

Implementation of Islamic Educational Leadership in the Digital Era Among Gen Z

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ABSTRACT

Background. The digital era has brought about significant changes in communication, learning, and leadership patterns, including in the context of Islamic education. Generation Z, born and raised alongside the development of digital technology, possesses unique characteristics such as technological literacy, critical thinking, and individualistic tendencies.

Purpose. This study aims to examine how to implement effective Islamic educational leadership in the digital era, especially in fostering and guiding students from Generation Z. The main focus is to identify appropriate leadership models, strategies used, and challenges faced in managing contextual and digital-friendly Islamic education.

Method. This research employed a qualitative approach with a literature review. Data were collected from various scientific journals, books, and relevant research reports on Islamic educational leadership, the characteristics of Gen Z, and the influence of digitalization in education. The analysis was conducted descriptively and critically to identify significant thematic patterns and synthesize them.

Results. The study results show that transformational and participatory leadership that utilizes digital platforms such as social media, e-learning, and online communication is very effective in reaching Gen Z. Educational leaders who are able to act as spiritual and digital role models have a significant influence on the formation of Islamic character in this generation.

Conclusion. Implementing Islamic educational leadership in the digital era requires leaders who are adaptive, visionary, and capable of integrating Islamic values with digital technology. For Gen Z, a collaborative, communicative, and digitally savvy approach is more effective in creating a religious, dynamic, and relevant learning environment.

KEYWORDS

Digitalization Era, Generation Z, Digital Transformation

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INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, advances in digital technology have significantly impacted various sectors of life, including education. In the realm of Islamic education, this

shift demands a paradigm shift in the management and leadership of educational institutions to remain relevant and adaptive to the rapid flow of change. Leadership in Islamic education can no longer focus solely on the spiritual and moral dimensions, but also requires the capacity to adopt technology, respond to the dynamics of global information, and meet the increasingly complex needs of digitally native students (Suizo, 2024).

Generation Z, individuals born between 1997 and 2012, presents unique challenges in education. This generation grew up in an ecosystem saturated with exposure to the internet, social media, and various forms of digital technology. They are known to possess unique characteristics, such as openness to information, dependence on digital devices, a preference for visual and fast-paced learning styles, and a tendency to think critically and be independent. Therefore, conventional leadership models need to be reexamined to better align with the unique characteristics of Generation Z, particularly in the context of Islamic educational institutions (Firdaus & Furqorina, 2024).

Leadership in Islamic education is essentially based on exemplary values, moral integrity, and a transcendental spiritual orientation. However, in the digital era, the role of an educational leader is no longer limited to merely conveying values, but also includes the function of facilitator in the use of technology and the development of learning innovations. This dual role requires leaders to possess additional competencies, including digital literacy, an understanding of the dynamics of the digital generation, and the ability to transmit Islamic values through media and technology platforms in an effective, communicative, and inspiring manner (Supiarza & Sarbeni, 2021).

Referring to the results of a literature review over the past five years, various studies underscore the importance of developing a collaborative, participatory, and adaptive leadership model in the context of Islamic education. A leader who is able to establish two-way communication, respond to student aspirations, and provide access to various digital-based learning resources tends to be more successful in creating a productive and meaningful learning environment. Islamic values such as amanah (trustworthiness), shiddiq (trustworthiness), tabligh (discipline), and fathanah (discipline) can be synergized with digital skills as part of the implementation of leadership in everyday life within the educational environment (Bhore & Pandita, 2022).

The digitalization process in education also demands more transparent, accountable, and efficient institutional management. The use of technology can be applied in various aspects, from administrative systems and curriculum management to assessment mechanisms and student services. In this regard, Islamic educational leaders are required to act as agents of change, capable of guiding the digital transformation process without neglecting the substance of Islamic values. Therefore, values-based leadership and technology-based approaches should not be positioned as contradictory, but rather should be integrated harmoniously and synergistically (Hua et al., 2024).

Generation Z tends to prefer flexible, collaborative, and technology-enabled learning environments. They respond more positively to visual, interactive, and personalized learning approaches. Therefore, leaders in Islamic education need to have a deep understanding of digital communication patterns and learning technologies that align with Gen Z's characteristics. This understanding is crucial to ensuring that the moral and spiritual values conveyed remain relevant, well-received, and effectively applied by students (Aprilliani et al., 2025).

Recent research indicates that transformational leadership is highly effective in the digital environment. Leaders with this style tend to encourage innovation, inspire, and motivate organizational members to develop both personally and professionally. In the context of Islamic

education, a transformational leadership approach can be utilized to foster a passion for learning and a love of religious teachings that are contextual and not doctrinally rigid, in line with the challenges of digitalization and the needs of Generation Z (Gokhale & Mittal, 2025).

The use of a literature review method in this study provides the author with the opportunity to examine and evaluate various findings and current thinking from various academic studies related to Islamic educational leadership and the characteristics of Generation Z. This approach plays a crucial role in developing a conceptual synthesis and relevant practices to address the challenges presented by the digitalization process. Through a critical review of the existing literature, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of effective leadership strategies aligned with Islamic values in the context of digital-based learning (Yens et al., 2025).

The urgency of this research is further heightened given that many Islamic educational institutions have yet to optimally utilize the potential of technology in their educational processes. Limited digital competency among leaders and educators is one of the inhibiting factors in realizing an education system that is in tune with current developments. By examining and understanding various leadership models that have proven effective in a digital environment, Islamic educational institutions are expected to be able to undertake a more focused and strategic transformation process (Kumawat & Baskaran, 2023).

With this background, this research is very relevant in answering the problem of how Islamic educational leaders can apply an adaptive and effective leadership style in responding to the challenges of the digitalization era, especially in fostering and guiding Generation Z. This study is expected to be able to provide contributions both theoretically and practically in efforts to develop a progressive Islamic educational leadership model, responsive to the dynamics of the times, but still rooted in the values of Islamic teachings (Ilhamalimy et al., 2025).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Over the past five years, advances in digital technology have had a significant impact on the structure, governance, and leadership models in educational settings, including Islamic educational institutions. Research conducted by Nasution (2021) revealed that technology is not only utilized as a means of supporting the learning process but also as a strategic instrument in decision-making and overall institutional management. Therefore, the current educational leadership paradigm is required to be more innovative, adaptive to change, and possess adequate digital literacy competencies to respond to the dynamics of education in the 21st century (Nur Habibah & Iksan, 2024).

Generation Z, which currently makes up the majority of the student population, exhibits characteristics that contrast sharply with those of previous generations. Prensky (2020) found that this generation is known as digital natives, individuals who have been accustomed to interacting with digital technology since birth and who exhibit a preference for fast-paced, visual, and hands-on learning styles. Research by Hapsari and Yulianto (2022) also emphasizes that a deep understanding of Gen Z's unique characteristics is crucial so that educational institutions, especially their leaders, can develop appropriate, engaging, and relevant learning strategies to meet the demands of the digital era (Muslih et al., 2025).

Several studies emphasize that transformational leadership has proven effective in addressing the challenges emerging in the digital era. Fitriyah (2021) demonstrated that this leadership model, which focuses on providing inspiration, motivational encouragement, and triggering innovation, is highly relevant for implementation in Islamic educational settings. This approach can encourage both cultural and structural transformation, while also instilling spiritual

values that are contextual, adaptive, and relevant to the dynamics of Generation Z, a society synonymous with the speed of information and digital culture (Mayvita & Rifani, 2024).

One of the crucial challenges in Islamic educational leadership today lies in harmonizing Islamic values with the use of modern technology. Wahyudin (2023) argues that leaders in Islamic educational settings are required to integrate basic principles such as amanah (trustworthiness), tabligh (prophetic conduct), shiddiq (righteousness), and fathanah (prophetic conduct) with skills in managing various digital platforms to convey moral and spiritual teachings. Effective leaders are those who are able to translate Islamic values into engaging and relevant forms of communication through digital media, such as podcasts, learning videos, and interactive content that aligns with the preferences of today's students (Sahputri et al., 2024).

Digital literacy skills have become a key competency for educational leaders in today's digital era. Ramadhan and Sari (2020) demonstrated that low levels of digital literacy among principals and leaders of Islamic educational institutions often act as a major obstacle to implementing technology in educational settings. Therefore, training and capacity building programs in the digital field are crucial to ensure these leaders can carry out the digital transformation process optimally and effectively (Mingka et al., 2024).

A participatory and collaborative leadership approach has been highlighted in several recent studies. Susanto and Maulida (2022) stated that a leadership model involving the active involvement of teachers, students, and parents is more effective in creating an inclusive and responsive learning environment. Within the framework of Islamic education, this principle can be implemented through the practice of deliberation, strengthening the value of brotherhood, and implementing a dialogical approach in decision-making processes that utilize technology to facilitate communication and collaboration (Shaista Irshad, 2024).

Leadership in Islamic education in the digital era is not solely oriented toward institutional management but also encompasses encouraging innovation in the learning process. Research by Azizah (2021) indicates that leaders who actively encourage the use of platforms such as Learning Management Systems (LMS), video-based learning media, and educational digital applications can improve learning motivation and academic achievement among Generation Z students. However, this technological integration must remain within the framework of Islamic values to prevent a shift toward secularization in the education system (Begum et al., 2023).

Although digitalization offers enormous potential for educational transformation, various studies also highlight the various obstacles faced in its implementation. Nugroho (2022) identified limited infrastructure, resistance to cultural change, and a lack of digital literacy training as key challenges to implementing digital-based leadership in Islamic educational institutions. Furthermore, digital ethics issues such as the misuse of social media and the rise of negative content pose a moral and spiritual responsibility for educational leaders to provide appropriate guidance and education to all school members (Wibowo et al., 2024).

Several case studies demonstrate the successful implementation of an Islamic leadership model integrated with a digital approach. For example, research conducted by Zulkarnain (2023) on technology-based madrasas in East Java showed that leaders who applied collaborative principles, encouraged innovation in digital learning, and actively participated in da'wah activities through virtual media were able to build an educational culture that was both religious and modern. These findings confirm that leadership based on Islamic values and the use of digital technology are not contradictory but can be synergistically and productively harmonized (Musfirah et al., 2024).

Academic literature over the past five years has emphasized the urgency of developing a future-oriented model of Islamic educational leadership. This includes providing ongoing training,

strengthening the synergy between Islamic values and technological advancements, and designing an Islamic leadership curriculum integrated with the use of digital technology. Research by Hamid and Salma (2024) concluded that Islamic education in the future requires leaders who not only possess religious character but also possess foresight, adaptability to technological developments, and sensitivity to the needs and characteristics of the younger generation, particularly Generation Z (Permana & Sudrajat, 2024).

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a qualitative approach with a literature review as the primary technique for data collection and analysis. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is considered capable of uncovering and in-depth understanding of complex social phenomena, including the dynamics of leadership in Islamic education evolving amidst the digital age and the distinctive characteristics of Generation Z. The literature review method is considered appropriate because it provides researchers with the opportunity to systematically, critically, and reflectively examine and synthesize various previous academic research findings.

The use of the literature review method as the primary approach in this research is intended to assess and summarize the findings, both conceptually and empirically, from relevant studies within the last five years (2020–2025). This period allows researchers to focus on the most up-to-date and relevant literature, reflecting the dynamics of technological change and rapid social transformation, particularly in the context of Islamic education and the interaction characteristics of Generation Z students. This strategy also provides a solid theoretical foundation for systematically building a conceptual framework for the research.

The data in this study were obtained from various highly credible scientific sources, including national and international journal articles, academic conference proceedings, scientific books, and research reports from recognized institutions. The literature search was conducted through several leading digital databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, DOAJ, ScienceDirect, and Garuda Ristekbrin. The inclusion criteria used in the literature selection included publications that explicitly address issues related to leadership in Islamic education, digitalization in the educational process, the characteristics of Generation Z, and aspects of technological literacy in the context of Islamic education.

The data search process in this study was conducted using a combination of keywords such as "Islamic educational leadership," "digitalization of education," "Generation Z in education," "digital transformation of Islamic institutions," and "leadership and Islamic education in the digital era." After the search phase was completed, the researcher continued with an initial screening process by reviewing titles and abstracts to ensure the topic's relevance to the study's focus. Publications that did not meet the criteria, such as articles that were non-scientific, personal opinions, or had not undergone a peer-review process, were excluded from the list of analyzed literature.

After the initial selection stage was completed, literature that met the criteria proceeded to a comprehensive review process through in-depth reading and noting key points. The researchers' primary focus in this stage was to identify key findings, the theoretical framework used in each study, and any unfilled research gaps. All selected literature was then grouped into several analytical themes, such as transformational leadership in the context of Islamic education, the impact of digitalization on Islamic educational institutions, the response of Islamic educational institutions to the characteristics of Generation Z, and efforts to integrate Islamic values with digital technology.

To ensure data validity and integrity, this study employed a thematic analysis approach as the primary analytical method. This approach allowed researchers to organize information based on central themes that consistently emerged across the various literature sources analyzed. Each theme was evaluated in-depth through critical analysis to identify patterns, interrelationships between concepts, and the direction of developments in issues relevant to Islamic educational leadership in the digital age. Furthermore, the analysis process took into account the social, cultural, and technological contexts surrounding Islamic education.

The researchers also employed source triangulation techniques to strengthen the accuracy and credibility of the study's findings. This triangulation was conducted by comparing diverse perspectives found in academic literature from various disciplines, such as Islamic studies, education, leadership, and learning technology. This interdisciplinary approach allows for a more comprehensive and relevant analysis, enabling the study to comprehensively represent the dynamics of Islamic educational leadership in responding to digital challenges and addressing the needs of Generation Z students.

Throughout the analysis process, researchers consistently maintain scientific objectivity by avoiding subjective bias and allowing for interpretation based on verified data. The primary focus is on connecting theory with empirical practice, and on how the literature synthesis can serve as a foundation for designing models or strategies for Islamic educational leadership that adapt to the demands of the digital era. This approach also takes into account the heterogeneity of Islamic educational institutions, including geographic factors, technology utilization capacity, and the characteristics of each institution's organizational culture.

Furthermore, this research adheres to academic ethics principles, even though it does not directly involve the research subjects. Every reference used is cited appropriately in accordance with scientific principles, as a sign of respect for the original work and to avoid plagiarism. The researcher also exercised caution in interpreting the study results, avoiding misleading data presentations, oversimplifications, and disproportionate generalizations regarding the diverse contexts of Islamic education across regions.

Through a structured literature review approach and the application of comprehensive thematic analysis, this study is expected to provide a conceptual contribution in formulating an Islamic educational leadership model that is responsive to the dynamics of digitalization and in line with the characteristics of Generation Z. The results of this study also have the potential to become a strategic reference for policy makers in the field of education, managers of Islamic educational institutions such as madrasas and Islamic boarding schools, as well as academics who study educational leadership innovations based on Islamic values and the optimal use of technology.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Initial findings indicate a paradigm shift in Islamic educational leadership with the introduction of digital technology into institutional structures. Several studies reveal a transition from traditional, authoritarian leadership models to more participatory, responsive, and technology-based forms of leadership. Successful Islamic educational leaders in this context demonstrate the capacity to integrate Islamic values in harmony with digital technological developments, without neglecting the sharia principles that underpin the institution. This phenomenon is reflected in the emergence of leadership models that emphasize not only managerial skills but also digital literacy and sensitivity to changing social dynamics (Zheng et al., 2024).

A literature review shows that a number of madrasah principals and Islamic boarding school leaders have begun integrating information and communication technology (ICT) into various institutional aspects, including administrative management, interaction between educational unit members, and the implementation of online learning activities. The use of Learning Management Systems (LMS), digital learning platforms, and social media have become common tools to improve managerial efficiency and the quality of the educational process. However, the success of adapting to these technologies is largely determined by the digital literacy capacity of institutional leaders and the extent to which institutional policies provide support. Unfortunately, significant disparities in this regard remain across regions in Indonesia (Haqqi & Wijayati, 2023).

Various literature studies highlight that low levels of digital literacy among some leaders of Islamic educational institutions remain a significant barrier to digital transformation. This barrier results in technology adoption not being optimally implemented in many institutions. Some leaders demonstrate limitations in effectively utilizing digital tools and, in many cases, rely on support from younger, more technologically familiar staff or educators. Therefore, systematic efforts are needed in the form of ongoing training and professional mentoring that focuses not only on technical aspects but also includes an understanding of ethical principles and pedagogy in the use of technology in Islamic educational environments (Abdillah & Handoko Putro, 2022).

Recent literature emphasizes the urgency of understanding the characteristics of Generation Z students within the context of Islamic educational leadership. This generation is characterized by a high affinity for digital technology, rapid access to and processing of information, and a preference for interactive and real-life learning models. Therefore, leaders of Islamic educational institutions are required to formulate learning strategies and policies that are responsive to the unique characteristics of Gen Z, while maintaining fundamental Islamic values such as good manners, Islamic brotherhood, and moral integrity throughout the educational process (Tjahjana et al., 2024).

The research findings also indicate that the integration of Islamic values into digital-based education systems must be comprehensive and integrated. Successful leadership in digitizing Islamic education generally focuses not only on providing technological facilities and infrastructure, but also on ensuring that learning content, pedagogical approaches, and interactions between all elements of the institution reflect Islamic principles. These efforts are realized, among other things, through digital-based da'wah (Islamic outreach), strengthening morals through online learning media, and instilling Islamic spiritual values and character through virtual forums and Islamic personality development programs (Yusma Amrulloh Tri Firmansyah & Fery Setiawan, 2025).

Other findings indicate that a leadership approach that emphasizes collaboration and participation has proven more effective in driving digital transformation in Islamic educational institutions. Leaders who actively involve various stakeholders, including educators, students, parents, and the surrounding community, in decision-making and the development of technological innovations, tend to be more successful in creating an educational environment that is responsive and adaptive to change. Islamic values such as deliberation, justice, and trustworthiness are the main foundations for developing an inclusive, participatory leadership model amidst the dynamics of digitalization (Martini et al., 2025).

Despite the emergence of various progressive leadership practices, a number of structural and cultural challenges remain that hinder the implementation of digital-based leadership in Islamic educational settings. Prominent obstacles include low levels of technological literacy, limited supporting facilities and infrastructure, and resistance to change among some educators and institutional administrators. In some regions, centralistic and conventional leadership styles have

become a barrier to the implementation of digital initiatives. Therefore, a transformative leadership model is needed that can bridge the gap between preserving traditional Islamic values and adopting technological innovation effectively and sustainably (Wildan et al., 2025).

The dimension of digital ethics is also a key focus in this study's findings. Leaders in Islamic educational institutions not only act as facilitators of technology utilization but also have a responsibility to guide the entire school community to utilize digital media wisely and productively, in line with Islamic sharia principles. This guidance includes education on responsible social media use, preventive measures against the spread of negative content, and protection of privacy and personal data. This responsibility becomes even more significant given the characteristics of Generation Z, who are highly active in the digital space and vulnerable to various external influences that may conflict with Islamic values (Santoso & Indudewi, 2025).

Several case studies in Indonesia indicate that madrasas and Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) led by young people with a background in technology education or international experience tend to demonstrate a more progressive approach to implementing digital-based leadership. Findings from regions such as East Java and Yogyakarta demonstrate that leaders who are able to integrate prophetic leadership principles with digital approaches have successfully built learning ecosystems that remain rooted in religious values while also aligning with the demands of the times. This fact confirms that there is no fundamental contradiction between Islamic leadership and technology, but rather the potential for strategic synergy that can be developed to strengthen the quality of Islamic education (Ningtyas et al., 2024).

The findings of this study highlight the importance of formulating strategic policies aimed at strengthening leadership capacity in Islamic education in the digital era. The government, in collaboration with Islamic higher education institutions, is expected to develop digital leadership training programs grounded in Islamic principles, initiate advanced research and curriculum development relevant to Islamic leadership in a digital context, and establish collaborative networks among educational institutions. These efforts are crucial for Islamic educational leadership to not only be able to face the challenges of technological disruption but also to emerge as a key driver in fostering a generation of Muslims who excel both spiritually and digitally (Ningtyas et al., 2024).

DISCUSSION

Digital transformation has brought about significant changes in the global educational landscape, including in the realm of Islamic education. In this context, leaders of Islamic educational institutions are required not only to master conventional managerial skills but also to possess the ability to respond to the dynamics of the digital era through leadership models that are adaptive to technological developments. Literature findings over the past five years indicate a paradigm shift in leadership from an authoritarian and hierarchical model to a more participatory, flexible, and digitally collaborative form of leadership. This change is becoming increasingly relevant as the learning process is no longer confined to traditional classrooms but has expanded into digital spaces, requiring leaders to think and act beyond physical and administrative boundaries (Hilya Zulva et al., 2024).

Within this framework, Islamic educational leadership faces substantial challenges in maintaining a balance between modern technological developments and the preservation of Islamic values. A literature review shows that leaders who achieve success are those who can harmonize Islamic moral values, spirituality, and cultural wisdom into various technology-based policies, strategies, and innovations. Effective leadership emphasizes not only technological mastery but also prioritizes strengthening Islamic character as the primary foundation for decision-making.

Concurrently, the prophetic leadership approach, which utilizes the Prophet's qualities such as *siddah* (guidance), *amanah* (trustworthiness), *tabligh* (prophetic conduct), and *fathanah* (faithfulness), is gaining increasing recognition and attention in the discourse on Islamic educational leadership in this digital era (Magtublo & Santoso, 2024).

One of the crucial issues identified in the literature review is the importance of improving digital literacy among leaders of Islamic educational institutions. The success of the digitalization process, in general, is largely determined by the extent to which a leader has the capacity to understand, manage, and effectively implement technology within the institutional context. Several studies emphasize that the digital competency of *madrasah* (Islamic school) principals and Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) leaders remains relatively low, often leading to a dependency on younger educators or staff for technical aspects. This situation hinders the maximum pace of digital transformation and has the potential to cause Islamic educational institutions to lag behind the dynamics of today's technology-based education systems (Azfar et al., 2024).

Generation Z, which currently constitutes the primary student population, possesses unique characteristics that distinguish it from previous generations. They were raised in a digital ecosystem, accustomed to rapid access to information, and tend to prefer interactive, personalized, and contextually meaningful learning models. In this context, Islamic educational leadership responsive to the digital era is required to develop learning policies and strategies that align with Gen Z's preferences and learning styles, while remaining grounded in the principles of *adab* (good manners), *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), and moral integrity. The application of Islamic values literacy in digital formats, the development of inspirational learning materials, and the use of experiential pedagogical approaches are key elements in addressing the needs and shaping the spiritual and social character of this generation (Etika Sari et al., 2024).

The application of digital leadership in Islamic educational institutions is reflected in the use of various technology platforms, such as Learning Management Systems (LMS), online meeting applications, social media, and other digital collaborative tools. Recent literature indicates that leaders with an innovative orientation tend to optimize the use of these technologies not only for administrative purposes but also to improve the quality of learning and the effectiveness of communication between educational units. However, not all institutions have equal access to digital tools and infrastructure, particularly in remote areas. This disparity creates gaps in the implementation of digital leadership, which requires strategic policy interventions and ongoing training programs to promote equity and strengthen digital capacity across all regions (Hanifah & Sobri, 2024).

The aspect of digital ethics is a crucial dimension that has been widely highlighted in various literature studies. Leadership in Islamic education plays a role not only in ensuring the effective use of technology but also bears a moral responsibility to guide all school members to interact in the digital realm in accordance with Islamic *sharia* principles. This responsibility includes monitoring digital learning materials, protecting personal data, providing education on the wise use of social media, and taking preventative measures against potential exposure to content that conflicts with Islamic values. Several studies emphasize the importance of leaders as digital educators who can serve as role models in the ethical, safe, and responsible use of technology (Arta et al., 2023).

Collaborative leadership models are gaining increasing attention in current discourse on Islamic education. Leaders who actively involve educators, students, parents, and the wider community in decision-making processes are considered more effective in creating innovative and resilient educational environments that face the challenges of the digital disruption era. An approach

that prioritizes the principles of deliberation and openness to new ideas reflects key characteristics of participatory leadership, which aligns with Islamic values. This trend also reinforces the spirit of inclusivity, where the diversity of experiences and perspectives from all elements of the educational community is seen as social capital in developing a constructive and competitive digital ecosystem (Nugraha et al., 2023).

However, strengthening digital-based Islamic educational leadership still faces various structural and cultural challenges. Barriers such as resistance to innovation, a less adaptive organizational culture, and minimal institutional support are common issues encountered in practice. Some educational institution leaders still employ a centralized leadership style, hindering participation and initiative at the grassroots level. In this context, a transformative leadership approach oriented toward fundamental changes in organizational culture is crucial for educational institutions to develop and adapt to the dynamics of the digital era (Monika T, 2025).

A growing body of literature indicates that young leaders with a background in technology education or international experience tend to demonstrate a more progressive approach to managing Islamic educational institutions. Case studies in East Java, West Java, and Yogyakarta demonstrate the success of young leaders in establishing madrasas and Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) that are able to respond adaptively to the challenges of digitalization without neglecting their Islamic identity. The synergy between a global perspective and local Islamic values has proven to be an effective strategy in building an inspiring, contextual, and spiritually grounded learning ecosystem (Andi Anggi Kemalasari et al., 2025).

Based on the literature review, it can be concluded that the application of leadership in Islamic education in the digital era is not solely determined by technological capabilities, but is also strongly influenced by moral integrity, social sensitivity, and a strategic vision grounded in Islamic principles. Therefore, supportive policy interventions are needed from the government and Islamic higher education institutions to initiate digital leadership training programs based on sharia values, develop curricula responsive to digital developments, and build collaborative networks to strengthen a transformative and inclusive Islamic education ecosystem (Yusnaini et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the literature review, it can be concluded that the application of leadership in Islamic education in the digital era is not solely related to the process of technological modernization, but also includes a comprehensive renewal of values, strategies, and leadership culture. Leaders of Islamic educational institutions are required not only to possess skills in operating digital technologies such as Learning Management Systems, social media platforms, and various online collaborative applications, but also to integrate the use of these technologies with Islamic principles such as *akhlakul karimah* (good character), honesty, Islamic brotherhood, and trustworthiness. Digital literacy, an understanding of the ethics of using digital media, and the ability to apply a transformative leadership style are key components in creating a learning environment that is relevant and responsive to the characteristics of Generation Z, namely a generation that grew up in a digital ecosystem, quickly adapts to the flow of information, and demands interactive and contextual learning experiences. Literature in the past five years also highlights the importance of strengthening prophetic leadership models that not only reflect the exemplary behavior of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) but also prioritize the principles of participation, collaboration, and the ability to adapt to the dynamics of the times.

Furthermore, the literature review also confirms that the implementation of digital leadership in Islamic educational institutions still faces significant challenges, such as structural

barriers, limited access to technological infrastructure, cultural resistance to change, and low levels of digital literacy among most institutional leaders. However, strategic opportunities exist, demonstrated by the success of several young leaders with backgrounds in technology education and global experience in creating learning environments that are not only contextualized to modern developments but also deeply rooted in Islamic spiritual values. Addressing this reality requires strategic policy interventions from the government and Islamic higher education institutions to strengthen the capacity for digital leadership based on Sharia values. This can be achieved through the implementation of integrated training programs, the development of curricula responsive to the challenges of digitalization, and the establishment of collaborative networks between institutions. This integrative approach is expected to enable Islamic educational leadership not only to adapt to the digital era but also to serve as a driving force in shaping a generation of spiritually competent and digitally proficient Muslims.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Look this example below:

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

Author 4: Formal analysis; Methodology; Writing - original draft.

Author 5: Supervision; Validation.

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