

Spiritual Foundations of Islamic Educational Leadership: Revisiting Al-Ghazali, Ibn Taymiyyah, and Syed Naquib al-Attas

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the concept of religiosity in Islamic educational leadership through a comparative analysis of the thought of three prominent scholars: Al-Ghazali, Ibn Taymiyyah, and Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. Employing a library research approach and content analysis method, the study examines how each thinker formulates the relationship between divine values, knowledge, and leadership responsibility within the context of education. The findings reveal a shared emphasis on the necessity of a spiritual foundation in leadership, yet each adopts a different approach: Al-Ghazali foregrounds the spiritual-ethical dimension through *tazkiyat al-nafs* (purification of the soul); Ibn Taymiyyah underscores a legalistic approach and the principle of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* (enjoining good and forbidding evil); while al-Attas highlights the cosmological and *adabic* dimension within the framework of the Islamisation of knowledge. The study proposes a conceptual typology of religiosity-based leadership through three distinctive models that have rarely been integrated in previous Islamic leadership literature. These findings have implications for the development of an integrative, contextual, and transformative paradigm of Islamic educational leadership, particularly relevant in addressing the contemporary global crisis of values in education

INTRODUCTION

Leadership in Islamic education is more than merely an administrative or managerial function; it is an ideological framework imbued with religious,

spiritual, and ethical values derived from divine revelation and the intellectual heritage of Islam. In understanding the existence of educational leadership, it is essential to recognise that educational leaders are expected not only to act as administrators but also as prophetic heirs (*warasat al-anbiya'*), possessing a transcendental vision in shaping the *insan kamil* (Mauludah, Ma'sum, & Iswanto, 2023). The concept of religiosity in educational leadership should facilitate a profound understanding of the moral and spiritual responsibilities of a leader. However, amidst global challenges such as moral degradation and the disintegration of values, we are witnessing a reality where religiosity is often reduced to normative symbolism that holds little significance in the actual practices of Islamic educational institutions (Hanifa & Maksum, 2022; Mauludah et al., 2023; Zakiah & Nursikin, 2024).

This phenomenon highlights a gap between the theorisation of religiosity and the realisation of genuine leadership practices. Emphasis on secular managerial aspects risks marginalising the religious and ethical dimensions of leadership, particularly as leadership success is increasingly measured by efficiency and productivity (Andriansyah & Permadi, 2022; Kamila & Wantini, 2023). This contradicts the principle that leadership in the context of Islamic education should be a manifestation of faith and morality implemented collectively (Najib, 2023; Zakiah & Nursikin, 2024).

Not only do modern values play a role, but the importance of the classical Islamic intellectual tradition must also be acknowledged. The thoughts of figures such as Al-Ghazali, Ibn Taymiyyah, and Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas offer critical perspectives for integrating religiosity within educational leadership models (Busyro, Ananda, & Adlan, 2019; Najib, 2023). All three stress the necessity of linking spiritual values with an inclusive and responsive leadership style capable of addressing contemporary challenges, thereby creating a constructive framework (Maghfiroh & Nursikin, 2024; Pransiska, 2017). Reinterpreting leadership not as a power instrument but as a spiritual trust that harmonises knowledge, faith, and ethics becomes essential in building a holistic and civilised leadership system (Kamila & Wantini, 2023).

In this context, the study of religiosity-based Islamic educational leadership should focus on a comparative approach across eras and schools of thought. The analysis of the seminal works of these three figures provides not only theoretical but also practical solutions for facing contemporary educational challenges (Alhassen, 2021; Pransiska, 2017). Therefore, it is crucial to encourage the development of educational curricula capable of instilling universal Islamic values while preserving the spiritual character of future leaders who will guide the next generation in confronting the effects of secularised modernisation (Olfah, 2024). Within this conceptual framework, Islamic educational leadership should serve as the foundation for empowerment and the advancement of a

civilisation rooted in authentic Islamic values (Busyro et al., 2019; Mauludah et al., 2023).

As a response to these challenges, the religious principles offered by scholars such as Al-Ghazali, Ibn Taymiyyah, and Al-Attas become particularly pertinent. Al-Ghazali, with his Sufi spirituality, provides a framework for integrating moral values into education, while Ibn Taymiyyah emphasises the clarity of *tawhid* and a firm adherence to *shari'ah*, offering guidance for a relevant Islamic education (Mansir, 2022). Al-Attas, on the other hand, elaborates on the concepts of *adab* and the Islamisation of knowledge, both of which are vital for constructing an educational context that prioritises ethics and morality especially in facing a globalised world increasingly dominated by secular values (Sirait, 2023).

The approach to religiosity in Islamic educational leadership encompasses not only ritual aspects but also epistemological and social-ethical dimensions. Research indicates that the leadership competence of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers significantly influences the development of a religious culture in schools (Wahyuni, Pettalongi, Malla, & Nurdin, 2023). In this regard, teachers as educators hold a strategic role in shaping students' attitudes and behaviours in accordance with the religious values being taught (Sa'diah, 2019). Therefore, enhancing the skills and professionalism of Islamic educators through training programmes focused on leadership and educational ethics is highly relevant (Alhashmi & Moussa-Inaty, 2020).

The original contribution of this article lies in its effort to reconstruct a religiosity-based model of Islamic educational leadership through a comparative approach across time periods and intellectual traditions. Unlike previous studies that tend to be partial or biographical, this research presents a comprehensive synthesis that integrates the theological, Sufi, rational, and philosophical ideas of the three scholars to form an integrated and *adabic* leadership framework. By employing content analysis of the primary works of these thinkers, this study seeks to identify the spiritual and epistemological foundations underpinning their leadership visions. The results of this synthesis offer a map of thought that can serve both as a conceptual foundation for formulating Islamic leadership education curricula and as a practical guide for developing visionary, civilised, and spiritually accountable Islamic leaders.

Thus, the urgency and contribution of this study are not merely theoretical, but also practical in responding to the value disorientation currently faced by Islamic educational leadership amid the pressures of modernisation and secularisation. This study becomes highly relevant for Islamic educational institutions aiming to build a value-based leadership system that is not only strong in management but also firm in spirituality and committed to Islamic civilisation. Through a critical reading and conceptual comparison of Al-Ghazali,

Ibn Taymiyyah, and Al-Attas, this article reasserts that religiosity is not an obstacle to leadership, but rather the essential foundation for building dignified, *tawhid*-oriented, and afterlife-conscious Islamic educational leadership.

METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative approach using the library research method, which emphasises critical analysis of both primary and secondary sources related to the thought of Al-Ghazali, Ibn Taymiyyah, and Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas. This method was chosen due to its relevance in examining philosophical, theological, and educational texts that emerged from different historical and social contexts, as well as in capturing the complexity and conceptual depth of these three major thinkers. This approach facilitates a cross-temporal and cross-traditional exploration, with particular attention to the historical, philological, and contextual aspects that shape the framework of religiosity in Islamic educational leadership.

The data collection procedure involved an intensive examination of the major works of the three thinkers: *Ihya Ulum al-Din* by Al-Ghazali, *Majmu' al-Fatawa* by Ibn Taymiyyah, and *Islam and Secularism* by Al-Attas. Each of these works is regarded as the most authoritative representation of their respective paradigms of thought. These texts were read critically using a hermeneutic approach to understand the intended meanings, structures of meaning, and the values embedded within them. In addition, this research made use of various secondary sources such as journal articles, dissertations, and academic books to support the analysis and broaden the contextual framework of the ideas being studied.

The data analysis technique employed was content analysis, focusing on the identification and thematic categorisation of key concepts such as religiosity, leadership, epistemology, *adab*, and spiritual responsibility. The data collected was then analysed systematically to identify patterns of similarity, divergence, and tendencies in the thought of the three figures. The validity and reliability of the interpretation were ensured through data triangulation and cross-referencing with credible academic literature. This approach enables the study to formulate a comprehensive conceptual synthesis and analytical model of religiosity in Islamic educational leadership, while also ensuring the theoretical accuracy and academic rigour of the findings obtained

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Al-Ghazali

Al-Ghazali places religiosity at the heart of the authentic personality structure of a leader in Islam. According to him, leadership cannot be separated from the spiritual dimension, which is attained through *tazkiyat al-nafs*, namely

the purification of the soul from reprehensible traits such as *riya'* (showing off), *ujub* (conceit), *takabbur* (arrogance), and *hubb al-dunya* (love of the worldly life). Within this framework, leadership is a divine trust (*amanah ilahiyyah*) that must not be carried out merely for worldly gain, power, or popularity, but as a vertical responsibility between humans and their Creator. A leader, according to Al-Ghazali, must possess sincerity in intention, patience in action, and a deep awareness of divine accountability (*hisab ilahi*). The religiosity in question is not limited to formal ritual worship, but involves the internalisation of faith-based values into all aspects of leadership behaviour and decision-making (Murdani & Fauzi, 2024; Sa'bani, Setiawarni, Fatimah, & Sari, 2024; Sheikh & Ali, 2019). True leadership is a spiritual journey that demands continuous self-reflection (*muhasabah*) and constant awareness of the afterlife dimension.

In *Ihya Ulum al-Din*, Al-Ghazali explicitly states that leaders in the field of education must serve as *qudwah hasanah* exemplars of moral and spiritual integrity. Religiosity is not merely a foundation for personal morality, but a criterion for directing the overall vision and mission of education. This includes curriculum design, social interaction within the educational institution, and the epistemological orientation towards knowledge (Ashari, 2023; Ghozali & Zamroni, 2022; Sheikh & Ali, 2019). Education, in Al-Ghazali's view, is a path towards nearness to God, thus its leaders must reflect piety and integrity capable of inspiring transformation among students and society. Within this context, leadership is not simply about managing institutions, but about safeguarding the sanctity of divine values throughout the educational process. Therefore, religiosity becomes both an ethical and strategic instrument for creating educational institutions that not only enlighten the intellect but also purify the soul.

One key aspect in Al-Ghazali's thought is the centrality of the *qalb* (heart) as the core of spiritual, ethical, and moral consciousness. He believes that successful leadership does not originate solely from intellectual intelligence, but from the clarity and strength of the heart in guiding a leader's intentions, decisions, and actions. A purified *qalb* will give rise to just, compassionate leadership that prioritises the well-being (*maslahah*) of the community. In an educational context, an enlightened *qalb* serves as the foundation for building harmonious relationships between leaders, teachers, students, and society. Al-Ghazali also emphasises the importance of *muraqabah* (awareness of God's watchfulness) in every action of the leader, leaving no room for the abuse of power (Jamilin et al., 2017; Najib, 2023; Putra, 2017). Such leadership will foster a civilised educational environment that upholds spiritual values in daily life.

For Al-Ghazali, leadership cannot be separated from the *maqamat* (spiritual stations) that must be traversed by a servant of God on their journey towards closeness with the Divine. He divides these *maqamat* into several phases such as

repentance (*taubah*), patience (*sabr*), gratitude (*shukr*), fear (*khawf*), hope (*raja'*), and reliance (*tawakkul*), all of which must be reflected in the leader's ethos and character. In this light, a leader is not merely an institutional manager, but a spiritual mentor (*murabbi*) who guides the educational community towards a transcendental vision. Thus, leadership is a part of *jihad al-nafs* and social worship, not merely a structural position. Accordingly, Al-Ghazali presents a paradigm in which the success of leadership is not measured by material or administrative achievements, but by the leader's ability to embed spiritual values in every dimension of the educational process they oversee (Ghozali & Zamroni, 2022; Gunawan & Lestari, 2021).

Al-Ghazali's conception of religiosity is highly relevant in responding to the crisis of contemporary Islamic educational leadership, which often falls into religious formalism or the secularisation of values. He proposes an integration of knowledge (*'ilm*), practice (*'amal*), and ethics (*akhlak*) as a normative framework for building authentic and principled educational leadership. This model offers not only conceptual solutions but also practical guidance for developing leaders of Islamic educational institutions. By prioritising the values of *tazkiyah*, *maqamat*, and *qalb*, Al-Ghazali demonstrates that religiosity is not an obstacle to progress, but a catalyst for creating educational institutions that excel both spiritually and intellectually (Huda et al., 2022; Sasmita, 2022). Therefore, his thought must be actualised in Islamic leadership and management curricula aimed at shaping leaders with a balanced character, both worldly and otherworldly.

Ibn Taimiyah

Ibn Taymiyyah, as a central figure in Islamic thought, proposes a leadership paradigm that emphasises the importance of a leader's religiosity as a manifestation of broader and more concrete piety. According to him, religiosity is not merely about ritual practice, but rather a commitment to the values of obedience as articulated in the Qur'an and Sunnah, as well as to legal integrity (Marfuah, Sutardi, Sutriani, & Fitriani, 2024; Sulhan, 2022). If leadership is understood as *mas'uliyah* (legal or religious responsibility), then only individuals with deep understanding of Islamic law and firm commitment to *tawhid* are qualified to assume such a position (Katimin, Adenan, & Anzaikhan, 2024).

From Ibn Taymiyyah's perspective, effective leadership also requires critical thinking and the ability to evaluate diverse viewpoints, along with the courage to uphold Shari'ah principles, even when they contradict dominant trends in society (Pratomo, 2022). He rejects blind imitation (*taqlid*) and stresses the importance of *ijtihad* as a foundation for decision-making, both at the individual and institutional levels (Khaidir & Qorib, 2023). In the context of education, leaders are expected to act as guardians of creed (*aqidah*), ensuring that

the values being taught do not deviate from the principles of *tawhid* (Marfuah et al., 2024).

Ibn Taymiyyah's critique of epistemologically weak leadership underscores that a leader must possess knowledge of Islamic legal foundations and moral values grounded in revelation. He characterises such unqualified leadership as a betrayal of trust (*amanah*), due to its failure to safeguard the sanctity of Islamic creed and its tolerance of deviations within educational institutions (Katimin et al., 2024; Sulhan, 2022). His perspective places religiosity as a fundamental element in Islamic education, where leadership must uphold Islamic values in every aspect of policy-making and curriculum management (Khaidir & Qorib, 2023).

The concept of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* (enjoining good and forbidding evil) becomes a focal point in the leader's active role in promoting virtue and preventing wrongdoing (Katimin et al., 2024). From Ibn Taymiyyah's view, educational leadership must go beyond administrative duties to become a social agent of change, committed to building a society grounded in Shari'ah principles (Noer, Tambak, & Rahman, 2017). Thus, religious leadership is not merely a task, but a form of *jihad fi sabilillah* a struggle in the path of God to create a civilised and morally upright society within the framework of *tawhid* (Mustakim, Salim, Rouzi, Rusiyono, & Nurmaida, 2021).

Accordingly, Ibn Taymiyyah stresses that education must be designed to internalise the values of the Qur'an, such that leaders in this field do not merely impart knowledge, but also shape characters that can contribute to the construction of a society aligned with Islamic teachings (Katimin et al., 2024). Effective leadership in education, in his view, fosters a culture that supports religious consciousness and *da'wah* among students, making education a strategic tool for building a resilient and competitive Muslim generation (Marfuah et al., 2024; Noer et al., 2017).

Therefore, Ibn Taymiyyah's thought offers a paradigmatic alternative in understanding religiosity in Islamic educational leadership. In contrast to Sufi or *adab*-centred approaches, he places greater emphasis on legalism, normative principles, and militant defence of *tawhid*. This model is highly relevant in the contemporary context, especially in confronting the moral relativism and liberalisation of education that threaten the purity of Islamic values in various institutions. His thinking reminds us that authentic leadership is one that is grounded in Shari'ah, steadfast in principle, and proactive in advancing the welfare of the *ummah* through education. In this regard, religiosity is not merely a personal expression but an epistemic stance and strategic praxis in building Islamic civilisation through the educational sphere

Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas

Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas offers a profound perspective on religiosity in Islamic educational leadership by emphasising the underlying structure of cosmic and metaphysical reality. In this context, he identifies the crisis facing contemporary Islamic education and leadership not merely as a managerial issue, but as a disruption of meaning and a detachment from the higher spiritual order. Al-Attas argues that the phenomenon of the “*loss of adab*” reflects a moral, epistemological, and spiritual disorientation among contemporary Muslim leaders, suggesting that *adab* is not merely a code of conduct, but also an epistemic principle shaping a leader’s character (Junaidi, Fitriyani, & Dhaifi, 2023).

From al-Attas’s perspective, the religiosity of leaders in Islamic education should not be confined to personal piety or formal knowledge, but must involve a comprehensive awareness of the human role as *khalifah* and responsibility towards the ontological order as defined by Islamic teachings (Ningsih, Kurniawan, & Nurbaiti, 2024). This implies that educational leaders must be able to comprehend and implement the values of *adab*, which constitute a synthesis of reason, revelation, and tradition. Education, according to al-Attas, is understood as a process of *ta’dib*, that is, the formation of a virtuous and civilised character, which should direct knowledge towards the service of society and submission to God (Tabroni & Romdhon, 2022).

Furthermore, al-Attas underlines that leadership in Islamic education must not be shaped by secular or pragmatic values that diminish the essence of the human being. In his seminal work *Islam and Secularism*, al-Attas systematically analyses how the secularisation of Western epistemology has permeated Muslim education systems, resulting in leaders who may be technically competent but morally and spiritually deficient (Alfulana, Rapsjani, & Fauzi, 2021). His approach opens the way for leadership grounded in Islamic worldviews, committed to intellectual and spiritual accountability, and capable of cultivating educational communities that emphasise not only intellectual acumen but also moral excellence (Razali & Mamat, 2024).

Al-Attas also stresses the need to integrate moral and intellectual dimensions within education an approach supported by research indicating that education embracing spiritual and moral values tends to produce individuals who are both intelligent and virtuous (Ali, Septuri, & ŞAHAL, 2023). This aligns with the views of other Islamic education scholars who highlight the role of moral education in addressing ethical and social crises in society, as well as in grounding Islamic religious education as a foundation for character and behavioural formation (Zailani & Amalia, 2022).

In addition, al-Attas underscores the importance of cosmic awareness in leadership that is, the understanding that everything in existence is ordered and meaningful according to divine will. A religious educational leader, therefore,

must not only understand organisational structures or academic standards, but also recognise the interconnection between their institutional vision and humanity's existential purpose as *'abd* and *khalifah*. Religiosity in leadership, for al-Attas, lies in the ability to harmonise true knowledge (*'ilm*), sincere action (*'amal*), and wisdom (*hikmah*) in the context of devotion to God and service to the *ummah*. This is the highest form of Islamic leadership *adabic* leadership that orients education towards forming holistic human beings, who are self-aware, God-conscious, and socially responsible within the divine order of existence.

Thus, al-Attas's thought provides a profound paradigmatic foundation for redefining the concept of religiosity-based leadership in Islamic education. The leadership model he proposes is not technocratic, but spiritual-philosophical, requiring deep reflection (*tafakkur*), moral integrity, and metaphysical awareness. The relevance of his ideas is particularly strong in the face of educational globalisation, which threatens the integrity of Islamic values through the adoption of secular and relativistic Western systems. Therefore, the actualisation of al-Attas's model of religious leadership may serve as a strategic foundation for building an Islamic education system that is not only adaptive to the times, but also firm in upholding lofty and *adabic* divine values.

Discussion

These three prominent figures Al-Ghazali, Ibn Taymiyyah, and Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas share a fundamental theological belief that leadership in Islam must be grounded in a theocentric principle, whereby God is the ultimate source of authority, truth, and the central direction of all leadership activities. They collectively reject secular paradigms that attempt to separate worldly affairs from religious principles in leadership. However, while their common ground lies in the transcendental roots of religiosity, sharp distinctions emerge in the ways they structure, interpret, and apply this principle within the practice of educational leadership. These differences offer a rich spectrum of perspectives and open opportunities for constructive synthesis in the development of contemporary Islamic educational leadership models.

Al-Ghazali approaches the issue of religious leadership through a spiritual-ethical framework. Within his Sufi orientation, *tazkiyat al-nafs* is not merely an individual process of spiritual purification, but also a moral and spiritual prerequisite for occupying leadership roles. For him, leadership without purification of the heart and control over the ego becomes a tool of tyranny and corruption. In contrast, Ibn Taymiyyah emphasises religiosity within a normative-legalistic framework. He believes that the strength of Islamic leadership lies in adherence to *Shari'ah*, the fair implementation of law, and devotion to the principle of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar* (enjoining good and forbidding evil). In contrast to both, al-Attas underscores the importance of *adab* as an epistemological and cosmological principle. For him, religious leadership

arises from the proper ordering of knowledge and metaphysical awareness that reflects humanity's position within existence, not merely from personal piety or legal compliance.

A more fundamental distinction is evident in their epistemological approaches. Al-Ghazali relies on an esoteric methodology that emphasises the inner self, contemplation, and *maqamat ruhaniyyah* (spiritual stations) as a means of forming a pious leader. Ibn Taymiyyah, by contrast, adopts a more textual and scriptural epistemology, prioritising direct references to the Qur'an and Hadith, with a strong emphasis on responsible *ijtihad*. Al-Attas, meanwhile, offers an integrative epistemology that blends revelation, reason, and Islamic cosmology within the framework of the Islamisation of knowledge. This perspective expands the understanding of leadership not only as legal enforcement or spiritual training, but as the construction of a civilised and holistic structure of knowledge. These epistemological differences reflect each thinker's historical and intellectual context, while simultaneously offering possibilities for building a more inclusive and multidimensional model of Islamic educational leadership.

With regard to societal orientation, the three thinkers also present divergent approaches. Al-Ghazali views education and leadership as a collective process of purification, driven by individual spiritual transformation. Ibn Taymiyyah, on the other hand, sees the leader as a guardian of social morality, actively correcting public deviations through political and legal authority. Meanwhile, al-Attas advances a civilisational approach, whereby educational leaders act as agents of Islamic cultural reconstruction through epistemological reform and educational transformation. In short, if Al-Ghazali focuses on soul formation, Ibn Taymiyyah on legal enforcement, and al-Attas on meaning reconstruction, these approaches are not mutually exclusive, but can be synergised to produce a form of Islamic educational leadership that is spiritually grounded, normatively firm, and civilisationally oriented.

Their relevance in contemporary settings is undeniable. Islamic education today faces complex challenges: the secularisation of curricula, a crisis of moral authority, and the erosion of *adab* within educational systems. Al-Ghazali's model offers a path for spiritual self-discipline among leaders seeking to revive the spiritual dimension of leadership. Ibn Taymiyyah presents a model of legal and moral clarity, acting as a safeguard against value degradation. Al-Attas provides a broader framework for the Islamisation of education, addressing not only the legal or moral dimensions, but also the epistemological and ontological foundations of the educational system. Each of these models can be integrated as a response to the multifaceted dysfunctions in current Islamic educational leadership.

As a synthesis, it may be argued that the religiosity-based model of Islamic educational leadership offered by these three thinkers transcends the dichotomy

between spirituality and legalism. It encompasses three major dimensions: (1) *spiritual-ethical* (Al-Ghazali), (2) *normative-legal* (Ibn Taymiyyah), and (3) *cosmological-adabic* (al-Attas). Integrating these dimensions forms a transformative framework that may serve as a foundational reference for the development of a contextual, authentic, and civilisationally oriented model of Islamic leadership. This comparative analysis therefore highlights the urgency of building educational leadership rooted in *tawhid*, *'ilm*, and *adab* as the spiritual and intellectual foundation for addressing the challenges of our time.

The theoretical implication of this study lies in the formation of a conceptual framework for Islamic educational leadership grounded in religiosity, structured through a tripartite configuration. This model represents three distinct orientations: first, the spiritual-ethical model, as formulated by Al-Ghazali, which is rooted in *tazkiyat al-nafs* and *maqamat ruhaniyyah* as the foundation of leadership; second, the legalistic-reformative model of Ibn Taymiyyah, which emphasises adherence to *Shari'ah*, the enjoining of good and forbidding of evil (*amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*), and the role of the leader as the guardian of *aqidah*; third, the cosmological-*adabic* model developed by Syed Naquib al-Attas, which positions *adab* as the epistemic and civilisational foundation. These three models not only fill gaps in Islamic leadership theory but also provide conceptual alternatives that transcend the classic dichotomy between technocratic modernism and normative traditionalism. As such, this synthesis offers a robust theoretical basis for reconstructing a contextual, integrative, and *adab*-based paradigm of Islamic leadership.

The practical implications of this study are highly significant, especially in the redesign of leadership education curricula across various Islamic educational institutions. Institutions such as *pesantren*, *madrasah aliyah*, faculties of *tarbiyah*, and centres for *ulama* and school leader development can utilise this tripartite model to develop leadership competence standards that are not only administrative but also spiritual and epistemological. A curriculum built upon this model would facilitate the formation of leaders who possess spiritual depth (Al-Ghazali), legal firmness and principled clarity (Ibn Taymiyyah), and cosmological insight and *adabic* integrity (al-Attas). This approach would produce leaders capable not only of managing institutions but also of guiding communities, safeguarding the purity of Islamic teachings, and shaping a knowledge-based civilisation grounded in *tawhid*.

Furthermore, the findings of this study can serve as a foundation for formulating value-based educational policies at both national and institutional levels. The ideas of the three scholars contain core principles that may guide the reform of Islamic education systems, from institutional vision and curriculum structure to the recruitment of educators and institutional governance. The integration of *'ilm*, *adab*, and *'amal*, as emphasised by Al-Ghazali, Ibn Taymiyyah,

and al-Attas, could become a main pillar in designing education policies that balance worldly needs with spiritual direction, and administrative efficiency with divine blessings.

In the context of leadership training and development, the results of this research can serve as the basis for training curricula that emphasise value-based character development. Such programmes should not only focus on technical skills in educational management but also on the cultivation of ethical awareness, spiritual sensitivity, and epistemic integrity. By understanding and internalising the three models, training participants will acquire a stronger value orientation and conceptual framework for leading Islamic educational institutions. This is particularly important given the challenges of globalisation and moral relativism, which continue to erode the moral authority of educational leaders among the younger Muslim generation.

Finally, the philosophical implication of this study touches the heart of the crisis in contemporary Islamic civilisation: the absence of leaders who are truly civilised (*beradab*). In a world increasingly driven by the logic of efficiency and secularism, the revival of Islamic leadership rooted in religiosity becomes an urgent task. The thought of Al-Ghazali, Ibn Taymiyyah, and al-Attas offers complementary paths spiritual, legal, and epistemological towards recovery. Therefore, the integration of their ideas will not only strengthen the Islamic education system but also expand the horizon of Islamic civilisation in a direction that is lofty, balanced, and God-conscious.

CONCLUSIONS

This study affirms that religiosity constitutes the ontological and epistemological foundation of authentic Islamic educational leadership. Leadership rooted in divine values is not merely a managerial tool, but a form of spiritual, moral, and intellectual praxis that guides the educational process towards the holistic transformation of the human being. Al-Ghazali, Ibn Taymiyyah, and Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas each offer comprehensive conceptual paradigms concerning the correlation between faith, knowledge, and leadership responsibility in the context of education. Collectively, they construct a mosaic of Islamic thought that integrates the dimensions of tazkiyah, shari'ah, and adab within a divinely inspired framework of leadership.

The original contribution of this research lies in the formulation of a religiosity-based typology of Islamic educational leadership, reflected in three distinct configurations: spiritual-ethical (Al-Ghazali), legalistic-reformative (Ibn Taymiyyah), and cosmological-adabic (al-Attas). This formulation has rarely been examined in a comprehensive comparative study, thus offering significant conceptual and methodological novelty within the field of Islamic leadership studies. By integrating these three approaches, this research proposes an

integrative leadership model that is not only responsive to contemporary realities, but also deeply spiritual and aligned with the principle of tawhid.

Practically, the synthesis of these thinkers' ideas provides a new direction for the development of Islamic educational leadership curricula that are both deep and multidimensional. The integration of akhlaq ruhaniyyah, shari'ah principles, and cosmic awareness forms the core foundation for shaping visionary, authoritative, and adabic educational leaders. In the global context, this study offers a strategic contribution to the reconstruction of both the theory and practice of Islamic leadership, while also responding to value disorientation and the crisis of authority within contemporary Islamic education.

Ultimately, this study serves not only as a theoretical reflection on the legacy of classical and modern Islamic thought, but also as a practical foundation for building a future of Islamic education that is excellent, holistic, and divinely inspired. Amid the challenges of globalisation, moral relativism, and secular modernity, the religiosity-based leadership model proposed in this study emerges as an urgent necessity – ensuring that Islamic education remains a light of civilisation and a bastion of moral integrity in the contemporary era.

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