



## Exploring Complementary Leadership Styles in Madrasahs by Aiming at Their Impact on Integrity and Character Development

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### Abstract:

This study aims to explore the role of madrasah principal leadership in shaping students' character through an approach based on Islamic values. This study is based on the importance of character development in the madrasah educational environment that not only emphasizes academic achievement, but also the formation of students' morals according to Islamic teachings. This study was conducted using a qualitative method through semi-structured interviews and observations of two madrasah principals under the auspices of the Pondok Pesantren Education and Social Foundation. The results of the study indicate that the principal applies an exemplary and disciplined approach to build a madrasah culture that values integrity, while the principal of Madrasah Diniyah uses a humanist approach by establishing close personal relationships with students. The contribution of these findings shows that different but complementary leadership strategies can create a conducive learning environment for student character development, and emphasizes the importance of integrity and empathy in building trust between leaders, staff, and students in madrasahs. This study is expected to provide practical insights for madrasah managers in optimizing a leadership approach that is in accordance with the context of education based on Islamic values.

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## INTRODUCTION

SMAIT and Madrasah Diniyah Ulil Albab are two educational institutions under the auspices of the Ulil Albab Education and Social Foundation, located in Brumbungan Lor Village, Gending District, Probolinggo Regency. Established in 2003, both institutions have obtained B accreditation with a validity period of 2023-2025, indicating good educational standards. SMAIT (Integrated Islamic Senior High School) focuses on developing students' academics and character, integrating the general curriculum with religious education to form a generation with noble and competitive morals. Meanwhile, Madrasah Diniyah Ulil Albab specializes in diniyah education that deepens religious knowledge, aiming to provide a strong foundation in understanding Islamic teachings to students. Both institutions play an important role in producing individuals who are not only academically intelligent, but also have high spirituality, so that they can contribute positively to society.

One of the important things that need to be considered in managing educational institutions is providing excellent service to school customers (Rasheed & Rashid, 2024;

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Baharun et al., 2021; Demir et al., 2021; Faiz et al., 2023). Education is a conscious and planned effort to create an atmosphere and learning process that allows students to actively develop their potential, including spiritual and religious strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills needed by themselves, society, nation, and state (Munna & Kalam, 2021; Metekohy et al., 2022; Priyambodo & Hasanah, 2021; Khotimah et al., 2024). Management is a strong tool and foundation for developing institutions in Indonesia (Mutamimah et al., 2022; Rosser, 2023; Sanjani, 2024). In this context, a leader has a significant role in a community and community group. Leadership is the main key in developing an organization, because if the leadership in an organization is not good, then the organization will find it difficult to achieve its goals (Saputra, 2021; Lasrado & Kassem, 2021; Zaini, 2023). The relationship between superiors or leaders and subordinates or employees needs to be improved into a more balanced relationship of dependence (Cho et al., 2021; Islamiah & Maulidiah, 2024; Zeleke & Obang, 2021; Maulidia, 2023). Generally, employees feel more dependent on leaders than vice versa, where leaders rarely depend on employees. School leadership style can influence the sustainability of the school, especially in improving the quality of education.

Previous studies have shown that leader personality has a significant impact on leadership effectiveness and employee satisfaction in organizations. Supratman et al. (2021) defines leader personality as a characteristic or trait that distinguishes an individual leader from others in a company. Hogan et al. (2021) identified six personality traits that can be considered good or bad by the employees being led. Nurlina (2022) emphasized the importance of organizational attention to employee satisfaction so that all activities run smoothly. Supratman et al. (2021) stated that effective leaders come from the personality of the leader himself, which indicates that the personality of the principal influences his leadership. Kilag et al. (2024) emphasized that personality traits are very relevant to leadership success, where personality competencies include a combination of knowledge, values, skills, and attitudes that are reflected in thinking and acting habits. Holmes et al. (2021) added that personality is the basis of leadership that influences the cognition, motivation, and behavior of leaders. Thus, a good leader personality greatly determines the achievement of organizational goals, especially in the context of Islamic educational institutions which are expected to be able to direct institutions towards better quality and effectiveness.

Although previous research has identified the importance of leader personality in determining leadership effectiveness and employee satisfaction, there are still several research gaps that need to be explored further. Many studies emphasize certain traits of leader personality, but less discuss how the combination of these traits may interact with each other and influence outcomes in the educational context, especially in Islamic educational institutions. The novelty of this study lies in its approach that integrates the analysis of leader personality with the specific context of Islamic educational institutions, and explores the impact of various leadership competencies on educational quality and employee satisfaction. This study will introduce a new framework that considers the interaction between leader personality traits and the unique cultural and religious context of Islamic educational institutions.

The purpose of writing this article is to identify and analyze the role of leader personality in creating superior public services in SMAIT and Madin Ulil Albab under the auspices of Ulil Albab Islamic Boarding School. This study seeks to explore the characteristics of leader personality that contribute to the implementation of *ahlakul*

karimah values, high integrity, and effective problem-solving approaches in educational environments. Thus, it is hoped that this study can provide new and practical insights for the development of more effective leadership in the context of education, as well as become a reference for other institutions in improving the quality of their public services.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study applies a descriptive qualitative approach, which aims to understand the phenomenon based on the perspective of the individuals involved in depth. The type of research chosen is multi-site, which allows researchers to explore more than one research location in order to obtain richer and more in-depth results. This study was conducted on two madrasah principals under the auspices of the Ulil Albab Islamic Boarding School Education and Social Foundation. They are the principal of Ulil Albab Islamic High School and the principal of Ulil Albab Diniyah Madrasah. The researcher acts as a key instrument in the data collection process, which means that the researcher acts directly in interpreting the data and determining the meaning contained therein. This refers to the opinion of Priya (2021) who emphasizes the importance of the role of the researcher as the main instrument in qualitative research to explore and understand the meaning behind the data obtained.

The data collection technique in this study uses semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and documentation. Semi-structured interviews were chosen because of their flexibility which allows researchers to combine elements of structured interviews with free interviews, so that respondents have space to express their views widely. According to Mishra & Dey (2022), semi-structured interviews are effective for collecting in-depth information because researchers can direct the conversation according to needs. At SMAIT Ulil Albab, data were obtained from six people, namely the principal, the BOS fund treasurer, the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher, the head of administration (KTU), and through supporting documents such as information boards about BOS funds and award certificates owned by the head of the madrasah. Meanwhile, at Madrasah Diniyah Ulil Albab, data sources included the head of the madrasah, the ustaz in the curriculum field, the deputy head of the madrasah who handles student affairs, and two grade 5 diniyah students as shown in Table 1. Direct observation and documentation were carried out to support the interview, providing additional data that was more objective and concrete.

**Table 1. Research Resource Person**

No.	Institution	Data Source
1	SMAIT Ulil Albab	Principal
2	SMAIT Ulil Albab	BOS Treasurer
3	SMAIT Ulil Albab	PAI Teacher
4	SMAIT Ulil Albab	KTU
5	SMAIT Ulil Albab	BOS Fund Information Board
6	SMAIT Ulil Albab	Certificate of Appreciation
7	Madrasah Diniyah Ulil Albab	Principal
8	Madrasah Diniyah Ulil Albab	Curriculum
9	Madrasah Diniyah Ulil Albab	Deputy Head of Madrasah for Student Affairs
10	Madrasah Diniyah Ulil Albab	Grade 5 Diniyah

The data analysis process in this study used the method introduced by Miles and Huberman (Lopez et al., 2021), which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. At the data reduction stage, the information obtained is selected and simplified so that only relevant data is retained, thus facilitating further analysis. Data presentation is done systematically to help researchers understand emerging patterns, visualize the information obtained, and describe the relationships between existing elements. The final stage, drawing conclusions, is done to provide a meaningful final interpretation, unify key findings, and formulate conclusions that can answer research questions. This analysis method aims to provide a deep and significant understanding of the data collected, and support researchers in producing meaningful interpretations according to research objectives.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### ***Akhlak* of Head Madrasas**

The subjects of this study were two madrasah principals who act as leaders under the auspices of the Ulil Albab Islamic Boarding School Education and Social Foundation, namely the principal of SMAIT Ulil Albab and the principal of Madrasah Diniyah Ulil Albab. They were chosen as subjects because they have direct responsibility for the management and development of educational institutions, which include academic aspects and student character building. In this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted to gain a deeper understanding of their perceptions, experiences, and views in leading madrasahs, especially in fostering morals and building a conducive learning environment.

The results of the interviews showed that the principal of SMAIT Ulil Albab emphasized the importance of exemplary behavior and discipline in managing madrasahs. He stated, "As a leader, I must be able to be an example for teachers and students, not only in terms of time discipline but also in implementing Islamic values every day." This statement shows that the principal of SMAIT Ulil Albab believes that the morals of leaders will have a direct impact on the behavior and culture that develops in madrasahs. On the other hand, the principal of Madrasah Diniyah Ulil Albab emphasizes a personal approach and close relationships with students. In his interview, he said, "I try to approach students with a friendly and caring attitude, so that they feel comfortable asking questions and learning well."

From the results of the interview, it is clear that both madrasah principals have strong views on the importance of the role of leaders in character formation in the madrasah environment. The principal of SMAIT Ulil Albab uses an exemplary approach, prioritizing discipline, while the principal of Madrasah Diniyah Ulil Albab emphasizes a humanist approach, by paying attention and approaching students personally. These two approaches complement each other, reflecting the diversity in leadership strategies that are appropriate to the context of each madrasah, while strengthening the foundation of morals expected in all elements in the Ulil Albab educational environment.



Figure 1. The head of SMAIT Give Socialization about the Importance of *Ahlakul Karimah*

This Figure 1 shows the learning atmosphere in an open hall in the Ulil Albab Islamic Boarding School environment. The students, who are all female and wearing all white clothes, are seen participating in teaching and learning activities led by a teacher in front of the hall. This location reflects a distinctive Islamic atmosphere, with Arabic writing ornaments attached to the walls and the traditional architectural design of the hall, characterized by an octagonal roof made of wood with a yellow frame. The presence of Arabic writings on the walls also strengthens the religious nuance in the Islamic boarding school environment.

This activity is relevant to the location of the research conducted in the Ulil Albab Islamic Boarding School Education and Social Foundation environment, especially at SMAIT Ulil Albab and Madrasah Diniyah Ulil Albab. The learning atmosphere as seen in this image shows how educational institutions under the foundation apply the concept of Islamic education, where aspects of moral development and instilling religious values are a priority. This also shows that the head of the madrasah plays an important role in creating a learning environment that not only focuses on academics but also on the formation of Islamic character, in line with the results of observations that have been carried out in the study.



Figure 2. The head of Madin Gave Socialization about the Importance of *Ahlakul Karimah*

Figure 2 shows the atmosphere of the socialization activity led by the head of Madrasah Diniyah (Madin) Ulil Albab, who was giving a briefing on the importance of noble morals (akhlakul karimah) in life to the teachers and students of Madin. The activity took place in an open hall with a typical Islamic boarding school architectural design, equipped with Arabic writing ornaments on the walls and a simple but functional room appearance. The head of Madin was seen standing in front of the participants, who were sitting neatly cross-legged, consisting of female and male students wearing clothes according to madrasah rules.

This socialization is closely related to the focus of the research conducted in the Ulil Albab Islamic Boarding School Education and Social Foundation, especially the Ulil Albab Diniyah Madrasah. This activity shows the role of the head of the madrasah in fostering the character of students and teachers through an Islamic approach that emphasizes the importance of moral values. In addition, the socialization regarding akhlakul karimah reflects the commitment of the head of the madrasah in creating a learning environment that not only focuses on academic education, but also on character building. This is in line with the results of interviews and observations in the study, which show that the head of the madrasah under the Ulil Albab Foundation has an important role in instilling moral values as an integral part of the educational process.

The morals possessed by both madrasah principals can be used as examples by all members of the madrasah, both teachers and students. The madrasah principals demonstrate good morals, such as being polite, friendly to others, having a high sense of family and social spirit, and being religious. The positive morals demonstrated by the madrasah principals create a good impression of themselves (Shah, 2024; Setyosari & Kamdi, 2021; Safitri, 2024), and the madrasah community also strongly agrees that the madrasah principals can be role models for all. With good morals, the madrasah principals are able to establish harmonious relationships with all members of the pesantren (Setyosari & Kamdi, 2021; Ridlo & Yanti, 2023), including teachers, students, staff, and guardians, which ultimately supports the achievement of goals effectively and efficiently through good cooperation between all components. This is in accordance with Imaduddin (2023) that personality can influence the effectiveness of the madrasah principal's leadership, because personality includes social, intellectual, emotional, physical conditions, imagination, and physical strength.

From the results of the study, it can be concluded that the morals shown by the principal of SMAIT and the principal of Madrasah Diniyah Ulil Albab have similarities, namely being friendly, polite, religious, and always respecting all members of the madrasah. The striking difference between the two is that the principal of SMAIT Ulil Albab smiles more often when meeting other people, while the principal of Madrasah Diniyah Ulil Albab appears more assertive in his appearance. However, this difference does not affect fairness and assertiveness in decision making. Thus, it can be concluded that both principals of madrasahs have good behavior, which can motivate all subordinates to achieve the goals of each planned program.

### **Integrity of the Head of the Madrasahs**

Principal Integrity In the environment of the Ulil Albab Islamic Boarding School Education and Social Foundation, they play an important role in creating an academic culture based on religious values and high morality. The principal of Ulil Albab Islamic

High School and the principal of Ulil Albab Diniyah Madrasah are seen to demonstrate attitudes that reflect high integrity, both in leading and in interacting with all members of the madrasah. The leadership they demonstrate includes honesty, responsibility, and dedication to the vision and mission of education based on Islamic principles and character building. The integrity of the madrasah principals is seen through their consistency in implementing rules fairly, providing positive examples, and commitment to continuously improving the quality of education. This attitude not only builds trust between leaders and teaching staff and students, but also strengthens the position of educational institutions as centers for moral development that can have a positive impact on the surrounding community.

In the observation of the integrity of the madrasah principal in the Ulil Albab Islamic Boarding School Education and Social Foundation, it is seen that the principal of Ulil Albab Islamic High School and the principal of Ulil Albab Diniyah Madrasah show attitudes that highly uphold honesty, responsibility, and steadfastness in upholding principles. Both leaders always try to carry out their duties with full commitment and transparency, both in terms of BOS fund management, academic decision-making, and student character development. For example, in every meeting or gathering with teachers and staff, the madrasah principal always emphasizes the importance of honesty in financial reports and urges all parties to carry out their duties seriously.

The integrity demonstrated by both madrasah principals is also reflected in their relationship with all members of the madrasah. The principal of Ulil Albab Islamic High School, for example, always ensures that every policy taken is based on common interests and based on the principle of justice. Likewise, the principal of Ulil Albab Diniyah Madrasah, who is known as a firm and committed figure, continues to ensure that every decision is made with mature consideration and without bias. This observation is in line with the educational environment at Ulil Albab Islamic Boarding School which emphasizes Islamic values, including honesty and responsibility as the foundation of character. With strong integrity from the leaders of the madrasah, the pesantren environment can be a place that supports the achievement of educational goals effectively, because all parties work with full trust and a sense of responsibility.

In an interview with the principal of SMAIT Ulil Albab, he said, "Leadership is not only about directing, but also about being a role model. We are here not only to educate academically, but also to shape the character of students so that they have good morals and can be useful in society." Meanwhile, the principal of Madrasah Diniyah Ulil Albab added, "Integrity in leadership means being fair and consistent, both in implementing regulations and in behaving towards all members of the madrasah. This is important so that all parties feel appreciated and motivated to give their best."

The results of this interview show that both leaders at Ulil Albab emphasize the importance of leadership with strong integrity, where the attitudes and actions of the principal become real examples for students and staff. They are committed to creating an environment that not only encourages academic success, but also emphasizes character building that is in line with Islamic principles. This leadership approach builds trust between leaders, staff, and students, and strengthens the role of the school as an educational institution that focuses on the balance between knowledge and morality.

In an interview with the head of administration at the Ulil Albab Islamic Boarding School Education and Social Foundation, he provided additional perspectives on the role of administration in supporting the integrity of the principal's leadership. The head of

administration stated, "Our job in the administration section is to ensure that all processes run according to procedure, are transparent, and accountable. This is important so that all parties, both students and teachers, feel comfortable and trust the existing system." He added, "We also try to always be open in communicating with the principal and staff, so that all needs can be coordinated well for the smooth operation of the school."

The results of this interview show that the head of administration at the Ulil Albab Islamic Boarding School Education and Social Foundation has a deep understanding of the importance of integrity in administration. This accountable and transparent approach not only supports the principal's leadership, but also helps create a culture of trust throughout the school environment. By ensuring that all procedures are carried out consistently and openly, the head of administration plays an important role in strengthening the education system that not only focuses on academic aspects, but also upholds ethics and honesty values that are in line with the vision of Islamic education carried by the foundation.



**Figure 3. Head of SMAIT Motivating SMAIT Teachers**

The Figure 3 above shows the atmosphere of the Principal Performance Assessment (PKKS) activity at Ulil Albab Integrated Islamic High School (SMAIT). The principal of Ulil Albab SMAIT is seen giving direction and motivation to the SMAIT teachers who attended the event. The room used has a conducive atmosphere with tables arranged in a circle, allowing participants to interact and discuss more effectively. Behind the principal, there is a banner that reads "PKKS Principal Performance Assessment of Ulil Albab Integrated Islamic High School," which indicates that the main purpose of the meeting is to evaluate the principal's performance for the 2022 academic year. This activity shows the school's commitment to improving the performance and quality of education through an evaluation process that involves the active participation of various related parties.

After the Principal Performance Assessment (PKKS) activity at SMAIT Ulil Albab, a similar commitment was also seen in the Ulil Albab Islamic High School (Madin). The Madin principal also provided direction and motivation to teachers in a meeting that took place enthusiastically. In picture 4, the Madin principal is seen sitting with the teachers, discussing educational materials and administration at tables full of files and textbooks. The atmosphere of the room equipped with various teaching aids shows a work environment that supports teaching and learning activities. This meeting emphasized the

importance of collaboration between the Madin principal and teachers in improving the quality of education in the madrasah. With direct motivation and direction from the Madin principal, it is hoped that teachers will be more motivated to give their best in the learning process and contribute to achieving the vision and mission of education at the Ulil Albab Islamic Boarding School Foundation.



**Figure 4. Madin's Head Motivating Madin's Teacher**

Figure 4 shows the atmosphere of the meeting between the head of Madrasah Diniyah (Madin) Ulil Albab and the Madin teachers. In this meeting, the head of the madrasah was seen providing motivation and direction to the teachers present. The teachers sat at long tables filled with files and textbooks, indicating an active and productive atmosphere in discussing educational or administrative materials. The background of the room displays various teaching aids and materials, indicating an environment that supports the teaching and learning process. This meeting reflects the commitment of the head of Madin in motivating and coaching teachers so that they can improve the quality of learning in the madrasah and strengthen their work spirit in achieving the educational goals that have been set.

The integrity of the leadership of the head of the madrasah is shown by honesty, order, firmness, wisdom and can motivate all members of the madrasah, both teachers, staff and students. Honesty can be seen from the way of managing funds owned by madrasahs, besides that order both in terms of administration, order of madrasah personnel and madrasah arrangement is shown by providing training on madrasah administration, providing examples of order for example in punctuality and responsibility for teaching each teacher, wisdom is seen in the duties given by the head of the madrasah To every subordinate who will definitely look to the abilities of each individual.

The person possessed by the Head of SMAIT and Madrasah Diniyah Ulil Albab is both have a person who is always passionate, honest, disciplined, a person who always motivates subordinates and is not easily discouraged. As Hidayah et al. (2022) who explains that the integrity of the head of a madrasah is about the nature, quality and circumstances that show integrity so that it has the potential and ability to radiate authority and honesty. Morality concerns ethics, morals, teachings about good and bad, everything related to ethics and customs of manners (Zuhdi et al., 2024; Purwanto & Wafa, 2023). In the interview, the head of the madrasah said that personality integrity is very important, where the head of the madrasah in working a prioritizes; One, honesty / transparency in carrying out tasks. Second, prioritize service, as well as possible. Third, prioritize comfort, prioritize the comfortable feeling of employees, and mean it.

Fourth, enthusiasm at work. It can be interpreted that the head of the madrasah has personality integrity which is shown by an attitude of honesty, justice, discipline, etc. so as to create an impression of authority so that the head of the madrasah can cooperate with all members of the madrasah well.

### **Personal Development of the Head of Madrasahs**

Personal development of the head of the madrasah In the environment of the Ulil Albab Islamic Boarding School Education and Social Foundation, it is one of the important aspects that also influences the effectiveness of leadership and the quality of education. The head of the Ulil Albab Diniyah Madrasah (Madin) shows a strong commitment to self-development through various efforts to improve managerial skills, religious understanding, and interpersonal approaches. In daily interactions, it is seen that the head of Madin tries to prioritize empathy, honesty, and discipline in carrying out his duties, both in managing administrative activities and when interacting with teachers and students. This reflects an awareness of the importance of being an example as a leader who is able to inspire those around him. This continuous self-development is expected to not only improve the head of Madin's ability to lead, but also have a positive impact on the teaching and learning atmosphere at the madrasah, and strengthen the reputation of the Ulil Albab Islamic Boarding School Foundation as an educational institution that prioritizes character quality and Islamic values.

In an interview with the principal of SMAIT Ulil Albab regarding his role in developing the quality of education and leadership, the principal shared his views on the importance of commitment and self-development. He explained, "As a principal, I have a big responsibility, not only in managing the school's operations, but also in ensuring that the education provided is truly beneficial and based on Islamic values. For that, I always try to improve my competence by attending trainings, reading books, and discussing with fellow madrasah principals."

He also emphasized that consistent self-development is essential to meet the demands of the ever-evolving world of education. "Every year, I participate in the PKKS (Principal Performance Assessment) conducted by the madrasah supervisor. This helps me see how far my abilities have developed, especially in the areas of managerial and leadership. This evaluation is important so that I know which aspects need to be improved," he added.

From the results of this interview, it is clear that the principal of SMAIT Ulil Albab has a high awareness of his crucial role as a leader who not only regulates, but also sets an example and guides teachers and students. The self-development process undertaken, both through formal training and informal discussions, demonstrates the principal's commitment to creating a quality educational environment. With regular assessments from supervisors, principals can continue to improve and adjust their leadership strategies to be more effective and in accordance with the needs of the school.

In an interview with the Vice Principal for Curriculum at SMAIT Ulil Albab, he provided additional perspectives that support the principal's view on the importance of self-development and improving the quality of education. He stated, "We in the curriculum field always coordinate with the principal to ensure that the educational programs run are in accordance with the school's vision and mission, and are oriented towards developing student character. The principal strongly supports various innovations in learning, especially in adjusting the curriculum to be more relevant to the

needs of students in this modern era."

The vice principal also explained that the principal actively participates in evaluation and training activities, which are then implemented in the development of the school's curriculum program. "The principal not only provides direction, but also provides examples by participating in training and is always open to discussing new ways to improve the quality of learning. This motivates us on the curriculum team to continue learning and innovating," he added.

The results of this interview, it is clear that the principal does not only act as an administrative leader, but also as an inspiration for the entire team, including the vice principal. The principal's approach that supports innovation and openness to new ideas demonstrates adaptive leadership and focuses on improving quality. Support from the principal makes it easier for the deputy for curriculum and his team to design dynamic educational programs that are in line with current developments, so that they can produce competent and characterful graduates.



Figure 5. Head of SMAIT in Participating in Self-Development Activities about The Curriculum

Figure 5 shows the Principal of SMAIT participating in a self-development activity related to the socialization of the Merdeka Curriculum. This event is a halal bihalal meeting and socialization held by MKKSMAS Probolinggo Regency. Six people are seen sitting at the front table covered with a patterned tablecloth, with a banner that reads "Halal Bihalal and Socialization of the Merdeka Curriculum" behind them. The participants looked serious, with some people speaking into the microphone, and others paying close attention. This shows the institution's commitment to improving the quality of education with a deeper understanding of the Merdeka Curriculum to be implemented in their respective schools.



**Figure 6. Head of Madin Participating in Self-Development Activities**

Figure 6 shows the Head of Madrasah Diniyah (Madin) who is participating in a self-development activity organized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA) at the district level. The participants are seen sitting in a room with chairs neatly arranged facing the front, where there is a projector screen displaying information about the socialization activity. The room looks quite bright with large windows on the side, providing natural lighting. The presence of the Head of Madin in this activity reflects an active effort to improve the quality of religious education through an understanding of new policies and programs introduced by the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

Self-development efforts by the Head of SMAIT Ulil Albab include consistently attending training sessions, reading, and engaging in discussions with other madrasah heads. Meanwhile, the Head of Madrasah Diniyah Ulil Albab enhances their skills by learning through YouTube, sharing experiences with heads of other madrasahs under supervision, and participating in collaborative learning activities. Setyosari & Kamdi, (2021) emphasizes that a key aspect of leadership ethics and morality is a commitment to improving the quality of human resources, as human resources (HR) are a critical factor in an organization's success. Leaders must possess a strong commitment to developing HR quality.

Both heads of madrasahs also engage in self-assessment activities supervised by their respective madrasah supervisors. This annual routine, conducted by the supervisors, aims to measure and evaluate the leadership progress of each head of the madrasah. Through this process, they can track their knowledge growth and leadership development (Arifin, 2024). As leaders, madrasah heads are expected to possess broad knowledge of effective leadership. Every leader is accountable for their actions and decisions.

In addition to their leadership role, madrasah heads also fulfill duties as teachers, actively participating in the learning process. According to Permendikbud Number 6 of 2018, a principal's workload includes performing core managerial tasks, developing entrepreneurship, and supervising teachers and educational staff to improve school quality (Nurlina, 2022). These roles inspire the heads of SMAIT and Madrasah Diniyah Ulil Albab to pursue self-development, aiming for effective education that aligns with the institution's goals. Through these self-development efforts, both leaders can strengthen their leadership effectiveness to achieve the madrasah's objectives.

The research findings show that the leadership of the madrasah principal under the Ulil Albab Islamic Boarding School Education and Social Foundation has an important contribution in the formation of character and academic culture based on Islamic values. The main contribution found is that leadership based on example, integrity, and self-development of the madrasah principal directly affects the conducive learning environment and character building of students. The principal of SMAIT Ulil Albab emphasizes the importance of discipline and example in daily behavior as a means to inspire teachers and students, while the Principal of Madrasah Diniyah Ulil Albab applies a friendly and humanistic personal approach to create learning comfort for students. In addition, both madrasah principals demonstrate high integrity in carrying out tasks and policies in a transparent, fair, and responsible manner. This not only increases trust between the leadership and members of the madrasah, but also strengthens the position of the educational institution as a center for moral development that has a positive impact on the surrounding community. The process of continuous self-development by the madrasah principal also contributes to improving their leadership competency, so that they are able to adapt to the ever-growing demands of education. Through this leadership approach, madrasahs under the auspices of the Ulil Albab Foundation have succeeded in creating a balance between academic achievement and moral strengthening, which supports the goal of education based on Islamic values.

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study shows that the leadership of the madrasah principal under the Ulil Albab Islamic Boarding School Education and Social Foundation has an important role in creating an educational environment that not only focuses on academic achievement, but also on the formation of student character based on Islamic values. The Principal of SMAIT Ulil Albab and the Principal of Madrasah Diniyah Ulil Albab implement different but complementary leadership strategies. The Principal of SMAIT uses an exemplary and disciplined approach, while the Principal of Madrasah Diniyah prioritizes a humanistic and personal approach. Both of these approaches have succeeded in building a madrasah culture that values integrity, a sense of responsibility, and empathy, so that a relationship of mutual trust is created between leaders, staff, and students. The moral-based leadership they apply is the basis for forming an academic culture that is conducive to the development of student character and element school in accordance with Islamic principles.

However, the findings of this study have several limitations. First, this study only involved two madrasah principals as subjects, so generalizing the findings to other madrasahs outside the Ulil Albab Foundation needs to be done carefully. Second, the data collection method is limited to semi-structured interviews and observations, which may not cover all aspects of the complexity of madrasah principal leadership. Further research is suggested to involve more subjects and use additional methods such as quantitative surveys to enrich the data obtained. In addition, longitudinal analysis can be conducted to see the long-term impact of leadership style on student character development in madrasahs.

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