ISLAMIC VALUES–BASED EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AS A FRAMEWORK FOR ADDRESSING TEACHER BURNOUT

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Abstract:

Teacher burnout has escalated globally and is increasingly recognised as a problem shaped primarily by organisational conditions rather than individual coping capacities. Leadership, therefore, occupies a central position in creating the working environments in which burnout either intensifies or is mitigated. This paper develops an organizationally grounded framework that explains how education leadership informed by both contemporary leadership scholarship and Islamic value-based principles can mitigate teacher burnout by addressing its structural and ethical causes. A narrative review was conducted on empirical and conceptual studies published between 2015 and 2025 using Scopus and Google Scholar. The selected studies were analysed thematically to identify leadership strategies consistently associated with improvements in teacher well-being. Four organisational practices emerged across the literature (1) the reduction of administrative workload, (2) the strengthening of professional autonomy, (3) the use of shared decision-making structures that support psychologically safe school climates, and (4) the equitable distribution of resources, professional development opportunities, and institutional support. These practices align closely with established Islamic leadership principles, particularly justice, trust, responsibility, compassion, and consultation. The framework demonstrates how ethical leadership values translate into concrete organisational conditions that directly intervene in established burnout mechanisms, including emotional

exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished professional efficacy. The framework indicates that leadership approaches centred on structural and organisational reform have the most sustained impact on reducing burnout. By integrating insights from secular leadership scholarship and Islamic value-based leadership models, this paper proposes a theoretically coherent framework for creating more humane, supportive, and professionally sustainable educational environments, providing a foundation for future empirical investigation.

Introduction

Teacher burnout has become an increasingly visible concern across education systems worldwide. Many teachers today work in environments marked by heavy workloads, constant time pressure, emotional demands, and growing accountability requirements. Over time, these conditions take a toll, leading to emotional exhaustion, detachment from work, and a gradual loss of interest. Rather than emerging suddenly, burnout develops slowly as teachers continue to function within organisational settings that offer limited space and support. Recent research has shifted the focus away from seeing burnout as an individual weakness; instead, burnout is now widely understood as a response to continuous organisational strain. This understanding aligns with the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory, which explains burnout as the result of sustained imbalance between job demands such as workload and time pressure, and insufficient organisational resources, including leadership support and autonomy (Bakker, Demerouti, & Sanz-Vergel, 2023). In schools, the way work is structured, and decisions are made shape how teachers experience their roles daily. Leadership plays a crucial role in this process. School leaders influence not only policies and expectations, but also the tone of professional relationships and fairness in workload distribution to the extent that teachers feel trusted, supported, and guided.

Although this understanding is well established in the literature, many responses to teacher burnout continue to focus on individual-level solutions, such as stress management or wellness programs. While these initiatives may offer short-term relief, they do not address the deeper organisational conditions that give rise to the burnout in the first place. This understanding has led to a growing interest in leadership approaches that prioritise ethical responsibilities and professional integrity as a collective well-being rather than an individual performance.

Recent empirical evidence indicates that teachers' affective and physical well-being is strongly shaped by organisational and leadership conditions, particularly leaders' capacity to reduce emotional strain, support emotional regulation, and create environments that buffer stress that eventually leads to burnout (Karakus et al., 2024).

Islamic value-based educational leadership offers a perspective that naturally aligns with this shift. Islamic leadership is understood as an ethical trust grounded in accountability, justice, consultation, and compassion. Empirical studies of Islamic leadership practices show that leadership practices grounded in justice, trust, and more responsibility are associated with healthier work climates and stronger employee well-being, reinforcing the relevance of value-based leadership for addressing burnout at the organizational level (Ahmad & Ogunsola, 2011). Authority is not framed as control or dominance, but as responsibility for the well-being of others and the moral health of the organisation. These principles closely mirror contemporary leadership theories while providing a clear ethical foundation for leadership practices.

This paper brings these two bodies of work together by exploring how Islamic value-based leadership can inform organisational approaches to addressing teacher burnout. Additionally, this paper proposes an organisational framework that reframes burnout prevention as a leadership responsibility and offers a value-driven approach to creating more humane and sustainable educational environments.

Literature Review

Teacher Burnout as A Multidimensional Psychological and Occupational Phenomenon

Teacher burnout has been widely examined within occupational psychology and educational research as a multidimensional syndrome emerging from prolonged exposure to chronic work-related stress. Foundational work conceptualises burnout as compromising three interrelated dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion reflects the depletion of emotional and physical energy, depersonalization involves emotional distancing from students and colleagues, and reduced personal accomplishment captures declining confidence in one's professional effectiveness (Maslach, 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

Importantly, burnout does not emerge suddenly; rather, it develops over time as teachers navigate sustained pressure embedded within their working environments. Maslach (2016) emphasises that burnout reflects a chronic mismatch between individuals and their work contacts, particularly in professions such as teaching that involve continuous emotional engagement and moral responsibility. This perspective is a code in teacher-focused studies showing that burnout is closely associated with diminished job satisfaction, weakened motivation, and growing intentions to leave the profession (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011a).

What is especially significant in recent literature is the shift away from viewing burnout as an individual failure to cope. Instead, burnout is increasingly interpreted as a signal of organisational strain when institutional conditions consistently prevent recovery, undermine professional values, or overload teachers' capacities, then burnout becomes a predictable outcome. This reframing establishes a critical foundation so looking at leadership as a central

organisational factor shaping burnout projections established over longitudinal studies (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2021).

Organisational And Systemic Sources of Teacher Burnout

Workload, Time Pressure, And Emotional Depletion

Among the organisational factors associated with teacher burnout, workload and time pressure stand out as particularly influential. Empirical studies consistently demonstrate that teachers experience intensifying work demands, increasing administrative responsibilities, and a growing pace of work that leaves limited time for recovery (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). These pressures are not episodic but systemic, embedded within institutional routines and expectations.

Evidence suggests that time pressure, more than most other stresses, is strongly linked to emotional exhaustion. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2017);(Schulze-hagenest et al., 2023) show that emotional exhaustion rises sharply when teachers experience continuous pressure to meet competing demands within limited timeframes. Significantly, this relationship remains strong even when controlling other workplace factors, highlighting workload management as a central organisational issue rather than an individual stress management problem.

As noted from previous studies, workload expectations are largely shaped by leadership decisions, through task allocation, scheduling, and performance, which leads to emotional exhaustion that is understandably an outcome of organisational structure. This has important implications for leadership practice, suggesting that burnout prevention requires structural interventions that address the organisation of work rather than depending on teachers' personal resilience.

Relational Strain and Classroom Challenges

Beyond workload, the relational dimension of teaching also plays a significant role in burnout. Teachers regularly report that discipline problems and low student motivation as persistent sources of emotional strain. Research show that these relational challenges are particularly associated with depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment, rather than emotional exhaustion alone (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

Sustained exposure to classroom discipline issues requires constant emotional regulation and vigilance. Over time, teachers respond by emotionally distancing themselves as a means of self-protection. This distancing comes out as a relational foundation of teaching and contributes to depersonalization. Similarly, prolonged experience of low student motivation can diminish teachers' sense of professional efficacy, leading them to question the impact of their work.

Essentially, the psychological impact of these stresses is shaped by organisational context, where leadership provides limited support or places sole responsibility on individual teachers, relational challenges become more burdensome. On the other hand, supportive leadership can buffer this impact. This highlights the importance of leadership in mediating how classroom challenges are experienced and managed.

Value Dissonance and Loss of Professional Meaning

A particularly important though often neglected contributor to teacher burnout is value dissonance. Teaching is a deeply value-oriented profession, grounded in commitments to student development, fairness, and meaningful learning. When teachers perceive misalignment between these professional values and institutional priorities, psychological strain intensifies (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011b; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

Empirical findings show that value dissonance is associated with all three burnout dimensions. Teachers who feel unable to teach in ways consistent with their values report higher emotional exhaustion and increased depersonalization. This form of strain is distinct from workload pressure, which reflects ethical and moral conflict rather than task overload.

Such findings highlight that the ethical dimensions of burnout are clearly directed to leadership responsibility. School leaders play a central role in shaping institutional priorities, mediating policy demands, and providing organisational values. While leadership fails to foster value synchronisation, burner becomes not only a psychological outcome but also an ethical one.

Educational Leadership, Organisational Culture, And Teacher Well-Being

Educational leadership research consistently shows that leaders influence teacher outcomes primarily through the organisational environments they create. Leadership effects are rarely direct, instead they operate through school culture, workload structures, and relational climate (Louis, 2015). This indirect influence is particularly relevant to burnout, which develops through sustained exposure to everyday organisational conditions.

Louis (2015) emphasises that leadership shapes how teachers experience policies, demands, and changes. Leaders determine whether pressures are interpreted as meaningful and manageable or as simply overwhelming. In this way, leadership functions as a crucial organisational filter through which systemic demands are translated into lived experiences.

Empirical studies further demonstrate that leadership style matters for teachers' well-being. Teachers who perceived their leaders as supportive, fair, and responsive report higher job satisfaction and lower burnout even in challenging contexts (Neuhoff, 2023, Leadership Style, Job Satisfaction, and Burnout). However, leadership perceived as controlling intensifies stress and disengagement. Organisational culture also mediates the relationship between leadership and burnout. Cultures, that are characterised by trust and professional support provide psychological resources that buffer against stress, whereas absenteeism in such cultures accelerates burnout. Together, these findings position leadership not as a primary influence but as a central organisational mechanism shaping teacher well-being.

In conclusion, the literature shows that teacher burnout is not simply an individual psychological response to stress. It develops through sustained exposure to organisational conditions that shape how teachers experience their work. Workload intensity and time pressure are closely linked to emotional exhaustion, while relational challenges and value dissidents contribute to depersonalization and reduce professional efficacy. These factors do not operate in isolation. They are structured and mediated by leadership practices within schools. Educational leaders influence how demands are distributed, how challenges are managed, and how professional values are supported or undermined. Burnout, therefore, reflects the quality

of organisational leadership as much as individual capacity. This understanding highlights the need for leadership approaches that prioritise fairness, responsibility, and collective well-being. Such principles form the foundation of Islamic value-based educational leadership, which is examined in the following section.

Methodology

This study adopted a narrative review approach to explore how leadership practices shape organisational conditions related to teacher burnout and how these practices can be understood through an Islamic ethical lens. A narrative review was considered appropriate because the aim was not to produce an exhaustive or statistically synthesised account of the literature but to develop a conceptually meaningful framework grounded in recurring patterns across existing research.

Relevant studies were identified through searches conducted in Scopus and Google Scholar. The review focused on peer-reviewed empirical and conceptual articles published between 2015 and 2025 that examined teacher burnout, education leadership organisation stressors, and teacher well-being. Studies were selected based on their relevance to leadership-related organisational conditions such as workload, professional autonomy, decision-making processes, relational trust, and school culture.

The selected literature was carefully read and analysed through a process of thematic reading rather than formal coding. Themes were identified, particularly those linking leadership practices to burnout-related outcomes such as emotional exhaustion, disengagement, and reduced professional efficacy. Once these themes were identified, they were examined in relation to key Islamic leadership principles, including justice, trust, responsibility, consultation, and compassion. This process allowed for a conceptual mapping between identified organisational practices and ethical leadership values. The outcomes of this analysis were the development of an Islamic value-based organisational leadership framework that addresses the structural and ethical conditions contributing to teacher burnout.

As a conceptual synthesis, this study does not claim systematic completeness; instead, it seeks to offer a grounded and ethically developed framework that can guide leadership practices and possibly serve as a foundation for future empirical research in education settings.

Analysis

Leadership As Ethical Responsibility Not Managerial Control

Islamic leadership is primarily grounded in ethical concepts of authority, which views leadership not as power, opposition, or control, but as an Amanah (trust) accompanied by accountability and responsibility for the collective organisational well-being, which includes the teachers. Within Islamic principles, leadership is not separated from moral responsibility, as leaders are entrusted with safeguarding the justice, dignity, and well-being of the institutions that they govern. This ethical orientation places leaders as stewards rather than managers, which aligns closely with contemporary organisational leadership theories that emphasise responsibility, care, and human values.

Like instrumental leadership models that prioritise efficiency and performance outcomes alone, Islamic leadership frameworks ground ethical intentionality and social responsibility as core principles. Leadership is understood as a moral practise which is embedded within everyday organisational decisions, including work allocation, distribution of resources, and management of interpersonal relationships. This ethical framework is particularly relevant in educational settings where leadership decisions directly shape teachers' working conditions and their identities. Ethical leaders are strongly aligned with the larger framework of Islamic leadership, which emphasizes accountability, justice, and collective consultation, and these provide a coherent framework for addressing structural and cultural conditions that majorly contribute to organisational stress. These principles are not just abstract values but are operational norms that need to guide organisational structure, which is based on operational manners in ethical and value-based leadership. This ethical framing shifts leadership away from performance-driven management towards stewardship of human and organisational conditions (Shah, 2013). In educational settings, this concept of leadership carries particular weight. Decisions made by school leaders directly affect teachers' workload autonomy and psychological safety. Islamic leadership literature emphasises that leaders are accountable not only for the outcomes but also for the means through which these outcomes are obtained. Organisational practices that systematically overburden staff are ethical failures, and not merely managerial shortcomings. Importantly, Islamic leadership principles are reflected through everyday organisational, practices and not just through conceptualised moral claims. Justice consultation and compassion shape how responsibilities are distributed, how decisions are made, and how people are treated (Shah, 2013).

Islamic Education Leadership and Organisational Well-Being

Research on Islamic-based educational leadership highlights a consistent emphasis on moral purpose, collective responsibility, and ethical coherence within institutions (Arar, Sawalhi, & Yilmaz, 2022). Education leaders are viewed not simply as administrators but as custodians of organisational values that shape professional culture and identity.

This perspective aligns closely with educational leadership scholarship emphasising moral leadership and relational trust. Islamic education leadership literature suggests that when leaders act with integrity and clarity, it fosters organisational environments in which teachers experience the work as meaningful and dignified (Shah, 2006; Ahmad & Ogunsola, 2011). Empirical studies examining Islamic leadership principles and organisational context further indicate positive associations with employee well-being, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment (Ahmad & Ogunsola, 2011; Bhatti et al., 2021), while not limited to education, these findings support the broader claim that ethical leadership contributes to healthier organisational climates

How Islamic Leadership Addresses Burnout Mechanisms

The relevance of Islamic leadership for addressing teacher burnout becomes clear when its principles are mapped onto empirically identified burnout mechanisms. Justice ('adl), workload iniquity and unfair expectations are primary predictors of emotional exhaustion. Trust and responsibility (Amanah) support professional autonomy, strengthening teachers' sense of efficacy and reducing burnout that are linked to organisational stresses. Consultations (Shura) significantly reduce depersonalisation by paying significant attention to teachers'

opinions and shared decision-making, whereas compassion (Rahmah) humanises organisational culture, challenging norms that normalise overwork and emotional neglect. These principles do not operate as abstract ideas; rather, they shape the concrete patterns of organisational practice, which directly affect teachers' daily experiences, aligning with ethical leadership to prevent burnout.

Mapping Islamic Leadership Principles To Burnout Mechanisms

To establish the practical relevance of Islamic-based leadership for addressing teacher burnout, it is essential to demonstrate how specific leadership principles directly intervene in empirically identified burnout mechanisms. Burnout research consistently suggests highlighting workload intensity, time pressure, and strain in the relationship. As the primary organisational stressors, Islamic leadership principles provide a targeted response to each of these dimensions.

Justice And Workload Equity

Justice and leadership require proportionality, fairness, and contextual sensitivity while allocating tasks in educational settings. This translates into equity-based workload and realistic performance expectations. Empirical studies show that excessive workload and time pressure are the strongest predictors of emotional exhaustion among teachers. Leadership practices that are grounded in Islamic values, such as justice, directly address this mechanism by preventing chronic overload and ensuring that institutional demands remain aligned with human capacity.

Trust And Responsibility Over Autonomy

Trust-based leadership emphasises confidence in teachers' professional judgement and recognises their expertise as central to educational quality. Islamic leadership frames authority as a responsibility rather than a privilege, obligating leaders to support rather than control their staff. Research demonstrates that professional autonomy and perceived organisational trust significantly reduce burnout and enhance job satisfaction. When teachers experience autonomy within their boundaries, their sense of professional efficiency is strengthened.

Consultation and shared decision making, Leadership institutionalises teachers' voice and participation in organisational decisions. Burnout as according to previous literature, indicates a lack of voice and exclusion from decision making contributes to disengagement and therefore low participation. By embedding consultation into leadership practices, Islamic leadership promotes psychological safety. Collective ownership reduces the conditions of feeling isolated and powerless that are often associated with burnout.

The Framework and Its Organisational Logic

This framework approaches teacher burnout as a deeply human and organisational experience rather than an individual shortcoming it recognises that teachers do not work in isolation and their well-being is shaped by the systems they operate with and most importantly by how leadership responds to those operational crisis At its core the framework positions education leadership as a key influence that determines whether structural pressure diminishes teacher well-being or is managed in ways that protect teachers dignity and professional commitment.

At the broadest level, teachers' functions within a macro or systemic context are characterised by policies, accountability, expectations, and institutional restrictions. These external pressures are often unavoidable and are mostly beyond the control of individuals. However, their impact on teachers' daily lives depends significantly on how they are interpreted and implemented at the organisational level.

Within schools these systemic demands are experienced as organisational stresses teachers frequently encounter heavy workloads and constant time pressures with increasing administrative responsibilities. Besides this classroom management difficulties parental expectations and limited support add emotional strain over time. Many educators also experience a loss of meaning when professional practise becomes disconnected from their values and sense of purpose The framework acknowledges that burnout emerges when these pressures persist without supportive care or organisational guidance.

Education leadership sits at the centre of this process as an organisational mediator rather than viewing leadership as a policy-enforcing system or performance monitoring system, the framework understands leadership as shaping how pressures are distributed and prioritised. The framework is grounded in Islamic value-based educational leadership, which understands leadership authority as Amanah, a moral trust and responsibility. From this perspective, leaders are accountable not only for the institutional outcomes but also for the well-being of those interested in their care.

Four interconnected Islamic values give practical form to this ethical foundation. Justice ('Adl) emphasises fairness in workload distribution and clarity in expectations, trust and responsibility (Amanah) affirms teachers' professional autonomy while maintaining supportive accountability, consultation (shura) ensures that teachers are meaningfully included in decision making fostering a sense of belonging and compassion (rahma) which frames leadership as attentive humane and responsive to the emotional realities of teachers everyday experiences.

When these values are embedded in leadership practice, they shape the supportive organisational conditions. Administrative demands are moderated, and psychological safety is strengthened while professional relationships are grounded in trust. The teacher's experience aligns better between institutional practices and their personal professional values when the leadership is well mediated as a bridge between the two.

This organisational condition leads to tangible teacher well-being outcomes. Emotional exhaustion and depersonalization are reduced while teachers' professional efficacy is strengthened; most importantly, educators regain a sense of meaning in their work and a renewed commitment to the teaching profession. The framework, therefore, demonstrates that addressing teacher burnout requires more than individual resilience. Self-care acquires ethical value-driven leadership that humanises organisational life, and honest teaching is both a professional and moral endeavour.

This framework is likely to be effective because it targets the structural and ethical conditions that lead to burnout. It positions leadership as responsible for creating human and sustainable educational environments, which therefore reduces teachers' burnout and increases organisational effectiveness.
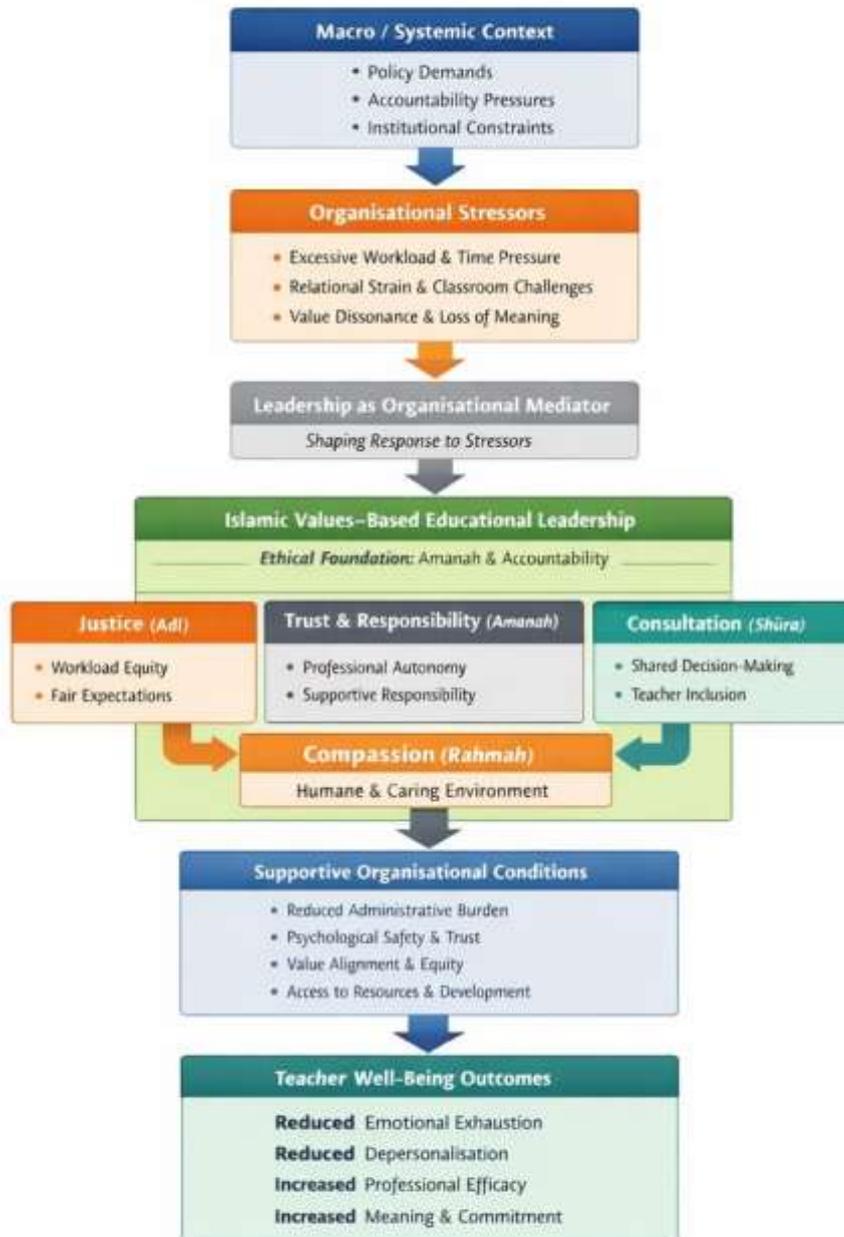
Figure 1: Islamic Values–Based Educational Leadership as An Organisational Framework for Addressing Teacher Burnout Journal

Research Gaps

Although scholarship on teacher burnout and ethical leadership has expanded in recent years, several gaps remain prominent. Existing studies largely examine burnout through psychological or managerial lenses with limited attention to leadership frameworks grounded in Islamic values, particularly within educational settings where Islamic leadership is discussed. It is predominantly presented in descriptive and normative terms, emphasising ideals such as justice, trust, consultation, and compassion without sufficient analytical linkage to organisational conditions that shape teachers' daily work experiences. Moreover, there is a notable absence of empirical and theoretical studies that systematically connect Islamic leadership principles to empirically established Bernard mechanisms such as workload intensity and time pressure.

Scope

In response to these gaps, the scope of the present study is deliberately analytical and conceptual rather than empirical. Drawing on selected peer-reviewed literature and teacher burnout in Islamic educational leadership published between 2015 and 2025. Previous studies identify key burnout-related themes and map them against core Islamic leadership principles. However, the study is limited to synthesising and integrating existing theoretical insights to develop a value-based analytical framework, but it does not seek to test this framework empirically.

By clarifying both the boundaries and contributions of the study, this paper aims to provide a theoretically grounded foundation for future empirical research examining the application of Islamic leadership principles in addressing teacher burnout within educational institutions across multiple contexts.

Conclusion

This paper argues that teacher burnout is not merely an individual psychological response to stress, but a predictable outcome of sustained organisational conditions shaped by leadership practices. Drawing on burnout research and education leadership scholarship, it has been shown that workload intensity diminishes professional autonomy and value dissonance as central mechanisms through which burnout develops. These mechanisms are not accidental but are structured and mediated by how leadership responsibilities are enacted within educational institutions.

By engaging Islamic value-based educational leadership, this study has demonstrated how ethical principles such as justice, trust, responsibility, consultation, and compassion offer a coherent organisational response to these challenges. Rather than functioning as abstract moral ideals, these principles were shown to align closely with empirically identified burnout mechanisms as informed leadership practices that shape workload distribution, decision-making processes, and organisational culture.

The proposed framework reframes burnout prevention as a leadership and organisational responsibility rather than an individual coping task. By incorporating ethical stewardship into leadership structures and daily practices, educational institutions can move towards more humane, sustainable, and professionally supportive environments for teachers. While the

framework is conceptual in nature, it provides a grounded foundation for future empirical research and offers guidance for educational leaders seeking to address teacher burnout through ethically informed organisational practices.

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