

Spiritual Leadership and Pedagogical Competence: Enhancing the Quality of Student Services in an Islamic Boarding School

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Abstract

The quality of student services in Islamic boarding schools depends on two forces working together: the principal's spiritual leadership and teachers' pedagogical competence. How the first actually strengthens the second in daily practice remains underexplored. This study examines that relationship at SMP Daarut Tauhiid Boarding School Putra in Bandung. The research employed a qualitative approach with a single case study design. Data came from in-depth interviews with four key informants: the principal and the vice principals for curriculum, student affairs, and dormitory coaching. Participant observation and document analysis complemented these interviews. The data were analysed through an interactive thematic model, and trustworthiness was established through source and method triangulation and member checking. Four themes emerged. First, spiritual leadership manifests through exemplary conduct (*uswab hasanah*), value-based vision communication, and divine accountability (*mas'uliyah ilahiyah*) as its motivational foundation. Second, pedagogical competence is strengthened through coaching-based supervision, weekly teacher upgrading, and a digital monitoring system. Third, these elements jointly produce holistic improvements in student service quality across the academic, character, and spiritual dimensions. Fourth, the process is shaped by identifiable supporting and inhibiting factors. The study shows that transcendent accountability and data-driven instructional management can reinforce rather than undermine one another. Spiritual leadership thus becomes a catalyst for transformative education and learning, in which strengthening pedagogical competence drives the moral, spiritual, and academic growth of teachers and students alike.

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic education in Indonesia faces a problem it has not resolved. Boarding schools are expected to produce graduates who excel academically and embody strong moral character, yet the two demands frequently pull against each other in practice. Parents and the state increasingly judge these institutions by measurable indicators of service quality, while the schools' founding purpose rests on the formation of *akhlak*, which resists measurement (Chen, 2022; Nandankar et al., 2023; Sur & Çakır, 2024). Many pesantren respond by treating character formation as a separate programme bolted onto the academic curriculum, and the moral mission quietly recedes behind the pursuit of visible results (Ghozali & Hilal, 2024; Mu'alina et al., 2024). The principal inherits this strain most directly. Effective leadership here cannot simply manage a school; it must hold academic ambition and moral formation together as one purpose, embedding a transcendent vision into the ordinary routines of teaching (Alharbi et al., 2022; Westover, 2024). How a principal accomplishes this, and through what institutional means, is the problem this study confronts.

Research on educational leadership has moved steadily inward, from outward behaviour toward the values that drive it. Early attention centred on transformational leadership, which Fitrieningrum et al. (2025) link to gains in teachers' professional competence. A subsequent strand looked past technique to motive, as Halliwell et al. (2022) showed that leadership anchored in shared values does more to sustain teacher motivation than structural reforms alone. Spiritual leadership marks the furthest point of this progression, where Samul (2024) ties a leader's spiritual orientation to both teacher satisfaction and institutional quality. Nistoreanu & Aluculesei (2021) gave this turn its theoretical spine, casting spiritual leadership as the fusion of vision, altruistic love, and hope into a source of intrinsic motivation. Nursanty & Wulandari (2023) then grounded the model in Indonesian Islamic organisational life, where transcendent values are native rather than imported. These studies converge on a single claim. Leadership rooted in values and spirituality produces favourable educational outcomes, most powerfully in faith-based institutions. They share a blind spot as well. Almost all establish that such leadership works without explaining how it works, a silence that the next section takes up directly.

This accumulated confidence rests on a narrow evidentiary base. Most prior studies adopt quantitative designs that confirm a relationship between variables but leave its inner workings unopened. They establish that spiritual leadership matters without showing how its influence ever reaches a classroom. The cost of this omission is practical, not merely theoretical. Programmes meant to develop principals are still built on correlations no one has traced to actual practice. A second limitation compounds the first. Spiritual leadership has rarely been studied where it matters most, inside modern pesantren-based boarding schools whose worship, curriculum, and dormitory life form one value-saturated whole. These are not conventional schools wearing a religious character. Spirituality governs their every operation. Explaining leadership in such a setting demands a method that can follow values from a principal's conviction into a teacher's practice, which correlational designs cannot do.

This study adopts that different vantage point. It treats spiritual leadership as a foundation for transformative education and learning rather than as a managerial variable. Its concern is how a principal's spiritual leadership reshapes the encounter between teacher and student, turning instruction into an occasion for moral and spiritual growth rather than the transfer of content alone. The novelty lies in identifying the pathway that makes this possible. Transcendent accountability, the conviction that one answers ultimately to God, functions as a pedagogical force that reorients teachers toward the formation of the whole learner. Earlier research separates leadership from pedagogy. This study reads them as a single transformative process, in which strengthening a teacher's competence simultaneously deepens the moral and spiritual substance of what students learn. Spiritual leadership, on this reading, belongs at the centre of education's transformative purpose, not at its administrative margins.



Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study
(Adapted from Fry, 2003; Tobroni, 2010; Sallis, 2014)

SMP Daarut Tauhiid Boarding School Putra offers a setting where that process can be observed directly. Its philosophy elevates *akhlak* above academic attainment, and its students inhabit a fully structured environment in which spiritual leadership operates as a lived foundation rather than a stated ideal. This study therefore examines, in depth, how the principal's spiritual leadership strengthens teachers' pedagogical competence and, through it, transforms the quality of student services. The inquiry asks not whether these elements connect, but how that connection is enacted day to day. Its importance lies in reframing a question usually confined to management as a question about learning itself. The study offers Islamic education a process-level account of how transcendent values become transformative practice, and it gives school leaders a clearer grasp of how their convictions shape what unfolds in the classroom. The conceptual framework guiding the study is presented in **Figure 1**.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopted a qualitative approach with a single case study design, defining the case study as an empirical inquiry into a contemporary phenomenon examined within its real-life context (Al Qur'an, 2025; Naeem & Thomas, 2025; Sadeghi Moghadam et al., 2021). This design was chosen because the study seeks to explore spiritual leadership as it unfolds naturally within an institutional setting, a depth of understanding that quantitative methods are not equipped to provide (Kniffin & Priest, 2022). The research was conducted at SMP Daarut Tauhiid Boarding School Putra in Bandung, West Java. Four key informants were selected through purposive sampling on the basis of their direct relevance to, and involvement in, the phenomena under study (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2025). Their profiles are summarized in **Table 1**. The selection was designed to capture perspectives across the leadership, curriculum, student affairs, and dormitory coaching functions, thereby allowing the phenomenon to be examined from complementary institutional vantage points.

Table 1. Profile of Key Informants

Code	Position	Experience	Interview Duration
KS	School Principal	In post since 2022	Recorded and transcribed verbatim
WK	Vice Principal for Curriculum	More than 11 years	Recorded and transcribed verbatim
WKS	Vice Principal for Student Affairs	11 years	Recorded and transcribed verbatim
WP	Vice Principal for Dormitory Coaching	3 years	Recorded and transcribed verbatim

Data were gathered through three complementary techniques. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with each informant, ranging from 42 to 120 minutes in length, recorded with consent, and transcribed verbatim. Participant observation was carried out during the Thursday morning *halaqah*, the Monday post-assembly briefing, and the Tuesday management meeting. Document analysis drew on data from the *Mutabaah Yaumiyah* (MY) daily worship evaluation system, the Individual Performance Management System (SMKI), module submission records in the digital monitoring application, BRTT scores, and the semesterly Customer Satisfaction Survey (SKP) reports.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), comprising data condensation through thematic coding, data display in narrative and matrix form, and the drawing and verification of conclusions (Asipi et al., 2022). Trustworthiness was established through source triangulation, in which the perspectives of all four informants were compared; method triangulation, in which interview data were verified against observation and documents; and member checking, through follow-up confirmation with the informants (Rivaz et al., 2021). To protect informant identities in accordance with research ethics, participants are referred to throughout by their position codes: KS (Principal), WK (Vice Principal for Curriculum), WP (Vice Principal for Dormitory Coaching), and WKS (Vice Principal for Student Affairs).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results

SMP Daarut Tauhiid Boarding School Putra integrates the *Merdeka* Curriculum with a *pesantren* curriculum grounded in four institutional pillars: *ma'rifatullah*, leadership, entrepreneurship, and environmental awareness. Students inhabit a fully structured 24-hour boarding environment that moves from congregational *Fajr* prayer and academic study to religious *halaqah* and character-building programmes. Analysis of the interview, observation, and document data yielded four major themes: the manifestations of the principal's spiritual leadership, the strategies employed to strengthen teachers' pedagogical competence, the resulting impact on student service quality, and the factors that supported or constrained these processes. These themes are illustrated in Figure 2.

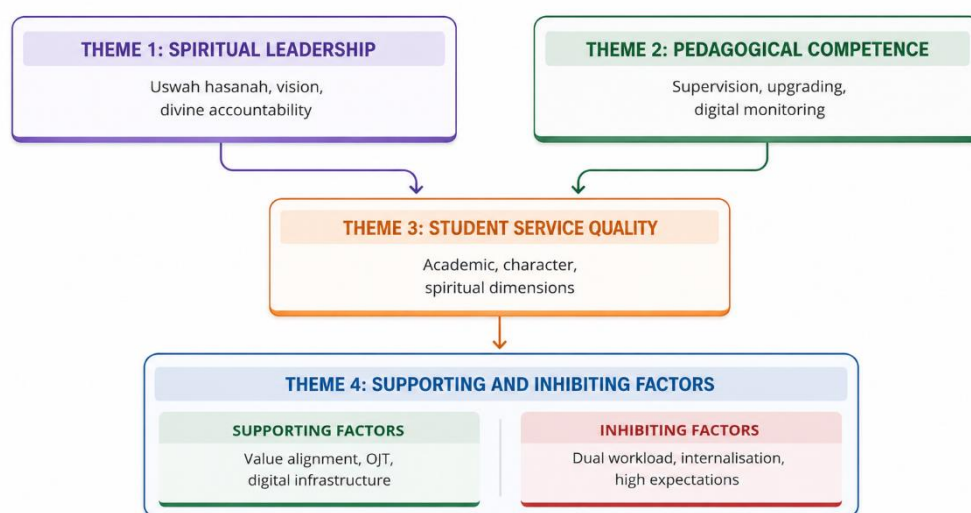


Figure 2. Major Research Themes
(Data Analysis: Miles, Huberman & Saldña, 2014)

Manifestations of the Principal's Spiritual Leadership

The principal's spiritual leadership surfaced consistently across three sub-dimensions: exemplary conduct (*uswah hasanah*), value-based vision communication, and divine accountability as the motivational foundation. All four informants, working independently of one another, identified the principal's personal example as his most powerful leadership instrument. WK articulated this with particular clarity: "He does things first before asking others to do them. He does not feel senior even though he is one of the school's predecessors. His exemplary conduct is visible in congregational prayer together with the students and teachers, and in being present at every activity (WK, Vice Principal for Curriculum, interview, 2026)." For WK, leadership authority is earned through participation rather than position. WP extended this observation, showing that the principal's example operates through concrete behavioural modelling rather than verbal instruction alone: "He always steps forward when there is a reprimand from the leadership or the foundation, even directly from the supervisory board, and he never blames the civitas. He takes full responsibility for any mistake at SMP. He is also able to regulate his emotions and responds to problems calmly but seriously (WP, Vice Principal for Dormitory Coaching, interview, 2026)."

What WP describes is a leader who absorbs accountability outward and models composure under pressure, setting a standard that staff observe before they are ever asked to meet it. WKS then identified the behavioural mechanism through which this example reshapes the conduct of staff: "His exemplary conduct makes subordinates feel ashamed if they do not follow instructions. His openness in enforcing rules becomes the key to change (WKS, Vice Principal for Student Affairs, interview, 2026)." Here the principal's example functions not as coercion but as moral suasion: compliance follows from a felt sense of accountability rather than from imposed authority.

The second sub-dimension, value-based vision communication, is operationalised through several structured channels. The school's vision rests on three elements: *tanbih*, character formation, and *rahmatan lil alamin*. These values are transmitted through the weekly Thursday morning *halaqah*, which combines Islamic study, spiritual reinforcement, institutional updates, and communal eating, described by the principal as “building community through something as simple as sharing *cilok* for Rp150,000”; the Monday post-assembly briefing for all staff; and the weekly Tuesday management meeting. The four institutional pillars are likewise required to appear in every subject module, a requirement the principal stated without exception: “Even in mathematics, it has to come in, whether through *ma'rifatullah*, leadership, entrepreneurship, or environmental awareness” (KS, interview, 22 April 2026).

The third sub-dimension is the most theologically distinctive: what this study terms divine accountability (*mas'uliyah ilahiyyah*), the framing of all professional responsibility not as compliance with a superior or an institution but as answerability to Allah. The principal conveyed this framework consistently and repeatedly across his communications with staff: “I always tell colleagues: your responsibility here is not to me, and not to the institution, your responsibility is to Allah. Because accountability to me, or to the Foundation, is only formal accountability. But each of you is answerable to Allah, so your rights and obligations are ultimately a matter between you and Him (KS, Principal, interview, 22).”

This framing relocates the source of motivation from external supervision to internal conviction. It is institutionally operationalised through the *Mutabaah Yaumiyah* (MY) system, a digital instrument for daily worship self-evaluation that tracks obligatory and *sunnah* prayers, Quranic recitation, *sunnah* fasting, *dhiker* (a minimum of 1,000 repetitions per day), and other indicators of worship, against a 95% completion target. Falling short of the target reduces a supplementary allowance, a measure framed not as disciplinary punishment but as a reinforcer of intrinsic motivation. These three sub-dimensions, together with their manifestations, empirical grounding, and institutional mechanisms, are summarised in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Sub-dimensions of the Principal's Spiritual Leadership

Sub-dimension	Manifestation	Empirical Evidence	Institutional Mechanism
Exemplary conduct (<i>uswah hasanah</i>)	Acting first before instructing others; presence at every activity; absorbing responsibility for mistakes	Identified independently by all four informants (WK, WP, WKS, KS)	Modelling in congregational prayer, attendance, and rule enforcement
Value-based vision communication	Transmission of <i>tanbih</i> , character formation, and <i>rahmatan lil alamin</i>	Four pillars required in every subject module	Thursday <i>halaqah</i> , Monday briefing, Tuesday management meeting
Divine accountability (<i>mas'uliyah ilahiyyah</i>)	Framing responsibility as answerability to Allah rather than to human authority	Conveyed consistently by KS across all communications with staff	<i>Mutabaah Yaumiyah</i> (MY) system with a 95% completion target

Table 2 reveals that the principal's spiritual leadership does not rest on any single instrument but on the mutual reinforcement of three distinct yet interlocking sub-dimensions. Exemplary conduct supplies the moral credibility that makes the other two persuasive, since a vision is only as compelling as the leader who embodies it, and accountability to Allah carries weight only when the one invoking it visibly lives by the same standard. Value-based vision communication then translates that personal example into a shared institutional direction, ensuring that the principal's conduct is not merely admired but understood as an expression of *tanbih*, character formation, and *rahmatan lil alamin*. Divine accountability, in turn, supplies the deepest layer of motivation, relocating the source of compliance from external supervision to internal conviction. What the table makes clear is that each sub-dimension is grounded in observable evidence and embedded in a concrete institutional mechanism rather than left as an abstract ideal: the *Mutabaah Yaumiyah* system operationalises divine accountability, the structured weekly channels

carry the vision, and the consistent testimony of all four informants anchors the principal's example. This convergence of espoused value, empirical evidence, and institutional mechanism is precisely what gives the leadership model its coherence and durability.

Strategies for Strengthening Teachers' Pedagogical Competence

Triangulation of interview, observation, and document data revealed three strategies for strengthening pedagogical competence, summarised in **Table 3**.

Table 3. Triangulation Matrix for Strengthening Pedagogical Competence

Strategy	Interview Data	Field Observation	Document Data
Coaching-based supervision	KS and WK describe a delegated accountability chain through the vice principals	Findings consolidated in the weekly Tuesday management meeting	Digital monitoring application: module progress, attendance, BRTT scores, activity logs
Structured professional development	WK outlines monthly IHT, foundation programmes, and facilitated external training	WP confirms weekly upgrading and Friday coordination	Cambridge English certification records; three-month OJT programme records
Psychologically safe professional culture	KS frames delegation as capacity-building, not the transfer of burden	Practices adjusted to protect teachers' family time	Communication allowance provided to all teachers

The first is coaching-based supervision delivered through a delegated hierarchical structure. The principal established clear accountability chains through the vice principals, each leading a functional team for curriculum, student affairs, or dormitory coaching, with findings consolidated in the weekly management meeting. This structure is supported by a digital monitoring application that WK, a mathematics teacher, developed independently: *"I built this application so that the principal and management can monitor everything in real time, module submission progress, daily classroom attendance, BRTT scores, and teacher activity reports, without adding to teachers' workloads. What teachers were already reporting through WhatsApp, I digitised so that all data is in one place (WK, Vice Principal for Curriculum, interview, 2026)."* The application consolidates module submission by subject and semester, daily classroom attendance with health-status indicators, BRTT (*Bersih, Rapi, Tertib, Teratur*, or Clean, Tidy, Orderly, Organised) scores recorded by duty teachers after the final period of each day, and teacher activity logs cross-validated against the SMKI system. This infrastructure allows the principal to monitor priorities in real time by scanning the data rather than processing every operational report by hand.

The second strategy is structured professional development delivered through multiple channels. WK outlined three: monthly in-house training (IHT) with external practitioners selected on the basis of supervision findings; foundation-level programmes, including Cambridge English certification for teachers; and facilitated external training in which teachers propose topics with institutional support. WP confirmed the weekly rhythm of this work: *"There is upgrading for teachers once a week. The vice principal for curriculum also gathers all teachers for coordination and to evaluate what has been accomplished during the week, usually on Fridays. Occasionally, they invite outside parties such as school supervisors (WP, Vice Principal for Dormitory Coaching, interview, 2026)."* Professional development thus operates on overlapping cycles, weekly, monthly, and foundation-wide, rather than as occasional one-off events. For new teachers, the school runs a three-month On-the-Job Training (OJT) programme in which candidates complete a structured induction, with a living allowance, before any formal placement. The principal explained its rationale: "Suppose we need five people, but twenty join the OJT, we find those who come closest to the standard. The others are not disadvantaged because they receive the allowance, and can be recalled when needed" (KS, interview, 22 April 2026). This process screens for value alignment from the outset rather than assuming it after appointment.

The third strategy is the cultivation of a psychologically safe professional culture aligned with institutional values. The principal reframed delegation as capacity-building rather than the transfer of burden: *“I delegate not to pass on my tasks. Colleagues will one day have the opportunity to serve in a role like mine, so they need to gain the experience now”* (KS, interview, 2026). He also revised institutional practices to protect teachers’ family time, abolishing the former expectation that tasks be completed however late that required, and provided every teacher with a communication allowance to offset the demands of digital reporting. Together these measures position professional growth as a form of trust extended to staff rather than a demand made of them.

Impact on Student Service Quality

The impact of spiritual leadership and strengthened pedagogical competence on student service quality was examined through the five SERVQUAL dimensions of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, as adapted by the principal in the school’s semesterly Customer Satisfaction Survey. Considering the quality of the learning process (reliability and tangibles), the integration of institutional values into subject content emerged consistently across all informants. WK offered a concrete example from his own classroom: *“When teaching linear inequalities, I connect it to the case of an overloaded lift, and then raise the question of adab: who should step out first? Mathematics becomes a vehicle for character formation, not just computation* (WK, Vice Principal for Curriculum, interview, 2026).” The example shows abstract content being recruited deliberately into moral formation. WP, who teaches *Fiqh*, described a parallel approach, linking the chapter on *tabarah* (ritual purity) to the value of not wasting water and thereby rendering theological content practically and morally meaningful. This integration is systematised through the four-pillar curriculum framework, which every subject module is required to reflect.

Turning to service consistency (reliability), WK explained that instructional delivery is insulated against disruption: *“Classrooms are never empty. If a teacher is absent, the duty teacher or the school counsellor substitutes. Lesson modules are prepared complete with YouTube links, journals, and student worksheets, so the duty teacher can immediately deliver the lesson”* (WK, interview, 23 April 2026). Because real-time attendance data is synchronised between classroom and dormitory records, discrepancies can be detected early, before they affect students. With respect to holistic service (empathy), the institution applies the DUZOLKAKOSI framework, which prohibits lying (*dusta*), oppression (*zolim*), rudeness (*kasar*), filth (*kotor*), and futility (*sia-sia*), to every interaction among students, teachers, and *musyrif* (dormitory supervisors). Violations are reported each morning by *musyrif*, compiled by administration, and submitted to the foundation’s monitoring platform. That the same behavioural standard governs all members of the institution, not students alone, reflects the spiritual leadership ethos in which character expectations flow from the top down.

Finally, with regard to quality assurance, the principal pointed to the semesterly SKP results as evidence of service quality outcomes: *“Based on the SKP results, our customer satisfaction survey, alhamdulillah the outcomes are very, very satisfying. Parents feel it: my child has improved, alhamdulillah. But there are always areas for improvement that we continue to work on* (KS, Principal, interview, 22 April 2026).” The principal’s acknowledgement that improvement remains ongoing is itself consistent with the continuous-improvement logic that underpins a quality-driven institution.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

Four factors supported the processes described above. The first is strong institutional value alignment, sustained through the MY, SMKI, and regular halaqah systems. The second is a selective, three-month OJT-based recruitment process that screens for value fit from the outset. The third is the digital monitoring infrastructure developed independently by WK, which provides real-time visibility without adding to teachers’ workloads. The fourth is low staff turnover, which the principal attributes to a shared sense of purpose, fair compensation, and a feeling of community belonging.

Three factors constrained these processes. The first is the dual workload borne by teachers who must manage both classroom instruction and dormitory supervision. The second is the difficulty of value internalisation for new staff entering a strongly value-driven culture; the principal acknowledged that “making colleagues truly understand is not easy; the priority is to help them feel comfortable in their responsibilities first” (KS, interview, 22 April 2026). The third is the complexity of serving a predominantly upper-middle-class parent community whose service expectations are both diverse and high.

Discussion

The findings of this study both confirm and substantially enrich existing theoretical frameworks. Spiritual leadership model, built on vision, altruistic love, and hope or faith, is clearly evident in the data (Fry & Vu, 2024); yet the findings also reveal an additional dimension that Fry’s original formulation does not explicitly articulate, namely divine accountability (*mas’uliyah ilahiyah*). The principal’s consistent framing of all professional responsibility as ultimately answerable to Allah functions as a powerful intrinsic motivator that operates beyond the reach of conventional organisational theory. This dimension resonates with Wahib (2025) contextualisation of spiritual leadership within the Indonesian Islamic educational tradition, and it extends that framework by demonstrating how the principle is operationalised through concrete institutional mechanisms such as the MY and SMKI systems. The model developed from these findings is presented in **Figure 3**.

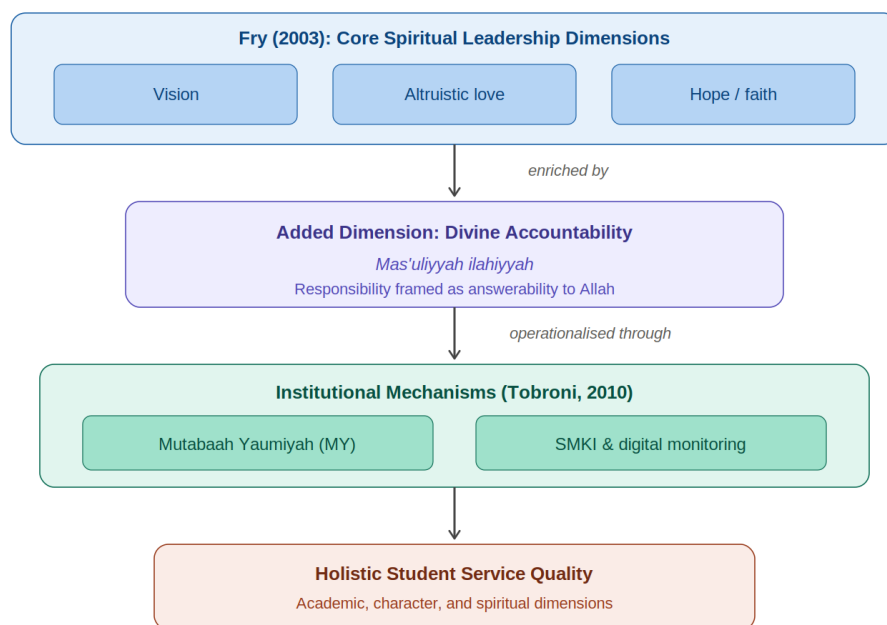


Figure 3. Spiritual Leadership Model in the Islamic Boarding School Context
(Developed from Fry, 2003 & Tobroni, 2010)

The digital monitoring application developed independently by WK represents a locally generated innovation that bridges spiritual accountability and data-driven instructional management. Rather than creating tension between ‘traditional’ Islamic education and ‘modern’ management systems, it shows how the two can reinforce one another within a coherent institutional culture: spiritual accountability (MY) and organisational management (SMKI and classroom monitoring) strengthen each other instead of competing. This finding challenges the common assumption that religiously grounded institutions are resistant to technological and managerial modernisation. The integration of values into subject content, with mathematics linked to Islamic adab, Fiqh to environmental responsibility, and every subject organised around the four

institutional pillars, corresponds to Billett (2025) conception of pedagogical competence as the capacity to make learning meaningful across the full range of students' lives. This finding also resonates with Jasti (2022) Total Quality Management framework as applied to education, in which quality is understood as holistic, relational, and grounded in shared values rather than reducible to procedural compliance. The principal's assertion that responsibility is owed "not to me or to the institution, but to Allah" articulates a philosophy of educational quality grounded in transcendent accountability, a contribution to Islamic educational management theory that is at once theologically distinctive and practically consequential. This finding supports and extends earlier arguments that quality in Islamic educational institutions necessarily treats spiritual and moral dimensions as integral rather than supplementary components of educational service (Budiyanti & Parhan, 2024; Hamdanah, 2024).

Beyond its contribution to leadership theory, this study speaks directly to the field of teaching and learning, and in particular to the project of transformative education. The findings demonstrate a pedagogical model in which value integration is not an add-on to instruction but its organising principle: abstract subject matter is deliberately recruited into character formation, as when linear inequalities are taught through the moral dilemma of an overloaded lift and the question of *adab*, or when the chapter on *tabarab* in *Fiqh* is linked to the ethic of not wasting water. Such practice moves learning beyond the transmission of content towards the transformation of the learner, reframing each subject as an occasion for moral and spiritual growth rather than mere mastery of material. It operationalises a conception of pedagogical competence as the capacity to make learning meaningful across the full range of students' lives, and it is systematised rather than left to individual initiative through the four-pillar curriculum framework, which requires every subject module, mathematics included, to carry the institution's formative values. Reinforced by an assured continuity of instruction, in which complete lesson modules and substitute teaching ensure learning is never interrupted, these elements together constitute a transferable model of transformative education in which spiritual leadership translates into concrete classroom practice. The model offers Islamic educational institutions a replicable framework that treats character formation and academic instruction not as competing priorities but as a single, integrated process of human transformation.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to understand how the principal's spiritual leadership strengthens teachers' pedagogical competence to improve the quality of student services at SMP Daarut Tauhiid Boarding School Putra. The spiritual leadership of the principal was found to operate through three mutually reinforcing dimensions, namely exemplary conduct (*uswah hasanah*) as the primary leadership instrument, value-based vision communication carried through structured weekly channels and the four-pillar curriculum, and divine accountability (*mas'uliyah ilahiyah*) that frames all professional responsibility as answerability to Allah rather than to human authority. Pedagogical competence, in turn, is strengthened through coaching-based supervision supported by a real-time digital monitoring application, weekly teacher upgrading and structured in-house and external training, and a psychologically safe culture that treats professional growth as a form of *amanah*, reinforced by a three-month induction system. Together these elements yield holistic improvements in student service quality across its academic, character, and quality-assurance dimensions. As a single case study conducted within one institution, however, this research is necessarily bounded in the breadth of its generalisability, and its reliance on a small number of key informants and self-reported institutional data further limits the scope of its claims. Future research is therefore encouraged to adopt multi-site and comparative designs across diverse boarding school contexts, to incorporate the perspectives of teachers, students, and parents more directly, and to employ longitudinal approaches capable of tracing how these leadership and pedagogical processes evolve and sustain their effects over time.

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