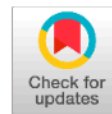


Spiritual leadership among youth: Fostering sustainable development towards Islamic values



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Abstract This study explores the role of spiritual leadership in promoting ethical and sustainable development among youth leaders within an Islamic context. Using a qualitative research design, focus group discussions were conducted with 11 youth leaders from various community organizations, representing diverse leadership experiences and societal roles. This study highlights the importance of spiritual leadership in addressing the unique challenges faced by youth leaders, such as navigating ethical dilemmas, balancing personal and communal responsibilities, and fostering resilience in the face of socio-economic and cultural constraints. By emphasizing leadership qualities rooted in Islamic principles, including justice (*adl*), compassion (*rahma*), and stewardship (*khalifah*), the study underscores the necessity of holistic youth development programs that focus on personal growth, ethical integrity, and community responsibility. The integration of spiritual and ethical training into youth leadership development has been shown to be instrumental in nurturing resilience, strengthening moral decision-making, and fostering a sense of shared responsibility within communities. This study contributes to the broader discourse on leadership by providing empirical evidence and a culturally relevant perspective on the integration of Islamic values into youth leadership. Additionally, it highlights the importance of family, mentorship, and structured leadership training in shaping future leaders who are both morally upright and socially conscious. Furthermore, this approach aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), advocating for leadership models that prioritize inclusivity, social justice, and sustainable community development. By offering a faith-driven, values-based leadership framework, this study provides a pathway for cultivating a new generation of ethical and socially responsible leaders who are equipped to address contemporary global challenges while upholding Islamic ethical principles.

Keywords: youth, leadership, Islamic values, sustainable development goals (SDGs)

1. Introduction

In today's society, integrating spiritual development into youth work and leadership training has become increasingly vital. Recent research underscores the significant benefits of spiritual development for various youth outcomes, including improved well-being, resilience, and civic engagement (Al-Jayyousi, 2016; Prabhu et al., 2020; Thalgi, 2024). This is particularly crucial in our diverse cultural landscape, where young individuals are exposed to a myriad of religious and spiritual traditions. Spiritual leadership, which focuses on guiding others through values, ethics, and personal integrity, transcends conventional leadership models that often prioritize results over individual well-being. This leadership approach involves leading by example, inspiring others with a commitment to purpose and meaning in life. Spiritual leadership is highly resonant with the goals of sustainable development goals (SDGs), which address global challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change, and peace and justice (Yasmeen et al., 2024; Surbakti 2024). Furthermore, spiritual leadership aligns closely with Islamic values that emphasize justice (*adl*), compassion (*rahma*), and community welfare (*maslaha*) (Ruhullah et al., 2024).

Youth leaders play a pivotal role in this landscape. Owing to their proximity in terms of age and experience with their peers, they serve as influential role models within their communities. Youth leaders who embody and promote principles of spiritual leadership can significantly shape the values and behaviors of their contemporaries and lay the groundwork for the ethical and moral development of future generations. This is especially critical for addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by communities today. Recent studies highlight the increasing relevance of spiritual leadership in various contexts. For instance, Azwar, (2024) demonstrated how spiritual leadership can enhance organizational performance by fostering a sense of community and shared values. Similarly, research by Mulang et al. (2023) shows that integrating spiritual principles into leadership practices can lead to improved employee well-being and organizational commitment. These findings suggest the

broader applicability of spiritual leadership beyond traditional settings, underscoring its potential benefits in youth leadership development.

Practically, spiritual leadership among youth involves several key components. First, it requires a commitment to personal growth and self-reflection, enabling youth leaders to understand their own values, strengths, and areas for improvement (Niamir-Fuller et al., 2023). This self-awareness is crucial for authentic and effective leadership. Second, spiritual leadership demands deep empathy and a willingness to listen and respond to the needs of others, fostering trust and collaboration within the community (Razak & Moten, 2023; Prabhu et al., 2020). Additionally, it involves the ability to inspire and mobilize collective action toward shared goals, aligning with both the SDGs and Islamic values, and emphasizing the inclusivity, sustainability, and well-being of all members (Maidugu & Isah, 2024; Abdelgalil et al., 2024).

Despite the growing recognition of the importance of spiritual leadership, several gaps remain in the literature that this study aims to address. First, while there is extensive literature on leadership models, the integration of Islamic values into these frameworks remains underexplored. Existing models often overlook the unique ethical and spiritual dimensions that Islamic values can bring to leadership practices. By incorporating principles such as justice (*adl*), compassion (*rahma*), and community welfare (*maslaha*), this study seeks to enrich the understanding of leadership from an Islamic perspective and highlights its relevance in fostering sustainable development (Siraj et al., 2022).

Second, most studies on leadership development tend to focus on adult leaders, with limited attention given to the specific needs and potentials of youth leaders (Northouse, 2018; Rami et al., 2019). Youth leaders face unique challenges and opportunities that differ significantly from those of their adult counterparts. This study addresses this gap by specifically examining how spiritual leadership principles can be applied to the development of youth leaders, thereby contributing to a more nuanced understanding of youth leadership in various contexts.

Additionally, although theoretical discussions on spiritual leadership abound, there is a paucity of empirical research linking spiritual leadership with sustainable development outcomes. This study employs a qualitative research design to provide empirical evidence on how integrating spiritual and ethical training in youth leadership programs can promote sustainability. By using focus group discussions with youth leaders, this study offers concrete insights into the practical applications of spiritual leadership principles in real-world settings (Hambali et al., 2023; Azwar, 2024). Finally, much of the existing research on spiritual leadership has been conducted in Western contexts, often neglecting the cultural and contextual nuances of non-Western settings. This study focuses on youth leaders from various community organizations within an Islamic context, providing a culturally relevant perspective that enriches the global discourse on spiritual leadership. Understanding these cultural nuances is crucial for developing effective leadership programs that resonate with the values and experiences of diverse populations (Suseno et al., 2022; Mulang et al., 2023).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Integrating Islamic values in leadership

Islamic values play a crucial role in promoting spiritual leadership among leaders. Central to Islamic teachings are principles such as justice (*adl*), compassion (*rahma*), responsibility (*amanah*), and community welfare (*maslaha*) (Firdaus & Prasetya, 2024). These values provide a robust ethical framework that can guide youth leaders in their efforts to promote social cohesion and address the challenges facing their communities. For instance, the concept of justice in Islam underscores the importance of fairness and equity, which aligns with SDG 10: reduced inequality (Makhmud et al., 2024). Youth leaders who internalize this value are better equipped to advocate for social equity and to challenge discriminatory practices that hinder inclusive community development (Northouse, 2018). The urgency of cultivating spiritual leadership among youth leaders is further highlighted by the complex challenges facing rural areas. The aforesaid elucidate why a lack or limited access to resources, economic instability, and environmental degradation manifested in those rural communities (Ataman et al., 2024). Addressing these challenges requires a leadership approach that is both ethical and holistic, grounded in a deep understanding of the interconnectedness of human and ecological systems. Spiritual leadership, supported by Islamic values, is uniquely suited to promote sustainable and inclusive solutions that align with the SDGs (Tlemsani et al., 2023; Setiawan, 2023). Furthermore, in a world increasingly focused on individualism and material success, spiritual leadership offers a counter-narrative that emphasizes community, empathy, and a sense of shared responsibility (Yasmeen et al., 2024). This approach can help rebuild the social fabric, creating more resilient and cohesive communities capable of achieving sustainable development goals (Alibašić, 2018).

2.2. Quality of leaders

Spiritual leadership is characterized by its emphasis on values, integrity, and societal welfare, making it a potent framework for nurturing effective youth leaders (Doornich & Lynch, 2024). Spiritual leadership integrates moral reasoning and intrinsic motivation, which are crucial for guiding young individuals toward ethical decision-making and sustainable development (Santos et al., 2024). This approach goes beyond transactional leadership styles by emphasizing transformational qualities such as vision, empathy, and humility (Doornich & Lynch, 2024; Rami et al., 2022). In the context of

Islamic values, leadership is guided by principles deeply rooted in the Quran and Sunnah (Rami et al., 2019). Grin et al. (20218) and Twum-Antwi et al. (2020) highlights justice, compassion, and stewardship as fundamental qualities of a leader in Islam. These values are essential not only for personal character development but also for fostering a sense of responsibility toward community and environmental sustainability. Concepts such as 'amanah' (trustworthiness) and 'taqwa' (God-consciousness) play pivotal roles in shaping ethical conduct and fostering accountability among youth (Al-Aidarous, 2019; Grin et al., 2020; Twum-Antwi et al., 2020).

Islamic teachings also emphasize the concept of 'khalifah' (stewardship), urging believers to act as responsible custodians of the Earth (Ataman et al., 2024). These principles align with sustainability goals, advocating for balanced resource use and environmental conservation (El-Sherbini et al., 2023). The spiritual crisis of modern society, as described by El-Sherbini et al. (2023), further underscores the need for ethical leadership rooted in spiritual values to address global environmental challenges. Effective youth leadership development strategies draw heavily from these ethical foundations. Rami et al. (2022) contend that the fathom and essence of leadership is earned and built on practice and mentorship. They emphasize the importance of empowering youth to articulate a compelling vision, build relationships on the basis of trust, and demonstrate integrity in their actions. Rodriguez et al. (2024) support this view by highlighting the role of experiential learning and reflection in developing leadership competencies among young people.

Empirical research provides concrete examples of how integrating Islamic values into youth leadership programs yields positive outcomes. Ataman et al. (2024) discusses various initiatives in Muslim-majority countries where Islamic ethics are embedded in leadership training, resulting in increased civic engagement and social responsibility among participants. Ahmed (2019) presents impact assessments demonstrating improvements in community development indicators and ethical leadership skills among youth involved in these programs. Despite the potential benefits, implementing spiritual leadership programs faces challenges. Khalid (2020) identified cultural resistance, a lack of resources, and misconceptions about Islamic teachings as barriers to effective implementation. Siraj et al. (2022) suggested that overcoming these obstacles requires embracing inclusive leadership models that respect diverse cultural perspectives and promote interfaith dialog.

2.3. *Spiritual leadership and youth resilience*

Spiritual leadership plays a crucial role in fostering resilience among youth, offering a framework that integrates moral values, purpose-driven motivation, and a sense of community responsibility (Ahmed, 2021; Mohamed, 2024). Defined as a transformative approach to leadership, it emphasizes the importance of ethical decision-making and personal integrity (Grin et al., 20218). This leadership style, unlike transactional approaches, encourages young individuals to transcend self-interest and contribute positively to their communities (Grin et al., 20218; Mohamed, 2024). Central to spiritual leadership is the incorporation of values derived from spiritual and religious traditions. These values provide a moral compass that guides youth in navigating challenges and adversities (Baharin, 2022; Rami et al., 2023). For example, Islamic teachings emphasize virtues such as patience ('sabr'), perseverance ('istiqamah'), and trust in divine wisdom ('tawakkul') as foundations for resilience in the face of adversity (Al-Aidarous, 2019; Asari, 2024).

Youth resilience represents what it takes to overcome challenges, setbacks, and misfortune and adapt positively to change; it is strengthened through spiritual leadership practices. (Christmas & Khanlou, 2019). By promoting a sense of purpose and meaning in life, spiritual leadership enhances psychological well-being and fosters a resilient mindset among young individuals (Van Breda & Theron, 2018). This approach emphasizes the importance of cultivating inner strength and resilience as essential qualities for effective leadership and personal growth (Fry, 2003; Wong, 2010). Empirical studies underscore the effectiveness of spiritual leadership in nurturing youth resilience across diverse cultural and religious contexts. Research indicates that leaders who embody spiritual principles such as compassion, humility, and ethical integrity inspire resilience among their followers (Van Breda & Theron, 2018). These leaders serve as role models who demonstrate resilience in their own lives, thereby influencing young people to develop similar strengths (Van Breda & Theron, 2018; Grin et al., 20218).

In practice, spiritual leadership for youth resilience involves mentoring, coaching, and creating supportive environments that foster spiritual growth and personal development (Sanders et al., 2017; Twum-Antwi et al., 2020). Mentors and educators play pivotal roles in guiding young individuals toward resilience by imparting wisdom, providing emotional support, and encouraging reflective practices (Grin et al., 20218; Twum-Antwi et al., 2020). Spiritual leadership serves as a powerful tool for nurturing resilience among youth by providing a value-based framework that promotes personal growth, ethical integrity, and community engagement. By integrating spiritual principles into leadership practices, educators, mentors, and community leaders can empower young individuals to navigate challenges with resilience and develop into compassionate and responsible leaders of tomorrow.

3. Research Methodology

This study takes a qualitative approach in which focus group interviews are used to collect data. Focus group interviews are considered a form of planned discussion, with the ideal number of informants being at least 4 and not

exceeding 20 (COI, 2016). Discussions in focus group interviews can vary from highly structured to unstructured, depending on the purpose of the study. In this study, semi-structured questions were provided to facilitate discussion. The questions focused on informants' understanding of the definition of leadership, ideal leadership characteristics, motivation or motivation for leadership and the types of training needed for youth leaders, especially those at the grassroots level. The researcher acts as a moderator or facilitator who encourages informants to share their views on the topic being discussed. The transcripts from the focus interviews were then analysed to generate themes that fit the study objectives.

The focus group interview for this study involved 3 FGDs and eleven informants were involved in this session, including youths, youth associations and stakeholders. In addition to being actively involved in community or grassroots development programs, some informants work in the government, private, and entrepreneurial sectors. Others run their own businesses or become full-time housewives. In the interest of the privacy and confidentiality of informants, short names and codes are used in the writing of this article. All the data from the interviews obtained from the field notes, audio-visuals, and document materials presented during the round-up were analysed. The data collected through the recorded interviews were transcribed into the interview notes. NVivo software was used to analyse the interview transcriptions and construct themes, categories and subcategories in this study. NVivo software helps researchers evaluate information gathered from interview data, pictures, videos, and audio more closely to produce clearer information. These integrated data management transformations help researchers produce useful knowledge to achieve their objectives.

3.1. Background of the informants

The focus group interview consisted of 11 informants, including the chairperson, a secretary from the Youth Association. This informant is typically in their 20s and 30 s. All the informants had experience being leaders in their area. Each individual presides over a subcommittee, including a safety committee, a youth development committee, an infrastructure committee, a women's development committee, a welfare committee and an economic development committee. The establishment of the Youth Association is a recommendation of the government, and its main purpose is to mobilize community activities for the purpose of improving the management and welfare of the population. Activities include organizing health awareness programs, family welfare, entrepreneurship skills training, working with the private sector and ensuring safety in their respective areas.

Table 1 Background of the informants' focus group interviews.

Group	Code	Leadership experience/Terms	Position/experience
A	R1	5 years in local youth association	Chairperson
	R2	4 years in local youth association	Members
	R3	6 years in sport association	Chair
	R4	3 years in local association	Secretary
B	R5	3 years in university youth association	Chairperson
	R6	2 years in university youth association	Members
	R7	2 years in university youth association	Members
	R8	2 years in university youth association	Members
C	R9	3 years in university youth association	Members
	R10	1 years in Vocational Collage	Chairperson
	R11	1 years in Vocational Collage	Member

4. Results and Discussion

Table 2 Summary of Findings.

Theme	Subtheme	Findings	Implications for Spiritual Leadership and Islamic Values
Definition of Leadership	Nurturing Leaders	Youth leaders debated whether leadership is an innate trait or a skill that can be nurtured. R1 emphasized that leadership traits might be inherent talents.	Spiritual leadership recognizes inherent qualities like compassion and wisdom as gifts from Allah, which can be nurtured through adherence to Islamic principles, shaping morally grounded leaders.
	Balancing Nature and Nurture in Spiritual Leadership	Effective communication is essential, as highlighted by R3. Leaders must balance natural charisma with acquired skills.	In Islamic teachings, clarity and compassion in communication (<i>da'wah</i>) are crucial for inspiring and mobilizing communities toward ethical and sustainable goals.
	Ethical Responsibility and Leadership	Leaders must prioritize community welfare over personal interests, as R6	Islamic principle of <i>amanah</i> (trustworthiness) positions leaders as stewards responsible for

Theme	Subtheme	Findings	Implications for Spiritual Leadership and Islamic Values
Developing Personalities of Youth as Tomorrow's Leaders		noted.	justice, compassion, and integrity in all aspects of leadership.
	Leader-Follower Dynamics in Islamic Context	Leaders should motivate and guide followers, emphasizing R2's points.	Islamic leadership views the relationship as akin to a shepherd guiding their flock, emphasizing the pursuit of <i>taqwa</i> (God-consciousness) and <i>ihsan</i> (excellence in faith and action).
	Knowledge and Continuous Spiritual Growth	Leaders must continuously seek knowledge and be aware of developments, as R7 mentioned.	Islam highly values <i>ilm</i> (knowledge), encouraging leaders to integrate it with faith to make ethical decisions and promote sustainable development.
	Communication Skills in Spiritual Leadership	R5 highlighted that leaders should be humble and maintain good relationships with their subordinates.	Spiritual leadership involves nurturing relationships and fostering community through humility, kindness, and respect, essential for uniting followers around ethical goals.
	Personal and Physical Attributes in Islamic Leadership	Physical presence and charisma are important, as R6 noted.	Islamic leadership emphasizes <i>akhlaq</i> (character), expecting leaders to embody virtues like humility and empathy, fostering trust and guiding communities toward ethical practices.
Motivation for Leadership	Family Influence and Tradition in Spiritual Context	Family traditions play a role in shaping leaders, as noted by R4.	Islam sees the family as crucial for moral and spiritual development, nurturing a sense of duty and service in future leaders.
	Service as a Motivator	The desire to serve, particularly the marginalized, motivates leadership, as R4 explained.	Reflects the Islamic concept of <i>khidmah</i> (service), where leadership is seen as a way to uplift and serve the community, ensuring justice and equity.
	Training and Development in Spiritual Leadership	Formal training is essential for leadership skills, R1 and R11 emphasized.	Islamic leadership training includes practical skills and spiritual development, fostering <i>taqwa</i> (God-consciousness) and <i>sabr</i> (patience), ensuring well-rounded, ethical leaders.

4.1. Definition of leadership

In the discussion, all the informants provided a variety of definitions of leadership. From here, we draw conclusions about leadership from the perspective of young people.

4.1.1. Nurturing leaders

The discourse among youth leaders highlighted two dominant perspectives: leadership as an innate trait versus a skill that can be cultivated. This particular difference of opinion, much relevant in the context of spiritual leadership, where both the natural disposition and the nurturing of spiritual values play crucial roles. R1's statement underscores this:

"...Today, many of us consider those who are highly educated and qualified to lead. However, in fact, a person's leadership style is whether he or she is born with this trait, which is born talent..."

In the framework of spiritual leadership, these inherent traits, such as compassion, integrity, and wisdom, are seen as gifts from Allah SWT that can be developed and refined through life experiences and adherence to Islamic principles. This dual approach highlights the importance of recognizing and nurturing the spiritual and ethical potential of youth. A study conducted on nurturing ethical integration among public students by Robert (2023), confirmed the findings of the study whereby natural disposition and the nurturing of spiritual values play crucial roles in shaping the youth into leaders who are not only competent but also morally grounded.

4.1.2. Balancing nature and nurture in spiritual leadership

Youth leaders emphasized the need for a balance between natural leadership charisma and acquired skills. R3 highlights the importance of effective communication:

"...To be a leader, you must be smart. If a person does not have the confidence to speak, then he will not see himself as a leader. Leaders must be able to clearly convey ideas and instructions so that subordinates can understand..."

In Islamic teachings, effective communication is a critical aspect of da'wah (invitation to faith), where clarity and compassion in conveying messages are essential. These findings validate the findings of Aini et al. (2021) and Ali (2023), which confirmed that engaging in Da'wah, which involves calling individuals to the path of righteousness, requires the propagator to have basic skills such as being compassionate, understanding, and consequently being charismatic, irrespective of any human communities they are disseminating their message to. Spiritual leaders are expected to articulate their vision and values in a manner that inspires and mobilizes their community, fostering a collective pursuit of ethical and sustainable goals.

4.1.3. Ethical responsibility and leadership

Youth leaders stress that leadership entails a profound responsibility to prioritize the welfare of the community over personal interests. R6 remarks:

"...I think that leaders need to have extensive experience in their own family institutions. If this looks beautiful, then the leader can fulfill his role as a good leader of the community..."

This perspective aligns with the Islamic principle of amanah (trustworthiness), where leaders are seen as stewards who are entrusted with the welfare of their followers. A study which investigated tawhidic leadership and Islamic governance in the modern world for peace and integrity (Ruhullah & Ushama, 2024) also confirms the result of the study. The study advocated for Tawhidic leadership, in which elements such as al-shūrā (consultation) and amānah (integrity) are core to achieving an ethically grounded and inclusive approach to leadership. This stewardship is not limited to managing resources but extends to upholding justice, compassion, and integrity in all aspects of leadership.

4.1.4. Leader–follower dynamics in the islamic context

Leadership is viewed through the prism of the relationship between the leader and followers. R2 emphasizes:

"...Leaders must be aware of the intricacies of leadership and can motivate their followers. In addition, leaders must have exceptional ideas and ideas that can be applied in a variety of situations and are capable of motivating their followers."

In Islam, this relationship is akin to the bond between a shepherd and her flock, where the leader is responsible for guiding, protecting, and nurturing her community. Spiritual leadership involves motivating followers through a shared commitment to taqwa (God consciousness) and the pursuit of ihsan (excellence in faith and action).

4.2. Development of the personalities of youths as tomorrow's leaders

The development of youth into future leaders involves integrating knowledge with spiritual growth, emphasizing continuous learning and moral integrity. This findings is supported by Surbakti et al. (2024) which found that effective communication, rooted in humility and respect, fosters community cohesion and ethical leadership. Personal attributes such as approachability and moral integrity are crucial, reflecting a leader's character and fostering trust. Islamic principles guide leaders to embody virtues such as empathy and humility, ensuring that they inspire and unite communities toward sustainable development and ethical practices.

4.2.1. Knowledge and continuous spiritual growth

An ideal leader is not only knowledgeable in their field but also committed to continuous spiritual growth. R7 highlights this need:

"...A leader must always want to learn and equip himself with the latest knowledge in his field. A leader must be aware of current developments and be able to handle any situation related to them."

Islam places high value on knowledge (ilm), which is considered a path to greater spiritual understanding and moral integrity. Leaders are encouraged to seek knowledge diligently, integrating it with their faith to make informed and ethically sound decisions that benefit their community and promote sustainable development.

4.2.2. Communication skills in spiritual leadership

Effective communication is a cornerstone of leadership. R5 illustrates this:

"...Leaders should not be arrogant. For example, when meeting with subordinates, they should always admonish people whether at work or outside."

In the context of spiritual leadership, communication is not only about conveying information but also about nurturing relationships and fostering a sense of community. Islamic teachings advocate for humility, kindness, and respect in interactions, which are essential for leaders who wish to inspire and unite their followers around common ethical and developmental goals.

4.2.3. Personal and physical attributes in islamic leadership

Physical presence and personal charisma were noted as important attributes for leaders. R6 observes:

"...I think he (mentions the name of a leader admired) is different from other high-ranking leaders because he does not have too much control or protocol with the common people..."

Islamic leadership emphasizes akhlaq (character), where a leader's outward conduct reflects their inner moral and spiritual state. Leaders are expected to embody virtues such as humility, empathy, and approachability, fostering trust and solidarity within the community. This approachability and moral integrity are crucial for leaders aiming to guide their communities toward sustainable and ethical practices.

4.3. Motivation for leadership

The integration of spiritual values in leadership development among youth is crucial for fostering ethical and sustainable leadership. However, the study highlights that family influence and structured training programs are significant motivators for aspiring leaders.

4.3.1. Family influence and tradition in the spiritual context

Family traditions and upbringing play a significant role in shaping future leaders. R4 explains:

"...Papa used to be a youth chairperson, and we are a family involved in youth activities such as organizing programs..."

In Islam, the family is seen as a foundational institution for moral and spiritual development. The role of tarbiyah (upbringing) is critical in instilling values such as responsibility, service, and leadership from a young age. This familial influence nurtures a sense of duty and a desire to contribute positively to the community, aligning with the principles of spiritual leadership.

4.3.2. Service as a motivator

The desire to serve others, particularly the marginalized, is a strong motivator for leadership. R4 notes:

"...If we think we have leadership qualities, then we can be leaders. Leadership is about spirit to work together and finish work together."

This reflects the Islamic concept of khidmah (service), where leadership is seen as an opportunity to serve and uplift the community, particularly those who are disadvantaged. Leaders are motivated by the ajr (reward) in serving others and the responsibility to ensure justice and equity in their leadership practices.

4.3.3. Training and development in spiritual leadership

The importance of formal training in leadership skills is emphasized by R11:

"...Listening skills are not needed by novice leaders, but leaders of an organization or company need this skill. The subordinates will be concerned about my inability to speak when a leader does not have good listening skills."

In the Islamic context, leadership training encompasses both practical skills and spiritual development. Training programs are designed to cultivate taqwa (God consciousness) and sabr (patience), along with technical skills, ensuring that leaders are well rounded and capable of guiding their communities toward sustainable and ethical development.

The findings from the qualitative study underscore a multifaceted approach to leadership that integrates spiritual, ethical, and practical dimensions. Spiritual leadership, which is deeply rooted in Islamic values, emphasizes the development of inherent moral qualities, continuous learning, effective communication, and a profound sense of responsibility to serve the community (Fathoni, 2024; Setiawan, 2024). Youth leaders, guided by these principles, are well equipped to address the challenges of sustainable development. They embody values that promote justice, compassion, and stewardship, which are essential for fostering a community that is resilient, equitable, and ethically aligned with the principles of sustainable development (Islam et al, 2024; Brooks & Ezzani, 2022). By incorporating spiritual leadership into their practices, youth leaders can inspire and mobilize their communities toward collective goals that reflect the values of justice, sustainability, and moral integrity. This integration of spiritual and ethical dimensions into leadership training is crucial for nurturing leaders who show commitment in creating a just and sustainable future in alignment with Islamic values. The need for spiritual leadership

among youth leaders is more pressing than ever in the pursuit of sustainable development and the promotion of Islamic values. As society grapples with complex and interrelated challenges, the principles of spiritual leadership offer a pathway toward a more just, sustainable, and compassionate world. By embracing these principles and aligning their efforts with the SDGs and Islamic values, youth leaders can inspire their peers and lay the foundation for a future where values, ethics, and integrity are at the forefront of leadership, driving progress toward a more equitable and sustainable global community.

5. Final Considerations

This study provides significant insights into the role of spiritual leadership in fostering ethical and sustainable development among youth leaders, particularly within an Islamic context. By exploring the integration of Islamic principles into leadership practices, this research highlights how values such as justice, compassion, and community welfare can significantly influence the ethical conduct and effectiveness of youth leaders. The findings suggest that youth leaders who incorporate these spiritual and ethical dimensions into their leadership approach are more likely to promote sustainable community initiatives and act as positive role models within their communities. One of the key contributions of this study is the emphasis on the unique challenges and opportunities faced by youth leaders compared with their adult counterparts. The research underscores the need to empower young leaders to thrive in today's complex leadership landscape in order to enhance their developmental foresight, sharpen their intellect, and equip them with the essential tools and expertise to succeed. This focus on youth-specific leadership development is crucial, given the pivotal role that young leaders play in shaping the future of their communities and societies at large. The qualitative research design, which utilized focus group discussions, allowed for a rich exploration of the experiences and perspectives of youth leaders across various community organizations. This methodological approach facilitated the identification of key themes related to spiritual leadership and ethical behaviour, providing empirical evidence to support theoretical discussions on the subject. The use of NVivo software for thematic analysis ensured a rigorous and systematic examination of the data, enhancing the reliability and validity of the findings.

However, the study also identifies several gaps in the current literature on spiritual leadership. There is a notable lack of integration of Islamic values into existing leadership models, which often overlook the unique ethical and spiritual dimensions that these values can bring. Additionally, few empirical studies have linked spiritual leadership with sustainable development outcomes, particularly in non-Western contexts. This study addresses these gaps by providing concrete insights into how spiritual leadership principles can be practically applied to promote sustainability in real-world settings. The research also highlights the cultural and contextual nuances of spiritual leadership, emphasizing the need for leadership programs that resonate with the values and experiences of diverse populations. By focusing on youth leaders from various community organizations within an Islamic context, this study contributes to a more culturally relevant understanding of spiritual leadership. This perspective is essential for developing effective leadership programs that can be implemented globally, taking into account the diverse cultural backgrounds of leaders and their communities.

In conclusion, this study underscores the imperative of integrating spiritual and ethical training into youth leadership development programs. By aligning leadership practices with core Islamic values, youth leaders can be empowered to foster sustainable development and enhance community well-being. The findings of this study contribute to the growing body of literature on spiritual leadership, highlighting the potential of faith-based approaches to address global challenges and promote a more just, sustainable, and compassionate world. Therefore, subsequent research can explore the long-term impacts of these initiatives and develop strategies to overcome the barriers to implementing spiritual leadership programs. By nurturing the next generation of ethical and spiritually grounded leaders, we can lay the foundation for a brighter, more sustainable future.

Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical guidelines. Prior to participation, all participants were provided with detailed information about the study's objectives, procedures, and their rights, including the right to withdraw at any time without any repercussions. Informed consent was obtained from all participants before the interviews were conducted. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained throughout the study, and the collected data were securely stored and used solely for research purposes.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Funding

This study did not receive any financial aid.

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