
INTEGRATION OF PROPHETIC LEADERSHIP IN THE ISLAMIC EDUCATION CURRICULUM FOR THE FORMATION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' CHARACTER

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis secara mendalam bagaimana nilai kepemimpinan profetik amanah, fathanah, siddiq, dan tabligh diintegrasikan dalam kurikulum PAI serta implikasinya terhadap pembentukan akhlak siswa sekolah dasar Islam. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian lapangan yang dilaksanakan di sekolah dasar Islam, dengan subjek penelitian meliputi guru PAI, kepala sekolah, dan koordinator kurikulum. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi pembelajaran, dan analisis dokumen kurikulum, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan teknik triangulasi sumber dan metode untuk menjamin keabsahan data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa integrasi kepemimpinan profetik dalam kurikulum PAI dilakukan secara sistematis melalui tiga aspek kunci, yaitu perencanaan kurikulum yang memuat indikator nilai profetik, pelaksanaan pembelajaran berbasis keteladanan guru dan partisipasi aktif siswa, serta evaluasi akhlak yang menekankan perubahan perilaku dan refleksi spiritual. Temuan empiris menunjukkan adanya peningkatan nyata pada dimensi tanggung jawab, kejujuran, empati, dan kemampuan kepemimpinan siswa dalam kehidupan sekolah sehari-hari. Secara teoretis, penelitian ini memperkaya pengembangan model kurikulum PAI berbasis kepemimpinan profetik dalam konteks pendidikan Islam kontemporer. Secara praktis, hasil penelitian memberikan rujukan implementatif bagi sekolah Islam dalam merancang kurikulum yang tidak hanya berorientasi kognitif, tetapi efektif dalam membentuk akhlak dan karakter kepemimpinan siswa sejak jenjang pendidikan dasar.

Kata kunci: Kurikulum Pendidikan Agama Islam; Kepemimpinan karakter; Pembentukan akhlak.

Abstract

This study aims to analyze in depth how the prophetic leadership values of amanah (trustworthiness), fathanah (wisdom), siddiq (truthfulness), and tabligh (communication) are integrated into the Islamic Religious Education curriculum and their implications for the moral development of Islamic elementary school students. This study uses a qualitative approach, with field research conducted in Islamic elementary schools, and research subjects include Islamic Religious Education teachers, principals, and curriculum coordinators. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, learning observations, and curriculum document analysis, then analyzed using source and method triangulation techniques to ensure data validity. The results show that the integration of prophetic leadership into the PAI curriculum is carried out systematically through three key aspects, namely curriculum planning that includes prophetic value indicators, teaching and learning

based on teacher role modelling and active student participation, and character evaluation that emphasizes behavioral change and spiritual reflection. Empirical findings show significant improvements in students' responsibility, honesty, empathy, and leadership skills in their daily school life. Theoretically, this study enriches the development of a prophetic leadership-based Islamic Religious Education curriculum model in the context of contemporary Islamic education. In practice, the research results provide an implementable reference for Islamic schools in designing a curriculum that is not only cognitively oriented but also effective in shaping students' morals and leadership character from the elementary level.

Keywords: Islamic Religious Education Curriculum; Character Leadership; Moral Formation.

INTRODUCTION

The transformation of global education in the 21st century places character building and moral leadership as central issues, in line with the increasing complexity of social, cultural, and technological challenges faced by students (Arif et al., 2024). In the context of Islamic education, rapid social, cultural, and technological changes have posed new challenges to the internalization of moral values and prophetic leadership in elementary schools (Hamdani, 2024; Sapitri et al., 2022). Global phenomena characterized by technological advances, popular culture, and massive digital media penetration have implications for shifts in moral values and lifestyles among the younger generation (Mansyuri et al., 2024; Fariq et al., 2024). In the context of Islamic education, this challenge requires the strengthening of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum, which should not only be oriented towards cognitive mastery but also towards the internalization of moral values and leadership from the elementary school level (Amirudin & Mukarom, 2018; Oldham & McLoughlin, 2025).

At the national level, Indonesia's education policy through the Character Education Strengthening program and the revitalization of the PAI curriculum emphasizes the importance of character education as the foundation for developing individuals who are faithful, have integrity, and are socially responsible (Ramatni et al., 2025). However, in practice in elementary schools, the implementation of leadership values in the Islamic Religious Education curriculum still faces fundamental problems. Many Islamic schools still treat Islamic Religious Education as a subject that focuses on the transmission of religious knowledge, without systematically integrating character and leadership values into the planning, implementation, and evaluation of learning (Amalia et al., 2025; Eissa & Khalid, 2018). This condition creates a gap between normative religious understanding and students' moral behavior in their daily lives.

Character education in Islam is rooted in prophetic values derived from the example set by the Prophet Muhammad, namely *siddiq*, *amanah*, *fathanah*, and *tabligh* (Hakim, 2020; Masripah & Mohammad, 2025). These values form the foundation of spiritual leadership that emphasizes moral integrity, social



responsibility, intelligence, and ethical communication skills (Irpan & Sain, 2024; Cici Hastuti & Amar Muzaki, 2023). From a curriculum perspective, prophetic leadership values should ideally not be taught in isolation but rather integrated into the overall learning cycle encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions (Rahayu et al., 2020). According to Connors et al. (2023), this approach aligns with the principles of classical Islamic education, which view *tarbiyah*, *ta'dib*, and *ta'lim* as a unified character-building process. Within this framework, PAI learning is not merely about conveying religious dogma, but also about bringing the values of exemplary behavior (*uswah hasanah*) to life in the learning experience (Nuraida and Rihlah Nuraulia, 2019).

However, there is a gap between the idealism of character-based curricula and their implementation in Islamic elementary schools (Susilo et al., 2022; Eriyanto & Chelong bin Zakariya, 2024). A number of studies show that religious education is often still textual, teacher-centered, and does not touch on the aspect of internalizing values (Alhamuddin et al., 2022). On the other hand, many schools do not yet have a curriculum design that explicitly includes prophetic leadership values in learning objectives, evaluation strategies, or extracurricular activities (Mahmud et al., 2022; Amalia et al., 2025). As a result, efforts to shape students' character are partial and lack systematic direction (Alimron et al., 2023). This condition indicates the need for an implementative approach that emphasizes the process of integrating leadership values into all dimensions of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum, including planning, implementation, and evaluation (Hamdani, 2024).

Previous studies have shown that character and leadership education play an important role in building a religious school culture and increasing students' moral awareness (Sukardi, 2020; Riinawati & Ngalimun, 2022; Muhammad, 2020). However, most of these studies are still conceptual or normative *in* nature and have not examined in depth how prophetic leadership values are actually implemented in the Islamic Education curriculum at the elementary school level. In addition, existing studies rarely examine the integration of prophetic leadership values across all stages of the curriculum, from planning and implementation to learning evaluation. This is the main research gap that remains unaddressed empirically.

Based on these gaps, this study specifically focuses on analyzing the implementation of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum based on character leadership in shaping the morals of elementary school students. The uniqueness of this study lies in its implementation, which examines the integration of prophetic leadership values not only at the conceptual level but also in the actual practice of learning and curriculum management in schools. This study aims to examine strategies for integrating prophetic leadership values into curriculum planning, patterns of role-model-based and active-participation learning, and mechanisms for evaluating student character formation.

This research contributes to the development of prophetic leadership-based Islamic Education curriculum studies by presenting empirical evidence in the context of Islamic elementary education. In practice, the findings of this study are expected to serve as an implementable reference for educators and Islamic school administrators in designing an effective Islamic Education curriculum that systematically and sustainably shapes students' morals and leadership character.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design, which aims to deeply understand the process of implementing a character-based Islamic Religious Education curriculum in the real context of elementary schools (Sugiyono, 2019). This approach was chosen because it allows for a holistic, contextual, and in-depth exploration of educational phenomena, especially regarding the integration of prophetic leadership values into the entire curriculum cycle (Moleong, 2019). The research location was purposively selected as SDN Balongsari I, Balongsari Village, Rawamerta District, Karawang Regency, West Java, because this school has relevant and unique methodological characteristics, consistently integrating prophetic leadership values (amanah, siddiq, fathanah, and tabligh) into the Islamic Education curriculum, as well as the Merdeka Curriculum. This context makes SDN Balongsari I a representative case for empirically examining the implementation of a prophetic leadership-based curriculum, rather than merely a normative one.

The research subjects consisted of 1 principal, 1 vice principal in charge of curriculum, 2 Islamic Education teachers, and 6 elementary school students, who were selected using purposive sampling based on the criteria of direct involvement in character-based Islamic Education learning, intensity of participation, and the students' ability to represent variations in character and learning responses (Aqib, 2019). The number of informants was determined until data saturation was reached, at which point the data no longer yielded significant new information. Data collection was carried out for approximately three months, with the researcher acting as the main instrument (human instrument) directly involved in the observation, interview, and data analysis processes. Observations were conducted non-participatory, focusing on Islamic Education learning practices, teacher-student interactions, and the manifestation of leadership values in classroom and school activities. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured, in-depth manner, using open-ended interview guidelines that enabled exploration of the informants' experiences, strategies, and challenges in implementing the curriculum. Each interview lasted between 30 and 60 minutes and was recorded and transcribed verbatim. Documentation included lesson plans, teaching modules, character evaluation instruments, and relevant school activity archives.



Data analysis was conducted simultaneously from the beginning of data collection using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion or verification (Miles, 2014). Data reduction was carried out through an open coding process of interview transcripts and observation notes, which were then grouped into thematic categories such as curriculum planning, teacher role modelling, student participation, and character evaluation. Data presentation was conducted as thematic matrices and analytical narratives, while verification was achieved through comparisons across data sources and interpretations grounded in the theoretical framework of prophetic leadership and Islamic character education. Data validity was ensured through source and technique triangulation by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation (Radlinski & Craswell, 2022). Member checking was carried out by confirming the summary of findings with PAI teachers and school principals to ensure consistency of meaning. These steps ensure the credibility and traceability of the research process while also enabling replication in similar Islamic school contexts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Character Leadership-Based PAI Curriculum Planning

The results of the study indicate that the planning of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum based on character leadership at SDN Balongsari I took place through a collaborative process involving the principal, the vice principal in charge of curriculum, and Islamic Religious Education teachers. In-depth interview data revealed that the selection of prophetic leadership values (*amanah*, *fathanah*, *siddiq*, and *tabligh*) was not determined normatively but rather through reflective discussions informed by classroom learning experiences. An Islamic Religious Education teacher stated:

"We emphasize the values of trustworthiness and sincerity the most, because elementary school children still really need to get used to honesty and responsibility. We discuss how these values can be incorporated into learning objectives, not just written in the lesson plans."

The principal added:

"We don't force all the values in at once. At first, the teachers found it difficult, but after trying it gradually through teaching modules and small projects, they began to see the benefits."

Analysis of the lesson plans and teaching modules shows that prophetic leadership values are explicitly integrated into learning objectives, core activities, and assessments. Character indicators are formulated operationally, such as

responsibility for completing group tasks, honesty in reporting learning outcomes, and courage in expressing opinions. Observations of the planning process also reveal a process of consultation and repeated revision, particularly when teachers encounter difficulties in adjusting character indicators to the limitations of learning time. These findings confirm that curriculum planning is adaptive and contextual.

Implementation of Role Model-Based and Active Participation Learning

Class observations indicate that teacher role modelling is the primary strategy for implementing the character-based Islamic Religious Education curriculum. Islamic Religious Education teachers consistently display discipline, honesty, and responsibility, which students observe and imitate in their daily learning interactions, as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Implementation of Role Model-Based learning

In project-based learning, researchers noted that students were given the opportunity to take turns leading group discussions. A previously passive student began to make decisions after the teacher demonstrated how to express opinions politely.

The Islamic Education teacher explained:

"If teachers only give instructions without setting an example, children find it difficult to imitate them. But when we get involved and are consistent, they slowly change."

However, field data also show implementation challenges, particularly differences in student character, time constraints, and initial resistance to reflective activities and role-playing. Teachers respond to these obstacles by simplifying project activities and integrating brief reflections at the end of the lesson. These findings show that the implementation of learning does not always align with

theoretical concepts. Teacher role modeling is effective, but it requires high consistency and adequate time for leadership values to be truly internalized.

Evaluation of Character Building and Spiritual Reflection

The evaluation results show that the formation of students' character is not measured through a single instrument, but through a combination of behavioral observation, project assessment, and spiritual reflection. Teachers noted gradual changes in student behavior, especially in the aspects of responsibility and honesty. Observation notes show that students who were previously less concerned with group assignments began to show active involvement. In weekly reflections, several students were able to verbally relate their behavior to the values of trustworthiness and sincerity. The Islamic Education teacher said:

"Children may not immediately understand the concept of leadership, but through reflection and practice, they begin to realize which behaviors are good and which need improvement."

Evaluation documentation shows that spiritual reflection through prayer, contemplation, and discussion of the values of the Qur'an strengthens the internalization of character and religious awareness in students. A summary of empirical findings at all stages of curriculum implementation is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Matrix of Empirical Findings on the Implementation of the Prophetic Leadership-Based Islamic Religious Education Curriculum

Stage	Data Source	Key Findings	Leadership Values
Planning	Interviews; Lesson Plans; Teaching Modules	Integration of values through reflective discussion and gradual revision	Trustworthiness, <i>Siddiq</i>
Implementation	Class observation; Interviews	Teachers' exemplary behavior increases student participation and courage	Trustworthiness, Intelligence, Communication
Dynamics	Field notes	Time constraints and student character variations	<i>Fathanah</i>
Evaluation	Observation; Assessment documents	Formative evaluation and spiritual reflection	<i>Siddiq, Amanah</i>

The Meaning of Findings in Character Leadership-Based Curriculum Planning

The findings of this study indicate that the success of character leadership-based Islamic Education curriculum planning does not lie in the completeness of administrative documents, but rather in the dialogical and reflective process between stakeholders. The integration of prophetic values in lesson plans and teaching modules reflects the principles of Islamic character education, which emphasizes the integration of academic goals and character building. These findings reinforce the view (Ulum & Slamet, 2025) that moral values are effective when directly attached to learning objectives and activities.

However, this study also shows that the integration of values is not linear. The initial resistance of teachers and the need for continuous adaptation confirm that curriculum planning is a complex, practical space. Exemplary Behavior and Active Participation as Mechanisms for Internalizing Values Findings regarding teacher exemplarity and active student participation confirm the theories of experiential learning and constructivist learning, but at the same time reveal their limitations. Teacher role modeling is a key factor in building students' intrinsic motivation, in line with the concept of *uswah hasanah* in Islamic education (Huda et al., 2023). However, its effectiveness depends heavily on teacher consistency and school culture. If role modeling is not maintained continuously, character learning has the potential to be reduced to a symbolic activity. This shows the tension between the idealism of theory and the reality of practice.

Character Evaluation as a Formative and Spiritual Process

Observation-based, project-based, and spiritual reflection-based evaluations show that character building cannot be measured instantly. This approach is in line with formative assessment (Birhan et al., 2021; Irpan & Sain, 2024) and the concept of *muhasabah* in Islamic education. Unlike quantitative academic evaluation, character evaluation requires strong pedagogical relationships and time for reflection. Spiritual reflection serves as a pedagogical mechanism to deepen students' moral awareness. A synthesis of the relationship between findings, theory, and implications is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Analytical Synthesis of Findings, Theory, and Implications

Findings	Theoretical Analysis	Implications
Collaborative planning	Integrative character education	Flexible and contextual Islamic Religious Education curriculum
Teachers' exemplary behavior	Good role models & experiential learning	Strengthening teacher competencies
Reflective evaluation	Formative assessment & <i>muhasabah</i>	Process-oriented assessment
Gradual change	Theory-practice tension	Continuous character education

The synthesis of the relationship between empirical findings, theoretical frameworks, and practical implications as summarized in Table 2 shows that the implementation of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum based on character leadership is a complex, dynamic, and gradual pedagogical process. Findings on collaborative curriculum planning indicate that character education cannot be designed solely in a top-down, administrative manner but requires space for reflective dialogue among stakeholders (Mansyuri et al., 2024). From the perspective of integrative character education theory, this collaboration serves as a mechanism for aligning values, academic goals, and the context of learners, so that the Islamic Religious Education curriculum is not rigid, but flexible and responsive to the real needs of students (Muhyiddin et al., 2022; Yuhanis et al., 2020). The implication of these findings is the importance of giving pedagogical autonomy to teachers and schools to interpret and contextualize the values of prophetic leadership in daily learning practices.

The dominant role of teacher exemplarity in the implementation of learning emphasizes the relevance of the concept of *uswah hasanah* in Islamic education, which is integrated with experiential learning theory (Huda et al., 2023; Sakti et al., 2024). Exemplarity not only functions as a moral strategy but also as an experience-based learning medium that allows students to construct meaning through observation and direct participation. Field findings show that the effectiveness of role modeling is highly dependent on the consistency of teacher behavior and school cultural support. The practical implication of these findings is the need to strengthen teacher competence, not only in pedagogical aspects but also in reflective awareness and personal integrity, so that character learning does not stop at the symbolic level.

At the evaluation stage, findings on the use of observation, project assessment, and spiritual reflection show that character building is better understood as a formative process rather than an instant result. The link between formative assessment and the concept of *muhasabah* in Islamic education shows that character evaluation serves as a means of fostering self-awareness, not merely as a measurement tool (Shiddiq et al., 2024; Fua et al., 2018). Implicitly, character assessment needs to be oriented towards the continuous development of students, placing spiritual reflection as an integral part of pedagogical practice rather than an additional activity.

Findings regarding gradual changes in student character reveal tensions between theoretical ideals and practical realities in the field. Character education is often described in the literature as a systematic and linear process, but this study shows that its implementation is marked by initial student resistance, time constraints, and the need to adapt learning strategies. This tension actually enriches theoretical understanding by emphasizing that character education is a long-term process that requires sustainability, patience, and consistency in school policy.

This study confirms that a character leadership-based Islamic Religious Education curriculum effectively shapes students' morals when it is designed through reflective collaboration, implemented through role modelling and meaningful learning experiences, and evaluated through formative and spiritual approaches. The main contribution of this study lies in revealing the dynamics of actual implementation in the field, including challenges, tensions between theory and practice, and adaptation strategies that are rarely raised in normative character education studies. Thus, this study not only strengthens the theoretical framework of Islamic character education but also provides an empirical basis for the development of a more realistic, contextual, and sustainable Islamic Religious Education curriculum practice.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that the implementation of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum based on character leadership at SDN Balongsari I forms a systematic and sustainable pattern of prophetic value integration throughout the entire curriculum cycle, from planning and teaching to student character evaluation. The integration of the values of siddiq, amanah, fathanah, and tabligh does not function merely as normative content, but is operationalized in a tangible way through teacher role modelling, participatory learning, and reflection on student behaviour and spirituality. These findings confirm that prophetic leadership plays a significant role in strengthening the internalization of morals and moral responsibility among students at the elementary school level.

Based on these findings, this study recommends that Islamic Religious Education teachers consistently integrate prophetic leadership values in planning, learning strategies, and student behavior evaluation, as well as placing exemplary behavior at the core of character education. Schools and educational administrators need to strengthen managerial support through sustainable curriculum policies, teacher capacity-building, and structured internal collaboration. Meanwhile, further research is recommended to test this model in a broader school context or through a comparative approach to strengthen the validity and generalization of the findings.

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