alignment.

### **Holistic Professional Development**

Teachers experienced professional competency and spiritual growth as mutually reinforcing rather than compartmentalized. This reflects Islamic educational philosophy requiring simultaneous technical excellence and moral formation (Efendi *et al.*, 2021).

### **Management Efficiency Serving Islamic Purpose**

Teachers perceived that systematic management strengthened dakwah and tarbiyah when properly contextualized. Better organization protected time for Islamic instruction, documented systems clarified accountability for character development, and formal monitoring ensured spiritual purposes were not lost.

### **Leadership Development and Organizational Sustainability**

The findings underscore that successful integration of Islamic values with management reform requires deliberate leadership development strategies prioritizing values-aligned leadership capacity alongside technical skills. Recent research on Islamic-based educational leadership (Arar, Sawalhi and Yilmaz, 2022) confirms this emphasis on leaders' capacity to contextualize innovation within religious frameworks. The sustainability of management reforms depends less on system design than on leadership character and organizational culture aligned with Islamic values. Purnomo, Siminto and Ausat (2024) demonstrate that value-based leadership directly shapes organizational culture, supporting sustainable change. This research suggests that Islamic schools investing in leader formation and spiritual development will achieve more durable integration of modern and traditional elements. Future leadership appointments should evaluate demonstrated commitment to Islamic values as equally important as management credentials, since these appear more predictive of successful organizational change than technical expertise alone.

### **Change Management Mechanisms and Organizational Resilience**

The eight integration mechanisms suggest that organizational change in Islamic contexts operates through pathways differing from secular change management models. Rather than rapid system implementation and compliance enforcement, Islamic school change appeared most successful following: gradual introduction → relational trust-building → explicit value-alignment framing → peer adaptation → demonstrated leadership commitment. This pattern aligns with recent research examining resilience and life values in Muslim educational communities (Bahrun *et al.*, 2023), which demonstrates that psychological and spiritual dimensions of change significantly influence teacher resilience and organizational adaptation. When organizational change grounds itself in shared Islamic values, teachers

develop genuine resilience and agency rather than mere compliance. This indicates that Islamic schools possess a unique capacity for managing organizational change because the underlying value system provides meaning-making capacity (Arar, Sawalhi and Yilmaz, 2022).

### **Teacher Professional Identity and Values Integration**

A critical dimension of successful management integration involves how teachers construct and maintain professional identity while navigating organizational change. Pandeglang teachers' positive perception of management innovation suggests they experience professional identity aligned with rather than threatened by modernization. This contrasts with research showing that teachers in some Islamic school contexts experience identity tension when secular management systems challenge religious commitments (Qoyyimah *et al.*, 2023). The difference appears rooted in how leaders frame management reforms—when explicitly connected to Islamic educational missions, teachers integrate new systems into a coherent professional identity emphasizing Islamic values and contemporary competence. Hanafi *et al.* (2021), studying Indonesian Islamic boarding schools' pandemic response, found that leadership intentionally linking organizational adaptation to Islamic educational purposes enabled teachers to maintain strong professional identity and commitment despite institutional disruption. This research suggests that professional identity becomes a mechanism through which teachers either resist or embrace organizational change. Islamic schools fostering integrated professional identity—where Islamic commitment and professional competency are presented as mutually reinforcing rather than competing—enable smoother change adoption. Teacher identity development thus emerges as a critical leadership function beyond technical change management.

### **School Climate, Instructional Leadership, and Change Enablement**

Beyond individual leadership behavior, this research reveals that school climate—the shared atmosphere reflecting collective values and relationships—functions as a critical change enabler. Teachers in Pandeglang schools reported experiencing respectful, collaborative school environments where procedural expectations were balanced with relational warmth. Contemporary research on school climate demonstrates its mediating role in translating principal leadership into teacher behavior change. Dutta and Sahney (2022) found that principal instructional leadership's effect on teacher performance was significantly mediated through school climate quality, with psychologically safe and value-aligned school environments producing stronger teacher engagement with new practices. Similarly, Akgöz, Şahin and Erdoğan (2024) identified school climate as the mechanism through which instructional leadership influences teacher autonomy and innovative behavior. In Islamic school contexts specifically, this research contributes evidence that school climate grounded in Islamic values—manifesting as respect, consultation, and shared Islamic purpose—facilitates organizational change acceptance. Schools that built a positive climate simultaneously with management reform created conditions enabling teachers to perceive change as coherent with the school's mission rather than as an external imposition. This suggests that school climate

represents an essential yet often overlooked dimension of change management strategy, particularly in values-based institutions where relational and spiritual dimensions of the work environment significantly impact teacher response to organizational innovation.

### **Limitations and Future Research Directions**

This research is limited by its focus on three schools in a single Indonesian region, potentially limiting generalizability across different Islamic educational contexts. The cross-sectional interview design provides rich insight into teacher perceptions at a specific moment but does not allow examination of change trajectories over extended periods. Future longitudinal research tracking management implementation over 3-5 years would clarify whether synergy between Islamic values and modern management is sustained. Research examining failed integration attempts would clarify conditions enabling versus preventing synergy. Comparative studies examining whether the integration mechanisms identified here operate across different Islamic school types (urban/rural, traditional/modern, single-gender/coeducational) would strengthen theoretical understanding.

### **Implications**

This research provides empirical evidence from teacher perspectives that modern management innovation and Islamic educational values can align when leaders create three conditions: gradual pacing, explicit Islamic contextualization, and relational trust-building. The tension between Islamic tradition and contemporary management is not inherent but constructed through implementation choices. For Islamic schools worldwide navigating similar transitions, the central question is not whether to adopt modern management but how to do so, strengthening rather than compromising Islamic educational missions.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTION**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

This research provides empirical evidence from ten teachers in three Pandeglang secondary Islamic schools that modern management innovation and Islamic educational values are not inherently contradictory but can synergize productively when leaders deliberately create three enabling conditions: (1) gradual implementation pacing changes incrementally to allow psychological and institutional integration, (2) explicit Islamic contextualization making transparent how management procedures serve Islamic educational purposes of dakwah and tarbiyah, and (3) relational trust foundation built through demonstrated leadership commitment to Islamic values. Rather than representing fixed opposition, the tension between Islamic tradition and contemporary management is constructed through implementation choices available to school leaders. The findings illuminate that sustainable organizational change in Islamic schools depends less on sophisticated system design than on leadership character aligned with Islamic values, organizational culture embedding religious principles, and schools' capacity to help teachers construct integrated professional identities where Islamic commitment and technical competency reinforce

rather than compete with each other. For Islamic schools worldwide navigating modernization pressures, the critical question is not whether to adopt contemporary management approaches but rather how to implement these tools in ways that strengthen Islamic educational missions while enhancing operational effectiveness. This research contributes theoretically by demonstrating that Islamic schools possess a distinctive capacity for values-driven organizational change grounded in shared religious frameworks that provide meaning-making resources unavailable in secular contexts, and it contributes practically by identifying concrete mechanisms through which gradual implementation, explicit value-alignment, and relational leadership enable sustainable integration of modern and Islamic educational dimensions. Future longitudinal research tracking implementation trajectories over extended periods, comparative studies across diverse Islamic school contexts, and investigation of implementation failures would strengthen the understanding of conditions enabling versus preventing values-management integration in Islamic educational settings worldwide.

## SUGGESTION

School leaders in Islamic educational institutions should prioritize the consistent implementation of *qudwah hasanah* (exemplary leadership) by ensuring alignment between espoused values and actual leadership practices. Leaders must move beyond rhetoric to demonstrate Islamic leadership principles through concrete daily actions that teachers can observe and emulate. Furthermore, leaders should strengthen participatory decision-making mechanisms by institutionalizing *shura* (consultation) processes that genuinely involve teachers in decisions affecting their professional lives, thereby enhancing inclusivity and collective ownership of organizational direction.

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