

## **SELF-EFFICACY THEORY AS A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

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### **Abstract**

Islamic educational institutions face increasing leadership challenges in the era of globalization and digital transformation. Issues such as limited leadership innovation, low leadership confidence, and weak decision-making capacity often hinder institutional development and competitiveness. This study aims to examine how Self-Efficacy Theory can serve as a conceptual solution to leadership problems in Islamic educational institutions. The research employs a qualitative approach using library research by analyzing relevant scholarly literature published between 2018 and 2023 on educational leadership, psychological competence, and Islamic education management. The findings indicate that leadership effectiveness is strongly influenced by psychological competence, particularly self-efficacy, which shapes leaders' confidence, motivation, and persistence in managing organizational challenges. Leaders with strong self-efficacy are more likely to initiate innovation, make strategic decisions, and foster collaborative organizational cultures. The study also identifies four major sources of self-efficacy—mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and emotional regulation—as key factors in strengthening leadership capacity. Integrating self-efficacy with Islamic leadership values such as responsibility (*amanah*), perseverance, and spiritual resilience can contribute to the development of adaptive, innovative, and effective leadership in Islamic educational institutions. Therefore, strengthening leaders' self-efficacy should become an important component of leadership development programs in Islamic education.

**Keywords:** self-efficacy, Islamic educational leadership, psychological competence

### **Abstrak**

*Lembaga pendidikan Islam menghadapi berbagai tantangan kepemimpinan di era globalisasi dan transformasi digital. Permasalahan seperti rendahnya inovasi kepemimpinan, kurangnya kepercayaan diri pemimpin, serta lemahnya kemampuan pengambilan keputusan sering kali menghambat perkembangan dan daya saing lembaga pendidikan Islam. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji bagaimana Teori Self-Efficacy dapat menjadi solusi konseptual terhadap problematika kepemimpinan dalam lembaga pendidikan Islam. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif melalui metode studi kepustakaan dengan menganalisis berbagai literatur ilmiah yang relevan pada periode 2018–2023 terkait kepemimpinan pendidikan, kompetensi psikologis, dan manajemen pendidikan Islam. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa efektivitas kepemimpinan sangat dipengaruhi oleh kompetensi psikologis pemimpin, khususnya efikasi diri, yang memengaruhi kepercayaan diri, motivasi, dan ketekunan pemimpin dalam menghadapi*

*tantangan organisasi. Pemimpin dengan efikasi diri yang kuat cenderung lebih mampu melakukan inovasi, mengambil keputusan strategis, serta membangun budaya organisasi yang kolaboratif. Penelitian ini juga mengidentifikasi empat sumber utama efikasi diri, yaitu pengalaman keberhasilan, pengalaman orang lain, persuasi sosial, dan regulasi emosi, yang berperan penting dalam memperkuat kapasitas kepemimpinan.*

**Kata kunci:** *efikasi diri, kepemimpinan pendidikan Islam, kompetensi psikologis*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Islamic education plays a crucial role in shaping generations who are not only intellectually competent but also spiritually grounded. In the era of globalization and rapid digital transformation, Islamic educational institutions such as madrasas and pesantren are required to move beyond their traditional role as centers of religious knowledge transmission and evolve into innovative and competitive educational organizations. The success of this transformation is strongly influenced by the quality of educational leadership. Ideally, leaders of Islamic educational institutions should possess both strong moral integrity grounded in Islamic values such as *amanah* (trustworthiness) and adequate managerial competence to manage institutional change effectively. However, the reality shows that leadership in many Islamic educational institutions still faces significant challenges related to innovation, leadership confidence, and decision-making capacity (Hakiem et al., 2023; Mu'minah et al., 2023).

A growing body of literature highlights that leadership effectiveness in Islamic educational institutions is often constrained by low levels of innovation and organizational adaptability. Several studies emphasize that innovative leadership is essential for improving institutional competitiveness, particularly in the context of curriculum development, educational management, and the integration of technology into learning systems (Nur & Subiyantoro, 2022; Sari et al., 2021). Intrapreneurial and transformational leadership approaches have been suggested as strategic frameworks for fostering innovation by encouraging creative problem solving, institutional collaboration, and visionary leadership (AR & Hendriyani, 2022; Hakiem et al., 2023). Nevertheless, many Islamic educational institutions still operate within traditional managerial structures that limit innovation and slow institutional adaptation to contemporary educational demands (Muhtadi & Kusumastuti, 2020).

Another major challenge concerns the lack of leadership confidence among institutional leaders. Confidence in leadership is closely related to the ability to communicate effectively, motivate staff, and implement policies that guide institutions toward shared goals. Studies show that leadership credibility, interpersonal behavior, and exemplary conduct significantly influence organizational trust and employee motivation within educational institutions (Ilmi & Rizalie, 2020; Suarga et al., 2021). In Islamic educational contexts, leadership legitimacy is often closely tied to moral authority and religious credibility. However, when leaders face complex administrative demands, limited resources, and increasing expectations from society, their confidence in making strategic

decisions may decline, ultimately affecting institutional performance (Muhtadi & Kusumastuti, 2020; Mu'minah et al., 2023).

Closely related to these challenges is the issue of weak decision-making capacity in some Islamic educational institutions. Effective decision making requires analytical competence, access to relevant information, and the ability to balance participation with authority in organizational governance. Research indicates that leadership strategies such as design thinking, empathy-based management, and collaborative decision-making processes can improve policy formulation and institutional responsiveness to emerging challenges (Adisel et al., 2022; Mauliya & Wulandari, 2021). However, in many pesantren and madrasa contexts, decision-making processes are still strongly influenced by hierarchical traditions and organizational culture, which sometimes limit flexibility and innovation in institutional management (Muhtadi & Kusumastuti, 2020).

Considering these leadership challenges, psychological competence has emerged as an essential factor influencing leadership effectiveness. Contemporary leadership studies emphasize that beyond technical and managerial skills, leaders require strong psychological capacities such as emotional intelligence, resilience, optimism, and self-efficacy in order to navigate complex organizational environments (Khawaja et al., 2022; Melnichuk, 2023). Self-efficacy, in particular, plays a critical role in shaping how leaders think, motivate themselves, and act when facing challenges and uncertainty. Leaders with strong self-efficacy are more likely to demonstrate persistence, confidence in decision making, and the courage to initiate innovation (Dai & Fang, 2023; Thompson et al., 2019). Therefore, this study aims to examine how the internalization of self-efficacy theory can serve as a conceptual solution to the persistent leadership challenges faced by Islamic educational institutions, particularly in strengthening innovation, leadership confidence, and decision-making capacity.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a qualitative approach using library research to explore the relevance of self-efficacy theory as a conceptual solution to leadership challenges in Islamic educational institutions. Library research is appropriate for examining theoretical frameworks and synthesizing existing scholarly literature related to educational leadership, psychological competence, and Islamic educational management. The data used in this study were obtained from secondary sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, and scholarly reports published between 2018 and 2023 that discuss Islamic educational leadership, innovation in Islamic educational institutions, and psychological constructs such as self-efficacy and psychological capital. These sources were selected based on their relevance, credibility, and contribution to understanding the relationship between leadership effectiveness and psychological competence in educational contexts.

The data analysis in this research uses qualitative content analysis and conceptual analysis. First, relevant literature was systematically reviewed to identify key themes

related to leadership innovation, leadership confidence, and decision-making capacity within Islamic educational institutions. Second, the identified themes were analyzed through the theoretical lens of self-efficacy theory to understand how psychological competence can influence leadership behavior and organizational effectiveness. Through this analytical process, the study develops a conceptual framework that explains how the four sources of self-efficacy—mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological and emotional states—can strengthen leadership capacity in Islamic educational institutions. This approach allows the study to provide a theoretical synthesis and propose a conceptual model for strengthening Islamic educational leadership through the development of leaders' self-efficacy.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Leadership Challenges in Islamic Educational Institutions**

Leadership in Islamic educational institutions has become a central issue in contemporary educational discourse. In many countries with significant Muslim populations, institutions such as madrasas and pesantren are expected to play a strategic role not only in preserving religious values but also in responding to rapid social transformation, technological disruption, and the demands of global educational competitiveness. However, numerous studies indicate that the leadership capacity of Islamic educational institutions often encounters structural, managerial, and psychological challenges that limit their ability to adapt to modern educational demands.

One of the major challenges relates to the persistence of traditional administrative structures that limit organizational innovation. According to Muhtadi & Kusumastuti (2020), leadership in pesantren-based institutions frequently emphasizes hierarchical authority and traditional legitimacy rather than strategic management competencies. While this leadership style has historically maintained institutional stability and religious authenticity, it sometimes slows down innovation in curriculum development, digital transformation, and organizational governance.

Recent empirical studies highlight that Islamic educational leadership requires a balance between religious values and modern managerial practices. For instance, Sari et al (2021) emphasize that effective leadership in Islamic schools requires the integration of visionary leadership, collaborative management, and institutional innovation to respond to changing educational environments. Similarly, Hakiem et al (2023) argue that intrapreneurial leadership—characterized by creativity, risk-taking, and strategic innovation—has become essential for improving the competitiveness of Islamic educational institutions.

Another challenge concerns the psychological readiness of leaders. Leadership research increasingly emphasizes that the success of educational transformation depends not only on technical competence but also on psychological attributes such as confidence, resilience, and self-efficacy. According to Azinga et al (2023), Chughtai et al (2024), and Khawaja et al (2022), educational leaders with strong psychological capital tend to

demonstrate higher levels of organizational commitment, adaptive leadership, and innovation.

In the context of Islamic education, the absence of psychological empowerment among leaders often leads to cautious decision-making and limited institutional reform. Leaders who lack confidence in their capacity to manage institutional change may prefer maintaining the status quo rather than initiating strategic reforms. As a result, Islamic educational institutions may struggle to compete with modern educational organizations that adopt innovative leadership approaches.

Therefore, addressing leadership challenges in Islamic educational institutions requires an integrative approach that combines managerial competence, institutional innovation, and psychological empowerment. Self-efficacy theory provides a promising conceptual framework for understanding how leaders can strengthen their confidence, motivation, and decision-making capacity in complex organizational environments.

### Empirical Evidence of Leadership Innovation Problems

Numerous studies conducted between 2018 and 2023 indicate that innovation remains one of the most significant challenges in Islamic educational leadership. Innovation is crucial because it enables institutions to adapt to technological change, develop relevant curricula, and improve educational quality.

**Table 1.** Empirical Findings on Leadership Innovation in Islamic Educational Institutions (2018–2023)

AUTHOR	CONTEXT OF STUDY	KEY FINDINGS
SARI ET AL (2021)	Islamic schools in Indonesia	Leadership innovation improves curriculum and learning quality
MUHTADI & KUSUMASTUTI (2020)	Pesantren-based schools	Traditional hierarchy limits innovation
HAKIEM ET AL (2023)	Islamic education leadership	Intrapreneurial leadership encourages institutional transformation
ADISEL ET AL (2022)	Islamic education management	Policy innovation is essential in the digital era
MAULIYA & WULANDARI (2021)	Educational leadership	Design thinking enhances innovation and policy development

The table above summarizes empirical research related to leadership innovation in Islamic educational institutions. The findings consistently indicate that innovation is influenced by leadership vision, organizational culture, and institutional support systems. For instance, Sari et al. (2021) found that schools led by visionary principals demonstrated stronger innovation in curriculum development and digital learning integration. Similarly, Hakiem et al (2023) argue that intrapreneurial leadership encourages leaders to create

new educational programs, collaborate with external institutions, and develop entrepreneurial approaches to institutional sustainability.

However, many Islamic educational institutions still operate within conservative administrative frameworks that prioritize stability over innovation. Muhtadi & Kusumastuti (2020) and Vinson et al (2020) highlight that leadership traditions rooted in religious authority may sometimes discourage experimentation and risk-taking. As a result, institutional innovation may progress slowly compared to other educational systems. This evidence suggests that leadership innovation requires not only structural reform but also psychological empowerment among leaders. Leaders must develop confidence in their ability to initiate change and overcome institutional barriers.

### Leadership Confidence and Psychological Competence

Another critical factor influencing leadership effectiveness is psychological competence, particularly leadership confidence. Leadership confidence reflects a leader’s belief in their ability to influence organizational outcomes, manage challenges, and inspire others.

**Table 2.** Psychological Factors Influencing Leadership Effectiveness

<b>PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTOR</b>	<b>LEADERSHIP IMPACT</b>	<b>SUPPORTING STUDIES</b>
<b>SELF-EFFICACY</b>	Improves decision making and resilience	Thompson et al (2019)
<b>EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE</b>	Enhances interpersonal leadership	Melnichuk (2023)
<b>PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL</b>	Strengthens organizational commitment	Khawaja et al (2022)
<b>RESILIENCE</b>	Supports crisis management	Southwick & Charney (2024)

Psychological competence has been widely recognized as a determinant of leadership effectiveness across organizational contexts. Leaders who possess strong psychological capacities are more capable of managing stress, motivating employees, and maintaining organizational stability during periods of uncertainty. Thompson et al (2019) emphasize that self-efficacy plays a central role in shaping leadership behavior. Leaders with high self-efficacy tend to set ambitious goals, persist in challenging situations, and demonstrate strong problem-solving abilities. Conversely, leaders with low self-efficacy may avoid difficult tasks and rely heavily on routine decision-making patterns.

Emotional intelligence also contributes to leadership success by enabling leaders to understand and manage interpersonal relationships effectively. According to Melnichuk (2023), emotionally intelligent leaders are better able to build trust, foster collaboration, and maintain positive organizational climates. In Islamic educational institutions, psychological competence is particularly important because leaders often face complex challenges such as limited resources, community expectations, and institutional traditions. Without strong psychological resilience, leaders may experience stress,

burnout, and reduced leadership effectiveness. Therefore, strengthening psychological competence—particularly self-efficacy—represents an important strategy for improving leadership performance in Islamic educational institutions.

### Self-Efficacy as a Key Determinant of Leadership Behavior

Self-efficacy refers to an individual’s belief in their capability to organize and execute actions necessary to achieve specific goals. According to social cognitive theory, self-efficacy influences motivation, cognitive processes, and emotional regulation in complex tasks. In leadership contexts, self-efficacy affects how leaders interpret challenges, develop strategies, and motivate their teams. Leaders with strong self-efficacy tend to view challenges as opportunities for growth rather than threats to organizational stability.

Research conducted in educational leadership contexts consistently supports the importance of self-efficacy. Khawaja et al (2022) found that school leaders with high self-efficacy demonstrated stronger leadership engagement, higher levels of organizational innovation, and improved teacher motivation.

Similarly, Dai & Fang (2023) show that psychological capital—including self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience—plays a significant role in promoting inclusive leadership practices. Leaders with strong psychological capital are more capable of building collaborative organizational cultures and supporting diverse educational communities.

In Islamic educational institutions, self-efficacy may also interact with spiritual values. Leadership grounded in Islamic ethics emphasizes responsibility, trustworthiness, and perseverance. These values align closely with the psychological mechanisms of self-efficacy, particularly persistence and goal commitment. Consequently, strengthening self-efficacy among leaders can enhance both managerial competence and moral responsibility in Islamic educational leadership.

### Sources of Self-Efficacy in Islamic Educational Leadership

Self-efficacy develops through four primary sources: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological states.

**Table 3.** Sources of Leadership Self-Efficacy

SOURCE	EXPLANATION	LEADERSHIP APPLICATION
<b>MASTERY EXPERIENCE</b>	Success in previous tasks builds confidence	Leadership achievements
<b>VICARIOUS EXPERIENCE</b>	Learning from role models	Observing successful leaders
<b>SOCIAL PERSUASION</b>	Encouragement from others	Institutional support
<b>EMOTIONAL REGULATION</b>	Managing stress and emotions	Leadership resilience

These sources provide practical strategies for strengthening leadership capacity in Islamic educational institutions. Mastery experiences occur when leaders successfully complete challenging tasks. Each success reinforces confidence and strengthens the belief that future challenges can also be overcome.

Vicarious experiences occur when leaders observe successful role models. In Islamic educational contexts, senior scholars, experienced school leaders, and community figures can serve as leadership role models. Social persuasion refers to encouragement from colleagues, mentors, and institutional stakeholders. Positive feedback and recognition reinforce leaders' confidence and motivation. Finally, emotional regulation enables leaders to manage stress and maintain psychological stability during organizational crises.

**Figure 1.** Conceptual Model of Self-Efficacy-Based Islamic Educational Leadership



Below is a conceptual diagram representing the relationship between leadership challenges, psychological competence, and institutional transformation. The diagram illustrates a conceptual pathway in which leadership challenges influence the development of psychological competence, particularly self-efficacy. Strengthening self-efficacy enables leaders to develop more effective leadership behaviors such as innovation, strategic thinking, and collaborative decision making. These leadership behaviors ultimately contribute to improved institutional outcomes, including educational quality and organizational sustainability. In practical terms, this model suggests that leadership development programs in Islamic educational institutions should include psychological training components that strengthen self-efficacy. Such programs may involve mentorship systems, leadership workshops, reflective learning practices, and peer collaboration networks.

## Implications for Islamic Educational Leadership Development

The findings of this study highlight several implications for leadership development in Islamic educational institutions. First, leadership training programs should incorporate psychological empowerment strategies that strengthen self-efficacy and resilience. Traditional leadership development programs often emphasize administrative skills but neglect psychological competencies. Second, institutional cultures should encourage innovation and collaboration. Leaders are more likely to develop confidence when organizational environments support experimentation and learning. Third, policy frameworks should promote leadership professionalism in Islamic educational institutions. Transparent recruitment processes, continuous professional development, and performance evaluation systems can strengthen leadership effectiveness. Finally, integrating psychological competence with Islamic ethical values can create a holistic leadership model that combines spiritual integrity with managerial excellence. Such an approach can help Islamic educational institutions navigate contemporary challenges while maintaining their religious identity and educational mission.

## CONCLUSION

This study highlights that leadership challenges in Islamic educational institutions are closely related to three major issues: limited leadership innovation, low leadership confidence, and weak decision-making capacity. Empirical studies conducted between 2018 and 2023 demonstrate that these challenges often stem not only from structural or managerial limitations but also from psychological factors affecting leaders. In many cases, leaders of Islamic educational institutions operate within traditional administrative frameworks and face complex pressures such as limited resources, institutional expectations, and rapid educational transformation. Without sufficient psychological competence, particularly self-efficacy, leaders may hesitate to initiate innovation, implement strategic reforms, or respond effectively to organizational challenges. Therefore, strengthening psychological competence becomes a crucial aspect of improving leadership effectiveness in Islamic educational institutions.

Self-efficacy theory offers a valuable conceptual framework for addressing these leadership challenges. Leaders with strong self-efficacy tend to demonstrate greater confidence, persistence, and adaptability in managing institutional change and decision-making processes. Through the development of mastery experiences, vicarious learning, social persuasion, and emotional regulation, leaders can strengthen their belief in their leadership capacity and enhance organizational performance. Integrating self-efficacy with Islamic leadership values such as responsibility (*amanah*), perseverance (*mujahadah*), and trust in God (*tawakkal*) can create a holistic leadership model that combines psychological empowerment with spiritual integrity. Consequently, strengthening self-efficacy among leaders of Islamic educational institutions has the potential to foster innovative, resilient, and globally competitive leadership capable of responding to the evolving challenges of contemporary education.

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