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Visionary Leadership In Islamic Education For Strengthening Religious Moderation And Social Inclusion

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Abstract: This study investigates the role of visionary leadership in strengthening religious moderation and social inclusion at Madrasah Aliyah Ummul Akhyar Tulungagung. The study addresses three aspects: leadership vision, implementation of moderation and inclusion, and their impact on students and institutional development. A qualitative descriptive design was applied using in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis involving school leaders, teachers, and students. Data were analyzed through thematic categorization and interpretive analysis supported by triangulation to ensure credibility. The findings reveal that visionary leadership is articulated through a clear value-oriented vision, exemplary conduct, and strategic alignment of institutional programs. Moderation and inclusion are embedded across curriculum, extracurricular activities, and daily interactions, creating a consistent culture of respect and collaboration. Students demonstrate increased tolerance, openness, and critical awareness in engaging with diversity. Institutional development reflects sustainability through continuous program innovation, stakeholder collaboration, and adaptive practices. The study concludes that visionary leadership provides a coherent and sustainable framework for integrating religious moderation and social inclusion within Islamic education.

Keywords: Visionary Leadership, Islamic Education, Religious Moderation, Social Inclusion, Educational Leadership

INTRODUCTION

The dynamics of contemporary society require Islamic educational institutions to respond to increasing diversity and complexity in religious and social life. Global interaction, digital communication, and cultural exchange shape new patterns of religious understanding that demand balanced and contextual responses. Educational environments are expected to promote inclusivity, dialogue, and peaceful coexistence while maintaining strong theological foundations. Within this context, leadership becomes a determining factor in shaping institutional direction and educational outcomes. Visionary leadership offers a framework that emphasizes long-term orientation, innovation, and value-based transformation. It enables institutions to anticipate future challenges while grounding practices in ethical and cultural principles (Nanus, 1992). In Islamic education, visionary leadership is closely related to efforts in strengthening religious moderation, which seeks

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to position religion as a source of harmony and social cohesion (Kamali, 2015). This study raises the question of how visionary leadership is conceptualized and practiced in Islamic educational institutions to strengthen religious moderation and social inclusion at Madrasah Aliyah Ummul Akhyar Tulungagung.

Islamic schools and madrasahs operate within a dual responsibility that involves preserving religious identity and responding to pluralistic social realities. This condition requires leaders to integrate inclusive values into curriculum design, teaching strategies, and institutional culture. Leadership practices shape how knowledge is constructed, how teachers interact with students, and how diversity is perceived within the school environment. Visionary leadership encourages leaders to move beyond routine administration and engage in strategic thinking that aligns institutional goals with broader societal needs. Leaders are expected to transform abstract values such as tolerance and inclusivity into practical programs that influence daily activities. Research in educational leadership shows that visionary leaders play a significant role in fostering collaborative cultures and encouraging innovation within schools (Sergiovanni, 2005). In the Indonesian context, the integration of religious moderation into education has become an important agenda to counter exclusivism and strengthen national cohesion (Hefner, 2011). The second question explored in this study concerns how visionary leadership is implemented in strengthening religious moderation and social inclusion within institutional practices at Madrasah Aliyah Ummul Akhyar Tulungagung.

Religious moderation and social inclusion require more than conceptual articulation since both demand consistent internalization through lived experiences. Students need to encounter values such as empathy, respect, and cooperation in both formal learning and informal interactions. Leadership plays a central role in ensuring that these values are embedded across institutional dimensions, including curriculum, extracurricular activities, and school policies. Visionary leadership supports this process by creating alignment between vision, practice, and institutional culture. Leaders encourage participation, critical reflection, and adaptive learning that allow institutions to respond effectively to changing social contexts. Studies indicate that leadership significantly influences school climate, student engagement, and long-term institutional

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sustainability (Louis et al., 2010). Within Islamic education, leadership that combines moral integrity with contextual awareness strengthens the relevance of moderation values in contemporary settings (Esposito, 2019). The third question examines how visionary leadership impacts student development and institutional growth in promoting inclusive and moderate educational environments at Madrasah Aliyah Ummul Akhyar Tulungagung.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to examine visionary leadership practices and their impact on religious moderation and social inclusion at Madrasah Aliyah Ummul Akhyar Tulungagung. A qualitative design was selected to capture the complexity of leadership behavior, institutional culture, and participant experiences within their natural setting. This approach enables the researcher to interpret meanings, values, and interactions that shape educational processes in Islamic institutions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). The research site was chosen due to its active commitment to integrating moderation and inclusion values into its educational practices and institutional vision.

Data collection was conducted through multiple techniques to ensure depth and richness of information. In-depth interviews were carried out with the head of the madrasah, teachers, and selected students to explore leadership perspectives, implementation strategies, and perceived outcomes. Observations were undertaken during classroom instruction, religious activities, and daily social interactions to understand how moderation and inclusion values were practiced in real contexts. Documentation analysis included institutional policies, curriculum frameworks, and program reports that reflect the integration of these values. The use of diverse data sources supports comprehensive understanding and strengthens the interpretive process (Patton, 2015).

The data analysis process followed a systematic and iterative procedure. Collected data were organized, reduced, and categorized into meaningful themes related to leadership practices, cultural implementation, and student development. Patterns were identified through continuous comparison and interpretation, allowing the researcher to construct a coherent narrative that addresses the research questions. This analytical process emphasizes flexibility and reflexivity,

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which are essential in qualitative research to capture the dynamic nature of social phenomena (Saldaña, 2021).

Credibility and trustworthiness were ensured through triangulation of data sources and methods. Information obtained from interviews was compared with observational findings and documentary evidence to confirm consistency. Validation with participants was conducted to ensure that interpretations accurately reflected their experiences and perspectives. Prolonged engagement in the research setting contributed to deeper understanding and minimized potential bias. These strategies enhance the rigor and reliability of qualitative inquiry, ensuring that the findings provide a valid representation of leadership practices and their impact on moderation and inclusion (Nowell et al., 2017).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Visionary Leadership Practices in Islamic Education

Leadership at Madrasah Aliyah Ummul Akhyar Tulungagung reflects a clear and future-oriented vision that places religious moderation and social inclusion at the center of institutional development. The head of the madrasah articulates this vision through formal planning documents, routine meetings, and daily communication with teachers and students. The vision emphasizes tolerance, respect for diversity, and ethical responsibility as core values that guide all educational activities. This orientation aligns with the concept of visionary leadership that focuses on creating a shared sense of purpose and direction within an organization (Westley & Mintzberg, 1989). The clarity of vision enables all members of the institution to understand their roles in fostering an inclusive and moderate educational environment.

The implementation of this vision is evident in the way leadership integrates values into institutional strategies and practices. Strategic planning includes programs that promote dialogue, collaboration, and character development. School activities are designed to reinforce moderation values through both academic and non-academic initiatives. The leader ensures that these programs are not isolated efforts but part of a coherent system that connects curriculum, extracurricular activities, and social interactions. This approach reflects the understanding that

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leadership effectiveness depends on the ability to align vision with practice and institutional culture. Research on educational leadership highlights that vision-driven leadership contributes to organizational coherence and long-term improvement (Leithwood & Sun, 2012).

Leadership is also enacted through personal example, where the head of the madrasah demonstrates openness, fairness, and respect in interactions with teachers and students. This modeling of behavior serves as a powerful mechanism for transmitting values and shaping institutional norms. Teachers observe and adopt similar attitudes in their teaching practices, creating a consistent environment that supports moderation and inclusion. The role of leaders as role models has been widely recognized as a critical factor in influencing organizational culture and individual behavior (Brown & Treviño, 2006). At Madrasah Aliyah Ummul Akhyar, this influence is visible in the way teachers communicate with students and manage classroom dynamics.

Teachers are encouraged to apply innovative and inclusive teaching methods that promote active participation and critical reflection. Classroom practices shift toward student-centered learning, where discussion, collaboration, and problem-solving are emphasized. These approaches allow students to engage with diverse perspectives and develop a deeper understanding of religious and social issues. Leadership supports teachers through guidance, training, and continuous feedback, ensuring that pedagogical practices align with institutional values. Studies on instructional leadership indicate that support for teacher development enhances the quality of teaching and student learning outcomes (Robinson et al., 2009).

The integration of visionary leadership into daily practice creates a learning environment that encourages openness and mutual respect. Students are given opportunities to express their views and engage in constructive dialogue with peers. School programs such as discussions, group projects, and community activities provide spaces for practicing moderation values in real-life contexts. These experiences contribute to the development of social skills and ethical awareness among students. The emphasis on experiential learning aligns with research that highlights the importance of active engagement in shaping student attitudes and behaviors (Kolb, 1984).



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Leadership at the madrasah also fosters collaboration among stakeholders, including teachers, students, and parents. This collaborative approach strengthens the implementation of moderation and inclusion by creating shared responsibility. Decision-making processes involve consultation and dialogue, which enhance trust and commitment within the school community. Collaborative leadership practices are associated with increased organizational effectiveness and stronger relationships among stakeholders (Spillane, 2006). At Madrasah Aliyah Ummul Akhyar, this approach contributes to the sustainability of programs and the consistency of value implementation.

The findings indicate that visionary leadership functions as a central mechanism in shaping institutional identity and direction. The alignment between vision, practice, and culture creates a stable yet dynamic environment that supports continuous improvement. The madrasah demonstrates the ability to adapt to changing social contexts while maintaining its commitment to moderation and inclusion. This adaptability reflects the essence of visionary leadership, which combines foresight with practical action to achieve long-term goals. Research on leadership and organizational change suggests that such adaptability is essential for sustaining innovation and relevance in educational institutions (Fullan, 2014).

The consistency between leadership vision and institutional practice is reflected in student behavior and school climate. Students exhibit respectful communication, openness to differences, and willingness to collaborate with others. The school environment becomes a space where diversity is appreciated and inclusion is practiced naturally. Leadership ensures that these values are reinforced through continuous monitoring and evaluation of programs. The presence of a clear vision, supported by consistent implementation, strengthens the credibility of the institution as a center of moderate and inclusive Islamic education.

The overall findings demonstrate that visionary leadership at Madrasah Aliyah Ummul Akhyar Tulungagung plays a significant role in shaping educational practices and institutional culture. Leadership provides direction, inspires participation, and ensures alignment between values and actions. The integration of vision into daily practices creates a sustainable system that



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supports the development of students and the institution. Visionary leadership emerges as a key factor in advancing religious moderation and social inclusion within Islamic education.

Implementation of Moderation and Inclusion in Institutional Culture

Moderation and inclusion at Madrasah Aliyah Ummul Akhyar Tulungagung are embedded within the institutional culture through systematic integration across curriculum, extracurricular activities, and daily social practices. The school frames moderation as a lived value that guides interactions and decision-making rather than a topic confined to a single subject. Classroom learning incorporates themes of diversity, peaceful coexistence, and ethical responsibility in ways that connect religious teachings with contemporary social realities. Teachers facilitate discussions that encourage students to reflect on differences in belief and practice while maintaining respect and empathy. This approach aligns with the perspective that inclusive education requires intentional design of learning experiences that cultivate understanding and reduce prejudice (Ainscow, 2020). Students are not only exposed to concepts of moderation but are also invited to practice them through dialogue and collaborative engagement.

The curriculum demonstrates an integrative structure where moderation and inclusion are embedded across disciplines. Subjects related to Islamic studies, social sciences, and civic education explicitly address values of tolerance and coexistence, while other subjects incorporate these values through group work and problem-solving activities. This cross-disciplinary integration strengthens the internalization of moderation by ensuring that students encounter these values in multiple contexts. Curriculum integration has been identified as an effective strategy in promoting inclusive attitudes and fostering social cohesion within educational settings (Gay, 2018). At the madrasah, this approach creates continuity between knowledge, values, and practice, allowing students to develop a holistic understanding of moderation.

Extracurricular activities serve as an important medium for reinforcing moderation and inclusion in practical contexts. Programs such as community service, student organizations, and collaborative projects provide opportunities for students to interact, cooperate, and engage with diverse perspectives. These activities are designed to foster empathy, responsibility, and mutual respect. Students learn to navigate differences through shared experiences that emphasize

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cooperation and collective goals. Participation in such programs contributes to the development of social competencies and strengthens the connection between school values and real-life situations. Research highlights that experiential learning environments enhance students' ability to internalize values and apply them in diverse social settings (Boud et al., 2013).

Institutional policies play a crucial role in sustaining moderation and inclusion by providing clear guidelines for behavior and interaction. Policies at Madrasah Aliyah Ummul Akhyar emphasize respect, fairness, and ethical conduct in all aspects of school life. These policies regulate classroom behavior, conflict resolution, and participation in school activities. Teachers are expected to model inclusive attitudes, while students are guided to practice these values consistently. The presence of structured policies ensures that moderation and inclusion are not dependent on individual interpretation but are institutionalized within the system. Educational research indicates that policy alignment with institutional values strengthens consistency and effectiveness in implementation (Honig & Hatch, 2004).

The school environment reflects a culture where diversity is respected and inclusion is practiced in everyday interactions. Students communicate with one another using respectful language and demonstrate sensitivity toward differences. Informal interactions outside the classroom reinforce the values introduced in formal learning. Teachers act as facilitators who guide students in resolving conflicts through dialogue and mutual understanding. This alignment between formal and informal practices creates a coherent environment that supports value internalization. School culture has been recognized as a key factor in shaping student behavior and attitudes toward diversity (Thapa et al., 2013).

Leadership encourages active participation from teachers and students in maintaining and developing this inclusive culture. Decision-making processes involve collaboration and dialogue, allowing members of the school community to contribute ideas and feedback. This participatory approach strengthens a sense of ownership and responsibility among stakeholders. Teachers are given space to innovate in their teaching practices, while students are encouraged to take part in initiatives that promote moderation and inclusion. Participatory leadership has been associated with increased engagement and commitment within educational institutions (Woods, 2005). At

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Madrasah Aliyah Ummul Akhyar, this approach supports the sustainability of moderation values and ensures their relevance to the needs of the school community.

The integration of moderation and inclusion within institutional culture also involves continuous reflection and evaluation. The school regularly reviews its programs and practices to ensure alignment with its vision and objectives. Feedback from teachers and students is used to improve implementation and address emerging challenges. This reflective process allows the institution to adapt to changing social conditions while maintaining its commitment to core values. Continuous improvement is essential in sustaining inclusive education and ensuring that practices remain effective over time (Florian, 2014).

The findings indicate that the success of moderation and inclusion at Madrasah Aliyah Ummul Akhyar Tulungagung is closely linked to the coherence between curriculum, extracurricular activities, policies, and leadership practices. These elements function as an integrated system that supports the internalization of values and the development of inclusive attitudes. Students benefit from a learning environment that encourages openness, empathy, and critical engagement with diversity. The institutional culture becomes a dynamic space where moderation is practiced consistently and reinforced through collective effort.

The implementation of moderation and inclusion demonstrates that Islamic educational institutions can play a significant role in promoting social harmony and cohesion. The experience at Madrasah Aliyah Ummul Akhyar shows that intentional design, supported by strong leadership and participatory culture, can create an environment where diversity is appreciated and inclusion becomes a shared practice. This model provides insight into how educational institutions can contribute to building a more tolerant and inclusive society through sustained and integrated efforts.

Impact of Visionary Leadership on Students and Institutional Development

Students at Madrasah Aliyah Ummul Akhyar Tulungagung demonstrate notable growth in tolerance, openness, and critical awareness when engaging with religious and social differences. These attitudes are formed through continuous exposure to a school environment shaped by visionary leadership that emphasizes inclusivity and ethical engagement. Students show the ability

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to appreciate diverse perspectives while maintaining their own religious identity in a balanced manner. This development reflects the role of leadership in shaping not only academic outcomes but also social and moral competencies. Educational research indicates that leadership significantly influences student learning environments and contributes to the formation of positive attitudes toward diversity (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). The students' responses to difference are grounded in daily practices that reinforce respect and dialogue as central values.

Changes in student behavior are visible in communication patterns and interactions within the school community. Students engage in respectful conversations, demonstrate willingness to listen, and avoid confrontational attitudes when encountering differing viewpoints. Group activities in classrooms and extracurricular settings reveal increased collaboration and mutual understanding. These behavioral changes suggest that leadership-driven initiatives have a direct impact on shaping social interaction. Visionary leadership encourages teachers to create spaces for dialogue and reflection, which support the development of interpersonal skills among students. Research on student-centered learning environments highlights that supportive leadership fosters communication skills and social competence (Cornelius-White, 2007). At Madrasah Aliyah Ummul Akhyar, the consistency between leadership vision and classroom practice strengthens these outcomes.

Student participation in school programs also reflects the influence of visionary leadership on engagement and social awareness. Activities such as community service, group projects, and religious discussions provide opportunities for students to apply moderation values in real contexts. Participation in these programs enhances students' sense of responsibility and encourages them to contribute positively to their community. These experiences create a bridge between theoretical understanding and practical application, allowing students to internalize values through action. Studies on experiential and participatory learning show that active engagement plays a crucial role in developing civic responsibility and ethical awareness (Eyler & Giles, 1999). Leadership ensures that such programs are consistently implemented and aligned with institutional goals.



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The impact of visionary leadership extends to the broader development of the institution.

Madrasah Aliyah Ummul Akhyar demonstrates sustainability through continuous improvement of programs and active involvement of stakeholders. Leadership fosters collaboration among teachers, parents, and the community, creating a network of support that strengthens institutional capacity. This collaborative approach enhances the effectiveness of educational programs and ensures that moderation values are reinforced beyond the classroom. Organizational development literature highlights that stakeholder engagement is essential for sustaining innovation and achieving long-term goals (Bryk et al., 2010). The institution benefits from shared responsibility and collective commitment to its vision.

Institutional adaptability and resilience are strengthened through visionary leadership that encourages reflection and innovation. The school is able to respond to social challenges and changes in educational demands by adjusting its programs and strategies. Leadership promotes a culture of continuous learning where feedback is used to improve practices and address emerging issues. This adaptability ensures that the institution remains relevant and effective in promoting moderation and inclusion. Research on school improvement indicates that adaptive leadership contributes to institutional resilience and long-term success (Harris & Jones, 2020). At Madrasah Aliyah Ummul Akhyar, resilience is reflected in the ability to sustain core values while responding to new challenges.

The alignment between vision and implementation contributes to the development of a strong institutional identity. The madrasah is recognized as an environment that promotes religious moderation and social inclusion through consistent practices and visible outcomes. This identity is built through the integration of values into curriculum, policies, and daily interactions. Leadership ensures that the institution maintains coherence between its stated goals and actual practices. A strong institutional identity enhances trust among stakeholders and supports sustainability. Research suggests that leadership plays a central role in shaping organizational identity and ensuring alignment between vision and practice (Day et al., 2014).

The relationship between leadership and institutional development is also supported by mechanisms of evaluation and feedback. Leadership encourages teachers and students to reflect

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on program effectiveness and contribute to improvement efforts. This participatory evaluation process strengthens accountability and fosters a sense of ownership among stakeholders. Continuous evaluation ensures that programs remain aligned with institutional goals and responsive to the needs of the community. Evidence-based improvement is recognized as a key factor in effective educational leadership and organizational growth (Datnow & Park, 2018). At Madrasah Aliyah Ummul Akhyar, this process supports the sustainability of moderation initiatives.

The findings indicate that visionary leadership has a multidimensional impact that connects student development with institutional growth. Students develop attitudes that reflect tolerance, openness, and critical awareness, while the institution evolves into a resilient and adaptive organization. Leadership serves as a unifying force that aligns values, practices, and goals within the educational environment. The case of Madrasah Aliyah Ummul Akhyar demonstrates that visionary leadership can create meaningful transformation by integrating ethical principles with strategic action. The impact is visible in both individual behavior and institutional sustainability, showing that leadership is central to advancing inclusive and moderate Islamic education.

CONCLUSION

Visionary leadership emerges as a central factor in strengthening religious moderation and social inclusion within Islamic educational institutions. The findings from Madrasah Aliyah Ummul Akhyar Tulungagung show that leadership grounded in clear vision and ethical commitment shapes institutional direction and educational practices. Leadership is not limited to formal authority but extends to the ability to inspire, guide, and model values that are consistently practiced across the school environment. The integration of moderation and inclusion into curriculum, extracurricular programs, and daily interactions creates a coherent system that supports value internalization. Students experience these values through lived practices, which contribute to the development of tolerance, empathy, and critical awareness. Institutional culture reflects a shared commitment to inclusivity and respect, indicating that leadership vision has been effectively translated into practice.



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The study also demonstrates that visionary leadership contributes to both student development and institutional sustainability. Students develop social competencies that enable them to engage constructively with diversity, while the institution maintains a stable yet adaptive environment. Leadership fosters collaboration among teachers, students, and stakeholders, which strengthens program implementation and reinforces shared responsibility. The presence of continuous evaluation and reflective practices supports improvement and ensures alignment between vision and action. Institutional resilience is strengthened through the ability to adapt to social changes while maintaining core values. This condition indicates that visionary leadership supports long-term development by integrating strategic planning with ethical orientation and participatory engagement.

The findings highlight that the success of religious moderation and social inclusion depends on the coherence between leadership vision, institutional policy, and educational practice. Visionary leadership provides a framework that aligns these elements into a unified system capable of sustaining change and fostering innovation. The experience at Madrasah Aliyah Ummul Akhyar Tulungagung shows that leadership can transform educational environments into spaces that promote harmony and inclusivity without compromising religious identity. This model offers practical insights for other Islamic educational institutions seeking to strengthen moderation and inclusion. Visionary leadership serves as a strategic foundation for developing education that is responsive to diversity, socially relevant, and oriented toward building a more inclusive and harmonious society.

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