



AL VADAUKAS

Journal of Education and Islamic Studies

Vol. 1 No. 2 September (2025)

ISSN: XXXX-XXXX (Print) ISSN: XXXX-XXXX (Electronic)

Open Access: <https://jurnal.ypiskhairulimam.com/al-vadaukas/index>

Managerial Leadership Strategies of the Language Intensive Program Institution for Improving Student Learning Quality

Ahmad Zainullah¹, Yusuff Olatunji Abimbowo²

¹ Universitas Islam Malang

² Al-Hikmah University Ilorin, Nigeria

ahamdzainullah@gmail.com

abimbowo.uk@gmail.com

Article Info :

Received:

25-08-2025

Revised:

28-08-2025

Accepted:

10-09-2025

ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze leadership management strategies in improving the quality of learning at Language Intensive Programs (LIPS) at SMP Nurul Jadid. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data was collected thru interviews and analysis of primary and secondary sources. The research findings indicate that effective leadership is demonstrated thru the leader's role as a role model, the application of inclusivity principles, and the ability to maintain a balance between providing motivation and protection for students. Additionally, learning innovations such as Arabic and English-based guidance have been proven to support improved student academic achievement. This finding confirms that strategic leadership management plays a crucial role in shaping a conducive, innovative, and relevant learning environment for the demands of the modern era.

Keywords : Managerial Leadership, Learning Quality, Language Intensive Program



©2022 Authors.. This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non Commercial 4.0 International License.
(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>)

INTRODUCTION

Leadership in educational institutions is a key determining factor that shapes the direction of development, competitiveness, and sustainability of an institution (Suriani & Hakim, 2023). Various educational management studies confirm that leadership effectiveness has a strong correlation with the quality of human resources produced, both in terms of cognitive competence and student character (Suryadi et al., 2023). Data from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology in 2023 show that over 40% of educational institutions in Indonesia face serious problems in leadership governance, particularly regarding strategic vision and the development of learning innovation (Wang et al., 2023). This phenomenon indicates a significant gap between the ideal concept of leadership and its practical application, leading many institutions to become stuck in management stagnation. This social fact underscores the urgency of conducting a deeper study of leadership practices within the context of modern Islamic educational institutions that integrate religious traditions and contemporary science.

An interesting phenomenon has emerged in the Language Intensive Programs (LIPS) at Nurul Jadid Junior High School, one of the educational units under the auspices of Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School. LIPS is designed to produce a generation of students who are both religiously competent and adaptable to global developments thru mastery of Arabic and English. This program has played a significant role in building the institution's progressive image, but in practice, there are still a number of managerial constraints. One of the fundamental issues is the lack of optimal sustainable leadership strategies integrated with language-based learning needs. This has resulted in inconsistent implementation of the vision, variations in the quality of learning, and difficulties in building a consistent academic culture. This condition confirms that the analysis of leadership management at LIPS SMP Nurul Jadid is not only relevant but also crucial for addressing the challenges of Islamic education management in the era of globalization.

Several previous studies have highlighted the significance of leadership's role in improving the quality of education. Rodin et al.'s (2025) research found that the management of the LIPS program at SMP Nurul Jadid is effective thru the application of educational management principles according to DuFour and Fayol, which emphasize collaboration and classical managerial functions. Furthermore, a study conducted in Gorontalo by Nor & Suriansyah (2024) proved that innovative leadership by school principals positively influences the quality of learning, especially in motivating teachers to adapt to technology. Meanwhile, international research by Sulaiman & Barat (2025) indicates that the transformational leadership model in Islamic-based schools is capable of increasing teachers' intrinsic motivation and student engagement. Nevertheless, the majority of these studies are still general and have not specifically examined leadership strategies in the context of LIPS, especially those focused on intensive language learning based on pesantren. Thus, there is a research gap that is still open for further study.

This research gap was identified from the limitations of previous studies, which tended to be oriented toward the general leadership paradigm without examining the specific context of language-based education within the modern pesantren ecosystem. The majority of previous studies have focused more on the relationship between leadership and the quality of learning in a broad sense, so the strategic dimension of leadership in managing and developing Arabic and English language learning in pesantren environments has been relatively overlooked. In fact, the success of the Language Improvement Program for Students (LIPS) is not only determined by visionary leadership, but also by the leader's capacity to weave harmony between Islamic values and contemporary academic needs.

Thus, this research is presented to bridge this epistemological gap thru an in-depth analysis of leadership strategies in the development of LIPS at SMP Nurul Jadid. The contribution offered is not only theoretical, enriching the body of literature on Islamic educational management, but also practical, providing implementable recommendations for institutional managers in formulating adaptive, integrative, and transformative leadership patterns.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on leadership strategies within intensive language-based education programs in modern pesantren environments. This research not only discusses leadership conceptually but also explores how leadership patterns are concretely implemented to support Arabic and English language learning. Additionally, this research offers a new perspective by integrating modern educational management theory and Islamic leadership principles into the analysis of leadership strategies at LIPS. This approach is expected to provide a more contextual and applicable conceptual model, differing from previous research that was more general and normative. Therefore, the novelty of this research is not only academic but also has practical value that can be adapted by other Islamic educational institutions.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method, aiming to deeply understand and describe phenomena according to the natural conditions of the research object (Poltak & Widjaja, 2024). The researcher serves as the primary instrument directly involved in the data collection and analysis process. The research focus is directed toward the leadership strategies implemented in the Language Intensive Programs (LIPS) Institute of the Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School in developing the quality of Arabic and English language learning.

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained thru in-depth interviews with the Chairman of the LIPS Institute and students participating in the program, while secondary data were obtained from documents, archives, and other written information relevant to the research focus. Thus, these two types of data complement each other to provide a more comprehensive picture of the object being studied.

The research was conducted at Nurul Jadid Islamic Boarding School, Paiton, Probolinggo, East Java. The research subjects were determined using a random sampling technique, involving four key respondents considered representative. The data collection process was carried out thru interviews, observation, and documentation, so that the information obtained could be validated thru source and method triangulation.

Data analysis is conducted interactively thru three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Qomaruddin & Sa'diyah, 2024). The analysis process is iterative, meaning it is repeated until a pattern of findings consistent with the research focus is obtained. In this way, the

research results are expected to provide a clear, in-depth, and meaningful description of LIPS' leadership patterns in improving student learning quality.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Leadership Strategies

Leadership in educational institutions, particularly at LIPS SMP Nurul Jadid, plays a strategic role in determining the direction of Arabic and English language program development. Leaders not only serve as administrative decision-makers but also as the main directors who integrate the pesantren's vision with contemporary academic needs. This aligns with the concept of instructional leadership, which emphasizes the importance of establishing a clear academic vision, facilitating the learning process, and creating a conducive learning environment (Nufus et al., 2024). Thus, the leadership strategy implemented at LIPS is not merely managerial, but also serves as an instrument for language-based educational transformation.

From a planning perspective, LIPS develops an annual roadmap focused on achieving language proficiency based on international standards. For English, the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) is used as a reference, while Arabic is structured based on a skills (mahārat) curriculum. Planning documents show that each level of learning has clear and measurable achievement indicators. Salaman Alfarisi, Head of LIPS, emphasized that progress is evaluated every two weeks thru progress checks, allowing teachers to adjust their teaching strategies. This practice demonstrates consistent leadership in systematically and measurably formulating program direction, in line with the principles of modern educational planning.

Ahmad Saqif, as part of the curriculum, stated that the language program at LIPS is organized thru a clear division of structure, starting from the head of LIPS, the coordinators of Arabic and English, lead teachers, to student mentors who accompany non-formal activities such as muhadatsah or daily conversation. This model demonstrates a collaborative distribution of leadership. Observation of lesson study activities shows collaboration among teachers in providing notes regarding the teaching methods used. This reflects that organization is not only formal and administrative, but also fosters the creation of a professional learning community focused on quality improvement (Mahmudah et al., 2025).

During the implementation phase, the leadership strategy is realized thru a task-based language teaching approach, the use of technology in listening and speaking practice, and the implementation of a language pledge that binds students to consistently use Arabic or English in certain zones. Badrus Zaman, as the Manager of LIPS, stated that the teachers were actively involved in developing the assessment rubrics to ensure more uniform standards were used. This indicates a more consistent and collaborative transformation of academic culture, aligning with the principles of transformational leadership, which emphasizes improving the learning culture.

The evaluation aspect also receives significant attention from LIPS leadership. Formative evaluations are conducted routinely thru bi-weekly progress checks, while summative evaluations are done thru block exams at the end of the period. Assessment data shows an improvement in student speaking skills after the data review meeting system was implemented. Classroom observations show high student participation in conversational tasks with peer feedback. This proves that evaluation is not just administrative, but is truly used as a means for continuous improvement of learning.

Additionally, the leadership strategy at LIPS also emphasizes the integration of Islamic values into every activity. The principle of deliberation is applied in the monthly PLC forum, the principle of exemplification is realized thru the direct involvement of leaders in language practice, while the principle of work excellence is reflected in the emphasis on the quality of learning outcomes. The integration of Islamic values and modern management approaches gives LIPS leadership both moral legitimacy and managerial effectiveness.

Although it has demonstrated significant achievements, the leadership strategy at LIPS still faces a number of challenges. Among these are the reliance on a few lead teachers, which may create bottlenecks; limitations in teaching English phonology; and the need to enhance teachers' capacity in academic writing. These factors are important considerations that must be addressed to ensure that the leadership strategy can truly support the program's sustainability in an optimal way.

Overall, the leadership strategy at LIPS SMP Nurul Jadid can be seen as an integrative model that combines Islamic values with modern educational management theories. The success of the intensive language program at this institution shows that the quality of education is not solely determined by the curriculum or infrastructure, but also by visionary, adaptive, and transformative

leadership. The impact of this leadership strategy can be directly felt by the students through a shift towards a more communicative and globally oriented learning culture. With these achievements, LIPS SMP Nurul Jadid has the potential to become a model for language program development in other Islamic educational institutions.

Managerial Challenges and Obstacles

Leadership at LIPS SMP Nurul Jadid is not only marked by successes in developing a vision for language learning, but also faces various managerial challenges that affect the continuity of the program. These challenges are closely related to the consistency of vision implementation, variation in teaching quality, and limitations in building a sustainable language-based academic culture. This situation highlights that educational leadership constantly deals with both internal and external dynamics that require strategic and adaptive responses.

One of the main obstacles identified is the lack of consistency in implementing the learning vision. Based on interviews with the head of LIPS, although the vision has been clearly outlined in planning documents, not all teachers are able to apply it uniformly in their teaching practices. Some teachers emphasize grammatical aspects, while others focus on communication skills. These differences in approach have implications for the variation in students' learning outcomes. This aligns with the findings of Febrina & Sesmiarni (2024), who emphasized that weak consistency in the implementation of a learning vision can undermine the quality of education management.

Another significant challenge is the noticeable variation in teaching quality. Classroom observations reveal that some teachers are able to apply task-based learning methods creatively, while others remain reliant on traditional lecture-based methods. One student mentioned during an interview, "When we study with Ustadz X, it's easier because we practice directly. But with Ustadz Y, it's mostly theory, so sometimes it's boring." This reality underscores that the effectiveness of leadership also depends on the ability to standardize the quality of teaching among educators.

Limitations in building a language-based academic culture also present a significant challenge. Although LIPS has implemented initiatives such as a *language zone* and *language pledge*, their application remains inconsistent. Some students still use Indonesian or local languages outside of lesson hours. This condition indicates a gap between formal regulations and actual practice in the field. As noted by Fadli et al. (2025), the establishment of an academic culture requires a long process of value internalization, along with consistent role modeling from educators.

In addition to internal challenges, external factors also influence the effectiveness of leadership. One such factor is the demand to adapt to technological advancements. The head of LIPS acknowledged that the use of digital language labs and e-learning platforms is still limited, as not all teachers possess adequate technological competence. Yet, in the era of globalization, integrating technology has become an essential component of language instruction. This is consistent with international studies that suggest leadership which fails to adopt technological innovations will struggle to maintain the relevance of educational programs amid global competition.

The shortage of qualified teaching staff further intensifies these challenges. Of the total number of instructors, only a few hold international certifications such as TOEFL or *Ijazah al-Lughah al-'Arabiyyah*. This qualification gap leads to significant disparities in the quality of instructional content delivered. In an interview, one of the language coordinators stated, "We are in great need of ongoing training, because global demands are increasing, and students are becoming more critical of the quality of instruction." These findings underscore that investment in continuous professional development for teachers is an urgent need within the current leadership strategy.

Another challenge is resistance to change, both from teachers and students. Some senior teachers feel uncomfortable when asked to integrate technology into their teaching, while some students are still not accustomed to the strict language-based academic culture. This factor indicates that LIPS leadership must be able to act as agents of change who not only emphasize regulation but also provide psychological support and motivation. The concept of *transformational leadership* is highly relevant in this context, as it highlights the importance of building shared commitment through inspiration and role modeling.

Overall, the analysis of these obstacles shows that the effectiveness of leadership at LIPS is not solely determined by the formulation of a clear vision, but also by the capacity to manage variations in teaching quality, build an academic culture, enhance teacher competence, and adapt to technological

developments. Identifying these challenges is crucial for finding more applicable strategic solutions. By strengthening leadership capacity, LIPS has the potential to overcome these challenges and further solidify its position as a model for modern, pesantren-based language education.

Integration of Islamic Leadership and Modern Management

Leadership in pesantren-based educational institutions is always rooted in Islamic values, which serve as the moral and spiritual foundation. Principles such as *amanah* (trustworthiness), *musyawarah* (deliberation), justice, and exemplary conduct are inseparable pillars of Islamic leadership (Sari et al., 2025). These values not only function as ethical guidelines but also provide moral legitimacy for a leader in the eyes of teachers, students, and the pesantren community. In the context of LIPS SMP Nurul Jadid, the application of Islamic values serves as the spiritual core that binds all language learning programs to ensure alignment with the pesantren's vision as an institution that integrates religious and scientific knowledge.

However, the challenges of education in the global era demand that leadership does not stop at traditional values alone. The complexity of 21st-century needs requires integration with modern management approaches that emphasize efficiency, innovation, collaboration, and data-driven decision-making (Lellya, 2024). Observations at LIPS show that, in addition to instilling Islamic ethical principles, leadership also strives to implement structured evaluation systems, regular progress checks, and the use of technological tools to support learning. This aligns with the view of Salam & Nopriani (2025) on the importance of a *Professional Learning Community* (PLC), which focuses on teacher collaboration to improve educational quality.

In daily practice, the integration of Islamic leadership and modern management is evident in decision-making patterns. The head of LIPS, for instance, consistently prioritizes *musyawarah* when determining new strategies, whether through teacher forums or evaluation meetings with pesantren administrators. However, the outcomes of these deliberations do not stop at normative consensus; they are followed up with the formulation of work plans based on measurable performance indicators. This reflects a synergy between the Islamic principle of *shura* (consultative decision-making) and the *management by objective* approach found in modern management theory.

The aspect of role modeling is also a key element in the integration of leadership. The Head of LIPS and the language coordinators actively participate in the use of Arabic and English, not only in the classroom but also in daily interactions in the dormitories. An interview with a student revealed, "We feel more motivated to speak Arabic when we see our ustadz consistently using it as well." This role modeling is combined with modern strategies such as the implementation of language zones and the use of language learning apps to ensure the sustainability of academic practices. It is this synergy between Islamic role modeling and modern innovation that strengthens the language-based academic culture at LIPS.

The Islamic leadership principle of *amanah* (trust/responsibility) is also translated into managerial accountability. Each teacher is required to submit a weekly report on learning outcomes and the challenges encountered. These reports are then compiled by the management team to serve as material for monthly evaluations. In this way, *amanah* is not only understood as a moral responsibility but is also manifested through a transparent and measurable reporting system. This practice shows how religious values can be integrated with data-driven management systems, a hallmark of modern educational leadership.

This integration is also evident in LIPS's efforts to foster a culture of collaboration. The values of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood) and togetherness upheld in pesantren traditions are used as a foundation to strengthen teamwork among language teachers. Peer teaching forums and lesson study sessions are held regularly, allowing teachers to provide feedback to one another. One English teacher stated in an interview, "We feel more at ease when teaching challenges are discussed together, rather than being handled individually." This practice demonstrates that Islamic leadership, which emphasizes community and togetherness, can be effectively combined with modern approaches that stress teamwork and collective efficacy.

While this integration has brought positive impacts, challenges remain. Some senior teachers feel more comfortable with traditional methods and have not fully embraced data-driven or digital approaches. This indicates that the integration process does not occur instantly; it requires leadership that is patient, continuous, and transformational. Leaders must be able to balance preserving the

authenticity of Islamic values with the need for modern innovation, in order to keep the program relevant in today's changing world.

Overall, the integration of Islamic leadership and modern management at LIPS SMP Nurul Jadid presents a contextual, practical, and replicable leadership model for other Islamic educational institutions. This model is rooted in pesantren traditions through the application of Islamic values, while also being responsive to global dynamics through the application of modern management principles. Through this integrative approach, LIPS has been able to build leadership that is both adaptive and value-driven, positioning itself as a potential conceptual reference in the development of intensive language-based Islamic education.

CONCLUSION

The leadership at LIPS SMP Nurul Jadid exemplifies a successful integration of Islamic values with modern educational management principles, creating a unique and contextual leadership model. Rooted deeply in pesantren traditions, the leadership upholds core Islamic principles such as amanah (trust), musyawarah (consultation), justice, and exemplary conduct, which serve as moral and spiritual foundations for decision-making and program implementation. This spiritual grounding is complemented by practical strategies such as structured evaluations, progress monitoring, and technology integration, which reflect the demands of 21st-century education. Role modeling by leaders in using Arabic and English both inside and outside the classroom fosters a language-rich academic culture, encouraging students to embrace the learning process enthusiastically. Furthermore, the strong emphasis on collaboration, seen through peer teaching and lesson study, demonstrates how Islamic values of brotherhood and togetherness align effectively with modern approaches that emphasize teamwork and collective efficacy. This holistic approach ensures that the educational vision is not only clearly articulated but also consistently realized in practice, strengthening the institution's position as a leader in pesantren-based language education.

However, the integration process is not without its challenges. Resistance from some senior teachers who are more comfortable with traditional methods and hesitant to adopt data-driven or digital tools highlights the need for patient, ongoing, and transformational leadership. Balancing the preservation of Islamic authenticity with the imperative for innovation requires strategic, adaptive leadership that can navigate both cultural and technological shifts. Despite these obstacles, the model developed at LIPS SMP Nurul Jadid offers a replicable framework that other Islamic educational institutions can adopt. By combining timeless spiritual values with modern management techniques, LIPS demonstrates how education rooted in faith can remain relevant and competitive in a globalized world. This integrative leadership approach not only strengthens institutional resilience but also prepares students to thrive academically and socially within an increasingly interconnected society.

REFERENCES

- Fadli, M. K., Jalil, A., & Santoso, K. (2025). Implementasi Budaya Religius Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Islami Mahasiswa Di Universitas Merdeka Malang. *Vicratina: Jurnal Ilmiah Keagamaan*, 10(3), 320–328.
- Febrina, M., & Sesmiarni, Z. (2024). Implementasi Manajemen Mutu Pendidikan di Sekolah Islam: Implementation of Educational Quality Management in Islamic Schools. *Thawalib: Jurnal Kependidikan Islam*, 5(2), 433–452.
- Lellya, I. (2024). Inovasi Dalam Manajemen Pendidikan: Sebuah Tinjauan Literatur Terhadap Metode Dan Praktik Terbaru. *Humanitis: Jurnal Homaniora, Sosial Dan Bisnis*, 2(12), 1423–1436.
- Mahmudah, S., Halik, A., Sari, A. P., & Ridwan, R. (2025). Budaya Mutu Organisasi pada Satuan Pendidikan. *Sulawesi Tenggara Educational Journal*, 5(1), 417–424.
- NOR, T., & SURIANSYAH, A. (2024). Kepemimpinan visioner kepala sekolah dalam meningkatkan mutu pendidikan. *MANAJERIAL: Jurnal Inovasi Manajemen Dan Supervisi Pendidikan*, 4(4), 256–268.
- Nufus, E. A. B., Riyanto, Y., & Setyowati, S. (2024). Strategi dan pendekatan kepemimpinan dalam meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan. *Jurnal Administrasi Pendidikan Islam*, 6(2), 185–202.
- Poltak, H., & Widjaja, R. R. (2024). Pendekatan metode studi kasus dalam riset kualitatif. *Local Engineering*, 2(1), 31–34.
- Qomaruddin, Q., & Sa'diyah, H. (2024). Kajian Teoritis tentang Teknik Analisis Data dalam Penelitian

- Kualitatif: Perspektif Spradley, Miles dan Huberman. *Journal of Management, Accounting, and Administration*, 1(2), 77–84.
- Rodin, R., Putra, W., Sujirman, S., Yanto, M., Azwar, B., & Ifnaldi, I. (2025). pendekatan klasik dalam teori organisasi dan relevansinya dengan manajemen pendidikan islam: systematic review. *Islamic Management: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 8(01), 351–366.
- Salam, M. A., & Nopriani, W. (2025). Membangun Profesionalisme Guru Melalui Learning Organisation Dan Professional Learning Community. *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar*, 10(02), 410–417.
- Sari, E. R., Ma'ruf, I., Triana, M., & Hidayat, R. (2025). Praktek Kepemimpinan Pendidikan Islam di Lembaga Pendidikan Pesantren. *Invention: Journal Research and Education Studies*, 567–580.
- Sulaiman, T. S., & Barat, S. M. S. K. (2025). Gaya Kepemimpinan Transformasional Kepala Sekolah dalam Mewujudkan Sekolah Berbasis Nilai-Nilai Islam. *Jurnal Al-Hasib: Manajemen Pendidikan Islam Vol*, 1(4).
- Suriani, N., & Hakim, L. (2023). Superioritas Kepemimpinan Dalam Meningkatkan Daya Saing Lembaga Pendidikan Islam. *QOSIM: Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial & Humaniora*, 1(2), 55–64.
- Suryadi, I., Pamungkas, R. W. P., Wahyudi, F. S., & Setiawan, T. (2023). Peran kepemimpinan efektif dalam meningkatkan kualitas manajemen pendidikan. *Journal of International Multidisciplinary Research*, 1(2).
- Wang, C., Zhang, M., Sesunan, A., & Yolanda, L. (2023). Peran teknologi dalam transformasi pendidikan di Indonesia. *Kemdikbud*, 4(2), 1–7.