

Developing an Islamic Emotional Spiritual Quotient (ESQ) Digital Module for Enhancing Leadership Competencies in Madrasah

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Abstract:

This study aims to develop a digital training module based on Emotional Spiritual Quotient (ESQ) from an Islamic perspective to improve the leadership competency of madrasah principals and teachers, by specifically positioning teachers as future instructional leaders (emerging leaders). This study contributes to the leadership training literature by integrating Islamic ESQ values and well-being awareness into a stand-alone digital module, an aspect rarely discussed in previous leadership development models. Using the Research and Development (R&D) method, this study involved 30 field trial subjects. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive techniques, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test, and the N-Gain Score. The results showed that experts rated the module as valid (average score of 3.70), while practitioners rated it very practical (96.25%). The effectiveness test showed a significant increase in competency ($p=0.000$), with an N-Gain score of 0.57 (moderately effective). It was concluded that this flipbook-based digital module is feasible and effective in fostering holistic Islamic educational leadership. This study recommends using this module for independent learning to support the practical development of character-based leadership in madrasah.

Keywords: *Digital Module, Educational Leadership, Emotional Spiritual Quotient, R&D*

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengembangkan modul pelatihan digital berbasis Emotional Spiritual Quotient (ESQ) dalam perspektif Islam guna meningkatkan kompetensi kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dan guru madrasah, dengan memposisikan guru secara khusus sebagai aktor kepemimpinan instruksional masa depan (emerging leaders). Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada literatur pelatihan kepemimpinan dengan mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai ESQ Islam dan kesadaran kesejahteraan (well-being) ke dalam modul digital mandiri, yang merupakan aspek yang jarang dibahas dalam model pengembangan kepemimpinan sebelumnya. Menggunakan metode Research and Development (R&D), penelitian ini dilakukan dengan melibatkan 30 subjek uji coba lapangan. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan teknik deskriptif, uji Wilcoxon Signed-Rank, dan N-Gain Score. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ahli menilai modul tersebut valid (skor rata-rata 3,70), sementara praktisi menilai modul tersebut sangat praktis (96,25%). Uji efektivitas menunjukkan adanya peningkatan kompetensi yang signifikan ($p=0,000$) dengan skor N-Gain 0,57 (kategori cukup efektif). Disimpulkan bahwa modul digital berbasis flipbook ini layak dan efektif dalam

membina kepemimpinan pendidikan Islam yang holistik. Studi ini merekomendasikan penggunaan modul ini untuk pembelajaran mandiri guna mendukung pengembangan praktis kepemimpinan berkarakter di madrasah.

Kata Kunci: Emotional Spiritual Quotient, Kepemimpinan Pendidikan, Modul Digital, R&D

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INTRODUCTION

Leadership plays a significant role in shaping human life and global dynamics, steering both personal growth and collective well-being. From an Islamic perspective, humans are entrusted as *khalifah* (representatives of God), tasked with maintaining harmony and goodness on Earth (Ruhullah & Ushama, 2025). In this context, effective leadership must be holistic, integrating intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions. However, in practice, many leadership models focus predominantly on intellectual intelligence (IQ), neglecting the importance of emotional (EQ) and spiritual intelligence (SQ), which are vital for preventing moral and ethical deviations (Baiti, 2022). This research is critical because it addresses the imbalance in leadership development, specifically in educational institutions, where the combination of IQ, EQ, and SQ is often underemphasized, leading to leadership gaps in nurturing moral integrity and effective interpersonal relationships.

Contemporary educational systems emphasise that school principals must possess a wide range of competencies, including emotional maturity, social skills, and spiritual grounding, to lead effectively (Aqil & Sanjani, 2024; Izzah et al., 2024; Suprapto, 2025). However, there is a persistent gap between these policy ideals and actual practices in schools, particularly in madrasahs (Islamic schools). School leadership remains largely focused on administrative functions, with limited attention given to the cultivation of emotional and spiritual aspects. As a result, communication between principals, teachers, and students is often ineffective, leading to a lack of motivation and engagement in the workplace. This disconnection further underscores the need for a structured, balanced, and holistic approach to leadership development within madrasah, the focus of this study.

Preliminary observations at Madrasah YPKP Sentani and SIT Insan Cendekia Doyo Baru reveal significant gaps in leadership practices, where principals and teachers prioritise administrative duties over emotional and spiritual engagement. The tendency to focus on operational and technical aspects of leadership while sidelining emotional and spiritual intelligence has led to a noticeable decline in teacher engagement and morale. Teachers and principals alike reported challenges in communicating effectively with students and colleagues, which undermines the overall educational climate. This imbalance highlights an urgent need for leadership development programs that emphasise not only intellectual capacities but also emotional resilience and spiritual awareness, aligning with Islamic values and promoting a more sustainable, human-centred approach to leadership.

Previous studies have made important contributions to the field of educational leadership. Kafiyanto and Yasin (2024) emphasised that ideal leadership must balance intellectual influence with spiritual and emotional dimensions, recognising the need to integrate spiritual intelligence (SQ) into leadership practices. Similarly, Santoso (2025) demonstrated the significant impact of emotional intelligence (EQ) on leadership effectiveness and teacher loyalty, highlighting the importance of social and emotional skills in fostering a positive school environment. However, much of the existing literature tends to focus on leadership traits in isolation or in the context of face-to-face training. There is a lack of comprehensive studies on integrating ESQ into digital learning formats, which is crucial for accommodating the needs of modern educators and their busy schedules (Arham et al., 2022; Alenezi et al., 2023).

Furthermore, while “well-being” has gained traction as a critical factor in educational leadership, it has rarely been incorporated into Islamic leadership training models. The existing literature, including studies by Amzat et al. (2023) and Munandar et al. (2025), acknowledges the role of well-being in leadership but does not sufficiently address how Islamic values, particularly Emotional Spiritual Quotient (ESQ), can be integrated into training programs for educational leaders. This research seeks to fill this gap by proposing a holistic approach that focuses not only on leadership effectiveness but also on spiritual well-being, which is often neglected in traditional leadership development models. By integrating ESQ principles with Islamic teachings, this study introduces a unique framework that bridges the gap between the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of leadership development.

This research introduces several novel contributions to the field of educational leadership. First, in terms of conceptual novelty, the study synthesises the Zero Mind Process (ESQ) with Islamic theological foundations and a focus on well-being awareness. This conceptual framework provides a more holistic understanding of leadership development, emphasising not just intellectual capacity but also emotional and spiritual maturity. Second, methodologically, the research translates these complex concepts into a flexible, self-directed digital flipbook format, making it more accessible to teachers and principals, particularly those in madrasahs, who may have limited time for face-to-face training. Finally, practical novelty lies in targeting the specific leadership needs of madrasah educators, positioning them as emerging leaders in instructional settings. Unlike previous studies that treat ESQ as a separate topic, this study integrates it into the madrasah pedagogical framework, ensuring that leadership development aligns with everyday teaching practices.

The central research problem of this study is to develop an effective digital training module that enhances the leadership competence of madrasah principals and teachers by integrating Emotional Spiritual Quotient (ESQ) principles within an Islamic framework. Based on preliminary observations and existing gaps in the literature, it is evident that current training resources focus predominantly on the technical and administrative aspects of leadership, neglecting the emotional and spiritual dimensions essential to holistic leadership. This research argues that a digital, self-directed ESQ-based training module will significantly

contribute to the development of instructional leadership in madrasahs, ultimately leading to improved communication, motivation, and overall leadership effectiveness. By incorporating Islamic teachings into leadership development, this research offers a fresh perspective on nurturing well-rounded, ethically grounded leaders capable of addressing evolving challenges in educational settings.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a Research and Development (R&D) approach to produce a specific educational product and test its effectiveness. The development procedure is adapted from Sugiyono's model, which originally encompassed 10 stages (Sugiyono, 2020). However, considering the scope of academic research, this study limited the procedure to nine stages: (1) potential and problem analysis; (2) data collection; (3) product design; (4) design validation; (5) design revision; (6) limited product trial; (7) product revision; (8) field usage trial; and (9) final product revision. The mass-production stage was excluded, as the primary focus is on validating the prototype's feasibility and preliminary effectiveness within the specific context of the target madrasahs.

The research was conducted from July to November 2025 in Jayapura Regency. The subject selection employed a purposive sampling technique, targeting educators currently holding or preparing for leadership roles in Islamic educational settings. The trial was limited to a small group comprising one principal and five teachers at Madrasah YPKP Sentani. Subsequently, the field trial was expanded to a larger group involving two principals and 20 teachers from Madrasah YPKP Sentani and SIT Insan Cendekia Doyo Baru. While the sample size ($n=30$) is limited, it is sufficient for the initial product development phase to establish feasibility and pilot effectiveness. The results are intended to validate the specific module intervention rather than to support broad generalisation across all educational contexts.

The procedure commenced with a preliminary analysis of problems and needs, utilising unstructured interviews and observations. This analysis revealed that school leadership practices were predominantly cognitive-centric, often lacking the necessary emotional and spiritual emphasis. Following information collection and prototyping, the product design underwent rigorous validation by material and media experts to assess content feasibility, language, and design. This iterative process ensured the prototype was refined before entering the empirical trial stages, strictly adhering to the adapted nine-stage R&D roadmap.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive, qualitative and quantitative methods. Expert validation data were assessed by calculating the average score (V_a), where the product was considered valid if the score fell within the range of $3 \leq V_a \leq 4$ (Nazihah et al., 2025). Practicality was evaluated using a percentage formula, with a threshold of $P \geq 60\%$ indicating the module is practical for use (Nst & Ariyanti, 2025). Finally, the module's effectiveness was determined using the N-Gain score formula based on pre-test and post-test results. Furthermore, the statistical significance of the improvement was tested using the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test. This non-parametric test was selected due

to the relatively small sample size and the non-normal distribution of the data. Effectiveness is categorized as high if $g > 0,70$, medium if $0,30 < g \leq 0,70$, and low if $g \leq 0,30$ (Hake, 2002).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The development of the ESQ-based digital training module followed Sugiyono's Research and Development (R&D) model, yielding significant findings at each stage, including validity, practicality, and effectiveness testing. The module's validity was assessed through expert judgment, including evaluations by material and media specialists. The material expert assessment yielded an average score of 3.73 (Valid), with the highest score of 3.93 in the Content aspect, confirming the theoretical soundness of integrating ESQ concepts, such as the Zero Mind Process, with Islamic leadership values. In parallel, the media expert evaluation produced an average score of 3.82 (Valid), with the Multimedia and Technical aspect receiving a perfect score of 4.00. These evaluations collectively yielded an overall validity score of 3.78, placing the module within the "Valid" category ($3 \leq Va \leq 4$).

These results indicate that the ESQ-based digital training module is feasible for implementation, though minor revisions are required. Specifically, improvements such as adding bookmarking features and correcting Hadith citations were recommended to enhance the module's usability and accuracy. Despite these adjustments, the overall validation confirms that the module is suitable for enhancing leadership competence among madrasah principals and teachers.

Table 1. Results of data analysis of material and media validation

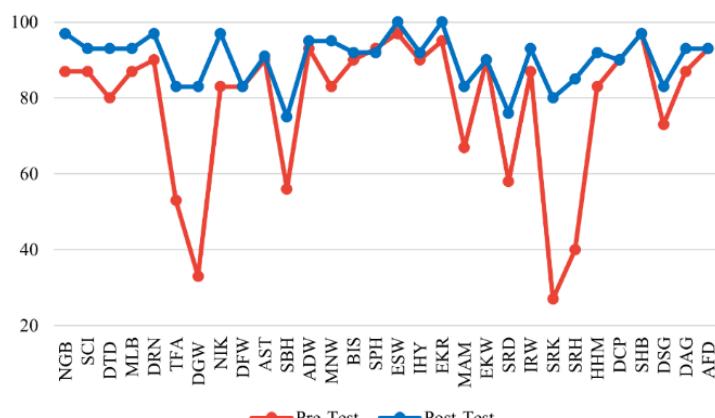
Number.	Aspect	V1	V2	Va	Category
1	Content	3,86	4,00	3,93	Valid
2	Presentation	3,50	3,83	3,67	Valid
3	Language	3,40	3,80	3,60	Valid
4	Display Design	3,43	4,00	3,71	Valid
5	Function and Navigation	3,50	4,00	3,75	Valid
6	Multimedia and Technical	4,00	4,00	4,00	Valid
Va Total				3,78	Valid

Following expert validation and subsequent revisions, a limited trial was conducted with five madrasah teachers to evaluate practicality. The results were highly positive, with an overall practicality score (P) of 97%, categorised as "Very Practical". The breakdown of scores highlighted that the "Usefulness" and "Content Integration" aspects achieved the highest ratings (98%), suggesting that the digital format effectively facilitated self-directed learning. However, minor feedback on the responsiveness of infographics on small screens prompted further design adjustments.

Table 2. Results of module practicality assessment data analysis

No	Aspect	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	f	P (%)	Category
1	Ease of access	15	16	16	16	14	77	96	Very Practical
2	Integration of Material	15	15	16	16	16	78	98	Very Practical
3	User interactivity and engagement	15	15	15	16	16	77	96	Very Practical
4	Expediency	14	16	16	16	16	78	98	Very Practical
P Total		59	62	63	64	62	78	97	Very Practical

The field trial involved 30 participants from Madrasah YPKP Sentani and SIT Insan Cendekia Doyo Baru to measure the effectiveness of the developed module. The data were analysed using the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test, which revealed an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.000 (), statistically confirming that the module significantly influenced the participants' leadership competence. As shown in Figure 1, the trend is overwhelmingly positive: 24 participants improved their post-test scores, while only 1 declined.

**Figure 1. Graph of increase in value from Pre-Test Post-Test**

To further quantify the level of improvement, the N-Gain score was calculated. The analysis yielded an average score (g) of 0.54, placing the module's effectiveness in the "Medium" category. In percentage terms, this translates to 54%, indicating the module is "Moderately Effective" in upgrading leadership competencies. This metric suggests that while the digital module is successful in enhancing theoretical understanding, it functions best as a foundational tool rather than a comprehensive solution for mastery.

Table 3. N-Gain test analysis results

Indicator	Value	Apposition
N Participant	30	-
Average of Pre-Test	77	-
Average of Post-Test	90	-
N-Gain	0,54	Medium Effectiveness
% Gain	54%	Quite Effective

Despite these positive quantitative outcomes, qualitative data derived from reflection journals indicated a gap between cognitive understanding and practical application. Participants reported specific challenges in consistently practising emotional regulation techniques, such as the Zero Mind Process, during real-time stressful situations. This finding suggests that while the module effectively transfers knowledge, permanent behavioural transformation requires sustained habituation beyond the scope of this initial training.

Discussion

The findings of this study elucidate a critical gap between current leadership training models and the ideal competency requirements for madrasah educators. Specifically, the analysis revealed that conventional training is predominantly administrative-centric, often neglecting the emotional and spiritual dimensions essential for holistic leadership. This finding aligns with established leadership theory (Goleman, 2019) and studies by Mishra & Bharti (2024), which argue that emotional intelligence (EQ) and spiritual values are stronger predictors of sustainable leadership success than intellectual intelligence (IQ) alone. The observed dominance of administrative tasks explains the rigid, transactional leadership styles prevalent in the targeted madrasahs, where leaders are conditioned to prioritize bureaucratic compliance over human connection. Furthermore, the absence of flexible, self-instructional features in prior materials contradicts modern andragogical principles. This gap is corroborated by Martinez-Soto et al. (2024), Li et al. (2024) and Sumianti et al. (2025), who emphasize that integrating spiritual leadership with well-being awareness is critical for enhancing teacher job satisfaction and resilience in faith-based schools. Consequently, shifting the training paradigm from a purely technical focus to one that synthesizes ESQ and digital flexibility is not merely an enhancement but a fundamental necessity for cultivating character-driven leaders capable of navigating the complexities of modern Islamic education.

The developed digital training module addresses these deficiencies by uniquely synthesizing technology (Flipbook), psychology (ESQ), and theology (Islamic values). Unlike standard adoption of Ary Ginanjar's ESQ model, this module contextualises concepts such as the Zero Mind Process and Mental Building with specific Qur'anic and Hadith evidence (El-Bassiouny et al, 2023). This approach resonates with Ubaidila & Maunah (2022), who argue that Islamic leadership is a manifestation of Khalifah and Imamah, requiring deep spiritual foundations beyond mere influence. The integration of multimedia features within the Heyzine Flipbook platform further supports modern learning needs, consistent with findings by Ashari (2025b) and Rusli et al. (2025), which advocate for interactive elements to enhance engagement. This confirms (Rahmi et al., 2024)'s assertion that ESQ-nuanced e-modules can significantly boost user enthusiasm and reflective capacity.

The high validity score ($V_a=3.78$) indicates that the synthesis of leadership competence, ESQ, and madrasah education standards is theoretically robust. However, initial expert feedback highlighted the need for improved interactivity, underscoring the importance of the R&D cycle in bridging theoretical validity

with practical functionality. The subsequent practicality score of 96.25% confirms that the revised module meets the “Self-Instructional” and “User-Friendly” criteria essential for effective digital learning tools. This supports the findings of Marisda et al. (2025) and Hadi et al. (2025), who found that interactive flipbooks are highly practical for educational purposes.

Regarding effectiveness, the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test confirmed a statistically significant improvement in participants’ leadership competence ($p < 0.05$). However, the N-Gain score of 0.57 (“Moderately Effective”) suggests that while cognitive understanding improved, translating this understanding into behavioural change remains a challenge. This phenomenon is consistent with recent findings by Karhu & Närhi (2025), who observed that short-term in-service training often transfers theoretical knowledge but frequently fails to result in immediate, sustained behavioural implementation in school settings. Furthermore, this aligns with the “transfer problem” described by Agustian (2016) and Kauffeld et al. (2025), in which applying new skills in the workplace requires ongoing self-regulation and environmental support rather than a single intervention. The qualitative data indicating participants’ struggles with consistent application further validates the notion that character transformation is a continuous, lifelong learning process (Daher-Armache et al., 2025), implying that this digital module should serve as a foundational trigger rather than a standalone solution for permanent behavioural modification.

Several limitations must be acknowledged. The study’s focus on two specific madrasahs limits the generalizability of findings to broader contexts with different organizational climates. Additionally, the reliance on pre-test and post-test scores primarily measures cognitive gains, leaving long-term behavioural impacts unassessed. External factors, such as organizational policy and superior expectations, were not controlled. Future research should therefore incorporate longitudinal observations and extend to diverse educational settings to fully evaluate the sustained impact of ESQ-based digital training.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research and development process, this study successfully produced a valid and practical “Educational Leadership Training Module Based on ESQ from an Islamic Perspective,” which serves as a strategic solution to the dominance of administrative-centric approaches in madrasahs. The most critical finding is that while the digital flipbook format effectively democratizes access to spiritual leadership training, as evidenced by a high practicality score of 96.25%, the “moderately effective” N-Gain score (0.57) indicates that cognitive mastery of ESQ concepts does not automatically translate into behavioural change without sustained habituation. This underscores that digital tools in Islamic education are most effective when positioned as cognitive triggers or foundational resources, rather than standalone replacements for long-term character building.

The scientific contribution of this study lies in its unique synthesis of the Zero Mind Process (ZMP) with digital andragogy, filling a gap in the literature regarding self-directed spiritual training for madrasah leaders. However, the

study acknowledges several limitations. The reliance on pre-test and post-test scores primarily captures short-term cognitive gains, leaving the long-term durability of these behavioural changes unassessed. Additionally, the sample was restricted to two specific madrasahs in Jayapura, limiting the generalizability of the findings to broader educational contexts. Future research should therefore prioritise longitudinal studies to track the persistence of ESQ values over time and explore hybrid models that combine this digital module with peer coaching to bridge the gap between knowing and doing.

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