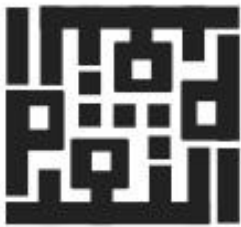


Islamic Education Leadership Controversy: Contesting the Effectiveness of Traditional Approaches in Facing the Digital Era

Muhammad Afif¹

Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, KH University. Mukhtar Syafaat
Banyuwangi, Indonesia

Correspondence email: Afif140603@gmail.com



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ABSTRACT

This research aims to conduct an in-depth analysis of the controversy that has arisen regarding the effectiveness of traditional approaches in Islamic educational leadership in the digital era and to find updates or new innovations in leadership strategies that can overcome the challenges of the digital era. In this research, a qualitative case study approach is used to explore and analyze leadership controversies in Islamic education, especially related to the effectiveness of traditional approaches in facing the digital era. Data analysis was carried out using an interpretive paradigm with source and method triangulation techniques to ensure the validity of the data. Thematic analysis techniques were used to identify the main themes that emerged from the data collection results, which were then interpreted to provide a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of Islamic educational leadership in the digital era. The results of the research show that the traditional approach to leadership in Islamic education at MAN 2 Banyuwangi tends to face challenges in integrating technology and modern educational innovation, the form of which is adopting digital technology and the needs of millennial era society and the controversy surrounding the effectiveness of leadership in Islamic education is not only limited to the debate between traditional and modern, but also includes differences of opinion in interpreting Islamic values in the current context, one of the forms of which is continuing to develop Islamic values education in the implementation of Ma'had Al Qosimy which adopts the Islamic boarding school education system such as sorogan, wetonan and bandongan in the study of poles.

Introduction

Traditional approaches to Islamic educational leadership generally focus on

teaching religious values, discipline, and character development through methods that have been passed down from generation to generation (Husna & Thohir, 2020; Ilham, 2020). This method often

involves direct teaching, memorization, and structured ritual and worship activities (Guerrero-Romera et al., 2022).

Traditional approaches are considered effective in shaping students' morality and ethics, providing a strong foundation in religious knowledge, and creating a disciplined and orderly learning environment (Hanafiah et al., 2022), (Dewantara et al., 2021). However, the effectiveness of this approach is often questioned in the context of the ever-evolving digital era (Kadwa & Alshenqeti, 2020), (Siddiqi, 2021).

Technology has changed the way students learn and interact with information. Limitations in integrating technology into education can cause students to lag behind in mastering digital skills that are essential in the modern world (James, 2021), (Ouahidi, 2020), (Varghese et al., 2022)

In addition, traditional approaches are sometimes less responsive to individual student needs and the development of modern pedagogy which emphasizes project-based, collaborative, and critical learning (Williams, 2023), (Vasiliene-vasiliauskiene et al., 2020). Thus, there is an urgent need to adopt this approach, which is more adaptive and innovative in Islamic educational leadership. This transformation is necessary to ensure that Islamic education remains relevant and effective in preparing students to face the challenges and opportunities in the digital era (Sukron Djazilan & Hariani, 2022), (Al Haddar et al., 2023). Research on the Islamic Education Leadership Controversy highlights the complexity of the relationship between the richness of Islamic traditions and the rapidly changing contemporary context (Alfi et al., 2024), as

a result of advances in digital technology, the democratization of knowledge, and globalization (Moloobhoy & Inloes, 2021).

In short, traditional approaches to Islamic educational leadership are effective in shaping student morality and ethics but are less responsive to the digital era. Technology is changing the way students learn, so traditional approaches often don't meet the needs of modern digital skills. Therefore, there is an urgent need to adopt a more adaptive and innovative approach so that Islamic education remains relevant and effective in facing the challenges and opportunities of the digital era.

In contrast to some of these studies, this research focuses on the activities of Islamic boarding school leaders as Islamic educational institutions that are facing global educational competition with efforts to preserve the typical educational traditions of Islamic boarding schools, namely diniyah education.

The research objectives are: (1) to conduct an in-depth analysis of the controversy regarding the effectiveness of traditional approaches in Islamic educational leadership in the digital era. Through mapping various existing views and arguments, this research will identify the main factors that influence disagreements in them; (2) to find updates or innovations in leadership strategies that can overcome the challenges of the digital era. By challenging traditional approaches that may no longer be appropriate, this research will look for new solutions that can integrate traditional values with modern technology.

As information and communication technology advances, traditional

approaches to Islamic educational leadership may face challenges in remaining relevant and effective (Uyuni & Adnan, 2020), (Sukron Djazilan & Hariani, 2022). The strong tradition in Islamic education often prioritizes moral and spiritual values without paying enough attention to the integration of modern technology which is important for learning and educational management today (Uyuni & Adnan, 2020), (Amaliya et al., 2022), (Suyadi et al., 2021).

Controversy about the effectiveness of leadership in Islamic education often reflects the conflict between those who advocate maintaining proven traditional values, and those who encourage innovation to adapt to the demands of the digital era (Sellami et al., 2019), (Ezzani et al., 2023). This creates complex dynamics that need to be understood in depth to reach balanced and productive agreements (Pe'er et al., 2020). Thus, this research provides a basis for exploring existing debates and formulating policy recommendations that can strengthen the effectiveness of Islamic educational leadership in facing current global challenges.

Literature Review

1. This literature review examines the effectiveness of Islamic educational leadership in facing the digital era by challenging traditional approaches that have long been used. Islamic education leaders are faced with significant challenges in the digital era that require adaptation and integration of technology in the education system (Fandir, 2024). Fandir emphasized that leaders must combine traditional Islamic values with modern digital

competencies to remain relevant and effective.

2. Another study highlights the main characteristics of effective Islamic education leaders, including prophetic nature, digital literacy, and openness to change (Amin & Muttaqin, 2022). They highlight the importance of cultural adaptation and technological innovation as part of effective leadership. However, the identification of significant obstacles in this implementation could also be related to the lack of skilled human resources and limitations in digital skills among teachers (Muttaqin, 2023). This emphasizes the need for comprehensive development of digital skills among Islamic educators.

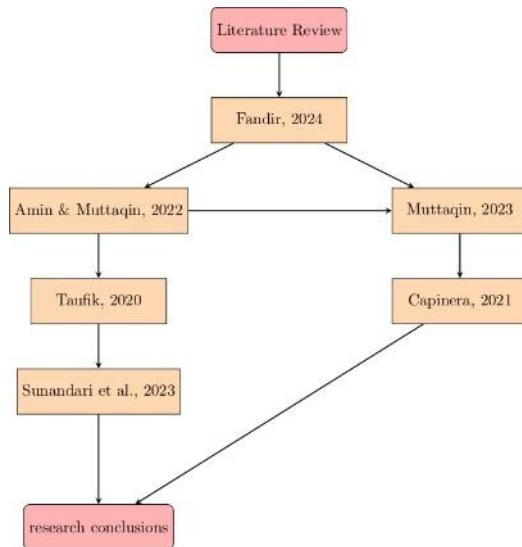
3. Furthermore, there needs to be emphasis on the importance of integrating technology into the Islamic education system while maintaining character education (Taufik, 2020). Character education is considered important to overcome the moral problems of the millennial generation in the digital era (Sunandari et al., 2023).

4. The solution that can be implemented is to recommend strengthening Islamic educational institutions through policy reform and the development of creative and innovative human resources (Capinera, 2021). He also emphasized the importance of a religion-based approach in facing the fast-paced digital era.

Thus, this research combines various perspectives to develop an Islamic educational leadership model that is more adaptive and responsive to the challenges of the digital era, while still maintaining the

traditional values that are at the core of Islamic Education.

The following is a chart of the relationships between the theories above:



Research Method

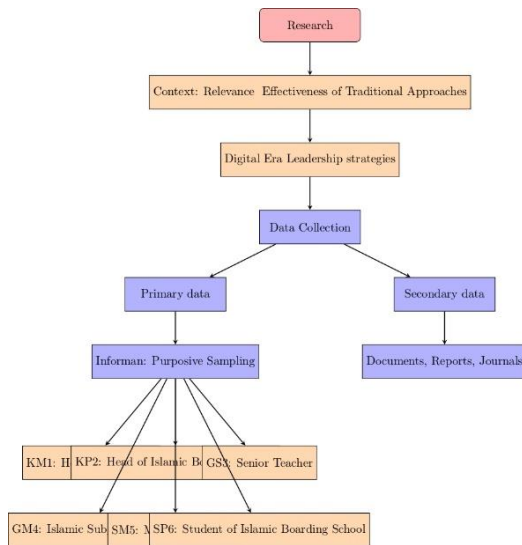
This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study type of research. This research aims to explore and analyze leadership controversies in Islamic education, especially related to the effectiveness of traditional approaches in facing the challenges of the digital era. The research location is at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 2 Banyuwangi and Islamic boarding schools in the Banyuwangi area which have a long history of implementing traditional approaches in Islamic education.

The relevance of this research to the theme is to identify the extent to which traditional approaches are still relevant and effective in the context of the rapid development of information technology, as well as to find leadership strategies that can integrate traditional values with the demands of the digital era.

The data sources in this research consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with madrasah and Islamic boarding school leaders, teachers and students. Secondary data was collected from official documents, educational reports, journals and related literature. Informants in this research were selected using purposive sampling with certain criteria, such as having leadership experience in Islamic education and playing an active role in the educational process. The following is a table of informants involved in this research:

No	Informant	Code
1	head master	KM1
2	head of Islamic boarding school	KP2
3	Senior Teacher	GS3
4	Islamic Subject Teacher	GM4
5	Madrasah Students	SM5
6	Islamic boarding school students	SP6

The correlation between data collection methods can be illustrated through the following chart:



The research paradigm used is an interpretive paradigm which aims to understand the meaning and experience from the informant's perspective. Data collection techniques include in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. To ensure the validity of the data, triangulation of sources and methods, member checks and audit trails were carried out. The data obtained was then analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, which involved coding the data, identifying main themes, and interpreting the findings. It is hoped that this research will provide in-depth insight into the effectiveness of Islamic educational leadership in facing the digital era and offer strategic recommendations for improving the quality of Islamic education in Indonesia.

Result and Discussion

This research reveals several main findings regarding the effectiveness of traditional approaches in Islamic educational leadership in facing the digital era. From the results of in-depth interviews and

participatory observation at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 2 Banyuwangi and Islamic boarding schools in the Banyuwangi area, it was found that: (1) Leaders of Islamic education at these madrasas and Islamic boarding schools showed limitations in integrating information and communication technology into the learning system. Most still rely on conventional teaching methods such as lectures and memorization, which are considered less effective in responding to modern learning needs.

(2) Despite facing the challenges of the digital era, traditional approaches are still valued because they emphasize moral, spiritual values and strong character. Many informants, including madrasa heads, teachers and students, stated that traditional Islamic education has an important role in forming individuals with noble character. (3) An urgent need for transformational leadership was found, where leaders are able to inspire and motivate staff and students to accept and use technology as a tool to enrich learning without sacrificing Islamic values (Yeo & Alias, 2021).

The findings of this research are in line with transformational leadership theory which emphasizes the importance of leaders who are able to bring positive change and innovation to organizations. Successful Islamic education leaders are those who can combine traditional values with modern technology to improve the quality of education (Aimah, 2024).

Technology acceptance is strongly influenced by perceptions of ease of use and usefulness (Arianto et al., 2020). In this context, leaders must be able to demonstrate the benefits of technology in

supporting learning and facilitating the educational process.

However, there is resistance to change among some leaders and educators, who worry that the use of technology could reduce the focus on fundamental Islamic values. Other research found similar resistance in other contexts, where concerns about the negative impacts of technology were a major barrier to its implementation (Oldemeyer et al., 2024).

Therefore, a holistic and wise approach is needed in integrating technology into Islamic education (Sholeh, 2023). A situational approach becomes relevant here, where leaders must adapt their leadership style according to the readiness and needs of their educational community (Fisher, 2021). Apart from that, leaders are also the main factor in forming an effective educational community through available human resources (Aimah & Rochim, 2023).

In conclusion, the effectiveness of Islamic educational leadership in the digital era depends on the leader's ability to balance maintaining traditional values and responding to the demands of modernity (April et al., 2024). This research provides important insights for Islamic education leaders to develop more adaptive and innovative leadership strategies, in order to improve the quality of education in the digital era.

Conclusion

This research reveals that Islamic educational leadership that relies on traditional approaches faces significant challenges in the digital era. Although traditional values are still considered important for shaping students' character

and morals, this approach is less responsive to the demands of modern learning which requires the integration of technology. Thus, a balance between maintaining traditions and adapting to technological developments is the key to successful leadership of Islamic education in the digital era.

A balance between maintaining traditional values taught in early education and integrating technology in teaching methods can strengthen the moral education provided. Technology integration can be used to expand access to religious knowledge, present information in a way that is interesting and relevant to students, and facilitate learning that is more interactive and connected to their world.

Thus, Islamic education that focuses on moral education can take advantage of adaptation to technological developments as an opportunity to improve the quality of religious education, while remaining rooted in the moral and spiritual values that are at the core of that education.

Recommendation

It is recommended that madrasah and Islamic boarding school leaders undertake transformational leadership training that focuses on the ability to inspire and motivate staff and students to adopt technology in learning. This training should include strategies for integrating Islamic values with modern technology. Additionally, investment in technology infrastructure is essential.

Madrasas and Islamic boarding schools need to be equipped with adequate technological facilities, such as educational hardware and software, stable internet access, and technical training for teachers

and students to maximize the use of technology in learning. Islamic education leaders must also adopt a collaborative approach by involving all stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents, and communities in the decision-making process regarding technology integration. Active participation from all parties will help reduce resistance and increase technology acceptance. In addition, a curriculum that integrates technology in learning must be developed. This includes the use of digital tools to support interactive and collaborative learning, as well as integrating relevant digital applications and platforms with Islamic educational content.

Further, more in-depth research regarding the impact of technology integration on the effectiveness of Islamic education also needs to be carried out. This research should include broader and more diverse case studies to get a more comprehensive picture of the challenges and opportunities faced. By implementing these suggestions, it is hoped that Islamic education can develop and adapt better in facing the challenges of the digital era, while still maintaining the traditional values that are its foundation.

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