

Subjectivity and Personal Ambition in the Governance of Educational Institutions

Indah Siti Nurhalizah¹, Pitriani¹, Maila Rosidah¹, Muhammad Sirozi¹

¹Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah Palembang, South Sumatra, Indonesia

Corresponding author e-mail: Indsitinurhalizah@gmail.com

Article History: Received on 8 April 2026, Revised on 18 April 2026,
Published on 8 July 2026

Abstract: This study examines how subjectivity and personal ambition influence the governance of educational institutions and affect the quality and relevance of educational services. Conducted using a qualitative literature review approach, the study analyzed books, journal articles, and policy documents related to educational management, leadership, and organizational governance through content analysis. The findings indicate that when decisions are influenced by personal interests, they can lead to bias, internal conflict, and reduced educational quality. Effective governance requires systematic, transparent, and participatory planning supported by ethical and professional leadership. In Islamic educational contexts, embedding moral and spiritual values such as justice, integrity, and responsibility further strengthens governance and leadership effectiveness. The novelty of this study lies in emphasizing the combined impact of human factors and ethical frameworks on educational management, highlighting the need for moral considerations alongside administrative systems. Practically, the findings suggest that educational institutions should implement objective decision-making processes and foster ethical leadership to enhance accountability and sustainability. Overall, this study contributes a comprehensive framework for understanding how subjectivity and personal ambition affect governance and provides guidance for improving institutional quality and long-term relevance in education.

Keywords: Educational Governance, Educational Quality, Ethical Leadership, Subjectivity and Personal Ambition

A. Introduction

The governance system is required that is not only effective and efficient but also transparent, accountable, and oriented toward continuous quality improvement to ensure institutional credibility and sustainable educational outcomes (Ahmad & Hassan, 2022). Educational governance encompasses various essential aspects, ranging from planning and implementation to the evaluation of educational programs carried out in a systematic and integrated manner (Hutt, et al., 2020). Furthermore, the principles of transparency and accountability are key factors in enhancing the quality

of educational management and strengthening public trust in educational institutions (Putra et al. 2020).

In practice, the success of educational institution governance is strongly influenced by the quality of leadership and managerial professionalism. Effective leadership is reflected not only in managerial competence but also in the ability to make objective, rational, and data-driven decisions, which contribute to the development of fair and accountable policies for all stakeholders (Onia, 2025). However, decision-making processes in educational institutions are not always free from individual subjectivity. Decisions based on personal perceptions, individual interests, or emotional closeness may lead to bias in policies, including in aspects such as recruitment, job placement, and performance evaluation. This condition can hinder governance effectiveness and the achievement of optimal educational goals (Liu & Bellibas, 2021).

In addition to subjectivity, personal ambition represents another critical factor that can shape the governance of educational institutions. While ambition can drive innovation and enhance leadership effectiveness, it may also create ethical risks when not balanced with integrity, potentially leading to biased and self-serving decision-making.

This condition can result in a decline in the quality and relevance of educational services. Decisions that are not based on data and the actual needs of the organization may lead to inappropriate policies, particularly in curriculum management, teaching staff management, and the quality of learning. Therefore, professional and integrity-based governance is essential to maintain educational quality and its alignment with societal and workforce demands (OECD, 2022).

Subjectivity and personal ambition can trigger internal conflicts within educational organizations, particularly when decisions are perceived as unfair or favor certain parties. This condition can reduce trust in leadership, weaken work motivation, and disrupt teamwork, thereby affecting the overall effectiveness of institutional management (Bush, & Glover, 2021). Furthermore, the long-term impact of such conditions can be even more detrimental if not addressed systematically. A decline in trust and collaboration among organizational members may create a fragmented work environment where individuals or groups operate in isolation rather than in synergy. This fragmentation can hinder the implementation of institutional programs, reduce efficiency, and ultimately affect student outcomes. In educational settings, where collaboration and shared responsibility are critical, the absence of cohesive teamwork can significantly weaken the institution's ability to achieve its goals.

In addition, leadership credibility becomes a central issue in this context. When leaders are perceived as biased or driven by personal ambition, their legitimacy may be questioned by subordinates. This situation can lead to resistance toward policies, low compliance, and even passive opposition within the organization. Consequently,

institutional initiatives may fail not because of poor design, but due to a lack of support and commitment from those responsible for implementation.

To address these challenges, it is important for educational institutions to establish clear governance frameworks that emphasize fairness, transparency, and accountability. Decision-making processes should be supported by reliable data, inclusive consultations, and well-defined procedures that minimize the influence of individual bias. Additionally, fostering a culture of professionalism and ethical responsibility among all members of the institution is essential to ensure that personal interests do not override collective goals.

Ultimately, strengthening governance practices through objective and participatory approaches will not only reduce internal conflict but also enhance organizational resilience. Educational institutions that are able to manage subjectivity and personal ambition effectively are more likely to sustain quality improvement and remain responsive to the evolving demands of society and the workforce.

In the context of Islamic educational institutions, this issue becomes more complex as these institutions function not only as centers for knowledge transfer but also as platforms for character building and spiritual development. Therefore, governance should be grounded in principles of justice, responsibility, and ethics to establish a system with integrity and a focus on the common good. However, without a structured management system and effective supervision, subjectivity and personal ambition may still influence the quality of decision-making (Alqahtani, 2021).

To minimize the influence of subjectivity and personal ambition, systematic and participatory planning is required in the governance of educational institutions. Strategic planning enables institutions to define clear, measurable goals and align organizational actions with shared interests and long-term development priorities (George et al. 2021). Stakeholder involvement and data-based evaluation also promote more objective and professional decision-making, thereby enhancing the quality and relevance of educational services in a sustainable manner (Castillo et al. 2024).

B. Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach using a literature study (library research) to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomena of subjectivity and personal ambition in the governance of educational institutions and their impact on the quality and relevance of educational services (Snyder, 2019). This approach enables the researcher to examine various concepts, theories, and findings from previous studies comprehensively in order to obtain a holistic understanding (Xiao & Watson, 2020).

The data sources in this study consist of secondary data obtained from books, academic journals, and policy documents relevant to the research topic, enabling

comprehensive analysis through existing literature and documented evidence (Snyder, 2019). The selection of literature is conducted selectively by considering credibility, relevance, and the recency of information, ensuring that the findings of the study are academically accountable (Paul & Criado, 2020). The data collection technique in this study used document analysis by reviewing relevant literature. This method helps researchers systematically understand textual data and identify key themes (Bowen, 2009). The data obtained were analyzed using content analysis techniques by categorizing information into key themes, such as subjectivity, personal ambition, their impact on educational quality, and prevention strategies. This approach enables systematic classification and interpretation of qualitative data into meaningful patterns (Elo, et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the analyzed data were synthesized using a descriptive-analytical approach by linking the findings with relevant theories to generate meaningful interpretations and conclusion (Braun & Clarke, 2021). This process aims to generate a systematic and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study, thereby providing a clear overview of the influence of subjectivity and personal ambition in the governance of educational institutions and the efforts to mitigate them (Elo et al. 2020).

C. Results and Discussion

The findings indicate that subjectivity and personal ambition are important factors influencing the governance of educational institutions, as individual attitudes and motivations can shape leadership behavior and decision-making processes within organizations (Legood, 2021). When decision-making is not grounded in objectivity and professionalism, the risk of bias and policy deviation increases. Individual behavior within organizations, shaped by personal perceptions and interests, can directly influence the quality and effectiveness of decisions (Bedi et al., 2016). Subjectivity in the management of educational institutions generally arises when decisions are based more on personal considerations than on data analysis and professional standards, increasing the likelihood of biased judgments and inconsistent practices (Schildkamp, 2021). This can be observed in various aspects, such as recruitment, job placement, task distribution, and performance evaluation. Non-objective decisions may lead to perceptions of unfairness, reduce trust among organizational members, and hinder the development of an effective and supportive working environment (Colquitt, 2021).

In addition to subjectivity, personal ambition also influences the dynamics of leadership in educational institutions, as individual motivations and career aspirations can shape leadership behavior, priorities, and decision-making processes (Legood et al. 2021). Ambition can serve as a driver of performance and innovation; however, without integrity and accountability, it may turn into a pursuit of power that

disrupts objectivity and distorts organizational policy direction (Eisenbeiss et al. 2020).

As a result, the quality and relevance of educational services may decline when decisions are not grounded in data and aligned with actual needs, leading to ineffective policy implementation and reduced institutional performance (Datnow & Park 2020). Inappropriate policies tend to produce programs that are less effective in improving the quality of learning. Inappropriate policies tend to produce programs that are less effective in improving the quality of learning. Therefore, enhancing educational quality largely depends on leadership that is oriented toward continuous improvement and evidence-based decision-making (Datnow & Park 2020).

The relevance of education to societal needs can be disrupted when policies fail to consider social, economic, and technological developments. Educational institutions are required to be adaptive to change in order to remain responsive to societal demands (OECD, 2021). However, when decisions are influenced more by personal interests, innovation and curriculum development tend to be hindered, resulting in graduates who are less competitive in the workforce (The World Bank, 2020). Moreover, subjectivity and personal ambition can trigger internal conflicts within educational organizations. Such conflicts often arise when members perceive injustice, inconsistency, or a lack of objectivity in decision-making processes, which can weaken trust and collaboration among stakeholders (Colquitt, 2021).

Differences in interests and perceptions that are not effectively managed may negatively affect organizational performance and the stability of educational institutions, as unresolved conflict can reduce collaboration and disrupt organizational functioning. To minimize subjectivity and personal ambition, governance based on systematic planning oriented toward needs analysis and organizational goals is required. Integrated planning and rational decision-making are key factors in improving the effectiveness and quality of educational institutions, as they enable better alignment of goals, resource allocation, and organizational performance (Bert George, Richard M Walker, 2021). In the context of Islamic educational institutions, these efforts need to be strengthened through the implementation of moral and spiritual values, such as justice, responsibility, and deliberation. These values play an important role in shaping ethical and integrity-based leadership, ensuring that institutional governance is more oriented toward the common good (Halstead, 2020). Thus, subjectivity and personal ambition represent significant challenges in the governance of educational institutions; however, they can be mitigated through the implementation of objective, transparent, and participatory systems supported by ethical leadership. Such an approach is essential for enhancing the quality and relevance of educational services in a sustainable manner.

Furthermore, effective conflict management strategies are essential to prevent the escalation of tensions caused by subjectivity and personal ambition. Educational

leaders must be equipped with the skills to mediate disputes, facilitate dialogue, and promote consensus-building among stakeholders. By adopting a collaborative approach, institutions can transform potential conflicts into opportunities for organizational learning and improvement. This aligns with contemporary management perspectives that view conflict not merely as a problem but as a dynamic process that, when properly managed, can enhance innovation and decision quality.

In addition, stakeholder involvement plays a crucial role in strengthening governance practices. The active participation of teachers, staff, students, and even parents in planning and evaluation processes helps ensure that decisions are more inclusive and reflective of collective needs. Participatory governance also increases transparency and reduces the likelihood of dominance by certain individuals or groups. As a result, institutional policies are more likely to gain acceptance and support from the wider community, thereby improving implementation effectiveness. Another critical dimension is the role of continuous monitoring and evaluation systems. Regular assessment of policies, programs, and leadership practices allows institutions to identify deviations from established goals and take corrective actions in a timely manner. This process not only enhances accountability but also reinforces a culture of continuous improvement. By integrating feedback mechanisms and evidence-based evaluation, educational institutions can maintain objectivity and reduce the influence of personal bias in governance processes.

D. Conclusions

This study shows that subjectivity and personal ambition strongly influence the governance of educational institutions. If not managed properly, these factors can lead to biased decisions, internal conflict, and a decline in the quality of educational services. This confirms that human factors play a central role in determining organizational direction. Without objective and data-based processes, governance tends to become ineffective and unfair. Therefore, educational institutions need to implement planning that is systematic, transparent, and participatory. Leadership must be ethical and professional so that decisions are based on collective goals rather than personal interests. Strengthening accountability and integrating values such as integrity, fairness, and responsibility are also essential to build trust and improve performance. Subjectivity and ambition often arise due to weak institutional control and unclear role distribution. When decision-making is too centralized and lacks checks and balances, leaders may prioritize personal perspectives. This condition is worsened by limited managerial competence and a lack of understanding of good governance. Thus, improving institutional capacity through training and leadership development is very important. Organizational culture also has a major influence. A culture that tolerates favoritism and lacks openness can strengthen subjective practices. In contrast, a culture of collaboration, respect, and open communication can reduce bias. Leaders should encourage dialogue, accept feedback, and create an environment where all perspectives are valued. In addition, objective and measurable

performance evaluation systems are needed. Clear indicators and data-based assessments can reduce personal bias and improve fairness. The use of digital systems and data analytics can further support accurate and evidence-based decision-making. Finally, ethical leadership is key to effective governance. Leaders who demonstrate integrity and accountability can build trust and create a fair, inclusive, and goal-oriented organization.

E. Acknowledgement

This research was conducted by Indah Siti Nurhalizah in collaboration with Pitriani, Maila Rosidah, and Muhammad Sirozi using a literature review method. We extend gratitude to the academic institution for providing a supportive environment and resources that facilitated this research. Appreciation is given to all scholars and researchers whose works have contributed to the development of this study through the literature reviewed. Special thanks are also addressed to friends and all parties who have provided encouragement and assistance during the research process. Finally, the authors express sincere thanks to family members for their continuous support and prayers.

References

- Ahmad, N., & Hassan, R. (2022). Ethical leadership in Islamic education institutions. *Journal of Islamic Educational Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIEM-04-2022-0015>
- Alqahtani, A. (2021). Governance and accountability in Islamic educational institutions. *International Journal of Educational Management*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-07-2020-0335>
- Bedi, A., Alpaslan, C. M., & S.Green. (2016). A meta-analytic review of ethical leadership outcomes and moderators. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 139. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-015-2625-1>
- Bert George., & Richard M Walker, J. M. (2021). Does Strategic Planning Improve Organizational Performance A Meta Analysis. *Public Administration Review*.
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 2(9), 27–40. <https://doi.org/10.3316/QRJ0902027>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). One size fits all? What counts as quality practice in (reflexive) thematic analysis. *Qualitative Research In Psychology*, 18(3), 328–352. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2020.1769238>
- Bush, T., & Glover, D. (2021). School leadership models: What do we know. *School leadership & management*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2020.1809244>
- Castillo, J. A., Córdova, M. E. R., Orozco, E. P., & Gurumendi, J. M. B. (2024). Strategic planning for the management of educational institutions: A systematic review. *Journal of Ecohumanism*. <https://doi.org/10.62754/joe.v3i8.4733>
- Colquitt, J. A. (2021). Bringing fairness back: How organizational justice research can inform management practice. *Academy of Management Annals*, 15(2), 567–602.

- <https://doi.org/10.5465/annals.2019.0051>
- Datnow, A., & Park, V. (2020). Data Driven Leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 56(1), 5–28. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X19840365>
- Eisenbeiss, S. A. (2020). Doing well by doing good Analyzing the relationship between ethical leadership and performance. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 162(2), 255–270. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-018-3974-9>
- Elo, S., Kaariainen, M., Kanste, O., Polkki, T., Utriainen, K., & Kyngas, H. (2020). Qualitative content analysis: A focus on trustworthiness. *SAGE Open*, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2007.04569.x>
- George, B., Walker, R. M., & Monster, J. (2021). Does strategic planning improve organizational performance A meta analysis. *Public Administration Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13104>
- Halstead, J. M. (2020). Islamic values: A distinctive framework for moral education. *Journal of Moral Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2020.1728672>
- Hutt, E., Polikoff, M. S., & Researcher. (2020). Toward a framework for public accountability in education reform. *Educational Researcher*. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X20931246>
- Legood, A. (2021). Leadership, creativity, and innovation: A meta-analytic review. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 30(1), 1–35. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1359432X.2020.1833237>
- Liu, S., Bellibas, M. S. G. S. (2021). The effect of instructional leadership on teachers' organizational commitment. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143220905031>
- OECD. (2021). Education Policy Outlook 2021: Shaping Responsive And Resilient Education In A Changing World. *OECD Publishing*.
- OECD. (2022). *Education at a glance 2022: OECD indicators*. <https://doi.org/10.1787/3197152b-en>
- Onia, S. I. (2025). Educational governance: A literature review. *Journal of Governance and Administrative Reform*, 2(6), 209–221. <https://doi.org/10.20473/jgar.v6i2.71954>
- Paul, J., & Criado, A. R. (2020). The art of writing literature review: What do we know and what do we need to know. *International Business Review*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibusrev.2020.101717>
- Putra, K. A. U., & Surnyawa, I. K. (2022). The effect of accountability and transparency on effectiveness of government school operational assistance funds management. *European Journal Of Business And Management Research*. <https://doi.org/10.24018/ejbmr.2022.7.4.1364>
- Schildkamp, K. (2021). Data-based decision-making for school improvement: Research insights and gaps. *Educational Research*, 63(2250–269). <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131881.2021.1907613>
- Snyder, H. (2019). Literature review as a research methodology: An overview and guidelines. *Journal Of Business Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039>
- The World Bank. (2020). *Realizing the future of learning: From learning poverty to learning*

for everyone, everywhere.

Xiao, Y., & Watson, M. (2020). Guidance on conducting a systematic literature review.
Journal of Planning Education and Research.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0739456X20907345>