

Exploring Teachers' Perspectives on Leadership Regeneration in Muhammadiyah Schools

A Phenomenological Study

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ABSTRACT

Leadership regeneration in educational institutions plays a crucial role in ensuring long-term sustainability. In Muhammadiyah schools, this system is expected to embody the values of transparency, justice, and professionalism. Although such a system is in place, there is limited research on how teachers, as essential stakeholders, perceive and experience the process. This study explores the meanings attached to the leadership regeneration system by drawing on the experiences of nine Muhammadiyah teachers. Using a phenomenological approach, the research collected and analyzed data to uncover underlying perceptions. Overall, participants conveyed a generally positive attitude toward the system, though a few expressed minor dissatisfaction. Analysis revealed four key themes from the teachers' narratives: transparency in leadership selection, which highlights the need for openness in decision-making; fairness and justice, emphasizing the importance of equitable treatment during transitions; a sense of care and support for teachers, showcasing leadership's role in nurturing a positive environment; and motivation and professional growth, illustrating the system's influence on teacher enthusiasm and career advancement. These findings highlight the importance of a well-designed leadership regeneration system in promoting teacher satisfaction and supporting the ongoing vitality of educational institutions.

Keywords

Headmaster

Leadership

Muhammadiyah

School Management

System Sustainability

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Introduction

In the contemporary era, it is imperative for organizations to foster innovation to secure sustainable growth and maintain competitiveness, thereby earning the trust of the public [1]. Innovation plays a crucial role in enhancing organizational productivity and fostering public trust [2], [3]. Educational institutions, including schools, are no exception; they must continuously modernize and generate creative ideas to maintain a positive public image [4], [5]. However, the capacity of schools to implement modernization strategies largely depends on the effectiveness of leadership at the institutional level [6], [7]. The principal, as the highest authority in school management, is instrumental in shaping organizational progress and achieving institutional objectives [8], [9], [10]

Leadership within educational institutions requires a long-term vision and a commitment to sustainable development. Effective leaders must set high-performance standards, engage in strategic planning, and foster a culture of continuous improvement [11]. This involves collaborative efforts between leaders and staff to drive institutional change, mitigate risks associated with policy implementation, and cultivate collective awareness of leadership responsibilities [10]. Consequently, the decisions and leadership practices of school leaders today will shape future leadership regeneration processes, thereby influencing the long-term sustainability of the institution. Leadership succession in educational organizations must not only address structural considerations but also prioritize networking, collaboration, and innovation to ensure a seamless transition of leadership

As one of Indonesia's largest non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Muhammadiyah has played a significant role in advancing Islamic-based modern education [12]. The organization has consistently adhered to modern management principles in administering its educational institutions, ensuring a structured and regulated approach to school governance. Founded in 1912 by K.H. Ahmad Dahlan in Yogyakarta, Muhammadiyah was established with the mission of eradicating ignorance among Indonesian Muslims and has since evolved into a renewal movement [13]. The organization, known as Persyarikatan Muhammadiyah (Muhammadiyah Union), operates with a hierarchical structure, with leadership centralized under the Pimpinan Pusat (PP) Muhammadiyah [Central Executive of Muhammadiyah].

The governance of Muhammadiyah-affiliated educational institutions is managed under the Majelis Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah [Council of Elementary and Secondary Education], which facilitates the administration and development of schools [14]. Over the years, Muhammadiyah has successfully established thousands of schools, ranging from kindergarten to secondary education levels. Given its structured leadership and well-defined educational mission, Muhammadiyah provides a valuable context for examining leadership regeneration in educational institutions. Understanding how leadership is cultivated and

sustained within Muhammadiyah schools offers critical insights into effective succession planning and institutional resilience.

The leadership regeneration system in Muhammadiyah schools has incorporated the learning organization framework as well as a leadership cultivation model, making it a distinctive approach compared to other leadership succession models implemented in non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Indonesia [15]. The implementation of this leadership regeneration system is directly experienced by teachers in Muhammadiyah schools. Therefore, an exploration of the meaning of leadership regeneration in Muhammadiyah, from the perspective of teachers as both subjects and objects of the system, can provide valuable insights for improving the leadership succession process in the future.

This study aims to explore the leadership regeneration system in Muhammadiyah schools, particularly in the context of principal succession, based on Muhammadiyah school teachers perspective in Yogyakarta. Yogyakarta was chosen as the research site due to its historical significance as the birthplace of Muhammadiyah in 1912. Furthermore, Muhammadiyah schools in Yogyakarta are well known for their high-quality education and the large number of institutions compared to other provinces in Indonesia.

Literature Review

As a modern organization, Muhammadiyah adheres to structured and well-directed behavioral patterns [16] including in its leadership succession process for Muhammadiyah schools. The mechanism for selecting school leaders is comprehensively outlined in the Compilation of Terms/Regulations in the Elementary and Secondary School Environment of the Regional Executive of Muhammadiyah Special Region of Yogyakarta [17]. This process begins with the nomination of school leader candidates through an internal selection process within Muhammadiyah schools as the tenure of the incumbent principal approaches its end. Each school is allowed to propose multiple candidates. Subsequently, the Council of Elementary and Secondary Education assesses the candidates' leadership capacity through direct interviews, evaluating their commitment to Muhammadiyah's Islamic values, academic competence, managerial and leadership skills, and social competence.

According to various references [18], [19], one of the key factors contributing to the significant growth of Muhammadiyah educational institutions is its organizational culture, which upholds the principle of collegial leadership. This leadership system does not revolve around a single individual or central figure but rather emphasizes collective decision-making and deliberation. In Muhammadiyah, no individual holds absolute power, ensuring that every strategic policy is always enacted through a democratic process. This principle has been the cornerstone of Muhammadiyah's sustainability and continuous development since its

establishment in 1912 [20], demonstrating how a collective and deliberative approach can serve as a model for effective leadership in modern organizations.

Leadership effectiveness is a critical determinant of a school's success, as it influences various aspects of school management, including teacher development, instructional quality, and institutional culture [21], [22]. Effective principals must possess the ability to build strong teams, foster continuous professional development, evaluate staff performance, and inspire stakeholders. These competencies are essential for schools to function as cohesive and well-structured organizations, ensuring alignment with institutional goals [23], [24], [25]. Furthermore, leadership plays a pivotal role in fostering a positive school culture and improving the overall quality of education [26].

From a social psychology perspective, leadership effectiveness is not solely dependent on technical expertise but also on a leader's ability to understand and integrate cultural values within their institutional setting. Cultural awareness is crucial as it influences social institutions, individual behavior, and interpersonal interactions [27]. A principal who is attuned to cultural values can enhance teacher motivation and trust, thereby strengthening organizational cohesion [28]. The further asserts that organizational culture indirectly impacts leadership effectiveness, as leadership styles and orientations are shaped by institutional norms and values [29].

Materials and Methods

A. Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research approach with a phenomenological perspective to explore teachers' experiences regarding the leadership regeneration system at Muhammadiyah schools. Phenomenology is chosen because it enables researchers to understand the lived experiences of individuals in depth, as suggested by Moustakas and Langridge [30], [31], [32]. However, to ensure flexibility in scientific analysis and allow for the intersection of data with external elements, this research does not adopt a purely phenomenological method but incorporates broader qualitative research techniques [33].

B. Data Sources and Participants

In qualitative research, participants are expected to provide rich and comprehensive data; therefore, the number of participants is typically limited to a manageable group. In this study, 9 Muhammadiyah teachers were selected using a purposive sampling technique [34]. The selection criteria are as follows: 1) Teachers from Muhammadiyah schools in Yogyakarta; 2) Minimum teaching experience of 10 years. Each participant voluntarily agreed to participate and provided written consent, while the researchers ensured confidentiality under ethical research standards [35]. An informed consent letter detailing the research objectives, participant roles, rights, and data collection process (in-depth interviews) was provided. Additionally, research

permits were obtained from both the participants' workplaces and the institutions where the researchers were affiliated, following ethical principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki [36].

C. Data Collection and Analysis

The primary data collection method was in-depth individual interviews. Each of the six participants was interviewed for 30-45 minutes, between January and July 2024. Additionally, follow-up clarifications were conducted via WhatsApp (WA) messaging when needed to address ambiguities in interview transcripts.

The data analysis followed standard qualitative procedures, beginning with transcribing interviews to identify patterns and trends. Redundant statements were removed, and key responses that directly addressed the research question were highlighted. Relevant statements were then coded and grouped into overarching themes based on emerging trends. To ensure accuracy, data were triangulated by comparing interviews with field notes, and participants were consulted to confirm that the findings accurately reflected their perspectives. Finally, the results were presented according to the identified themes to systematically address the research question.

Results and Discussion

From the step of identifying statements with similar meanings and removing redundancies, the answers to the research question were found. Fig. 1 shows this finding. The yellow mark underlines the sentences that can explicitly answer the research question.

- 36 **Interviewee:** Certainly. In Muhammadiyah schools, there are clear regulations regarding the
 37 appointment and dismissal procedures for school principals. For example, there is a term limit
 38 for principals, two terms at the same school, but they may be reappointed for a third term at
 39 another school if their performance is excellent. Therefore, we are not surprised by leadership
 40 changes in Muhammadiyah schools. Theoretically, this reinforces our trust in the school's
 41 transparent management regarding leadership succession.
- 42 **Interviewer:** So, would you say that this system effectively ensures transparency and
 43 accountability?
- 44 **Interviewee:** Absolutely. It not only ensures that leadership is refreshed periodically but also
 45 promotes accountability and prevents potential power concentration. The reappointment system
 46 also motivates principals to maintain high performance, knowing that their track record could
 47 open opportunities at other schools.
- 48 **Interviewer:** How do stakeholders, such as teachers and parents, perceive these leadership
 49 changes?
- 50 **Interviewee:** Generally, they perceive it positively. The structured approach to leadership
 51 succession provides clarity and stability, minimizing uncertainties that could arise from abrupt
 52 changes. Moreover, the evaluation process is well-documented, fostering trust in the system.

Fig. 1. Identifying statements with similar meanings and removing redundancies process

The next activity was categorizing key themes by assigning codes to relevant statements based on emerging trends related to the research question. Fig. 2 shows the coding process.

36 **Interviewee:** Certainly. In Muhammadiyah schools, there are clear regulations regarding the
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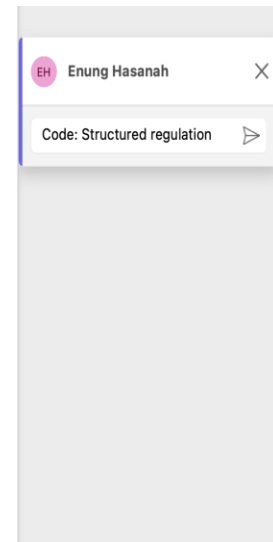


Fig. 2. The Example of coding process

Using the software, the grouping of similar codes was applied to form overarching themes that reflect participants' experiences. The example of the theme formation activity process is shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Theme formation activity process

Relevant statement	Code	Theme
In Muhammadiyah schools, there are clear regulations regarding the appointment and dismissal procedures for school principals. For example, there is a term limit for principals, two terms at the same school, but they may be reappointed for a third term at another school if their performance is excellent. Therefore, we are not surprised by leadership changes in Muhammadiyah schools. Theoretically, this reinforces our trust in the school's transparent management regarding leadership succession (P2, 36-41).	Structured regulation	Transparency in leadership selection
To become a principal or vice principal, every teacher must go through a selection system established by the Muhammadiyah <i>Dikdasmen</i> Council. The selection team consists of individuals known for their objectivity and professionalism. Ideally, this system prevents interventions from certain parties, but in reality, its implementation is not always entirely free from preferences or considerations beyond competence. Some schools apply it strictly, while others are still influenced by certain subjective factors (P7, 27-31).	There is a gap in implementation	Transparency in leadership selection
However, to be honest, not all processes are entirely objective. Personal relationships and organizational culture also play a role (P9, 32-36).	Organizational Culture	Transparency in leadership selection

Based on the data analysis, it was found that generally, the participants conveyed positive meanings toward the leadership regeneration system in Muhammadiyah schools. Although in some parts, there are slight dissatisfactions of the participants. From the entire statements of the participants, there are four themes of meanings conveyed by the teachers toward the system. From the overall statements, four key themes emerged regarding teachers' perceptions of the system: Transparency in Leadership Selection; Fairness and Justice; A Sense of Care and Support for Teachers; Motivation and Professional Growth.

A. Theme 1. Transparency in Leadership Selection

The analysis of interview transcripts indicates that transparency in leadership succession within Muhammadiyah schools is a key concern among research participants. Formally, Muhammadiyah has established clear regulations regarding the procedures for appointing school principals, to create a more structured and equitable system. Many teachers appreciate the clarity of these regulations, as they provide certainty in career progression and leadership processes. However, in practice, the implementation of these regulations is not always uniform across all schools. Internal dynamics, leadership culture, and potential interventions from certain parties still influence the level of transparency in the selection of school principals. This reflects a gap between formal policies and the realities on the ground, where subjective factors continue to pose challenges in achieving a truly objective and professional selection process. Overall, the analysis can be better understood through the following concepts.

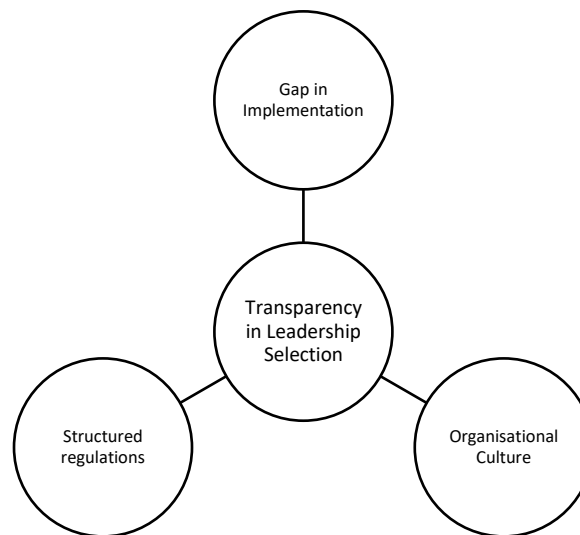


Fig. 3. Transparency in Leadership Selection

Based on Fig. 3, it is evident that there are three main points that teachers focus on regarding transparency in leadership selection at Muhammadiyah schools, namely structured regulations, gaps in implementation, and organizational culture. The following statement from P2 reflects a positive view of Muhammadiyah's leadership succession system, though it also reveals a sense of concern:

In Muhammadiyah schools, there are clear regulations regarding the appointment and dismissal procedures for school principals. For example, there is a term limit for principals, two terms at the same school, but they may be reappointed for a third term at another school if their performance is excellent. Therefore, we are not surprised by leadership changes in Muhammadiyah schools. Theoretically, this reinforces our trust in the school's transparent management regarding leadership succession (P2, 36-41).

However, P7 highlights that despite the existence of regulations, the level of transparency in their implementation still depends on the leadership culture of each school and the influence of certain parties:

To become a principal or vice principal, every teacher must go through a selection system established by the Muhammadiyah Dikdasmen Council. The selection team consists of individuals known for their objectivity and professionalism. Ideally, this system prevents interventions from certain parties, but in reality, its implementation is not always entirely free from preferences or considerations beyond competence. Some schools apply it strictly, while others are still influenced by certain subjective factors (P7, 27-31).

P9 also expresses a similar reflection, emphasizing that although the system provides career progression certainty, challenges remain in its implementation: “ However, to be honest, not all processes are entirely objective. Personal relationships and organizational culture also play a role” (P9, 32-36).

Theme 1 indicates that Muhammadiyah has established formal policies governing leadership succession in a transparent manner [37], [38]. While the existence of leadership regeneration regulations [39], such as term limits and objective selection procedures, reflects an institutional commitment to transparency and professional standards, the variations in how these rules are interpreted and implemented highlight the critical role of leadership culture and ethical practices in educational management [40], [41]. The participants' reflections suggest that effective management education should not only focus on designing robust systems but also on cultivating a leadership mindset that upholds fairness, accountability, and cultural alignment [42]. Therefore, to enhance the integrity of leadership development in Muhammadiyah schools [43], management training programs must incorporate both structural competencies and soft skills necessary to navigate organizational dynamics and resist non-merit-based influences.

B. Theme 2. Fairness and Justice

Based on Fig. 4, the participants perceived Muhammadiyah's leadership regeneration system as one that ensures equal opportunities for teachers to advance to leadership positions. They believed that, provided candidates meet the established qualifications, they are granted a fair chance to attain leadership roles. Nevertheless, in certain cases, there remain factors that may give rise to perceptions of inequity, particularly among teachers serving in small or remote schools. Below, we present a relevant excerpt from the interview with Participant 1 [P1].



Fig. 4. Fairness and Justice

The assessment process of a teacher to become a headmaster or deputy headmaster candidate, until the final appointment process in every Muhammadiyah school, is open. It is a good thing for me. It is fair and not biased. However, in practice, there are still aspects that require improvement, particularly regarding salary distribution, which remains unequal. Schools are independent in administering their finance, thus in big schools the salary is high, but in smaller schools the salary is minimum. This disparity has led to dissatisfaction among teachers in smaller schools. Well,... That's the only shortfall. Regarding the leadership regeneration system, in my view, it is already professional, directed, and measured... The point is, it is fair already (P1, 45-53).

Similarly, P3 reinforced the belief in procedural justice, emphasizing that the selection process was transparent and competency-based:

There is no 'shortcut system' in Muhammadiyah. If someone wants to become a leader in Muhammadiyah schools, they should fulfill the competencies and regulations, and follow the selection the procedure. We know that the competencies for leader candidates in Muhammadiyah schools are far harder compared to schools outside Muhammadiyah. There is a demand for religious competency and ideological firmness for the candidates. However, it is a positive thing for me. The leaders in Muhammadiyah schools truly should be able to be a model for their subordinates and students. Therefore, the netting process of the headmaster and deputy headmaster candidates can result in qualified leaders. Although it is a bit complicated, the process is done fairly and openly (P3, 47-54).

P6 further affirmed that leadership appointments were not based on seniority or personal relationships, but strictly on competence:

I feel that in Muhammadiyah, there is fairness in term of the chance to become a headmaster. The appointment of the headmaster does not depend on seniority or closeness of someone with the people in the council. It is truly about competencies. The process is open, so it's a good thing... yes, yes... It is good, according to my experience. It's fair, Mam'... However, fairness in opportunity does not always translate to fairness in access, as some teachers from smaller schools or remote areas

might face structural barriers in competing with candidates from more established schools. (P6, 67-70).

Based on Theme 2, the leadership regeneration system in Muhammadiyah schools [44] is characterized as fair [45], professional [46], and meritocratic [47]. Teachers believe that every individual has an equal opportunity to assume a leadership position, provided they meet the specified qualifications.[48]. The open, transparent, and competency-based selection process exemplifies procedural justice, where fairness is assessed not only by the outcome but also by the mechanisms used to achieve it. The emphasis on ideological integrity and religious competence aligns with the transformational leadership approach, which underscores the importance of values and role models in leadership. This system is seen as capable of fostering leadership that is not only administrative but also moral and ideological.

Nevertheless, certain dynamics reveal inequalities in terms of distributive justice and accessibility. Teachers in smaller or remote schools often encounter structural barriers to leadership opportunities, such as limited resources and a lack of exposure to institutional networks. Variations in financial independence between schools also contribute to incentive disparities, generating a sense of injustice, despite the fairness of formal procedures. Therefore, the system's justice remains incomplete. To address this, affirmative policies are necessary to uphold procedural justice and ensure equality in both access and outcomes, thereby ensuring that leadership regeneration truly reflects the principles of inclusivity and sustainability in value-based educational organizations.

C. Theme 3. Sense of Care and Support for Teachers

Based on Fig. 5, the leadership regeneration system in Muhammadiyah schools provided positive impressions for teachers, particularly regarding the attention and support from the organization's leaders. Teachers felt that Muhammadiyah offered continuous professional development opportunities to help them grow in their careers[49]. P1 explained that during their first year of teaching, their responsibilities were limited to classroom instruction. However, in the second year, they were given additional responsibilities, such as becoming a committee member, a homeroom teacher, and accompanying students in various competitions. The school principal also provided guidance to help improve leadership capacity. Additionally, the school council ensured that teachers had access to training programs to enhance their competencies.

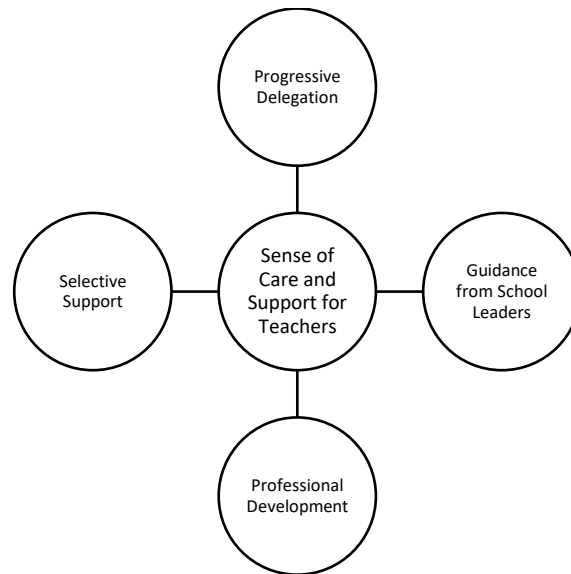


Fig. 5. A Sense of Care and Support for Teachers

Similarly, P5 stated that Muhammadiyah teachers were provided with various facilities for professional development. One example was funding support for classroom action research, which allowed teachers to improve their instructional practices [50]. However, this support seemed to be selective, as not all teachers received the same opportunities. Teachers who actively pursued self-improvement had better access to these resources. P5 also mentioned that Muhammadiyah offered scholarships for teachers, reinforcing the idea that committed educators could become future school leaders.

P6 also shared a similar experience, stating that they had participated in leadership and organizational training multiple times. Additionally, they received a scholarship for their master's degree from the Muhammadiyah Elementary and Secondary Education Council. Despite these positive initiatives, it is important to consider how these opportunities are distributed. While some teachers feel supported, others may perceive differences in access to training and career advancement opportunities.

D. Theme 4. Motivation and Professional Growth

To better understand the core findings of this theme, the following mind map visually organizes the key codes that emerged from the participants' statements. These codes highlight the interconnected elements that contribute to the motivation and development of leadership within Muhammadiyah schools. See Fig. 6 for the detail.

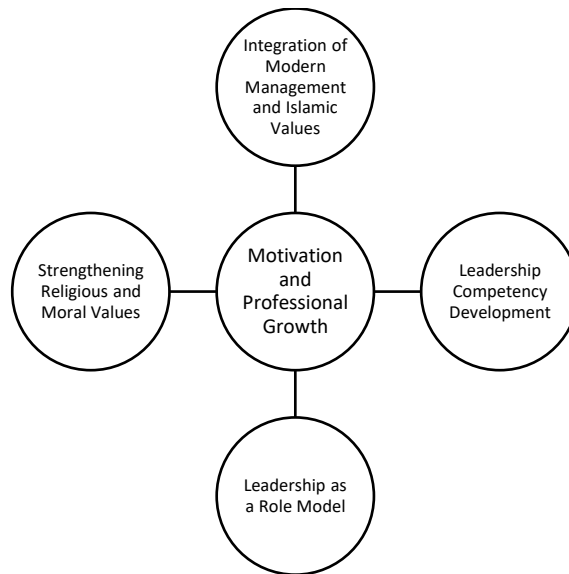


Fig. 6. Motivation and Professional Growth

The emphasis of the leadership regeneration system in Muhammadiyah schools, which obliges teachers, particularly headmasters or deputy headmasters, to demonstrate excellence in Islamic ideology and Muhammadiyah principles, has had a positive impact on teachers' motivation to continue learning. Participants understood that strengthening moral and religious ideology among Muhammadiyah school leadership candidates aimed to produce role models for both teachers and students. However, it is also important to consider the extent to which these requirements influence leadership effectiveness beyond moral and religious aspects. While moral values are crucial, modern educational leadership also demands managerial competence, pedagogical innovation, and the ability to respond to diverse educational challenges. The following statements illustrate teachers' perspectives, as P1 stated:

I was educated in many aspects of becoming a leader in Muhammadiyah schools. There is a distinction in Muhammadiyah. Leader candidates for Muhammadiyah schools should have a grip on Islamic ideology and Muhammadiyah principles. I have been to Baitul Arqam [Baitul Arqam is an Islamic ideology and leadership-oriented coaching program in Muhammadiyah] many times. They teach how to read and write the Quran, prayer practices, organizational commitment, also moral development. I think it is essential. A leader should have morals; moreover, it is a headmaster who becomes the role model of their children. I feel comfortable with the system (P1, 97-102).

P3 also believed that requiring leader candidates in Muhammadiyah schools to possess strong religious morality is reasonable. He felt motivated to keep learning to become a better person. However, it remains unclear whether this motivation extends beyond personal development to include broader professional competencies required in school leadership. P3 stated:

What Muhammadiyah develops are professional leaders based on Islamic values. We, as teachers, should have the ability to read the Quran properly, practice prayers diligently, and also have a strong comprehension of Muhammadiyah principles before we can become the next leader. The values developed in Muhammadiyah are highly related to modern organizational values and moral values

as a provision to be an ideal role model and leader. That's why I also get encouraged to learn and try to be a person who upholds religious and moral values. This makes sense, that a leader should have morals, that's why the leadership regeneration system in Muhammadiyah schools is very rational (P3, 97-105).

P8 explicitly described the process of coaching and development of religious values for leader candidates in Muhammadiyah schools:

In Muhammadiyah, there is an activity called Baitul Arqam, which is obligatory for every teacher, especially those who aim to become a headmaster. I just started attending recently. I feel that Baitul Arqam is essential for Muhammadiyah teachers to develop better leadership character... Hmm... well... It's a positive activity because it can build good morals for teachers (P8, 89-91).

The findings indicate that Muhammadiyah schools have established clear regulations regarding leadership succession, which aim to create a structured and fair system. Participants acknowledged the formal existence of these policies and expressed confidence in the transparency of the leadership selection process. However, discrepancies in implementation emerged as a recurring theme. While some schools adhered strictly to the guidelines, others exhibited variations influenced by internal dynamics, leadership culture, and external interventions.

The findings highlight the significance of leadership regeneration [51], [52], [53] in Muhammadiyah schools. The structured system for leadership succession not only ensures sustainability but also fosters a culture of continuous professional development [49], [54]. Teachers perceive leadership pathways as structured and purposeful, with an emphasis on mentorship, professional training, and moral development. These aspects align with previous research emphasizing that effective leadership development programs contribute to both teacher retention and institutional growth [55].

One of the characteristics of Muhammadiyah schools is the integration of moral values into leadership training. An example of its activities is the Baitul Arqam program, which focuses on developing leadership skills as well as religious guidance in all its activities [56]. A values-based leadership approach can effectively align organizational goals with ethical leadership practices [57]. However, although the emphasis on moral and religious competence is visible, there is still a question whether this approach is sufficient to address the challenges of contemporary educational management, such as innovation, digitalization, and stakeholder engagement [58], as well as the challenge of improving the quality of education in the context of rural and urban communities at the same time [59]. Thus, the question remains whether the current leadership training model in Muhammadiyah schools effectively balances moral integrity with modern leadership skills.

Moreover, the findings suggest a selective access to leadership development opportunities. While some teachers benefit from scholarships, training, and research funding,

others perceive disparities in access. This suggests a need for more inclusive talent development policies to ensure that professional growth opportunities are equitably distributed. In line with the Human Capital Theory [60], investment in teachers' professional development directly influences school effectiveness. Thus, Muhammadiyah schools might benefit from broadening access to leadership training, ensuring that motivation and career progression are not solely dependent on individual initiative but also institutional support mechanisms.

In conclusion, Muhammadiyah's leadership regeneration system provides a structured pathway for teacher development, balancing religious-moral education with modern management principles [56]. However, the challenge remains in ensuring that leadership training extends beyond ideology to equip educators with contemporary pedagogical and managerial skills necessary for 21st-century schooling. Future research could further explore how Muhammadiyah leadership training compares with secular educational institutions and whether moral-based leadership translates into measurable improvements in school performance.

Conclusion

Muhammadiyah schools implement a structured leadership succession system grounded in transparency, fairness, and competence. While formal regulations promote procedural justice and meritocracy, inconsistencies in practice reveal the influence of institutional culture, personal networks, and external factors. These variations underscore the need for enhanced accountability measures, such as external audits and community involvement, to ensure uniform implementation. Although leadership pathways are generally viewed as equitable, concerns remain regarding financial disparities and unequal access to professional development, particularly in smaller or under-resourced schools. Broadening access to leadership training and institutional support would improve inclusivity and talent development. A notable strength of Muhammadiyah's model lies in its integration of Islamic moral values with professional training, exemplified by programs like Baitul Arqam. However, future policies should balance ideological grounding with contemporary educational management skills essential for navigating 21st-century challenges.

Recommendation

This study contributes to Islamic educational leadership literature by presenting a value-based model that merges ethical principles with managerial competencies. It demonstrates how succession planning can be contextualized within Islamic education to foster sustainable, morally grounded leadership. Muhammadiyah schools should adopt more inclusive development strategies and explore comparative frameworks to strengthen

leadership regeneration. Future research should assess the practical outcomes of value-based leadership and identify strategies for harmonizing religious and modern management practices.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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