

# Prophetic Leadership in Creating Superior Educational Institutions in Private Islamic Universities

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## Abstract:

This research focuses on the prophetic leadership style practised in two higher education institutions, namely Nurul Jadid University Probolinggo and Muhammadiyah University Malang. This prophetic leadership style is a leadership style that can develop, encourage and create superior (Islamic) educational institutional units that have other prestigious educational qualities. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study type of research to understand the leadership phenomenon in these two sites. Data were collected through interviews, participant observation, and documentaries. Next, the data was analyzed using Miles, Huberman and Saldana interactive analysis. This research concludes that the leaders of the FAI UNUJA and FAI UMM institutions have a prophetic leadership style, which is demonstrated through their roles as quality control, political power, and political will (goodwill). From this leadership style, prophetic nuances emerge in institutional governance, which refers to 4 (four) pillars: theological-monotheistic, empirical-demonstrative, rational-philosophical, and theoretical stakes. The four pillars of prophetic management in the two research sites ultimately gave birth to a prophetic leadership style, which is essentially based on the three epistemological frameworks of Burhani, Bayani, and Irfani.

**Keywords:** *Prophetic Leadership, Superior Education, Higher Education*

## Abstrak:

Riset ini memfokuskan pada gaya kepemimpinan profetik yang dipraktekkan di dua lembaga perguruan tinggi, yaitu Universitas Nurul Jadid Probolinggo dan Universitas Muhammadiyah Malang. Gaya kepemimpinan profetik ini merupakan gaya kepemimpinan yang mampu mengembangkan, mendorong, serta mewujudkan unit kelembagaan pendidikan (Islam) yang unggul dan memiliki mutu pendidikan prestatif lainnya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian studi kasus dengan tujuan memahami fenomena kepemimpinan di dua situs tersebut. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara, observasi partisipan, dan documenter. Selanjutnya, data dianalisis menggunakan analisis interaktif Miles, Huberman dan Saldana. Riset ini menyimpulkan bahwa pimpinan lembaga FAI UNUJA dan FAI UMM memiliki gaya kepemimpinan profetik yang ditunjukkan melalui

perannya sebagai quality control, political power, dan political will (good will). Dari gaya kepemimpinan itulah maka muncul nuansa profetik dalam tata kelola institusi yang merujuk pada 4 (empat) pancangan, yakni pancangan teologis-monoteistik; empiris-demonstratif; rasional-filosofis; serta pancangan teoretis. Keempat pancangan manajemen profetik di dua situs riset pada akhirnya melahirkan gaya kepemimpinan profetik yang pada hakikatnya tersimpul pada tiga kerangka epistemologik burhani, bayani, dan irfani.

**Kata Kunci:** *Prophetic Leadership, Pendidikan Unggul, Perguruan Tinggi*

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## INTRODUCTION

Education is the front guard determining the progress of a nation's civilization. Therefore, achieving quality education is a necessity. One way to accomplish this goal is by creating a prophetic leadership pattern. Prophetic leadership has now become part of the future leadership model, so it is often used as a discourse in various research themes. As Syam's (2017) research shows in the field of politics, Muhammad (2015) relates it to the theme of quality of decision-making, Ahmad (2018) correlates it with corporate governance, Widyatmoko et al. (2020) discuss opportunities for character development, Sidiq & 'Uyun (2019) links it to religious culture, or to building organizational commitment, such as research by Febrianto (2019).

This suggests prophetic leadership has practical advantages that influence realizing the organization's visionary goals or hopes. Likewise, in educational institutions, prophetic leadership is claimed to have significant effectiveness in developing the institution itself, as per research (Umirso (2018), or also in increasing and growing human resource commitment to educational institutions, as concluded by Rahayuningsih's research (2016), as well as research from Dewi (2019). Therefore, prophetic leadership is actualized in educational institutions to encourage improvements in academic quality to create achievement advantages.

It is usual for educational institutions such as Islamic Religious Universities, namely the Faculty of Islamic Religion (FAI), Muhammadiyah University of Malang (UMM) and Nurul Jadid University (UNUJA), to apply a prophetic leadership style. One of the indicators is that he develops the potential of the unit's academics using the method of delegation of authority and dialectical discussions once a week. In Salleh's research, this indicator is an indicator of the Islamic leadership model (Salleh, 2018). On the other hand, the three university leaders also encouraged all community members to develop their potential and spirituality. This reality is what Geise signals: that prophetic leadership behaviour will never be separated from spiritual values (Geise, 2002).

Applying this leadership can lead to progressive academic activities and a conducive learning climate. Research by Maulana et al. (2019) shows that this leadership can transform educational institutions. Therefore, it is natural that this leadership style influences and develops human resources to work not solely based on material aspects. They can develop an attitude of discipline, sincerity and commitment to the institution, as with human resources at FAI-UMM and FAI-UNUJA. This is also stated in one research: this leadership style has a strong

influence on strengthening human resource performance (Rifauddin, 2017). Historical reality also records that prophetic leaders had brilliant achievements when they became leaders in society, such as Umar bin Khattab or Umar bin Abdul Aziz.

Therefore, if you look at the prophetic leadership style, it encourages all components of educational institutions to be concerned about educational dynamics. At FAI-UMM and FAI-UNUJA, leaders give high levels of trust and authority to their subordinates to be creative by their authority. This means the unit head allows subordinates to develop and grow in responsibility. He is frank in guiding (altruistic) his subordinates and can control himself to manage existing resources. It is done sincerely, even in influencing others to realize goals collectively. He is committed to freeing human resources in the unit from being shackled by pessimism, backwardness and unwillingness to progress.

On the other hand, he also shows deep concern for other people - read FAI-UMM and FAI-UNUJA subordinates. This encourages him to position himself as a "servant" who is sincere and willing to provide services; therefore, Chong & Bell stated that one of the principles of service leadership (Chung & Bell, 2015). His attitude of bringing educational institutions towards institutions with religious nuances is firmly integrated into his commitment. Therefore, the religious climate does not subside and continues to be developed in every educational program at FAI-UMM and FAI-UNUJA.

They carry out - read lead - in the unit sincerely, sincerely, and with high discipline. This is one of the characteristics of a prophetic leadership style, which always leads, guides and influences others based on and arises from the heart or purity of the soul (Geise, 2002). Naturally, this style is different from other leadership styles, especially when compared to charismatic leadership, because this style is not only transactional but also transformational (Oakes, 1997). For this reason, in one study, it was said that this prophetic leadership style has internal maturity, namely in the emotional and spiritual aspects (Kessi et al., 2022; Karsono et al., 2022). Moreover, some conclude that a comprehensive leadership style - having integrity, humility, justice and piety - is a solution for managing Islamic educational institutions (Salleh, 2018). This framework is designed in the educational institutional leadership style at FAI-UMM and FAI-UNUJA so that the unit can move towards a superior and prestigious educational institution or unit. Within this framework, there needs to be a critical study in the form of research to see and understand in detail and comprehensively the prophetic leadership style at FAI-UMM and FAI-UNUJA.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This research seeks to understand the phenomenon of prophetic leadership style in developing and realizing educational units through providing interpretation and meaning seen from a conceptual perspective. Therefore, this research can provide an in-depth explanation (interpretive understanding (verstehen)) regarding the urgency of prophetic leadership in realizing superior educational units such as FAI-UMM and FAI-UNUJA. On the other hand, this research also understands the meaning behind leadership behaviour in the

educational unit, especially the ideality, which is their view of life and the motives for their behaviour, which are expressed factually. However, researchers start with following "what is" to reveal the "true" meaning of what is being investigated while still emphasizing the subjective aspects of their behaviour.

Data collection was carried out in a comprehensive, integrative manner relevant to the focus and objectives of the research, so three techniques commonly used in qualitative research were used: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation studies. The data extracted by researchers were examined from internal and external aspects. The "internal" aspect emphasizes whether the available data is accurate or not and is related to the significance of the research focus and objectives, as well as the "external" aspect includes the authenticity of the data obtained by the researcher. In detail, data collection techniques in this research were carried out in several ways, including In-depth interviews, Observation and Documentation.

After the data collection process, the next step is to analyze the data. Researchers used qualitative descriptive analysis techniques in this research. Researchers describe the actual reality according to existing phenomena, entirely and in detail. Meanwhile, in the process, data analysis in this research uses interactive analysis techniques. The author uses this technique based on the interactive analysis model developed by Miles, Huberman and Saldana. After going through the data collection process, three subsequent data analysis components were carried out using this model: data condensation, data display, and concluding.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **Prophetic Leadership Style in Creating Superior Educational Institutions**

The findings that researchers obtained regarding leadership styles at FAI-UMM and FAI-UNUJA were the presence of leaders who carried out educational institutional transformations. The substance of the leadership style at FAI-UMM and FAI-UNUJA is to implement system transformation towards modern higher education institutional management.

It is usual for this condition to occur at FAI UNUJA considering the dynamics of the academic climate at UNUJA, which is currently improving from the previous three universities (Nurul Jadid Islamic Institute (IAINJ), Nurul Jadid College of Technology (STTNJ) and Nurul Jadid College of Health Sciences (STIKESNJ)) then merged into one university called UNUJA. Apart from that, it is essential to recognize that the role of leaders in educational institutions is very central, one of which is in influencing increased achievement and institutional stability, as revealed in research (Yeigh et al., 2019).

The results of the researcher's interview with the leadership of FAI UNUJA show that the leadership style applied at this institution seeks to influence other people - read the academic community - so that they can collectively achieve goals with sincerity. Leaders themselves have high levels of self-consistency in internalizing leadership traits in their employees. In this context, he admits that leading is the art of empowering others to metamorphose from a "dependent self" to an independent self, from a shackled person to a free self. He accompanies his employees to carry out self-transformation to represent *al-asma al-*

*husna*, namely *al-muhaimin* (the Most Sustainer). This was realized because the unit leader wanted to "ground" divine qualities in the organizational foundations of the FAI UNUJA institutional unit. The following is an excerpt from the researcher's interview with the leadership of FAI UNUJA:

"We are fully aware that our institution is in a take-off position based on superior governance as per the vision of Nurul Jadid University. Therefore, we must uphold the principle of independence as one of our normative guidelines in developing FAI UNUJA. One of the ways we do this is by providing role models to structural leaders at the study program level so as not to get bored of being creative independently."

Leadership at FAI-UMM is a linear leadership used by university leaders, which has been seen since the 2000s, which educational regulations designed by the government have influenced. Through this linear leadership pattern, researchers found a method of delegating authority from the leadership of the FAI UMM dean to the Heads of Study Programs (Kaprodi) and Heads of Laboratories (Ka. Lab) within the FAI UMM environment. In other words, the leadership of FAI UMM gives high levels of trust and authority to their subordinates to be creative by their authority.

This trust is used seriously by subordinates - read leaders at the Study Program and Laboratory level - to develop their respective Study Programs and Laboratories. Documentation data obtained by researchers shows a digital creation initiated by the FAI UMM Tarbiyah Laboratory, namely an integrated online action learning system (on the network) that combines features to support the teaching, practicum and student reporting processes during the national and international internship process. This system can be accessed via the [Klikmengajar.com](http://Klikmengajar.com) page using verified student data.

Apart from that, researchers also found an academic activity in the form of a dialectical discussion once a month, which all teaching staff and FAI UMM education staff must participate in. In the researcher's observations, this activity is commonly known by FAI UMM residents as "Saturday Morning Scientific Halaqah (HISP)."



**Figure 1. HISP FAI UMM Activities**



Interestingly, HISP activities not only present academic topics but are also designed as a medium for exploring the spirituality of the speakers at these activities. The results of observations that researchers have made show that there is a proportional distribution of discussion topics at each meeting

**Table 1. Schedule of Activities "Saturday Morning Scientific Halaqah" FAI UMM**

No	HISP Topics	Implementation Schedule
1.	Muhammadiyah as a Value: Placing Muhammadiyah in everyday life	April 2022
2.	Muhammadiyah as an Academic Study	(Week three)
3.	Muhammadiyah that I Know (I)	May 2022
4.	Educational Examples and Muhammadiyah Figures	(Week three)
5.	Muhammadiyah that I Know (II)	June 2022
6.	Muhammadiyah Experiencing and Overcoming the Khilafiyah	(Week three)
7.	Muhammadiyah Women's Movement	July 2022
8.	Muhammadiyah Economic Movement	(Week three)
9.	Religious Literacy Traditions in Muhammadiyah	August 2022

Based on these findings, researchers indicated that the leadership style at FAI UMM is a leadership pattern that develops the potential and spirituality of the academic community in the FAI UMM environment. The UMM FAI leadership plays himself as a bi-dimensional role model. This means a leader who dedicates his body and soul to the realization of the success of the institution, both in the worldly and hereafter dimensions. All the policies he decides regarding the management of institutions always move the worldly side into the afterlife. With this pattern, the researcher indicates that the leadership style at FAI UMM is a leadership style that integrates sacred and profane domains in one unit.

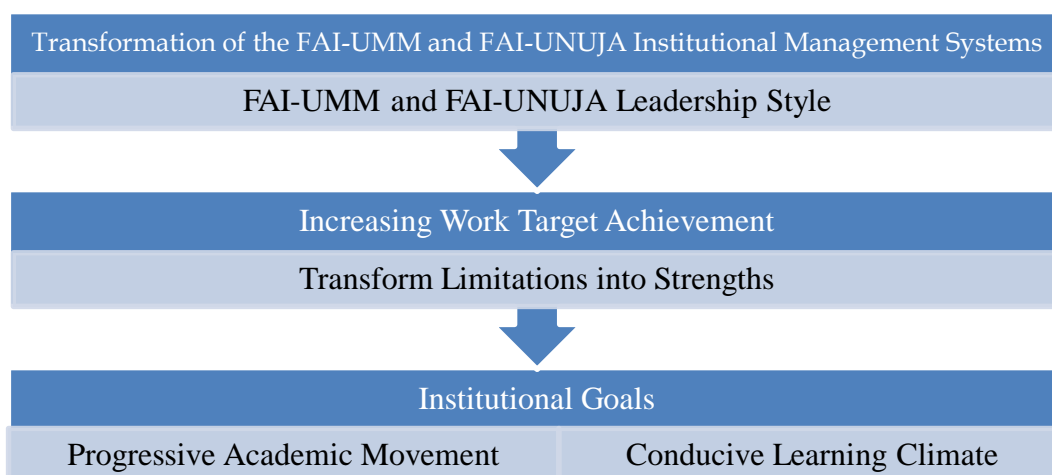
The data researchers obtained from the FAI UMM website shows symptoms of a "herding" leadership style. This means that leaders who encourage themselves to position themselves as "servants" are sincere and willing to provide leadership services for their employees.

The transformation of the institutional management system at FAI-UMM and FAI-UNUJA is expected to meet a crucial turning point in various dimensions. One thing that researchers discovered during the research process at FAI-UMM and FAI-UNUJA was that there was established performance accountability. This leadership style is certainly not only transactional but also transformational.

The researchers indicated that these findings were based on observations which showed that the leadership of the FAI-UMM and FAI-UNUJA institutions could increase the achievement of work targets through team dynamics, as well as the capability to transform limitations into strengths. The optimism and enthusiasm showed by the leadership of FAI-UMM and FAI-UNUJA through their communication behaviour.

Internal and external communication implemented by the leadership of FAI-UMM and FAI-UNUJA is one of the factors supporting the realization of organizational growth. It indirectly impacts other people effectively through concrete actions, giving rise to progressive academic activity, becoming a role model in work spirit, and a conducive learning climate. When visualized, the

transformative leadership style at the FAI-UMM and FAI-UNUJA institutions can be seen in the following picture:



**Figure 2. Transformative Leadership Style at FAI-UMM and FAI-UNUJA**

Uniquely, the leadership style at FAI-UMM and FAI-UNUJA is more than just a pattern of achieving Institutional goals based on the transformation of the institutional management system alone. However, there is a side of sincere guidance carried out by the leaders of FAI-UMM and FAI-UNUJA to their subordinates so that they can control themselves. To manage existing resources. This leadership pattern is not only transformative in value. However, it contains a prophetic element: leadership that affirms behaviour based on high morality by the prophetic mission, or it can be said to be a leadership pattern based on spiritual values that contributes to organizational dynamics, as research concludes (Vu & Gill, 2019).

Next, observations made by researchers at FAI-UMM and FAI-UNUJA describe a leadership style that builds a disciplined, sincere and committed attitude towards the institution. This is reinforced by the interviews that researchers conducted with the leaders of FAI-UMM and FAI-UNUJA. The following is an excerpt from the interview.

"FAI UNUJA is classified as a higher education institution that is growing from its original "seeds". It is in this phase that we consider it very important to instil solid core values and core beliefs of the organization. "It is important because these two things will be our ontological basis in building and developing FAI UNUJA so that we as leaders always build an attitude of discipline, sincerity and commitment to the institution, for us personally and at the same time for the academic community at FAI UNUJA."

Therefore, improving the quality of human resources at FAI UNUJA is one of the targets that must be achieved. The leadership style displayed at the FAI UNUJA institution is a leadership pattern to achieve worldly and spiritual goals based on divine awareness (transcendence), which is an integrated part of the leadership style. This axis shapes the behaviour of "as-Siddiq" leaders through alignment between ideal ideals and actions based on ethical truth and monotheistic beliefs. The leadership of FAI UNUJA wants to bring the institutional

unit they lead towards the ideal organization (*baldatun thayyibah*) with a breakthrough program that leads to three transformative dimensions, namely: psychological, sociological and theological transformative.

The psychological transformative dimension is manifested in self-reformation, which is focused on increasing skill competency and developing scientific insight and emotional maturity. Various educational activities such as outbound workshops, seminars and regular weekly discussions are often scheduled to support the psychological maturity of employees within the UMM FAI environment. The conditions at FAI UMM align with the results of Groves' research, which found that organizational transformation can be carried out by developing the emotional side of subordinates in an organization (Groves, 2020).

The following finding is that the sociological transformation dimension in FAI-UMM and FAI-UNUJA has become a direction for innovation through organizational reform efforts. In this context, leaders focus on the construct of organizational culture infused with the values of spirituality and humanity. Through these efforts, the institutional unit creates a social interaction that is mutually respectful, egalitarian, cooperative and moderate, as expressed by the leadership through the following interview excerpt:

"...Once again, we uphold egalitarianism in an institutional context in our FAI UNUJA unit. One form of this commitment is providing real examples of egalitarian and humanistic values within the FAI UNUJA environment. We hope that with our example of real action for the academic community, we will slowly foster a good organizational culture."

The nuances researchers encountered during ongoing observations also showed symptoms that were increasingly felt and easily found at the research location. One of the factors behind this is that the leadership of FAI-UMM and FAI-UNUJA themselves do not only provide verbal direction but are also accompanied by accurate role models in the form of actual daily behaviour. So, the entire academic community can see and hear the organizational values that originate from the philosophical thoughts of the leaders of their institutions. In this way, researchers indicate that doubts about value orientation in organizational culture will not last long enough to lead to axiological disorientation. It can exist based on unit travel in the faculty at any time, and the organizational cycle in the faculty can grow and strengthen organizational culture. Conditions at this faculty align with Belak's research findings, which conclude that the company cycle can grow and strengthen organizational culture (Belak, 2016).

The prophetic leadership style at FAI-UMM and FAI-UNUJA has internal maturity in the emotional and spiritual aspects. The maturity of the emotional aspect can be seen from the behaviour of the FAI-UMM and FAI-UNUJA leaders, who distribute authority through ethical relationships based on organizational education and are directed at cultivating the leadership spirit of employees. Meanwhile, spiritual maturity can be seen from efforts to improve spiritual quality through the HISP program, which has become a mandatory academic activity routine for all teaching staff and FAI UMM education staff.

Next, the dimension of theological transformation researchers found at FAI-UMM and FAI-UNUJA was an effort to reform oneself in the realm of spirituality



in order to support a more religious organizational culture. It is also focused as a normative, ethical, ontological reference for organizational values. The leadership style demonstrated by faculty leaders will be able to realize the institutional vision, mission and goals by applying spiritual and ethical values to the academic community. In reality, the empirical facts that researchers found based on observations show that employees affiliated with FAI-UMM and FAI-UNUJA have a great social responsibility and take the initiative to implement it in the broader scope. This is based on the actions of faculty unit employees who show nuances of spirituality, such as being able to act dynamically, having behaviour with a high level of self-awareness, and caring about human values (respect, tolerance and honesty) towards others.

Departing from the research findings mentioned above, this research is on managing Islamic education, especially Prophetic Leadership, in creating superior educational institutions in private Islamic universities, especially in a deeper understanding of leadership. A deeper understanding of Prophetic Leadership has many positive implications, especially in Islamic education management and efforts to create superior educational institutions, especially private Islamic universities. A deeper understanding of Prophetic Leadership enables a deeper integration of Islamic values into educational management. This includes values such as justice, equality, honesty, and compassion, which can shape an organizational culture based on Islamic teachings.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, this research concludes that the FAI UNUJA and FAI UMM institutions have a prophetic leadership style demonstrated through their role as quality control, political power, and political will (goodwill). From this leadership style, a prophetic nuance will emerge in institutional governance, which refers to at least 4 (four) pillars. First, the theological-monotheistic position as a construct of belief in the existence of the truth of revelation (the Qur'an and al-Hadith) is transcendental and comes from one God. Second, the empirical-demonstrative basis is the belief that there is truth based on empirical reality that is accurate and detailed so that it can be identified through other methods of proof. Third, the rational-philosophical perspective is a belief in truth based on argumentative reasoning. Fourth, a theoretical foundation is a form of belief in truth based on reason and data, which has been practised often through organizational management. The principles of prophetic management that gave birth to this prophetic leadership style are essentially concluded in the epistemological framework of Burhani, Bayani, and Irfani.

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