

Between Managerial Competency and Moral Authority: Contextualizing Educational Leadership in Indonesian Madrasahs

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Abstract:

This study aims to develop a contextual leadership effectiveness framework for State Islamic Senior High Schools (MAN) in Indonesia. The study employed a qualitative multiple-case study approach across three MANs, using semi-structured interviews with madrasah principals and supported by descriptive survey data from teachers and students. The qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis and cross-case synthesis, while the survey data were analyzed descriptively. The results identified five leadership competency domains that, through cross-case synthesis, were integrated into four dimensions of leadership effectiveness: instructional leadership, adaptive managerial competency, relational governance, and religious moral authority. The resulting framework enriches the study of educational leadership by incorporating Islamic institutional values and provides a reference for leadership development and policy formulation in Islamic secondary education. This study provides implications for the development of Islamic educational leadership by providing a conceptual and practical framework that can serve as a basis for strengthening madrasah principal competencies, designing contextual leadership training programs, and improving Islamic educational governance that is oriented towards values, trust, and sustainable educational quality.

Keywords: *Leadership, Competence, Madrasah Principal, Educational Governance*

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan mengembangkan kerangka efektivitas kepemimpinan yang kontekstual bagi Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) di Indonesia. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus multipel kualitatif pada tiga MAN melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan kepala madrasah, yang didukung oleh data survei deskriptif dari guru dan siswa. Data kualitatif dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik dan sintesis lintas kasus, sedangkan data survei dianalisis secara deskriptif. Hasil penelitian mengidentifikasi lima domain kompetensi kepemimpinan yang melalui sintesis lintas kasus terintegrasi menjadi empat dimensi efektivitas kepemimpinan, yaitu kepemimpinan instruksional, kompetensi manajerial adaptif, tata kelola relasional, dan otoritas moral keagamaan. Kerangka yang dihasilkan memperkaya kajian kepemimpinan pendidikan dengan memasukkan nilai-nilai kelembagaan Islam serta memberikan acuan bagi pengembangan kepemimpinan dan perumusan kebijakan pada pendidikan menengah Islam. Penelitian ini memberikan implikasi bagi pengembangan kepemimpinan

pendidikan Islam melalui penyediaan kerangka konseptual dan praktis yang dapat menjadi landasan dalam penguatan kompetensi kepala madrasah, perancangan program pelatihan kepemimpinan yang kontekstual, serta peningkatan tata kelola pendidikan Islam yang berorientasi pada nilai, kepercayaan, dan keberlanjutan mutu pendidikan.

Kata Kunci: *Kepemimpinan, Kompetensi, Kepala Madrasah, Tata Kelola Pendidikan*

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INTRODUCTION

Leadership effectiveness is widely recognized as a critical determinant of school quality and long-term institutional sustainability. Within Islamic educational settings, principals are expected not only to exercise instructional and managerial leadership but also to embed Islamic ethical values into governance, organizational culture, and decision-making processes (Alazmi & Bush, 2024; Iskandar et al., 2026; Shofiyyah et al., 2023). However, existing educational leadership studies still predominantly apply general leadership perspectives and pay limited attention to the contextual characteristics of leadership within Islamic educational institutions. Consequently, there remains a need to develop a context-sensitive leadership effectiveness framework that reflects the organizational realities of Islamic school leadership (Alazmi & Bush, 2024; Mawardi, 2025; Rosidin et al., 2024).

Leadership effectiveness in State Islamic Senior High Schools (Madrasah Aliyah Negeri/MAN) is shaped by a complex organizational context that differs from that of general secondary schools (Alazmi & Bush, 2024; Noer, 2023). Principals are required to balance instructional leadership responsibilities with administrative demands arising from the dual governance structure, which involves both the Ministry of Religious Affairs and broader national education regulations (Alazmi, 2025; Kusumaputri et al., 2023). This governance arrangement often creates overlapping expectations regarding policy implementation, accountability, resource management, and institutional performance. At the same time, principals are expected to demonstrate leadership that reflects Islamic values and moral authority while responding to contemporary educational challenges. These multiple, sometimes competing, responsibilities make leadership effectiveness in MAN a context-specific phenomenon that cannot be adequately explained by conventional educational leadership frameworks alone (Alazmi, 2025; Sholihah et al., 2023).

Leadership effectiveness is widely recognized as a determining factor in improving educational quality, organizational climate, and stakeholder satisfaction within schools (Hallinger et al., 2025; Hallinger & Kovačević, 2022). In the context of State Islamic Senior High Schools (Madrasah Aliyah Negeri/MAN), principals are expected not only to manage instructional and administrative processes but also to integrate Islamic moral authority into institutional governance and educational practices (Alazmi, 2025; Muli et al., 2026; Richardson & Khawaja, 2025). Effective leadership contributes to teacher professionalism, student satisfaction, and institutional credibility (Noer, 2023; Song & Hsieh, 2026). However, previous educational leadership studies have largely emphasized

general managerial and instructional dimensions while paying limited attention to the contextual and religious characteristics of leadership within Islamic educational institutions (Alazmi, 2025; Karim et al., 2023). This limitation highlights the need for a context-sensitive leadership effectiveness framework that reflects the organizational and value-based realities of MAN.

Despite the recognized importance of educational leadership, empirical studies on leadership effectiveness within State Islamic Senior High Schools (Madrasah Aliyah Negeri/MAN) remain limited and fragmented. Previous research has shown that principal leadership significantly influences teacher performance, organizational climate, institutional quality, and stakeholder satisfaction (Özdemir et al., 2024; Sholihah et al., 2023). However, most of the existing literature has examined leadership through specific dimensions such as managerial competence, instructional supervision, transformational leadership, or entrepreneurial leadership. Without adequately explaining how these dimensions interact within the governance structure and value system of Islamic educational institutions (Rahman et al., 2026; Richardson & Khawaja, 2025; Sholihah et al., 2023). In the context of MAN, principals are expected to balance administrative accountability, instructional improvement, stakeholder engagement, and the implementation of Islamic values simultaneously. These contextual demands suggest that leadership effectiveness cannot be fully understood through conventional educational leadership models alone and highlight the need for a context-sensitive framework that captures the multidimensional nature of leadership within Islamic schools.

Previous studies on educational leadership have consistently demonstrated that effective principal leadership improves school effectiveness, teacher performance, organizational climate, and educational quality (Hallinger, 2023; Hallinger et al., 2025; Ninković & Knežević Florić, 2024; Shen & Wu, 2025). Several studies have examined various dimensions, such as managerial competence, instructional supervision, transformational leadership, and entrepreneurial leadership, and demonstrated their positive contributions to school performance (Agustina et al., 2024; Hallinger et al., 2025; I.V., 2021). Other scholars have also examined the contribution of leadership toward teacher motivation, institutional culture, and stakeholder satisfaction within educational organizations (Mawardi, 2025; Noer, 2023; See et al., 2026; Sianipar & Putr, 2025). However, existing studies predominantly examine leadership from general educational perspectives and tend to focus on specific leadership constructs rather than developing an integrative framework (Arar et al., 2022; Hakim & Zahra, 2024; Sawalhi et al., 2024). Limited attention has been paid to the contextual characteristics of leadership in State Islamic Senior High Schools (Madrasah Aliyah Negeri/MAN), particularly the integration of instructional leadership, managerial effectiveness, relational governance, and religious moral authority in Islamic educational institutions. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by developing a context-sensitive leadership effectiveness framework grounded in the organizational and value-based realities of MAN in Lampung Province.

This study aims to develop a context-sensitive leadership effectiveness framework for principals of State Islamic Senior High Schools (MAN) in Lampung

Province. The novelty of this study lies in the development of a four-dimensional framework integrating instructional leadership, adaptive managerial competence, relational governance, and religious moral authority as a distinctive dimension of leadership effectiveness in Islamic educational institutions.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative multiple-case study design to develop a contextual understanding of leadership effectiveness in State Islamic Senior High Schools (Madrasah Aliyah Negeri/MAN) in Lampung Province, Indonesia. The multiple-case study approach was selected because it enables an in-depth investigation of leadership practices within their real-life institutional contexts and facilitates cross-case comparisons to identify shared patterns and unique characteristics of effective leadership.

Three MAN in Lampung Province were purposively selected as research sites to represent diverse institutional contexts and leadership characteristics. The selection criteria included institutional relevance, principals' leadership experience, and accessibility for data collection. The primary participants were school principals, who provided comprehensive insights into leadership practices and competency development.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with principals, focusing on five leadership competency domains: personal competence, managerial competence, entrepreneurial competence, instructional/supervisory competence, and social competence. The interview protocol was developed based on established educational leadership frameworks and adapted to the context of Islamic secondary education.

The interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis, involving data familiarization, coding, theme identification, theme refinement, and interpretation. A cross-case synthesis was subsequently conducted to compare findings across the three cases and generate an integrated framework of leadership effectiveness.

To complement and triangulate the qualitative findings, descriptive quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to teachers and students. Teacher questionnaires assessed perceptions of principals' leadership performance, while student questionnaires examined satisfaction with principals' leadership practices. The questionnaire data were analyzed descriptively using IBM SPSS Statistics version 27 and presented as frequencies and percentages. These findings were used to support and contextualize the qualitative interpretations rather than to test statistical relationships.

The rigor of the study was maintained through data triangulation, member checking, and systematic documentation of the research process. Ethical principles were observed by obtaining informed consent from participants, ensuring confidentiality, and maintaining voluntary participation throughout the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Thematic analysis identified five primary competency domains across cases. Cross-case synthesis further demonstrated that these competencies

converged into four interrelated dimensions that collectively shape leadership effectiveness.

Personal Competence of Principal Leadership Dimension

The findings indicate that principals' personal competence is reflected in several key indicators, including moral integrity, openness in leadership practice, emotional self-control, and leadership interest and aptitude. In developing moral values and ethical traditions within the school community, principals demonstrated leadership through honest, open, and integrity-based behaviour. Leadership practices included religious activities, the habituation of the 5S culture (smile, greet, salute, politeness, and courtesy), and participation in social programs. One principal stated, "A principal must become a role model through consistent behaviour and religious discipline within the school environment" (Principal of MAN 1 Bandar Lampung).

Leadership integrity was reflected in consistency between words and actions, professionalism, firmness in decision-making, and responsible emotional management. Principals emphasized moral responsibility, ethical conduct, and adherence to professional values in carrying out leadership responsibilities. Another informant explained that "professional leadership requires consistency in attitude, communication, and decision making" (Principal of MAN Lampung Timur).

Openness in leadership practices was demonstrated through transparent, accountable, and democratic approaches. Principals reported willingness to receive criticism, suggestions, and input from teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders. As expressed by one principal, "Leadership is not only about authority but also about maintaining trust through transparency and accountability" (Principal of MAN 1 Pringsewu).

The ability to control emotions when facing workplace challenges also emerged as an important leadership attribute. Principals described maintaining calmness, separating personal matters from professional responsibilities, and adopting positive responses when addressing conflicts, budget limitations, and curriculum demands. These challenges were generally perceived as institutional responsibilities that required adaptive and constructive leadership responses.

Leadership interest and aptitude among principals were reflected through complementary emphases expressed by each informant. The principal of MAN 1 Bandar Lampung demonstrated leadership by formulating a clear, structured school vision and mission, indicating a focus on strategic direction. The principals of MAN Lampung Timur emphasized leadership as a process of guiding, motivating, and inspiring teachers and staff, highlighting the importance of human resource development. Meanwhile, the principal of MAN 1 Pringsewu underscored exemplary behaviour and strong personal integrity as the core of leadership aptitude. Overall, these responses show that leadership interest and aptitude were manifested through strategic vision, motivational support, and integrity-based role modelling within the school context.

Cross-case analysis indicated that the five competency domains exhibited substantial conceptual overlap. Emotional control and leadership aptitude

consistently appeared as interconnected aspects of personal leadership capacity and were therefore integrated into the broader dimension of Religious Moral Authority. This thematic consolidation was guided by pattern matching and supported by leadership theories emphasizing self-regulation. Integrity and moral exemplarity were closely related components of effective leadership.

Managerial Competence Dimension

The findings indicate that managerial competence was manifested through three interrelated themes: strategic planning and organizational coordination, human resource development, and stakeholder engagement. Strategic planning was reflected in the preparation of school work plans (RK5), budget plans (RKAS), and performance targets aligned with institutional goals. Principals emphasized the importance of clear role distribution, effective coordination, and optimal resource utilization to support school development and organizational effectiveness.

Human resource development emerged as another important aspect of managerial competence. Principals promoted teacher and staff performance through supervision, professional development activities, and continuous coaching, and performance evaluation. These practices were intended to strengthen professional capacity and maintain organizational accountability.

Stakeholder engagement was reflected in efforts to foster a positive school climate and maintain productive relationships with parents and the wider community. Open communication, collaborative problem-solving, and community involvement were consistently identified as important strategies for sustaining institutional support and improving school performance. Overall, the findings suggest that managerial competence extends beyond administrative functions and serves as a mechanism aligning organizational resources, professional development, and stakeholder participation toward achieving educational goals.

Entrepreneurial Competence Dimension

The findings indicate that entrepreneurial competence was reflected through innovation orientation, opportunity creation, and institutional sustainability. Innovation orientation was demonstrated through efforts to encourage teacher creativity, develop new instructional approaches, and institutionalize innovative practices within school operations. Principals also created opportunities for school development by expanding partnerships, strengthening community collaboration, and utilizing available resources to improve learning facilities and educational programs. Furthermore, entrepreneurial competence contributed to institutional sustainability through initiatives to maintain school competitiveness, strengthen organizational commitment, and ensure continuous improvement in educational quality. These findings suggest that entrepreneurial leadership extends beyond administrative management and serves as a strategic mechanism that fosters innovation, generates development opportunities, and sustains institutional growth.

Entrepreneurial competence was also evident in the principal's approaches to addressing school constraints and managing production or service units as

learning resources. In responding to institutional challenges, the principal of MAN 1 Bandar Lampung emphasized situational awareness and the ability to identify emerging opportunities. The principal of MAN 1 Lampung Timur highlighted innovation and creative thinking as the main strategies for resolving problems. In contrast, the principal of MAN 1 Pringsewu stressed strategic planning and optimal resource management as effective solutions. In managing school production or service activities, the principal of MAN 1 Bandar Lampung concluded that a clear vision and mission were necessary to ensure relevance to student competencies. The principal of Lampung Timur emphasized resilience and a creative mindset to sustain entrepreneurial activities. Meanwhile, the principal of MAN 1 Pringsewu viewed the integration of entrepreneurship into overall school management as essential for supporting experiential learning and institutional sustainability.

Supervisory Competence Dimension

The results demonstrate that principals exercised supervisory competence through deliberate planning and structured execution of academic supervision. In preparing supervision programs, the principal of MAN 1 Bandar Lampung emphasized formulating explicit supervision goals and embedding them within the annual school agenda supported by clear schedules and formal authorization. The principal of MAN Lampung Timur highlighted the selection of appropriate supervision methods and techniques, as well as the preparation of observation instruments to evaluate instructional practices. In contrast, the principal of MAN 1 Pringsewu underscored direct classroom supervision conducted through sequential pre- and post-observation stages to identify teachers' instructional strengths and areas for improvement. In the implementation phase, the principal of MAN 1 Bandar Lampung reported conducting regular quarterly supervision that encompassed planning, execution, and evaluation with defined performance targets. At MAN Lampung Timur, supervision was adapted through flexible approaches tailored to teacher characteristics. Meanwhile, the principal of MAN 1 Pringsewu viewed supervision as a means of stimulating instructional innovation and refining teaching strategies.

These findings indicate that supervision served not only as a monitoring function but also as a strategy to enhance instructional quality and teachers' professional growth. The supervision process encouraged reflective practice, instructional improvement, and continuous organizational learning.

Supervisory competence was also evident in the systematic follow-up of supervision outcomes. The principal of MAN 1 Bandar Lampung emphasized the need to analyze supervision documentation to map teacher competencies and determine priority areas for professional development. The principal of MAN Lampung Timur focused on individual consultations to provide targeted guidance and strengthen professional rapport. Meanwhile, the principal of MAN 1 Pringsewu emphasized collective follow-up through forums such as discussions, workshops, and MGMP or KKG meetings to address shared instructional challenges and formulate joint solutions. Overall, principals perceived follow-up

supervision as a continuous process aimed at enhancing teacher professionalism and improving instructional quality through reflective and collaborative practices.

Social Competence Dimension

The findings indicate that social competence was reflected through interpersonal sensitivity, ethical communication, and responsiveness to the needs of diverse stakeholders. Principals demonstrated the ability to interact respectfully with teachers. Principals interacted with students, parents, and community members while fostering an inclusive and supportive school environment. Social competence was further evident in empathy, fairness in addressing conflicts, and adaptability in responding to different social and cultural contexts. These practices enabled principals to build trust, strengthen social cohesion, and promote harmonious relationships within and beyond the school community.

Social competence was further reflected in principals' social sensitivity toward individuals and groups. The principal of MAN 1 Bandar Lampung emphasized inclusive collaboration with teachers, staff, parents, and external institutions as well as direct involvement in social and cultural activities. The principal of MAN Lampung Timur highlighted impartiality in conflict resolution and the demonstration of empathy and respect toward others. Meanwhile, the principal of MAN 1 Pringsewu emphasized adaptive social interaction, characterized by politeness, flexibility, and adherence to social norms, when engaging with both the school community and the wider society. Overall, these findings suggest that principals perceived social sensitivity as a foundational capacity for fostering harmonious relationships and supporting school effectiveness through responsive and ethical leadership practices.

Principal Leadership Performance Based on Teacher Assessment

The assessment of leadership performance of the three principals was evaluated by teachers is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution of Leadership Performance of State Islamic Senior High School Principals in Lampung Province

Leadership Performance	MAN 1 Lampung	MAN Insan Cendekia Lampung Timur	MAN 1 Pringsewu	Total n (%)
Poor	9 (60.0%)	4 (26.7%)	5 (33.3%)	18 (40.0%)
Good	6 (40.0%)	11 (73.3%)	10 (66.7%)	27 (60.0%)
Total Participants	15	15	15	45 (100.0%)

The assessment of the three principals' leadership performance, as evaluated by teachers, is presented in Table 1. Overall, most teachers perceived the leadership performance of state Islamic senior high school principals in Lampung Province as moderately good, with 27 respondents (60.0%) reporting this. At MAN 1 Bandar Lampung, leadership performance was predominantly rated as poor by 9 respondents (60.0%). In contrast, the principal of MAN Insani Cendekia Lampung Timur received a positive evaluation, with 11 respondents (73.3%) rating the leadership performance as good. Similarly, at MAN 1 Pringsewu, most teachers assessed the principal's leadership performance as good, with 10 respondents (66.7%) reporting so.

Student Satisfaction with Principals' Leadership Performance

Student satisfaction with the leadership performance of state Islamic senior high school principals is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Students' Satisfaction with Principals' Leadership Performance in State Islamic Senior High Schools

Students' Satisfaction Level	MAN 1 Lampung	MAN Insan Cendekia Lampung Timur	MAN 1 Pringsewu	Total n (%)
Not Satisfied	9 (20.0%)	8 (17.7%)	10 (22.2%)	27 (20.0%)
Satisfied	24 (53.3%)	27 (60.0%)	21 (46.7%)	72 (53.3%)
Very Satisfied	12 (26.7%)	10 (22.3%)	14 (31.1%)	36 (26.7%)
Total Participants	45	45	45	135 (100.0%)

Overall, the majority of students in state Islamic senior high schools in Lampung Province reported being satisfied with the principals' leadership performance, with 72 respondents (53.3%). At MAN 1 Bandar Lampung, most students expressed satisfaction, accounting for 24 respondents (53.39%). Similarly, student satisfaction at MAN Insani Cendekia Lampung Timur was relatively high, with 27 respondents (60.0%) reporting satisfaction. In contrast, although satisfaction remained the dominant response at MAN 1 Pringsewu, the proportion was lower: 21 respondents (46.7%) indicated satisfaction with the principal's leadership performance.

Overall cross-case comparison indicates that variations in institutional performance correspond to differences in the intensity and integration of leadership competencies. Schools demonstrating stronger instructional supervision, adaptive management, and relational governance tended to show higher levels of teacher performance and student satisfaction.

Discussion

This study extends existing educational leadership frameworks by integrating institutional religiosity as a structural dimension of leadership effectiveness within Islamic educational governance. Personality

competence emerged as a fundamental dimension shaping effective principal leadership through integrity, ethical behaviour, emotional control, continuous self-development, and a strong commitment to student welfare. These attributes contributed to a positive school culture and enabled principals to respond effectively to institutional challenges

Beyond supporting prior studies, the findings suggest that personality competence in Islamic educational settings encompasses more than individual character and professional conduct. It functions as a source of religious and moral authority that strengthens stakeholder trust. Organizational commitment and leadership legitimacy. This perspective broadens conventional leadership frameworks by positioning value-based leadership as an integral dimension of leadership effectiveness in madrasahs.

Managerial competence was found to be essential in translating leadership vision into organizational effectiveness. The findings indicate that principals who demonstrated strengths in strategic planning, organizational coordination, resource management, and change management were better positioned to align

institutional goals with school operations. Effective managerial practices facilitated organizational coherence, supported teacher performance, and strengthened institutional effectiveness. These findings are consistent with recent evidence indicating that managerial leadership improves organizational capacity (Juhji et al., 2022; Leithwood et al., 2020; Ninković & Knežević Florić, 2024).

A distinctive finding of this study is the role of religious moral authority as a contextual dimension of leadership effectiveness within State Islamic Senior High Schools (Madrasah Aliyah Negeri/MAN). The findings suggest that leadership legitimacy was not derived solely from formal authority or managerial competence but was also shaped by principals' ability to demonstrate Islamic values through integrity, fairness, accountability, and exemplary conduct. Such value-based leadership strengthened stakeholder trust, facilitated organizational governance, and fostered school culture grounded in shared moral commitments. Unlike conventional leadership models that primarily emphasize managerial and instructional functions, the present study highlights religiosity as an important source of institutional legitimacy that influences decision-making, interpersonal relationships, and collective commitment to educational goals. This finding extends the existing leadership literature by demonstrating that religious moral authority is a critical contextual factor shaping leadership effectiveness within Islamic educational institutions.

Entrepreneurial competence plays a strategic role in strengthening school resilience and organizational development. The findings indicate that principals with strong entrepreneurial competence demonstrate innovation, opportunity recognition, proactive problem-solving. Moreover, effective resource mobilization enables schools to respond constructively to institutional challenges. Such entrepreneurial leadership also encourages organizational adaptability and supports the effective utilization of school resources for continuous improvement. These findings are consistent with (Balasi et al. 2023), who argue that entrepreneurial leadership enhances school innovativeness and adaptability. Moreover, organizational performance aligns with Demirbilek (2024), who found that entrepreneurial competencies contribute to sustainable management behaviours and long-term school development.

Supervisory competence was confirmed as a key mechanism for improving instructional quality and teacher professionalism. The findings show that structured supervision through systematic planning includes classroom observation, individual guidance, and group workshops. Group workshops and follow-up evaluations contribute to the improvement of reflective teaching. The use of directive and collaborative approaches based on teacher needs strengthens professional growth. These results support Arifin (2017), who emphasizes that effective supervision benefits teachers through guidance and motivation, students through improved learning experiences, and schools through enhanced educational quality.

Social competence was identified as a critical factor in building trust and collaboration among school stakeholders. The findings indicate that effective communication, empowerment of school members, professional networking, social participation, and exemplary conduct enable principals to foster

harmonious relationships within the school and the wider community. This competence strengthens public trust and supports collective commitment to school improvement. These findings are consistent with Ninković & Knežević Florić (2024), who identified instructional supervision and professional learning as important pathways through which school leadership enhances teaching quality.

Principal leadership performance reflects the integration of personality, managerial, entrepreneurial, supervisory, and social competencies. The findings confirm that effective principals demonstrate instructional leadership, administrative management, teacher supervision, clear communication, motivation, and empowerment. Such leadership supports organizational learning, creates a collaborative work environment and enhances teacher performance. This aligns with Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (2007), which defines effective leadership through change management, supervision, role modeling, and program evaluation. The study confirms that principals function not only as managers but also as leaders who guide, motivate, and enable teachers to support high-quality student learning.

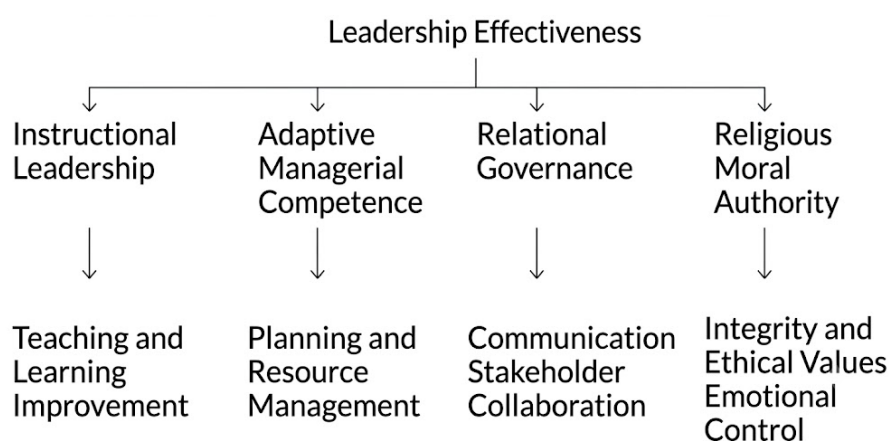


Figure 1. Context-Sensitive Leadership Effectiveness Framework

Student engagement with principal leadership was found to be closely associated with leadership style and performance. The findings indicate that principals who demonstrate democratic and transformational leadership create positive learning environments, strengthen teacher motivation, and improve educational quality. Effective principals act as motivators, communicators, and innovators, which enhances student learning experiences and satisfaction. Conversely, less supportive leadership reduces student satisfaction. These findings are consistent with those of Sun et al. (2024) and Tan et al. (2024).

The findings demonstrate that leadership effectiveness extends beyond managerial and instructional functions and operates as a multidimensional process that shapes teacher performance, motivation, and organizational culture. Effective principals function not only as administrators but also as agents of change who facilitate professional development, collaboration, and continuous school improvement. The positive influence of leadership on teacher professionalism and institutional climate suggests that leadership is crucial to strengthening organizational commitment and educational quality, even amid challenges such as limited infrastructure and diverse teacher backgrounds.

A distinctive finding of this study is the role of religious moral authority as a contextual dimension of leadership effectiveness within State Islamic Senior High Schools (Madrasah Aliyah Negeri/MAN). The findings indicate that leadership legitimacy is derived not only from formal authority and managerial competence but also from the principal's ability to embody religious values that foster trust, ethical governance, and collective commitment among school stakeholders. This finding distinguishes leadership practices in Islamic educational institutions from conventional leadership models. It suggests that sustainable school improvement requires a facilitative leadership approach that integrates collaboration, empowerment, shared responsibility, and value-based governance.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that leadership effectiveness in State Islamic Senior High Schools (Madrasah Aliyah Negeri/MAN) is shaped by the integration of four interrelated dimensions, namely instructional leadership, adaptive managerial competence, relational governance, and religious moral authority. The findings suggest that effective principals can combine managerial capability, professional supervision, stakeholder engagement, and value-based leadership to strengthen teacher performance, organizational commitment, and school quality. A key contribution of this study is the development of a context-sensitive leadership effectiveness framework that highlights religious moral authority as a distinctive source of leadership legitimacy, trust, and governance within Islamic educational institutions.

However, the findings should be interpreted in light of several limitations, including the focus on selected MAN in Lampung Province, the reliance on a limited number of informants, and the context-specific nature of qualitative inquiry, which may restrict broader generalization and introduce interpretive bias. Therefore, future studies are encouraged to examine the applicability of the proposed framework across diverse educational settings and regions, and to explore the interactions among religious values, organizational culture, and leadership effectiveness using broader comparative or mixed-methods approaches.

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