Strategy of Islamic Educational Leadership in Facing the Challenges of the Digital Era at STIT Madina Sragen

Sukamdi[1]
[1]Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Tarbiyah Madina Sragen

Article Info	Abstract
	Introduction:The digital era has brought significant changes across various aspects of life, including the field of education. Amid the accelerating currents of globalization and digitalization, Islamic educational institutions face increasingly complex challenges, including STIT Madina Sragen. Adaptive, visionary, and innovative leadership strategies in Islamic education have become a key factor in responding to these dynamics.Materials and Methods:This study aims to analyze the Islamic educational leadership strategies implemented at STIT Madina Sragen in addressing the challenges of the digital era. A qualitative descriptive method was employed to allow an in-depth exploration of the phenomena and to identify various factors that influence leadership effectiveness within the context of Islamic education.Results:The research findings reveal that leadership grounded in a strategic vision, the ability to collaborate with various stakeholders, and the optimal utilization of digital technology plays a crucial role in enhancing the quality and relevance of Islamic education in the digital age. These findings are expected to contribute academically to the development of leadership models in Islamic education that are more responsive to contemporary demands, and to provide strategic recommendations for other educational institutions facing similar challenges.Conclusion:Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the Islamic educational leadership strategy at STIT Madina Sragen, which is responsive to digital-era developments, is supported by three main pillars: a clearly directed long-term vision, the ability to build synergy with relevant stakeholders, and the effective use of digital technology in managerial and instructional processes. This approach has proven to contribute to the improvement of institutional quality and relevance in facing changing times. Therefore, this leadership model can serve as a strategic reference for other Islamic educational institutions in responding to the challenges of globalization and technological advancement.

Corresponding Author:
Sukamdi
Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Tarbiyah Madina Sragen

1. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has revolutionized the education system by providing new ways to deliver and access learning, making the learning process more open, flexible, and efficient (UNESCO, 2021). Advances in digital technology have brought fundamental changes to the education system, particularly in terms of delivery methods and access to learning. This presents a significant opportunity for educational institutions to create a more dynamic, accessible, and modern learning process.

Islamic educational institutions are required to keep pace with current technological developments, without neglecting the moral and spiritual principles that serve as their primary

foundation (Choudhury, 2019). Adapting to technological advancements is inevitable in the world of education, including in Islamic education. However, this transformation must remain grounded in Islamic values to avoid losing sight of the fundamental direction and purpose of education.

Islamic educational institutions are required to create harmony between the use of information technology and efforts to uphold the ethics and values of Islamic teachings (Sugiono, 2017). The application of technology in Islamic education must not ignore the moral and spiritual aspects that underlie the educational system. Therefore, appropriate strategies are needed to ensure that technology utilization remains in line with upheld Islamic principles.

Islamic higher education institutions are required to adapt to digital developments while maintaining the Islamic principles reflected in their vision and mission (Nasution & Ahmad, 2020). Adapting to digital technology is a crucial step for Islamic higher education institutions to remain relevant in the modern era. However, in this process, Islamic principles must be maintained and implemented to ensure the identity and goals of Islamic education are not compromised.

The development of digital technology has had a significant impact on the education sector, including Islamic education. Innovations in information and communication technology offer various benefits, such as increasing efficiency, expanding access, and improving the quality of education. However, Islamic educational institutions face the challenge of combining technology with efforts to uphold the moral and spiritual values that are the foundation of Islamic education. As an Islamic educational institution, STIT Madina Sragen needs to carefully manage these developments so that technology can become a tool that supports the strengthening of education without compromising the institution's identity and mission, which are based on Islamic teachings.

This requires leadership with a forward-thinking vision and a transformational leadership style. Leaders must be able to utilize technology effectively while simultaneously providing guidance and motivation to educators and students to adapt to changing times. Transformational leadership is crucial for encouraging innovation and addressing the challenges of digitalization, while maintaining the fundamental principles of Islamic education. Therefore, STIT Madina Sragen is expected to serve as an example in managing digital transformation in a balanced manner, focusing not only on technological advancement but also on maintaining and strengthening moral and religious values in education.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research adopts a qualitative approach based on the philosophy of postpositivism. This approach was chosen because it is able to examine the conditions of the object naturally, with the researcher as the main instrument in the research. The main objective of this qualitative research is to understand the phenomena occurring at STIT Madina Sragen, especially related to leadership strategies in facing challenges in the digital era. This is in accordance with the views expressed by Sugiyono (2015:15). The qualitative approach is highly relevant for this research because it allows the researcher to gain a deep understanding of the context and dynamics occurring at STIT Madina Sragen. Through interviews, observations, and document analysis, this approach can explore the real experiences of leaders, lecturers, and students in facing the challenges of digital technology, thus providing more comprehensive and contextual insights.

A qualitative research approach was applied to answer research questions that require narrative-based analysis using data collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The purpose of this study is to gain a deep understanding of the research concept and to explain in detail the approach and type of research applied, while ensuring the validity of the research results (Wahid Murni (2017). In the context of this research, a qualitative approach is very relevant because it is able to provide a deep understanding of the dynamics that occur in the field, especially in facing the challenges of the digital era at STIT Madina Sragen. This method allows researchers to dig deeper

into the perspectives of leaders, lecturers, and students, and understand the strategies applied in managing change, which cannot be explained by a quantitative approach alone.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. Challenges of the Digital Era in Islamic Education

The shift to technology-based learning in higher education opens up vast opportunities to improve the quality of education and prepare graduates for an increasingly competitive workforce. However, challenges such as disparate access to technology, data security risks, and a lack of adequate infrastructure present obstacles. Therefore, higher education institutions need to formulate a robust strategy for integrating technology into the learning process, including training for faculty and students and investment in adequate infrastructure.

Rapid technological advancements have transformed the learning paradigm. To meet the demands of the times, learning processes in various educational institutions need to continually adapt to developments in information and communication technology. (Kompasiana) Therefore, the use of technology in education is not merely a matter of following trends, but a necessity to improve the quality of graduates who are able to compete in the global era.

The existence of technology is currently very important in the learning process in higher education. Lecturers can utilize technology as a learning medium or mediator in delivering lecture material through several applications: Zoom, Google Classroom, Google Meeting, WhatsApp Group, or through the Klassiber program owned by the Madina Sragen Islamic Education College. Information and communication technology (ICT) has become an integral component of the learning process in higher education. The use of platforms such as Zoom, Google Classroom, Google Meet, WhatsApp Group, or the Klassiber program owned by STIT Madina Sragen allows lecturers to deliver lecture material more effectively and interactively.

The uneven distribution of Islamic religious learning resources results in disparities in the level of understanding and mastery of Islamic religious knowledge across various community groups. (Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam, VOL: 12/NO: 03 August 2023). Furthermore, the adoption of technology in education enables a more effective and efficient learning process, as well as opens broader access for students. Therefore, Islamic educational leaders need a clear vision and the ability to manage change to face the challenges of the digital era.

b. Leadership Strategy at STIT Madian Sragen

Digital Competence Development

This strategy is implemented through technology training for lecturers and administrative staff, strengthening responsive leadership capacity, and updating supporting technology tools such as the Klassiber Learning Management System (LMS) at STIT Madina Sragen. Innovations in the Klassiber LMS not only facilitate student access to online learning but also integrate curriculum management and administration digitally, resulting in greater efficiency.

c. Front View of Kalssiber STIT Madina/ https://klasiber.stitmadinasragen.ac.id/accessed January 14, 2025

The Klassiber Learning Management System (LMS) not only facilitates student access to online learning but also enhances interaction between lecturers and students through effective communication features. By providing structured and easily accessible learning materials, Klassiber supports a more efficient and flexible teaching and learning process. Furthermore, the platform allows students to access materials anytime and anywhere, thus supporting independent and continuous learning. Thus, Klassiber plays a crucial role in improving the quality of higher education in the digital era.

The implementation of transformational strategies has had a positive impact on the quality of learning. Students now have broader access to diverse learning resources, such as e-books, learning videos, and online discussion platforms. This enables them to learn independently and

more actively. Furthermore, the use of technology such as simulation applications, virtual reality, and Klassiber has made learning more engaging and interactive.

The transformational approach implemented at STIT Madina Sragen shares similarities with research at similar institutions, such as that conducted by Khan et al. (2021) at Islamic-based universities in South Asia. This research demonstrated that transformational leadership is capable of integrating Islamic values with technological innovation to address modern challenges.

Collaboration between educational institutions, the government, and the private sector plays a crucial role in the development of technological infrastructure and resources in Indonesia. This synergy not only accelerates innovation but also ensures that the technologies developed are relevant and can be effectively implemented in society.

Collaboration between various stakeholders enables a more efficient exchange of knowledge and resources. Educational institutions provide the basis for research and development, while the government establishes supportive regulations and policies, and the private sector offers market perspectives and funding. This synergy creates a conducive ecosystem for innovation and technological development.

While collaboration offers numerous benefits, there are challenges that need to be overcome, such as differences in organizational culture between academia and industry, as well as bureaucracy that can hinder the collaboration process. Therefore, effective communication and shared understanding are crucial to achieving shared goals.

Collaboration between educational institutions, the government, and the private sector is key to developing infrastructure and technological resources in Indonesia. This synergy is expected to create innovations that are not only relevant to industry needs but also improve the welfare of society as a whole.

d. Visionary Leadership:

The leadership at STIT Madina Sragen has implemented a transformational leadership style aimed at creating innovation, motivating staff, and strengthening the institution's vision and mission in responding to the challenges of the digital age. This approach emphasizes changes in work culture that facilitate the use of technology and improve administrative efficiency across all aspects of educational management.

In the book "Islamic Educational Leadership: Between Theory & Practice" written by Baharuddin and Umiarso (2012), it is explained that the application of transformational leadership in Islamic education can improve the quality of education through changes in work culture and adoption of technology.

This transformational leadership approach emphasizes the importance of leaders inspiring and motivating staff to achieve shared goals, as well as encouraging innovation and positive change within educational organizations. Thus, the quality of education can be improved through changes in work culture that are more adaptive and responsive to technological developments.

In this context, leaders at STIT Madina Sragen have adopted a transformational leadership approach aimed at fostering innovation, motivating staff, and strengthening the institution's vision and mission to meet the challenges of the digital era. This approach focuses on transforming the work culture to support technology adoption and drive administrative efficiency across all levels of educational management.

Transformational leadership plays a crucial role in improving the quality of higher education. With its characteristics, transformational leaders can inspire and motivate staff and students to achieve shared goals through positive change. However, its implementation requires commitment and specific skills to overcome the challenges.

Thus, the application of transformational leadership, which emphasizes changes in work culture and the adoption of technology, is key to improving the quality of education in the digital age. This aligns with the findings of Baharuddin and Umiarso (2012), which showed that

transformational leadership can improve the quality of education through changes in work culture and the adoption of technology.

Transformational leadership in higher education focuses on leaders who are able to inspire and motivate staff and students to achieve shared goals through positive change. Transformational leaders are not only oriented towards achieving short-term goals but also committed to continuously improving the quality of education. Transformational leadership is key to STIT Madina Sragen's success in facing future challenges. By continuously developing leadership qualities, this institution will be increasingly able to produce quality graduates and make real contributions to national development.

e. Impact of Strategy Implementation

Improving the Quality of Learning. The integration of technology in education has brought significant changes in the interaction between lecturers and students, as well as facilitated access to learning resources. The use of technology-based learning media, such as e-learning platforms, digital devices, and multimedia resources, creates a more interactive and dynamic learning environment. This not only increases students' active participation in the learning process but also enriches their learning experience.

Technology enables richer interactions between lecturers and students. Before digital technology, interactions between lecturers and students were limited to face-to-face classroom meetings. Now, with online learning platforms and digital communication tools, lecturers and students can interact in real time and asynchronously, through discussion forums, email, and instant messaging applications. This allows for deeper discussions and more effective collaboration outside of class hours.

The integration of technology into learning also facilitates student access to a variety of learning resources. With the internet, students can access academic journals, e-books, learning videos, and other educational materials anytime and anywhere. This allows for more flexible and independent learning, allowing students to learn at their own pace and style.

The use of technology-based learning media has been shown to improve student motivation and learning outcomes. The interactivity and variety of learning methods offered by technology make the learning process more engaging and enjoyable. Furthermore, technology enables personalized learning, where materials can be tailored to individual student needs and preferences, thereby increasing learning effectiveness.

Despite its numerous benefits, integrating technology into learning also faces several challenges. One of these is the gap in access to technology, where not all students have equal access to devices and adequate internet connections. Furthermore, a lack of technological skills among lecturers and students can be a barrier to optimal technology utilization. Therefore, efforts are needed to provide adequate training and technical support for all parties involved.

The integration of technology into learning at STIT Madina Sragen has had a positive impact, increasing interaction between lecturers and students and facilitating access to learning resources. However, to maximize its benefits, it is necessary to address existing challenges and seek appropriate solutions, such as providing equitable technology access and technology skills training for lecturers and students. This will ensure the continued improvement of the quality of learning at the university.

Improving Institutional Reputation. Improving the reputation of higher education institutions, such as STIT Madina Sragen, can be achieved through the adoption of modern technology and learning methods. This integration not only improves the quality of education but also reflects the institution's adaptability to changing times. Here are some strategies that can be implemented:

The use of technology in the learning process enables faster access to information and allows learning to take place anywhere and anytime. Educational technology acts as a catalyst that changes

the learning paradigm, increases accessibility, and encourages innovation in teaching methods. Modern learning methods such as blended learning and e-learning allow for a combination of face-to-face and online learning, creating a more flexible and interactive learning experience. In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, the use of digital technology can make the learning process more engaging, interactive, and adaptive to student needs. Innovation in technology-based learning also contributes to improving the overall quality of education. By adopting technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), educational institutions can improve teaching quality, operational efficiency, and graduate relevance in the future. The adoption of technology in hybrid education presents both challenges and opportunities for higher education institutions. It is important for institutions to understand the factors that influence e-learning performance and optimize the use of technology to enhance learning effectiveness. The implementation of a curriculum that integrates technology, such as the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum, allows for flexibility and adaptation of learning to suit individual needs. This can enhance teacher creativity in the learning process and encourage active student participation.

Collaborating with EduTech platforms can help institutions adopt the latest technologies and improve the quality of learning. This collaboration enables institutions to remain relevant and competitive in the digital age. By implementing these strategies, STIT Madina Sragen can enhance its reputation as an institution that adapts to changing times while also improving the quality of education offered to students.

4. THE KNOT

This research demonstrates that STIT Madina Sragen plays a strategic role in shaping a generation that excels not only in science and technology but also possesses a strong Islamic personality. Visionary and effective leadership is key to facing the challenges of the digital era. Leaders are required to harmoniously integrate digital technology into management and learning processes, without neglecting Islamic spiritual and ethical values. They must also be a source of motivation and inspiration for educators and students to continue developing amidst rapid change.

STIT Madina Sragen has great potential to become a model of Islamic educational leadership in the digital age. By optimizing the use of technology and making Islamic values the foundation of innovation, this institution is able to create a sustainable competitive advantage. The harmony between modern technology and Islamic principles is the main foundation in responding to the challenges of the times. Therefore, STIT Madina Sragen deserves to be an inspiration for other Islamic educational institutions in developing adaptive and valuable leadership.

5. BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BOOKS

Baharuddin & Umiarso. (2012). Kepemimpinan Pendidikan Islam: Antara Teori dan Praktik.

Bass, B. M. (1990). From transactional to transformational leadership: Learning to share the vision. Organizational Dynamics, 18(3), 19-31.

Choudhury, M. A. (2019). Islamic Educational Leadership: Principles and Practices. Cambridge University Press.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (2014). Qualitative Data Analysis: A Methods Sourcebook (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Sugiyono. (2015). Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D. Alfabeta.

Sugiyono. (2017). Metode Penelitian Pendidikan: Pendekatan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif, dan R&D. Alfabeta.

UNESCO. (2021). Digital Transformation in Education: Opportunities and Challenges. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Wahid Murni, W. (2017). Metode Penelitian Kualitatif dalam Pendidikan. PT Remaja Rosdakarya.

Wahid Murni. (2019). Pemaparan Metode Penelitian Kualitatif. Universitas Maulana Malik Ibrahim.

Daftar Pustaka Jurnal Ilmiah

Bilal Khan, et al. (2016). Effects of Project Manager Leadership Style on Employees' Job Satisfaction in Construction Projects in Pakistan KP Region. PM World Journal, Vol. V, No. VII: 1–12.

Herliandry, Luh Devi, dkk. (2022). Pembelajaran Pada Masa Pandemi Covid-19. Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan, 22(1), 68–70.

Jihan, dkk. (2023). Permasalahan dan Tantangan Pendidikan Islam Modern di Tengah Era Digitalisasi. Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam, 12(03), Agustus 2023.

Nafiati, Dewi Amaliah. (2019). Revisi Taksonomi Bloom: Kognitif, Afektif dan Psikomotorik. Humanika: Kajian Ilmiah Mata Kuliah Umum, 21(2), 155.

Putriani, Jesika Dwi, dan Hudaidah. (2021). Penerapan Pendidikan Indonesia di Era Revolusi Industri 4.0. Edukatif: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan, 3(3), 833.

Winata, Koko Adya, dkk. (2021). Kebijakan Pendidikan di Masa Pandemi. Ad-Man-Pend, 4(1), 87–91.