Implementation of Leadership Learning in Shaping Students' Leadership Character at SDIT Abu Seno, Bandung City

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Keywords:	Abstract
Leadership Learning; Leadership Character; Islamic Integrated Education	*Leadership education in elementary schools plays a crucial role in shaping students' moral responsibility, independence, and collaborative skills from an early age. This study aims to describe the implementation of leadership learning as a means of developing students' leadership character at SDIT Abu Seno, an Islamic integrated elementary school in Bandung. Using a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study design, data were collected through observations, interviews with teachers, principals, students, and parents, as well as documentation of school activities. The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, supported by source triangulation to ensure validity. The findings show that leadership learning is integrated into thematic lessons and daily school programs, including Class Responsibility Week and student projects, which encourage students to practice responsibility, independence, and teamwork. Both teachers and parents reported behavioral improvements such as students becoming more disciplined, proactive, and helpful at home. Leadership is internalized as amanah—a moral trust before God—rather than a position of authority. This model fosters not only social and emotional growth but also spiritual awareness consistent with Islamic educational principles. The study concludes that leadership learning can serve as a holistic and practical approach to Islamic character education, providing a replicable framework for developing young leaders who are intellectually capable, morally grounded, and spiritually aware.*

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Primary education is a crucial stage in shaping children's character, encompassing not only cognitive aspects but also social–emotional development and leadership values. A supportive elementary school environment can transform students from mere recipients of knowledge into active agents capable of taking initiative, assuming responsibility, and leading themselves and others. In this context, leadership education has become increasingly important, as today's education system demands graduates who are not only intelligent but also possess strong leadership

character. Previous studies have shown that teachers' leadership behaviour, role-modelling, and school culture have a positive impact on students' character formation (Samong et al., 2016). Furthermore, the broader framework of character education emphasises that learning strategies based on the principles of "caught, taught, and sought" make a tangible contribution to students' character development (Gani Ali, 2013).

In Indonesia, many elementary schools, including integrated Islamic primary schools, have begun to integrate leadership values into their curricula and daily activities (Purwanto Sidiq & Indra, 2023). However, systematic implementation of leadership learning in the context of integrated Islamic primary schools remains relatively under-documented. There is therefore room to explore how such implementation operates in practice and how it contributes to the development of students' leadership character. This study focuses on SDIT Abu Seno in Bandung City, an integrated Islamic primary school that has implemented a leadership learning programme for its students. Accordingly, this research lies at the intersection of character education, student leadership, and integrated Islamic primary education.

The Problem of The Study

Despite the existence of many character and leadership programmes at the elementary level, several issues persist. First, how are leadership learning programmes actually designed and carried out in integrated Islamic primary schools such as SDIT Abu Seno? Second, to what extent does leadership learning genuinely contribute to the formation of students' leadership character? Third, there is a lack of empirical studies offering an in-depth description of the process and impact of leadership learning in Indonesia's integrated Islamic primary schools. In other words, there remains a knowledge gap regarding how leadership education is implemented in this context and how it influences students' leadership character.

Research's State of the Art

The body of literature on character education has grown significantly. For instance, a literature review concluded that character education programmes at the K–12 level focus on developing students as moral and social agents, though they face challenges concerning definition, strategy, and evaluation of effectiveness (Martinez & Partin, 2023). Moreover, research has shown that school leadership and school culture play a significant role in shaping students' character (Ansori et al., 2017). Studies in Indonesian elementary schools have also highlighted that character development through integrated Islamic education modules enhances students' positive attitudes (Ansori et al., 2024). Nevertheless, little literature specifically discusses leadership learning—that is, programmes deliberately designed to cultivate leadership capacity among primary school pupils—including how teachers and schools design, implement, and evaluate such programmes within the context of integrated Islamic primary education. Thus, although much research exists on character and leadership more broadly, few studies address leadership education in Indonesia's integrated Islamic primary schools (Faiz & Soleh, 2021).

Novelty, Research Gap, & Objective

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the implementation of leadership learning within an Integrated Islamic Primary School (SDIT) environment as a strategy for shaping students' leadership character. To date, most studies on character education in Indonesia have centred on general moral values such as discipline, responsibility, and honesty, whereas the aspect of leadership among primary school children has received limited systematic attention. This study offers a new perspective by positioning leadership education not merely as a supplementary or extracurricular activity, but as an integral component of the learning process that nurtures independence, decision-making ability, and teamwork within an Islamic value framework (Tanjung & Amelia, 2017).

The research gap arises from the limited empirical data and conceptual descriptions regarding how integrated Islamic primary schools design, implement, and evaluate leadership learning in practice. While several previous studies have discussed character education in primary schools, they have not specifically examined leadership practices integrated into classroom learning and school culture. Moreover, few studies have explored how Islamic leadership values are transformed into contextual learning experiences for young learners. Therefore, this study seeks to fill that gap through a case study approach at SDIT Abu Seno, Bandung City.

The main objective of this research is to describe the implementation of leadership learning at SDIT Abu Seno, including programme planning, implementation strategies, and the role of teachers in instilling leadership values in students. Additionally, it aims to analyse the contribution of leadership learning to the development of students' leadership character, particularly in terms of responsibility, independence, and collaboration. The findings of this study are expected to enrich the body of knowledge in primary education, particularly in developing leadership-based character education models that are relevant to the context of integrated Islamic schools in Indonesia.

METHOD

Type and Design

This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study design (Creswell, 2016). This approach was chosen as it is considered the most appropriate for gaining an in-depth understanding of how leadership learning is implemented and how such activities contribute to the formation of students' leadership character at SDIT Abu Seno, Bandung City. Through a case study, the researcher can explore the phenomenon contextually and obtain a comprehensive picture of the strategies, values, and practices applied within the integrated Islamic school environment.

Data and Data Sources

The research was conducted in three main stages. The first stage was the pre-field phase, which included preparing research instruments such as observation and interview guidelines, as well as obtaining permission from the school. The second stage was field data collection, during which the researcher conducted direct

observations of the learning process and student leadership activities, carried out semi-structured interviews with the headteacher, teachers, and students, and examined supporting documents such as lesson plans (RPP), activity reports, and photo documentation. The third stage was data analysis and interpretation, which involved reviewing the results of interviews and observations to identify key themes related to the implementation and impact of leadership learning at the school.

The sources of data consisted of the headteacher, teachers, and students directly involved in leadership activities, as well as relevant school documents. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, which involves choosing individuals deemed most knowledgeable about and directly involved in the implementation of the leadership programme. The headteacher provided information about policies and the vision of leadership character development; teachers explained the strategies and teaching methods applied in the classroom; while students shared their perspectives and experiences of participating in leadership activities.

Data Collection Technique

Data collection techniques included observation, semi-structured interviews, and document study (Sugiono, 2013). Observation was conducted to capture real situations in learning activities and classroom interactions. Interviews were used to explore participants' views and experiences more deeply, while documentation served to strengthen the findings and enable data triangulation. All data were recorded, transcribed, and systematically organised into field notes (Leko et al., 2021).

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed the interactive model by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of three steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out by selecting relevant information from observations and interviews, then categorising it into themes such as planning, implementation, and the impact of leadership learning. The reduced data were then presented in descriptive narrative form to illustrate the relationships among themes. Conclusions were drawn by comparing the field findings with the theoretical foundations of character education and leadership. To ensure data validity, source and method triangulation were applied by comparing information from different informants and data collection techniques. This analytical process aimed to obtain a valid and comprehensive understanding of how leadership learning at SDIT Abu Seno is designed, implemented, and contributes to shaping students' leadership character.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Implementation of Leadership Learning at SDIT Abu Seno

The findings reveal that leadership learning at SDIT Abu Seno is not treated as an additional or ceremonial activity, but rather as an integral part of the learning process and school culture (Saefudin et al., 2023). The programme is systematically integrated into the thematic curriculum and students' daily activities, enabling leadership values to be internalised through contextual experiences. Each class has a rotating structure of responsibilities, including class leader, discipline coordinator,

and cleanliness team, which changes weekly. This rotation ensures that all students have the opportunity both to lead and to be led, allowing them to learn responsibility, cooperation, and self-awareness within real social contexts.

This learning model demonstrates that SDIT Abu Seno views leadership as a process of character formation rather than as a position or status. This concept aligns with the principle of transformational leadership in education, where leadership is understood as an influential process that shapes individuals' values, behaviours, and aspirations (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Through daily activities such as leading prayers, facilitating group discussions, and managing student projects, pupils are trained to take active roles within their social environment. This approach reflects the principles of experiential learning proposed by Kolb (2014), who asserted that learning becomes more meaningful when students engage directly in experiences that are consciously reflected upon.

Teachers play a central role in this process as facilitators and role models (*uswah hasanah*). They do not merely transfer knowledge about leadership values but also exemplify them through their attitudes, communication styles, and decision-making in the classroom. Teachers' exemplary conduct serves as a primary medium for value internalisation, as emphasised by Bandura (1977) in social learning theory, which states that children learn through observing and imitating respected models. In the context of an Islamic school, teachers' roles also have a spiritual dimension — serving as *murabbi* who instil the values of trust (*amanah*), responsibility, and excellence (*ihsan*) in every leadership-related activity.

These findings reinforce Lickona's (1992) view that effective character education must involve three key dimensions: *knowing the good*, *feeling the good*, and *doing the good*. At SDIT Abu Seno, these three dimensions operate harmoniously. Students are guided to understand Islamic leadership values through explicit classroom instruction, to experience those values through reflection and social interaction, and to practise them through tangible responsibilities in classroom activities. Thus, leadership education at SDIT Abu Seno is not merely cognitive, but also affective and psychomotor in nature.

Furthermore, the implemented learning pattern aligns with the concept of integrated character education (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2006), in which character formation occurs through the integration of curriculum, school culture, and teacher role-modelling. Activities such as *class responsibility week* and *student projects* serve as platforms for the actualisation of leadership values accompanied by spiritual reflection. This indicates that SDIT Abu Seno has succeeded in fostering a learning environment that cultivates a sense of ownership, empathy, and moral responsibility, consistent with Islamic principles that regard leadership as a trust (*amanah*) (Putra & Afrilia, 2020). Therefore, the implementation of leadership learning at SDIT Abu Seno can be categorised as a comprehensive practice of character education. It not only focuses on academic outcomes but also on shaping individuals with leadership spirit, noble character, and a commitment to collective well-being (Ni'amah & M, 2021). The learning pattern applied in this school serves as a concrete example of how leadership values can be integrated within integrated Islamic primary education and

offers a replicable model for other educational institutions seeking to nurture leadership values from an early age.

The Impact of Leadership Learning on Students' Character

The findings indicate that leadership learning at SDIT Abu Seno has a significant influence on the development of students' character, particularly in three main dimensions: responsibility, independence, and collaboration. The impact is evident not only within the school environment but also reflected in students' behaviour at home. This demonstrates that the leadership learning implemented in school successfully fosters a sustainable transfer of values between the learning environment and children's daily lives.

In terms of responsibility, students showed increased awareness in fulfilling their assigned duties. Observations revealed that pupils voluntarily maintained classroom cleanliness, led morning prayers, and organised queues without frequent reminders. Teachers also noted consistent behavioural changes following the implementation of the leadership programme. As stated by Mrs Dila, one of the class teachers at SDIT Abu Seno:

> "Since the leadership learning was introduced, the children have become more responsible. They tidy up their desks and chairs after lessons without being told. When given tasks, they complete them earnestly and rarely delay."

This statement illustrates that leadership learning has helped students internalise the meaning of responsibility in a practical way, beyond verbal instruction. The value of *amanah* (trustworthiness) taught at school has evidently been internalised and translated into students' real actions in the classroom. Similar changes were observed in the aspect of independence. Children became more confident in taking initiative, organising activities, and making simple decisions. This was also recognised by parents at home. During interviews, Mrs Resa shared:

> "Since joining the leadership programme, my child has become much more independent. Previously, I had to remind them to tidy up the bed every morning, but now they do it on their own. They even prepare their school supplies without being asked."

Meanwhile, another parent, Mrs Juni, expressed a similar observation regarding her child's behavioural change at home:

> "My child is now more willing to help around the house. They used to be indifferent, but now they help wash the dishes, tidy up their sibling's toys, and sometimes even fetch water for us. They said it's part of their responsibility training from school."

Both statements indicate that the leadership values instilled at school have shaped new habits oriented towards independence and social care. Leadership learning has successfully cultivated positive behaviour that extends into family life, demonstrating a strong connection between character education and moral value reinforcement. In terms of collaboration, students showed improved abilities in working together and respecting others' opinions. During *student project* activities, children were observed sharing roles, listening to peers' ideas, and completing tasks collectively with a spirit of cooperation. Teachers noted that classroom dynamics became more active and harmonious, as each child had the opportunity to lead and

contribute. The Islamic values of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) and *musyawarah* (deliberation) were clearly embodied in these learning practices.

These findings align with the study by Matthews (2004), which demonstrated that leadership education in primary schools enhances students' self-regulation and social empathy. They also reinforce Goleman's (2002) theory of emotional intelligence, which asserts that effective leadership at an early age is not solely based on cognitive ability but also on emotional management, empathy, and the capacity to build healthy social relationships. Therefore, leadership learning at SDIT Abu Seno can be understood as a means of holistic emotional, moral, and social character development. The programme not only trains children to become leaders in academic contexts but also nurtures responsibility, independence, and a collaborative spirit reflected in their everyday lives. This proves that a leadership education model grounded in Islamic values can serve as an effective approach to strengthening character education in primary schools and offers a replicable framework for other educational institutions.

Interpretation of Findings in the Context of Integrated Islamic Primary Education

The implementation of leadership education at SDIT Abu Seno demonstrates distinctive characteristics rooted in Islamic values that position leadership as *amanah* (trust), rather than power. In the Islamic paradigm, leadership is not a position to be pursued, but a moral responsibility to be carried out with integrity and sincerity. This concept aligns with the Qur'anic verse in Surah Al-Ahzab [33]:72, which highlights the *amanah* entrusted to humankind. At SDIT Abu Seno, this principle is translated pedagogically through teaching practices that encourage students to understand leadership as a form of service rather than domination.

The principle of *leadership as trust* is reflected in various school activities, such as value-based *student projects*, the *Class Responsibility Week* programme, and the habituation of good manners (*adab*) in speech and action. For instance, through *student projects*, pupils are trained to collaborate within teams while instilling the values of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), *amanah* (trust), and responsibility. Meanwhile, during *Class Responsibility Week*, students take turns managing classroom duties with moral awareness. These activities cultivate the mindset that true leadership begins with the ability to lead oneself before leading others—consistent with the Islamic educational principle of *mujahadah an-nafs* (self-discipline and self-struggle).

This approach aligns with arti et al. (2024) view that value-based religious education can strengthen character dimensions through the integration of *faith (iman)*, *knowledge (ilmu)*, and *action (amal)*. At SDIT Abu Seno, leadership learning not only develops social skills but also nurtures deep spiritual awareness. Students are taught not merely to become responsible leaders but also ethical ones, conscious that every act of leadership carries accountability before Allah. This signifies that leadership education in integrated Islamic primary schools has evolved into a form of *tarbiyah ruhaniyah*—education that cultivates spiritual self-awareness through lived experience.

Compared to secular character education models that primarily emphasise universal moral aspects, the model applied at SDIT Abu Seno offers a holistic-

integrative approach that combines four dimensions of human development: intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual. Intellectually, students learn to understand leadership concepts through thematic learning; emotionally, they develop empathy and emotional regulation in teamwork; socially, they refine communication and communal responsibility; and spiritually, they internalise *amanah* and sincerity (*ikhlas*) as the foundation of all actions. This integration resonates with Al-Attas's (2014) conception that the ultimate goal of Islamic education is the formation of the *insan adabi*—a person who possesses both knowledge and virtuous character.

Therefore, the leadership learning model at SDIT Abu Seno can be understood as a form of *integrated Islamic character education* that seeks harmony between worldly and spiritual values. This approach not only shapes students into effective social leaders but also into *khalifah*—spiritually accountable stewards. Such an educational model holds great potential for replication in other Islamic primary schools in Indonesia, especially in addressing the challenges of globalisation and moral crises in the modern era. Through instilling the value of leadership as *amanah*, SDIT Abu Seno demonstrates that Islamic-based character education is not only relevant but also capable of producing a generation grounded in integrity and noble character.

Implications and Directions for Future Research

The findings of this study carry significant implications for the development of character education at the primary school level, particularly within the context of integrated Islamic schools. First, the implementation of leadership learning at SDIT Abu Seno demonstrates that leadership can be cultivated from an early age through integrated, value-oriented learning experiences based on Islamic principles. This model can serve as a contextual strategy for character education in which students are not merely taught to understand concepts such as responsibility and independence theoretically, but are also given the opportunity to experience them directly through daily practice. In this way, primary schools can play a more active role in shaping a generation that is disciplined, empathetic, and capable of leading themselves with strong moral values. Second, the results of this research highlight the crucial role of teachers as models of moral leadership within the school environment. Leadership learning can only be effective if teachers possess a reflective awareness of their exemplary role (*uswah hasanah*) before their students. Therefore, schools need to strengthen teachers' capacities through training focused on *leadership pedagogy*—the ability to teach in a way that inspires, guides, and nurtures leadership character in students. Teachers thus function not only as instructors but also as facilitators of character formation who foster Islamic values throughout the learning process. Third, the findings provide a foundation for developing a leadership-based Islamic character education curriculum. The integration of leadership values, spirituality, and social skills should be designed not only within extracurricular activities but also within the intramural curriculum (Depdiknas, 2007). Such a curriculum has the potential to reinforce harmony among the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains of students—consistent with the goal of Islamic education to nurture balance among the intellect (*'aql*), heart (*qalb*), and actions (*'amal*).

Beyond its practical contributions, this research also opens up opportunities for further, broader studies. Future research is encouraged to expand the scope to other primary schools with different social and cultural backgrounds, in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of how leadership education is implemented in diverse contexts. A quantitative approach could also be employed to measure the effectiveness of leadership learning against specific character indicators such as discipline, responsibility, social empathy, and environmental awareness (Renz et al., 2018). Furthermore, subsequent research may explore how parents and the wider school community contribute to reinforcing the sustainability of leadership values beyond the classroom. A *school–home partnership* approach could offer new insights into the collaboration between teachers, students, and parents in building an Islamic leadership culture. In this way, leadership-based character education would not end within the confines of school activities but become a living value system embedded within both home and community life.

Conceptually, this study is expected to make an academic contribution to the development of integrated Islamic character education theory, particularly in formulating leadership models for children at the primary level that are relevant to contemporary needs. Values such as *amanah* (trust), responsibility, *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), and *ihsan* (excellence) can be further developed into a new pedagogical framework for 21st-century learning—an education that not only produces intellectually capable students but also cultivates morally grounded, well-mannered, and faithful young leaders.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the conclusion is to help the reader understand why your research is significant after reading the paper. A conclusion is not merely a summary of your points or a restatement of your research problem; it is a synthesis of the most significant points. For most essays, one well-developed paragraph is sufficient for the conclusion, but in some instances, two or three paragraphs may be necessary. The Conclusion section is intended not only to repeat findings. The conclusion shall contain substantializing of meaning. It can present a statement of what is being expected as proposed in the "Introduction" and what has happened as reported in the Results and Discussions so that there is compatibility. An addition can be made concerning the prospects of enriching the research findings and developing the potential for future research.

The findings of this study demonstrate that the implementation of leadership learning at SDIT Abu Seno has succeeded in transforming leadership education from a theoretical concept into a lived moral practice. Rooted in Islamic values, leadership is not positioned as an instrument of authority but as a form of amanah—a trust that demands integrity, service, and responsibility before God. Through integrative programs such as Class Responsibility Week and student projects grounded in moral values, students not only learn to lead but also to serve, collaborate, and act with empathy. This transformation confirms that leadership education, when embedded

in an Islamic character framework, is capable of cultivating responsible, independent, and spiritually conscious young leaders.

Furthermore, this study reveals the crucial role of teachers as uswah hasanah—living examples of moral leadership whose attitudes and behaviors shape students more profoundly than instruction alone. Teachers at SDIT Abu Seno function as facilitators of reflection and internalization, enabling leadership values to be experienced rather than merely explained. This finding underscores that leadership education in Islamic elementary contexts must be relational, value-driven, and spiritually grounded. Beyond its empirical contribution, this research substantiates the idea proposed in the introduction that leadership learning can serve as a strategic model for integrated Islamic character education. The results confirm that such an approach nurtures not only intellectual development but also emotional balance, social harmony, and spiritual awareness—the essential dimensions of holistic education ('aql, qalb, and 'amal). These findings enrich the discourse on character education by offering an Islamic pedagogical model that harmonizes knowledge, faith, and morality.

Future research may extend this study by applying mixed-method or quantitative designs to measure the long-term impact of leadership education on specific indicators such as discipline, empathy, and prosocial behavior. It is also recommended to explore school–home partnerships that reinforce leadership values beyond the classroom. Through such continuity, Islamic leadership education can evolve into a sustainable moral ecosystem that shapes not only competent students but also ethically grounded future leaders.

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Conflict of Interest Statement: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be constructed as a potential conflict of interest.