

Islamic Leadership Practices and Service Quality at Ins Beauty Aesthetic: Qualitative Case Study

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ABSTRACT

The beauty and aesthetic clinic industry is growing rapidly, increasing the importance of service quality in maintaining competitiveness. However, the application of Islamic leadership in beauty-service organizations remains relatively underexplored. This study examines the implementation of *tawhid*, *shura*, *'adl*, *amanah*, and *ihsan* at INS Beauty Aesthetic in Samarinda and their perceived relationship with service quality. Using a qualitative single-case study, data were collected from 18 informants through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, and data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana. Data credibility was strengthened through source and methodological triangulation. The findings show that the five Islamic leadership principles were reflected in honest communication, participatory decision-making, fair treatment, accountability, and attentive service. These practices were perceived as associated with the SERVQUAL dimensions of assurance, responsiveness, reliability, and empathy, while the tangibles dimension was not directly examined. The findings provide a context-specific conceptual understanding of Islamic leadership practices and perceived service quality in the beauty-service sector. Given the single-case design and absence of customer-side data, the findings do not constitute causal evidence of improved service quality.

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Introduction

The beauty and health care industry in Indonesia has grown in tandem with changing lifestyles, increasing public concern for health and appearance, and rising demand for aesthetic services (Hamzah et al., 2025). Lienata & Berlianto (2023) highlight

the rising use of aesthetic services, noting that one clinic in South Jakarta treated 4,290 outpatients over an eight-month period in 2022. These changes indicate that skin care and beauty treatments are increasingly becoming a necessity for the public, particularly among the younger generation, who are becoming more familiar with skincare products and professional beauty services (Ariesandy et al., 2025).

This rising demand is driving the growth and competition among beauty service providers. In this context, customers consider not only the results of the treatments but also their overall experience during the service, including safety, comfort, communication, ease of access, and how well the service meets their expectations (Octaviani et al., 2023). Therefore, service quality has become a strategic aspect for beauty clinics in building customer satisfaction, trust, loyalty, and word-of-mouth (Hadi et al., 2025; Hanafi et al., 2025). Service quality also depends not only on facilities and technology but is also related to the quality of human resources and an organizational culture that supports customer-oriented service (Saji et al., 2024).

In this study, service quality is understood through the five dimensions of SERVQUAL: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. These five dimensions encompass the condition of facilities and employee appearance, service reliability, responsiveness in assisting customers, the ability to provide a sense of security and trust, and attention to customer needs. This perspective is relevant in the beauty industry because the quality of the customer experience is shaped by both the facilities and direct interactions between employees and customers.

The quality of service interactions is inextricably linked to the role of leadership in shaping employee behavior and organizational culture. Research by Mastina & Emiliana (2024) and Eshete & Kassahun (2025) indicates that leadership is linked to service quality through the shaping of organizational culture and employee engagement. These findings open the door to examining leadership that is not only oriented toward organizational achievements but is also grounded in moral and ethical values. In organizations that integrate Islamic values, Islamic leadership becomes relevant because it emphasizes the principles of tawhid, shura, 'adl, amanah, and ihsan as the foundation of leadership behavior (Prasojo & Athallah, 2025).

These five values can serve as a lens for understanding leadership practices and their relationship to the service process. Tawhid serves as the foundation for awareness and

responsibility in work; shura emphasizes consultation and participation; ‘adl guides leaders toward justice; amanah emphasizes honesty and accountability; while ihsan encourages the provision of optimal service. These values can be translated into organizational behaviors related to reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and the physical aspects of service. Thus, the relationship between Islamic leadership and service quality in this study is understood as a process and interconnection that must be explained through organizational practices, rather than as a causal relationship that directly proves an improvement in service quality.

INS Beauty Aesthetic is a service organization that provides facial and aesthetic care services involving direct interaction between employees and customers. Based on initial observations, human resource management at INS Beauty Aesthetic demonstrates a focus on discipline, responsibility, honesty, and concern for customers. These values are reflected in the relationship between management and employees as well as in the service delivery process. These conditions make INS Beauty Aesthetic a relevant context for understanding how Islamic leadership values are applied in organizational practices and how these practices are perceived in relation to service quality.

Previous research has examined Islamic leadership and service quality in various contexts, such as education, Islamic banking, the halal industry, and healthcare (Farihin, 2023; Noor, 2025; Aydemir & Türkel, 2022). However, these studies have not adequately explained how the values of tawhid, shura, ‘adl, amanah, and ihsan are translated into daily leadership practices, nor through what mechanisms these practices are perceived in relation to the five dimensions of SERVQUAL. Furthermore, the context of beauty clinics remains relatively underrepresented in studies on Islamic leadership and service quality. Thus, the research gap lies not only in the under-explored context but also in the limited understanding of the mechanisms linking Islamic leadership values to service experiences.

Based on these gaps, this study aims to analyze the implementation of Islamic leadership at INS Beauty Aesthetic and its relationship with service quality from the SERVQUAL perspective. Specifically, this study examines how the practices of tawhid, shura, ‘adl, amanah, and ihsan are implemented in leadership and how these practices are perceived in relation to the dimensions of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich the study of Islamic leadership in the context of the beauty services industry. Practically, this study is expected to serve as a reference

for clinic managers in developing a service culture that is professional, ethical, and aligned with Islamic values.

Literature Review

Islamic Leadership

Leadership in Islam is a trust that must be carried out in accordance with the guidance of Allah SWT and His Messenger. Surah An-Nisa, verse 59, emphasizes obedience to Allah, the Messenger, and those in authority, while Surah Al-Baqarah, verse 30, describes humanity as vicegerents on earth. Therefore, Islamic leadership is not only about authority or power but also involves a moral and spiritual responsibility to exercise leadership fairly, accountably, and with a focus on the common good (Lubis, 2025; Alfares et al., 2026).

Conceptually, Islamic leadership is the process of influencing, directing, and guiding individuals or groups based on the values of the Qur'an and Hadith to achieve common goals in accordance with Islamic principles. Sadali (2024) and Sola (2024) emphasize the functions of directing and influencing based on Islamic teachings, while Aliefiarahma & Sasmita (2025) emphasize trustworthiness, justice, transparency, and integrity. Based on these perspectives, this study understands Islamic leadership as a leadership practice that translates Islamic values into decision-making, relationships with employees, organizational management, and service delivery processes.

This study employs five principles tawhid, shura, 'adl, amanah, and ihsan as an analytical framework. The selection of these five principles is based on their ability to represent the main aspects of Islamic leadership, namely the divine foundation, participation in decision-making, justice, responsibility and trust, as well as an orientation toward goodness and quality. These five principles are used as initial categories to identify Islamic leadership practices at INS Beauty Aesthetic.

Table 1. Principles of Islamic Leadership and Focus of Analysis

Principle	Conceptual Meaning	Empirical Indicators / Focus	Observable Manifestations
Tawhid	Awareness that leadership is a trust from Allah SWT.	Moral awareness, integrity, and accountability to Allah	Setting a good example, making decisions based on religious values, and

		SWT.	practicing honesty.
Shura	Consultation and involvement in decision-making.	Consultation, openness, participation, and communication.	Giving employees opportunities to express their opinions and involving them in problem-solving.
‘Adl	Justice and equal treatment.	Objectivity, consistency, and non-discrimination.	Fair division of tasks, consistent enforcement of rules, and fair treatment of employees and customers.
Amanah	Trust, responsibility, and integrity.	Honesty, responsibility, consistency, and keeping promises.	Carrying out duties properly, maintaining trust, and fulfilling service commitments.
Ihsan	Performing work to the best of one’s ability and doing good.	Setting a good example, caring, doing one’s best, and quality orientation.	Providing optimal service, helping customers, and improving service shortcomings.

Service Quality

Service quality is an organization’s ability to provide services that meet or exceed customer expectations. Rosiani et al. (2025) define service quality as the comparison between customer expectations and perceptions of service performance, while Suraya & Riofita (2024) emphasize an organization’s ability to meet customer needs as the foundation for customer satisfaction and loyalty.

This study uses the Servqual model developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry as a conceptual framework for understanding service quality. The model identifies five main dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Although Servqual is widely used to assess service quality, its application in the health and beauty context must be approached contextually because service characteristics, customer needs, and forms of interaction may vary across organizations. Therefore, this study uses Servqual as an analytical framework to interpret service experiences and processes, rather than as a quantitative measurement instrument.

Table 2. SERVQUAL Dimensions and Analysis Focus

Dimension	Conceptual Meaning	Empirical Indicators / Focus	INS Beauty Aesthetic Context
Tangibles	Physical evidence of service.	Facilities, equipment, cleanliness, comfort, and staff appearance.	Condition of the clinic, treatment rooms, equipment, cleanliness, and staff appearance.
Reliability	Ability to provide services accurately and consistently.	Accuracy, consistency, and adherence to commitments.	Accuracy of procedures, schedules, information, and service outcomes as promised.
Responsiveness	Willingness and speed in assisting customers.	Speed, promptness, and response to customer needs or complaints.	Staff response to customer questions, requests, and complaints.
Assurance	Ability to build a sense of security and trust.	Competence, knowledge, courtesy, and integrity.	Staff competence, communication, safety of procedures, and customer trust.
Empathy	Individual attention and care.	Attention, personal communication, and understanding of customer needs.	Ability to understand customers' individual circumstances and needs.

By incorporating tangible elements, this study examines not only the quality of interpersonal interactions but also the physical aspects that are part of the customer service experience.

The Conceptual Relationship Between Islamic Leadership And Service Quality

In this study, Islamic leadership and service quality are not treated as a cause-and-effect relationship that must be statistically proven. Rather, the study views the relationship between the two as an organizational mechanism that is, how the values of Islamic

leadership are translated through leadership practices and organizational behavior, and subsequently perceived in relation to service experiences.

Conceptually, tawhid provides a moral and spiritual foundation for leaders' behavior; shura encourages communication and participation; 'adl guides fair treatment; amanah fosters responsibility, integrity, and trust; while ihsan promotes a focus on goodness and optimal service. The relationship between these practices and the five dimensions of Servqual is then examined.

Table 3. Conceptual Mapping of Islamic Leadership and SERVQUAL

Principles of Islamic Leadership	Organizational Mechanisms / Practices Examined	Potentially Related SERVQUAL Dimensions	Basis for the Relationship
Tawhid	Moral awareness, exemplary conduct, and integrity	Reliability, Assurance, Empathy	Divine values can be reflected in responsibility, integrity, and compassion.
Shura	Consultation, communication, and employee engagement	Responsiveness, Empathy	Participation and communication can support responsiveness to customer needs.
'Adl	Fair treatment, objectivity, and consistency	Assurance, Empathy	Justice can be reflected in equal treatment and respect for customers.
Amanah	Honesty, responsibility, and fulfillment of commitments	Reliability, Assurance	Trust and responsibility are linked to reliability and a sense of security.
Ihsan	Exemplary conduct, best efforts, and care	Responsiveness, Empathy, Reliability	A commitment to providing the best can be reflected in responsiveness, care, and consistency of service.
Overall Organizational Practices	Facility management, work standards, and service culture	Tangibles	Tangibles are analyzed as part of service quality and are not imposed as a direct consequence of any specific Islamic leadership principle.

Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach using a single-case study design of a descriptive-analytical nature. This design was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of Islamic leadership and its relationship to service quality in the real-world context of INS Beauty Aesthetic, East Kalimantan. The case is limited to leadership practices and service processes that took place during the research period from January to April 2025.

Informants were selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in operations and their understanding of leadership and service practices; the sample consisted of 18 individuals, including the owner, beauticians, administrators, and service staff. Inclusion criteria included direct involvement in operations, a minimum of one year of work experience, an understanding of leadership and service practices, and a willingness to participate. Informants who did not meet the criteria or were unwilling to provide information were excluded from the study. Data collection was halted when sufficient information was obtained, as indicated by the absence of new substantive information.

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, direct observation, and documentation. The interviews used a guide based on the five principles of Islamic leadership tawhid, shura, 'adl, amanah, and ihsan as well as the five dimensions of SERVQUAL: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The interviews lasted 120 minutes, were recorded with the informants' consent, and were transcribed. Observations were conducted over a period of one week, with each session lasting 120 minutes, covering leadership practices, employee-customer interactions, and service processes. Documentation included photographs taken during the interviews that were relevant to leadership and service.

Results and Discussion

Overview of INS Beauty Aesthetic

INS Beauty Aesthetic is a beauty care service business located in East Kalimantan that offers a variety of facial and aesthetic treatments using modern technology. Based on interviews, observations, and documentation, the business's activities are not only focused on performing treatments but also on applying values that serve as guidelines for workplace conduct. The five Islamic leadership values identified in this study include tawhid, shura, 'adl, amanah, and ihsan. These values are evident in how management guides employees, in the decision-making process, in the provision of information, in customer service, and in the maintenance of service facilities.

Implementation of Tawhid: The Moral Foundation of Service

The research findings indicate that informants understand tawhid as the awareness that work is a trust (amanah) and a form of worship to Allah SWT. This understanding serves as the foundation for employees to perform their work with honesty, responsibility, discipline, and diligence. The owner explained that employees are guided to view their work not merely as a professional obligation but also as a responsibility that must be fulfilled properly.

In service practice, this value is particularly evident in the communication of information regarding treatments. Employees are guided to provide explanations about the process, benefits, and considerations tailored to the customer's condition. Information is not intended to be exaggerated for the sake of sales. The owner also emphasized that business targets remain part of operations, but achieving them should not come at the expense of honesty and customer trust (Owner W1).

These findings indicate that the implementation of tawhid occurs through the process of understanding work as a trust → awareness of responsibility → honest behavior → open communication of information. The conditions that enable the application of this value are leadership guidance and a shared understanding of job responsibilities. At the same time, there is potential tension between business interests and honesty in providing information to customers. The findings show that in such situations, informants regard honesty as a limit to the achievement of business targets.

When linked to SERVQUAL, this mechanism has a contextual relationship with assurance and reliability. Honesty and transparency in information can be understood as part of the process of building trust, while responsibility in carrying out service delivery relates to the ability to provide services as promised. However, this study does not conclude that tawhid enhances assurance or reliability, as there are no customer metrics available to test this relationship.

Implementation of Shura: Participation in Resolving Service Issues

The principle of shura is manifested through communication and discussion between management and employees when addressing service or operational issues. Employees are given the opportunity to voice the challenges they encounter while working, including issues related to customer needs and service processes.

One staff member explained that when a problem arises, the relevant parties are first invited to discuss the matter to understand the situation before determining a solution. The experiences of employees directly involved in service delivery serve as a key consideration in this process. Employees can also provide feedback on operational challenges and aspects of service that need improvement (Staff, W2).

This evidence points to a mechanism of employee participation → information exchange → problem identification → determination of internal adjustments. This practice allows information from the operational level to feed into the evaluation process. However, the implementation of shura also has limitations because final decisions remain within the

organization's management structure. Furthermore, the evidence found primarily indicates shura as an internal mechanism and does not yet show direct customer involvement in the decision-making process.

Therefore, the connection to the responsiveness dimension must be interpreted with caution. Shura can serve as an internal mechanism that enables an organization to identify and respond to service issues, but the existence of internal deliberation does not in itself prove that the organization is more responsive to customers. This relationship can only be understood to the extent that the discussion process results in observable service adjustments.

Implementation of 'Adl': Fairness in Service Standards and Treatment

The principle of 'adl' is reflected in efforts to provide services based on needs and applicable procedures without discriminating against customers based on their background. Informants explained that customers receive information and services in accordance with their chosen treatment, while service delivery remains consistent with applicable standards.

When handling complaints or situations deemed inappropriate, INS Beauty Aesthetic first listens to the issue, objectively assesses the situation, and then determines an appropriate resolution. However, informants also acknowledged that the application of fairness requires flexibility because each customer has different personalities and needs. Employees must understand the customer's situation without deviating from established service standards (Beautician/Staff, W3).

These findings illustrate the mechanism: the principle of fairness → application of standards → adjustments based on needs → objective problem-solving. Thus, 'adl in the context of INS Beauty Aesthetic is not only related to equal treatment but also to efforts to provide appropriate treatment based on the customer's circumstances.

The connection to SERVQUAL is particularly evident in reliability and empathy, though it is indirect in nature. Consistency in applying standards may relate to reliability, while attention to differences in customer needs may relate to empathy. Thus, 'adl cannot be directly equated with reliability, as this connection emerges through the service practices identified in the study.

Implementing Integrity: Trust, Transparency, and Accountability

The value of integrity is reflected in the practice of maintaining customer trust through accountability in performing treatments, providing information, conducting pre-treatment consultations, and ensuring the cleanliness and safety of service procedures.

Informants explained that before a treatment is performed, customers are given an explanation of the type of treatment to be performed and necessary information, including the benefits and precautions specific to the customer's condition. Employees are instructed to convey information openly and without misleading customers. Management also

communicates with and supervises the execution of tasks, while employees have responsibilities in accordance with their respective roles (Administrator/Beautician, W4).

The findings reveal a mechanism of trust → transparency → accountability → supervision → maintenance of trust in the service process. The application of these values is supported by management guidance and the division of work responsibilities. However, the effectiveness of their implementation still depends on employees' consistency in carrying out their responsibilities and following applicable procedures.

If there are written SOPs governing equipment cleanliness, product safety, and treatment procedures, these documents can serve as additional evidence that the value of trustworthiness is translated into organizational mechanisms. If SOPs are unavailable or cannot be documented, findings should be limited to informant statements and observational results.

From a SERVQUAL perspective, these mechanisms are related to assurance and reliability. Transparency of information and accountability can be understood as practices that support a trustworthy service process. However, since the study did not obtain direct assessments from customers, the findings are not used to assert that trustworthiness enhances customers' sense of security or satisfaction.

Implementation of Ihsan: Attention and Service Adaptation

The principle of ihsan is reflected in the way employees provide service in a friendly, polite, and attentive manner, while striving to understand customer needs. Informants explained that service does not focus solely on performing treatments but also includes communicating with customers, providing explanations, answering questions, and offering appropriate advice.

A beautician/staff member explained that every customer has different conditions and needs, so employees must understand these conditions before providing service. Adjustments are still made while adhering to applicable procedures (Beautician/Staff, W5).

These findings reveal a mechanism of care → understanding customer needs → communication → service adaptation. The condition that enables the application of ihsan is direct interaction between employees and customers. However, there is a limitation in the form of service procedures that must be strictly followed, so adjustments are not entirely unrestricted.

This mechanism is primarily linked to the empathy dimension, particularly in understanding customers' individual needs. Its connection to responsiveness can be considered when there is evidence that employees respond quickly and appropriately to customer needs. Thus, this study does not assert that ihsan directly enhances empathy or responsiveness but demonstrates a correlation based on the service practices observed.

Tangibles as a Dimension of Service Quality

Unlike the four Servqual dimensions that can be conceptually linked to the practices of Islamic leadership values, the tangibles dimension is analyzed based on the physical conditions of the service. This aspect includes facilities, equipment, cleanliness of the space, comfort, and employee appearance.

Interview results indicate that the cleanliness and readiness of facilities are viewed as crucial components of service delivery. Equipment is kept clean to ensure it remains functional; service areas are maintained for cleanliness and comfort; and employees are instructed to maintain a neat, clean, and professional appearance.

These findings were corroborated by observations of the condition of the facilities and the service environment. Thus, the tangible indicators in this study include facility cleanliness, equipment readiness, the comfort of service areas, and the neatness of employees' appearance. This aspect is not imposed as a direct consequence of any particular principle of Islamic leadership, as the available evidence more strongly indicates that tangibles are part of service quality that can be directly observed.

Conclusion

This study shows that Islamic leadership at INS Beauty Aesthetic is not only understood as a normative concept but is also translated into organizational practice through five principles: tawhid, shura, 'adl, amanah, and ihsan. The findings indicate that tawhid serves as the moral foundation for honesty and accountability shura is manifested through communication and participation in decision-making 'adl through fair and consistent treatment; amanah through transparency and accountability in service; and ihsan through care and efforts to provide the best possible service. These patterns are perceived and observed in relation to the dimensions of assurance, reliability, responsiveness, empathy, and tangibles in service practices. However, these findings are not intended to prove a causal relationship or an improvement in service quality, as the study did not use pre-post measurements or direct customer evaluations.

Conceptually, this study demonstrates that the relationship between Islamic leadership and service quality can be understood as a process of translating leadership values into organizational practices and service interactions, rather than as a direct relationship between variables. The study's contribution lies in mapping the five principles of Islamic leadership to service practices within the context of a beauty clinic, thereby expanding the application of Islamic leadership studies to service organizations.

Practically, the management of INS Beauty Aesthetic can strengthen the implementation of these values through standard operating procedures (SOPs) for communicating the benefits and risks of treatments, regular shura forums, audits of fairness in service delivery, evaluations of trustworthiness and transparency in service, and monitoring of quality indicators based on the five dimensions of SERVQUAL. These steps can serve as internal evaluation mechanisms without assuming an improvement in quality before it is empirically tested.

This study has limitations, including the use of a single case study, the possibility of socio-religious bias and internal informant bias, and the absence of direct SERVQUAL measurements from customers. Therefore, the transferability of the findings to other beauty clinics remains limited. Future research could strengthen these findings through triangulation with customers, SERVQUAL surveys, comparisons of multiple beauty clinics, and a longitudinal design to test whether the identified Islamic leadership practices are associated with more measurable changes in service quality.

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