

Malay Islamic Leadership as a Model of Moral and Spiritual- ity-Based Leadership in the Modern Era

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Abstract : This study is motivated by the moral and spiritual crisis affecting modern leadership systems, where the exercise of power often prioritizes material and political interests over ethical values and social responsibility. In this context, the concept of Malay Islamic Leadership is considered relevant as an alternative model that integrates moral, spiritual, and local cultural values to establish a just and civilized governance framework. The purpose of this study is to describe the fundamental principles of Malay Islamic leadership, analyze the implementation of its moral and spiritual values, and assess its relevance in addressing the challenges of modern leadership. The research employed a qualitative descriptive method using secondary data obtained through literature reviews of books, journal articles, and academic documents discussing Islamic leadership and Malay culture. The results indicate that Malay Islamic leadership is founded on the values of *amanah* (trustworthiness), *'adl* (justice), *hikmah* (wisdom), and *shura* (consultation), while *taqwa* (piety) serves as the core of a leader's spirituality. These values are proven to be relevant in the modern context as they address ethical crises, strengthen leaders' integrity, and reorient leadership toward service and the welfare of the community .

Keywords : Malay Islamic Leadership , morality, spirituality, trustworthiness, justice.



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1. Introduction

Leadership is a crucial aspect in building a just, civilized, and progressive society . In the context of human civilization, the success of a nation is often determined by the character and moral qualities of its leaders. Leaders are not only managers of administrative systems, but also guardians of values, ethical role models, and spiritual guides of society [1] . In Islamic teachings, leadership (*imamah*) is seen not as a privilege of power, but rather a trust that must be carried out with full responsibility before Allah SWT and the people. The principles of *amanah* , *'adl* (justice), *shura* (deliberation), and *taqwa* (piety) are the moral and spiritual foundations of the concept of Islamic leadership. An ideal leader is not only required to be intellectually intelligent, but also clear in heart and intention, because power in Islam is not to oppress, but to spread the benefit (*rabmatan lil 'alamin*). This concept positions Islamic leadership as a system oriented towards ethics, spirituality, and social responsibility, not merely political power and authority.

The concept of leadership has very deep roots and is based on a combination of custom and sharia. The classic phrase "adat bersendikan syarak, syarak bersendikan Kitabullah" describes the integration between Islamic values and local traditions that form a typical Malay leadership

character. In the view of the Malay people, a leader is *a shadow of God on earth*, a figure who upholds justice, fosters prosperity, and is an example of manners and morals. Malay philosophy which emphasizes character, politeness, and moral responsibility, combined with Islamic principles such as trust, justice, and deliberation, produces a holistic leadership model: rooted in spirituality, benefit-oriented, and upholding humanity [2]. In the history of Malay kingdoms such as the Malacca Sultanate, Riau-Lingga, and Aceh Darussalam, Islamic values and Malay customs became the basis for ethical and dignified government. Malay leaders are considered not only as political rulers, but also as *priests* and moral role models who lead with wisdom, politeness and social responsibility.

The concept of leadership, steeped in moral and spiritual values, is beginning to experience a crisis of relevance in social and political practice. The decline in leadership ethics is evident in numerous cases of abuse of power, corruption, money politics, and a lack of role models at various levels of government and public institutions. Modern leaders are often trapped in a materialistic and pragmatic paradigm, which positions power as a tool of domination, not service. This shift in orientation has led to a crisis of public trust in leadership figures, particularly in Muslim-majority countries like Indonesia and Malaysia, which should uphold Islamic values as a moral guideline. The loss of spirituality and moral values in contemporary leadership has led to significant social degradation: increasing economic inequality, weakening social solidarity, and a decline in public morals.

Transparency International's 2024 report, Indonesia's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) is at 34/100, indicating a persistently high level of abuse of power across various public sectors. Furthermore, a survey by the Indonesian Survey Institute (LSI) showed that 68% of respondents believe that current leaders lack moral exemplars and social awareness. This situation highlights the gap between the ideals of Malay-Islamic leadership, which upholds the values of trust and justice, and the reality of modern leadership, which tends toward hedonism and transactionalism. Furthermore, the report [3] reveals that Southeast Asians increasingly expect leaders who are not only technically competent but also possess integrity and a strong spirituality. These facts reinforce the urgency of rediscovering the Malay-Islamic leadership model as an alternative paradigm capable of balancing morality, spirituality, and modernity.

Conceptually, Malay Islamic leadership is rooted in two primary sources of values: Islamic teachings and Malay customs. Islam provides universal moral and spiritual principles such as trustworthiness, justice, and shura, while Malay customs enrich it with the values of politeness, courtesy, and local wisdom. The integration of the two creates a leadership model that is not only rational and effective, but also civilized and moral [4]. Malay Islamic leadership rejects authoritarianism while avoiding extreme secularism; it positions leaders as servants of society who are accountable to God and their people. In the context of education, government, and social life, this leadership model can be a solution to the moral crisis plaguing the modern world. Leaders who adhere to Islamic-Malay values will lead with their hearts, not just with power; they uphold justice, foster harmony, and revive the values of compassion in society.

Based on the above explanation, this study aims to analyze the concept of Malay Islamic Leadership as a model of moral and spiritual leadership in the modern era. This study is expected to explain how Islamic values and Malay customs can be integrated into a leadership paradigm that is relevant to the needs of the times, without losing its traditional roots and spiritual identity. Specifically, this study explores the main principles of Malay Islamic leadership such as *trustworthiness*, *justice*, and *deliberation*, and examines their application in a modern context, both in the fields of government, education, and social life. The results of this study are expected to be theoretical and practical contributions in developing a leadership model oriented towards morality, spirituality, and the welfare of the people amidst complex global dynamics that often lose their ethical direction.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Concept of Leadership in Islam

Leadership in Islam is based on the principle that power is a trust that must be exercised with justice and moral responsibility before Allah SWT. Leaders not only function as managers of worldly affairs, but also as spiritual role models for their people. The Qur'an emphasizes that justice and trust are two primary values in managing power, as Allah states in Surah An-Nisa verse 58 regarding the obligation to convey trusts and establish laws fairly. The principles of '*adl* (justice), *shura* (deliberation), and *taqwa* (piety) form the ethical foundation for decision-making and social relations in Islamic society. According to [5], leadership in Islam is not a tool of domination, but rather a means to achieve the welfare and well-being of the people based on moral and spiritual values. In line with this, [6] in *Ihya' Ulumuddin* emphasizes that a just leader is more valuable than a thousand clerics who are only good at talking, because justice is the pillar of civilization. Thus, Islamic leadership emphasizes the dimensions of morality, responsibility, and balance between this world and the hereafter as the essence of carrying out the mandate of power.

2.2. Performance of Islamic Religious Education Teachers

Malay culture places leadership as an embodiment of moral and social values that combine custom and religion. The ideal Malay leader is described as a figure who is *civilized, sensible and polite*, who is able to uphold justice and maintain social harmony. The philosophy of "*adat bersendikan syarak, syarak berndikan Kitabullah*" is the basis for integration between Islamic teachings and Malay traditions in forming leadership ethics. In Malay society, leaders are not only chosen because of their power, but because of their authority, wisdom and exemplary performance in carrying out their duties. According to [7], the Malay concept of leadership demands a balance between moral, spiritual and social forces, where the leader is responsible for maintaining the dignity and welfare of the people. This view is reinforced by [8] who states that Malay-Islamic leadership is based on the values of *trust, fairness* and *noble character* as the principles of the relationship between the leader and the people. Therefore, the Malay leadership system is not only political, but also a manifestation of Islamic morality and local wisdom which mutually reinforce each other in forming a civilized and moral society.

3. Method

The research method used in this study is a descriptive qualitative approach, which aims to describe in depth the concept of *Malay Islamic Leadership as a Moral and Spirituality-Based Leadership Model in the Modern Era* [9]. This approach was chosen because the focus of the research lies in understanding the values, meanings, and moral principles contained in the Malay Islamic leadership tradition, rather than on quantitative measurements or hypothesis testing [10]. Qualitative research allows researchers to interpret data contextually, critically, and reflectively, thus producing a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between Islamic teachings and Malay culture in forming a relevant leadership model in the modern era. Researchers play a role as the main instrument in analyzing symbolic meanings, social norms, and spiritual values contained in library sources. [11]. Therefore, this research is interpretive, in which the researcher examines texts, documents and academic literature related to the theme of Islamic leadership and Malay culture.

The data sources used in this study are secondary data, obtained through literature studies from various scientific references such as books, national and international journal articles, proceedings, and other academic documents relevant to the research topic [12]. Data were collected through a systematic literature search process using academic databases such as Google Scholar, DOAJ, and Islamic university journal portals [13]. Data analysis was carried out using content analysis techniques. analysis) with the following steps: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Each literature is reviewed to find key themes such as *trust, justice, deliberation, morality, and spirituality of leadership*, then compared to find patterns of similarities and differences between sources [14]. Thus, the results of this study are expected to provide theoretical contributions in strengthening the understanding of

the integration of Islamic values and Malay culture in building a leadership model that is ethical and oriented towards the welfare of the people amidst the challenges of modernity.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 . Moral and Spiritual Values in Malay Islamic Leadership

Leadership in Islam and Malay culture is a manifestation of the combination of two value systems that have high philosophical and spiritual depth. Islam places leadership as a great trust that is not only related to worldly affairs, but also has spiritual value because it involves moral responsibility for the welfare of the people. Meanwhile, Malay culture views leadership as an embodiment of adab, character and social responsibility towards society [15] . In the Malay-Islamic view, a leader is not a ruler who oppresses or uses power for personal gain, but rather an *imam* , *protector* and *guide* whose role is to uphold justice, maintain honor and foster inner and outer prosperity for his people. Moral values such as trust, honesty, wisdom, politeness and social responsibility combine with spiritual values such as piety, sincerity and devotion to Allah SWT. This combination makes Malay Islamic leadership a leadership model that is not only rational and efficient, but also civilized and has high morals.

Theologically, the concept of leadership in Islam is rooted in the understanding that power comes from God and must be used to uphold truth and justice. The Qur'an affirms in Surah An-Nisa, verse 58:

﴿إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤْتُوا الْأَمْلَاتِ إِلَى أَهْلِهَا وَإِذَا حَكَمْتُمْ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ أَنْ تَحْكُمُوا بِالْعَدْلِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُعِظِّمُ إِيمَانَ النَّاسِ كَمَا يُعِظِّمُ إِيمَانَ الْمُنْذِرِ﴾

"Indeed, Allah commands you to convey your mandate to those who are entitled to it, and when you establish laws between people, so that you act justly."

This verse demonstrates two primary moral values that form the basis of Islamic leadership: *trustworthiness* and *justice* . *A faithful leader must not exercise power through injustice, deception, or abuse of authority.* He must recognize that every policy, decision, and action will be accounted for not only before the people but also before God. Therefore, the spiritual dimension of Malay Islamic leadership cannot be separated from social responsibility. A pious leader will make divine values the moral guideline in every action. Thus, spirituality in leadership is not merely a religious ritual, but rather an ethical orientation and transcendental awareness that shape honest, just, and compassionate leadership behavior.

The value of trustworthiness is at the heart of the entire Malay Islamic leadership system. Trustworthiness not only means trust, but also loyalty to responsibilities and promises made. In Malay society, trustworthiness has a very broad and profound meaning. A trustworthy leader is considered to possess high moral dignity and prestige. A Malay proverb states, " *A leader who promises but breaks it is like fire in the chaff,*" illustrating that a leader's dishonesty will damage the people's trust and cause social division. Therefore, trustworthiness is the basis of moral legitimacy in the relationship between leaders and their people. In a modern context, trustworthiness can be defined as public integrity—a leader's ability to carry out duties honestly, transparently, and responsibly. When trustworthiness is carried out sincerely, leadership becomes a source of social trust . *trust*) which strengthens community cohesion and builds a stable and dignified system of government.

In addition to trust, justice ('adl) is a moral value that is a main pillar of Malay Islamic leadership. Justice is not only in the legal sense, but also includes social, economic, and moral justice. In Malay tradition, the adage " *a just king is worshipped, a tyrannical king is denied*" is an expression that describes how highly society values justice. A just leader will foster prosperity and peace, while a tyrannical leader will cause chaos and destruction. In a spiritual context, justice is a manifestation of the attribute of Allah, the Most Just (*Al- 'Adl*). Therefore, upholding justice means emulating divine attributes and carrying out God's commands. A Malay-Islamic leader is required not to side with group or personal interests, but rather to put everything in its place. In the context of modern government, this principle of justice can be realized through public policies oriented towards the welfare of the people, indiscriminate law enforcement, and the eradication of corruption that damages the moral foundation of the nation [16] .

The next moral value that is no less important is wisdom or *wisdom*. In the Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah verse 269 it is stated:

وَتَوَيَّبُ الْحِكْمَةُ مِنْ يَسَاءَةٍ وَمَنْ يُؤْتَ الْحِكْمَةَ فَقَدْ أُوتِيَ خَيْرًا كَثِيرًا وَمَا يَدْكُرُ إِلَّا أُولَوْا
يَالْبَابِ ٢٦٩

In the Malay perspective, wisdom is a combination of knowledge, experience, and discernment. A wise leader does not rush into decisions, but rather weighs everything with rationality and moral sensitivity. He also understands that every decision must take into account the balance between custom, religion, and social interests. In Malay culture, a wise leader is described by the proverb "*who is wise and wise, clever at diving in calm waters*," meaning that a true leader is able to understand profound issues without causing turmoil. This value of wisdom is crucial in the modern context when leaders are faced with complex social and political issues. Without wisdom, power can become a source of arbitrariness. With wisdom, leaders are able to maintain stability and harmony in society.

The spiritual dimension is an element that distinguishes Malay Islamic leadership from modern secular leadership models. Spirituality in this context does not only mean formal religiosity, but an inner awareness that leadership is a form of devotion to God. A leader who possesses a high spirituality will exercise power with the intention of worship and a sense of responsibility for the welfare of the people. He will not abuse power for personal gain because he realizes that every action he does will be accounted for [17]. In Malay society, a pious leader is described as "the shadow of God on earth," namely a figure who mediates mercy and justice for his people. Piety gives a leader a clear vision and a gentle heart, so that he is able to uphold the truth without losing empathy for the common people. This trait is very important in the modern era when many leaders have lost their spiritual direction and become trapped in the logic of materialism and power politics.

The morality and spirituality of Malay Islamic leadership are also reflected in the practice of *deliberation* (*shura*), which is decision-making based on collective deliberation and a spirit of togetherness. This principle aligns with the values of participatory democracy, but has a higher ethical foundation because it is based on sincere intentions and collective responsibility. In Malay society, deliberation is known as "mufakat," where decisions are made after considering all views to achieve justice and social harmony. Deliberation is not merely a formal procedure, but a means to foster trust, avoid conflict, and strengthen community solidarity. Leaders who adhere to the principle of shura are open to criticism and suggestions, and make dialogue an integral part of the decision-making process. In the modern context, this value is highly relevant for strengthening a transparent, accountable, and democratic system of governance.

The values of *good manners* and *polite language* are also essential components of Malay leadership morality. In Malay culture, a leader's speech and behavior reflect their personality and morality. A leader must be careful with their words so as not to hurt others' feelings, demonstrate patience, and avoid arrogance. Good manners and communication ethics reflect a leader's wisdom and spiritual maturity. A Malay proverb states, "*budi bahasa budaya bangsa*," meaning that noble morals and politeness are the primary characteristics of a civilized society. In the context of leadership, noble manners reflect a balance between reason and heart, between power and compassion. A civilized leader does not use words to oppress, but to guide and motivate his people. This value is especially important in today's digital age, where hate speech and polarization often undermine social order.

The moral and spiritual values inherited from the Malay Islamic leadership tradition offer a solution to the leadership crisis currently gripping the world. Many contemporary leaders are trapped in a materialistic and pragmatic orientation, neglecting their moral responsibility to society. Ethical crises such as corruption, abuse of power, and the loss of social sensitivity are clear evidence that modern leadership often lacks a spiritual foundation. The concept of Malay Islamic leadership presents an alternative model that places morality and spirituality as the primary foundations for building a government with integrity and humanism. Leaders who adhere to Islamic values and Malay customs will exercise power based on the principle of serving, not dominating; guiding, not commanding. They recognize that the success of

leadership is not measured by wealth or position, but by the extent to which they uphold justice and bring prosperity to the people.

The combination of moral and spiritual values in Malay Islamic leadership shows a synthesis between *religion* (*syarak*) and *adat* (*tradition*). Islam provides a universal theological and moral framework, while Malay customs provide a contextual humanistic and cultural dimension. The phrase "*custom is based on syarak, syarak is based on the Book of Allah*" is not just a symbol of integration, but a basic principle in building a harmonious leadership system between religion and culture. The ideal Malay-Islamic leader is one who is able to balance these two dimensions, implementing the Shari'a with full sincerity while respecting local customs and wisdom as a social guide. A model like this not only maintains spiritual values in government, but also strengthens the nation's cultural identity in the midst of globalization which tends to dilute local and religious values.

The moral and spiritual values of Malay Islamic leadership can be applied broadly in various areas of life, including education, social, and economic matters. In education, leaders act as *murabbi* (educators) who instill moral values through exemplary behavior. In the social sphere, leaders function as *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (*blessing for the universe*), bringing compassion and well-being to all levels of society. Meanwhile, in the economic sphere, moral and pious leaders uphold the principle of distributive justice, avoid exploitative practices, and ensure the common good. Thus, the values of Malay Islamic leadership are not only relevant in historical and cultural contexts but also serve as practical guidelines for addressing the moral and spiritual challenges of modern society.

Morality and spirituality in Malay Islamic leadership are two complementary and inseparable aspects. Morality provides ethical guidance in interpersonal relationships, while spirituality provides inner strength in one's relationship with God. Both make leadership a process of devotion, not simply a profession. In a modern context filled with moral, political, and social challenges, this leadership model is a highly relevant alternative for returning leadership to its essence: upholding justice, cultivating compassion, and building a civilization grounded in divine values. By practicing the moral and spiritual values taught in Islamic tradition and Malay culture, a leader will not only be respected by his people but will also receive blessings and genuine moral legitimacy in the sight of Allah SWT.

4.2 . The Relevance of Malay Islamic Leadership in the Modern Era

In the context of modern civilization characterized by technological progress, economic globalization, and rapid social transformation, the issue of leadership has become increasingly complex. The world today faces not only a political or economic crisis, but also a moral and spiritual crisis [18]. Modern leaders are often judged by their technocratic abilities, managerial efficiency, and communication skills, while the ethical and spiritual dimensions are increasingly marginalized. As a result, many government systems and organizations have lost the moral direction that should be the foundation of public policy and social relations. In such a situation, the concept of Malay Islamic leadership finds relevance. This tradition teaches that leadership is not merely administrative power, but a mandate that carries a moral responsibility to the people and a spiritual responsibility to Allah SWT. Malay Islamic leadership positions leaders as moral figures and spiritual role models who must uphold justice, foster prosperity, and maintain social harmony based on divine values and noble customs.

Malay Islamic leadership is the result of acculturation between Islamic teachings and local Malay traditions that have been formed since the 13th century, when Islam began to take firm root in the Malay world. The classic philosophy of "*adat berndikan syarak, syarak berndikan Kitabullah*" has become the main principle in the social and political life of Malay society. This philosophy emphasizes that all forms of leadership, decisions and policies must be based on God's law and the moral values contained in Islamic teachings. In the Malay view, a leader is not a ruler who rules with military force or economic power, but rather a *priest* who guides his people towards goodness in this world and the hereafter. He is not only responsible for the success of physical development, but also for fostering the morals and spiritual balance of his people. This leadership model rejects the dichotomy between world and religion, between power and morality, because the two complement each other. A good

leader is one who is able to combine modern administrative skills with the moral principles and spirituality taught by Islam.

One of the main reasons why Malay Islamic leadership is relevant in the modern era is because this model offers a solution to the crisis of ethics and leadership integrity currently plaguing various countries, including Muslim countries. Various global reports indicate that corruption, abuse of power, and moral degradation remain serious problems. According to *Transparency International's* 2024 report, Indonesia's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) only reached a score of 34 out of 100, indicating a still low level of public trust in the integrity of public officials. This condition is in line with similar phenomena in many developing countries in Southeast Asia, where modern leadership is more often driven by political interests, economic oligarchy, and short-term populism [19]. In such a situation, Malay Islamic leadership with the values of *amanah* (trust), *'adl* (justice), *bikmah* (wisdom), and *shura* (deliberation) becomes relevant as an alternative paradigm. These values are not only normative ideals, but have practical implications for building a leadership system that is transparent, accountable, and oriented towards the welfare of the people.

In today's increasingly secular and materialistic modern world, the spiritual aspect of leadership is often overlooked. Yet, spirituality is a dimension that maintains the purity of a leader's intentions and moral integrity. In Malay-Islamic leadership, spirituality is understood not only as a vertical relationship between the leader and God, but also as an inner awareness that every leadership action is a form of devotion to Allah SWT. A devout Malay-Islamic leader will use power not as a tool of domination, but as a means of worship and service. This spiritual awareness fosters a fear of injustice and encourages leaders to always act justly. Historically, this is reflected in the governance of Malay sultanates such as the Sultanates of Malacca, Aceh Darussalam, and Riau-Lingga, where leaders played a dual role as head of government and moral guide of the people. By placing spirituality at the core of leadership, the Malay-Islamic model can correct the direction of modern leadership, which tends to lose its moral spirit due to global political and economic pressures.

The relevance of Malay Islamic leadership can also be seen in the principle of *shura*, or deliberation, which serves as the foundation for social participation in society. In Malay culture, deliberation is called *musafakat*, a process of joint decision-making involving various parties with the aim of achieving justice and mutual agreement. This principle is very much in line with the spirit of modern democracy, which emphasizes openness, participation, and transparency. However, the fundamental difference between *shura* in Islam and modern secular democracy lies in the underlying values. *Shura* is based on moral responsibility to God and society, while modern democracy is often oriented towards the interests of the majority without considering ethical and spiritual dimensions. Therefore, Malay Islamic leadership, with its principle of deliberation, can be a model of moral participatory democracy, where freedom is balanced with responsibility, and political decisions are always directed towards the public good (*maslahah*). *al-'ammah*). This principle is very important to improve the practice of modern democracy which is often dragged into money politics, manipulation of public opinion, and conflicts of interest.

In the educational and social spheres, Malay Islamic leadership remains relevant because it can revitalize character values and moral exemplars in a society eroded by the currents of cultural globalization. Modern education often overemphasizes cognitive aspects and technical competencies, while moral values and social ethics receive less attention. Malay Islamic leadership places moral and spiritual education at the heart of the process of developing civilized human beings. A Malay proverb states, "*knowledge without adab, is like a tree without fruit.*" This means that knowledge without morality will not produce benefits for humanity. A leader in an educational context, such as a principal or rector, must be a *good example* who practices the values of honesty, discipline, and compassion for his subordinates. In such a system, leadership is not merely administrative, but transformational and inspirational. This model is much needed in the modern era, which is full of ethical challenges, such as individualism, hedonism, and the decline of social values.

The relevance of Malay Islamic leadership also lies in its ability to maintain a balance between modern rationality and traditional values. The modern world glorifies efficiency, productivity, and innovation, but often neglects moral and humanitarian aspects. Meanwhile,

Malay Islamic leadership does not reject modernity, but rather seeks to integrate scientific and technological advances with moral and spiritual values. This principle aligns with the concept of *wasatiyyah* (balance) in Islam, which rejects extremism in the form of both conservatism that closes itself off from change, and liberalism that ignores religious values. Leaders based on Malay Islamic values will use rationality for the advancement of the nation, while maintaining humanity, justice, and blessings in every decision. Such an approach is highly relevant to addressing the challenges of globalization, where economic and technological progress must be balanced with social responsibility and the preservation of spiritual values [20].

Furthermore, Malay Islamic leadership also plays a crucial role in strengthening the nation's cultural and moral identity amidst the homogenizing and capitalist currents of globalization. Modern societies tend to lose their identity due to the influence of consumerist and individualistic culture. In this regard, leadership rooted in Islamic values and Malay customs can serve as a moral guide to maintain the integrity of the nation's identity. Leaders who understand their cultural roots will be better able to internalize local values as a social force that fosters a sense of togetherness, empathy, and social responsibility. For example, the values of mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), polite language (*budi bahasa*), and respect for elders in Malay tradition are concrete forms of Islamic morality that must be maintained in leadership. When modern leaders lose social empathy, these values become a counterbalance that can foster humanistic leadership oriented towards the welfare of the people.

good governance, governance). Principles such as trustworthiness, justice, transparency, and public responsibility are core values in the concept of Islamic leadership. From a Malay perspective, the proverb "*a just king is worshipped, a tyrannical king is denied*" illustrates the principle of accountability inherent in power. A just and trustworthy leader will gain popular support, while a tyrannical leader will lose moral legitimacy. In a modern government system, these values can be translated into public policies that favor the common people, an independent legal system, and a bureaucracy free from corruption. Thus, Malay Islamic leadership can serve as a normative reference for establishing a government that is not only technically efficient but also morally upright and has integrity.

Malay Islamic leadership is also highly relevant in the context of interfaith relations and multiculturalism in the modern world. The principles of justice, tolerance, and compassion taught in Islam and upheld in Malay culture make this model the foundation for inclusive leadership. Malay-Islamic leaders understand that a pluralistic society requires policies that are just, respectful of differences, and oriented toward the common good. Historically, Malay kingdoms have been known to be open to various ethnicities and religions, as long as they do not disrupt social harmony and Islamic values. In a global context rife with identity conflicts and hate politics, the values of Malay Islamic leadership can serve as a model for peaceful and just multicultural leadership.

Malay Islamic leadership is relevant because it has a sustainable development dimension (leadership). The moral and spiritual principles upheld in this system emphasize the balance between material development and the preservation of human values and the environment. Leaders who adhere to Islamic teachings and Malay customs will view nature as a trust, not an object of exploitation. In the modern context, this paradigm aligns with the principles of sustainable development, which prioritize balance between economic progress, social welfare, and environmental sustainability. Thus, Malay Islamic leadership has strong ecological relevance, especially in the face of the worsening global environmental crisis caused by a development orientation focused solely on profit and economic growth.

Conceptually, the relevance of Malay Islamic leadership in the modern era is also evident in its ability to bridge spirituality and professionalism. This model does not reject modern professionalism, but adds ethical and spiritual dimensions that make it meaningful. A professional leader without spirituality may be technically efficient, but potentially lacks empathy and moral responsibility. Conversely, a leader who is spiritual but professionally incompetent will fail to carry out his duties effectively. Malay Islamic leadership combines both: spirituality as a moral foundation and professionalism as a practical skill. This combination produces a holistic leadership—one that is not only intellectually intelligent (*intellectual*) but also possesses a strong sense of responsibility (*intellectual* quotient), but also has

emotional and spiritual intelligence (*emotional and spiritual quotient*) is high. In this context, values such as sincerity, patience and gratitude become inner energy that strengthens leaders' moral endurance in facing the pressures of the modern world.

The relevance of Malay-Islamic leadership in the modern era lies in its ability to reinvent the meaning of humanistic and service-oriented leadership. Amidst a global leadership crisis marked by social inequality, political conflict, and environmental crises, this leadership model offers an alternative paradigm based on compassion (*rahmah*), justice (*'adl*), and moral responsibility (*amanah*). True Malay-Islamic leaders are those who do not view power as a privilege, but rather as a burden to be borne for the benefit of the people. In an increasingly pluralistic and dynamic modern society, this concept teaches that successful leadership is not measured by the extent of power held, but by the extent of benefit generated for humanity and nature. Thus, Malay-Islamic leadership is not only a historical and cultural heritage, but also a universal paradigm relevant for building a modern civilization that is moral, just, and civilized .

5. Comparison

The results of this study indicate that the concept of Malay-Islamic leadership has strong relevance in the modern era because it is able to integrate local moral, spiritual, and cultural values in forming a just and civilized leadership model. This finding is in line with research [21] which emphasizes that Malay-Islamic leadership is based on the principles of *trustworthiness, justice, and noble character* as the basis of the relationship between leaders and the people, and remains relevant to answer the challenges of modernity that emphasize integrity and public accountability. However, the results of this study expand on this view by emphasizing the importance of the spiritual dimension as a transcendental force in maintaining the morality of leaders amidst the globalization of values and the contemporary leadership ethical crisis. In addition, this finding also strengthens the view [22] that the application of Islamic values in a modern leadership system can create governance that is oriented towards *the benefit of the community. al- ' ammah* (public welfare) and strengthening the character of the nation through moral-based leadership and spiritual example.

6. Conclusion

Based on the overall results and discussion of the research, it can be concluded that Malay Islamic leadership is a leadership model that is highly relevant for application in the modern era because it combines moral, spiritual, and cultural values in a harmonious whole. This leadership not only emphasizes administrative aspects and technocratic rationality , but also makes trust, justice, wisdom, and piety the main foundations in exercising power. In a modern context often marked by ethical crises and abuse of authority, the concept of Malay Islamic leadership offers an alternative paradigm that positions power as a divine mandate and a social responsibility to create the welfare of the people. This model teaches that a leader's success is not measured by the amount of power or material progress, but by the ability to uphold justice, maintain morality, and foster the physical and spiritual well-being of the community. Thus, Malay Islamic leadership becomes a normative and spiritual foundation for the development of a civilized, ethical, and just nation.

Based on the results of this study, it is recommended that Malay Islamic leadership values be re-internalized in the education system, government, and social life of modern society. In education, moral and spiritual values such as trustworthiness, honesty, and responsibility need to be taught contextually so that students grow into future leaders with morals and integrity. In government, the principles of justice, transparency, and deliberation should be used as guidelines in every public policy to build public trust and prevent corruption and abuse of power. Meanwhile, in social life, society needs to emulate Malay culture, which emphasizes etiquette, politeness, and respect as a reflection of Islamic morality. By reviving Malay Islamic leadership values, this nation can build a modern way of life that maintains its cultural and spiritual roots, while also producing a generation of leaders oriented towards the welfare, justice, and balance between this world and the hereafter.

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