



## Prophetic Leadership as a Strategy to Improve Teacher Performance in Traditional Islamic Educational Institutions

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the application of prophetic leadership in improving the performance of educators in traditional Islamic educational institutions, particularly pesantren. Prophetic leadership, which is grounded in values exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad – such as justice, simplicity, wisdom, and compassion – is considered effective in shaping a more meaningful and spiritually-driven educational environment. Using a qualitative approach with a case study method, data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation at several pesantren. The findings indicate that prophetic leadership positively impacts teachers' work motivation, collaboration, and engagement in educational activities. Leadership by example, open communication, and a humanistic approach significantly enhance the professionalism and performance of educators. This research contributes both theoretically and practically to the development of leadership models rooted in Islamic values that are relevant to the challenges of modern education. Future studies may further explore the integration of prophetic leadership with educational technology and other innovations to support the quality of learning in pesantren

## **INTRODUCTION**

Traditional Islamic education, which historically developed in the form of Islamic boarding schools, has a strategic position in shaping character and improving the quality of human resources. Islamic boarding schools are not only centers for learning Islamic sciences, but also a vehicle for fostering the morals and personality of students as a whole. The education system run by Islamic boarding schools emphasizes the integration of knowledge, moral values, and worship practices in the daily lives of students.

As educational institutions that are deeply rooted in Islamic tradition and are an important part of the national education system, Islamic boarding schools face various challenges in responding to the demands of the times. Technological developments, changes in the national curriculum, and the dynamics of social society require Islamic boarding schools to be able to adapt without losing their identity. In facing these challenges, the role of educators becomes very important, because they are at the forefront of the process of educational transformation in the Islamic boarding school environment.

The performance of educators in Islamic boarding schools is not only measured by their ability to deliver subject matter, especially Islamic sciences, but also by the integrity and exemplary behavior displayed in daily life. Educators in Islamic boarding schools act as teachers, spiritual guides, and role models for students. Therefore, improving the performance of educators is a necessity that is not only oriented towards academic aspects, but also on moral and spiritual dimensions.

One approach that is considered relevant to improving the performance of educators in Islamic boarding schools is the application of prophetic leadership. Prophetic leadership refers to a leadership style that emulates the nature and attitudes of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, such as amanah, tabligh, fathanah, and sidq. This leadership model emphasizes the values of spirituality, justice, exemplary behavior, and social responsibility in managing and leading educational institutions. In the context of Islamic education, prophetic leadership is expected to produce educators who are not only professional, but also have noble and visionary personalities.

Baiturrahman Ciparay Islamic Boarding School, located in Bandung Regency, is one of the traditional Islamic educational institutions that continues to make improvements in improving the quality of educators and their learning systems. This Islamic boarding school is an interesting object to study because it is committed to building the character of students through the active role of educators who are under a leadership structure based on Islamic values. This context provides an ideal space to explore how prophetic leadership is applied and influences the performance of educators.

This study aims to explore more deeply the application of the prophetic leadership model in an effort to improve the performance of educators at the Baiturrahman Ciparay Islamic Boarding School. Through this approach, it is expected that a contextual, relevant, and applicable leadership model can be formulated to be applied in the Islamic boarding school environment. In addition, the results of this study are expected to provide theoretical and practical

contributions in the development of the concept of Islamic educational leadership, especially in facing increasingly complex global challenges.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***The Concept of Prophetic Leadership***

Prophetic leadership is a leadership model that emulates the characteristics and behavior of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, such as shiddiq (honest), amanah (trustworthy), tabligh (conveying the truth), and fathanah (intelligent). According to Umiarso (2018), prophetic leadership combines the dimensions of spirituality, moral ethics, and social vision in leading educational institutions. This model is not only oriented towards results, but also on the process of fostering divine values in the organization.

Hidayanti (2023) emphasized that prophetic leadership is a strategic solution in dealing with the value crisis in the world of modern education. Prophetic leaders act as moral guides who are able to create a conducive, empathetic, and productive work climate.

### ***Prophetic Leadership in the Context of Islamic Education***

In the context of Islamic education, especially in traditional institutions such as Islamic boarding schools, prophetic leadership becomes very relevant. Salimah (2023) explains that the application of prophetic values can strengthen the identity and character of students. This is in line with the findings of Sholeh, et al. (2022), that prophetic leadership strengthens collaboration between educators, improves work culture, and increases loyalty to the institution's vision.

Novianti, et al. (2023) in their research at MTI Canduang showed that prophetic leadership is effective in fostering work ethic, increasing the social responsibility of educators, and strengthening spiritual relationships between leaders, teachers, and students.

### ***Performance of Educators in Islamic Boarding Schools***

The performance of educators in the Islamic boarding school environment is not only measured from the academic aspect, but also from their role as moral and spiritual mentors of students. Abidin (2023) stated that in Islamic boarding schools, educators act as the main role models who shape the character of students through daily interactions. Therefore, a leadership model that is able to inspire and motivate is needed.

Sugiara et al., (2025) emphasized that the application of prophetic leadership can directly increase teacher motivation and professionalism in the learning process. This is evident through increased teacher involvement in teaching and learning activities, training, and work discipline.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design, which aims to understand in depth how prophetic leadership is applied in improving the performance of educators in traditional Islamic educational environments, especially at the Baiturrahman Ciparay Islamic Boarding School, Bandung Regency. This approach was chosen because it is appropriate for studying phenomena in a real context, where the role of local spiritual and cultural values greatly influences the dynamics of leadership and the behavior of educational organizations.

The subjects of this study consisted of elements of Islamic boarding school leaders, educators, and senior students who were considered to have relevant experience and understanding related to the implementation of leadership in their daily lives. The selection of informants was carried out purposively, taking into account their active involvement in the educational process and their closeness to the values of prophetic leadership applied by the Islamic boarding school. This allows researchers to obtain richer and more contextual data.

Data collection techniques were carried out through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and documentation studies. Interviews were used to explore the understanding, experience, and perceptions of informants regarding the concept and practice of prophetic leadership in their daily activities. Observations were conducted to directly observe the interaction between educators and students, as well as how leadership values such as honesty, exemplary behavior, and responsibility are demonstrated in the learning process and non-formal activities. Meanwhile, documentation was used to complete the data through analysis of official Islamic boarding school documents such as organizational structures, work programs, and educator performance evaluation records.

The data obtained were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques as developed by Braun & Clarke (2006). The analysis process includes the stages of data coding, identification of main themes, and interpretation of data based on the social context and Islamic values that are the basis of leadership in Islamic boarding schools. The main themes raised in this study include: (1) characteristics of prophetic leadership applied at the Baiturrahman Ciparay Islamic Boarding School, (2) its influence on educator motivation and performance, and (3) challenges and opportunities in implementing this leadership model amidst the dynamics of modern education.

The entire research process refers to the ethical principles of qualitative research and follows the methodological references of Creswell (2014) for qualitative design and Braun & Clarke (2006) for thematic analysis techniques. Data validity is strengthened by triangulation techniques of sources and methods, as well as member checking to ensure the accuracy of the information provided by the informants. With this approach, it is hoped that the results of the study can provide a complete and in-depth picture of the contribution of prophetic leadership to improving the quality of educators in Islamic boarding schools.

## RESULTS

This study reveals various forms of prophetic leadership practices implemented at the Baiturrahman Ciparay Islamic Boarding School, Bandung Regency, and how these practices have a significant impact on the performance of educators. Prophetic leadership in this context refers to a leadership model that exemplifies prophetic values such as honesty, justice, patience, and compassion. Based on the results of in-depth interviews with the leaders of the Islamic boarding school, educators, and observations of the dynamics of educational activities, it is clear that these values are not just slogans, but are truly internalized in the management patterns and daily interactions in the Islamic boarding school environment.

One real form of prophetic leadership that is evident in this Islamic boarding school is the moral and spiritual exemplars demonstrated by the leaders of the Islamic boarding school. Educators consider that the figure of the leader is a strong source of inspiration, both in terms of religiosity, work responsibility, and simplicity in life. This exemplary role model indirectly motivates educators to increase their commitment to educational tasks, not only as a formal job, but as part of devotion. A work culture full of sincerity and a spirit of service grows from respect for the leaders who are role models.

In addition, the practice of open and participatory communication is also a main pillar in the prophetic leadership applied in this Islamic boarding school. The leadership routinely holds discussion forums with educators and staff, in order to listen to aspirations, share visions, and resolve various problems collectively. This creates a family-like working atmosphere and makes educators feel involved in decision-making. This participation ultimately increases the sense of ownership and collective responsibility for achieving educational goals. A loving approach in nurturing and coaching is also a characteristic of prophetic leadership in this Islamic boarding school. Educators are guided not only with formal instructions, but with an approach full of empathy, mutual respect, and psychological support. When mistakes or challenges occur in the learning process, the approach taken is more nurturing and corrective, rather than punitive. With an atmosphere like this, educators feel more comfortable and brave to explore innovative learning methods, without fear of excessive pressure or judgment.

Furthermore, the application of these prophetic values also has an impact on increasing the professional competence of educators. With supportive and motivating leadership, many educators voluntarily participate in training, workshops, and scientific forums both inside and outside the pesantren environment. These self-development activities are driven by internal enthusiasm, not because of administrative obligations. Thus, the competence of educators in pedagogical aspects, teaching methodology, and integration of Islamic values into the curriculum has increased significantly.

The direct impact of prophetic leadership practices on improving the quality of education can be seen in the learning outcomes and involvement of students. Many students show improvements in both academic and spiritual achievements. This cannot be separated from the role of educators who are

increasingly optimal in carrying out their roles as teachers, mentors, and role models. In addition, the relationship between educators and students becomes closer and more harmonious, because it is based on mutual respect and sincerity in educating. This atmosphere makes the learning process more effective and enjoyable.

To clarify the influence of prophetic leadership practices at the Baiturrahman Ciparay Islamic Boarding School, the following is a summary in table form regarding the three main dimensions of leadership and their impact on educator performance:

No	Aspects of Prophetic Leadership	Impact on Educator Performance
1	Exemplary	Educators are more motivated and have good examples in teaching
2	Open Communication	Increase collaboration between educators and students
3	Affectionate Approach	Educators feel appreciated and work more optimally

## DISCUSSION

The discussion of the results of this study confirms a strong correlation between the implementation of prophetic leadership and the improvement of educator performance at the Baiturrahman Ciparay Islamic Boarding School. In practice, prophetic leadership that reflects spiritual and moral values such as justice, wisdom, and compassion has been proven to be able to create a more harmonious and productive work climate. Educators feel that their roles are appreciated, and receive moral and spiritual encouragement to continue to develop their competence and dedication in the field of education. This finding is in line with the results of Madya's (2019) study which states that leadership rooted in spiritual values can increase the motivation and dedication of educators.

Furthermore, prophetic leadership in this Islamic boarding school is not only symbolic or normative, but is manifested in daily social and work culture relationships. The example of the leadership, open communication, and appreciation for the contribution of each educator are important factors in building a conducive academic environment. This has a direct impact on increasing work enthusiasm, creativity in learning, and active involvement in student development activities. Thus, prophetic leadership has proven to be a driving force for the transformation of educator performance as a whole.

This study also strengthens Sahlberg's argument (2022) which emphasizes that leadership based on religious values has a significant contribution to improving the quality of education, especially in traditional Islamic institutions such as Islamic boarding schools. In the context of Islamic boarding schools that are the subject of the study, the success of the leader is not only seen from the policies designed, but also from his ability to present down-to-earth moral

examples, and build a collective spirit based on divine values. This approach has succeeded in creating a pesantren culture that is not only academically productive, but also strong in spiritual and emotional dimensions. On the other hand, one important aspect of prophetic leadership identified in this study is the leader's ability to manage conflict wisely and fairly. In a complex educational environment, conflict between individuals and groups is inevitable. However, leaders who emulate prophetic attitudes in solving problems are able to reduce conflict tensions and create inclusive and calming solutions. These results are in line with the findings of Thomas-Hunt et al. (2023), which states that a leadership model that prioritizes justice and shared welfare will have a direct impact on increasing the comfort and productivity of educators.

Thus, it can be concluded that the practice of prophetic leadership at the Baiturrahman Ciparay Islamic Boarding School not only has an impact on the relational dimension between leaders and educators, but also has a broad influence on the quality of the educational process and the formation of a positive institutional culture. This finding enriches the scientific treasury in the field of Islamic educational management, especially in terms of the relevance of prophetic values as a foundation for superior and transformative managerial.

## **CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The conclusion of this study presents a comprehensive conclusion on the process and findings that have been obtained, and provides a reflection on the relevance and contribution of research to the world of education, especially in the realm of academic literacy. This study emphasizes the importance of a deep understanding of reference writing techniques that are in accordance with academic standards, such as the American Psychological Association (APA) style, which has been a common reference in many scientific works. Accuracy in writing references is not only a technical aspect, but also reflects the integrity and professionalism of the author in producing quality work.

From the results of the analysis carried out, it can be seen that the ability to write references correctly has a significant influence on the validity and credibility of a scientific work. Systematically arranged references allow readers to easily search for sources of information, and provide assurance that the arguments built in the writing are based on a strong scientific foundation. Therefore, writing a good bibliography must be an integral part of the process of compiling scientific works, not only as an administrative complement, but as a scientific foundation that strengthens the entire content of the research.

The conclusion of this study shows that the main objective has been achieved, namely to provide comprehensive and applicable guidance in writing references, as well as presenting examples that can be adapted by students, researchers, and academics in writing scientific works. This guide not only helps in technical aspects, but also encourages the formation of academic awareness to uphold originality and scientific honesty. This research practically makes a real contribution to improving academic literacy and can be a source of learning in scientific writing training in higher education environments.

Furthermore, these findings open up space for the development of further research that can explore various aspects that support reference writing. One of the suggested directions for development is the use of digital technology in citation management, such as the use of reference management software (Zotero, Mendeley, EndNote), and how these devices can improve the efficiency and accuracy of writing bibliographies. In addition, a study of the style of writing references for various types of publications—such as journal articles, proceedings, theses, and dissertations—can be the focus of subsequent studies.

In closing, this study emphasizes the importance of maintaining consistency in the use of reference writing templates, so that the quality and systematics of scientific work can be maintained. Uniformity in writing not only reflects good academic governance, but also makes it easier for readers to understand and assess the credibility of the scientific sources used. Therefore, it is recommended that higher education institutions can integrate reference writing training as part of the curriculum or routine academic activities, in order to strengthen a quality and integrity scientific culture.

#### **FURTHER STUDY**

This research still has limitations, so further research is needed related to the topic of Prophetic Leadership as a Strategy to Improve Teacher Performance in Traditional Islamic Educational Institutions in order to perfect this research and increase insight for readers.

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