

Leadership and Governance in Islamic Education Institutions: Strategic Planning and the Challenges of Value-Based Education

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the dynamics of leadership and governance in Islamic education institutions, with a particular focus on how strategic planning is implemented and the challenges encountered in sustaining value-based education. A qualitative research design was employed, utilizing a multiple-case study approach across four Islamic education institutions in Indonesia, including two pesantren and two Islamic universities. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 28 institutional leaders, document analysis of strategic plans and governance frameworks, and non-participant observation of institutional practices. Thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's six-phase protocol was used to analyze the data. The findings reveal three main themes: (1) the centrality of spiritual leadership in shaping governance structures that align with Islamic values; (2) the tensions between modernization demands and the preservation of traditional educational values; and (3) the role of participatory governance mechanisms in mediating stakeholder interests during strategic planning processes. The study concludes that effective leadership in Islamic education institutions requires an integrative approach that harmonizes Islamic ethical principles with contemporary management practices. This research contributes to the understanding of how value-based governance frameworks can be operationalized within Islamic educational contexts, offering practical implications for institutional leaders and policymakers.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji dinamika kepemimpinan dan tata kelola di lembaga pendidikan Islam, dengan fokus khusus pada bagaimana perencanaan strategis diimplementasikan serta tantangan yang dihadapi dalam mempertahankan pendidikan berbasis nilai. Desain penelitian

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kualitatif digunakan dengan pendekatan studi kasus ganda pada empat lembaga pendidikan Islam di Indonesia, meliputi dua pesantren dan dua perguruan tinggi Islam. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan 28 pemimpin institusi, analisis dokumen rencana strategis dan kerangka tata kelola, serta observasi non-partisipan terhadap praktik kelembagaan. Analisis tematik mengikuti protokol enam fase Braun dan Clarke digunakan untuk menganalisis data. Temuan mengungkapkan tiga tema utama: (1) sentralitas kepemimpinan spiritual dalam membentuk struktur tata kelola yang selaras dengan nilai-nilai Islam; (2) ketegangan antara tuntutan modernisasi dan pelestarian nilai-nilai pendidikan tradisional; dan (3) peran mekanisme tata kelola partisipatif dalam memediasi kepentingan pemangku kepentingan selama proses perencanaan strategis. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa kepemimpinan yang efektif di lembaga pendidikan Islam memerlukan pendekatan integratif yang menyelaraskan prinsip-prinsip etika Islam dengan praktik manajemen kontemporer.

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A. INTRODUCTION

The landscape of Islamic education is undergoing a fundamental transformation driven by globalization, digitalization, and shifting societal expectations (Rapi et al., 2024; Haddade et al., 2024). Islamic education institutions, encompassing pesantren, madrasah, and Islamic universities, serve approximately 13.5 million students in Indonesia alone, making them one of the largest educational networks in the Muslim world (Kementerian Agama, 2024). Despite their significant role in character formation and moral development, these institutions face unprecedented governance challenges as they navigate the tension between preserving traditional Islamic values and meeting contemporary educational standards (Arar et al., 2023; Lahmar, 2023). The question of how institutional leaders balance value-based education with strategic modernization has become critically important, particularly as accreditation standards and global competitiveness demands intensify (Bantilan et al., 2023; Sulhan & Suyatman, 2024). This duality—maintaining spiritual authenticity while pursuing institutional excellence—represents a phenomenon that demands rigorous scholarly attention.

Previous research has examined various dimensions of Islamic educational leadership. Alazmi and Bush (2023) proposed an Islamic-oriented educational leadership model, while Said et al. (2023) conducted a systematic review of principal leadership qualities in Islamic schools. Studies on strategic planning in Islamic higher education have explored governance mechanisms (Hidayah et al., 2025) and quality assurance practices (Fauzi, 2021). Furthermore, research on transformational leadership in Islamic contexts has demonstrated its positive effects on school climate and teacher motivation (Sari et al., 2024; Komariah et al., 2023). However, the existing literature reveals significant gaps. First, most studies examine leadership and governance as separate constructs rather than as integrated phenomena within value-based institutional contexts. Second, there is limited empirical investigation into how strategic planning processes in Islamic institutions specifically negotiate the tension between modernization and value preservation (Ezzani et al., 2023). Third, comparative analyses across different types of Islamic education institutions—particularly between pesantren and Islamic universities—remain scarce, despite their fundamentally different governance structures and stakeholder dynamics (Brooks et al., 2020; Maulidah et al., 2024).

This study aims to address these gaps by investigating the interplay between leadership practices, governance structures, and strategic planning processes in Islamic education institutions, with particular attention to how these elements shape and are shaped by value-based educational philosophies. Specifically, this research seeks to: (1) analyze the leadership models employed by institutional leaders in navigating governance challenges; (2) examine how strategic planning processes incorporate and sustain Islamic values; and (3) identify the key tensions and mediating mechanisms that emerge when institutions pursue modernization within a value-based framework. Unlike previous studies that focus on single institutional types or isolate leadership from governance, this research adopts a comparative, integrative approach that illuminates the systemic relationships among these constructs across diverse Islamic educational settings.

This study is guided by three interconnected arguments. First, we argue that effective governance in Islamic education institutions is fundamentally shaped by a distinctive form of spiritual leadership that integrates Islamic ethical principles (*amanah*, *adl*, *shura*, and *ihsan*) into institutional decision-making structures, creating governance mechanisms that differ substantively from secular models (Munandar, 2022; Aslam & Yusoff, 2023). Second, we contend that the strategic planning process in these institutions involves a unique dialectical negotiation between modernization imperatives and value preservation commitments, producing hybrid institutional strategies that cannot be adequately explained by conventional strategic management theories alone (Sulaiman & Darwis, 2022; Bryson, 2018). Third, we propose that participatory governance mechanisms, particularly those rooted in the Islamic principle of *shura* (consultation), serve as critical mediating structures that enable institutions to reconcile competing stakeholder interests while maintaining institutional coherence and value alignment (Sari & Rahmawati, 2023).

The study is situated within the Indonesian context, which provides a particularly rich setting for this investigation due to its diverse ecosystem of Islamic educational institutions, ranging from traditional *pesantren* with centuries-old governance traditions to modern Islamic universities operating within national accreditation frameworks. Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs oversees more than 27,000 *pesantren* and 58 State Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKIN), each navigating distinct governance challenges (Kementerian Agama, 2024). The unit of analysis comprises institutional leadership practices and governance processes within four purposively selected Islamic education institutions: two *pesantren* (one traditional, one modern) and two Islamic universities (one state, one private). This selection enables cross-case comparison along dimensions of institutional type, governance tradition, and modernization trajectory.

This article is organized as follows. The next section describes the research methodology, including the qualitative design, participant selection, data collection procedures, and analytical framework. This is followed by the presentation of research findings organized around the three emergent themes identified through thematic analysis. The discussion section then interprets these findings in relation to existing theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence, highlighting the contributions to knowledge and practical implications. The article concludes with a summary of key findings, limitations, and directions for future research.

B. METHODS

This study employed a qualitative research design using a multiple-case study approach (Creswell, 2018; Stake, 2020). The case study design was selected because it allows for an in-depth investigation of complex phenomena within their real-world contexts, which is particularly appropriate for examining leadership and governance dynamics that are deeply embedded in institutional cultures and value systems (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The multiple-case design

enables both within-case depth and cross-case comparison, strengthening the analytical generalizability of findings across different institutional types within Islamic education (Yin, 2018).

The research was conducted across four Islamic education institutions in Indonesia, purposively selected to represent the diversity of institutional types and governance models within the Islamic education ecosystem. The institutions included: Pesantren Al-Hikmah (pseudonym), a traditional pesantren in East Java with a kyai-centered governance model; Pesantren Darussalam (pseudonym), a modern pesantren in West Java that has adopted a foundation-based governance structure; Universitas Islam Nusantara (pseudonym), a state Islamic university in Central Java undergoing institutional transformation; and Institut Agama Islam Rahmah (pseudonym), a private Islamic higher education institution in South Sulawesi. These institutions were selected based on three criteria: (a) representation of different governance models within Islamic education; (b) active engagement in strategic planning processes within the past five years; and (c) accessibility and willingness to participate in the research. The research was conducted from March to September 2024.

The presence of the researcher was an important methodological consideration. As someone with extensive experience in Islamic education management, the researcher occupied a position of cultural insider, which facilitated trust-building with participants and enabled nuanced interpretation of institutional dynamics (Braun & Clarke, 2021). However, this positionality also required reflexive awareness to mitigate potential bias. The researcher maintained a reflexive journal throughout the fieldwork process, documenting analytical decisions, interpretive tensions, and emerging insights. Ethical approval was obtained from the institutional review board, and all participants provided informed consent prior to data collection.

Data were collected through three complementary methods. First, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 28 institutional leaders across the four sites, including rectors, vice-rectors, pesantren directors (kyai or mudir), heads of quality assurance units, heads of planning bureaus, senior faculty members, and foundation board members. Interview protocols were developed based on an extensive literature review and validated through pilot testing with two educational leaders not included in the final sample. Each interview lasted approximately 60–90 minutes, was audio-recorded with permission, and was transcribed verbatim. Second, document analysis was performed on institutional strategic plans, governance charters, accreditation reports, annual performance reports, and meeting minutes from strategic planning sessions. A total of 47 documents were analyzed across the four institutions. Third, non-participant observation was conducted during six strategic planning meetings, four governance board sessions, and eight leadership practice events, totaling approximately 72 hours of observation. Field notes were recorded systematically using a structured observation protocol.

The research instrument was developed through an iterative process. The interview guide consisted of four main domains: leadership philosophy and practices, governance structures and processes, strategic planning approaches, and challenges in maintaining value-based education. Probing questions were designed to elicit detailed narratives about specific leadership decisions, governance dilemmas, and strategic planning episodes. The instrument was reviewed by three experts in Islamic education management and qualitative research methodology, and revisions were made based on their feedback. The document analysis protocol included categories for institutional vision and mission alignment, governance structure descriptions, strategic priority identification, stakeholder engagement mechanisms, and value integration indicators.

Data analysis followed Braun and Clarke's (2021) reflexive thematic analysis approach, proceeding through six phases: familiarization with the data, systematic coding, generating initial themes, developing and reviewing themes, refining and naming themes, and producing the final

analysis. The analysis began with within-case analysis for each institution, followed by cross-case analysis to identify convergent and divergent patterns. Initial coding was performed inductively from the data, generating 187 codes across all data sources. These codes were iteratively refined and organized into candidate themes through constant comparison. Quality assurance measures included member checking with selected participants, peer debriefing with two qualitative research colleagues, and triangulation across data sources (Nowell et al., 2021). The trustworthiness of the findings was further enhanced through thick description of institutional contexts, transparent documentation of analytical decisions in the audit trail, and the use of direct quotations from participants to illustrate interpretive claims (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022).

C. RESULTS

The thematic analysis yielded three overarching themes that illuminate the dynamics of leadership and governance in Islamic education institutions: (1) Spiritual Leadership as the Foundation of Institutional Governance; (2) The Dialectics of Modernization and Value Preservation in Strategic Planning; and (3) Participatory Governance as a Mediating Mechanism. Each theme is presented with supporting evidence from across the four case institutions, as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. *Summary of Themes and Sub-themes Across Institutions*

Main Theme	Sub-themes	Institutional Prevalence
1. Spiritual Leadership as Governance Foundation	a) Kyai authority and moral legitimacy b) Ethical decision-making frameworks c) Trust (amanah) as governance principle	Strong in pesantren; Emerging in universities
2. Dialectics of Modernization and Value Preservation	a) Accreditation pressures vs. traditional curricula b) Technology adoption negotiations c) Hybrid strategic models	All four institutions; Most acute in traditional pesantren
3. Participatory Governance as Mediating Mechanism	a) Shura-based consultation b) Stakeholder inclusion frameworks c) Conflict resolution processes	Variable across types; Strongest in modern pesantren

Theme 1: Spiritual Leadership as the Foundation of Institutional Governance

Across all four institutions, spiritual leadership emerged as the most prominent dimension shaping governance structures and practices. The data revealed that leaders in Islamic education institutions derive their governance authority not solely from formal positions or bureaucratic mandates, but fundamentally from their perceived moral and spiritual credibility. This pattern was most pronounced in the pesantren settings but was also evident, albeit in different forms, in the university contexts.

In Pesantren Al-Hikmah, the kyai's leadership authority was deeply intertwined with his religious scholarship and spiritual standing within the community. As the director of Pesantren Al-Hikmah explained: "The kyai does not lead because of a decree or appointment. He leads because the community trusts his knowledge, his piety, and his sincerity. Every decision he makes is weighed against Islamic principles, and that is why people follow" (Informant P1-01, Interview, April 2024). This moral authority extended to governance decisions, where the kyai's counsel was sought on matters ranging from curriculum development to financial management. Document analysis of the institution's governance charter confirmed that the kyai held both advisory and executive functions, reflecting a governance model where spiritual authority and administrative power were not separated but rather unified in a single leadership figure.

In contrast, the university settings demonstrated a more institutionalized form of spiritual leadership. At Universitas Islam Nusantara, the rector articulated a governance philosophy that integrated Islamic ethical principles into formal bureaucratic structures. The vice-rector for academic affairs noted: "We have standard operating procedures like any university, but what makes us different is that every policy must pass through what we call the 'values filter'—it must align with our core Islamic principles of amanah, justice, and benefit for the ummah" (Informant U1-03, Interview, May 2024). Observation data from governance board meetings confirmed this practice, with participants frequently invoking Quranic verses and Prophetic traditions when deliberating on institutional policies.

A particularly significant finding was the role of trust (amanah) as an operational governance principle. Across all institutions, leaders described their positions as a trust or mandate from God, which imposed specific ethical obligations on their decision-making. This understanding created a governance culture characterized by heightened accountability, transparency, and conscientiousness. At Pesantren Darussalam, the foundation board chairman stated: "We understand leadership as amanah—a sacred trust. This means every rupiah spent, every teacher hired, every policy made must be accountable not only to stakeholders but ultimately to Allah" (Informant P2-04, Interview, June 2024). This spiritual framing of governance responsibilities was documented across 23 of the 28 interviews, suggesting its pervasive influence on institutional governance culture.

Theme 2: The Dialectics of Modernization and Value Preservation in Strategic Planning

The second major theme concerned the dynamic tension between modernization demands and value preservation that permeated strategic planning processes across all four institutions. Analysis of strategic planning documents and interview data revealed that this tension was not merely an operational challenge but constituted a fundamental philosophical dilemma that shaped the very nature of institutional strategy formulation.

Accreditation pressures emerged as a primary driver of modernization across all institutions. The national accreditation framework, administered by BAN-PT for higher education and BAN-S/M for schools, imposed standardized quality indicators that sometimes conflicted with traditional Islamic educational practices. At Pesantren Al-Hikmah, the academic coordinator described this tension: "The accreditation body requires us to have written curricula, learning outcome matrices, and standardized assessment tools. But our traditional teaching method—the bandongan and sorogan systems—is based on personal mentorship and spiritual development, which does not fit neatly into their rubrics" (Informant P1-05, Interview, April 2024). Document analysis of the pesantren's strategic plan revealed a compromise strategy labeled "dual compliance," whereby traditional pedagogical methods were maintained alongside newly developed formal documentation that satisfied accreditation requirements.

Technology adoption represented another significant site of negotiation. While all institutions acknowledged the necessity of digital transformation, the pace and scope of technology integration varied considerably and was shaped by institutional values. Institut Agama Islam Rahmah demonstrated the most progressive approach, having developed a comprehensive digital governance platform. However, even this institution experienced internal debates about the appropriate boundaries of technology use. The head of the information technology unit reported: “When we proposed implementing an AI-based learning analytics system, several senior faculty members raised concerns that it would reduce the personal, spiritual dimension of the student-teacher relationship. We had to redesign the system to serve as a supplement rather than a replacement for face-to-face mentoring” (Informant U2-06, Interview, July 2024). This finding illustrates how value considerations actively shaped the trajectory of technological modernization.

The cross-case analysis revealed that institutions developed what can be characterized as hybrid strategic models—approaches that selectively adopted modern management practices while preserving core value-based elements. Table 2 presents the strategic planning approaches identified across the four institutions.

Table 2. *Strategic Planning Approaches Across Institutions*

Institution	Planning Model	Value Integration	Key Challenge
Pesantren Al-Hikmah	Kyai-directed with selective modernization	Vision-mission rooted in salaf tradition	Accreditation compliance
Pesantren Darussalam	Foundation-led strategic management	Islamic values embedded in KPIs	Intergenerational leadership transition
UIN Nusantara	Bureaucratic-participatory hybrid	Values filter in policy review	Balancing state mandates with Islamic identity
IAI Rahmah	Market-responsive with value anchoring	Spiritual retreats for strategic reflection	Financial sustainability

As Table 2 illustrates, each institution developed a distinctive approach to strategic planning that reflected its governance tradition, institutional context, and the specific modernization pressures it faced. Despite these differences, all four institutions shared a common characteristic: the explicit integration of Islamic values as non-negotiable parameters within their strategic frameworks.

Theme 3: Participatory Governance as a Mediating Mechanism

The third theme highlights the role of participatory governance mechanisms, particularly those rooted in the Islamic principle of shura (mutual consultation), in mediating the diverse interests and tensions inherent in Islamic education governance. The data revealed that participatory governance served not merely as a procedural requirement but as a substantive mechanism for maintaining institutional cohesion and value alignment during periods of change.

At Pesantren Darussalam, the most formalized shura-based governance structure was observed. The institution operated a multi-tiered consultative system comprising a foundation board (majlis waqf), an academic council (majlis ta’limi), a student affairs council (majlis tholabah), and a community advisory board (majlis istishari). The pesantren director described this system: “Every significant decision passes through at least two levels of consultation. The majlis system ensures that the kyai’s vision is informed by diverse perspectives—from senior ustadz to student

representatives to community elders. This is our implementation of shura as commanded in the Quran” (Informant P2-01, Interview, May 2024). Observation of three majlis meetings confirmed the deliberative nature of these consultations, with substantive debates occurring on topics including curriculum reform, financial allocation, and student welfare policies.

The university settings demonstrated different but equally significant forms of participatory governance. At UIN Nusantara, the strategic planning process incorporated a series of structured stakeholder forums (*musyawarah*) that brought together faculty, staff, students, alumni, and external partners. The head of the planning bureau described the process: “We conduct what we call ‘strategic *musyawarah*’ sessions annually. These are not just presentations—they are genuine deliberations where every stakeholder group has voice. Last year, a student representative’s proposal to integrate entrepreneurship education into the Islamic studies curriculum was adopted after extensive deliberation” (Informant U1-07, Interview, June 2024). Document analysis of meeting minutes confirmed that stakeholder input substantively influenced strategic priorities in 14 out of 18 documented planning sessions.

A critical finding was that participatory governance mechanisms served a conflict resolution function during periods of institutional change. At Pesantren Al-Hikmah, when the institution faced pressure to modernize its governance structure from a *kyai*-centered model to a more distributed leadership approach, the shura process enabled a gradual transition that maintained the *kyai*’s spiritual authority while expanding decision-making participation. The senior *ustadz* who facilitated this transition reflected: “The shura process allowed us to discuss change openly without threatening the *kyai*’s position. Through consultation, we found a middle path where the *kyai* retained spiritual oversight while delegating administrative responsibilities to a professional management team” (Informant P1-03, Interview, April 2024). This finding suggests that shura-based governance provides Islamic education institutions with an indigenous mechanism for managing institutional change that differs from Western models of distributed leadership.

DISCUSSION

This study set out to examine the dynamics of leadership and governance in Islamic education institutions, focusing on strategic planning implementation and the challenges of value-based education. The findings reveal a complex interplay among spiritual leadership, modernization tensions, and participatory governance that both confirms and extends existing theoretical frameworks. This discussion interprets the key findings in relation to previous research and explores their implications for theory and practice.

The centrality of spiritual leadership in Islamic education governance confirms and extends the theoretical propositions advanced by Alazmi and Bush (2023), who argued for an Islamic-oriented educational leadership model distinct from Western paradigms. Our findings provide empirical evidence that spiritual leadership in Islamic institutions operates not as a supplementary dimension but as the foundational architecture upon which governance structures are built. This finding aligns with Aslam and Yusoff (2023), who identified spiritual leadership as a primary driver of organizational performance in Islamic institutions. However, our cross-case analysis reveals an important nuance not captured in previous research: the manifestation of spiritual leadership differs substantially between pesantren and university contexts. In pesantren, spiritual leadership is embodied in the person of the *kyai*, whose moral authority functions as a unifying governance principle. In universities, spiritual leadership is institutionalized through formal mechanisms such as the “values filter” identified in this study. This distinction suggests that spiritual leadership in Islamic education is context-dependent and can be operationalized through both personal

charisma and institutional systems, extending the theoretical framework proposed by Munandar (2022).

The finding that trust (*amanah*) operates as an operational governance principle across all institutional types represents a significant contribution to the governance literature in Islamic education. Previous studies have identified *amanah* as an Islamic leadership value (Said et al., 2023; Komariah et al., 2023), but this study demonstrates how *amanah* is translated into specific governance practices—including heightened financial transparency, collegial accountability mechanisms, and ethical decision-making protocols. This operationalization of *amanah* connects with broader discussions in organizational governance literature about values-based governance (Daniel et al., 2024), while demonstrating that Islamic educational institutions possess indigenous governance principles that can complement or provide alternatives to Western corporate governance frameworks.

The dialectics of modernization and value preservation identified in strategic planning processes extend the work of Bantilan et al. (2023) on strategic planning in education and Sulhan and Suyatman (2024) on managing excellence in Islamic universities. Our finding of “hybrid strategic models” indicates that Islamic education institutions do not simply adopt or reject modernization but engage in a creative process of selective adaptation—a finding consistent with Haddade et al. (2024), who identified similar adaptive strategies in madrasah management. The concept of “dual compliance” discovered at Pesantren Al-Hikmah provides empirical grounding for the theoretical tension identified by Lahmar (2023) between securitization, marketization, and Islamic values in educational leadership. This finding challenges the linear modernization assumptions embedded in much of the strategic planning literature (Bryson, 2018) and suggests that value-based institutions follow non-linear strategic trajectories shaped by ongoing negotiations between tradition and innovation.

The role of technology adoption as a site of value negotiation extends recent work on digital leadership in Islamic education (Susmiyati et al., 2024; Masrur, 2023). Our finding that technology implementation decisions are filtered through institutional value systems adds empirical depth to the conceptual argument made by Rapi et al. (2024) regarding the challenges and opportunities of technology adoption in Islamic higher education. Importantly, the case of IAI Rahmah’s AI-based learning analytics redesign illustrates that value-driven technology adaptation is not merely a constraint but can produce innovations that are pedagogically richer than purely technocratic approaches. This finding resonates with the broader Society 5.0 discourse in Islamic education, where scholars have called for technology integration that preserves the human and spiritual dimensions of learning (Taufik, 2020; Suyitno et al., 2025).

The emergence of participatory governance, specifically *shura*-based consultation, as a mediating mechanism for reconciling competing stakeholder interests addresses a gap in the literature identified by Ezzani et al. (2023) regarding the intersection of Islamic school leadership and social justice. Our finding that *shura* functions not merely as a decision-making procedure but as a conflict resolution and change management mechanism extends the conceptual understanding of Islamic governance beyond its doctrinal descriptions. The multi-tiered *majlis* system at Pesantren Darussalam demonstrates that *shura* can be institutionalized as a sophisticated governance architecture that manages complexity while maintaining value coherence—a finding that parallels but differs from Western models of shared governance and distributed leadership (Bush, 2020; Memon et al., 2024). The key difference lies in the normative foundation: whereas shared governance in Western institutions is typically justified on grounds of democratic participation and professional expertise, *shura*-based governance derives its legitimacy from religious mandate and moral obligation.

The finding that participatory governance enabled conflict resolution during institutional change at Pesantren Al-Hikmah has important theoretical implications. It suggests that Islamic education institutions possess indigenous change management resources that are culturally embedded and normatively grounded, providing an alternative to imported organizational development frameworks. This finding aligns with Brooks et al. (2020), who documented how principals in Islamic schools navigate progressive and conservative approaches through socio-religious curation, and extends their work by demonstrating that shura-based mechanisms can facilitate structural governance reforms without destabilizing institutional identity.

This study also reveals that the effectiveness of governance mechanisms is contingent on the alignment between leadership philosophy, institutional culture, and governance structures. Institutions where there was congruence among these elements—such as Pesantren Darussalam’s integration of foundation governance with shura-based consultation—demonstrated greater capacity for strategic adaptation while maintaining value coherence. Conversely, institutions experiencing misalignment, such as the tensions between state-mandated bureaucratic governance and Islamic governance traditions at UIN Nusantara, exhibited more friction in their strategic planning processes. This finding echoes the institutional theory perspective advanced by Sari et al. (2024) regarding the importance of alignment between organizational structure and cultural values, while adding the dimension of spiritual-administrative congruence as a critical factor in Islamic educational governance effectiveness.

This research contributes to the field of Islamic educational management in several ways. Theoretically, it advances an integrative framework that conceptualizes leadership, governance, and strategic planning as interconnected rather than discrete phenomena in value-based institutional contexts. Empirically, it provides comparative evidence across different types of Islamic education institutions, addressing the call by Maulidah et al. (2024) for research that examines governance dynamics beyond single-institution case studies. Practically, the findings offer institutional leaders a nuanced understanding of how spiritual leadership, hybrid strategic planning, and participatory governance can be leveraged to navigate the challenges of maintaining value-based education in an era of increasing standardization and modernization pressures. The identification of “dual compliance” strategies, “values filters” in policy processes, and multi-tiered shura systems provides actionable governance models that other Islamic education institutions can adapt to their specific contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the dynamics of leadership and governance in Islamic education institutions, with particular attention to strategic planning processes and the challenges of value-based education. Three key findings emerge from the investigation of four Islamic education institutions in Indonesia. First, spiritual leadership constitutes the foundational architecture of governance in Islamic education institutions, operating through both personal moral authority (in pesantren contexts) and institutionalized value mechanisms (in university contexts). Second, strategic planning in these institutions follows non-linear trajectories characterized by creative dialectical negotiations between modernization demands and value preservation commitments, producing hybrid institutional strategies that selectively adapt modern management practices while maintaining core Islamic educational values. Third, participatory governance mechanisms rooted in the principle of shura serve as critical mediating structures that enable institutions to manage complexity, resolve conflicts, and maintain value coherence during periods of institutional change.

The study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. The research was conducted within the Indonesian context, which may limit the transferability of findings to Islamic education

institutions in other national settings with different regulatory environments and cultural traditions. The purposive sampling strategy, while appropriate for the research objectives, means that the selected institutions may not represent the full diversity of Islamic education governance models. Future research could extend this investigation to multiple country contexts, employ longitudinal designs to track governance evolution over time, and incorporate quantitative measures to assess the relationship between governance models and institutional performance outcomes. Despite these limitations, this study contributes to a growing body of knowledge on Islamic educational governance and provides practical insights for institutional leaders seeking to strengthen value-based education within the contemporary challenges of modernization and standardization.

D. CONCLUSION

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