

Implementation of Religious Teacher Leadership in Cultivating Islamic Ethics in Madrasah

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Abstract:

This research analyzes the implementation of religious teacher leadership in cultivating Islamic ethics at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 1 Gorontalo City. This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach with a phenomenological framework. Data collection involves observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis follows four stages: condensation, coding, categorization, and theorization. The findings reveal that religious teachers can design, organize, guide, and supervise the inculcation of religious teachings, particularly in Islamic jurisprudence, thus emphasizing the manifestation of Islamic ethics, such as dress code, religious traditions, and Islamic interactions. However, the teachers' skills in critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity have yet to integrate the practice of religion within them, both among teachers and students. This research underscores the importance of further studies to unveil comprehensive strategies for realizing Islamic ethics across various dimensions in the context of religious teacher leadership. These strategies should align with the student profile project of "rahmatan lil alamin" and position the practice of religious teachings as a critical leadership competency within the madrasah context.

Keywords: *Leadership, Teacher, Islamic Ethics, Madrasah*

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis implementasi kepemimpinan guru agama dalam membudayakan etika Islam di Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 1 Kota Gorontalo. Jenis penelitian ini adalah deskriptif kualitatif dengan pendekatan fenomenologi. Data penelitian dikumpulkan dengan teknik observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Teknik analisis data dilakukan dengan empat tahap, yakni kondensasi, pengkodean, pengkategorian, dan teori. Temuan penelitian mengungkapkan bahwa guru agama mampu merancang, mengatur, membimbing, dan mengawasi penanaman ajaran agama, khususnya pada aspek fikih, sehingga menekankan pada perwujudan etika Islam, seperti tata cara berpakaian, tradisi keagamaan, dan interaksi Islami. Namun keterampilan guru dalam berpikir kritis, kolaborasi, komunikasi, dan kreativitas belum mengintegrasikan pengamalan agama dalam dirinya, baik di kalangan guru maupun siswa. Penelitian ini menggarisbawahi pentingnya studi lebih lanjut untuk mengungkap strategi komprehensif untuk mewujudkan etika Islam di berbagai dimensi, dalam konteks kepemimpinan guru agama. Strategi-strategi ini harus selaras dengan proyek profil siswa "rahmatan lil alamin" dan menjadikan pengamalan ajaran agama sebagai kompetensi kepemimpinan utama dalam konteks madrasah.

Kata Kunci: *Kepemimpinan, Guru, Etika Islam, Madrasah*

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INTRODUCTION

The educators of religious education must be capable of instilling the practice of religious teachings within the madrasah community to actualize Islamic ethics. The issue of inculcating the practice of religious teachings through teacher leadership has become a trend in the last decade in Indonesia, particularly following the introduction of character education based on national education (Sukardi, 2016).

Teacher leadership has garnered significant attention, particularly in the West. At the same time, pedagogical studies in the homeland still revolve around academic concerns related to the four standard competencies: pedagogical, personality, social, and professional. However, teacher leadership competencies are crucial in every educational renewal process (Mukaffa, 2018).

Teachers possess personality, pedagogical, professional, and social competencies (Febriana, 2021). For religious education teachers, the addition of leadership competencies (Fatmawati et al., 2022; Tricahyono, 2022) aims to realize Islamic ethics through inculcating religious teachings. This involves the development of critical thinking, communication, collaboration, creativity, and innovation skills, which need to be addressed with competent leadership skills (Idris & Mokodenseho, 2021).

Implementing religious education teacher leadership requires the instillation of religious teachings among students, which facilitates the achievement of Islamic ethical goals in madrasahs. This is important because education is basically a process of forming ethics, and there is no ethical education that has no value. Values are the core of the goal of forming ethics (Ilham, 2019).

Leadership competency involves the ability of religious education teachers to realize Islamic ethics in every educational unit (Sa'diyah, 2019), encompassing several aspects: the ability to plan the inculcation of religious teachings, organizing the potential of the madrasah, the ability to innovate, motivate, facilitate, guide, and counsel; maintaining control, directing the inculcation of religious teachings, and ensuring harmonious relations among religious adherents.

However, religious education teachers often need help to design and manage the inculcation of religious teachings to actualize Islamic ethics within madrasahs. Students tend to emphasize Islamic ethics through Islamic attire, religious rituals, and Islamic interactions by sharing smiles, greetings, and interactions within the madrasah community. Nevertheless, etiquette in communication, collaboration, and responding to the creativity and innovation of students has yet to be widely practiced.

Similarly, the reflection of Islamic ethics through good manners to harmonize the religious atmosphere is yet to be fully realized. This is evident as students still exhibit coarse and inappropriate language when communicating and struggle to accept criticism when assuming leadership roles within the madrasah community. However, it is essential to note that religious teachers should not only be capable of fostering creative, innovative, and critical-thinking students, but they should also possess the etiquette to effectively convey and receive criticism, as well

as respond to innovations and creativity (Surjanti et al., 2022).

Meanwhile, the etiquette and decorum for communication and collaboration have yet to be well-maintained, resulting in a noticeable gap between teachers as leaders and students as followers exhibiting Islamic ethics during interactions. This gap is evident in situations like asking questions, expressing opinions, and engaging in discussions. Additionally, the complete realization of Islamic ethics still needs to be improved due to the tendency of teachers and students to undervalue the creativity of individuals when innovating, for instance, by not showing appreciation through expressions of gratitude or other rewards.

As for previous research related to leadership competencies, a considerable amount of studies have been conducted, focusing primarily on school principals in enhancing well-being and workplace effectiveness (Buskila & Chen-Levi, 2021), academic leaders in cultivating communicative competencies (Kamal et al., 2022), students to develop prophetic leadership competencies, particularly among women in Madrasah Mu'allimat (Makruf et al., 2022), prospective leaders in schools and their responsiveness to drastic educational changes (Al-Zyoud, 2015), and school principals' influence on the sustainable development of professional learning communities (Hu et al., 2022).

Similarly, previous research related to teachers has primarily focused on the research settings and creative skills training (Gyurova, 2020), correlating student skills with teacher skills (Tican & Deniz, 2019), dimensions of teacher competencies potentially aiding in developing teacher potential aligned with learning concepts (Sulaiman & Ismail, 2020), teacher skill development for the application of instructional design concepts (Babair, 2023), digital pedagogy as a distinctive characteristic of teachers (Rintayati et al., 2022), and the key to learning effectiveness being the enhancement of teaching skills (Kim et al., 2019).

Research in the past has indeed explored Islamic ethics, although its focus has yet to be on the relationship with the leadership competence of religious teachers. Instead, previous studies have examined aspects such as the antagonism between Islamic culture and Western culture (Tafazoli & Egan, 2022), building Islamic culture through the strengthening of students' morality (Mawardi et al., 2020), shaping morality through the implementation of Islamic culture (Raudhatinur, 2019), developing Islamic culture through the concept of child-friendly schools (Alawi et al., 2022), and implementing religious culture in madrasahs (Maarif et al., 2020).

Empirical facts from MAN 1 Gorontalo reveal that religious education teachers tend to emphasize their duties within the four standard competencies: pedagogical, personality, social, and professional. However, less emphasis is placed on leadership competencies in comprehensively instilling the practice of religious teachings. The dominance of religious teachers' leadership competencies lies primarily in attire. In contrast, etiquette or manners that guide the application of teachers' skills in interactions, communication, collaboration, presenting criticism, and appreciating students' creativity still need to be more widely emphasized and normalized. Nevertheless, religious education teachers serve as educators, instructors, mentors, and assessors and as leaders in realizing Islamic ethics within the madrasah community.

This research aims to uncover new insights into implementing religious education teacher leadership, specifically focusing on the inculcation of religious teachings regarding etiquette or manners and its relationship with teacher skills. The prevailing tendency of Islamic culture manifested by religious education teachers primarily centers around Islamic jurisprudence, rituals, and religious interactions. Thus, this research is expected to contribute to the educational field by formulating theories that align more closely with the "rahmatan lil alamin" student profile project, the self-directed learning curriculum, and skills. Madrasah, in this context, is the Islamic educational institution that serves as the primary target for the contributions of this research, determining the direction and foundation for the implementation of Islamic culture in every educational program that focuses on the comprehensive practice of religious teachings (Islam), thereby highlighting the crucial significance of these primary leadership competencies.

RESEARCH METHODS

This qualitative research adopts an interpretive paradigm, allowing informants to reflect on implementing religious teacher leadership. The informants consist of teachers specializing in various subjects such as Islamic jurisprudence, Quran and Hadith, Islamic Cultural History, and Islamic Creed and Ethics. This self-reflective approach involves emotional aspects and encompasses experiences, cognition, and self-understanding. "No law, structure, or mechanism offers a higher explanatory principle or a greater predictive force than self-interpretation" (Crotty, 1998)

This study is designed to provide a rich self-description from informants, aiming to dig deeper into their perspectives on the leadership of religious teachers in their efforts to actualize Islamic ethics through practicing religious (Islam) teachings in the madrasah community. Maximizing data depth and richness and broadening the sample will offer a broader perspective to the researcher (Merriam, 2009).

This study strives to generate findings from informants regarding religious teachers' leadership in cultivating Islamic ethics. The sources of information extend beyond religious education teachers, school principals, and vice principals to include students. Including students as informants is essential as they are direct sources to address this issue. As is known, students are one of the determining or dominant factors in education, standing on the frontlines and backlines when facing the pressures of daily life within the madrasah community (Solong, 2022). Students are considered to have a better understanding of what is beneficial for their community, something they need and expect from religious education teachers to foster religious teachings, thereby creating a feedback loop of literacy (Kleijn, 2023).

During interview sessions with religious teachers, principals, deputy principals, and students, informants were instructed to answer critical questions and sub-questions to elucidate their ideas. The purpose was to capture situations that describe the leadership of religious teachers and Islamic ethics and obtain spoken data from their respective perspectives. The researchers assured the

informants that their insights and reflections would be solely used for research purposes. To ensure confidentiality, the names of each informant, whether students or teachers, were replaced with pseudonyms.

The data analysis commenced with the researcher collecting interview data using a direct pattern, while observations were conducted using instruments, field notes, and documentation involving the collection of relevant documents. The data analysis technique consisted of four stages: condensation, coding, categorization, and theory (Sidiq & Choiri, 2019).

The data condensation technique involves creating written summaries using a sharpened analysis pattern. This entails classification, focus, elimination, and data organization to accommodate comprehensive data without reducing field findings (Miles et al., 2020). Coding was applied to the collected data (Merriam, 2009), and categorization was used to identify themes and theories related to religious teacher leadership and the cultivation of religious teachings. Meanwhile, theory is used to study the existence of Islamic ethics and the leadership of religious teachers.

Coding guided the researcher in identifying ideas or conceptual frameworks from students and other informants to extract useful information. This information was organized into units of meaning that categorized and classified the material based on their representative features. The researcher also extracted themes associated with students, teachers, and school principals to construct research findings from students and another informant regarding implementing religious teacher leadership. These themes were classified according to the meanings established and explained by Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2004) for the practice of religious teachings as a critical leadership competency.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

As leaders, teachers can create a friendly, collegial atmosphere and serve as inspiring models for respect, helpfulness, and cooperative efforts to foster Islamic ethics (Buskila & Chen-Levi, 2021). The inculcation of religious teachings as a manifestation of Islamic ethics at MAN 1 Gorontalo City relies on leadership competencies. The services provided by teachers to students are directed towards fostering the practice of religious teachings through skills, including demonstrating etiquette in communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and innovation.

Regarding the inculcation of religious teachings and skills, in terms of collaboration, there is a tendency among students who excel in a class or hold leadership positions within study groups to prioritize competition, leading them to be hesitant in sharing knowledge with their peers due to their academic habits and the fear of being outperformed. In this context, the role of teachers and school principals is crucial in becoming attentive listeners and caring for the spiritual needs of their students. Collaboration and communication are only possible by being grounded in various forms of empathy expression, which are highly encouraged in realizing Islamic ethics (Buskila & Chen-Levi, 2021).

The century has brought about changes to various aspects of human life along with challenges and impacts that need to be addressed, such as

globalization, liberalization, and the development of information and communication technology (Sulaiman & Ismail, 2020). As a result, students sometimes need help to adapt to the challenges and impacts, including inculcating religious teachings in collaboration skills. This is why religious education teachers at MAN 1 Gorontalo City undertake their roles as leaders in fostering the practice of religious teachings by applying skills to realize Islamic ethics.

The following is the implementation of religious teacher leadership in fostering the practice of religious teachings. First, planning the inculcation of religious teachings. Creating programs and proposals for inculcation within the madrasah community, involving all stakeholders, such as teachers and student organizations. Second, organizing school potentials systematically. Establishing schedules for religious practice activities involving stakeholders, such as religious guidance and celebrations of significant religious days. Third, providing innovation, motivation, facilitation, guidance, and counseling. Establishing a religious atmosphere through learning technology, offering advice with a religious touch to those who violate religious teachings. Fourth, maintaining, controlling, and directing the inculcation of religious teachings. Giving advice, verbal warnings, assignments, and penalties to students not practicing religious teachings. Some of these findings provide a framework for religious education teachers to take the lead in cultivating the practice of religious teachings and facilitating the realization of Islamic ethics in madrasa communities. Some of these findings provide a framework for religious education teachers to take the lead in cultivating the practice of religious teachings and facilitating the realization of Islamic ethics in madrasa communities.

Several activities of teachers that demonstrate leadership abilities in fostering the practice of religious teachings include crafting proposals for the inculcation of religious teachings within the school community, involving all components such as subject teachers and student organizations; creating schedules for religious activities such as religious guidance and celebrations of significant religious days; establishing a religious atmosphere through the utilization of learning technology; advising and directing by appealing to emotions, giving verbal warnings, assigning tasks, and applying penalties to students who do not practice religion. This is crucial considering that there are better approaches than investing in old methods to realize Islamic ethics for future madrasahs, thus requiring social and personal transformation to overcome future challenges (Kalantzis & Cope, 2012).

Furthermore, teachers as leaders provide motivation and services during religious activities and facilitate students with information and communication technology for learning. For instance, they encourage and facilitate the use of available resources such as library books, e-learning platforms, and other information technologies to enhance skills that are aligned with Islamic ethics among students. This is done under the supervision and guidance of religious education teachers. Teachers do not only function as educators but also as leaders, as this will determine a relatively high level of satisfaction and care (Yu et al., 2022).

While performance assessments related to leadership competencies are not explicitly conducted for religious education teachers, as is the case with the other four competencies, their proficiency in teaching methods demonstrates mastery of these competencies. For example, incorporating character values and affective spiritual and social elements into the design of lessons, organizing activities for inculcating religious teachings by creating study groups, and encouraging and addressing challenges in realizing Islamic ethics. This is because religious education teachers can respond strategically to critical religious issues (Arifin, 2016; Idris et al., 2021).

This aligns with the regulatory demands placed upon religious education teachers to apply leadership competencies, with indicators such as organizing all the madrasah's potentialities to foster Islamic ethics. While performance assessments related to this leadership competency have not been conducted, they have been implemented within teaching methods. Additionally, seven certified religious education teachers and eighteen possess at least a bachelor's degree, with five teachers holding master's degrees, which is undoubtedly a supportive factor.

Moreover, as religious education teachers, the competence of leadership is not only about consistently applying knowledge but also about doing so voluntarily and out of sincerity, not coercion. For instance, setting an example and instilling the discipline of practicing religious teachings is done out of awareness. In performing their duties, teachers are leaders who foster the practice of religious teachings, which students exemplify, and this is done voluntarily. The communication of religious teachers is also characterized by cultivating the practice of religion in students without ulterior motives, as it is done with genuine intentions, seeking the pleasure of Allah.

From the outset, Islam in Indonesia has distinct characteristics, such as politeness, tolerance, mutual assistance, and moderation. Islam emphasizes the teachings of brotherhood, compassion, forgiveness, self-control, and a rejection of enmity and hatred among humans (Kanafi et al., 2021). Islam is believed to be a religion that teaches doctrines of love and friendship among humanity. Religious education teachers, also acting as leaders, tend to provide services to their students with genuine care, both in activities related to God (*hablum minallah*) and people (*hablum minannas*). These actions are always carried out voluntarily and without any hidden agenda, solely to assist students.

In addition to fostering the practice of religious teachings with sincerity and without ulterior motives, religious education teachers are observed to assign tasks that consider students' capabilities and do not burden them. Furthermore, they monitor and supervise religious teachings that are not seen as imposing difficulties but instead seeking solutions. The monitoring and supervising religious teachings are not merely formalities but are aimed at building togetherness. Since teachers and students come from diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds, recognizing and loving Allah, the Prophet, and scholars, friendship, positive impressions, and peace are maintained in human relationships everywhere (Kanafi et al., 2021).

Religious teachers who act as learning leaders design, develop, and present materials according to their expertise to achieve objectives and are supported by the ability to understand students' characteristics. They guide and observe

students' development, employ problem-based and project-based learning methods, and use technology-based digital learning media. These teachers create an Islamic learning environment, implement educational discipline, assess higher-order thinking skills, and actively contribute to curriculum development, focusing on strengthening the practice of religious teachings within it.

Based on findings in the field, the activities of religious teachers and students in madrasas can be seen in several ways. First is critical thinking: the teachers allow students to ask questions after observing prepared videos. As instructional leaders, teachers motivate, facilitate, provoke questions, and provide guided support. Second, collaboration: the teachers form study groups to dissect tasks in the Student Worksheet further. They provide friendly and approachable guidance and support to students. Third, communication: the teachers lead discussions, allowing students to communicate ideas with their peers. Students present their work while teachers attentively listen to every idea presented by students. Fourth, creativity and innovation: As instructional leaders, teachers encourage students to discover novel aspects within the subject matter. Real-life examples and internet-based learning resources are utilized to inspire creative thinking.

Religious education teachers, as leaders, instilling religious practices, especially critical thinking, involve influencing students to raise questions about the observed videos. Before this, teachers facilitate, motivate, and engage in literacy activities, allowing students to present intriguing ideas, thus fostering multidirectional interactions. Likewise, subsequent activities are carried out with a sense of hospitality and familiarity, radiating a spirit of leadership in executing their role as religious education teachers.

As leaders in teaching, educators strive to influence students not solely by capitalizing on their formal position but primarily through persuasive personal skills. This approach assists students in overcoming learning difficulties and optimizing their potential, particularly concerning religious teachings, namely critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and innovation. The core competency of leadership lies in cultivating religious teachings to face the challenges of the times, which is driven by the teacher's sincere dedication (Febriyanti et al., 2022).

Students express that their experiences under the guidance of religious education teachers consistently involve persuasion, especially when seeking solutions to their challenges. This is evident when real problems are faced, as showcased in the videos. When students desire to address fundamental issues related to the study material, teachers offer wise solutions, demonstrating a thoughtful approach that avoids imposition and provides alternatives aligned with students' abilities and potential.

Other students also share instances when teachers voluntarily assisted them without expecting rewards or personal gain, thus feeling comfortable seeking solutions to their learning-related issues. In times of disappointment in their studies, teachers provide motivation and advice that soothe the heart, enhancing their learning spirit and averting discouragement. The strength of this inner

resilience serves as a crucial foundation for inculcating religious teachings in the context of madrasah life.

The certified religious education teacher group consists of 10 individuals with varying lengths of service. Overall, the obtained results are satisfactory and meet the established standards in the performance assessment, encompassing four competencies: pedagogical, personality, social, and professional. Additionally, two more competencies, namely spiritual and leadership, are assessed for religious education teachers. However, performance assessment data for leadership competency in evaluating religious education teachers was not found. In the evaluation of the work performance of civil servants, five behavior assessment indicators for teachers as employees were identified: service orientation, integrity, commitment, cooperation, and leadership. However, for the assessment of teachers, the latter aspect needs to be completed, resulting in a missing score.

Table 1 Civil Servant Performance Assessment Document for the July-December Period

No	Assessment Component	Score	Description
1.	Service Orientation	95.00	(Very Good)
2.	Integrity	95.00	(Very Good)
3.	Commitment	95.00	(Very Good)
4.	Discipline	95.00	(Very Good)
5.	Cooperation	95.00	(Very Good)
6.	Leadership	(No data available)	

Source Data: Document of SKP for July-December 2022 Period

Religious teacher performance assessments are based on service orientation, integrity, commitment, discipline, and cooperation. However, despite existing regulations on this matter, there needs to be more in the assessment process regarding the leadership competency of religious education teachers. There currently needs to be an assessment or established format for evaluating the leadership competency of religious education teachers in performance assessments. This is notable even though, for religious education teachers, leadership competency is integral to their overall pedagogical, personality, social, and professional competencies.

The observations made by the author regarding the implementation of religious teacher leadership have been applied in learning, even though no assessment has been conducted in both the Teacher Performance Appraisal (PKG) and the Civil Servant Performance (SKP) assessment, as shown in the above data. The assessment of the leadership competency of religious education teachers has yet to be conducted, primarily because the necessary assessment format still needs to be made available. While the SKP document includes a column for this purpose, it is designed to be filled out by the teachers. Therefore, it is advisable to recommend that the government or relevant authorities establish regulations and an assessment format for evaluating the leadership competency of religious education teachers.

Implementing religious teachings at MAN 1 Gorontalo City has not entirely realized Islamic ethics among the students. This is because teachers tend to focus

on the aspects of Islamic law, such as proper attire, congregational prayers, and religious traditions during festive occasions and Islamic interactions. However, etiquette, manners, and courtesy have received little attention from teachers, especially in overcoming future challenges related to critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and student creativity.

Table 2 Islamic Islamic Ethics in the Leadership of Religious Teachers

No	Islamic Ethics	Observation Result
1.	Dress Code	Culture Both teachers and students adhere to Islamic dress code guidelines for females and males.
2.	Religious Traditions	Teachers and students perform congregational Zuhr and Asr prayers at the mosque and engage in ceremonial celebrations of religious holidays.
3.	Islamic Interaction	Teachers and students interact through greetings, salutations, handshakes, and smiles and by maintaining personal hygiene and cleanliness of their surroundings.
4.	Religious Teacher Skills	<p>Critical thinking: There is a lack of proper etiquette in receiving and providing constructive questions and criticisms.</p> <p>Communication: There needs to be more etiquette in speech and conveying ideas, sometimes leading to hurtful or less courteous communication.</p> <p>Collaboration: Some individuals dominate teamwork, while others remain passive.</p> <p>Creativity and innovation: There is a disregard for the strengths and goodness of others, as well as a lack of appreciation for the innovations produced.</p>

Source Data: Observation Sheet, 2022

The manifestation of religious teachings through exemplary behavior and habituation by religious teachers and students has yet to be fully effective. The primary focus of teachers' attention in their practices is predominantly on the Shariah aspects, such as dress code, religious traditions, and etiquette in interactions. As a result, religious education teachers still need to fulfill their role as leaders in guiding the practice of religious teachings thoroughly. This has led to an inadequate emphasis on role modeling and habituation in this dimension, consequently preventing the comprehensive realization of Islamic ethics.

Here, the importance of the school principal conducting a comprehensive assessment, particularly for religious education teachers, extends beyond the scope of pedagogical, personality, social, and professional competencies. It should encompass leadership (Dugan, 2024) and religious (Sieveke, 2024) competencies. Mere possession of minimum academic qualifications, such as a bachelor's or even a master's degree, along with certification, is insufficient. Overall, a religious teacher, apart from being proficient and skilled in teaching, must also demonstrate good ethics and politeness in fostering religious practice (K et al., 2024). This aspect is integral to their role as leaders of learning.

The school principal acknowledges that religious education teachers are certified. They have yet to fully realize comprehensive Islamic ethics as expected, particularly in religious practice. Cultivating religious practice is highly appropriate (Amaly et al., 2023). It should be implemented comprehensively, as it

forms a cornerstone of the primary leadership competency for religious teachers in fostering Islamic ethics (Solahudin et al., 2023).

As leaders nurturing religious practice at MAN 1 Gorontalo City, teachers have yet to be subject to performance assessment regarding leadership competency, unlike their pedagogical, personality, social, and professional competencies. While their implementation of teaching practices has shown promise, there still needs to be a gap in emphasizing the cultivation of religious practice to manifest Islamic ethics in learning. The capabilities of religious teachers in planning, organizing madrasah resources, motivating, and overseeing religious practice are more directed towards Shariah aspects and religious traditions, such as festive religious celebrations. Meanwhile, the observance of proper etiquette or decorum in applying skills as leaders of learning is yet to be widely practiced by religious education teachers toward their students.

CONCLUSION

Religious teachers can design, organize, guide, and oversee the cultivation of religious practices in Islamic Shariah aspects, thereby emphasizing the realization of Islamic ethics, such as attire, religious traditions, and Islamic interactions. Meanwhile, teachers' skills in critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity still need to integrate the practice of religion into these aspects, both by teachers and students.

This study has several limitations. Firstly, the number of informants serving as data sources is small, potentially impacting the validity of generalizing the findings. There are inherent challenges in researching a broad topic like teacher leadership competence in fostering Islamic ethics. Other limitations are related to the research conducted in Indonesia (Gorontalo). Therefore, local culture, including organizational and managerial characteristics, may have influenced the results. Additional implications are connected to the fact that self-reports have been provided by religious education teachers from public madrasahs, meaning the findings and research outcomes need to be more relevant to private madrasahs or other types of schools with different cultures and ideologies in Indonesia.

This study underscores the necessity for further research on the leadership competencies of religious teachers from the perspective of school principals and educational stakeholders. Cross-cultural and cross-religious studies from other countries should also address this topic to provide diverse cultural and religious perspectives.

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