

# Synergy to Strengthen the Quality of Islamic Education in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

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## Abstract

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### Keywords:

Leadership;  
Islamic Education;  
Sustainable  
Development Goals  
(SDGs);  
Educational Reform;  
Curriculum  
Innovation.

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This research aims to understand and analyze the leadership role of KH. Muhammad Tholhah Hasan is working to improve the quality of Islamic education to achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs). This research is field research with a multisite method and qualitative approach. There were 12 informants involved through interviews, with research locations at the Al-Ma'arif Foundation and the Sabilillah Foundation, Singosari District, Malang Regency, East Java. This research's findings include several roles: First, as the initiator, he sets long-term goals and manages change for educational sustainability. Second is the concept's role, where he carries out comprehensive planning and delegates responsibility to the next generation. Third, in reform, he leads decision-making through deliberation and considers risks to maintain the quality of education. Fourth, his organizational role involves "istikhoroh" and "riyadloh" before making big decisions. Fifth, as an actor, he carries out monitoring and cadre formation for leadership regeneration. Sixth, as a developer, he innovates the curriculum. He discusses with stakeholders how to adapt education to 21st-century skills and SDG goals, focusing on the quality of Islamic education and sustainability. This contribution can encourage the creation of an inclusive society, reduce inequality, and form a generation ready to face various global challenges in an era of rapid technological development.

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## Abstrak

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### Kata kunci:

Kepemimpinan  
Pendidikan Islam;  
Tujuan Pembangunan  
Berkelanjutan (SDGs);  
Reformasi Pendidikan;  
Inovasi Kurikulum..

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Tujuan penelitian ini untuk memahami dan menganalisis peran kepemimpinan KH. Muhammad Tholhah Hasan dalam meningkatkan mutu pendidikan Islam guna mencapai sustainable development goals (SDGs). Penelitian ini berjenis studi lapangan dengan metode Multisitus dan pendekatan kualitatif. Sebanyak 12 informan terlibat melalui wawancara, dengan lokasi penelitian di Yayasan Al-Ma'arif dan Yayasan Sabilillah, Kecamatan Singosari, Kabupaten Malang, Jawa Timur. Temuan penelitian ini meliputi beberapa peran, yaitu: Pertama, sebagai inisiator, beliau menetapkan tujuan jangka panjang dan mengelola perubahan untuk keberlanjutan pendidikan. Kedua, peran konseptor, di mana beliau melakukan perencanaan menyeluruh dan mendelegasikan tanggung jawab kepada generasi penerus. Ketiga, dalam reformasi, beliau memimpin pengambilan keputusan melalui musyawarah dan mempertimbangkan risiko untuk menjaga kualitas pendidikan. Keempat, peran organisatoris beliau melibatkan "istikhoroh" dan "riyadloh" sebelum mengambil keputusan besar. Kelima, sebagai aktor, beliau melakukan pemantauan dan pengkaderan untuk regenerasi kepemimpinan. Keenam, sebagai developer, beliau berinovasi dalam kurikulum dan berdiskusi dengan stakeholders guna menyesuaikan pendidikan dengan keterampilan abad ke-21 serta tujuan SDGs, yang berfokus pada kualitas pendidikan Islam dan keberlanjutan. Sehingga kontribusi ini dapat mendorong terciptanya masyarakat yang inklusif, mengurangi ketimpangan, serta membentuk generasi yang siap menghadapi berbagai tantangan global di era perkembangan teknologi yang pesat.

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## INTRODUCTION

Various concepts in improving the quality of Islamic education have been proven to encourage mastery of modern science relevant to the times' needs (Syarnubi, Syarifuddin, & Sukirman, 2023). Integrating religious knowledge and general science in Islamic boarding schools and Madrasas is a strategic step to create graduates who can compete. As time goes by, the role and function of Islamic education have increasingly developed and varied (Asy'arie, Mun'im, Ma'ruf, Susanti, & Kurniawati, 2024). Synergy in improving the quality of Islamic education is very important in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to realize quality education that aligns with global development goals (Filho et al., 2023). In this context, Islamic education has a significant role in building an academically intelligent generation with strong moral and spiritual character. Islamic education can form individuals who care about environmental issues, social justice, and human rights (Chanifah, Hanafi, Mahfud, & Samsudin, 2021) through a holistic approach that includes education based on morality and spirituality. Apart from that, improving the quality of Islamic education also means providing more equitable access by ensuring that all students receive a decent education to create a more just, harmonious, and sustainable society, in line with the big vision of the SDGs (Khoiriyah, Asror, Ruzakki, & Masdar Hilmy, 2023).

Currently, various problems with the quality of Islamic education in achieving the SDGs are very complex and varied. One of the main challenges is unequal access to quality education (Bruns, Macdonald, & Schneider, 2019). Many areas, especially rural and remote areas, still need more educational infrastructure, qualified teaching staff, and curricula relevant to the times' needs. This has a direct influence on the ability of Islamic educational institutions to produce graduates who are ready to compete on the global stage (Setiadi, Ma'ruf, Darmanto, Abdillah, & Asy'arie, 2024). Apart from that, there are problems integrating religious knowledge and general science, which still need to be fully optimal. Often, Islamic education is trapped in traditions that are less adaptive to developments in science and technology. Lack of training for educators in applying modern teaching methods is also an obstacle (Asy'arie, 2023). To achieve the SDGs emphasizing quality education, it is necessary to carry out reforms in the Islamic education system. This includes improving the quality of teaching, updating the curriculum, and ensuring equal access for all levels of society (Fekih Zguir, Dubis, & Koç, 2021). So that Islamic education can contribute significantly to creating an intelligent generation with a noble character and ready to face global challenges (Septiani Selly Susanti et al., 2024).

Several relevant studies on the synergy of Islamic education to achieve the SDGs show important directions in improving the quality of education. *First*, is research focusing on curriculum integration, combining religious values with general science. This aims to produce academically intelligent graduates with a strong moral foundation (Hidayaturrehman, Sudarman, Husamah, & Kusumawati, 2021; Mansir, 2022; Riwanda,

Huda, Nadlir, & Yani, 2024). *Second*, studies that lead to the development of innovative teaching methods, such as the application of information and communication technology in the teaching and learning process. This method will increase student engagement and facilitate more effective and enjoyable learning (Fuadi & Suyatno, 2020; Nasucha, Khozin, & Thoifah, 2023; Septiani Selly Susanti et al., 2024). *Third*, an article about community empowerment in Islamic education includes the involvement of parents and communities in supporting student education and efforts to create an inclusive and sustainable learning environment (Al Farisi, Syarifuddin, & Zuhri, 2023; Brifkani, 2021; Zuhairi, Bima Fandi Asy'arie, Ahmad Muzakki, 2024). All of these studies have different characteristics. So far, no research focuses on improving the quality of Islamic education so that it can contribute more to achieving the SDGs. Thus, this article is novel, especially in developing quality and equitable Islamic education.

Strengthening the quality of Islamic education is an effort to improve the quality of education based on Islamic principles and meet global needs. This strengthening aims to create graduates who are not only academically intelligent but also have good moral character and social concern (Zamroni, 2017, p. 63). On the other hand, the benefit of strengthening this quality is increasing access and learning opportunities for all groups, including those in poor economic conditions (Ummah, 2019, p. 99). Apart from that, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a global agenda prepared by the UN to achieve sustainable development until 2030 (Leal Filho, Viera Trevisan, et al., 2023; Venturelli & Pizzi, 2023). One of the goals is to improve the quality of inclusive and equitable education, including Islamic education. The main goals of SDGs in education are ensuring fair access to education for all, integrating religious knowledge with modern science, and encouraging the formation of students' moral character (Leal Filho, Salvia, & Eustachio, 2023). The benefits of implementing SDGs in education include: First, the SDGs help facilitate sustainable education, enabling students to learn about global issues (Kopnina, 2020). Second, SDGs in strengthening education can create a generation that is not only academically intelligent but also has empathy and social responsibility (Webb & Rodriguez, 2022). Third, SDGs produce graduates ready to contribute positively to society and reduce social and economic disparities, which can play an active role in community development (Satianingsih, Rosmiati, Satriawan, & Rakhman, 2024).

The role of Islamic education in the current global era makes a significant contribution. This research aims to identify and analyze the leadership role of Kiai in strengthening the quality of Islamic education to achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs). This article focuses on KH Muhammad Tholhah Hasan's way of thinking; as a modernization step, the development of quality management of Islamic education can be used as a theoretical and practical contribution to realizing the essence of providing quality Islamic education. This aims to contribute to achieving the SDGs, especially goal 4 regarding quality education. In the context of strengthening the quality of Islamic education, researchers chose the Al-Ma'arif Foundation and the Sabilillah Foundation, Singosari, Malang Regency. By integrating holistic Islamic teaching values in the

education process, it is hoped that we can give birth to a generation that is not only academically intelligent but also has high character, morals, spirituality, and social awareness. Therefore, it is hoped that this article can provide constructive policy recommendations for strengthening the quality of Islamic education, which aligns with the development vision to achieve quality education.

### RESEARCH METHODS

This research is a field study, the type used is Multisite using a qualitative approach. The main goal of a multisite study is to identify similar patterns or develop new propositions and theories based on findings from various information from research objects in the field (Hasiara, 2018). The location of this research was the Al-Ma'arif Foundation and the Sabilillah Foundation, Singosari District, Malang Regency, East Java, Indonesia. To obtain primary data obtained in this research, namely from observation, interviews, and documentation. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from various scientific articles, books, proceedings, and several bookworks from KH. Muhammad Tholhah Hasan discussed the quality of Islamic education.

Then, this research was conducted for 6 months, from December 2023 to May 2024. The main data in this research was obtained through interviews, which were conducted twice. The focus of participants from all informants was 12 informants. This was done to find out the efforts made to strengthen the quality of Islamic education in achieving Islamic education. The selection of each informant was based on understanding their credibility regarding attaining the vision and mission to develop quality Islamic education. On the same day, the researcher conducted separate interviews with the informants; this lasted approximately 1-2 hours, and each informant was allowed to express his opinion. Not only that, researchers also conducted observations within the Al-Ma'arif Foundation and the Sabilillah Foundation during the learning process in class, outside of class, and activities, as well as strengthening the data findings with documents on these two things. The following is the distribution of the informants.

**Table 1.** Distribution of Informant Identity

No	Informant	Position
1	Nyai Hj. Solichah Nur	Wife, KH. M. Tholchah Hasan
2	Gus Mohammad Hilal Fahmi	Son of KH. M. Tholchah Hasan
3	Nyai Anisah Mahfudz	Chairman of the Development Division of the Al-Ma'arif Foundation
4	KH. Anas Bashori	Chairman of the Cadre Division of the Al-Ma'arif Foundation and Chairman of the Worship Division of the Sabilillah Foundation
5	H. Moh. Anas Noor	Chairman of the Al-Ma'arif Foundation
6	Drs. Fachrudin Subekti	Secretary of the Al-Ma'arif Foundation
7	Prof. Mas'ud Said	Chair of the Socioeconomic Division of the Sabilillah Foundation
8	Drs. H. Zainul Fadli	Chairman of the Takmir of the Sabilillah Mosque

9	Prof. Ibraahim Bafadhhal	Chairman of the Sabilillah Islamic Education Institute
10	Dr. Ishom Ihsan	Sabilillah Foundation Development Team
11	Dr. KH. Marzuqi Mustamar	Chairman of the Sabilillah Foundation
12	Ustadz Akhmad Farkhan	Chairman of the Sabilillah Foundation
<b>Number: 12 informants</b>		
<b>Source: processed by researcher (2024).</b>		

Then, this research uses a data analysis model (B. Miles, 1994). This model has three stages: data analysis, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion. First, data reduction. This stage is a reduction as a process of selecting, focusing on simplifying, and transforming rough data that emerges from written notes in the field. Data reduction in this research was carried out after obtaining observation and interview data. Second, presentation data. This process is carried out by presenting data from observations and interviews with research informants through research sources by concluding. Third, conclude. This final stage is to write a brief conclusion obtained from reviewing field notes to be used as an answer received by the research topic related to improving the quality of Islamic education and SGDs.

## RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

In this context, KH. Muhammad Tholhah Hasan is one of the Indonesian Muslim intellectuals who deserves to be reckoned with. His thoughts and work in developing Islamic thought are a real contribution to the process of Islamic education in Indonesia. This is proven by his many works discussing Islamic education (Observation, 2022).

Together with K.H. Masykur, he (KH. M. Tholchah Hasan) started establishing the MTs al-Ma'arif Education Foundation in 1959, founded Religious Teacher Education (PGA) in 1960, then founded other Islamic educational institutions, such as TK, SD/MI al-Ma'arif, SMP, MA, SMK and SMA, Sabilillah Islamic Kindergarten and Elementary School, establishing the Islamic University of Malang (UNISMA). This was explained by Nyai Sholichah Nur (2023) following the arguments presented.

*"...Starting from the figure of KH. Masykur, who at that time wanted to establish a Tsanawiyah and PGA Madrasah in Singosari, Malang City, which was equivalent to an Aliyah school. He then preached through the media of art and sports. It was proven that his method attracted many people, including members of Gerwani, who often came and were close to NU. Many people were hostile to him because of his methods and freedom style, and some even expelled him."*

In his daily life, KH. M. Tholchah Hasan is a democratic figure, and never prioritizes family. The cadre formation pattern flows where the administrators who serve in the institution are not from their own families. The following argument is presented by Gus Mohammad Hilal Fahmi (2023).

*“...My father is a very democratic person; he never forces anything and always invites discussion with all parties in the family. Then the father never chose people with any background; according to him, those people could be trusted, so he immediately chose them and gave them trust.”*

The various scientific backgrounds, knowledge, and experience of this organization then made him grow into an interesting person and come out of the mainstream of the majority of Kiai, as well as Islamic scientists or intellectuals with a modern leadership spirit and maturity in managing Islamic education. The figure of KH. M. Tholchah Hasan, as stated by Dr. Zainul Fadli, M. Kes (2023), as Chair of the Sabilillah Foundation. The following arguments are presented.

*“...KH. M. Tholchah Hasan is an Islamic education scientist. He has quite extensive associations with various groups or circles. This is because the knowledge he has is very comprehensive. He mastered not only religious matters but also general knowledge that he understood. With mu'asyarah various things that he understands, it is unsurprising that various groups accept his figure. He is a kind (tolerant) and open-minded person.”*

As a leader, through mature thinking and extraordinary struggle, KH. M. Tholchah Hasan was able to establish and develop such a good institution. His leadership made Islamic educational institutions superior, different, and sought after by the public. Dr. Ishom Ihsan (2023) explains one of his specialties as follows.

*“...In its implementation, he became a visionary director for implementing the policies of the Sabilillah Islamic Education Institute (LPI). His thoughts on educational institutions are always “out of the box”. His principle is that schools must dare to be different and have character but still adhere to the values of Islamic teachings. Some of his latest ideas to compete with other educational institutions are inseparable from the concept of having to dare to be different from others.”*

Life becomes meaningful if someone can be useful to others, so he once advised the Santri. As Drs. H. Zainul Fadli (2023) argued, the following narrative is presented.

*“...Life should always be filled with monuments with positive value, meaning that many others can feel our absence, according to KH. M. Tholchah Hasan, life is not just for yourself and your family. However, providing goodness that contains benefits for society as well.”*

KH formulated the concept of developing the quality of Islamic education. M. Tholchah Hasan is based on the desire to make education broader in scope and orientation. According to him, implementing the Islamic education system is not only about forming human personalities that create happiness in this world and the hereafter. More broadly, the management of Islamic education is carried out to realize the benefit of humanity, makes an important contribution to nation-building by the demands of current developments, is carried out openly (inclusive), and must not be closed

(exclusive). As Nyai Anisah Mahfudz (2023) argued when talking about her desires and aspirations.

*"...Islamic educational institutions are considered to have the greatest opportunity to realize this (creativity in curriculum and methodological development), which provide teaching and education not regulated by the government. So, Islamic education, such as Islamic boarding schools, must have competitive advantages and be ready to compete in everything, including NU Go International and Globalization of Islamic Boarding Schools; this is an idea that he wants and likes.."*

As an effort to maintain and develop the quality of Islamic educational institutions, KH. M. Tholchah Hasan never gets tired of conveying messages to the management of the Al-Ma'arif Foundation and the Sabilillah Foundation. He gave four things related to success in developing Islamic educational institutions, which became motivation, as told by Prof. Mas'ud Said (2023) and KH. Anas Bashori (2022), the following are the arguments presented.

*"...Several important aspects that he explained include (1) He is smart and pious, as well as being an example of how to oversee institutions with high integrity, professional hard work, patience, and harmony; (2) Every Islamic educational institution, mosque, social and community that he has built has produced results. success, (3) Elegant in guarding the younger generation (choosing the right people), (4) His extensive experience, simplicity, and istiqomah in goodness, uswah hasanah as a beacon of goodness for his successor." Not only that, this statement was strengthened by KH. A. Bashori (2023), who was also entrusted to participate in helping manage and improve the quality of education being developed. "He always advised us to maintain unity because we will be great if we are solid in maintaining this Foundation well for future development."*

In religious matters, the example of KH. M. Tholchah Hasan, in getting students used to praying, always coordinates and asks teachers to provide education about the importance of prayer. This aims to become a habit in students' lives that is practiced every day. As argued by Drs. Fachrudin Subekti (2024), as explained below.

*"...One of KH's big ideas. M. Tholchah Hasan regarding instilling a positive culture in students from an early age. This implementation is carried out when children want to perform prayers; he politely does not require them to wear trousers like adults. But he invited them to wear shorts. That doesn't mean he recommends this, but he wants to introduce them to the culture of prayer, not teach them to pray according to the pillars and requirements as in the science of jurisprudence. Let them pray according to their prayers, not the Shari'ah. This is an initial lesson for students so that they love the obligations embedded in prayer so that children can carry out istiqomah without any element of coercion. Apart from that, he also taught us that students should know Islam according to their world. Don't demand that they dress like adults (they must wear trousers); the most important thing is to instill a culture of prayer in them."*

On another occasion, the figure of KH. M. Tholchah Hasan also often discusses educational problems by holding joint deliberations to find wise solutions. These various problems are related to the condition of students, teachers, the curriculum, and so on, as the argument presented by H. Moh. Anas Noor (2024), the following is stated.

*"...Every Friday after praying. He always invites the management and supervisors of the Foundation to eat, then after finishing the meal he invites us to chat casually and dialogue together to discuss when any problems occur. Apart from that, he often confirms regular deliberations or meetings, this is usually held every Sunday to discuss various programs that have not been implemented, or create new programs that do not yet exist."*

From some of the data presented above, KH's strategy. M. Tholchah Hasan in developing the quality of Islamic education, indirectly produces future generations who are always ready to maintain goodness and develop institutions by the demands of the times. The annual work program of the Al-Ma'arif Islamic Education Foundation and the Sabilillah Foundation involves three main elements: *"humans as the main element, materials as supporting elements, and work programs as guidelines or references in every form of activity."* On the other hand, he is always guided by principles *"Al-muhafadzotu 'ala qodimis sholih, wal akhdzu bil jadidil ashlah"*, meaning: *"that it is important to maintain old things that are good, and take new things that are better"*. The Islamic educational institution that he developed has a superior quality; this is because before building an educational institution, he always thought deeply, prepared everything thoroughly and totally, not half-heartedly, and he also had *"keistiqomahan"* and did often *"riyadloh"* (Obsevasi 2024).

As in the book KH. M. Tholchah Hasan, that the role and role of the established Islamic education foundations were not only limited to conceptualizers and initiators of their founding but were also directly involved in the process of *"development, management, and supervision."* The following is a document of his bookwork presented.

*"...Where he acts as a "role model, consultant and source of reference in the decision-making process."* On the other hand, he has strong principles and beliefs that the ups and downs of Islamic civilization in the world, including in Indonesia, cannot be separated from the progress and decline of Islamic education. Now, when Islamic civilization is experiencing setbacks, freezing (*jumud*), and weakness (*khumul*) and is helpless to face various developments and challenges of globalization and modernity. So realizing and bringing back strong, superior and progressive Islamic education can be the answer so that Islamic educational civilization can be established and successful again in building an advanced and modern nation and state" (M. T. Hasan, 2006, p. 11).

Apart from that, this is reinforced by the book documents of KH's thoughts and ideas. M. Tholchah Hasan. He believes that in facing various challenges of the times and modern life, Islamic education is a common hope to form humans (students) who can do everything by the times. As in his work *"Islam and Human Resources Problems"*



(*Islam dan Masalah Sumber Daya Manusia*) (M. T. Hasan, 2005, p. 204). The following thoughts are presented.

“...First, transferring the values of faith, obedience to worship, and morals with curricular programs developed through an ethical approach. Second, provide methodological competence to students to understand the basic messages given by the Islamic religion. This enables them to develop an understanding of their religion that is conducive to their times. Third, integrating the surrounding empirical problems through the development of social awareness trained to perceive the reality of the environment based on theological understanding obtained from normative prescriptions. Fourth, provide a dialogic situation in studying the Islamic religion’s substance and material so that students can participate in understanding the problems and perceiving the religious teachings they are studying. Fifth, Encourage and develop the spiritual potential of students so that it becomes their spiritual strength in stemming materialistic and consumeristic greed in modern life which is full of worldly temptations.”

KH’s persistence. M. Tholhah Hasan, as a religious figure who is intelligent and has high social sensitivity, certainly flows into his soul to become a young man who is creative, advanced, and critical of various things. On the other hand, he is known as an educator, teacher, alim, preacher, Islamic education figure, diligent organizational activist, and an active figure in government organizations. As stated by Nasarudin Umar (Professor and High Imam of the Istiqlal Mosque), he is a multidimensional figure and a multitasking Kiai (Umar, 2011, p. 217).

Furthermore, several documents written by KH. M. Tholchah Hasan in book form, as the researcher presents in the table below.

**Table 2.** Books by KH. M. Tholchah Hasan

No	Topic	Publisher
1	“Islam in a Socio-Cultural Perspective” ( <i>Islam dalam Perspektif Sosial Budaya</i> )	LP2M Universitas Islam Malang (1987)
2	“Dynamics of Religious Life” ( <i>Dimamika Kehidupan Religius</i> )	Jakarta: Listafariska Putra (2004)
3	“Diskursus Islam Kontemporer” ( <i>Diskursus Islam Kontemporer</i> )	Jakarta: Listafariska Putra (2004)
4	“Moderate Religion, Islamic Boarding Schools, and Terrorism” ( <i>Agama Moderat, Pesantren, dan Terorisme</i> )	Jakarta: Listafariska Putra (2004)
5	“If Faith Remains” ( <i>Apabila Iman Tetap Bertahan</i> )	Jakarta: Listafariska Putra (2004)
6	“The Prospects of Islam in Facing the Challenges of the Times” ( <i>Prospek Islam dalam Menghadapi Tantangan Zaman</i> )	Jakarta: Lantabora Press (2005)
7	“Islam and Human Resources Problems” ( <i>Islam dan Masalah Sumber Daya Manusia</i> )	Jakarta: Lantabora Press (2005)
8	“Islamic Education as a Conscious Effort: Saving and Developing Human Nature” ( <i>Pendidikan Islam</i> )	Jakarta: UIN Syarif Hidayatullah (2005)

	<i>sebagai Upaya Sadar: Penyelamatan dan Pengembangan Fitrah Manusia)</i>	
9	“General Insights of Ahlussunnah wal Jama’ah” <i>(Wawasan Umum Ahlussunnah wal Jama’ah)</i>	Jakarta: Lantabora Press (2006)
10	“Dynamics of Thought about Islamic Education” <i>(Dinamika Pemikiran tentang Pendidikan Islam)</i>	Jakarta: Lantabora Press (2006)
11	“Building the Image of Islamic Civilization through Education” <i>(Membangun Citra Peradaban Islam melalui Pendidikan)</i>	Jakarta: Lantabora Press (2007)
12	“Early Childhood Education in the Family” <i>(Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini dalam Keluarga)</i>	Jakarta: Mitra Abadi Press (2009)
14	“Gifts for God’s Guests” <i>(Kado Untuk Tamu-Tamu Allah SWT)</i>	Jakarta: Lantabora Press (2015)
15	“Ahlussunnah wal Jama’ah in NU Perceptions and Traditions” <i>(Ahlussunnah wal Jama’ah dalam Persepsi dan Tradisi NU)</i>	Jakarta: Lantabora Press (2015)
16	“Multicultural Education as an Option for Overcoming Raccidentalism” <i>(Pendidikan Multikultural sebagai Opsi Penanggulangan Rasdikalisme)</i>	Lembaga Penerbit Universitas Islam Negeri Malang (2016)

Source: processed by researchers 2024.

As the data findings above can be underlined, the figure of KH. M. Tholchah Hasan has contributed to improving the quality of Islamic educational institutions. Below, we present data on his role in the table.

**Table 3.** Leadership Role of KH. M. Tholchah Hasan

No	Leadership Role of Kiai	Findings	
1	KH. M. Tholchah Hasan	Initiator	Determine long-term goals Controlling change
2		Drafter	Study the planning process comprehensively Delegating and giving trust
3		Reformasi	Menetapkan keputusan secara bersama-sama Mempersipakan resiko masa mendatang
4		Organisator	Melakukan “istikhoroh” dan “riyadloh” Memiliki tanggung jawab yang kuat
5		Aktor	Melakukan pemantauan Melakukan pengkaderan
6		Developer	Melakukan intervensi kurikulum dan metodologis Melakukan diskusi bersama seluruh stakeholders

### Discussion

As a leader, KH. M. Tholchah Hasan can organize and lead organizations at the Al-Ma'arif Foundation and the Sabilillah Foundation effectively and efficiently. Several roles have been carried out to achieve alignment with the SDGs vision, especially goal 4

regarding quality education which has relevance to this achievement. Following are his six roles in building the development of quality Islamic education.

First, Initiator. A leader who acts as an initiator can start, change, or revitalize something to create a new beginning (Prim Masrokan Mutohar et al., 2020; Walther, 2021). As agents of change, leaders need to have the capacity to be problem solvers, able to identify and understand various challenges within the organization and initiate innovative ideas that attempt to overcome these problems (Ismail, 2021). In the context of strengthening the quality of Islamic education to achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs), leaders play an important role in setting long-term goals and controlling changes that support the development of quality education sustainably and inclusively (Kuenkel, Kühn, Stucker, & Williamson, 2020; Nisa & Aimah, 2024). This includes setting goals that align with the SDGs, such as providing equitable education, increasing access for all groups, and preparing a curriculum relevant to the needs of the times (Arkorfur et al., 2020). Besides that, leadership needs to manage the necessary changes so that the quality of Islamic education can adapt to global developments without losing Islamic values. A leader must be sensitive to change and able to bring innovation in learning methods, use of technology and sustainable use of resources (Ekasari, Orba Manullang, Wahab Syakhrani, & Amin, 2021). Therefore, ideal leadership can make Islamic education more responsive to global challenges while ensuring Islamic values remain optimally integrated into the learning process.

Second, Drafter. A drafter is a leader who is rich in creative ideas, where they can think holistically, designing work concept plans which tend to allocate much time for thinking in building a sustainability agenda (Northouse, 2021; Prim Masrokan Mutohar et al., 2020). Leadership as a conceptualizer must focus on preparing mature plans and targeted strategies to improve the quality of Islamic education toward achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs) (Haidar, Hasanah, & Ma`arif, 2022; Haq & Roesminingsih, 2024; Kuenkel et al., 2020). On the other hand, a conceptual leader must know how to process a systematic and comprehensive planning agenda. With deep understanding, leaders can see every important aspect of improving the quality of education, including the need for resources, potential obstacles, and development opportunities (M. T. Hasan, 2006). Apart from that, in implementing the agreed plan, a leader must prioritize the delegation of tasks and give trust to a competent team or individual. Delegation creates more even responsibilities and fosters a sense of self-confidence and initiative among team members (Istiyani, Wibowo, Taruna, Rahmawati, & Atmanto, 2024; Rachman et al., 2024; Suryono, Ghazali, & Hashim, 2023). By combining good planning and effective delegation; leaders can contribute significantly to strengthening Islamic education (Mukhtar Latif, Sumsu, 2020). So, it aligns with the global vision of SDGs, especially regarding quality and inclusive education.

Third, Reform. A reform attitude is a drastic change for improvement in a country's educational, social, political, and religious fields (Northouse, 2021). In the context of education reform, this is an effort to carry out fundamental reforms and changes to the system of implementation in the education sector (Prim Masrokan

Mutohar et al., 2020). A leader with a spirit of reform can certainly emphasize the importance of collective decision-making processes and readiness to face future risks to strengthen the quality of Islamic education in achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs) (Kuenkel et al., 2020). As agents of reform, leaders must focus on making decisions involving all stakeholders in the organizational structure to formulate achievable targets. Making decisions together can create harmonious collaboration so that all members of the school and madrasah feel more responsible in implementing the decisions that have been agreed upon (Brunsson & Olsen, 2018). Apart from that, leaders with a spirit of change prepare to face future risks (Ilham, 2020). In Islamic education, this means developing preventive steps to address global educational challenges, such as the need for technology, an adaptive curriculum, and an inclusive learning approach (Hamami & Nuryana, 2022). This anticipatory attitude makes leadership key in ensuring that education continues to be relevant and able to contribute to sustainable development, especially the SDGs targets emphasizing quality education (Kioupi & Voulvoulis, 2019).

Fourth, Organizer. Organizational leadership refers to structural leadership, where the leader has the authority to carry out leadership functions, especially in delegating tasks and limited authority (Prim Masrokan Mutohar et al., 2020; Sloof & von Siemens, 2021). A leader as an organizer in strengthening the quality of Islamic education to achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs) must prioritize religious principles and high responsibility (Kuenkel et al., 2020). In this case, leaders can carry out actions such as "*istikhoroh*" (sunnah prayers performed to ask for guidance and help from Allah SWT in choosing or deciding something) (Sidiq, 2018), and "*riyadloh*" (mental and physical training to cleanse oneself of inappropriate things and practice commendable qualities as moral development and a method of treating heart disease). This activity is a form of effort to obtain guidance, confidence, steadfastness, and calmness in every decision (M. S. Hasan, Mujahidin, Azizah, & Solechan, 2024; Wahib, 2024). Apart from that, a leader not only plays a role in preparing plans but is also fully responsible for ensuring that each stage of implementation runs by the values of Islamic education and SDG's principles, especially in the aspect of quality education that can compete globally (Northouse, 2021). With strong responsibilities, leaders play an active role in managing resources, motivating organizational teams, and ensuring the success of every program that supports improving the quality of Islamic education can run optimally (Prim Masrokan Mutohar et al., 2020).

Fifth, Actor. In leadership, an actor sets an example and behaves that others can follow, or in leadership theory, is called a role model (Northouse, 2021). A leader as an actor in improving the quality of Islamic education to achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs) has a significant contribution (Kuenkel et al., 2020). In this context, leaders are responsible for regularly monitoring the implementation of various programs such as schools and madrasahs. This monitoring form includes evaluating progress, challenges, program sustainability, and ensuring inclusive, quality and sustainable education goals. A leader's monitoring attitude also allows for improvements if there are

discrepancies in the ongoing program (Prim Masrokan Mutohar et al., 2020). Apart from that, leaders as actors also have a key role in providing cadres for the next generation. This aims to prepare academically competent cadres to continue their positions and responsibilities as inheritors of the organization's positive values, ensure sustainability, and become a learning tool for its members (Suryono et al., 2023). This cadre formation includes overall development that can develop Islamic education to be of higher quality and relevant to the needs of the times (Fusarelli, Fusarelli, & Riddick, 2018). Through monitoring and cadres, this can ensure the continuity of the vision of Islamic education that is in line with the SDGs to create sustainability that can adapt positively for society.

Sixth, Developer. A developer-type leader is adept at developing and fostering cooperation to achieve common goals (Ma'arif et al., 2024, 2025; Northouse, 2021). Professional leaders can improve the work skills of their subordinates, build effective interpersonal relationships, trust others in carrying out tasks, and demonstrate a responsible attitude in every action (Prim Masrokan Mutohar et al., 2020). The task of professional leaders is very important in improving the quality of Islamic education, especially in achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs) (Kuenkel et al., 2020). In this case, a leader must intervene in the curriculum to ensure that the material taught is relevant to current needs and can develop students' potential. This intervention also includes adapting the curriculum to suit 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning skills (Sulaiman, Susanti, Aini, Wahyudi, & Asy'arie, 2024). Apart from that, leaders must also hold frequent discussions, including teachers, parents and the community. This aims to make it easier to develop effective steps for implementing learning standards that align with achieving the SDGs (Ilham, 2020). On the other hand, this form of discussion or deliberation aims to obtain input from various parties so that the resulting program can be more inclusive and oriented toward the desired success (Sarid, 2024). In this way, joint agreements can create higher-quality, competitive education, and in line with the global goals of sustainable development.

## CONCLUSION

In strengthening the quality of Islamic education at the Al-Ma'arif Foundation and the Sabilillah Foundation in achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs). Similar to KH's leadership role. M. Tholchah Hasan emphasized six roles as a leader, which include: initiator, conception, reformer, organizer, actor, and developer. His overall role in various activities is adapting the curriculum to suit 21<sup>st</sup> century learning skills and achieving the SDGs vision by improving the quality of Islamic education appropriate for achieving the SDGs. This can produce individual students with character, morals, and spiritual and social qualities that can build a desire for a more inclusive society, reduce disparities, and create a generation ready to face various global challenges. Apart from that, it has unique characteristics that differ from previous findings. Every action he wants to take always carries out "*istikhoroh*" and "*riyadloh*." This is a form of effort to obtain guidance, confidence, steadfastness, and calmness in every decision. Although this research highlights the role of leadership in achieving quality Islamic education that

is in line with the SDGs agenda, there are several limitations. This research only includes two target cases, considering different levels and limited research locations. Therefore, further research that includes more diverse cases and a larger sample is needed to obtain a deeper and more comprehensive understanding. So, this research can help as a reference for future research and how to formulate Islamic education policies that are more effective in achieving quality education by the opportunities offered by the SDGs agenda in the future.

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