

***Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah*: A Love-Based Leadership Model for Improving the Performance of Islamic Educational Organisations in the Digital Age**

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ABSTRACT. Digital transformation has introduced new challenges for Islamic educational organizations, particularly in balancing organizational effectiveness with the preservation of humanistic and spiritual values. This study aims to construct *Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah* as a love-based leadership model for enhancing the performance of Islamic educational organizations in the digital era. The research employed a qualitative approach using library research and content analysis methods. The data sources consisted of scholarly literature on Islamic leadership, spiritual leadership, servant leadership, compassionate leadership, and digital leadership. Data were analyzed through an interactive model involving data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that *Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah* is built upon three main pillars: *Mahabbah Leadership*, *Rahmah Organizational Culture*, and *Khidmah-Oriented Leadership*. Its implementation in the digital era is supported by three strategic approaches, namely Digital Humanization Strategy, Collaborative Empowerment Strategy, and Digital Spiritual Engagement Strategy. The model contributes to improving work motivation, organizational commitment, employee loyalty, collaborative organizational culture, and the sustainable competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions. This study offers a novel conceptual framework of love-based leadership that integrates Islamic values, humanistic approaches, and digital transformation into a comprehensive leadership model.

Keyword: Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah, love-based leadership, digital transformation

Abstrak. Transformasi digital telah menghadirkan berbagai tantangan baru bagi organisasi pendidikan Islam, terutama dalam menjaga keseimbangan antara peningkatan efektivitas organisasi dan pelestarian nilai-nilai kemanusiaan serta spiritualitas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkonstruksi model *Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah* sebagai model kepemimpinan berbasis kecintaan dalam meningkatkan kinerja organisasi pendidikan Islam di era digital. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian kepustakaan (*library research*) dan analisis isi (*content analysis*). Sumber data penelitian berasal dari berbagai literatur yang membahas kepemimpinan Islam, *spiritual leadership*, *servant leadership*, *compassionate leadership*, dan *digital leadership*. Data dianalisis menggunakan model analisis interaktif yang meliputi kondensasi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah* dibangun melalui tiga pilar, yaitu *Mahabbah Leadership*, *Rahmah Organizational Culture*, dan *Khidmah-Oriented Leadership*. Implementasi model ini pada era digital dilakukan melalui tiga strategi utama, yaitu *Digital Humanization Strategy*, *Collaborative Empowerment Strategy*, dan *Digital Spiritual Engagement Strategy*. Model kepemimpinan ini berimplikasi pada peningkatan motivasi kerja, loyalitas, komitmen

organisasi, budaya kerja kolaboratif, serta penguatan daya saing berkelanjutan lembaga pendidikan Islam. Penelitian ini menawarkan kebaruan berupa konstruksi konseptual kepemimpinan berbasis kecintaan yang mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai Islam, pendekatan humanistik, dan transformasi digital dalam satu kerangka kepemimpinan yang komprehensif.

Kata Kunci: *Al-Qiyādah Al-Mahbūbah, kepemimpinan berbasis kecintaan, transformasi digital*

Introduction

Advances in digital technology have brought about rapid changes in the governance of Islamic educational organisations. Digital transformation requires educational institutions not only to be able to adapt to technological developments, but also to have leadership capable of mobilising all human resources effectively. Ideally, leadership in Islamic education should not only be focused on achieving organisational targets, but should also be founded on spiritual values, humanity and noble moral principles derived from Islamic teachings (Kartika dkk., 2025; Muntaha & Asyhari, 2025). Ideal leadership is leadership that is capable of fostering harmonious relationships between leaders and members of an organisation through setting a good example, compassion, respect for human dignity, and a commitment to achieving the common good (Sunardi dkk., 2026). Consequently, Islamic educational organisations in the digital age require a leadership model that is not only adaptable to technological change, but also capable of fostering emotional and spiritual engagement within the organisation.

However, empirical evidence suggests that various Islamic educational organisations still face complex organisational performance issues. Digitalisation is often focused solely on technical and administrative aspects, whilst the relational and humanistic dimensions of leadership receive insufficient attention (Anshori, 2025; Mujahidin dkk., 2025). Various studies show that low work motivation (Febrian & Jacobus, 2022), a decline in organisational loyalty, resistance to change, internal conflict (Ndruru dkk., 2024) as well as a lack of a collaborative culture, which poses a challenge for many educational institutions (Rumra dkk., 2025). On the other hand, a leadership style that tends to be bureaucratic (Rohayati dkk., 2026). Transactional and control-oriented approaches are often unable to create a working environment conducive to the development of creativity and innovation (Pasalli dkk., 2025). This situation highlights a discrepancy between the concept of Islamic leadership which emphasises the values of *rahmah* and *ukhuwah* and the leadership practices currently in place in many Islamic educational organisations.

This disparity is all the more interesting to examine because, in some Islamic educational organisations, a unique phenomenon has been observed: the emergence of leaders who are beloved by the organisation's members for their ability to prioritise compassion, setting a good example, empathy and service. These leaders are not merely respected because of the formal positions they hold (Hidana dkk., 2026) but also because of their ability to build positive emotional relationships

with teachers, school staff, pupils and the local community (Sunardi dkk., 2025) This phenomenon may be referred to as *Ail-Qiyādah Al-Mahbūbah* (beloved leadership), namely a model of leadership that places love (*mahabbah*) as the foundation for building organisational commitment. In the context of Islamic education, the value of love is not merely interpreted as personal affection, but rather as a manifestation of the values of rahmah, ihsan, ukhuwah, and service oriented towards collective progress. This phenomenon demonstrates that leadership based on love has the potential to be a key factor in enhancing organisational performance amidst the challenges of the digital age.

Previous research studies have generally focused more on transformational leadership and visionary leadership (Fazira dkk., 2026; Sunardi dkk., 2025) spiritual leadership (Sunardi dkk., 2026) *servant leadership* (Sunardi dkk., 2024) and authentic leadership in enhancing the effectiveness of educational organisations. The research findings indicate that these various leadership models have an impact on improving work motivation, job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and the performance of educational institutions. However, studies that specifically construct the concept of love-based leadership from the perspective of Islamic education remain relatively limited. Some studies discuss aspects of compassion, empathy or concern on the part of leaders as supporting variables, but have not yet established these as a complete and comprehensive leadership model. Consequently, there remains a research gap in the form of limited conceptual and empirical studies on how the value of love can be internalised in the leadership practices of Islamic educational organisations and how this influences the improvement of organisational performance in the digital age.

Based on the above, this study offers a novel contribution in the form of the development of the concept of *Al-Qiyādah Al-Mahbūbah* as a love-based leadership model grounded in Islamic values and relevant to the demands of digital transformation. This model not only emphasises the aspect of spirituality, as in spiritual leadership, or the aspect of service, as in servant leadership, but also integrates the values of love, exemplary behaviour, empathy, appreciation and empowerment as the core of the relationship between leaders and members of the organisation. This research is important and urgently needed because Islamic educational organisations require a leadership paradigm capable of maintaining a balance between technological progress and the reinforcement of humanistic values. The research findings are expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of Islamic educational leadership studies, whilst also serving as an alternative model of effective leadership to enhance the performance of Islamic educational organisations in the digital age.

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach in the form of a literature review (*library research*) (Safarudin dkk., 2023) combined with content analysis and conceptual analysis. This approach was chosen to conduct an in-depth examination of the theoretical construct of Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah as a love-based leadership model within the context of Islamic educational organisations in the digital age. The research is oriented towards the development of a conceptual model drawing on classical Islamic leadership traditions, contemporary leadership theory, and various literature discussing the relationship between leadership, organisational culture, organisational performance, and digital transformation. A systematic literature review was conducted over a three-month period using various reputable academic sources, including national and international journal articles, books on Islamic educational leadership, educational policy documents, and Islamic works discussing the concepts of mahabbah (love), rahmah (compassion), ukhuwah (brotherhood), and service in leadership.

The research data sources consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data comprises academic articles discussing value-based leadership, spiritual leadership, servant leadership, authentic leadership, transformational leadership, and Islamic educational leadership, obtained from academic databases such as *Google Scholar*, *Scopus*, *Crossref*, and *Dimensions*. Secondary data, meanwhile, includes classical and contemporary books on Islamic leadership, institutional documents from Islamic educational organisations, previous research findings, and references relevant to the digital transformation of educational organisations. The literature was selected using purposive sampling based on criteria of substantive relevance to the themes of love-based leadership, Islamic educational organisations, and organisational performance improvement. The units of analysis in this study comprise concepts, propositions, theoretical arguments, and empirical findings relating to leadership practices that prioritise the dimensions of compassion, empathy, appreciation, exemplary behaviour, and the empowerment of organisational members.

Data collection was carried out using documentation and systematic literature review techniques (Andriani, 2021). The data collection process comprised three main stages. Firstly, the identification of literature through keyword searches such as “Islamic leadership”, “love-based leadership”, “compassionate leadership”, “spiritual leadership”, “educational leadership”, “organisational performance” and “digital transformation”. Second, the selection and evaluation of sources based on their credibility, relevance, and contribution to the development of the *Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah* model. Third, data extraction was carried out by systematically recording the main concepts, leadership indicators, factors supporting implementation, and their implications for improving the performance of Islamic educational organisations. To enhance the depth of the analysis, the study

also employed a technique of conceptual comparison between theories, thereby yielding a comprehensive theoretical synthesis.

The data collected were analysed using the interactive qualitative analysis model developed by Miles, Huberman and Saldana (Miles dkk., 2014) which includes data condensation, data presentation, and the drawing of conclusions and verification. During the data condensation stage, various concepts and research findings were selected, classified and focused on the key dimensions of love-based leadership. The data presentation stage was carried out by compiling a conceptual categorisation matrix covering the values of mahabbah, rahmah, empathy, exemplary behaviour, service, empowerment and digital adaptation. Subsequently, the conclusion-drawing stage was carried out through theoretical synthesis to construct the *Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah* model and to explain the relationship between these leadership dimensions and the improvement of the performance of Islamic educational organisations in the digital age.

To ensure the validity of the data (*trustworthiness*), this study applied the criteria of credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability (Husnullail et al., 2024). Data credibility is achieved through source triangulation by comparing various literature from the perspectives of both Islamic leadership and modern organisational leadership. Dependability is ensured through a research audit trail that documents the entire process of data retrieval and analysis. Confirmability is achieved by re-examining the results of the conceptual synthesis based on the primary sources used. Transferability is achieved through the presentation of a detailed conceptual description, so that the *Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah* model can serve as a reference for the development of leadership in Islamic educational organisations across various institutional contexts in the digital age

Research Findings and Discussion

Research Findings

The Conceptualisation of *Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah* as a Love-Based Leadership Model in Islamic Educational Organisations

The first finding of this study indicates that *Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah* (leadership based on love) is a leadership model developed through the integration of Islamic leadership values with a contemporary humanistic leadership approach. An analysis of the literature on Islamic leadership reveals that a leader functions not only as a decision-maker, but also as a moral guide, a servant of the community, and a catalyst for social change grounded in the values of rahmah, amanah and ihsan (Al-Ghazali, 2014) Meanwhile, the theory of spiritual leadership asserts that the effectiveness of leadership is greatly influenced by a leader's ability to foster a sense of purpose, hope and emotional attachment amongst the members of the organisation (Fry, 2003) This finding is supported by research on servant leadership, which identifies service, empowerment and human

development as the core of effective leadership (Greenleaf, 2013) Based on a synthesis of these various sources, this study constructs Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah through three main pillars, namely: (1) Mahabbah Leadership, (2) *Rahmah Organisational Culture*, and (3) *Khidmah-Oriented Leadership*. These three pillars form a leadership system that is not only oriented towards achieving organisational targets, but also towards strengthening interpersonal and spiritual relationships within Islamic educational organisations (Beekun & Badawi, 1999).

Pilar pertama adalah *Mahabbah Leadership*. Analisis terhadap konsep mahabbah dalam tradisi Islam menunjukkan bahwa cinta merupakan fondasi hubungan sosial yang mampu melahirkan kepercayaan, penghormatan, dan loyalitas (Al-Ghazali, 2014) In an organisational context, love is manifested in the form of empathy, care, respect for human dignity, and a commitment to developing the potential of the organisation's members. This finding is consistent with the concept of compassionate leadership, which regards empathy and care as key factors in creating a healthy and productive working environment (Barbera, 2014). Consequently, leaders who practise *Mahabbah Leadership* tend to be able to foster a sense of *psychological safety* that encourages creativity, openness and innovation within the organisation.

The second pillar is *Rahmah Organisational Culture*. Based on an analysis of the literature on Islamic leadership and organisational culture, it has been found that the value of rahmah serves as the foundation for building an inclusive, collaborative and equitable working environment (Beekun & Badawi, 1999) Organisations that foster a culture of care and respect for fellow members tend to have lower levels of conflict and greater organisational cohesion. This finding is supported by research on organisational culture, which shows that a positive organisational culture contributes to increased job satisfaction, organisational commitment and institutional effectiveness.

The third pillar is *Khidmah-Oriented Leadership*. The findings of the synthesis indicate that a service-oriented approach is a key characteristic of both Islamic leadership and servant leadership. Leaders are regarded as servants whose role is to facilitate, empower and develop human resources so that they can realise their full potential (Greenleaf, 2013). Through this approach, the relationship between leaders and members of the organisation is no longer purely hierarchical, but has evolved into a productive partnership focused on mutual progress.

Strategies for Implementing *Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah* to Improve the Performance of Islamic Educational Organisations in the Digital Age

The second finding indicates that the effectiveness of *Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah* is significantly influenced by the leader's ability to integrate values of love with the demands of digital transformation. Based on an analysis of various studies on digital leadership and educational leadership, three main implementation strategies were identified, namely the *Digital Humanisation*

Strategy, the *Collaborative Empowerment Strategy*, and the *Digital Spiritual Engagement Strategy* (Sterrett & Richardson, 2019).

The first strategy, the Digital Humanisation Strategy, emphasises the importance of preserving the human dimension in the process of organisational digitalisation. Various studies show that digital transformation focused solely on technology often leads to a decline in the quality of social interaction within organisations. Leaders therefore need to utilise technology as a means of strengthening communication, building emotional connections and increasing the participation of members of the organisation. In the context of Islamic education, this approach ensures that the values of mahabbah and rahmah are upheld even when interactions take place via digital media.

The second strategy is the *Collaborative Empowerment Strategy*. The literature review indicates that participatory leadership has a significant impact on improving organisational commitment and performance. By involving teachers, educational staff, pupils and stakeholders in the decision-making process, the organisation is able to foster a stronger *sense of belonging*. This fosters a collective sense of responsibility in achieving the organisation's objectives (Fry, 2003). In the context of Islamic education, this strategy is implemented by reinforcing the values of amanah, ihsan, honesty and responsibility in the use of digital technology. Thus, digital transformation not only leads to organisational efficiency, but also strengthens the institution's Islamic identity.

The integration of these three strategies results in a leadership implementation model that is adaptable to technological developments without losing sight of its humanistic and spiritual orientation. Leaders act as agents of change who maintain a balance between digital innovation and Islamic values in the management of educational organisations.

The Implications of *Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah* for the Performance of Islamic Educational Organisations

The third finding indicates that the implementation of *Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah* has significant implications for improving the performance of Islamic educational organisations. Based on a synthesis of various studies on leadership, these impacts can be classified into three main dimensions, namely improved individual performance, improved organisational performance, and the strengthening of the sustainable competitiveness of educational institutions (Barney, 1991). At an individual level, love-based leadership contributes to increased work motivation, job satisfaction, loyalty and organisational commitment. Research into spiritual leadership and servant leadership shows that members of an organisation who feel valued, supported and cared for by their leaders tend to have higher levels of work engagement than those who work in authoritarian and transactional environments.

At the organisational level, *Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah* has succeeded in fostering a collaborative, innovative and adaptable work culture. The values of love, empathy and service foster harmonious working relationships, thereby strengthening the organisation's effectiveness in achieving its strategic objectives. These findings are consistent with research on organisational culture, which indicates that a positive working environment has a positive impact on an organisation's productivity and service quality.

Meanwhile, at the institutional level, a leadership model based on love contributes to the development of sustainable competitiveness. Islamic educational organisations that internalise the values of mahabbah, rahmah and khidmah are better equipped to build their reputation, maintain public trust and develop institutional innovation on a sustainable basis (Barney, 1991). Therefore, *Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah* can be regarded as a relevant alternative leadership model for addressing the challenges of transforming Islamic educational organisations in the digital age.

Discussion

Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah as a Love-Based Leadership Model in Islamic Educational Organisations

The Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah model identified in this study functions as a leadership construct that synthesises Islamic leadership values with a contemporary humanistic approach. This conceptualisation, which takes the form of an integrative synthesis, is built upon three main pillars, namely Mahabbah Leadership, Rahmah Organisational Culture, and Khidmah-Oriented Leadership. The integration of these three dimensions demonstrates that the effectiveness of leadership in Islamic educational organisations is determined not only by a leader's managerial abilities but also by their capacity to build positive emotional, spiritual and social relationships with members of the organisation. This finding broadens the discourse on Islamic educational leadership which has hitherto focused predominantly on administrative and transformational aspects by incorporating the dimension of love as the relational foundation of the organisation (Beekun & Badawi, 1999; Fry, 2003).

From the perspective of Islamic leadership, the concept of mahabbah holds a central position as it forms the basis for the development of ukhuwah, trust and social commitment. Al-Ghazali explains that love is a moral energy capable of guiding people towards behaviour oriented towards the common good and self-development. The findings of this study indicate that the value of mahabbah is not only relevant in personal relationships but can also be developed as a paradigm for organisational leadership. Leaders are no longer positioned as centres of power who control subordinates hierarchically, but rather as role models who derive their legitimacy through empathy, appreciation and moral exemplarity. This view is consistent with the theory of spiritual leadership,

which identifies meaning, hope and emotional attachment as key factors in enhancing the commitment of organisational members (Fry, 2003).

At the same time, the concept of *Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah* represents an extension of the theory of servant leadership. Whilst servant leadership emphasises service as the core of leadership (Greenleaf, 2013) Thus, *Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah* places love at the very foundation of such service. Consequently, service is not merely a managerial activity, but a manifestation of the values of compassion and care for the development of the organisation's members. This explains why Islamic educational organisations require leadership that is not only structurally effective, but also capable of fostering a healthy psychological climate that supports the sustainable growth of human resources.

This finding enriches the study of Islamic educational leadership by offering a new perspective: that organisational success is determined not only by strategic vision and the ability to manage resources, but also by a leader's ability to foster relationships based on love, trust and service. In this context, *Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah* can be understood as a leadership model that integrates the dimensions of Islamic spirituality, organisational humanism and institutional effectiveness within a single, comprehensive conceptual framework

Strategies for Implementing Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah in the Face of Digital Transformation

The implementation of *Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah* in the digital age demonstrates that technological transformation need not eliminate the human dimension within Islamic educational organisations. The findings of this study identify three key implementation strategies, namely the *Digital Humanisation Strategy*, the *Collaborative Empowerment Strategy*, and the *Digital Spiritual Engagement Strategy*. These three strategies form an organisational adaptation model that seeks to maintain a balance between the demands of digital innovation and the preservation of Islamic values.

In many studies of digital leadership, digital transformation is often understood as a process of improving efficiency, service speed, and the effectiveness of technology-based decision-making (Maryati, 2025). However, this study demonstrates that the success of digital transformation in Islamic educational organisations is determined not only by technological aspects but also by leaders' ability to maintain the quality of relationships amongst organisational members. The *Digital Humanisation Strategy* is crucial as it prevents the dehumanisation that often arises from the dominance of digital systems in organisational activities. In other words, technology must serve as a tool to strengthen social relationships, not as a substitute for them.

The second strategy, the *Collaborative Empowerment Strategy*, demonstrates that leadership based on compassion is closely linked to a participatory approach. The involvement of teachers,

educational staff, learners and stakeholders in the decision-making process fosters a sense of ownership of the organisation. This finding confirms (Patterson, 2025) view that participatory leadership is capable of enhancing organisational commitment and the effectiveness of programme implementation. In the context of Islamic education, such participation is not merely administrative in nature, but also serves as a means of strengthening ukhuwah and collective responsibility.

Meanwhile, the Digital *Spiritual Engagement Strategy* demonstrates that spiritual values remain highly relevant in the digital age. Various studies reveal that organisations which integrate spiritual values into their work culture tend to exhibit higher levels of integrity and commitment compared to organisations focused solely on material aspects (Fry, 2003). These findings emphasise that the use of technology within Islamic educational organisations must remain grounded in the principles of amanah, ihsan, and moral responsibility, so that digital transformation does not erode the institution's Islamic identity. Consequently, the implementation of *Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah* yields a model of digital leadership that is oriented not only towards technological innovation but also towards strengthening human relationships and the organisation's spirituality. This model offers a conceptual alternative to trends in digital leadership that place excessive emphasis on technical aspects and efficiency alone.

The Implications of Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah for the Performance of Islamic Educational Organisations

The key implication of *Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah* is its ability to sustainably improve the performance of Islamic educational organisations. The research findings indicate that the influence of this leadership model operates simultaneously at three levels: the individual level, the organisational level and the institutional level. This multi-layered pattern of influence demonstrates that leadership based on love not only brings about changes in individual behaviour but is also capable of shaping organisational culture and the institution's overall competitiveness.

At the individual level, the application of the values of mahabbah, rahmah and khidmah contributes to increased work motivation, job satisfaction, loyalty and organisational commitment. This can be explained by social exchange theory, which states that individuals will contribute more when they feel valued and treated fairly by the organisation. Leaders who demonstrate care and appreciation for members of the organisation create a working environment that fosters greater engagement and productivity.

At the organisational level, *Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah* plays a role in building a collaborative, innovative, and adaptable work culture. Arghode explains that organisational culture is a key factor determining institutional effectiveness. In the context of this study, the culture of compassion fostered by leaders creates a working environment that supports cooperation, mutual trust, and

organisational learning (Arghode dkk., 2021). These conditions enable Islamic educational organisations to respond to environmental challenges in a more flexible and productive manner.

At the institutional level, leadership based on love contributes to the development of sustainable competitiveness. The Resource-Based View explains that sustainable competitive advantage stems from resources that are valuable, unique, and difficult to imitate (Barney, 1991). The findings of this study indicate that an organisational culture built on the foundations of love, trust and service constitutes a social resource that is difficult for other institutions to replicate. Consequently, Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah not only enhances organisational performance in the short term but also strengthens the reputation, public trust and innovative capacity of Islamic educational institutions in the long term.

Consequently, Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah can be positioned as an alternative leadership model that offers a synthesis of Islamic values, a humanistic approach, and the demands of digital transformation. This model makes a new theoretical contribution to the development of Islamic educational leadership studies whilst offering a practical framework for enhancing the performance of Islamic educational organisations in the digital age

Conclusion

Research on Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah as a love-based leadership model for enhancing the performance of Islamic educational organisations in the digital age indicates that effective leadership is determined not only by managerial skills and technological proficiency, but also by a leader's ability to build positive emotional, spiritual and social relationships with all members of the organisation. A synthesis of the relevant literature reveals that Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah is an integrative leadership model built upon three main pillars: Mahabbah Leadership (leadership based on love and compassion), Rahmah Organisational Culture (a humanistic and inclusive organisational culture), and Khidmah-Oriented Leadership (service-based leadership). These three pillars form a leadership ecosystem capable of strengthening the emotional bonds of organisational members, fostering a collaborative work culture, and enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of Islamic educational organisations' performance.

The research findings also indicate that the implementation of Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah in the digital age requires strategies that adapt to technological developments without compromising humanistic and spiritual values. The 'Digital Humanisation' strategy, which maintains the quality of interpersonal relationships within a digital environment; 'Collaborative Empowerment', which encourages the participation and empowerment of all stakeholders; and 'Digital Spiritual Engagement', which integrates the values of amanah, ihsan and integrity into the organisation's digital ecosystem, have proven to be vital instruments in maintaining a balance between

technological transformation and the institution's Islamic identity. The integration of these three strategies produces a leadership model capable of addressing the challenges of change whilst strengthening the character of Islamic educational organisations as institutions oriented towards progress and the common good.

This research makes a significant contribution to academic development in the fields of Islamic educational leadership, educational management, and value-based organisational studies. Theoretically, this research enriches the leadership literature by proposing the concept of Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah as an alternative leadership model that integrates Islamic values, a humanistic approach, and the demands of digital transformation within a single, coherent conceptual framework. This model broadens the study of Islamic leadership which has hitherto been dominated by transformational, spiritual and servant leadership perspectives by placing the value of mahabbah as the primary foundation of the relationship between leaders and members of the organisation. In practical terms, the findings of this study can serve as a reference for headteachers, leaders of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), madrasahs, and other Islamic educational institutions in building an organisational culture that is more inclusive, collaborative, and sustainably competitive. Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. Firstly, this study employs a literature review and conceptual analysis approach; consequently, all findings are based on a synthesis of theory and previous research without direct verification through field research. Secondly, the construction of the Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah model remains at a conceptual level, meaning its effectiveness across various contexts within Islamic educational organisations cannot yet be empirically measured. Thirdly, the research data sources are predominantly drawn from literature on Islamic leadership, spiritual leadership, servant leadership, and digital leadership; consequently, there may still be other perspectives that have not been comprehensively accommodated.

Therefore, it is recommended that future research conduct an empirical test of the Al-Qiyādah Al-Maḥbūbah model through case studies, qualitative field research, or quantitative approaches across various types of Islamic educational organisations. Furthermore, follow-up research could also develop a love-based leadership measurement instrument to examine the relationship between the dimensions of mahabbah, rahmah and khidmah and organisational performance, organisational culture, and the sustainable competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions in the digital age.

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