

Prophetic Leadership for Sustainable Islamic Higher Education: A Systematic Literature Review of Transformative Values and SDG Alignment (2009–2024)

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ABSTRACT

This study systematically synthesizes the prophetic values embedded in leadership models for Islamic higher education and analyzes their alignment with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Conducting a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) via the PRISMA protocol, the study reviews thirty-six peer-reviewed publications from Scopus, DOAJ, and Google Scholar spanning 2009–2024, focusing on leadership, ethics, innovation, sustainability, and Islamic higher education. The investigation identifies three central themes: the integration of *ṣidq* (truthfulness) and *amānah* (trustworthiness) in institutional governance and culture; the application of *fatanāh* (wisdom) and *tablīgh* (effective communication) in developing value-driven curricula, green campus initiatives, and ethical research management; and the use of *adālah* (justice) and *shūrā* (consultation) for participatory decision making. These findings suggest that prophetic leadership directly supports SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). The review concludes that prophetic leadership offers an innovative, ethically robust, and adaptive framework for reforming Islamic higher education towards sustainable development, expanding value-based leadership theory, and recommending practical directions for curriculum, leadership training, and governance, while highlighting pathways for further empirical study in organizational performance and SDG impact assessment.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic higher education (IHE) stands at a pivotal intersection in the age of Industry 5.0 and accelerating digital transformation, tasked with cultivating graduates who embody not only advanced intellectual competencies but also unwavering moral integrity. The pursuit of value-based education aligned with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has elevated the imperative for leadership frameworks that integrate scientific innovation with spiritual-ethical principles, thus reframing the purpose of higher education as a vehicle for human dignity, justice, and sustainability (UNESCO, 2021; United Nations, 2015). However, current academic leadership paradigms—predominantly adapted from Western managerial models—tend to prioritize administrative efficiency and competitiveness, often at the expense of epistemic and ethical depth. This reductionist tendency risks disconnecting IHEs from their theological foundations, diminishing their capacity to serve as agents of social and moral transformation (Al-Attas, 1993; Al-Fārūqī, 1992).

Recent developments in Islamic leadership studies further expand these theoretical foundations. Mahmud and Ramli (2025) introduced the Islamic Spiritual Leadership Model to strengthen a culture of

quality and contribute to the attainment of SDGs, highlighting four integrative pillars: transcendence, ethical exemplarity, community empowerment, and contextual adaptation. Meanwhile, Budiharto and Himam (2006) and Tobroni (2015) reaffirmed the four classical prophetic virtues—*ṣidq*, *amānah*, *tablīgh*, and *faṭānah*—as the moral axis of educational governance. Recent studies (Ilmi et al., 2025; Mubah et al., 2024; Rahmawati, 2020; Ruhullah & Ushama, 2025) expanded these principles through complementary virtues such as *rahmah* (compassion), *‘adālah* (justice), *shūrā* (consultation), *ṣabr* (steadfastness), and *tawakkul* (spiritual reliance), underscoring the adaptability of the prophetic model in diverse institutional contexts.

Recent literature in Islamic educational leadership calls for a paradigm shift toward value-centered, spiritually grounded leadership—inspired by Prophetic tradition (*tarbiyah ‘ala al-risalah*)—as an antidote to these limitations (Atiqullah, 2024; Hefniy et al., 2023; Rahman, 2025). While conceptual models for Prophetic Leadership highlight the virtues of *ṣidq* (truthfulness), *amānah* (trustworthiness), *tablīgh* (effective communication), and *faṭānah* (wisdom), prior studies have generally treated these values descriptively or in isolation. Notably absent is an integrative, operationalized framework that demonstrates how Prophetic Leadership can drive governance, academic innovation, and the achievement of the SDGs within Islamic universities. Instead, the empirical connection between prophetic values and SDG implementation remains fragmented and under-theorized (Dewi et al., 2024; Jakiyudin & Hardianti, 2024). Furthermore, the field lacks critical evaluations of how the adoption of Prophetic Leadership transforms institutional performance and sustainability outcomes.

Given these gaps, this study asserts two core urgencies. First, there is a global need to reconceptualize educational leadership within a spiritually and ethically robust framework capable of responding to the challenges of globalization and sustainability. Second, an evidence-based, systematic synthesis of the literature is necessary to consolidate the diverse theoretical and empirical insights into Prophetic Leadership, and to clarify their practical relevance to SDG-aligned governance and pedagogical reform in IHEs. To address this, the present research deploys the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method, recognized for its methodological transparency, rigor, and capacity to map knowledge gaps, thematic trends, and future research directions (Kitchenham & Charters, 2007; Snyder, 2019).

This study’s novelty lies in constructing and systematizing an integrative model of Prophetic Leadership that explicitly connects Islamic epistemology, organizational leadership, and the global sustainability agenda. By synthesizing findings from thirty-six peer-reviewed publications (2009–2024) across major academic databases, the study identifies thematic patterns, critically evaluates existing frameworks, and formulates actionable strategies aligned with SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). Ultimately, this research positions Prophetic Leadership not merely as a normative or theoretical ideal, but as a pragmatic and transformative paradigm for advancing excellence and social responsibility within the global landscape of Islamic higher education.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology guided by the protocols outlined by Kitchenham and Charters (2007) and Moher et al. (2009). The SLR approach was chosen for its transparency, replicability, and objectivity in identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing relevant scholarly works, avoiding the interpretive bias typical of conventional narrative reviews. The review process adhered strictly to the PRISMA framework, encompassing Planning, Conducting, and Reporting stages to ensure methodological comprehensiveness and rigor (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006; Snyder, 2019).

2.1 Search Strategy and Database Selection

A comprehensive literature search was conducted from January to September 2025 across four major academic databases—Scopus, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Google Scholar, and ResearchGate. The search strategy employed Boolean logic, combining key terms including “Prophetic Leadership,” “Islamic Leadership,” “Higher Education,” “University,” “Sustainability,” “SDGs,” and “Innovation.” The initial search included studies published between 2010 and 2025 in English or Bahasa Indonesia, focusing on leadership in Islamic educational contexts, governance, sustainability, or leadership ethics vis-à-vis SDG implementation.

2.2 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To qualify for inclusion, studies had to be peer-reviewed journal articles, books, or conference proceedings that explicitly addressed the intersection of prophetic or Islamic leadership models and sustainable development in higher education. Excluded were non-scholarly materials, studies focused solely on secular leadership without Islamic contextualization, duplicates, and studies lacking methodological transparency.

2.3 Screening and Selection

The screening process involved multiple phases: an initial title and abstract review, followed by a full-text assessment to determine relevance and quality in accordance with the inclusion criteria. The final corpus consisted of 36 studies selected from an initial yield of 162 records. This sample size was deemed sufficient to comprehensively capture theoretical and empirical developments in the domain, given the focused scope of Prophetic Leadership and SDG-related governance in Islamic higher education.

2.4 Quality Assessment

Each selected article underwent a rigorous quality appraisal using a standardized coding form to capture details on author, year, context, methodology, and key findings. Articles were rated on a five-point scale concerning theoretical contribution, methodological rigor, and applicability to policy and practice (Snyder, 2019). This process ensured that studies with insufficient conceptual depth or empirical robustness were excluded.

2.5 Data Extraction and Analysis

Data extraction was systematically conducted and subjected to thematic synthesis protocols (Thomas & Harden, 2008). Emerging themes were classified into three meta-themes: Ethical Leadership Foundations emphasizing *ṣidq* (truthfulness) and *amānah* (trustworthiness); Prophetic Innovation and Educational Reform highlighting *faṭānah* (wisdom) and *tablīgh* (effective communication); and Value-Based Governance centered on *‘adālah* (justice) and *shūrā* (consultation). Thematic alignment with relevant SDGs (4, 9, 10, and 16) was examined to establish conceptual coherence between prophetic principles and global sustainability.

2.6 Validation and Reliability Measures

Triangulation of theoretical, contextual, and methodological data enhanced study validity. Two independent expert reviewers conducted cross-validation, yielding a Cohen’s Kappa coefficient of 0.84, indicating high intercoder reliability. The meta-synthesis approach integrated diverse conceptual and empirical insights, further strengthening interpretive accuracy and reducing bias.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

All analyzed materials were publicly accessible and cited adequately in accordance with APA 7th edition guidelines. The study involved no direct human subjects, so institutional ethical approval was not required. Academic integrity and intellectual property rights were stringently maintained throughout. This robust and transparent methodology ensured the systematic mapping of the field, facilitating evidence-based conclusions about the transformative potential of Prophetic Leadership in advancing sustainable development goals within Islamic higher education.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Result

A total of 36 peer-reviewed publications meeting the criteria were reviewed, spanning 2010–2025. Scholarship on Prophetic Leadership in Islamic higher education has markedly increased since 2019, corresponding with growing international focus on value-driven education and the SDGs (UNESCO, 2021). Of these studies, 47% are conceptual frameworks connecting Islamic leadership ethics to institutional transformation, and 53% are empirical analyses, including qualitative case studies and cross-institutional comparisons in Indonesia, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan. This dataset reflects both global interest and regional investment in reforming education through prophetic paradigms (Dewi et al., 2024; Prayitno et al., 2022).

3.1.1. Emerging Themes in Prophetic Leadership Research

Three dominant themes emerged from the analysis: ethical integrity, innovative transformation, and value-based governance. Each theme reflects distinct yet overlapping dimensions of Prophetic Leadership and its relation to sustainable development. The distribution is summarized below:

Table 1. Regional Composition of the Reviewed Literature

Region	Studies
Indonesia	15
Malaysia	8
Middle East/South Asia	7
Western	6

Table 2. Empirical and Methodological Details

Type	Studies
Conceptual	17
Empirical	19

Table 3. The Distribution of Dominant Themes

Theme	Number of Studies
Ethical Integrity	14
Innovative Transformation	12
Value-Based Governance	10

1. *Ethical Integrity*: The Moral Foundation for Change

Ethical leadership serves as the cornerstone of all prophetic models. *Ṣidq* (truthfulness) and *amānah* (trustworthiness) represent the ethical infrastructure essential for institutional trust, a critical factor for achieving SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions). Studies by Affan (2025) demonstrate that Islamic universities that apply prophetic values exhibit lower corruption rates, greater transparency in resource management, and improved morale among faculty. These findings resonate with the classical writings of Al-Ghazali (1962) and Ibn Taymiyah (1983), which stress the inseparability of leadership and morality. In the context of modern academic institutions, Prophetic Leadership empowers leaders to embody integrity not only in administrative decisions but also through personal example—what Max Weber once referred to as “value rationality.” This approach replaces purely bureaucratic systems with spiritually accountable governance rooted in ethical consciousness.

2. *Innovative Transformation* through Prophetic Wisdom

The second key theme—*faṭānah* (wisdom)—correlates with innovation, strategic decision-making, and intellectual foresight. Innovation in IHE, guided by prophetic principles, prioritizes creative, ethical, and socially responsive research over profit-oriented technological progress (Ishola-Esan & Olabode, 2025). For example, Malaysian Islamic universities reported that leadership adopting *faṭānah*-oriented policies fostered research environments that blended science, ethics, and spirituality, thereby enhancing student creativity and community impact (Ismail et al., 2018). Furthermore, *tablīgh* (effective communication) was identified as a strong predictor of collaborative leadership—vital for interdisciplinary research networks contributing to SDGs 4 (Quality Education) and 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure). This transformative leadership dynamic parallels global educational innovations promoting transformational learning (Mezirow, 2000), yet it extends these ideas by grounding innovation in revelation (*wahy*). Consequently, prophetic-inspired leaders act not merely as administrators but as *mujaddidūn*—renewers of educational vision who continually adapt methodologies while anchored in divine ethics.

3. *Value-Based Governance* for Sustainable Development

A recurring insight from the reviewed literature concerns how *amānah* and *‘adālah* (accountability and justice) manifest institutional stability and social trust. While direct multi-campus quantitative studies on Islamic universities remain limited, existing literature confirms that value-based accountability mechanisms in faith-driven educational institutions are strongly associated with improved staff retention and compliance with sustainability indicators (Sukirman et al., 2025; Zahirah & Suhaedi, 2025). Prophetic leadership operationalizes these principles through participatory governance structures such as *shūrā* (consultative decision-making). By empowering stakeholders—faculty, students, and community representatives—*shūrā* reinforces transparency and fosters a sense of collective responsibility. These models closely align with UNESCO’s Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) agenda, which emphasizes inclusive governance and the development of ethical citizenship. Moreover, Prophetic Leadership challenges neoliberal educational paradigms that commodify knowledge. Instead, it frames teaching and research as acts of service (*‘ibādah*) oriented toward *maṣlaḥah* (collective well-being). This spiritual foundation creates resilience against moral relativism and promotes a shared culture of integrity—key pillars of long-term institutional sustainability.

3.1.2 Integration of Prophetic Values with SDGs

The review synthesized the relationship between prophetic virtues and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across four thematic intersections, summarized conceptually below:

1. Quality Education (SDG 4): Prophetic Leadership transforms pedagogical design by embedding moral reasoning and value-based assessment in curricula, promoting not only intellectual excellence but also *adab* (ethical comportment) (Al-Attas, 1993).
2. Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9): The principle of *faṭānah* fosters intelligent governance that prioritizes ethical research and sustainability technology innovation.
3. Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10): Humanization, as defined by Kuntowijoyo (2006), advocates for inclusive education that ensures justice across gender, class, and ability.
4. Strong Institutions (SDG 16): *Amānah* and *‘adālah* guide institutions toward accountable, transparent, and just governance mechanisms.

This integrative framework emphasizes that Prophetic Leadership, far from being an abstract or nostalgic concept, provides actionable strategies that align religious imperatives with global sustainability commitments.

3.1.3 The Prophetic Leadership for SDG Framework

Drawing on thematic findings, the synthesis proposes the Prophetic Leadership for SDG Framework—a holistic model aligning leadership virtues, governance principles, and sustainability targets as follows:

1. Moral Core (Individual): *Ṣidq* (truthfulness) and *amānah* (trustworthiness).
2. Cognitive Capability (Strategic): *Faṭānah* (wisdom) leading to evidence-based, forward-looking policy.
3. Communicative Integrity (Interpersonal): *Tablīgh* (transparent, motivating dialogue).
4. Social Justice (Institutional): *‘Adālah* and *shūrā* ensuring fair participation and accountability.

Together, these attributes produce transcendent educational ecosystems where innovation, research, and governance are guided by prophetic moral reasoning. The model serves as both a conceptual framework and a pragmatic tool for leadership training and evaluation within Islamic universities.

3.1.4 Comparative Analysis and Global Implications

Compared to secular models such as transformational or authentic leadership, Prophetic Leadership exhibits a unique ontological depth. Whereas transformational leadership emphasizes charisma and motivation, Prophetic Leadership integrates divine accountability and communal justice (Northouse, 2019). Similarly, servant leadership’s focus on empathy and humility finds theological grounding within the prophetic ethic of *rahmah* (universal compassion). On a global scale, integrating prophetic ethics into higher education could redefine sustainability to encompass not only environmental and economic aspects but also moral and spiritual considerations. As post-pandemic educational recovery accelerates, this model positions Islamic universities to lead in constructing holistic knowledge paradigms that reconcile science and spirituality (Nasr, 1990). By advancing moral-centered innovation, research rooted in the *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah* (objectives of Islamic law) can ensure that sustainability includes justice, equity, and faith-inspired stewardship of the Earth.

3.1.5 Implications for Islamic Higher Education

The findings of this study underscore that integrating Prophetic Leadership into the management and academic culture of Islamic higher education institutions (IHEIs) offers transformative potential. The implications of the systematic review may be reflected across three levels of institutional operations: leadership development, academic innovation, and community engagement.

1. Leadership Development and Organizational Culture

First, Prophetic Leadership redefines leadership identity in IHEIs from authoritative control to moral stewardship. Leaders adopting the prophetic values of *ṣidq*, *amānah*, *tablīgh*, and *faṭānah* model ethical behaviors that cultivate institutional trust. This moral consistency fosters what Schein (2010) terms a “values-based organizational culture,” in which ethics guide policy and administrative practice. Implementing leadership training grounded in prophetic ethics should become a strategic priority for Islamic universities. Workshops and executive education programs can integrate spiritual reflection (*muhasabah*), participatory decision-making (*shūrā*), and ethical auditing mechanisms. These practices institutionalize *taqwā*-based accountability, ensuring that performance evaluation extends beyond quantitative outcomes to encompass moral indicators such as humility, transparency, and justice. In

addition, succession planning that prioritizes ethical maturity and spiritual intelligence over mere technical competence is essential to reinforcing sustainability in Islamic educational leadership and aligning governance with long-term spiritual and social objectives (Abdul Hamid et al., 2025; Reave, 2005; Siswanto, 2022). This shift transforms the leadership paradigm from managerialism to moral exemplarity, bridging institutional administration with prophetic virtue.

2. Curriculum Innovation and Knowledge Production

Second, adopting Prophetic Leadership within academic programs enhances innovation and relevance in knowledge production. Prophetic leadership calls for integrating *ta'mīr al-insān* (humanization), *tahrīr al-insān* (liberation), and *ta'līh al-insān* (transcendence) into educational frameworks, as articulated by Kuntowijoyo (2006). These dimensions encourage knowledge to serve not merely functional or economic purposes but moral and communal advancement. Pragmatically, this means that IHE curricula must incorporate sustainability literacy—environmental ethics, social equity, and global citizenship—interlinked with Islamic ethical reasoning. Courses on leadership, management, and governance should embed spiritual character-building elements, ensuring that technical learning remains ethically grounded. Learning outcomes can thus extend beyond cognitive mastery to encompass *adab* (ethical behavior), civic responsibility, and ecological awareness. Innovative course designs that promote inquiry-based and service-learning methodologies can align academic endeavors with the SDGs, such as quality education (Goal 4), climate action (Goal 13), and reduced inequalities (Goal 10). Furthermore, incorporating Prophetic Leadership principles into research policy enhances institutional credibility. Encouraging interdisciplinary and community-participatory research ensures that university knowledge ecosystems contribute to societal well-being while embodying Qur'anic mandates for justice and mercy (*'adl* and *rahmah*) (Nasr, 1990).

3. Governance Reform and Institutional Sustainability

Third, the application of Prophetic Leadership at the governance level has direct implications for institutional sustainability. Academic decision-making informed by *amānah* (trustworthiness) and *shūrā* (consultation) ensures inclusivity and participatory justice, thereby aligning governance mechanisms with SDG 16 (Strong Institutions).

Three key attributes characterize a prophetic governance model:

- a. Transparency in accountability, where leaders provide moral justification for financial and strategic decisions.
- b. Collective deliberation, encouraging input from educators, students, and stakeholders in alignment with *shūrā*.
- c. Ethical auditing, where institutional indicators incorporate moral and social impact assessments alongside conventional financial metrics.

These mechanisms not only foster legitimacy but also strengthen the spiritual resilience of educational institutions as they navigate the ethical dilemmas posed by globalization, commercialization, and political influence. As universities expand international collaborations, Prophetic Leadership ensures that Islamic identity remains intact amid cross-cultural academic exchange. Institutional reform grounded in prophetic ethics also extends to environmental and social responsibility initiatives. For instance, adopting “Green Campus” policies inspired by *khilāfah* (stewardship) and *maṣlahah* (public good) reinforces ecological sustainability. Leadership informed by prophetic values ensures that such initiatives are not tokenistic but reflect a deep moral commitment to equilibrium between humanity and nature, as ordained in the Qur'an (55:7–8).

4. Global Partnerships and Transcultural Relevance

Ultimately, the internationalization of Islamic higher education presents a crucial platform for Prophetic Leadership to engage with global academic discourses on diversity, inclusion, and sustainability. By demonstrating a moral framework rooted in revelatory ethics yet open to innovation, Prophetic Leadership can position Islamic education as a universal model of value-centered transformation. Partnerships with non-Islamic institutions can thus become platforms for ethical dialogue rather than identity negotiations. Collaborative projects grounded in prophetic ethics can emphasize shared human values of justice, compassion, and accountability, thereby creating what Hoesterey (2015) terms “prophetic cosmopolitanism.” Such cross-cultural engagement situates Islamic higher education not

at the periphery of global academia, but as a catalyst for rehumanizing education systems increasingly driven by consumerism and competition.

3.1.6 Summary

In summary, the implications of implementing Prophetic Leadership in Islamic higher education are multi-dimensional:

- a. Moral Capacity Building: Elevating ethical awareness and exemplarity in leadership training.
- b. Pedagogical Reform: Integrating sustainability and spirituality in knowledge construction.
- c. Governance Transformation: Institutionalizing transparency and *shūrā* as core decision-making principles.
- d. Global Engagement: Promoting intercultural partnerships through shared prophetic ethics.

Collectively, these implications form the basis for an Islamic educational paradigm that harmonizes faith, intellect, and sustainability—providing a blueprint for achieving the SDGs through spiritually grounded leadership.

3.2. Discussion

This systematic review substantiates that the transformation of Islamic higher education (IHE) in the era of Industry 5.0 requires leadership that transcends the managerial and market-driven paradigms traditionally dominant in global academia, affirming arguments by scholars such as Al-Attas (1993) and Al-Fārūqī (1992) that sustainable educational reform must remain rooted in epistemological, ethical, and theological values. The ascendancy of Prophetic Leadership models—characterized by *ṣidq* (truthfulness), *amānah* (trustworthiness), *faṭānah* (wisdom), and *tablīgh* (effective communication)—signals an important paradigm shift towards integrating spirituality, ethics, and social responsibility within institutional governance and pedagogical design.

Critically, this review's findings are consistent with the Value-Based Leadership theory and recent global discourses on ethical stewardship and transformative leadership in education (Greenleaf, 1977; Northouse, 2019). While transformational and servant leadership theories highlight empowerment, shared vision, and moral intent, Prophetic Leadership's distinct value lies in its ontological grounding—its embedding of spiritual accountability and divine ethics as inseparable from effective practice. Unlike secular frameworks, Prophetic Leadership holds leaders to both communal and transcendental standards, which, as the literature evidences, directly contribute to increased transparency, social trust, and institutional resilience.

Notably, the thematic analysis revealed that Islamic universities operationalizing prophetic values (especially *amānah* and *ṣidq*) exhibit not only improved ethical climates and staff retention but also lower incidences of corruption and maladministration. These outcomes support the classical Islamic perspective that authentic leadership is inseparable from moral rectitude (Al-Ghazali, 1962) and confirm more recent empirical research that spiritual leadership contributes to institutional sustainability and effective SDG implementation (Anggraeni et al., 2025; Sukirman et al., 2025). Such findings also extend Weber's notion of "value rationality" (Weber, 1947) by embedding ethical intent into every level of organizational decision-making.

However, the literature reviewed is not without notable limitations. First, the predominance of conceptual and qualitative empirical studies—often limited to isolated or narrative accounts—signals a pressing need for more robust, quantitative, multi-site research capable of establishing causal relationships between Prophetic Leadership and measurable institutional or student outcomes. Second, most current conceptualizations of prophetic values, such as *rahmah*, *taqwā*, and *tawakkul*, remain fragmented in the literature, lacking operational frameworks that translate these values into strategic practice. This result reinforces the concerns of Dewi et al. (2024) and Jakiyudin & Hardianti (2024) regarding fragmentation and insufficient methodological rigor in integrating Islamic paradigms with global SDG frameworks.

Methodologically, this review's use of SLR protocols and systematic thematic synthesis adds value to the field by consolidating and categorizing disparate findings and offering a more precise trajectory for integrating Prophetic Leadership into IHE leadership development, curriculum innovation, and governance reform. It provides the basis for conceptual frameworks that can be empirically validated across multiple contexts, advancing both the theory and practice of value-driven educational leadership. By linking prophetic ethics to SDG targets, the review suggests new metrics for institutional performance—beyond efficiency and output—emphasizing moral capital, participatory decision-making, and communal well-being.

Practically, these findings have important implications for leadership training programs, curriculum designers, and policymakers in Islamic higher education. Institutions seeking to realize both spiritual purpose and international quality standards must move beyond incremental or symbolic reforms and institutionalize Prophetic models across policy, pedagogy, and everyday practice. The unique fusion of ethical and epistemic

virtues in Prophetic Leadership provides a powerful “third way” for educational transformation—one that mediates between secular modernization and religious authenticity while aligning with global sustainability goals.

Nevertheless, several limitations must be acknowledged. The deliberate focus on English- and Indonesian-language publications and the heavy representation of Southeast Asian contexts may limit the generalizability of the findings. The inherent challenges of meta-synthesizing diverse conceptual frameworks and empirical methodologies also introduce interpretive subjectivity, though this is mitigated by triangulation and interrater reliability checks. Future research should employ comparative, longitudinal, and experimental designs to test the causal mechanisms and scalability of Prophetic Leadership across diverse institutional and cultural settings.

In sum, this review demonstrates that Prophetic Leadership offers more than an idealized vision for Islamic higher education—it anchors organizational transformation in principled, spiritually attuned, and sustainability-oriented leadership. By critically bridging theology, educational theory, and global SDGs, this model marks a substantive contribution to both Islamic education studies and the broader literature on moral leadership and institutional reform.

4. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Prophetic Leadership—anchored in values of *ṣidq*, *amānah*, *tablīgh*, *faṭānah*, *‘adālah*, and *shūrā*—provides a robust ethical and strategic foundation for the transformation of Islamic higher education toward sustainable development goals. Through systematic synthesis, the research highlights that institutions adopting prophetic leadership models not only strengthen governance, innovation, and stakeholder trust but also advance the integration of moral and spiritual principles in responding to contemporary educational challenges.

Theoretically, this study enriches the discourse on value-based and spiritual leadership by providing an integrated framework linking prophetic virtues to SDG-oriented educational reform. Practically, it offers actionable recommendations for curriculum development, leadership training, and policy design rooted in prophetic ethics. However, the review is limited by the predominance of qualitative, context-specific studies and by linguistic and regional concentration in the literature. Future research should employ comparative, quantitative, and longitudinal designs to assess the causal and scalable impact of Prophetic Leadership across diverse educational settings. In short, this research underlines that Prophetic Leadership is not merely a normative model, but a pragmatic paradigm for cultivating ethical, innovative, and resilient Islamic higher education institutions equipped to address both global and local sustainability imperatives.

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