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ANALYSIS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AL-GHAZALI'S LEADERSHIP IN IMPROVING THE PERFORMANCE OF THE LEADERSHIP OF THE FACULTY OF DA'WAH AND COMMUNICATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the leadership concept of Al-Ghazali in improving the performance of the leadership of the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication in the digital era. The quantitative approach was used with a survey method involving 50 respondents from faculty leaders, lecturers, and education staff at several universities in Indonesia. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and linear regression to measure the relationship between Al-Ghazali's leadership principles and improved academic leadership performance. The results of the study show that the leadership principles of Al-Ghazali, which include justice (al-'adalah), wisdom (al-hikmah), exemplary (uswah hasanah), and trust, have been applied significantly in faculty management. The average score of the application of the principle reached 4.25 out of 5, indicating that Islamic leadership values have become an integral part of academic leadership practice. Regression analysis showed a significant positive relationship ($R^2 = 0.72$, $p < 0.05$) between the implementation of Al-Ghazali's leadership and the improvement

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of leadership performance, especially in the aspects of decision-making, internal communication, and innovation in faculty management. This study concludes that the concept of Al-Ghazali leadership has strong relevance in increasing the effectiveness of academic leadership, especially in facing the challenges of digitalization in Islamic higher education. Therefore, leadership training based on Islamic values needs to be strengthened in order to optimize the quality of faculty management in the digital era.

Keywords: Al-Ghazali Leadership, Leadership Performance, Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, Digital Era, Islamic Leadership

INTRODUCTION

The digital era has brought fundamental changes in organizational governance, including the academic environment. Technological transformation requires not only infrastructure adaptation, but also a redefinition of leadership models that are able to integrate the speed of innovation with the resilience of the organization's core values. The Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, as an institution that carries out the dual mission of producing spiritually competent da'wah experts and technologically adaptive communicators to face multidimensional challenges. On the one hand, faculty leaders must respond to the demands of digitalization, such as strengthening online learning, using social media for da'wah, and technology-based data management (Razak, Masrokan, & Sujianto, 2024). On the other hand, they are obliged to ensure that Islamic values such as honesty, justice, and exemplary remain the foundation of every academic policy and interaction. These challenges hint at the need for a holistic leadership approach, one that relies not only on technical skills but also on spiritual depth (Yunita, Falah, & Latifah, 2023).

Imam Al-Ghazali's thoughts on leadership offer a unique perspective in this context. In Ihya Ulumuddin, Al-Ghazali emphasizes that true leaders are those who are able to become a "mirror of virtue" (qudwah hasanah) through self-integrity, justice in making decisions, and wisdom in prioritizing the benefit of the ummah. Concepts such as tazkiyatun nafs (cleansing of the soul) and muraqabah (awareness of Divine supervision) that he taught were relevant to forming resilient leaders in the midst of the distractions of the digital age, such as the pressure of instant performance, a culture of overwork, and ethical degradation. Unfortunately, studies on the implementation of these classical Islamic leadership values in

the context of modern education management are still limited, especially in linking them to performance indicators such as productivity, innovation, and stakeholder satisfaction (Haqqani, 2025).

This phenomenon is evident in the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, where leaders are often caught in a paradox between maintaining religious identity and pursuing accreditation based on global technology standards. For example, the demand to use artificial intelligence in da'wah research may collide with the principle of prudence (ihtiyath) in spreading religious messages. This is where Al-Ghazali's principles of wisdom (contextual wisdom) and tawazun (balance) can be a solution to formulate policies that are not reactive, but visionary. However, there has been no in-depth study of how these values are operationalized in daily leadership practices, their impact on team performance, or their impact on organizational culture within the faculty (Rizqi Shohibul Khotami & M. Reza Saputra, 2024).

Based on the complexity of the above challenges, this research focuses on the main question: How are the leadership principles of Al-Ghazali implemented by the leadership of the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication to improve performance in the digital era, and what factors hinder or support the process? This question leads to the exploration of two critical aspects: first, the degree of alignment between Al-Ghazali's leadership concept and the practical needs of digital leadership; Second, the effectiveness of these values in creating a productive, inclusive, and spiritual goal-oriented work environment (Sariani, Adi, & Nugraha, 2025).

The research is designed to achieve three main objectives. First, identify the leadership principles of Al-Ghazali that are most relevant to the dynamics of the digital era, such as the ability to manage change (taghayyur), build collaboration (ta'awun), and maintain transparency (syaffafiyah). Second, analyze the real practice of the leadership of the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication in integrating these principles into strategies such as decision-making, conflict management, and technology-based human resource development. Third, designing an integrative leadership model that combines the Al-Ghazali framework with modern organizational performance theory, so that it can be adopted by similar institutions to achieve success both operationally and morally (Sholeh, Tanzeh, & Fuadi, 2023).

Academically, this research fills the literary gap by linking the legacy of classical Islamic thought with contemporary issues such as digital leadership. So far, the study of Al-Ghazali tends to focus on the dimension of Sufism or individual ethics, while this research extends it to the realm of organizational management. At a practical level, the resulting leadership model can be a guideline for faculty leaders to optimize the use of technology without sacrificing da'wah values. For example, how to implement khiyar (freedom of choice) in staff empowerment through a flexible work system, or manage digital communication with the principle of qawl al-ma'ruf (good speech). In addition, the findings of this research can be used as a consideration for the Ministry of Religion or Islamic educational institutions in designing leadership training that is responsive to the challenges of the times (Bella & Tamami, 2022).

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with an exploratory case study design to understand the phenomenon of leadership in the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication in depth. Data were collected through three main methods: (1) semi-structured interviews with deans, vice deans, and department heads to explore their perceptions of the Al-Ghazali principles and the challenges of the digital age; (2) participatory observation in strategic meetings, lecturer training, and student activities to observe the application of leadership values in concrete actions; and (3) analysis of documents such as faculty strategic plans, performance reports, and codes of conduct to see consistency between written policies and field practices. The data was then analyzed thematically by comparing the empirical findings with Al-Ghazali's leadership concept and digital performance theories such as the Digital Leadership Model (DLM) and the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Triangulation of sources and methods is carried out to ensure the validity of research results (Murdiyanto, 2020).

RESULTS

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the leadership concept of Al-Ghazali in improving the performance of the leadership of the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication in the digital era. The concept of leadership put forward by Al-Ghazali emphasizes the values of morality, spirituality, and wisdom in decision-making, which

become relevant in the face of the challenges of modern leadership. In this study, data was collected through a quantitative survey involving a number of faculty leaders, lecturers, and education staff to gain a comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of the implementation of these leadership principles. Data analysis was carried out using descriptive statistical methods to describe the characteristics of the applied leadership, as well as linear regression to test the relationship between Al-Ghazali's leadership principles and improved leadership performance. Thus, this research is expected to contribute to the development of a leadership model based on Islamic values that is adaptive to technological developments and organizational dynamics in the academic environment (Habibi et al., 2025).

Respondent Description

The respondents in this study consisted of 50 leaders and lecturers of the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication from various universities in Indonesia. The respondents included deans, vice deans, study program chairs, and lecturers with various levels of academic positions. The majority of them have more than five years of experience in academic leadership as well as being active in the strategic decision-making process in their respective faculties. In addition, most of the respondents are also involved in research and community service related to da'wah and Islamic communication, so they have in-depth insight into the challenges and opportunities in academic management in this field. The diversity of the respondents' institutions provides a broad and comprehensive perspective on the dynamics of leadership and academic policies at the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication in Indonesia. To provide a more detailed picture of respondents' characteristics, the following table presents the distribution of respondents by academic position and leadership experience:

Table 1. Respondent Distribution

Academic Departments	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Dean	5	10%
Vice Dean	8	16%
Head of Study Program	10	20%
Head Lecturer	12	24%
Lecturer	10	20%
Expert Assistant Lecturer	5	10%
Total	50	100%

Source: Author's Analysis

From the table above, it can be seen that the majority of respondents are in strategic positions within the faculty, with more than half having more than 4 years of academic leadership experience. This shows that the respondents have a deep understanding of faculty policies and the challenges faced in academic management.

Implementation of Al-Ghazali's Leadership

Based on the results of the analysis, it was found that the concept of Al-Ghazali's leadership, which includes aspects of justice (al-'adalah), wisdom (al-hikmah), exemplary (uswah hasanah), and trust, has been widely applied in various managerial aspects of the faculty. These principles are reflected in the decision-making process, the distribution of responsibilities, and the interaction between leaders and lecturers. For example, the aspect of justice is manifested in the transparency of academic policies and the provision of equal opportunities for all lecturers in career development. Wisdom is seen in the implementation of deliberation-based policies that consider various perspectives before decisions are made. Exemplary as the main element of Al-Ghazali's leadership is reflected in the attitude and behavior of the leader who serves as an example for lecturers and staff in carrying out academic and administrative tasks. This has an impact on increasing the work spirit and loyalty of the academic community to the institution. Meanwhile, the mandate in leadership is shown through the commitment of the leadership in maintaining academic integrity and professionalism in carrying out their duties (Munandar, 2022).

Al-Ghazali's average score of 4.25 out of 5 of 4.25 has adopted these values in their leadership. Further data showed that the exemplary aspect received the highest score (4.40), followed by trust (4.30), wisdom (4.20), and justice (4.10). This indicates that leadership in the faculty is more oriented towards an exemplary-based leadership model, which is in line with the ideal concept put forward by Al-Ghazali. The following is a table summarizing the level of application of Al-Ghazali's leadership principles in the faculty:

Table 2. Average score of the level of application of Al-Ghazali's leadership principles

Al-Ghazali Leadership Principles	Average Score (Maximum 5)
Example (uswah hasanah)	4,40
Trust	4,30
Wisdom (al-hikmah)	4,20
Justice (al-'is)	4,10
Overall average	4,25

With the application of these principles, leadership in the faculty not only focuses on academic and administrative achievements, but also builds a work culture based on Islamic ethical values. This contributes to increased managerial effectiveness and harmony in the academic environment, as well as providing a clearer direction in the development of institutions based on Islamic values.

The Influence of Al-Ghazali's Leadership on Leadership Performance

Regression analysis showed that there was a significant relationship between the application of Al-Ghazali's leadership concept and the improvement of faculty leadership performance ($R^2 = 0.72$, $p < 0.05$). This shows that the higher the application of Al-Ghazali's leadership values, the higher the performance shown by faculty leaders in various aspects, such as decision-making, internal communication, and innovation in faculty management. In the aspect of decision-making, the application of the principle of al-hikmah (wisdom) allows leaders to make more mature decisions, based on deliberation (shura), and consider the long-term impact on the faculty and academic community. This contributes to more inclusive and effective policies. In addition, the aspect of al-'is (justice) plays an important role in creating a fair and transparent work environment, thereby increasing the trust and loyalty of lecturers and education staff to faculty leadership.

In terms of internal communication, exemplary-based leadership (uswah hasanah) strengthens the relationship between leaders and faculty members, creating a harmonious and collaborative work culture. Leaders who implement these values are more likely to build open communication, support dialogue between various parties, and provide ongoing motivation for lecturers and staff. This has a positive impact on improving the overall team's performance. In addition, the aspect of trust in leadership encourages leaders to be more committed in carrying out their responsibilities with full integrity. This not only creates more professional faculty governance, but also sparks innovation in academic management and administration. The results of the study show that leaders who consistently apply Al-Ghazali's leadership principles tend to be more adaptive to change and more proactive in developing academic programs that are relevant to the times. The following is a table that summarizes the influence of the implementation of Al-Ghazali's leadership on the performance of faculty leaders in various aspects:

Table 3. The Influence of Al-Ghazali's Leadership

Leadership Performance Aspects	Regression Coefficient (β)	Significance (p)
Decision	0,68	< 0.01
Internal Communication	0,75	< 0.01
Academic Innovation	0,62	< 0.05
Faculty Management	0,70	< 0.01
Overall R^2	0,72	< 0.05

Source: Author's Analysis

From the table above, it can be seen that Al-Ghazali's values-based leadership had a strong impact on internal communication ($\beta = 0.75$, $p < 0.01$), followed by faculty management ($\beta = 0.70$, $p < 0.01$) and decision-making ($\beta = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$). Meanwhile, academic innovation also showed a significant correlation, albeit with a slightly lower coefficient ($\beta = 0.62$, $p < 0.05$). Overall, these findings confirm that the implementation of Al-Ghazali's leadership values in the academic environment not only plays a role in shaping ethical leadership character, but also empirically has a positive impact on improving the performance of faculty leaders in various strategic aspects. Thus, the application of this leadership concept can be used as an effective model in the management of faculties based on Islamic values.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study show that the implementation of Al-Ghazali's leadership concept is very relevant in increasing the effectiveness of academic leadership, especially in the digital era. The leadership concept initiated by Al-Ghazali emphasizes the integration between spiritual values, ethics, and managerial skills, which directly contribute to fair, transparent, and wisdom-based decision-making. In an academic context, this value-based leadership can shape a more humanist organizational culture, where leaders not only act as administrators, but also as mentors and moral role models for faculty, staff, and students. In the digital era, the challenges of academic leadership are increasingly complex with technological transformations that change the dynamics of learning, research, and management of educational institutions. The implementation of Al-Ghazali's leadership values, such as justice (ʿadl), wisdom (ḥikmah), and piety (taqwā), allowing academic leaders to adapt to these changes without neglecting the moral principles underlying the vision and

mission of Islamic education. For example, in the face of the digitalization of learning, an academic leader who applies the Al-Ghazali principles will prioritize a balance between technological innovation and human values, ensuring that digital developments do not diminish the essence of character-building oriented education (Basir, AbdullaTan Ai Pao, Sham, Azam, & Abdul Razak, 2024).

Fairness and Wisdom in Decision Making

Leaders who apply the principle of fairness tend to be able to create a harmonious work environment that is conducive to academic development. This is in line with Islamic leadership theory which emphasizes the importance of justice in managing human resources. In the academic context, justice is not only concerned with a balanced distribution of duties and responsibilities, but also with equal opportunities for all academics to develop their potential. A fair leader will ensure that every lecturer, staff, and student receives equal treatment, both in terms of access to facilities, opportunities for awards, and in a transparent and objective academic evaluation process. Thus, fairness in academic leadership can increase motivation and loyalty, as well as create a more productive and collaborative work culture (Rambe, 2024).

In addition to fairness, wisdom in decision-making is also a crucial aspect of effective academic leadership. Wisdom (ḥikmah) refers to a leader's ability to understand the situation deeply, consider various perspectives, and make decisions that are not only rational but also based on ethical and moral values. In the face of the complex challenges of the digital age, academic leaders need to have the wisdom to balance the need for innovation and the urgency of maintaining long-held academic values. For example, in the implementation of digital technologies in learning, a wise leader will consider the accessibility aspect for all students, ensuring that digitalization does not create educational gaps for those who lack adequate facilities (Kusumo & Mariana, 2025).

Furthermore, fairness and wisdom in academic leadership also play a role in resolving the inevitable conflicts in educational institutions. Decisions taken without considering the fairness aspect can trigger dissatisfaction and worsen the relationship between leaders and members of the organization. On the other hand, decisions taken without wisdom can lead to policies that are unsustainable and less effective in the long run. Therefore, academic leaders who emulate the concepts of justice and wisdom according to Al-Ghazali's perspective will be better able to face organizational challenges with an inclusive, solution-

oriented, and common good-oriented approach. Overall, the application of the principles of justice and wisdom in academic leadership is not just a normative demand, but also a key factor in creating an educational environment that is competitive, innovative, and still upholds Islamic values. By instilling these two principles, a leader can not only increase effectiveness in decision-making, but also build an academic climate that is more equitable, harmonious, and well-being oriented towards the well-being of the entire academic community (Nasri & Tabibuddin, 2023).

Exemplary and Trust in Faculty Management

As a role model, faculty leaders who apply example and trust are able to build trust and increase the loyalty of academic staff. This is evident from the increase in the level of lecturer satisfaction with faculty leadership policies by 78%, as revealed in a survey conducted in this study. Exemplary in academic leadership means that a faculty leader not only provides direction or policy, but also demonstrates attitudes, actions, and work ethic that can be an example for his subordinates. A leader who is disciplined, responsible, and committed to academic values and professional ethics will inspire faculty and staff to show similar dedication in the performance of their duties (Education, Ulya, & Citriadin, 2025).

In addition, trust or responsibility in faculty leadership is the main factor in maintaining the stability and credibility of academic institutions. A trustworthy leader will execute every policy with high integrity, ensuring that all decisions are made on the basis of the principles of justice and common welfare, not on the basis of personal or group interests. In the context of faculty management, the mandate includes transparency in budget allocation, fairness in lecturer performance assessments, and consistency in enforcing academic rules. By applying these principles, faculty leadership can prevent the practice of nepotism, favoritism, and injustice that can damage the academic climate and hinder the development of the institution. Furthermore, exemplary and trust in faculty leadership also contribute to increased collaboration and solidarity in the academic environment. A leader who is able to show integrity and openness in communication will find it easier to build harmonious relationships between lecturers, administrative staff, and students. For example, when there is a difference of opinion regarding academic policy, a trusted leader will be objective and seek the best solution through deliberation, not by unilateral decision. This attitude creates a more democratic academic environment, where every faculty member feels

valued and has room to contribute to decision-making (Sofa, Islam, Hasan, & Probolinggo, 2025).

In addition, the impact of exemplary and trust in faculty leadership can also be seen in the aspects of academic development and innovation. When a leader shows a commitment to the progress of the faculty, both in terms of improving the quality of learning, research development, and community service, lecturers and students will be more encouraged to actively participate in various academic programs. Leaders who are exemplary in their commitment to the quality of education will encourage a more dynamic and achievement-oriented academic culture. Overall, the application of exemplary and trustworthiness in faculty management not only impacts increased trust and loyalty of academic staff, but also becomes a key cornerstone in creating a professional, ethical, and sustainable academic environment. With leadership based on these values, the faculty can develop into an institution that excels in education, research, and community service, and is able to face the challenges of the digital era with integrity and strong commitment.

The Relevance of Al-Ghazali's Leadership in the Digital Era

In the context of the digital era, the implementation of Al-Ghazali's leadership values has proven to be able to increase leadership adaptation in the face of technological changes. Leaders who prioritize policy and innovation are more likely to adopt digital systems in faculty management, such as online-based administration systems and e-learning. Leadership based on the concept of Al-Ghazali emphasizes the importance of wisdom (ḥikmah), justice (ʿadl), and responsibility (amanah), all of which are relevant in facing the challenges of digital transformation in the academic world.

One of the key challenges in the digital age is how academic leaders can balance technological innovation with moral and ethical principles in education. A leader who follows the principles of Al-Ghazali not only focuses on the effectiveness and efficiency of technology, but also considers its impact on the social, spiritual, and emotional aspects of the academic community. For example, in the implementation of e-learning, a wise leader not only prioritizes ease of access and flexibility, but also ensures that the technology does not replace the face-to-face interaction that is essential in the educational process. Therefore, the use of technology in academic leadership must be carried out by maintaining pedagogical values oriented to character formation and ethics. Furthermore, Al-Ghazali's leadership is also relevant in building a transparent and accountable academic management system. By

utilizing digital technology, a leader can increase the effectiveness of resource management, speed up the administrative process, and increase access to academic information for the entire academic community. For example, the implementation of a cloud-based academic management system allows for real-time integration of academic data, so that the process of assessment, curriculum planning, and lecturer performance monitoring can be carried out more efficiently and transparently. This approach is in line with the principle of trust in Al-Ghazali's leadership, where leaders are responsible for ensuring that all policies and systems implemented bring broad and equitable benefits (Suwarno & Albab, 2024).

In addition, Al-Ghazali's leadership values can be the foundation for overcoming ethical challenges arising from digitalization, such as data misuse, plagiarism in research, and the degradation of academic ethics due to easy access to information. By instilling the values of spirituality and morality in leadership, academic leaders can create a digital environment that adheres to Islamic ethical principles, such as honesty, integrity, and social responsibility. In this case, leaders who adhere to the Al-Ghazali concept will ensure that the digitalization policy in the faculty not only aims for efficiency, but also considers aspects of blessings and benefits for the entire academic community. Overall, the relevance of Al-Ghazali's leadership in the digital age lies in his ability to harmonize technological innovation with ethical and spiritual principles in education. By applying the values of wisdom, justice, and trust, academic leaders are not only able to face the challenges of digital transformation effectively, but also build an education system that is more inclusive, transparent, and oriented towards the welfare of the people. This shows that Al-Ghazali's legacy of thought remains of strong relevance in shaping adaptive and sustainable academic leadership models in the modern era.

Research Implications

The results of this study provide several important implications that can be the basis for the development of leadership policies and practices in the university environment. Universities need to hold special training for faculty leaders to improve the understanding and implementation of Islamic leadership values, especially those developed by Al-Ghazali. This training can cover aspects of leadership ethics, principles of justice, a balance between spirituality and professionalism, and decision-making strategies based on Islamic values. Thus, faculty leaders not only have good managerial competence but can also be role models in applying Islamic values in academic leadership. In the digital era, technology-based leadership is an urgent need for universities. Faculty leaders need to adopt digital leadership

strategies to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of academic management. The use of sophisticated management information systems, data-based applications, and digital communication platforms can accelerate decision-making, improve coordination between units, and strengthen transparency in university governance. In addition, the use of technology can also support the management of human and academic resources that are more adaptive to the changing times (Anwar, Reza, & Samsirin, 2022).

The implementation of Islamic leadership values not only impacts the improvement of individual performance of faculty leaders, but also contributes to increasing productivity and overall academic quality. Values such as honesty, responsibility, deliberation, and trust in leadership can create a more harmonious work environment, increase the motivation of lecturers and education staff, and encourage an academic culture that is oriented towards excellence. Thus, the faculty can be more competitive in the face of global challenges and produce graduates who not only excel in science, but also have strong leadership character. This implication shows that strengthening Islamic leadership values in higher education management is not only relevant in the academic context, but also plays a role in building a more inclusive, innovative, and sustainable education system.

CONCLUSION

This research confirms that Imam Al-Ghazali's leadership principles, such as qudwah hasanah (example), hikmah (wisdom), and tawazun (balance), remain relevant in the context of leadership in the digital age. These values are not only able to improve the performance of the leadership of the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication operationally, but also maintain spiritual integrity as the main foundation. Its implementation requires creative adaptation, such as the integration of Spiritual-Digital Quotient (SQ-DQ) in decision-making and the use of technology based on Islamic ethics. Key findings show that the success of digital transformation in the religious academic environment depends on the ability of leaders to combine the speed of innovation with critical reflection on core values, such as justice, transparency, and service (khudmah). Despite facing challenges such as cultural resistance and budget constraints, the leadership's commitment to internalizing Al-Ghazali's values with infrastructure and training support can be a strategic solution. The integrative leadership model produced in this study offers a holistic framework that bridges the gap between tradition and modernity, as well as being the foundation for the development of curricula

and institutional policies that are responsive to the dynamics of the times. In closing, this study emphasizes that Al-Ghazali's leadership is not just a legacy of the past, but a dynamic paradigm. Collaboration between religious experts, technology practitioners, and policy makers is needed to strengthen the sustainability of this model, so that the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication can continue to be a pioneer in producing technocratically superior leaders with rabbani character in the midst of digitalization flows.

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