

Transposition of the Concept of *Imām* al-Mawardi into the Islamic Education Leadership System

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ABSTRACT

Leadership in Islamic education is not only administrative, but also spiritual and moral. The concept of *imām* according to Imam al-Māwardī offers ideal leadership principles that are relevant to address the challenges of contemporary Islamic education. However, until now there have not been many educational leadership models that systematically adapt these principles. This study explores the concept of *imām* as articulated by Imām al-Māwardī and its relevance to leadership in Islamic education. In the educational context, leadership goes beyond administrative management; it encompasses spiritual and moral guidance grounded in Islamic values. Through his seminal work *al-Aḥkām al-Sultāniyyah*, al-Māwardī outlines the essential qualities of an ideal imām—including justice (*‘adālah*), knowledge (*‘ilm*), trustworthiness (*amānah*), wisdom (*ḥikmah*), and a commitment to consultative governance (*shūrā*). Employing a qualitative approach with descriptive analysis, this research investigates the values embedded in al-Māwardī's theory of leadership and applies them to the framework of Islamic educational leadership. The findings suggest that integrating the principles of *imām* can foster a leadership model that is ethically sound, spiritually conscious, and adaptable to contemporary educational challenges. By embracing the values of justice, knowledge, and participatory leadership, Islamic educational leaders can cultivate a nurturing ecosystem that promotes character development and spiritual growth among students. This study aims to contribute both theoretically and practically to the advancement of a holistic and contextually relevant model of Islamic educational leadership.

Keywords: *Imām*, Islamic Education Leadership, Imam al-Mawardi, Leadership Model.

ABSTRAK

Kepemimpinan dalam pendidikan Islam bukan hanya bersifat administratif, tetapi juga spiritual dan moral. Konsep *imām* menurut Imam al-Māwardī menawarkan prinsip kepemimpinan ideal yang relevan untuk menjawab tantangan pendidikan Islam kontemporer. Namun, hingga kini belum banyak model kepemimpinan pendidikan yang secara sistematis mengadaptasi prinsip-prinsip tersebut. Penelitian ini mengkaji konsep *imām* menurut Imam al-Māwardī serta relevansinya dalam kepemimpinan pendidikan Islam. Dalam konteks pendidikan, kepemimpinan tidak hanya berperan sebagai pengelola administratif, tetapi juga sebagai pembimbing spiritual dan moral yang berlandaskan nilai-nilai Islam. Melalui karya monumentalnya *al-Aḥkām al-Sultāniyyah*, al-Māwardī merumuskan karakteristik ideal seorang imām, antara lain keadilan (*‘adālah*), ilmu pengetahuan (*‘ilm*), amanah (*amānah*), kebijaksanaan (*ḥikmah*), dan semangat musyawarah (*shūrā*). Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan analisis deskriptif untuk menggali nilai-nilai kepemimpinan dalam teori *imām* dan mengaplikasikannya pada kepemimpinan pendidikan Islam. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan prinsip-prinsip *imām* dapat membentuk model kepemimpinan yang etis, spiritual, dan responsif terhadap tantangan pendidikan kontemporer. Dengan mengintegrasikan nilai keadilan, pengetahuan, dan partisipasi, kepemimpinan pendidikan Islam dapat menciptakan ekosistem yang mendukung pengembangan karakter dan spiritualitas peserta didik. Penelitian ini diharapkan memberikan kontribusi teoritis dan praktis dalam pengembangan model kepemimpinan pendidikan Islam yang holistik dan kontekstual.

Kata Kunci: *Imām*, Kepemimpinan Pendidikan Islam, Imam al-Mawardi, Model Kepemimpinan.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a fundamental element in determining the quality, direction, and success of an institution, including in the context of Islamic education. Educational leadership not only functions as an administrative manager, but also plays a role as a spiritual and moral leader who guides the entire academic community in internalizing Islamic values. Understanding and applying ideal leadership principles is very important so that Islamic educational institutions are able to produce a generation that is academically superior as well as strong in morals and spirituality.

In the treasures of Islamic thought, the concept of *Imam* which was put forward by Imam al-Mawardi is the main reference in understanding the principles of ideal leadership principles. Imam al-Mawardi, an 11th-century Shafi'i scholar, through monumental works *Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniyyah*, systematically explain the structure, criteria, and ethics of leadership in Islam. According to al-Mawardi, the imam is an institution that replaces the prophetic role in maintaining religion and regulating world affairs.¹ Leaders (imams) must meet the criteria of justice, knowledge, ijtihad ability, physical and spiritual health, and courage in upholding the truth. The process of selecting imams is carried out by *ahl al-hall wa al-'aqd*, which is a group that has the competence and authority to determine the best leader for the ummah.²

This principle of *imamah* has a very high relevance in the leadership of Islamic education.³ The principal or leader of Islamic educational institutions not only functions as administrators, but also as exemplary figures who instill the values of Islam and morality in every aspect of education management.⁴ Leadership based on the principle of *imamah* is expected to direct educational institutions towards the achievement of vision and mission that is in line with Islamic values, so as to produce students who are not only intellectually intelligent but also spiritually and morally strong.⁵

Several empirical studies corroborate the relevance of the concept of *imamah* al-Mawardi in the context of education. Elok's research, for example, shows that the implementation of al-Mawardi's leadership principles in high school can improve the quality of education by instilling strong Islamic and moral values.⁶ Meanwhile, Building upon this foundation, recent scholarly attention has increasingly turned to Islamic leadership paradigms as a means to reform educational management and governance in Muslim-majority contexts.

¹ Abū al-Ḥasan Al-Māwardī, "Adab Al-Dunyā Wa-al-Dīn," Bayrūt: Dār Maktabat al-Ḥayāh, 1986.

² Ahmad Fauzan, "Leadership Character According to Imam Al-Mawardi and Its Relevance in Indonesia: The Study of the Book Of Al-Ahkam As-Sulthaniyyah," *Jurnal Penelitian* 15, no. 1 (2018): 39–50; Ahmad Thamys, "Konsep Pemimpin Dalam Islam (Analisis Terhadap Pemikiran Politik Al-Mawardi)" (PhD Thesis, UIN Raden Intan Lampung, 2018), <https://repository.radenintan.ac.id/id/eprint/3389>.

³ Al-Māwardī, "Adab Al-Dunyā Wa-al-Dīn."

⁴ Fauzan, "Leadership Character According to Imam Al-Mawardi and Its Relevance in Indonesia"; Novianti Muspiroh, "Peran Kepala Sekolah Dalam Menciptakan Budaya Religius Siswa Studi Kasus Di Sekolah Dasar Negeri Grenjeng Kota Cirebon," *JTEM (Journal of Islamic Education Management)* 2, no. 2 (2018): 44–61.

⁵ Mhd Syahdan Lubis, Candra Wijaya, and Mardianto, *Kepemimpinan Spiritual KLAi: Mengungkap Tabir Kepemimpinan Kiai di Pondok Pesantren Musthafawiyah Purba dan Pondok Pesantren Al-Jamaliyah Raso* (Medan: UMSU Press, 2024); Ahmad Khoiri et al., *Konsep Dasar Teori Pendidikan Karakter* (Batam: Cendikia Mulia Mandiri, 2023).

⁶ Kharisma Elok, Jefik Hafizd, and Mohamad Rana, "Al-Mawardi's Leadership Concept and Its Relevance to Indonesian Democracy," *Journal of Law Justice (JLJ)* 3, no. 1 (2025): 47–62.

Alamsyah et al. (2023), in their analysis of *imāmah* according to al-Māwardī, argue that leadership attributes such as justice (*‘adl*), knowledge (*‘ilm*), moral uprightness (*‘afāf*), and the capacity to ensure public welfare are not only theological imperatives but also pedagogical imperatives. Their study outlines the potential of these classical Islamic principles when operationalized in school leadership to nurture holistic student development rooted in *akhlāq* and discipline.⁷

Furthermore, Juhji et al. (2025) explored the correlation between prophetic leadership—drawing upon figures such as the Prophet Muhammad and classical Islamic thinkers like al-Māwardī—and job satisfaction among madrasah teachers. Their findings indicate that a leadership style grounded in integrity, trust, and compassion contributes significantly to teachers’ professional motivation and student outcomes. Similarly, Mahmud (2025) emphasizes the reconstruction of Islamic leadership models to instill religious moderation (*wasatiyyah*), national character, and moral authority within the school environment.⁸

Widyatama’s emphasis on justice and integrity resonates with Kultsum et al. (2022), who note the rising relevance of ethical leadership among female Islamic school principals, particularly when confronting issues of inclusivity and moral formation. This reaffirms al-Māwardī’s notion that *imāmah* is not solely about political authority but also about moral guardianship and societal rectification—principles highly relevant in educational reform.⁹

Nevertheless, despite these valuable contributions, the existing literature remains fragmented. The majority of studies either examine leadership traits in isolation or apply general Islamic leadership theories without anchoring them in a structured model derived from classical sources like al-Aḥkām al-Sultāniyyah. There is still a significant gap in developing a comprehensive, theoretically robust, and practically applicable educational leadership framework grounded explicitly in al-Māwardī’s concept of *imāmah*.¹⁰ A model that systematizes these classical values into modern educational leadership practices is urgently needed, particularly to enhance the quality of Islamic education in a way that is faithful to its spiritual heritage while responsive to contemporary educational challenges.

Therefore, this research aims to examine in depth the concept of *imāmah* according to Imam al-Mawardi and develop a leadership model of Islamic education based on these principles. Thus, it is expected to make a theoretical and practical contribution to the development of Islamic education leadership that is holistic, contextual, and able to answer the challenges of the times without abandoning the fundamental values of Islam.

⁷ Firman Dwi Alamsyah, Muh Nurrochim Maksum, and Mohammad Zakki Azani, “Implementation of Leadership in Education According to Al-Mawardi’s Perspective,” in *International Conference on Islamic and Muhammadiyah Studies (ICIMS 2023)* (Atlantis Press, 2023), 297–309, <https://www.atlantispress.com/proceedings/icims-23/125991758>.

⁸ Juhji Juhji et al., “Exploring the Relationship between Prophetic Leadership and Job Satisfaction of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Teachers in Indonesia,” *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 6, no. 1 (2025): 13–28.

⁹ Umami Kultsum et al., “Women School Leadership: The Catalytic Style in Developing Guidance and School Members’ Well-Being in Facing Global Pandemic,” accessed June 19, 2025, <https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/69481>.

¹⁰ Muchammad Eka Mahmud, “School Leadership Models and Efforts Reconstruction of Religious Moderation in State Madrasah Aliyah in Indonesia,” *Educational Process: International Journal* 14 (2025): e2025018.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a type of analytical descriptive research. This approach was chosen because it aims to understand and interpret the concept of *imāmah* put forward by Imam al-Mawardi in depth and contextual, and transpose it into the leadership system of Islamic education.¹¹ The data used in this study is sourced from literature studies, including classic books such as *Al Ahkam al Sulṭaniyyah* al-Mawardi's works, literature on Islamic leadership, as well as relevant scientific articles and research results. The data collection technique is carried out through documentation studies and content analysis of the primary and secondary sources.¹²

In the analysis process, the researcher examines the value of the values and principles of the leadership principles of the *imāmah* contained in al-Mawardi's thought, then analyzes their potential application in the current Islamic education leadership system. To maintain the validity of the data, this study uses reference triangulation by comparing various literature sources and considering the local context and needs of the contemporary world of education.¹³ The results of the analysis were systematically compiled to formulate a leadership model of Islamic education based on the principle of *imāmah* al-Mawardi.

This research aims to examine the concept of imam according to Imam al-Mawardi, including the characteristics, functions, and mechanisms of ideal leadership in classical Islam, as well as its relevance in the leadership of modern Islamic education such as Islamic boarding schools, madrasas, and Islamic schools. This study also aims to develop an educational leadership model based on the principles of *imāmah* al-Mawardi as a practical reference, so that it can make a theoretical and applicative contribution to the development of Islamic leadership that is contextual with today's educational needs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Imam al-Mawardi (d. 450 AH/1058 AD), a great scholar of the Shafi'i school, in his monumental work *Al Ahkam al Sulṭaniyyah*, provides an in-depth definition of the concept of *imāmah* (leadership).¹⁴ According to him, the *imāmah* is an institution that is determined to replace the role of prophethood, especially in the two main functions, namely maintaining religion (*hirasat al din*) and regulating world affairs (*siyasat al dunya*). In his famous expression, al-Mawardi emphasized, "*Indeed, the imam is established to replace prophethood in maintaining religion and managing the affairs of the world.*"¹⁵

This statement shows that leadership in the Islamic view is not only political or administrative, but also has a very deep spiritual and moral dimension.¹⁶ Therefore, in the

¹¹ Amtai Alaslan, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif* (Depok: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2021), <https://osf.io/2pr4s>; Mestika Zed, *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan* (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2008).

¹² Burhan Ashofa, *Metode Penelitian Hukum* (Jakarta: Rineka Cipta, 1998).

¹³ Joshua D. Atkinson, "Chapter Title : Qualitative Methods Book Title : Journey into Social Activism Book Subtitle : Qualitative Approaches This Chapter Explores :," *Journey into Social Activism*, no. May 2021 (2017): 27–64; Zed, *Metode Penelitian Kepustakaan*.

¹⁴ Danang Permadi, "Konsep Pemimpin Dalam Islam (Analisis Pemikiran Al-Mawardi)," *EKSYA: Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi Syariah* 1, no. 1 (2023): 10–17; Zulfikar Yoga Widyatama, "Konsep Kepemimpinan Menurut Al-Mawardi," *Ijtihad* 8, no. 1 (2014): 87–104.

¹⁵ Elok, Hafizd, and Rana, "Al-Mawardi's Leadership Concept and Its Relevance to Indonesian Democracy."

¹⁶ Astri Dwi Andriani et al., *Pendidikan Agama Islam Di Era Disrupsi* (Makassar: TOHAR MEDIA, 2022);

context of Islamic education, the concept of *imāmah* can be used as a philosophical foundation in forming a leadership model that is not only effective in institutional management, but also able to be a protector of Islamic values and a guide for the moral and moral development of students.¹⁷

Within the framework of classical Islamic political thought, Imam al-Mawardi provides a comprehensive conceptual construction of the conditions that must be possessed by an imam or leader of the ummah. In his work *Al Ahkam al Sultaniyyah*, he sets out seven main conditions as the basis for a person's qualification to hold leadership positions in Islam.¹⁸ *First*, trait 'is or justice, namely moral integrity and honesty that make a leader worthy of trust in carrying out the mandate of the people. *Second*, 'ilm, which is the breadth of knowledge sufficient to perform ijtihad in religious matters, which allows an imam to be able to provide sharia guidance in the midst of the dynamics of the ummah. *Third*, physical perfection and five senses, so that a leader can carry out his responsibilities without being hindered by physical shortcomings that can interfere with the function of leadership. Fourth, wisdom and intellect, in order to be able to navigate society in dealing with complex problems fairly and wisely.¹⁹

Fifth, courage, as a form of mental and physical strength to protect the community from external and internal threats, as well as maintain the stability and security of the people. *Sixth*, the condition of the Quraish *nasab*, which in the historical context of Arabia functions as a form of socio-political legitimacy, although in contemporary studies, this aspect is more emphasized on the capacity and social validity of the ummah. *Seventh*, administrative skills, namely the ability to manage government and develop an effective and accountable bureaucratic system.²⁰ The whole of these conditions shows that al-Mawardi views leadership as a multidimensional responsibility that includes moral, intellectual, physical, social, and administrative aspects.²¹ These conditions aim to ensure that the elected leader is not only able to enforce the sharia, but also realize social order and community welfare as a whole.

Furthermore, al-Mawardi explained that the mechanism for the appointment of imams must be carried out collectively through a forum called *Ahl al Hall wa al 'Aqd*, namely a group of community leaders who have the authority, knowledge, and public trust to choose leaders. This appointment process can be carried out through two methods: first, through deliberation and consensus *Ahl al Hall wa al 'Aqd* who democratically determines the most qualified figures; Second, through the direct appointment by the previous priest a method of succession that is considered valid if carried out by the priest who was in office before his death.²² These two methods show that the legitimacy and agreement of the ummah are

Muhammad Iqbal and Amin Husein Nasution, *Pemikiran Politik Islam* (Jakarta: Kencana, 2015).

¹⁷ Harjo Susmoro, *Kepemimpinan Robbani* (Bantul: Pandiva Buku, 2022).

¹⁸ Iqbal and Nasution, *Pemikiran Politik Islam*.

¹⁹ Fauzan, "Leadership Character According to Imam Al-Mawardi and Its Relevance in Indonesia."

²⁰ Thamyis, "Konsep Pemimpin Dalam Islam (Analisis Terhadap Pemikiran Politik Al-Mawardi)."

²¹ H. Abd Salam Arief and Tamyiz Muharrom, "Pemikiran Al-Mawardi Tentang Negara Kesejahteraan Dan Relevansinya Pada Era Reformasi Di Indonesia Tahun 1998-2018," 2021, <https://dspace.uui.ac.id/handle/123456789/37323>.

²² Usman Fauzi, "Masa Jabatan Legislatif Yang Tidak Dibatasi Dalam Undang-Undang Nomor 2 Tahun 2018 Tentang MPR, DPR, DPD Dan DPRD (MD3) Dan Fiqh Siyasah" (PhD Thesis, UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh, 2020), <https://repository.ar-raniry.ac.id/id/eprint/16947/>.

important pillars in the Islamic political structure, in order to avoid conflicts, divisions, and leadership vacancies that can be detrimental to the sustainability of Islamic society.²³

The duties and authorities of an imam as detailed by al-Mawardi reflect a very broad and complex scope of responsibility. He outlined at least ten main duties that a priest must perform: *first*, Safeguarding religion from all forms of deviation and heresy, as the guardian of the authority of valid Islamic teachings; *second*, Enforcing the law, i.e. resolving disputes and upholding justice among the community; *third* Maintaining security, both from internal threats such as crime and external threats from the enemy; *fourth* Implementing hudud law, namely imposing sanctions in accordance with sharia to maintain morality and public order; *fifth* Protecting the country's borders, as a form of defense against foreign aggression.²⁴

Furthermore, the duties of the priest also include *sixth* carrying out jihad in defense of the religion and sovereignty of Muslims; *seventh* managing state finances, including the collection and distribution of zakat and other state revenues fairly; *eighth* formulate economic policies, which are oriented towards distributive justice and common welfare; *ninth* appointing government officials, ensuring that state apparatus are capable and trustworthy individuals; and *last* supervise the running of government, ensure that all government policies and practices run in accordance with the principles of justice and sharia provisions. This task proves that an imam in al-Mawardi's view is not only a spiritual leader, but also a state administrator, protector of the people, and a just policymaker.²⁵

The concept of *imamah* put forward by al-Mawardi has a very important relevance in building a contemporary Islamic leadership system. In the midst of the complexity of modern life, the principles offered by al-Mawardi can be the basis for creating integral leadership, namely leadership that is able to combine the dimensions of religion and politics, between spirituality and public management.²⁶ In this context, the integration between religious values and governance becomes inseparable, where a leader is judged not only by his ability to manage the country's administration, but also by his moral exemplary, the justice of his policies, and his seriousness in serving the people.²⁷

Another relevance can be seen in the morality-based leadership model, which emphasizes the importance of morality as the main foundation in shaping public trust. In al-Mawardi's view, a leader should not only be power-oriented, but should be a reflection of the noble values of Islam such as honesty, trust, justice, and compassion for his people. In addition, the concept of community participation reflected in the existence of *Ahl al Hall wa al 'Aqd* also opens up opportunities to build a leadership system that is not authoritarian, but upholds deliberation, openness, and social legitimacy.²⁸

²³ Syaikhul Islam Ali, *Kaidah Fikih Politik: Pergulatan Pemikiran Politik Kebangsaan Ulama* (Tangerang Selatan: Harakah Book, 2018).

²⁴ Ali.

²⁵ Ali.

²⁶ Miriam D. Ezzani et al., "Islamic School Leadership and Social Justice: An International Review of the Literature," *International Journal of Leadership in Education* 26, no. 5 (September 3, 2023): 745–77, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2021.2009037>.

²⁷ Ahmad Mukhtar, *Pengantar Manajemen Syariah* (Padang: Azzia Karya Bersama, 2024).

²⁸ Alamsyah, Maksum, and Azani, "Implementation of Leadership in Education According to Al-Mawardi's Perspective."

An imam must be accountable for all his policies and actions to the people and to Allah. This is in line with the principle of *hisbah* in Islam, which requires supervision of the running of government so as not to deviate from the value of sharia. Thus, the idea of *imamah* formulated by al-Mawardi can be used as a paradigm to build a system of government that is democratically substantial, structurally just, and spiritually transcendent.²⁹

In the context of Islamic educational leadership, al-Mawardi's thoughts are also very relevant. Islamic educational institutions, such as madrasas, Islamic boarding schools, and Islamic colleges, need leaders who not only understand the management of the institution, but also have moral integrity and a strong Islamic vision. Educational leaders should be *qudwah* (role models) for students, facilitate the creation of an educational environment that supports the growth of moral values, and be able to manage institutional resources effectively and fairly.³⁰ This leadership model is in line with the concept of *imamah* al-Mawardi which balances worldly management and the maintenance of *ukhrawi* values.

Considering the overall thinking of al-Mawardi, it can be concluded that the concept of *imamah* is not only related to political leadership in a narrow sense, but also includes fundamental principles that can be applied in various fields, including educational, social, economic, and cultural. This concept deserves to be explored more deeply as the contribution of classical Islamic intellectuals in answering the challenges of the leadership of the ummah in the modern era.

Transposition of the Value of *Imamah* into Islamic Education Leadership

The concept of *imamah* in the treasures of classical Islamic political thought not only represents leadership in the context of the state, but also holds the principle of universal principles that can be transformed into various areas of social life, including education. Imam al-Mawardi, a great thinker and faqih of the 5th century AH who lived under Abbasid rule, through his work *al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭāniyyah*, provided a systematic formulation of the concept of ideal ummah leadership, which not only had political and sharia legitimacy, but also a strong ethical and moral foundation. Although the original context is state leadership, the basic value of the *imamah* is applicable to be applied in the context of modern institutions, including in the leadership system of Islamic education.

Islamic education as an institution that is not only responsible for the transmission of knowledge, but also the formation of character and spirituality, certainly requires a leadership model that is not only administrative and technocratic, but also visionary, trustworthy, and highly moral. In this case, the transposition of the values of the imam into educational leadership is not only relevant, but very urgent.³¹ Educational leadership requires a strong ethical footing and foundational principles to address the complexity of modern-day challenges.

²⁹ Risqiatul Hasanah, Muhammad Iqbal, and Irfan Noor, "Komersialisasi Pendidikan Dan Implikasinya Terhadap Dakwah Di Era Teknologi," *Bayan Lin-Naas: Jurnal Dakwah Islam* 8, no. 2 (2024): 33–50.

³⁰ Fenti Hikmawati, Fisher Zulkarnain, and Dede Nuryayi Taufiq, "Pendidikan Islam Berwawasan Multikultural Sebagai Resolusi Konflik Pemahaman Agama" (Gunung Djati Publishing, 2024), <https://digilib.uinsgd.ac.id/102162/>.

³¹ Imam Mujahid, "Islamic Orthodoxy-Based Character Education: Creating Moderate Muslim in a Modern Pesantren in Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 11, no. 2 (2021): 185–212.

Broadly speaking, Imam al-Mawardi emphasized that an imam must meet seven main requirements: (1) justice (*'is*), (2) adequate knowledge to perform *ijtihād*, (3) good hearing and sight, (4) physical abilities (*salamah al ḥawas*), (5) proficiency in administration and defense, (6) courage and firmness in enforcing the law, and (7) the *nasab* of the Quraish (which some contemporary scholars consider to be a representation of social legitimacy).³² Of these seven conditions, at least five essential principles can be directly transformed into the world of education: justice, knowledge, trust, wisdom, and deliberation.

First, justice as the main foundation of leadership. In educational institutions, justice demands proportional, non-discriminatory, and balanced treatment in all fronts. A fair madrasah head will distribute tasks objectively, impartially in conflicts between teachers or students, and be honest in assessing achievements and giving awards.³³ Justice also prevents institutions from nepotism, corruption, and abuse of authority. As mentioned by Imam al-Mawardi, “*al imamu ‘adlun ḥarisun ‘ala syar’ Allah wa shalih al ‘ibad.*” A leader is the guardian of justice and sharia.³⁴

Second, knowledge as the main requirement. In the world of education, knowledge is not only shown by degrees or positions, but also a deep understanding of Islamic values and strategic managerial insights. Knowledgeable Islamic education leaders are able to integrate Islamic teachings with the needs of contemporary management, answer the challenges of 21st century education, and are able to inspire their subordinates to continue learning and innovating. Leaders who do not have a scientific basis will tend to be authoritarian, non-adaptive, and fail to read the direction of the changing times.³⁵

Third, trust as a moral responsibility. Leadership is not an honor, but a heavy trust and will be accounted for before Allah. In this context, the leader of an educational institution should not use his position as a tool of power or economic means, but rather as a field of service.³⁶ Amanah includes honesty in budget management, integrity in decisions, and commitment to improving the quality of the institution. A trustworthy leader will also be consistent between speech and action, thus becoming an example for teachers and students.³⁷

Fourth, managerial skills and wisdom. Al-Mawardi mentioned the importance of *Kifayah* and *ra’y wa hikmah* in regulating the country. This value is also crucial in educational leadership, considering the complexity of institutional management ranging from curriculum planning, human resource development, conflict handling, asset management, to establishing

³² Permadi, “Konsep Pemimpin Dalam Islam (Analisis Pemikiran Al-Mawardi).”

³³ Afrilia Nurul Khasanah, “Konsep Kesenjangan Gender Menurut Pemikiran Amina Wadud Muhsin Dan Relevansinya Dalam Pendidikan Islam” (PhD Thesis, UIN Raden Intan Lampung, 2018), <https://repository.radenintan.ac.id/3809/>.

³⁴ Thamyis, “Konsep Pemimpin Dalam Islam (Analisis Terhadap Pemikiran Politik Al-Mawardi).”

³⁵ Azam Othman et al., “Islamic Integrated Education System Model in the Malay Archipelago: Implications for Educational Leadership,” *Intellectual Discourse* 25, no. 1 (June 30, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.31436/id.v25i1.998>.

³⁶ Liana Beattie, “Educational Leadership: Producing Docile Bodies? A Foucauldian Perspective on Higher Education,” *Higher Education Quarterly* 74, no. 1 (2020): 98–110, <https://doi.org/10.1111/hequ.12218>.

³⁷ Muammar Idwin, Martin Kustati, and Rezki Amelia, “Pengelolaan Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Dalam Perspektif Manajemen Pendidikan,” *Jurnal Riset Rumpun Agama Dan Filsafat* 4, no. 1 (2025): 604–20.

external partnerships.³⁸ A wise leader will be able to make decisions with long-term benefits, not rash in policy changes, and be able to read the situation sharply and solutionally.

Fifth, deliberation as a participatory pillar. Principle *ahl al ḥall wa al ‘aqd* developed by al-Mawardi shows that in Islam, leadership is not a dictatorial or centralistic system. In the world of education, the spirit of deliberation can be manifested in the involvement of teachers in the preparation of programs, the involvement of school committees in institutional evaluations, and the opening of aspiration spaces for students and parents.³⁹ Good deliberation not only strengthens policy legitimacy, but also strengthens the bond between leaders and the educational community.

Another value that is no less important is the commitment to Islamic law. Leadership in Islamic educational institutions must have a strong spiritual vision and *ukhrawi* orientation. Islamic education is not only about transferring knowledge, but also transmitting values⁴⁰. Therefore, the policies of educational institutions must be based on the values of sharia values: honesty, simplicity, responsibility, help, and example. Thus, educational institutions become miniatures of Islamic society that not only produce intellectually intelligent graduates, but also spiritually and socially mature.⁴¹

In the contemporary context, the challenges of Islamic education are complex. Globalization, the current of cultural liberalism, the penetration of digital media, and the identity crisis of the younger generation demand morally sound and managerially strong leadership.⁴² The leadership model based on the values of the imam of al-Mawardi offers an ideal alternative: the integration between the spiritual dimension and professionalism, between authority and deliberation, between discipline and compassion.⁴³ Leadership like this is able to respond to the dynamics of the times while still holding on to principles, as well as being adaptive to change.⁴⁴

The transposition of these values is also in line with the paradigm of *maqāṣid al shari’ah*, especially in maintaining religion (*ḥifẓ al din*), intellect (*ḥifẓ al ‘aql*), and heredity (*ḥifẓ al nasl*) through the education system.⁴⁵ By implementing fair, knowledgeable, trustworthy, and wise leadership, Islamic educational institutions can become the vanguard in maintaining

³⁸ Wafi Kautsar, “Kewenangan Wilāyah Al-Ḥisbah Di Aceh Dalam Perspektif Imām Al-Māwardi” (PhD Thesis, UIN Ar-Raniry, 2023), <https://repository.ar-raniry.ac.id/id/eprint/29764/>.

³⁹ Cecilia M. Azorin and Daniel and Muijs, “Networks and Collaboration in Spanish Education Policy,” *Educational Research* 59, no. 3 (July 3, 2017): 273–96, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2017.1341817>.

⁴⁰ Ahmad Barizi, *Pendidikan Integratif: Akar Tradisi Dan Integrasi Keilmuan Pendidikan Islam* (UIN-Maliki Press, 2011), <http://repository.uin-malang.ac.id/1229/>.

⁴¹ I. I. F. Atikah, “Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter Di Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor Ponorogo,” *Institut Agama Islam Negeri (Iain) Ponorogo, April* 1328 (2019), <https://etheses.iainponorogo.ac.id/8164/>.

⁴² Elok, Hafizd, and Rana, “Al-Mawardi’s Leadership Concept and Its Relevance to Indonesian Democracy.”

⁴³ Punaji Setyosari and Waras Kamdi, “Exploration of Moral Integrity Education and Superior Cadre Leadership at Madrasah Boarding School Indonesia,” *International Journal of Instruction* 14, no. 4 (2021): 753–74.

⁴⁴ Ayesah A. Alazmi and Tony Bush, “An Islamic-Oriented Educational Leadership Model: Towards a New Theory of School Leadership in Muslim Societies,” *Journal of Educational Administration and History* 56, no. 3 (July 2, 2024): 312–34, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220620.2023.2292573>.

⁴⁵ Ayuk Witria Ningsih, Hidayati Nilam Permatasari, and Putri Anjani, “Pendidikan Islam Berbasis Maqasid Syariah: Membangun Sistem Pembelajaran Yang Berorientasi Kesejahteraan Umat,” *Hidayah: Cendekia Pendidikan Islam Dan Hukum Syariah* 1, no. 2 (2024): 17–20.

the moral integrity of the nation and building the next generation who are mutadayyin, capable, and globally insightful.⁴⁶

The experience of Islamic history also shows that large educational institutions such as madrasah madrasas, and *pesantren* in the archipelago can develop not only because of the quality of the teachers or curriculum, but also because of visionary and dedicated leadership.⁴⁷ Many traditional Islamic boarding schools have survived for tens or even hundreds of years because they are supported by *kiai* or *mudir* who are not only alim, but also fair, wise, and trustworthy.⁴⁸ This is proof that the value of the value of *imamah* is not just a theoretical concept, but has been historically proven in the praxis of Islamic education.

Thus, it can be affirmed that the transposition of the values of the imam from the thought of Imam al-Mawardi into the leadership of Islamic education is not only theoretically possible, but also pragmatically urgent. In the midst of a leadership crisis and the degradation of ethical values in education, this model provides a comprehensive answer and is firmly rooted in the treasures of classical Islam. The leadership of Islamic education should not be merely a technical administrator, but should be an imam in the true sense: a director, a guide, a protector, and a person in charge of values.

CONCLUSION

Leadership in the context of Islamic education, as studied through the thought of Imam al-Mawardi, is an essential component that is not only administrative, but also includes spiritual, moral, and intellectual dimensions. The concept of *imamah* initiated by al-Mawardi emphasizes five main pillars as the ideal condition for a leader, namely justice, breadth of knowledge, trust, wisdom in decision-making, and the spirit of deliberation in solving problems. These fundamental values, when transformed into the leadership system of Islamic education, have the potential to form a leadership model that is not only effective managerially, but also morally and religiously integrity, and able to answer the challenges of education in the contemporary era.

The implementation of the principle of *imamah* in the leadership of Islamic educational institutions is expected to be able to create an educational ecosystem that supports the development of students' character and spirituality, not just academic achievements. Leaders of educational institutions who adhere to Islamic values will be an inspiring role model, whose presence not only facilitates a conducive learning process, but also forms an institutional culture that upholds ethics, honesty, responsibility, and a collective spirit in achieving the vision of Islamic education. This is in line with the essence of education in Islam as a process of purification of the soul (*taṣkiyah al nafs*) and the formation of *kamil* people.

Furthermore, the transposition of the values of the imam into the leadership of Islamic education is not just an idealistic effort, but an urgent need in responding to the

⁴⁶ Saidah Mohd Said, Sabariah Sharif, and Mohd Khairuddin Jerry Abdullah, "Unveiling the Excellent Leadership Qualities and Practices of Principals in Islamic Schools: A Systematic Literature Review," *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* 22, no. 9 (2023): 43–61.

⁴⁷ Azyumardi Azra, "Civic Education at Public Islamic Higher Education (PTKIN) and Pesantren," *Tarbiya: Journal of Education in Muslim Society* 2, no. 2 (June 1, 2016): 167–77, <https://doi.org/10.15408/tjems.v2i2.3186>.

⁴⁸ Hariadi, *Evolusi Pesantren; Studi Kepemimpinan Kiai Berbasis Orientasi ESQ* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2015).

complexity of today's educational challenges. In the midst of the rapid flow of secularization, commercialization of education, and the crisis of exemplary leadership in leadership, the leadership model based on the principles of al-Mawardi is present as an integral paradigm offering combining moral integrity, professional competence, and participatory involvement of all elements of education. With this foundation, Islamic educational institutions have a great opportunity to be at the forefront of maintaining the purity of Islamic values, building a civilization based on science and morals, and producing a generation that is intelligent, globally competitive, and solid in Islamic principles.

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