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Integrating Prophetic Principles and Ki Hajar Dewantara's Trilogy in Strategic School Management

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ABSTRACT

This manuscript proposes an integrated framework for strategic school management that synthesizes prophetic principles with Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational trilogy to enhance the quality, ethics, and effectiveness of school leadership. Drawing on contemporary leadership literature and Indonesian educational philosophy, the study articulates how prophetic principles—grounded in integrity (*siddiq*), accountability (*amanah*), authentic communication (*tabligh*), and wisdom (*fathanah*)—can be operationalized through Dewantara's trilogical leadership framework: *Ing Ngarso Sung Tulodo* (leading by example), *Ing Madya Mangun Karsa* (fostering collaborative empowerment), and *Tut Wuri Handayani* (providing supportive guidance). Through comprehensive review of empirical evidence and theoretical analysis, this manuscript develops a conceptual model demonstrating how the integration of these prophetic principles and Dewantara's trilogy creates synergistic effects in strategic management that enhance institutional culture, decision-making quality, and organizational effectiveness. The framework emphasizes that authentic integration—rather than superficial adoption—of these principles generates meaningful improvements in school climate, stakeholder commitment, and educational outcomes. This manuscript contributes to advancing educational management theory by proposing a culturally grounded, spiritually-centered, and humanistically-oriented approach to school leadership that prioritizes human development, moral integrity, and collective welfare alongside organizational effectiveness and student achievement.

1. INTRODUCTION

The contemporary educational landscape faces unprecedented challenges emanating from rapid technological advancement, demographic shifts, globalization, and evolving social demands [1]. School principals, as key institutional leaders, confront complex strategic decisions that extend far beyond administrative efficiency to encompass profound implications for student development, teacher wellbeing, community engagement, and institutional sustainability. The pressure to make rapid, data-driven decisions while maintaining ethical standards and human-centered values presents a fundamental leadership paradox that traditional management frameworks often fail to adequately address.

In recent decades, leadership scholarship has increasingly examined diverse leadership paradigms to enhance organizational effectiveness in educational settings. Transformational leadership, distributed leadership, instructional leadership, and inclusive leadership have each demonstrated significant contributions to improving school performance [2]; [3]. However, these predominantly Western-originated frameworks, while valuable, may not fully capture the culturally specific wisdom traditions that have guided educational practice in non-Western contexts. The integration of local philosophical traditions with contemporary leadership theory represents a critical frontier in developing more contextually responsive and culturally grounded approaches to educational administration.

Ki Hajar Dewantara, the founding figure of Indonesian education and creator of the Taman Siswa movement, articulated an educational philosophy that remains profoundly relevant to contemporary leadership challenges. His trilogical framework—*Ing Ngarso Sung Tulodo*, *Ing Madya Mangun Karsa*, and *Tut Wuri Handayani*—represents a humanistic approach to leadership that emphasizes moral exemplarity, collaborative empowerment, and supportive freedom rather than hierarchical control or bureaucratic compliance [4]. These principles align closely with what might be termed “prophetic leadership,” a concept rooted in the ethical and spiritual dimensions of leadership that prioritize integrity, accountability, and the greater good over personal or institutional advantage [5].

The concept of prophetic leadership, drawing from both Islamic and broader religious traditions, emphasizes the integration of spiritual values, moral conviction, and practical wisdom in decision-making processes. Research on prophetic leadership in Islamic educational contexts has demonstrated its capacity to generate empowering, wise, and humanistic decisions that strengthen institutional culture and foster transformative change [6]. The *siddiq* (honesty), *amanah* (responsibility), and *fathanah* (wisdom) dimensions of prophetic leadership mirror, in many respects, the values embedded in Dewantara's educational philosophy [7].

Yet despite the evident philosophical alignment and practical complementarity between prophetic leadership principles and Dewantara's educational trilogy, empirical research examining their integrated effect on strategic decision-making among school principals remains limited. This manuscript addresses this gap by developing a conceptual framework that positions Dewantara's educational leadership principles as mediators through which prophetic leadership values influence the quality and effectiveness of principals' strategic decision-making. By explicating these mediating mechanisms, the study contributes to advancing both leadership theory and educational practice in culturally contextualized, ethically grounded directions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Prophetic Leadership: Conceptual Foundations and Applications

Prophetic leadership represents a leadership paradigm that integrates spiritual, ethical, and practical dimensions to guide organizational decision-making toward justice, equity, and collective welfare. Rooted in religious and philosophical traditions emphasizing moral exemplarity and accountability to higher principles, prophetic leadership contrasts with purely instrumental or transactional leadership models that prioritize efficiency, compliance, or profit maximization as primary objectives.

In the Islamic educational context, prophetic leadership draws directly from the *sifat nabawiyah* (prophetic qualities), particularly the attributes of *siddiq* (truthfulness and integrity), *amanah* (trustworthiness and responsibility), *tabligh* (clear and educational communication), and *fathanah* (analytical wisdom and strategic intelligence) [5]. Research examining the application of these prophetic values in Islamic educational institutions has documented their powerful influence on organizational culture and decision-making processes. One comprehensive study of prophetic leadership in an Islamic school foundation found that the integration of these values resulted in

transparency and consistency in decision-making, responsible task distribution based on competency, participatory dialogue, and data-informed strategic responses to crises [7].

The implementation of prophetic leadership principles directly affects multiple dimensions of institutional functioning. The *siddiq* value manifests through integrity, transparency, and consistency that build organizational trust and establish clear ethical boundaries for decision-making. The *amanah* principle translates into systematic responsibility structures, competency-based assignment of duties, and open reporting mechanisms that ensure accountability. The *tabligh* dimension emphasizes courteous, participatory communication that includes all stakeholders in dialogue. Finally, *fathanah* operates through analytical, adaptive, and strategic decision-making that increases organizational efficiency and stakeholder participation [7].

Prophetic leadership's influence on decision-making quality extends beyond abstract ethical commitments to concrete improvements in organizational outcomes. In studies of leadership during crisis situations, prophetic principles have demonstrated their capacity to enhance decisiveness, adaptability, and moral coherence [8]. The Prophet Muhammad's leadership during the Battle of Hunain exemplified how prophetic principles—including visionary strategy, exemplary behavior, crisis management, and effective situational adaptation—produced decisive outcomes while maintaining moral integrity. This historical example demonstrates that prophetic leadership is not incompatible with strategic effectiveness; rather, ethical integrity and strategic acumen are mutually reinforcing dimensions of prophetic leadership.

2.2. Ki Hajar Dewantara's Educational Philosophy: The Trilogy of Leadership

Ki Hajar Dewantara (1889-1959) stands as one of Asia's most influential educational philosophers. His educational philosophy, operationalized through the Taman Siswa movement, challenged colonial educational systems and articulated a vision of education centered on human development, cultural preservation, and national liberation. At the core of his educational philosophy lies the leadership trilogy, a trilogical framework that guides relationships between educators and learners, leaders and followers, within educational contexts.

The three principles constituting Dewantara's leadership trilogy are: (1) *Ing Ngarso Sung Tulodo* (in front, one sets an example), emphasizing the leader's role as moral exemplar whose conduct, values, and behavior provide the pattern for followers; (2) *Ing Madya Mangun Karsa* (in the midst, one strengthens resolve/will), highlighting the leader's responsibility to inspire, motivate, and collaboratively build the collective will and commitment of the group; and (3) *Tut Wuri Handayani* (from behind, one provides support), stressing the leader's function in providing supportive empowerment that enables followers to achieve their potential and exercise their autonomy [9]. This trilogy reflects a coherent pragmatist philosophy of education, in which each principle constitutes a practical orientation toward conduct rather than an abstract ideal, giving Dewantara's framework enduring applicability to concrete institutional practice [10].

Empirical research on the implementation of these principles in contemporary educational settings confirms their continued relevance and effectiveness. A qualitative case study of kindergarten principals in Indonesia found that *Ing Ngarso Sung Tulodo* emerged as the dominant theme in leadership practice, manifesting through disciplined exemplary behavior that established moral authority and credibility [11]. The same study identified *Ing Madya Mangun Karsa* as the foundation of participatory leadership, where principals actively fostered collaboration and engaged teachers in decision-making. *Tut Wuri Handayani* was operationalized through support for teacher autonomy, professional development, and independence in pedagogical decision-making.

Importantly, research reveals that Dewantara's principles are not merely theoretical abstractions but practical guides that generate measurable institutional outcomes. Schools implementing these principles demonstrated enhanced teacher motivation, improved learning environments characterized by trust and psychological safety, stronger collaborative work culture, and positive school climates conducive to student development [11]. The application of the trilogy created conditions where teachers

felt valued as professional partners rather than subordinates, experienced genuine support for their growth, and perceived clarity regarding institutional expectations and values. This teacher-centered impact aligns with recent findings that trust-based, empowering leadership practices in Islamic schools are positively associated with teachers' job satisfaction [12].

The philosophical foundation of Dewantara's trilogy extends beyond pragmatic effectiveness to encompass a distinctly humanistic and democratic vision of education. Dewantara articulated the concept of *among*—a relationship between educator and learner grounded in love, guidance, and empowerment rather than coercion or control. This approach positioned education not as transmission of static knowledge but as facilitation of human potential development in dialogue with cultural, social, and individual contexts [13]. The *Tri Pusat Pendidikan* (three centers of education)—family, school, and community—reflected his understanding that education occurs within interconnected social systems requiring collaborative coordination rather than isolated institutional functioning [14]. The continuing relevance of Dewantara's thought for school management is affirmed by contemporary scholarship, which finds that his ideas remain applicable to institutional leadership challenges in the industrial era 4.0 [15], while the Tamansiswa movement itself stands as a historical exemplar of culturally embedded, locally grounded educational practice within the Indonesian education system [16].

2.3. Strategic Decision-Making in Educational Leadership

Strategic decision-making represents the process through which leaders identify, analyze, and select among alternative courses of action to advance organizational objectives while managing complex contingencies, stakeholder interests, and environmental uncertainties [17]. In educational contexts, strategic decisions carry particular significance because they shape institutional culture, allocate limited resources, establish operational priorities, and fundamentally influence teaching and learning conditions that ultimately affect student outcomes.

Research on principals' decision-making practices has identified several critical dimensions that characterize effective strategic decision-making in schools. First, principals who engage in structured processes involving identification of problems, development of multiple alternatives, and deliberate selection among options tend to make more adaptive and responsive decisions than those relying on intuition or habitual response patterns [17]. Second, participatory processes that include relevant stakeholders in decision-making—particularly teachers who implement decisions and possess professional expertise—enhance both decision quality and implementation fidelity [18].

The quality of principals' strategic decision-making is fundamentally influenced by their cognitive complexity—their capacity to identify relationships among multiple factors, evaluate diverse perspectives, and seek innovative solutions in complex situations [19]. Leaders with high cognitive complexity are more effective at identifying key environmental factors, foreseeing risks, recognizing opportunities, and adapting their approaches to changing circumstances. Decision-making quality is further enhanced by attention to ethical dimensions alongside technical and operational considerations. The Sensemaking and Engagement in Ethical Decision-Making (SEED) Framework emphasizes that principals' decisions carry profound psychosocial implications for school climate, teacher practices, and student learning, demanding that leaders integrate ethical reasoning with strategic analysis [18].

An emerging body of research emphasizes the mediating role of organizational culture and school climate in translating leadership practices into improved outcomes. Multiple studies demonstrate that transformational leadership practices enhance student achievement not through direct mechanistic effects but rather through their influence on school culture, teacher motivation, and collaborative work environments that subsequently influence teaching quality and student learning [20]; [21]. This mediating pathway suggests that leadership effectiveness depends significantly on how leaders cultivate institutional conditions—trust, psychological safety, shared purpose, collaborative norms—that enable their strategic directives to be implemented with fidelity and enthusiasm.

The relationship between leadership and organizational outcomes is fundamentally mediated by institutional culture and climate. School culture, defined as the shared values, norms, beliefs, and practices that characterize an educational institution, serves as the lens through which institutional members interpret leadership messages, make decisions, and engage in collaborative action. Research consistently demonstrates that transformational leadership influences outcomes—including teacher performance, student achievement, and organizational effectiveness—substantially through its effects on school culture [21].

A comprehensive systematic review of 15 studies examining transformational leadership in healthcare contexts, while not directly focused on education, identified a critical pattern: team synergy, adaptive training capacity, and context-specific competency frameworks mediated the relationship between leadership competencies and decision-making quality [22]. These findings suggest that leadership effectiveness operates through institutional mechanisms—shared understanding, collaborative capacity, adaptive responsiveness—rather than through direct leader-to-follower influence.

In the educational context specifically, qualitative research has documented how principals' leadership practices shape school culture through multiple mechanisms. When principals demonstrate moral exemplarity (*Ing Ngarso Sung Tulodo*), they establish cultural norms emphasizing integrity, transparency, and ethical conduct. When they engage in collaborative motivation (*Ing Madya Mangun Karsa*), they cultivate norms of participatory decision-making, collective responsibility, and intellectual engagement. When they provide supportive empowerment (*Tut Wuri Handayani*), they establish cultural patterns of autonomy, professional growth, and mutual support [9].

This culturally embedded process of leadership influence operates through what might be termed "institutional learning" or "cultural transmission." Rather than leaders directly controlling outcomes through command and authority, they shape the institutional conditions, norms, and practices that enable organizational members to act coherently toward shared objectives. The shift from direct control to cultural influence is particularly important in professional organizations like schools, where teacher expertise and professional judgment represent critical resources that cannot be effectively mobilized through hierarchical authority alone.

3. METHOD

3.1. Research Approach and Design

This article adopts a comprehensive literature review approach, integrating conceptual analysis with empirical evidence synthesis to develop an integrated framework linking prophetic leadership and Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational philosophy. This design was selected because it enables the development of a coherent conceptual model while simultaneously verifying key propositions against available empirical evidence in the school leadership and management literature.

3.2 Data Sources and Literature Selection Process

The study involved a systematic review of literature drawn from leading academic sources, including international journals, Indonesian national journals, and relevant reference books addressing leadership, school management, Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational philosophy, and prophetic leadership within the context of Islamic education. The literature search employed the following key terms: "prophetic leadership," "Ki Hajar Dewantara," "strategic school management," "educational philosophy," "school culture," "decision-making," "institutional culture," and related combinations in both English and Indonesian.

Inclusion criteria comprised: (1) direct relevance to the study's core themes—prophetic leadership, Dewantara's philosophy, strategic school management, or institutional culture; (2) empirical studies documenting the effects of leadership on institutional practices or organizational outcomes; (3) conceptual and theoretical analyses that deepen understanding of leadership and management

frameworks; and (4) publications from the past five years to ensure contemporary relevance, with exceptions made for seminal works or classic references that remain theoretically significant.

Exclusion criteria comprised: literature addressing leadership or management without explicit connection to educational or school contexts; works focusing exclusively on technical management aspects without consideration of ethical or cultural dimensions; and publications not available in full text or lacking peer review.

3.3 Analysis and Synthesis Procedure

The literature analysis followed a systematic, multi-stage process. First, each source was evaluated to identify key findings, theoretical propositions, and empirical evidence relevant to the research questions. Second, these findings were categorized according to five main themes: (1) conceptual foundations of prophetic leadership in educational contexts; (2) empirical applications of prophetic principles in educational institutions; (3) Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational philosophy and its implementation; (4) school culture as a mediating mechanism between leadership practice and organizational outcomes; and (5) integrated evidence for synergistic effects.

Third, a comparative analysis was conducted to identify points of convergence and divergence between the prophetic leadership tradition and the Dewantara framework. This process revealed substantial areas of mutual reinforcement between the two traditions, forming the theoretical basis for an integrated model.

Fourth, the core propositions of the proposed framework were examined against available empirical evidence from the literature. This process identified the level of empirical support for each proposition, limitations within the existing evidence base, and research gaps warranting further investigation.

Fifth, logical connections were developed among prophetic leadership principles, Dewantara's operational practices, institutional culture, and strategic management outcomes, through causal-logical analysis illustrating the mechanisms by which this integration produces the expected outcomes.

3.4 Quality Control and Validity

Several quality-control strategies were applied throughout the research process to ensure the credibility and validity of the findings.

First, source triangulation was achieved by integrating evidence across diverse theoretical perspectives, geographic contexts (Indonesian and international), and methodological approaches (qualitative, quantitative, and case study). This multi-source approach reduces single-source bias and strengthens confidence in the conclusions.

Second, internal validation was conducted by examining the internal consistency between the framework's core propositions and the supporting empirical evidence. Inconsistencies or contradictions with strong empirical evidence were explicitly flagged and discussed.

Third, limitations were clearly acknowledged. This study constitutes a literature-based conceptual analysis rather than an empirical study involving primary data collection. Accordingly, the conclusions reflect patterns observed in the available literature rather than direct hypothesis testing on a representative sample.

Fourth, a critical perspective was applied by questioning underlying assumptions, identifying limitations in the existing empirical evidence, and articulating implementation challenges relevant to real-world school practice.

3.5 Researcher Positionality and Context

This study was conducted by a research team with expertise in educational leadership, school management, and local educational philosophy. The team brings a perspective grounded in deep familiarity with the Indonesian educational context, combined with sustained engagement with international leadership and organizational theory literature. A commitment to authentic integration between local wisdom and contemporary academic discourse informed the overall research approach.

The purpose of this article extends beyond characterizing a conceptual framework; it also aims to propose practical implications for more ethical, contextually grounded, and human-centered school leadership. In this respect, the study combines academic rigor with attention to practical applicability and contextual relevance for the Indonesian educational community.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Integrating Prophetic Principles and Dewantara's Trilogy in Strategic School Management

Building on the preceding literature review, this manuscript proposes a conceptual framework that explains how prophetic leadership principles and Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational trilogy can be authentically integrated to strengthen strategic school management. Rather than treating these as separate leadership dimensions, the framework articulates an integrated approach in which prophetic principles supply the foundational values and ethical grounding, while Dewantara's trilogy supplies the operational mechanisms through which these principles are translated into concrete management practices and institutional culture. This integration is expected to produce synergistic effects—improvements in institutional culture, decision-making quality, stakeholder commitment, and organizational effectiveness that exceed what either framework could achieve independently. The framework operates across three interconnected dimensions: foundational principles (prophetic values and Dewantara's humanistic vision), operational integration (the translation of principles into management practice), and institutional outcomes (effects on culture, decision quality, and organizational effectiveness).

In strategic school management, prophetic principles function as foundational values that orient leaders' overall approach to institutional stewardship and decision-making. Although derived from Islamic tradition, these principles resonate with broader ethical and spiritual wisdom and provide the philosophical foundation on which authentic integration with Dewantara's practical framework rests. Four core prophetic principles form an integrated value system: (1) *siddiq* (truthfulness and integrity)—an unwavering commitment to honesty, transparency, and consistency between public commitments and private conduct across all institutional communication and action; (2) *amanah* (trustworthiness and responsibility)—an understanding of school leadership as a trust that demands faithful stewardship, genuine accountability, and commitment to stakeholder welfare; (3) *tabligh* (clear and authentic communication)—a commitment to transparent, educative communication that includes all stakeholders in institutional dialogue and decision-making; and (4) *fathanah* (wisdom and strategic intelligence)—the capacity to perceive institutional situations comprehensively, understand diverse stakeholder perspectives, exercise sound judgment, and act strategically in the service of long-term institutional welfare.

In strategic management contexts, these principles function as ethical anchors that prevent leadership from devolving into purely instrumental or self-serving behavior. They reorient school leaders toward decision-making grounded in integrity rather than expedience, genuine accountability rather than political advantage, collective welfare rather than narrow institutional benefit, and long-term institutional health rather than short-term metrics. When internalized as authentic leadership orientations—rather than merely espoused rhetoric—prophetic principles cultivate a disposition toward ethical reasoning, stakeholder consideration, humanistic concern, and long-term strategic thinking that shapes the character and quality of institutional management as a whole.

While prophetic principles provide the foundational ethical grounding for strategic school management, Dewantara's educational trilogy provides the operational mechanisms through which these principles are translated into concrete management practices, institutional structures, and cultural patterns. The trilogy is not an additional layer superimposed on prophetic leadership but an operational framework that enacts prophetic values through three interdependent, mutually reinforcing pathways.

Pathway One: Moral Exemplarity (*Ing Ngarso Sung Tulodo*). This pathway integrates prophetic *siddiq* (integrity) and *amanah* (trustworthiness) through exemplary conduct. School managers guided by prophetic principles prioritize consistency between publicly espoused institutional values and their own demonstrated behavior, including in situations where such consistency is personally costly. This consistency is the visible, lived embodiment of prophetic principles, translating abstract ethical commitment into observable institutional reality. Teachers and other stakeholders who witness leaders making transparent, ethically grounded decisions—even when politically difficult—come to trust the authenticity of that leadership. This observed integrity establishes cultural norms in which ethical considerations carry genuine institutional weight rather than serving as post hoc justification for predetermined conclusions. As a continuous mechanism of cultural transmission, leaders' consistent alignment of behavior with stated values gradually becomes internalized as institutional culture as others adopt similar patterns and expectations.

Pathway Two: Collaborative Empowerment (*Ing Madya Mangun Karsa*). This pathway integrates prophetic *amanah* (accountability), *tabligh* (authentic communication), and *fathanah* (wisdom) through institutionalized collaborative processes. When grounded in genuine commitment to stakeholder accountability, collaborative management practices move beyond superficial consultation toward authentic power-sharing and collective decision-making in which stakeholders meaningfully influence outcomes. This integration operates through several mechanisms: (1) authentic stakeholder inclusion, whereby teachers and staff recognize that their input genuinely affects institutional decisions; (2) structured dialogue processes that allow diverse perspectives to be genuinely heard and considered; (3) collaborative problem-solving, in which collective intelligence generates solutions superior to isolated administrative judgment; and (4) shared responsibility, whereby implementation ownership extends beyond administrators to all organizational participants. This collaborative integration produces a marked cultural shift: organizational members move from passive compliance toward proactive commitment because they perceive themselves as genuine stakeholders with meaningful institutional voice rather than subordinates executing predetermined directives. The heightened engagement and commitment generated by authentic collaboration enhance both implementation quality and organizational adaptability, while building stakeholder capacity for future collaborative engagement. This liberative dimension of collaborative empowerment resonates with research on prophetic leadership in faith-based school systems, which shows that distributing decision-making authority functions as a form of institutional liberation that frees teachers and staff from purely hierarchical control [23].

Pathway Three: Supportive Empowerment (*Tut Wuri Handayani*). This pathway integrates prophetic *amanah* (stewardship responsibility) and *fathanah* (wisdom and strategic perception) through the deliberate creation of conditions that enable teachers to exercise autonomous professional judgment, adaptive leadership within their domains, and continuous professional growth. Informed by a prophetic understanding that leadership responsibility includes developing organizational capacity rather than concentrating control, school managers invest in supportive institutional structures: professional development aligned with teachers' growth aspirations, autonomy in pedagogical decision-making within clear value frameworks, mentoring and coaching relationships, psychological safety that permits experimentation and learning from failure, and recognition systems that validate teacher contributions. This distributive approach shifts institutional functioning away from concentrating decision-making authority at the administrative level and toward distributing authority and initiative throughout the organization, closer to student learning contexts. Teachers who receive genuine autonomy and organizational support demonstrate greater initiative in identifying contextual problems, generating locally adapted solutions, and collaboratively addressing emerging challenges—behaviors that

substantially enhance institutional responsiveness and organizational learning. This pathway generates a virtuous cycle: supportive conditions build teacher capacity and initiative, which improves institutional functioning, which in turn validates supportive management approaches and deepens stakeholder commitment to the institutional mission.

The authentic integration of prophetic principles with Dewantara's trilogy is expected to generate synergistic improvements in strategic school management across several interconnected dimensions, producing emergent institutional effects that extend beyond what either framework could achieve alone.

Decision integrity. The integration of prophetic *siddiq* (truthfulness) with Ing Ngarso Sung Tulodo (exemplary leadership) is expected to generate decisions that reflect demonstrable alignment between stated institutional values and chosen courses of action, rather than rhetorical invocation of values in service of narrowly instrumental objectives. School managers who have internalized prophetic principles and consistently model exemplary behavior establish the credibility that makes value-aligned decision-making believable, which in turn increases stakeholder trust, psychological safety, and willingness to accept difficult decisions.

Decision inclusivity. The integration of prophetic *tabligh* (authentic communication) and *amanah* (accountability) with Ing Madya Mangun Karsa (collaborative leadership) is expected to produce strategic decisions that emerge from genuinely inclusive participatory processes, in contrast to consultation that acknowledges input without substantively incorporating it. Inclusivity is expected to improve decision quality by drawing on diverse information sources, ground-level contextual understanding, and creative alternatives generated through collaborative problem-solving, while simultaneously enhancing implementation effectiveness because stakeholders who contributed to a decision develop genuine ownership rather than reluctant compliance.

Decision wisdom. The integration of prophetic *fathanah* (wisdom and strategic intelligence) with Tut Wuri Handayani (distributed, supportive leadership) is expected to yield strategic choices that reflect comprehensive consideration of interconnected factors—immediate operational requirements, long-term institutional sustainability, stakeholder wellbeing, broader social and cultural context, ethical principles, and systemic consequences over time. This multidimensional consideration is expected to produce more resilient and adaptable decisions than approaches optimized for a single dimension such as efficiency, compliance, or short-term performance metrics.

Management effectiveness and institutional flourishing. Because strategic decisions under this framework are expected to reflect distributed stakeholder input, to be grounded in trustworthy leadership genuinely committed to stakeholder welfare, to be implemented by teachers with genuine commitment rather than compliance, and to be designed with wisdom that accounts for multiple dimensions and long-term consequences, they are expected to be more effective than decisions perceived as administratively imposed, ethically questionable, or narrowly self-serving. The integration of prophetic principles and Dewantara's trilogy is further expected to generate a virtuous institutional cycle: wise decisions build trust, trust enables more authentic participation, authentic participation produces better future decisions, and the visible success of well-conceived, collaboratively developed decisions deepens stakeholder commitment to the shared institutional mission.

4.2. Empirical Evidence Supporting Integration of Prophetic Principles and Dewantara's Trilogy

Empirical research provides evidence that prophetic leadership principles, when operationalized in educational settings, enhance the quality and ethical grounding of institutional decisions. A qualitative study of prophetic leadership in an Islamic school foundation found that implementation of the *siddiq* (honesty) value directly shaped decision-making processes by establishing norms of transparency, consistency, and accountability [24]. Leaders operating from the *siddiq* principle established clear decision criteria, involved relevant stakeholders, and documented the rationale for decisions—practices that enhanced both decision quality and stakeholder trust.

The fathanah (wisdom) dimension has been shown to contribute specifically to strategic decision-making quality through data-informed approaches, participatory dialogue, and adaptive crisis response [7]. Educational leaders with a strong fathanah orientation systematically gathered information, considered diverse perspectives, and adjusted their approach to contextual change—decision processes associated with superior outcomes in the broader organizational literature.

Although limited, research on prophetic leadership during crisis situations suggests that these principles support effective decision-making under conditions of extreme uncertainty and pressure. A historical analysis of the Prophet Muhammad's leadership during the Battle of Hunain identified strategic decision-making grounded in intelligence gathering, logistics planning, and adaptive troop reorganization, indicating that prophetic leadership supports rather than conflicts with strategic effectiveness [8].

Empirical research on the implementation of Dewantara's educational principles provides evidence for the mediating mechanisms proposed in this framework. A qualitative case study of kindergarten principals in Indonesia found that the three elements of the trilogy directly shaped leadership practice and institutional culture: principals emphasizing Ing Ngarso Sung Tulodo established discipline and exemplary behavior that generated moral authority; those practicing Ing Madya Mangun Karsa engaged teachers in participatory decision-making that fostered a collaborative culture; and those implementing Tut Wuri Handayani supported teacher autonomy and professional development [9].

This research further documented that institutionalizing these practices produced observable changes in school culture and functioning. Schools in which principals consistently demonstrated trilogy principles exhibited increased teacher motivation and commitment, enhanced collaboration and reduced interpersonal conflict, improved learning environments characterized by respect and psychological safety, and stronger community engagement and trust—conditions that the literature identifies as mediating variables between leadership practice and educational outcomes.

Several studies have examined the application of Dewantara's principles in specific educational contexts. Research on implementation of the Merdeka (Independent Learning) Curriculum found that schools successfully operationalizing Dewantara's principles—particularly *Tut Wuri Handayani*—made more adaptive, contextualized decisions about curriculum implementation than schools following rigid, top-down compliance approaches [25]. Teachers in schools emphasizing Dewantara's principles took greater initiative in identifying student needs, adapting instructional approaches, and solving problems collaboratively with colleagues. Complementary research grounded in constructivist learning theory similarly finds that Tut Wuri Handayani provides an effective pedagogical foundation for teacher facilitation within the Merdeka Curriculum, supporting learner-centered knowledge construction [26].

Dewantara's principles also appear to generate decision-making outcomes well suited to complex, uncertain educational environments. A qualitative study of democratic education implementation found that teachers applying Dewantara's principles made more nuanced decisions regarding classroom management—balancing freedom with responsibility—than teachers applying either purely authoritarian or purely permissive approaches [27]. The trilogy provided a framework that enabled adaptive professional judgment rather than rigid application of standardized rules.

Several empirical studies support the mediating role of institutional culture and school climate in the relationship between leadership practice and organizational outcomes. A structural equation modeling study of 375 teachers in Yemeni public schools found that school culture significantly mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and teaching performance [20]; transformational leadership influenced teaching performance both directly and, substantially, through its effect on school culture. Comparable findings have been reported across diverse contexts, suggesting that this mediating pathway is robust.

The mediating mechanism operates as follows: leadership practices shape school culture by establishing norms, modeling behavior, and creating institutional structures that embody leadership values; these cultural elements subsequently influence how organizational members interpret situations,

make decisions, and engage in coordinated action. A study of strategic leadership in vocational schools found that when principals consistently communicated vision, engaged in data-driven decision-making, and fostered collaborative teacher engagement, they cultivated a school culture supportive of innovation [28]; this innovation culture in turn shaped teachers' willingness to experiment with new instructional approaches and collaborate on curriculum development.

Research directly examining the integrated effects of prophetic leadership, Dewantara's philosophy, and strategic decision-making remains limited, but existing evidence suggests that such integration would produce substantial combined effects. One study examined how digital integration of Dewantara's leadership principles enhanced school leadership effectiveness [29] and found that all three elements of the trilogy remained relevant and effective in digital implementation contexts, suggesting the robustness of the principles across settings. This robustness is further corroborated by research showing that Dewantara's leadership trilogy can be systematically integrated with literacy leadership and digital leadership models, positioning technological adaptation as a natural extension of the trilogy's operational principles rather than a departure from them [30].

A qualitative study examined the synergy between Dewantara's humanistic values and humanistic pedagogical traditions in the context of total quality management in educational institutions [31]. This research found that when humanistic principles were authentically integrated into quality management processes—rather than added as a rhetorical layer—they transformed decision-making from administrative control toward collaborative improvement centered on human development, generating gains in both institutional performance and teacher and student wellbeing.

4.3. Implementing Integrated Prophetic–Dewantara Strategic School Management

The conceptual framework and supporting empirical evidence carry practical implications for how school principals and education administrators can establish genuinely integrated prophetic-Dewantara approaches to strategic management capable of generating synergistic improvements in institutional culture, decision quality, stakeholder engagement, and organizational effectiveness. Implementation requires sustained commitment across three interconnected dimensions: personal leadership transformation, institutional practice redesign, and deliberate cultivation of a supportive school culture.

Implementing authentic prophetic-Dewantara strategic school management requires that principals and administrators undertake deliberate personal transformation focused not merely on intellectual understanding but on internalizing prophetic principles, embodying Dewantara's values, and aligning personal behavior with espoused institutional values. This transformation is more demanding than acquiring new management techniques; it requires genuine character development and value clarification. School leaders must critically examine their own motivations—whether they seek leadership for personal advancement or institutional service—and the consistency between the values they publicly espouse and the behavior they demonstrate under pressure, in conflicts of interest, or when unobserved. They must identify where authentic transformation is needed, recognizing that prophetic-Dewantara leadership may require departing from established habits or previously internalized models of leadership.

Research on authentic transformational leadership development indicates that genuine value-centered leadership transformation is rarely accomplished through training seminars alone; it requires structured reflection, sustained mentoring, engagement with communities of practice that share these values, and repeated practice until new behaviors become authentic expressions of character [32]. Principals undertaking this transformation might engage in regular structured reflection on how recent decisions align with the prophetic principles of integrity, accountability, wisdom, and stakeholder welfare; examine historical or contemporary cases of prophetic leadership—including the Prophet Muhammad's decisions during the Battle of Hunain and Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational innovations—to develop a clearer understanding of what prophetic-Dewantara leadership looks like in

practice; and seek mentoring relationships with leaders who embody these values. Importantly, personal transformation also requires confronting how power, control, and institutional authority have shaped prior conceptions of leadership, since prophetic-Dewantara approaches rest on different assumptions about human nature, organizational capacity, and leadership responsibility.

Personal transformation provides a necessary foundation, but authentic prophetic-Dewantara strategic management also requires deliberate redesign of institutional practices, decision-making structures, and management systems so that prophetic principles and Dewantara's trilogy are embodied throughout daily organizational functioning.

Implementing moral exemplarity (*Ing Ngarso Sung Tulodo*) requires that school managers establish visible, consistent patterns of ethical leadership that build institutional moral authority. This requires more than rhetorical reference to institutional values; it demands high-visibility demonstration of value-aligned behavior through (1) transparent explanation of decision rationales that shows how ethical considerations shaped a choice; (2) consistency between publicly stated values and personal conduct, including in situations where consistency is costly; (3) institutional acknowledgment of mistakes, together with an explanation of what was learned and how practice was adjusted; and (4) visible personal commitment to institutional mission beyond minimum requirements. These practices establish cultural norms and build the credibility on which other leadership practices depend for authentic, rather than merely compliant, engagement.

Operationalizing collaborative empowerment (*Ing Madya Mangun Karsa*) requires that school managers institutionalize collaborative decision-making that extends beyond superficial consultation toward genuine shared governance. This includes (1) establishing decision-making committees and governance structures in which teachers and staff hold substantive, rather than purely advisory, authority; (2) creating structured processes for professional dialogue on institutional challenges and proposed changes; (3) institutionalizing collaborative problem-solving that draws on diverse organizational perspectives; (4) demonstrating through action that stakeholder input genuinely influences decisions, and explaining the reasoning when recommendations are not adopted; and (5) ensuring decision-making transparency so that stakeholders understand not only what was decided but why. Authentic collaboration depends on building sufficient trust that stakeholders believe their participation will genuinely influence outcomes.

Implementing supportive empowerment (*Tut Wuri Handayani*) requires that school managers redesign management systems to distribute authority, support professional growth, and enable teacher autonomy and initiative. Concrete practices include (1) professional development systems aligned with teacher growth aspirations and institutional needs; (2) genuine autonomy in pedagogical decision-making within clear institutional value frameworks; (3) institutionalized mentoring and coaching relationships; (4) explicit assurance that experimentation and learning from failure are valued; (5) recognition systems that visibly validate teacher contributions; and (6) evaluation systems that emphasize growth and development rather than surveillance and compliance verification. These changes redistribute decision-making authority and support throughout the organization, enabling teachers to exercise leadership within their domains and to respond with initiative to student needs and institutional challenges.

Implementing prophetic-Dewantara strategic management requires redesigning how strategic decisions are made throughout the organization, moving from hierarchical, efficiency-focused processes toward deliberative, wisdom-centered, participatory approaches that embody prophetic principles and operationalize Dewantara's trilogy. Such a process includes the following integrated elements: (1) problem clarification, involving diverse stakeholder perspectives to understand institutional situations before determining what must be decided; (2) value-aligned problem framing, which examines how potential decisions would affect different stakeholder groups and whose interests should be prioritized; (3) generation of multiple alternatives, developing diverse options rather than converging quickly on a single course of action; (4) comprehensive analysis of implications, examining technical, operational, stakeholder, ethical, and unintended-consequence dimensions; (5) authentic participatory deliberation, enabling genuine dialogue in which diverse perspectives influence the final decision; (6) transparent decision-making and rationale, explaining what was decided, why, and how

stakeholder input shaped the outcome; (7) implementation with commitment, recognizing that stakeholder participation in decision-making fosters investment in implementation success; and (8) ongoing evaluation and learning, examining whether decisions produced their intended outcomes and extracting lessons that improve future decision-making.

This deliberative, participatory process contrasts with rapid, centralized decision-making focused primarily on efficiency or compliance with external mandates. Although deliberative processes require greater initial time investment, they typically yield superior long-term outcomes: better decision quality grounded in comprehensive information and collective wisdom, stronger stakeholder commitment to implementation, and continuous organizational learning that improves institutional decision-making capacity over time. Educational leaders often find that the initial time invested in deliberative decision-making is recouped through improved implementation, reduced need for repeated decisions on the same problem, and greater stakeholder initiative in addressing problems without waiting for administrative authorization.

4.4. Challenges and Considerations for Implementation

Despite the theoretical promise and empirical support for integrated prophetic-Dewantara leadership, implementation faces significant contextual challenges. Educational systems in many countries operate within bureaucratic frameworks that emphasize standardization, compliance, and hierarchical authority. These systemic structures may constrain principals' capacity to implement genuinely collaborative decision-making or to prioritize long-term culture development over immediate compliance metrics. Research on school-based management in resource-constrained contexts documents how limited infrastructure, inadequate professional development, and competing accountability demands limit principals' ability to implement idealized leadership practices [33]. Similar resource and institutional constraints have been documented in Islamic school settings, where boarding schools operating within limited-resource frameworks must adapt visionary leadership practices to infrastructural realities [34], and where schools situated in border regions must strategically balance modernization pressures with the preservation of institutional and cultural traditions [35].

External pressure for rapid decision-making and measurable outcomes may also appear to conflict with the deliberative, values-centered approach proposed in this framework, as principals face pressure from district offices, school boards, or parents to demonstrate quick, accountable action. Addressing this tension requires not only individual principal development but also systemic reforms that create conditions conducive to values-centered leadership.

Research documents substantial variation in principals' readiness to engage in transformational, values-centered leadership. Demographic factors—including age, tenure, and educational background—influence adoption of participatory decision-making approaches [36]. More importantly, deeply held beliefs about authority, control, and human nature shape whether principals genuinely embrace or merely simulate participatory approaches; research on principal leadership development consistently identifies the challenge of moving leaders from surface compliance with recommended practices to genuine internalization of underlying values.

Teachers' readiness to participate genuinely in collaborative decision-making likewise varies. Teachers socialized within hierarchical educational systems may initially distrust invitations to participate, interpreting them as an absence of clear leadership or as manipulation. Building an authentic collaborative culture therefore requires sustained commitment to participatory processes even when the initial response is lukewarm, as organizational members gradually develop trust that participation is genuine rather than performative.

Educational systems increasingly emphasize measurable outcomes and data-driven accountability. The framework proposed in this manuscript emphasizes outcomes—decision quality, institutional integrity, teacher commitment, and student wellbeing—that are qualitatively rich but not always easily captured through quantitative metrics. Although longitudinal studies indicate that values-centered leadership approaches generate superior outcomes, including improvements in student

achievement, the lag between implementation and measurable outcomes can create tension with accountability systems that demand immediate, quantifiable results.

Addressing this challenge requires developing more nuanced approaches to educational accountability that incorporate qualitative indicators of school culture, decision-making quality, and stakeholder wellbeing alongside traditional achievement metrics. Research on school effectiveness increasingly incorporates these dimensions, but their translation into accountability policy and practice remains incomplete.

4.5. Research Implications

This study has proposed a conceptual framework that integrates prophetic leadership values, Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational philosophy, and strategic decision-making in school management. Although the theoretical reasoning and supporting empirical literature lend credibility to the framework's core propositions, several avenues for future inquiry remain open.

Empirical Validation of the Integrated Framework. The proposed framework is conceptual in nature and therefore requires systematic empirical validation. Quantitative studies employing structural equation modeling (SEM) are needed to test the hypothesized relationships among principals' adoption of prophetic leadership values, their application of Dewantara's leadership practices, school culture, and the quality of strategic decision-making. Particular attention should be given to school culture as a potential mediating variable linking value-based leadership to decision-making outcomes. Complementary qualitative case studies would help clarify how principals operationalize the integrated prophetic–Dewantara approach in day-to-day practice and identify the mechanisms through which observed changes in institutional functioning occur. A mixed-methods design combining both approaches would offer the most robust test of the framework's explanatory and predictive validity.

Cross-Cultural and Contextual Validation. The framework was developed primarily within the Indonesian educational context and draws on Islamic prophetic leadership traditions. Its applicability beyond this setting has not yet been established. Comparative studies are therefore needed to examine how prophetic leadership principles manifest within other cultural and religious traditions, and how indigenous educational philosophies from different national contexts align with, extend, or challenge the framework proposed here. Such cross-cultural inquiry would help determine the extent to which the framework represents a context-specific model or a more generalizable approach to value-based educational leadership, thereby strengthening both its theoretical generalizability and practical transferability.

Longitudinal Investigation of Implementation and Outcomes. Because this study is based on cross-sectional literature and conceptual synthesis, it cannot address how the integrated approach unfolds over time. Longitudinal research designs following schools through multiple phases of implementation are needed to examine the trajectory of cultural change, the development of stakeholder trust, and whether anticipated improvements in decision-making quality and institutional effectiveness materialize and are sustained over the longer term. Such designs would also help distinguish short-term novelty effects from durable organizational transformation.

Professional Development and Training Research. Further research is needed to identify effective mechanisms for developing principals' capacity to enact prophetic leadership values and Dewantara's educational principles in practice. Future studies could evaluate the comparative effectiveness of different training modalities (e.g., workshops, mentoring, coaching, and communities of practice) and identify the organizational and individual conditions that support the translation of training into sustained behavioral and cultural change. Findings from this line of research would provide practical guidance for educational leadership development programs and policy design.

5. CONCLUSION

School management occupies a critical juncture at which organizational structures intersect with human development, systemic accountability demands meet individual stakeholder needs, and

institutional efficiency must be reconciled with ethical integrity. The strategic decisions made by school leaders carry consequences that extend beyond operational outcomes to shape student learning, teacher professional growth, family and community engagement, and the broader institutional conditions that either support or constrain human flourishing. Importantly, the quality of these decisions depends not solely on principals' technical competence or managerial training, but fundamentally on the values underlying administrative judgment, the ethical grounding of leadership orientation, the authenticity of stakeholder engagement, and the institutional culture within which decisions are made.

This study has argued that the integration of prophetic leadership principles with Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational trilogy offers a culturally grounded and ethically coherent framework for strengthening strategic school management. This integration is conceptualized as synergistic rather than additive: the prophetic values of *siddiq* (truthfulness), *amanah* (trustworthiness), *tabligh* (transparent communication), and *fathanah* (wisdom) provide the ethical and spiritual foundation for leadership, while Dewantara's trilogy—Ing Ngarso Sung Tulodo (leading by example), Ing Madya Mangun Karsa (building collective will), and Tut Wuri Handayani (providing encouragement and support)—supplies the operational mechanisms through which these values are enacted in institutional practice. Three interrelated pathways connect the two frameworks: moral exemplarity, which translates prophetic integrity into institutional credibility; collaborative empowerment, which translates prophetic accountability and communication into genuine stakeholder participation; and supportive empowerment, which translates prophetic wisdom into distributed leadership and organizational learning capacity.

The literature reviewed in this study—spanning research on prophetic leadership in Islamic educational institutions, applications of Dewantara's principles in Indonesian schools, and broader scholarship on the mediating role of institutional culture in leadership effectiveness—provides preliminary support for the proposition that this integration is associated with improved decision-making quality, stronger institutional integrity, greater stakeholder commitment, and more supportive school cultures. These associations, however, remain largely inferential at this stage and require the empirical testing outlined in Section 7 before firmer causal or generalizable claims can be made.

Beyond its immediate relevance to the Indonesian context, this framework contributes to broader debates on educational leadership by demonstrating how indigenous philosophical traditions and faith-based ethical frameworks can be systematically integrated with contemporary leadership and management theory. As educational systems worldwide confront disruption, technological change, and renewed scrutiny of education's fundamental purpose, there is growing interest in leadership models that combine ethical grounding with practical operational guidance. The prophetic–Dewantara framework represents one contribution to this broader agenda: an evidence-informed, culturally situated model that positions strategic school management not merely as an administrative function but as a values-driven practice oriented toward institutional effectiveness, ethical integrity, and the holistic development of students, educators, and communities. Future empirical work, as outlined above, will be essential to substantiate these propositions and to clarify the conditions under which this integrated approach yields its intended benefits.

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