

ACCELERATIVE AND TRANSFORMATIVE: THE LEADERSHIP OF DEDI ISKANDAR BATUBARA IN STEERING AL-JAM'İYATUL WASHLIYAH IN NORTH SUMATRA

Devrichan Syahputra Zalukhu ^{a*)}, Sukiman ^{a)}, Mhd. Syahminan ^{a)}

^{a)} Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia

^{*)}Corresponding Author: devrichansyahputra99@gmail.com

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Abstract. This study aims to analyze the leadership model of Dedi Iskandar Batubara at the North Sumatra Regional Board of Al-Washliyah, characterized by an accelerative and transformative vision within the framework of Islamic political thought. Employing a qualitative case study methodology, data were collected through in-depth interviews with the research subject and key informants. The findings indicate that Batubara's leadership is grounded in a spiritual philosophy that construes his position as a sacred trust (*amanah*) and an act of worship (*ibadah*), compelling him to drive innovation and systematic improvements. His leadership model is democratic, transparent, and humanistic, consistently implementing Islamic political principles such as consultation (*syura*) and trustworthiness (*amanah*) in all decision-making and organizational management processes. He has also successfully addressed internal challenges, including political diversity and intergenerational dynamics, by upholding the principle of independence and prioritizing cadre regeneration. This accelerative and transformative vision has not only yielded significant advancements in the fields of Islamic propagation (*da'wah*), education, and asset management but has also enhanced Al-Washliyah's public credibility. This study concludes that Dedi Iskandar Batubara's leadership exemplifies an effective model of how a leader can balance Islamic idealism with the demands of modernity to ensure the organization's sustainability and relevance in the contemporary era.

Keywords: leadership; acceleration; transformation; Islamic politics; Al-Washliyah.

I. INTRODUCTION

Religious organizations in Indonesia play a crucial role in shaping the social, cultural, and moral identities of society [1], [2]. In a country with the world's largest Muslim population, the presence of these organizations not only provides spiritual guidance but also involves them actively in social activities, education, and the resolution of humanitarian issues [3]. One religious organization of historical and social significance is Al Jam'iyah Al-Washliyyah, an Islamic organization deeply rooted in North Sumatra. Since its establishment, Al-Washliyyah has played a vital role in the regional socio-political landscape, contributing to the struggle for independence and community development [4]. This role has persisted over time, with the organization successfully adapting to a dynamic political landscape while maintaining its religious objectives [5], [6].

As its role expands, leadership within modern religious organizations faces complex challenges that demand a model of leadership not only grounded in spiritual values but also capable of managing social and political dynamics. Leadership in an organization like Al-Washliyah, which combines a mission of *da'wah* (Islamic propagation) with a vision for social and economic development, requires its

leaders to navigate change and maintain the organization's relevance within society [7], [8]. This challenge is compounded by shifts in religious authority and the emergence of new Islamic movements, which compel traditional organizations to continually adapt to preserve their historical roles [9], [10].

The primary problem faced by religious organizations is how to balance traditional values with the demands of modernity. This requires a leadership model that can foster innovation without compromising spiritual identity and objectives [8]. A common solution proposed in the literature is spiritual leadership, which emphasizes the importance of moral integrity, accountability, and service to others [11], [12]. Such leadership focuses on performing good deeds, adhering to divine commands, and building an organizational culture based on the principle of "work as worship" [12]. Spiritually motivated leaders can positively influence their groups, ensure organizational sustainability, and encourage innovative behavior through intrinsic motivation [13], [14].

In a broader context, spiritual leadership in religious organizations is also closely linked to social responsibility and community development. Faith-based organizations are increasingly involved in socially responsible activities, driven by unique motivations and governance structures that enable

them to contribute effectively to societal well-being [15]. This aligns with the historical role of Islamic organizations in Indonesia, which not only emphasize spiritual aspects but also address social problems, educate the youth, and promote tolerance [16], [17].

Specifically, Islamic political thought offers a framework for managing governance and operational strategies grounded in faith. Central concepts such as *Khilafah* (caliphate) and *Syura* (consultation) form the basis for a democratic Islamic political order that emphasizes accountability, justice, and public participation [18]. This faith-based value framework guides a leader's decision-making and promotes cohesion and a shared vision within the organization [19]. This approach is consistent with the thought of Muhammad Iqbal, who advocated for a dynamic approach to Islam, integrating spiritual values with modern science and social dynamics to address contemporary challenges [20]. In Indonesia, this is reflected in movements such as the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), which has adopted a post-Islamist framework, merging Islamic values with democratic principles [21].

Although the literature has extensively discussed Islamic leadership, the role of religious organizations, and Islamic political thought in general, a significant research gap remains. Existing studies tend to focus on major organizations like NU and Muhammadiyah [2], [22], or on the dynamics of Islamic politics at the national level [23]. To date, there have been few empirical studies that specifically analyze how a leader with dual roles—as both a politician and a religious organization figure—applies the principles of Islamic politics within the context of a regional organization like Al-Washliyah. This gap indicates that our understanding of effective leadership in balancing Islamic idealism with the realities of modernization and political challenges is still limited. This research aims to fill that gap by conducting an in-depth case study. The research problems are described in the following questions:

1. What are the characteristics of Dedi Iskandar Batubara's leadership in the North Sumatra Regional Board of Al-Washliyah according to the principles of Islamic political thought?
2. To what extent are Islamic political principles such as *syura* (consultation), *amanah* (trustworthiness), and independence applied in the leadership of Dedi Iskandar Batubara?
3. What are the main challenges faced by Dedi Iskandar Batubara in implementing his leadership at Al-Washliyah?

The objective of this study is to analyze the characteristics, application, and challenges of Dedi Iskandar Batubara's leadership based on in-depth interviews with him and a key board member. The novelty of this research lies in its presentation of empirical evidence of a transformative and accelerative leadership model that effectively integrates Islamic political values with modern management strategies. The scope of this study is a qualitative case study focusing on the leadership of Dedi Iskandar Batubara as Chairman of the North Sumatra Regional Board of Al-Washliyah, with primary data obtained from interviews conducted in 2025.

Fundamental Concepts of Leadership in Islam

Leadership in Islam is deeply rooted in the ethical and moral teachings of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Distinct from mere authority or control, leadership in Islam is defined as responsibility, service, and cooperation among followers. A profound understanding of Islamic leadership must be grounded in the foundational texts of the Qur'an and Hadith, rather than solely on Western perspectives [24].

The Islamic leadership model is highly oriented toward the character of the leader, aligning with modern transformational leadership theory. Leaders are required to emulate noble qualities such as integrity, respect, and humility to foster trust and loyalty [25]. This is reinforced by Rafiki, who identifies four key elements: personalism, idealism, high expectations, and appreciation of cultural context [26]. These elements affirm that a leader must possess cultural awareness and be capable of adapting their leadership style to the socio-cultural dynamics of their followers.

In practice, Islamic leadership often adopts a paternalistic approach, where the leader views their relationship with followers as familial [27]. This approach positions the leader as a nurturer and mentor, not merely an authority figure. These leadership principles impact not only relationships but also performance. Zaim et al. demonstrate that Islamic leadership correlates positively with job performance and organizational behavior, highlighting justice and employee engagement as vital components [28].

Nevertheless, the application of Islamic leadership faces contemporary challenges, including in terms of gender dynamics. Koburtay et al. investigated female leadership within an Islamic context and found that patriarchal structures can sometimes hinder women's leadership capabilities, even though Islamic teachings support gender equality [29]. This indicates that a more nuanced understanding of leadership is necessary to reflect both Islamic teachings and modern social norms. Ultimately, successful Islamic leadership promotes continuous self-improvement and the development of human potential, consistent with transformational principles [28]. Therefore, Islamic leadership is a profound, multifaceted construct focused on ethics, service, and relationships that cultivate trust and loyalty [30], [31].

Religious Organizations in Indonesia

Religious organizations in Indonesia play a vital role in shaping the social, cultural, and moral identity of society, particularly in the country with the world's largest Muslim population. Major organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah function as guardians of Islamic moderatism, actively engaging in social and educational activities [2]. Through various social entrepreneurship initiatives, they strive to improve community welfare and foster social cohesion [8], [32]. For instance, the role of Muhammadiyah through its Muhammadiyah Disaster Management Center (MDMC) in providing humanitarian aid is tangible proof of their social contributions [1].

Furthermore, religious organizations serve as important platforms for the development of education and public health. Studies show that involvement in religious organizations

positively influences healthy behaviors among youth [33]. This reflects their role in creating social stability by promoting ethical values and healthy conduct [33]. This role became increasingly prominent during crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, where they provided crucial guidance and leadership to help communities navigate health challenges [34], [35].

In social dynamics, religious organizations act as important bridges in inter-religious dialogue. Although there is a commitment to pluralism, challenges such as intolerance and violence against minority groups persist [36], [37]. Organizations like NU and Muhammadiyah play a critical role in promoting moderate discourse and countering radicalism to preserve Indonesia's legacy of moderate Islam [7], [38]. In the political sphere, these organizations are also instrumental. They have historically channeled the aspirations of the Muslim community within the democratic process [9], [39], [40]. However, they face challenges from shifts in religious authority and the emergence of new Islamic movements [9], [10], which demand continuous adaptation to maintain their relevance in contemporary society [41].

Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah in Indonesia

Al Jam'iyah Al-Washliyyah is one of the largest Islamic organizations in North Sumatra, Indonesia, holding a significant role in the regional socio-political landscape. The organization was formed with the aim of promoting Islamic teachings and community welfare [5]. Since its inception, Al-Washliyyah has played a significant part in the Indonesian independence struggle, particularly in facilitating the empowerment and mobilization of the Muslim community in Sumatra from the 1930s to the 1950s [4]. This contribution demonstrates the organization's commitment not only to spiritual affairs but also to national development.

Al-Washliyyah's activities are closely tied to the socio-political context of Indonesia. The organization is known for its ability to adapt to the changing political landscape, forging relationships with various political parties while preserving its religious objectives [5]. This synergy between Islamic teachings and national interests is what keeps Al-Washliyyah relevant and resilient in modern Indonesian society [6]. Its organizational structure has also evolved from an initial focus on *da'wah* (Islamic propagation) to encompass educational and socio-economic development initiatives, enabling the organization to meet societal needs amidst rapid change [4].

In a more recent context, Al-Washliyyah continues to promote community development through various programs aimed at improving the quality of life. The organization plays an important role in promoting Islamic values in civil society, contributing to both social and economic progress [6]. Its role in local governance and politics also underscores the crucial interaction between religious organizations and civic responsibility, reinforcing the idea that religious groups can be powerful agents of social change. Thus, Al-Washliyyah is a clear example of a multifaceted Islamic organization that has successfully navigated social and political complexities, maintaining its relevance through a commitment to both Islamic teachings and nation-building.

II. RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative approach with a case study method to obtain an in-depth and holistic understanding of the leadership of Dedi Iskandar Batubara at Al-Washliyah North Sumatra [42]. This approach allows the researcher to investigate a phenomenon within its real-life context, enabling the collection of rich, descriptive data from the participants' own perspectives [43].

Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with two key informants: Dedi Iskandar Batubara, as the primary research subject, and Rusli Effendi Damanik, a board member of the Al-Washliyah Regional Board (PW), as a supporting informant. These semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to flexibly explore crucial topics such as vision, the application of Islamic political principles, and leadership challenges. Additionally, secondary data from supporting documents were used to complement and enrich the analysis.

The data analysis process followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of three main stages. First, data reduction was performed to simplify and focus the raw data from the interviews. Second, the reduced data were then organized into thematic categories in a process known as data display to facilitate understanding. Third, conclusion drawing and verification were conducted by identifying patterns and themes emerging from the organized data [44]. Through this method, the study is expected to yield valid and trustworthy findings regarding the leadership under investigation.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics and Philosophy of Dedi Iskandar Batubara's Leadership

The leadership characteristics of Dedi Iskandar Batubara can be analyzed through the lens of a humanistic, open, and democratic leadership style. This is reflected in the testimony of Rusli Effendi Damanik, who stated, "There are several leadership styles—some are open, and some are closed; some are authoritarian, and some are democratic. Dedi Iskandar Batubara's style is democratic. He leans towards democracy by accepting criticism and not restricting his relationships with anyone, even the cleaning staff. He likes to joke and is not just formal in front of the camera; he genuinely has a humorous nature with his colleagues" [45]. This leadership style, which prioritizes personal and egalitarian relationships, aligns with the paternalistic approach often found in the leadership context of Middle Eastern countries, where the leader acts as a nurturing figure and mentor, rather than merely an authority [27]. Furthermore, these characteristics also exhibit elements of transformational leadership, which emulates noble qualities, thereby fostering trust and loyalty among followers [25].

Batubara's leadership philosophy is deeply rooted in the spiritual values of Islam, where he defines leadership as both a sacred trust (*amanah*) and an act of worship (*ibadah*). This

motivation is the primary foundation for all his activities, as he conveyed, “For me, the orientation of all work must be for the sake of Allah. So, when I lead Al-Washliyah, I intend it to be my worship to Allah. Therefore, whatever I do in my organizational work, the orientation is worship. That value, I believe, is the highest value for a servant” [46]. This philosophy is highly relevant to the concept of the *khalifah* (vicegerent or leader) in the Qur’an, where humanity is appointed as leaders on earth to carry out divine duties with integrity and responsibility. This is also supported by a Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, which asserts that every leader is a shepherd who will be held accountable for their flock: “Each of you is a shepherd, and each of you is responsible for his flock” (Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim). Thus, this spiritual motivation elevates leadership to the highest degree as a form of obedience, which is consistent with literature that highlights the importance of ethics and moral values in Islamic leadership [11].

The application of this leadership philosophy, grounded in worship and trust, has a tangible impact on the organization’s vision and strategy. Batubara believes that his position as a member of the DPD RI (Regional Representative Council of Indonesia) allows him to contribute more significantly to Al-Washliyah, making it a means to worship and fulfill his *amanah*. He expressed, “I believe that with my competence and my position as a DPD member, I can contribute much more to the organization, and that hope will be more palpable when I lead the organization directly” [46]. This conviction demonstrates how spiritual motivation can drive a leader to be more effective and dedicated, striving to enhance the organization’s well-being. This is corroborated by literature indicating that spiritually motivated leaders can increase commitment and discretionary behavior among their followers, which ultimately facilitates organizational survival [13], [14].

More profoundly, the concept of *amanah* also drives him to make Al-Washliyah the “epicentrum” of da’wah (Islamic propagation), educational, and social movements in North Sumatra. Batubara affirmed this with his statement: “As the largest Islamic organization in North Sumatra, we must make Al-Washliyah the epicentrum of the da’wah, educational, and social movements in North Sumatra” [46]. This statement shows that leadership based on spirituality is not merely internally oriented but also carries a broader social responsibility. This aligns with research underscoring that leaders in a religious context often lead with a faith-based value framework that influences decision-making and leadership practices, thereby creating a shared identity and purpose [19]. Therefore, for Dedi Iskandar Batubara, his leadership position is an *amanah* that must be answered for to Allah and to the community he leads.

Accelerative Vision and Organizational Transformation

Dedi Iskandar Batubara’s leadership is also characterized by a vision of acceleration and innovation to face the dynamics of the times, particularly the digital era. This vision serves as his strategic foundation to ensure Al-Washliyah is not left behind. This is evident from a direct quote from his interview:

“From the beginning, when I ran for chairman of Al-Washliyah North Sumatra in 2020, my vision was one of acceleration. In today’s modern era, even in this digital era, everything is very dynamic and innovative. If we are not accelerative, do not work quickly, and then act quickly, we will be left behind” [46]. This vision was implemented with a flexible and adaptive strategy, such as shifting the da’wah approach from conventional to digital. He added, “We changed the strategy from conventional da’wah to digital da’wah by utilizing technological advancements” [46]. This proactive stance is in line with the views of Muhammad Iqbal, who emphasized the need for a dynamic approach to Islam, combining spiritual values with modern science and social dynamics to address contemporary challenges [20].

This accelerative vision has produced concrete transformations within the organization. Rusli Effendi Damanik confirmed that under Batubara’s leadership, Al-Washliyah became “more alive” and orderly in its administration and asset management. “Firstly, Al-Washliyah is more orderly, and there are no levies whatsoever on the Regional and Branch boards; the personal costs of the chairman, secretary, etc., are covered to ensure the continuity of organizational activities. Secondly, administration is orderly with the existence of a secretariat; six months before their term ends, they must form a committee for the Regional Conference (MUSDA)” [45]. This change was reinforced by innovations in da’wah, such as the launch of the AW SUMUT Chanel studio, which, according to Rusli Effendi Damanik, is “The sole pioneer in Al-Washliyah to have an AW SUMUT Chanel studio with the aim of Islamic da’wah through social media, so that Muslims in the villages can watch Islamic da’wah via the internet” [45].

The transformation initiated by Dedi Iskandar Batubara demonstrates the embodiment of leadership oriented towards holistic organizational development. His accelerative vision focuses not only on da’wah but also on internal governance and asset management, through which he “strives to build a more systematic tradition” and manages “assets that Al-Washliyah has fought for” [46]. The success in certifying organizational assets that were previously unmanaged proves that effective leadership must be able to balance spiritual dimensions with managerial ones [31]. This is consistent with the role of religious organizations, which focus not only on spiritual aspects but also on social and economic development [6], [8].

Furthermore, his accelerative vision also encompasses improving the quality of education and empowering human resources. Batubara stated, “I want to measure the success of education with a clearer measure, school accreditation for instance; I will raise it to ‘Excellent’” [46]. This statement shows his commitment to raising educational standards under the auspices of Al-Washliyah, which is part of a religious organization’s contribution to producing quality future leaders [3]. Through these various efforts, Batubara’s leadership has successfully created positive momentum, which he reflected on with optimism: “The vision of acceleration that we agreed upon at the last conference has

been successfully implemented today... and our educational institutions have become highly sought after by the community” [46]. Thus, his leadership serves as an example of how innovation and adaptation can strengthen the historical role of religious organizations in modern society.

Implementation of Islamic Political Values (Syura and Amanah)

Dedi Iskandar Batubara's leadership consistently implements Islamic political values, especially the principle of consultation (*syura*) in every strategic decision-making process. He affirmed this in an interview: “All decisions taken by the organization related to politics must be deliberated through consultation; that is what I always prioritize.” He continued, “I always ensure that all decisions are based on consultation. That is the principle, I believe; by consulting, we provide a space for justice for all who have the authority to decide. I strive to give space to all board members to convey their views and thoughts on what our planned decision will be. There should be no majority domination; even if, for instance, I desire something, I cannot impose my will” [46]. This practice is consistent with the concept of *syura* in Islamic political thought, which underscores the importance of participation and justice to avoid autocracy [18], while also affirming that an authentic leader must lead with integrity and uphold high moral values [11].

The application of *syura* in Batubara's leadership has a strong foundation in Islamic teachings. The Qur'an explicitly commands Muslims to consult in their affairs, as stated by Allah SWT in Surah Ali-Imran, verse 159: “...and consult them in the matter.” This verse is a fundamental basis that decision-making, especially in strategic matters, must involve participation. Moreover, Rusli Effendi Damanik confirmed this practice, stating, “There are many strategic matters where he makes decisions through consultation, among them are work meetings, regional conferences, major events, and also routine meetings like organizational evaluations, resolving the articles of association and by-laws, and conducting daily meetings to gather input” [45]. The practice of *syura* ensures that decisions made are not only just and acceptable but also reflect the collective needs and shared commitment of the entire organization's board.

Once a decision is made, the principle of trust (*amanah*) becomes the primary guide for its implementation. Batubara views *amanah* not just as an individual obligation but as a collective responsibility. He stated, “When the organization has decided, I will execute it. When the organization decides we must support our best cadres, for instance, to sit in legislative or executive positions, then my duty is to carry out that decision with *amanah*.” He also added, “Regarding the *amanah* of a position, all must be responsible. Once it is decided, it becomes the collective responsibility of everyone and must be executed to the best of our ability” [46]. This commitment aligns with the view that a leader in Islam is a guardian (*wali*) tasked with managing the community's affairs with full integrity [12].

Furthermore, *amanah* in leadership has a deep spiritual dimension, where a leader is accountable not only to their

followers but also to Allah SWT. The Qur'an reminds us in Surah An-Nisa, verse 58: “Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due.” This verse emphasizes that a trust is a sacred deposit that must be safeguarded. This principle is reinforced by the testimony of Rusli Effendi Damanik, who appreciated Batubara's efforts in organizing asset management and resolving Al-Washliyah's land disputes. “All assets, Washliyah land certificates, he placed them in a safe at the office. In leadership before him, many of Al-Washliyah's important documents were scattered everywhere, but he resolved these disputes” [45]. This action proves that leadership based on *amanah* results in high accountability and contributes positively to organizational performance [31]. This is also consistent with a Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, which asserts that trustworthiness is one of the signs of faith.

Success and Impact of Leadership

The success of Dedi Iskandar Batubara's leadership is evident from the significant impact felt across various organizational sectors, especially in da'wah, education, and public credibility. He reflected on this success with optimism, “The vision of acceleration that we agreed upon at the last conference has been successfully implemented today. Acceleration in education, for instance, a significant increase in the number of upgraded schools and madrasahs, digital da'wah, and also our educational institutions have become highly sought after by the community” [46]. This achievement is reinforced by the testimony of Rusli Effendi Damanik, who directly witnessed the revitalization of da'wah through digital media innovation. He stated, “Al-Washliyah is more alive, holding frequent cadre training events... The sole pioneer in Al-Washliyah to have an AW SUMUT Chanel studio with the aim of Islamic da'wah through social media, so that Muslims in the villages can watch Islamic da'wah via the internet” [45]. This initiative not only demonstrates adaptation to the digital era but also strengthens Al-Washliyah's role as a relevant agent of change in modern society [4].

In addition, Batubara's leadership has successfully enhanced the organization's image and credibility in the public eye, both locally and nationally. Rusli Effendi Damanik observed that, “In the eyes of the public, the current Al-Washliyah, during Dedi Iskandar's time, has become a topic of conversation, or ‘viral,’ in the community. All central officials, if they come to North Sumatra, will definitely stop by Al-Washliyah—Ministers, intellectuals” [45]. This credibility indicates that a religious organization can be a strategic partner for the government and external parties, reinforcing its role in community development [6]. This is also consistent with the historical role of Islamic organizations in Indonesia, which have been actively involved in the socio-political landscape and have contributed to national interests [5].

This success is not only recognized internally but has also become an inspiration for other organizations. Rusli Effendi Damanik expressed his hope that these achievements can be continued, “Continue what has been created and pioneered by

the current regional board, which inspires other provinces and even the central board in Jakarta. Because Al-Washliyah was born in North Sumatra, what has been done should at least be continued and well-managed" [45]. This statement indicates that effective and innovative leadership has not only a local impact but can also create a replicable model of success. It reflects that Al-Washliyah, through Batubara's leadership, not only fulfills its traditional role as a da'wah and educational organization but also innovates to become a driving force in the modern era, consistent with the idea that religious organizations can be resilient agents of social change [6].

Beyond mere achievements, Dedi Iskandar Batubara's leadership has also created hope for the organization's future. This hope is not only directed at the sustainability of ongoing programs but also at the quality of future leaders. Rusli Effendi Damanik hoped, "The next leadership to replace him should be a person who is pious (*wara'*) and does not love worldly things. If possible, a leader who is not too old, so that leadership effectiveness becomes more practical and better" [45]. This hope reaffirms that spiritual values, integrity, and adaptability are the main criteria for desired leaders, which aligns with the ideal characteristics of leadership in Islam oriented towards service, morality, and human development [30].

Organizational Transformation and Cadre Regeneration

Dedi Iskandar Batubara's leadership is strongly oriented towards organizational sustainability through a systematic process of regeneration and cadre development (*kaderisasi*). He believes that this process must not stop, as it is key to ensuring Al-Washliyah's future. He conveyed, "The process of leadership regeneration in Al-Washliyah must continue; it cannot stop... I believe anyone can become a leader and board member in this organization" [46]. This awareness is in line with the view that religious organizations have a responsibility to prepare the younger generation as quality leaders [3]. Furthermore, Batubara's leadership is proactive in providing ample space and opportunities for young cadres, whom he considers important assets. He asserted, "I think young leaders must be given space, because I believe they are national assets who have spirit, passion, and competence... if they are not given enough space, then I think they must be given enough space" [46]. This policy is a strategic step to overcome potential stagnation and ensure organizational vitality amidst ever-changing social dynamics [39].

This regeneration policy is not merely rhetorical but is implemented through massive cadre development programs and motivation for improving human resource quality. Rusli Effendi Damanik reinforces this: "In terms of cadre development, in a condition where people are free, the cadre training is precisely massive" [45]. Batubara also directly motivates young people to pursue higher education, as noted by Rusli Effendi Damanik: "Firstly, many young Al-Washliyah members are motivated by him to continue their studies to higher levels, like him. He also inspires by helping with schooling, university, and so on" [45]. This effort not only strengthens individual capacity but also contributes to the creation of a knowledgeable and responsible citizenry [4],

which is a primary goal of the Al-Washliyah educational system.

Philosophically, this commitment to regeneration is rooted in the Islamic teaching of the importance of the continuity of knowledge and leadership. A Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, which states, "Verily, Allah does not take away knowledge by snatching it from the chests of scholars, but Allah takes away knowledge by taking the lives of the scholars," implicitly teaches the necessity of a continuous process of knowledge and leadership transfer. Batubara understands this, and therefore he affirms that Al-Washliyah has a structured cadre development system, "Starting from students, university students, youth, and so on. That is the organization's way of preparing the next cadres" [46]. Through this systematization, he seeks to ensure that the organization's legacy and vision will continue to live on and be upheld by competent future generations.

Ultimately, this vision of regeneration reflects hope for the organization's future. This hope is not limited to the sustainability of programs but also extends to the quality of future leaders who will succeed Dedi Iskandar Batubara. Rusli Effendi Damanik stated his hope, "The next leadership to replace him should be a person who is pious (*wara'*) and does not love worldly things. If possible, a leader who is not too old, so that leadership effectiveness becomes more practical and better" [45]. This statement confirms that ideal leadership requires not only managerial skills but also moral and spiritual integrity, which is the most important legacy to be preserved from one generation to the next.

Challenges and Internal Organizational Dynamics

Dedi Iskandar Batubara's leadership faces various challenges, particularly those related to political diversity within the organization. He openly acknowledged that Al-Washliyah accommodates cadres with various political affiliations, where "In Al-Washliyah, all political colors are present. All cadres of political parties are in Al-Washliyah, and they are an inseparable part of the Al-Washliyah board" [46]. To maintain organizational unity amidst this dynamic, Batubara implements a strategy of independence and neutrality. He asserted, "Al-Washliyah remains neutral, meaning Al-Washliyah is independent and does not take sides in the sense that Al-Washliyah does not support any one political party and is not part of any political party; that is the independence of Al-Washliyah" [46]. This strategy ensures that space and opportunities are given proportionally to all cadres without favoritism, maintaining internal cohesion and preserving the organization's credibility as an institution that serves the community [5].

On the other hand, there are more personal challenges related to his leadership style. As a young leader, Dedi Iskandar Batubara tends to make policies quickly, which sometimes creates communication dynamics among the internal board members. Rusli Effendi Damanik commented, "His shortcoming in leading the Al-Washliyah board, because he is still young, is that he does not want to be long-winded in making policies, so at times his decisions are swift, and he sometimes forgets to inform his members when deciding

something that is not yet very urgent” [45]. However, this shortcoming is balanced by his wisdom in distinguishing the urgency of a matter. “He feels that trivial matters do not need to be deliberated, for fear of creating useless debates among members. Consultation is certainly carried out by him if it is indeed an important decision,” added Rusli Effendi Damanik [45]. This approach shows a pragmatic and efficient leadership, where consultation remains the foundation for crucial decisions, in accordance with the teachings of Islamic politics.

Other challenges arise from the external sphere, which impact internal dynamics. The organization faces challenges in retaining its best cadres amidst competition with other mass organizations (*ormas*) that may have greater political power. Rusli Effendi Damanik admitted, “There are many challenges, with many cadres having moved to other mass organizations, because in terms of political power in the government, especially in the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Al-Washliyah plays a lesser role” [45]. This situation requires the leader not only to focus on internal improvements but also to strengthen the organization’s strategic position in the public and governmental spheres. This is in line with the view that religious organizations must adapt to shifts in authority and the emergence of new Islamic movements to maintain their relevance [9], [10].

Thus, Dedi Iskandar Batubara’s leadership is characterized by his ability to navigate various challenges, both from internal political diversity and external competition. He responds to these challenges with strong Islamic principles such as neutrality, objectivity, and efficiency, while simultaneously striving to strengthen Al-Washliyah’s position as a relevant and credible organization. This effort shows that an effective leader must be able to balance traditional values with the need for adaptation to contemporary realities.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The leadership of Dedi Iskandar Batubara in steering Al-Jam’iyatul Washliyah in North Sumatra exemplifies an accelerative and transformative model that successfully integrates the values of Islamic politics with modern management strategies. His leadership is characterized by a democratic, humanistic, and transparent style, grounded in a spiritual philosophy that regards his position as a sacred trust (*amanah*) and an act of worship (*ibadah*) to Allah SWT. This model demonstrates that effective leadership, particularly within the context of a religious organization, depends not only on authority but also on moral integrity, accountability, and a dedication to serving the community (*umat*). The application of Islamic political principles serves as the primary foundation for Dedi Iskandar Batubara’s organizational transformation. The principle of consultation (*syura*) is consistently applied in strategic decision-making, providing a just space for every board member to participate and thereby avoiding the domination of power. Meanwhile, the principle of trustworthiness (*amanah*) is manifested in the

collective responsibility to execute every organizational decision, as well as in the orderly and accountable governance of asset management. The principle of independence is also key to navigating internal political dynamics by maintaining the organization’s neutrality from specific political party affiliations. Dedi Iskandar Batubara faced internal challenges such as diverse political interests and intergenerational dynamics. However, he effectively responded to these challenges by upholding strong Islamic principles and implementing transformative measures. His proactive efforts in leadership regeneration and his accelerative vision—focused on digital innovation and systematic improvements—prove that his leadership is not merely responsive but also oriented toward the sustainability and future of the organization. Overall, the leadership of Dedi Iskandar Batubara is a tangible example of how a leader can balance Islamic idealism with contemporary realities to guide Al-Washliyah toward becoming a more modern, relevant, and credible organization.

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