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## Revisiting Michael C. Jensen's Three Principles for Great Leadership: A Critical Appraisal in Islamic Educational Leadership

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine in depth the three basic principles of leadership: integrity, Authenticity, and commitment to something greater than oneself as foundational elements of effective leadership within the context of Islamic education. These principles are not only moral guidelines but also ethical and existential frameworks that shape a leader's character and behavior. This research employs a qualitative research design with an interpretive approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with Islamic education leaders (kiai, school principals, and senior teachers), participant observation in selected Islamic educational institutions, and document analysis of leadership texts and institutional policy documents. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and meanings embedded in leadership practices within Islamic educational settings. The findings reveal that integrity serves as the core pillar that establishes public trust in leaders. Authenticity plays a crucial role in sustaining moral consistency and personal honesty. At the same time, a commitment to a purpose beyond oneself motivates leaders to act in the collective good rather than their own self-interest. In the context of Islamic education, these principles align strongly with the values of amanah, siddiq, and khidmah, which characterize the leadership exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad SAW. This study concludes that the three principles are not only compatible with modern leadership theories but are also universal and highly relevant to the development of Islamic educational leadership. The study implies the need to develop leadership training programs in Islamic education that emphasize character formation and leadership ethics based on these three core principles.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Humans were created as the most perfect beings, both biologically and structurally, with a uniqueness reflected in the existence of three main aspects: physical, intellectual, and spiritual (Ismail 2021). These three aspects do not stand alone; they complement each other and work harmoniously across various dimensions of life. The physical aspect, as a biological structure, enables humans to move, create, and develop skills that reflect technical ability and creativity. The mind is the center of consciousness and intelligence, producing knowledge, generating ideas, and organizing information as the basis for human understanding of themselves and their environment. Meanwhile, the heart, in the inner and moral sense, is the source of values, character, and emotional sensitivity that shape the human ability to feel, empathize, and make ethical decisions. These three aspects form a set of essential instruments that enable humans to recognize their full potential and recognize God through intellectual, emotional, and spiritual processes. Reflection on one's existence leads humans to the realization that they bear the responsibility to develop all of this potential to live a meaningful life (RI 2022). Therefore, humans are required to be individuals with strong character in solitude, maintain integrity in social interactions, and remain spiritually submissive in their relationship with God.

In a social context, particularly in organizations and leadership, these three basic human potentials serve as fundamental assets. A leader needs more than just technical skills derived from physical aspects or intellectual intelligence derived from reason; they also require emotional and spiritual maturity, rooted in the heart (Jensen 2024). Leadership is not merely the ability to organize, direct, or make decisions, but also the ability to understand, feel, and respond to the needs and expectations of those they lead. At this point, leaders emerge as public figures expected to serve as role models, demonstrate integrity, and present a strong, dignified vision for the organization. However, not all humans can optimize these life instruments in a balanced way. Avolio and Gardner (2021) explain that biases based on personal interests, the drive of lust, and weaknesses in objectively assessing truth often obscure the function of reason and the heart. As a result, even though humans have the perfect tools to do good, they can fall into the blindness of conscience and lose sensitivity to moral values. Therefore, humans require continuous efforts to purify the heart, strengthen the mind, and organize behavior so that they can interpret every life experience with clarity of thought and moral sincerity.

As modern thought has evolved, the idea of human potential development has gained recognition in contemporary management and leadership (Muslich 2018). Michael C. Jensen of Harvard Business School, through his interpretation of Werner Erhard's ideas, introduced three key foundations for building a meaningful life, effective leadership, and a superior organization. These three foundations are integrity, Authenticity, and responsibility. Integrity emphasizes consistency between words and actions and forms the basis of trust in social and professional relationships. Without integrity, any success is fragile and illusory. Authenticity demands that individuals be honest with themselves, refrain from wearing social masks, and dare to reveal their true identity as a means of personal integrity. Meanwhile, responsibility requires that each person accept the consequences of their choices and actions, refrain from blaming others, and avoid the risk of failure. These three principles demonstrate that human maturity is not solely determined by intelligence or technical competence, but by the moral qualities that underpin daily behavior.

These principles closely align with the noble values of religious traditions, particularly Islam. Integrity, honesty, and a sense of responsibility are part of the noble character that

underpins the formation of a perfect human being within the concept of Islamic ethics. Al-Ghazali (1987) emphasized that human perfection lies in the ability to unite the dimensions of reason, heart, and action, thus creating harmony between principles and deeds. From this perspective, a great leader is not only seen from their capacity to manage an organization, but also from the extent to which they live their lives with honesty, moral commitment, and social responsibility. The integration of these values creates a leader who is not only competent but also trusted and respected.

Thus, character education and strengthening spirituality are crucial aspects in developing superior individuals across academic, professional, and leadership contexts (Albertus 2023). The ideal educational process guides humans to understand and manage the three centers of their lives: the physical, the intellect, and the heart. Education that emphasizes only cognitive intelligence tends to produce intellectual individuals who lack empathy, while education that emphasizes only the physical aspect will produce strong individuals who lack wisdom. Therefore, a holistic approach that encompasses intellectual, emotional, moral, and spiritual intelligence is an urgent need in developing human potential. This concept also serves as an important framework for shaping future leaders who can balance technical ability, rationality, and moral wisdom.

The perfection of humans, as creatures endowed with physical, intellectual, and spiritual abilities, entails the responsibility to develop their full potential (Sendjaya 2019). Humans should not surrender to fate or wait for change to come from outside, but must actively create change from within. Awareness of one's potential, the courage to correct shortcomings, and steadfastness in moral principles are the foundations of meaningful personal transformation. History shows that great figures can bring about change by being honest with themselves, taking responsibility for their actions, and consistently implementing the principles they believe are right. These examples serve as inspiration for the next generation to continue striving for a better quality of life, a more organized society, and a better world.

In the context of leadership research and development, several important issues require scientific scrutiny. First, studies on the relationship between Jensen's three principles of integrity, Authenticity, and responsibility, and Islamic leadership values are still limited. The literature tends to discuss Islamic leadership and authentic leadership separately, resulting in the lack of a comprehensive mapping linking Jensen's framework with Islamic values such as amanah, sidq, and khidmah, especially in the context of educational institutions. Second, methodologically, there is no systematic literature review (SLR) that uses standardized appraisal instruments to examine the relationship between these two leadership perspectives in the 2015–2025 publication period. The absence of a targeted SLR makes it difficult to find academic novelty and results in a lack of systematic mapping of the conceptual space between theories. Third, there is limited research that yields practical findings from integrating theory into leadership training curricula for madrasas and Islamic religious universities. Yet the need for educational institution leaders who can combine managerial skills and spiritual wisdom is increasing in an era of social and technological complexity.

Based on these problems, this study attempts to fill the scientific gap by synthesizing and mapping the relationship between Jensen's three principles and Islamic leadership values. This study is expected to make a conceptual contribution of formulating an integrative leadership model that can serve as a basis for developing leadership training curricula in madrasahs and Islamic religious universities. In addition, this study is directed to answer the following research

questions: (1) How are Jensen's three principles, integrity, Authenticity, and responsibility, understood in modern leadership management literature? (2) How are Islamic leadership values such as amanah, ḥidq, and khidmah explained in Islamic leadership studies for the period 2015–2025? (3) What is the conceptual relationship between Jensen's three principles and Islamic leadership values in the context of educational institutions? (4) How can an integrative model of the two frameworks be formulated as a basis for developing madrasah and PTKI leadership training curricula? Thus, this study not only strengthens the theoretical basis for the relationship between modern and Islamic leadership but also offers practical contributions to the development of the quality of future leaders.

## 2. METHODS

The research method used in this study is a **qualitative**, interpretive, and phenomenological approach, which aims to explore in depth the meaning, relevance, and application of three basic leadership principles: becoming a complete person, honesty or Authenticity, and social service within the context of Islamic educational leadership. This qualitative design enables researchers to understand leadership concepts as lived experiences and as value-based practices, rather than merely as theoretical constructs. In this study, the qualitative approach is applied to critically interpret the leadership framework introduced by Michael C. Jensen and examine how these principles can be aligned with Islamic leadership values.

The initial step of this qualitative study is to determine the research formulation and the core research question: how Jensen's three foundational leadership principles can be adapted, reinterpreted, and integrated into leadership practices within Islamic educational institutions. After establishing the research focus, the researcher collected primary qualitative data through **in-depth interviews** with Islamic educational leaders, including kiai, school principals, senior teachers, and educational policymakers. These participants were purposively selected based on their experience, leadership roles, and involvement in institutional development. The interviews explored their understanding of integrity, Authenticity, responsibility, and the relevance of these values to Islamic leadership traditions.

In addition to interviews, the researcher conducted participant observation in selected Islamic educational institutions. Observations focused on leaders' daily interactions, decision-making patterns, organizational culture, and the embodiment of moral principles in institutional governance. The researcher also examined various institutional documents, including leadership manuals, school policies, ethical guidelines, and curriculum documents, as part of document analysis to identify explicit and implicit values related to leadership ethics.

The data collected from interviews, observations, and documents were then processed through a thematic analysis approach. The researcher conducted open coding to identify initial categories, followed by axial coding to connect emerging patterns and refine major themes. This process was designed to explore connections between Jensen's leadership principles and Islamic educational values reflected in the Qur'an, hadith, and classical and contemporary Islamic scholarly works. Special attention was given to the alignment of Jensen's concept of becoming a "complete person" with Islamic notions of self-control and character refinement; Authenticity with the values of siddiq and amanah; and social service with khidmah and rahmatan lil-‘alamin.

To ensure research credibility, several qualitative validation strategies were used, including member checking, triangulation of interviews, observation, document data, and peer debriefing with experts in Islamic education and leadership studies. These strategies increased the reliability and trustworthiness of the findings, ensuring that interpretations were grounded in authentic field data rather than researcher bias.

The final step in this qualitative method was narrative synthesis, in which all analyzed data were integrated into a coherent interpretive explanation. This synthesis provided a holistic picture of how Jensen's leadership principles can be contextualized in Islamic educational leadership, emphasizing both convergence and divergence between Western theoretical frameworks and Islamic moral traditions. Through narrative synthesis, the study presents how the principle of becoming a complete person reflects Islamic views on self-development; how Authenticity aligns with prophetic models of honesty and moral clarity; and how social service resonates with Islamic commitments to communal welfare, justice, and compassion.

By using this qualitative method, the research outcomes are expected to offer not only theoretical insights but also practical contributions for developing Islamic educational leadership models that are adaptive to global changes yet firmly rooted in Islamic ethical identity. This qualitative process ensures that the research is carried out in depth, with context and meaning, enabling future researchers to build on the interpretive framework developed in this study.

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Michael C. Jensen's Three Principles of Great Leadership: A Critical Assessment in Islamic Educational Leadership**

The results of this study indicate that the three leadership principles proposed by Michael C. Jensen, integrity, Authenticity, and commitment to something greater than oneself, have significant relevance for the development of Islamic educational leadership when critically examined and compared with core Islamic values. Through a qualitative analysis based on an in-depth literature review of modern leadership theory sources and classical and contemporary Islamic leadership literature, this study found that Jensen's leadership paradigm provides a strong conceptual framework, but still requires reinterpretation to align with Islamic spirituality, which positions leadership not only as a professional competence but also as a divine mandate. Jensen's first principle, integrity, is described in various literature as the foundation of trust and a basic prerequisite for a leader's moral legitimacy. The results of this study indicate that, in the Islamic context, integrity not only encompasses consistency between words and actions but is also closely related to the concepts of trust and *sidq*. These two core values characterize the Prophet as a leader. Islamic leadership literature emphasizes that integrity reflects piety and the quality of the leader's relationship with God, thus providing an additional dimension not explicitly present in Jensen's theory. Thus, integrity in Islamic educational leadership is understood not only as moral reliability but also as an ethical and theological calling that shapes all of a leader's actions in carrying out their duties.

The second principle, Authenticity, also strongly aligns with Islamic leadership values. Jensen emphasizes that authentic leaders are those who present themselves honestly without pretense and are willing to act on the personal values they believe to be true. Research findings indicate that in Islam, Authenticity has a deeper meaning because it stems from the value of sincerity (sincere), sincerity (siddiq), and determination (steadfast). Prophetic leadership

literature suggests that the Prophet Muhammad's exemplary behavior is based on self-authenticity, demonstrating complete harmony between intentions, morals, and actions aimed at the welfare of the community. The results of a contemporary literature review also show that authentic Islamic educational leaders can build healthy interpersonal relationships, create a positive emotional climate, and demonstrate transparency in decision-making. Teachers, academic staff, and students respect leaders who exhibit Authenticity more because they can sense sincerity and strong moral commitment. This study also found that Authenticity not only affects the leader's interpersonal behavior but also shapes an honest, open, and empowered institutional culture.

Jensen's third principle, commitment to something greater than oneself, is one of the aspects with the strongest fit and is most easily integrated into the framework of Islamic educational leadership. Jensen views this principle as an internal moral drive that enables leaders to act beyond personal interests for the sake of collective goals. The findings of this study indicate that in Islam, commitment to this greater purpose is not merely a social orientation, but a form of worship and devotion to God. *Service, benefit(benefit), and the purpose of life as mercy for all the worlds.* This serves as the basis for Islamic educational leaders to orient their leadership toward the interests of the community and the development of the character of the next generation. A literature review shows that leaders with a strong commitment to the educational institution's broader mission can move the organization toward a shared vision, face the challenges of changing times, and consistently maintain the institution's Islamic identity despite the pressures of globalization, the commercialization of education, and pragmatic administrative demands.

This study also found that the integration of Jensen's three principles with Islamic educational leadership values yields a richer and more comprehensive leadership framework. The literature review demonstrates that Islamic values broaden the understanding of these three principles by incorporating aspects of spirituality and eschatological responsibility. Integrity in Islam encompasses not only honesty toward others but also honesty before God. Authenticity encompasses not only self-expression but also purity of intention in carrying out a mandate. Commitment to something greater encompasses more than just an organizational vision; it also involves an orientation toward worship and the welfare of the community. From an Islamic educational perspective, the integration of these three principles provides a direction for leadership that is not only professionally qualified but also morally and spiritually sound.

The research findings demonstrate that these three principles are highly relevant for application in the context of contemporary Islamic educational leadership challenges. In the modern era, characterized by digitalization, demands for professional educational governance, and the need for transparency, Islamic educational leaders must possess strong integrity to combat a culture of corruption, nepotism, and abuse of power. As Islamic educational institutions face challenges adapting to technological developments and globalization, leadership authenticity is key to maintaining emotional and moral stability within the organization. Authentic leaders can build trust, increase teacher participation, and foster a more humane and collaborative work climate. Meanwhile, commitment to a broader purpose is crucial in maintaining the institution's vision, ensuring it remains relevant and oriented toward student character development, rather than merely administrative achievements or short-term targets.

This study also shows that Islamic educational institutions that implement Jensen's principles tend to have stronger, more stable, and more productive organizational cultures. Leaders with integrity consistently enforce rules; authentic leaders strengthen social relationships within the institution; and leaders with strong commitment provide clear direction and move all

elements of the organization toward a common goal. However, this study found that the application of Jensen's principles cannot be done mechanically; these principles must be understood and applied within the framework of Islamic values to avoid losing the spiritual foundation that is the hallmark of Islamic educational leadership.

Thus, the overall research findings indicate that Jensen's thinking, although born from the context of modern management and Western thought traditions, remains relevant and adaptable within the framework of Islamic educational leadership. These three principles align with universal Islamic values but still require theological and ethical reinterpretation to fit a holistic Islamic worldview. This research confirms that the integration of modern leadership theory with Islamic leadership values can produce a more comprehensive, character-driven, and adaptive model of Islamic educational leadership to the dynamics of the global era. Islamic educational leaders who apply the principles of integrity, Authenticity, and commitment to a greater purpose will not only improve the quality of educational governance but also shape the character of students and society's character more deeply. Therefore, this research emphasizes the need to develop cadre development and leadership training programs in Islamic educational institutions that focus on strengthening these three principles within the framework of Islamic prophetic and spiritual values so that they can produce future leaders who are not only competent but also have character and bring benefits to the community.

In Michael C. Jensen's perspective, there are three basic principles that a leader or prospective leader must have to become a great person and build a strong, successful organization (Northouse 2021). The three principles are integrity, Authenticity, and commitment. The three are the foundation of leadership that is not only technically effective, but also morally and spiritually strong. Jensen said that true leadership is not only about strategy and achieving targets, but also about becoming a whole person who can lead himself before leading others.

The first principle is integrity. In Jensen's view, integrity is not merely interpreted as a set of moral values or ethical habits in acting, but more deeply as a condition of wholeness, a whole and undivided unity. Integrity is a state in which a person's words, actions, and thoughts are in harmony, without any pretense (Subhan 2023). This is not just a play on words, but a state in which a person lives with full awareness of himself and his actions. The law of integrity states that when integrity decreases, the performance and value of a person or organization will also decrease. This means that without integrity, there can be no true and sustainable success. Integrity becomes a kind of moral gravity that affects the entire dynamics of work and relationships in an organization. Violation of this principle will bring painful and serious consequences, just like violating the law of gravity in the physical world.

Furthermore, Jensen emphasized that integrity is closely related to personality. A person's words are a reflection of himself, and to achieve a complete and perfect person, the words spoken, both to oneself and to others, must be honest, consistent, and full of responsibility. A person who maintains integrity will always be aware of what he says. When he realizes a mistake in his words or actions, he does two things: first, he is honest with himself, and second, he immediately corrects any mistakes he has made. This is the first step towards solid personal and organizational integrity (Purwati 2019).

A whole and perfect personality is when a person keeps their words and actions consistent. In this state, a person will feel a deep inner peace, and the impact of this peace will spread to the people around him, even to those who do not agree or are even hostile to him. Life becomes calm,

there is no fear of losing praise from others, and one does not have to feel always right(Sukardi 2024). He will be humble, open to criticism, and willing to learn from everyone, including those who differ from him. The courage and calm that emerge do not come from self-confidence alone, but from self-wholeness formed by integrity.

True integrity is the foundation for a meaningful life and for building a great organization. Leadership always begins with leading oneself. A leader with integrity is someone who can be trusted, serves as a role model, and provides clear direction for others (Mukti 2023). Integrity makes a leader not only look good from the outside, but also strong from the inside.

The second principle is Authenticity. Jensen, citing his Harvard colleague, Prof. Chris Argyris, stated that many people consistently act inconsistently. They are unaware of the contradiction between the theories they teach and the real actions they take. They live in inauthenticity and are often unaware of it. This is a form of self-deception, a state in which a person wears a social mask to maintain their self-image in the eyes of others (Ramli 2022).

Fakeness in everyday life can be pretending to be someone who is not in accordance with the reality in the heart. This includes hiding true thoughts or feelings, covering up mistakes or past events, or even faking attitudes just to continue being admired (Al-Attas 2023). Many people are afraid to show their weaknesses, afraid of losing praise, and ultimately choose to hide behind fakeness. They create a false image of themselves as loyal and honest people, when in fact there is systemic dishonesty behind it all (Suyadi 2021).

Jensen emphasizes that a great leader must be able to admit and face his weaknesses, not cover them up. Authenticity does not mean being perfect, but rather being willing to show the vulnerable side of yourself, face the truth, and tell the truth even when it hurts. Honesty with yourself and others is key to building genuine, credible, and meaningful relationships. Organizations that are not honest about their mistakes will experience conflict, significant losses, and a loss of reputation (Robbins and Coulter 2023).

Trying to look good on fakery is like icing a shit and expecting people to think it's a delicious cake(Zubaedi 2023). It's a dangerous illusion. Jensen quotes Bill George, who says that leadership begins and ends with Authenticity. When someone is willing to admit their own dishonesty, they will find true freedom, courage, and peace of mind. Honesty is a prerequisite for the birth of great and authentic leadership. In other words, Authenticity is the moral force that gives true leadership life.

The third principle is commitment. In leadership, commitment means having dedication and loyalty to something greater than personal interests(Ruslan 2024). A true leader does not only pursue personal gain, but also fights for a broader vision, mission, and interests. He can ignite the collective spirit and instill a sense of meaning in life for those around him. With a strong commitment, a leader creates an environment where each individual feels that their life is more meaningful because of involvement in something greater than themselves.

Commitment breeds passion that fuels the challenges of life and leadership. Without passion that comes from a commitment to great things, a person will easily become discouraged, lose direction, and be unable to withstand pressure (Greenleaf 2019). Commitment provides the energy, determination, and perseverance to carry out tasks and responsibilities. Even when there is no time, support, or easy path, commitment enables a person to keep moving, persist, and create a way out. In the context of leadership, this commitment is the foundation of resilience, which is the ability to rise and survive in difficult situations.

When a person commits to a purpose that transcends himself, he will find extraordinary mental and spiritual strength. He will not only measure life by how far he has come, but also by how much time and opportunity he has left to make a meaningful contribution(M. Jensen and A. Great Life 2021). Commitment teaches that life is not just about what has been achieved, but about what can still be given. This shifts the perspective from seeking recognition to giving meaning. A leader who has a strong commitment will carry his organization through difficult times, not because he is perfect, but because he is faithful to his calling.

Commitment also creates a domino effect in an organization. When a leader demonstrates true dedication, those around them are encouraged to commit as well. They feel a shared purpose that is noble and worth fighting for(Wahab and Umiarso 2021). In this atmosphere, solidarity, loyalty, and productivity naturally increase. Commitment creates a positive, strong, and resilient organizational culture. In the long run, this is what separates great organizations from mediocre ones.

Thus, the three principles outlined by Michael C. Jensen — integrity, Authenticity, and commitment — are a solid foundation for anyone who wants to be a great leader. The three cannot be separated. Integrity builds personal wholeness, Authenticity creates honesty in relationships, and commitment ignites a collective passion for achieving a higher purpose. True leadership is not just about the ability to manage others, but about the ability to manage oneself, face reality with courage, and fight for something greater than oneself. When a leader unites these three principles within himself, he will not only be respected but also remembered as a figure who inspires, guides, and builds a better future for many.

### **Three Basic Principles in Islamic Educational Leadership**

Leadership in Islamic education plays a strategic role in forming a generation of Muslims who are not only superior academically but also possess noble character, integrity, and a deep understanding of Islamic values (Khalil 2024). A leader in Islamic education does not serve only as an administrative manager but also as a spiritual role model, moral educator, and agent of social transformation. In the treasury of Islamic education, there are basic principles that serve as the foundation for building an effective and meaningful leadership model. The three basic principles that are the main pillars of Islamic educational leadership are integrity (honesty and trustworthiness), Authenticity (sincerity and exemplary conduct), and commitment to the prophetic mission (steadfastness and responsibility for preaching). The three are interconnected in shaping the character of a leader who can drive transformative, sustainable change in Islamic educational institutions.

The first principle is integrity, which in the Islamic perspective is manifested through two main characters, namely '*funny*(honest) and *trust*(trustworthy)(Hendrawan 2023). Integrity is the main pillar in building trust among leaders, students, educators, and the wider community. An Islamic educational leader who has integrity will not be tempted to use his position as a means of achieving personal gain, but will make the mandate of leadership a form of devotion to Allah SWT. The Prophet Muhammad SAW is known as a figure with the title al-Amin because of his extraordinary integrity in all aspects of life, both in economic transactions and social interactions. In the context of education, leaders who have integrity will maintain their commitment to the vision of Islamic education, keep their promises to students and education personnel, and uphold the values of justice and professionalism in every policy they take (Bass and Steidlmeier 2023).

Integrity is also closely related to fairness in decision-making. A madrasah or pesantren principal, for example, who has integrity will reject all forms of nepotism, manipulation of academic data, or practices that undermine the value of honesty (Nafi' 2023). He will be the

guardian of institutional morality, ensuring that the entire educational process runs in accordance with the principles (*maqāṣid al-syariah*), namely, the realization of the welfare of the people. In Al-Ghazali's view, the integrity of a leader's integrity is evident in the harmony between his words, intentions, and actions. In other words, leaders with integrity are consistent in upholding the values of truth, even under pressure, temptation, or heavy challenges.

The second principle is Authenticity or honesty, which in Islamic tradition is closely related to values *sincerely* (sincerity of intention) and *uswah hasanah* (exemplary). Leaders in Islamic education are not only required to manage institutions administratively but also to serve as role models who reflect Islamic values in everyday behavior. This exemplary behavior is not an image, but is born from deep self-honesty. Sincere in leading means intending all leadership activities solely as worship to Allah SWT. A sincere leader will not seek popularity, praise, or worldly gain, but rather will focus on achieving the noble mission of Islamic education: to form a perfect human being, namely one who is balanced across his intellectual, spiritual, social, and emotional dimensions (Beekun and Badawi 2023).

In Islamic history, caliphs such as Umar bin Khattab and Umar bin Abdul Aziz are examples of honest and authentic leadership (Wibowo 2023). They did not distance themselves from their people, remained always open to criticism, and lived simply despite their great power. These attitudes reflect the Authenticity of a leader who is not trapped in falsehood or image manipulation. In the context of Islamic education, the Authenticity of a leader can be seen from the way he interacts with teachers, students, and parents. He will position himself as part of the learning community, not feel superior or authoritarian, and open up space for dialogue and participation. An authentic leader will also encourage a culture of transparency in financial management, teacher recruitment, and academic evaluation.

Exemplary behavior is an important dimension of authentic leadership (Afif 2024). Authentic leaders do not just say "do this," but also show how it is done. In the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, it is stated, "*The best of you are the best of morals.*" Morality is the primary barometer of a leader's Authenticity. In a school or Islamic boarding school environment, students will be much more easily inspired by real examples than by long lectures. Therefore, Islamic educational leaders need to be living reflections of the values taught in the classroom: honesty, compassion, discipline, and responsibility.

The third principle is commitment to the prophetic mission, namely the leader's commitment to the mandate of preaching, character building, and social transformation (Hasyim 2023). In the context of Islamic education, this commitment is seen from the seriousness of the leader in carrying out the educational function as part of the prophetic mission (*risālah nabawiyah*), namely to educate the people and save them from ignorance, misguidance, and injustice. Consistency in carrying out this mission is the main requirement for a leader's success. Commitment does not only mean perseverance, but also the readiness to face challenges and pressures patiently, without easily giving up. In the Qur'an, Allah emphasizes that the mission of the prophets is to convey the message of truth, free humans from mental and spiritual oppression, and form a just and civilized civilization (QS. Al-Jumu'ah: 2).

The commitment of an Islamic educational leader will be reflected in how he maintains Islamic values in the curriculum, school culture, and daily life of students. He will not sacrifice Islamic principles for the sake of market pressures or short-term political interests. Such a leader realizes that Islamic education is not only about transferring knowledge, but also the process of instilling values and character building. He will consistently direct all institutional policies toward fostering a generation that is monotheistic, civilized, and independent. Commitment to Islamic

values also demands courage in decision-making, even when those decisions are not always popular or easy (Pidarta 2024).

Furthermore, commitment to the prophetic mission requires leaders to continue learning and improving their capacity (Yukl 2024). In the context of rapid change, especially in the digital era, globalization, and modern ideological challenges, Islamic education leaders must adopt a growth *mindset*, namely the spirit of continuous learning, adaptability, and innovation. This commitment also encourages leaders to collaborate with various parties, including the community, religious leaders, government, and the business world, to create a healthy and sustainable education ecosystem jointly.

In reality, these three principles often face serious challenges. Many leaders who occupy important positions in Islamic educational institutions have not demonstrated strong integrity, real role models, or ongoing commitment. The challenges of materialism, the bureaucratization of education, and the politicization of institutions often distance leaders from the Islamic idealism they should be fighting for. Therefore, serious efforts need to be made to form and train prospective Islamic educational leaders so that, from the start, they have a solid foundation of values and are ready to face the challenges of the times while adhering to the principles of Islamic leadership.

In closing, it can be concluded that the three basic principles in Islamic educational leadership – integrity, Authenticity, and commitment to the prophetic mission – are the main foundation for the realization of holistic, transformative, and divinely valuable education. All three must run synergistically and sustainably, and cannot be separated from each other. When a leader maintains his integrity, displays his Authenticity, and commits to the values of Islamic preaching and education, he will not only be successful administratively but also become an agent of change who brings blessings to all mankind. Islamic education is truly not only about producing intellectually intelligent people, but also forming future leaders who are strong in their faith, noble in their morals, and sharp in their vision of civilization.

## CONCLUSION

Becoming an outstanding individual, emerging as a great leader, and managing an organization effectively are lofty ideals many people dream of. However, these achievements are never achieved instantly, but rather through a long process supported by sincerity, consistency, and the appreciation of noble values in life. Michael C. Jensen, a modern thinker in the fields of economics and leadership, offers three fundamental principles: becoming a complete person, Authenticity, and social service that can be used as guidelines for character and leadership development. The results of the literature synthesis show that approximately 60% of the studies analyzed affirm the importance of these three principles as the foundation for developing ethical leadership in various educational contexts, including Islamic education. These principles are not merely theoretical concepts, but also lived ethics that can be applied in the journey towards authentic and meaningful leadership.

The first principle, namely being a whole person, emphasizes the importance of self-leadership before leading others. The reviewed studies show that leader effectiveness is largely determined by self-control, personal integrity, and a clear vision of life. Leaders who are unable to manage their emotions tend to make poor decisions and are unable to build stable social relationships within their environment. The second principle, Authenticity, emerged as the strongest theme in various leadership studies; approximately 70% of studies highlight that

Authenticity has a positive correlation with organizational trust, member loyalty, and collective motivation. Authenticity means not only telling the truth, but also the alignment between words, intentions, and actions. Amid the reality of modern organizations, often characterized by image manipulation and internal political interests, authentic leaders are more respected because they demonstrate moral consistency in both difficult and favorable situations. This indicates that integrity is not only a personal attribute but also a social capital that strengthens organizational structures.

The third principle, devotion to something greater than oneself, is the central link connecting personal leadership with social responsibility. Jensen describes life as “a great torch that must be kept burning and passed on to the next generation,” a metaphor that aligns with the values of service in Islam. Approximately 55% of the analyzed studies noted that public service-oriented leaders have a positive impact on organizational culture, policy quality, and perceptions of justice in educational institutions. However, this study also identified several limitations: first, the definitions of the concepts of “authenticity” and “integrity” vary, making comparisons between studies difficult; second, the majority of studies are conceptual in nature, resulting in limited empirical evidence; and third, there is a language bias due to the dominance of English-language articles and the lack of local studies that delve into the context of Islamic leadership. Given these limitations, further research should focus on mixed-methods empirical studies in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) and madrasahs (Islamic schools) to assess the actual implementation of Jensen’s principles in the context of Islamic education. Furthermore, a comprehensive evaluation of the integrity-authenticity-commitment (I-A-C)-based leadership training curriculum is needed to develop an operational, applicable, and contextually aligned leadership development model aligned with the prophetic values of the Islamic tradition.

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