

Research Horizon

ISSN: 2808-0696 (p), 2807-9531 (e)

Research Horizon

Volume: 05

Issue: 03

Year: 2025

Page: 965-972

Citation:

Dewi, S., Naimah., Jannah, J. A., Istiqomah, N., & Oktavianti, M. (2025). Prophetic Leadership in the Battle of Hunain: Strategic Lessons for Modern Leadership. *Research Horizon*, 5(3), 965-972.

Article History:

Received: May 26, 2025

Revised: June 13, 2025

Accepted: June 24, 2025

Online since: June 30, 2025

Prophetic Leadership in the Battle of Hunain: Strategic Lessons for Modern Leadership

Siska Dewi^{1*}, Naimah¹, Jessika Ahali Jannah¹, Nurul Istiqomah¹, Mutia Oktavianti¹

¹ Universitas Islam negeri Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

* Corresponding author: Siska Dewi (siskadewi929@gmail.com)

Abstract

The Battle of Hunain is one of the important events in Islamic history that proves the leadership of The Prophet Muhammad SAW in facing a major crisis. This study aims to analyse the leadership strategy of the Prophet Muhammad SAW in the Battle of Hunain and its relevance to the concept of contemporary leadership. The method used is qualitative with a literature study approach sourced from hadith books, *Sirah Nabawiyah*, and academic literature. The results of the study show that The Prophet SAW implemented a leadership strategy based on vision, exemplary behaviour, crisis management, and effective situational adaptation. Decisiveness in decision making, the ability to raise the spirit of the troops, and anxiety in facing changes in the war situation are the main keys to victory. Strategies such as intelligence gathering, logistics planning, and reorganizing troops during chaos are proof of his capacity as a visionary and transformational leader. The moral and spiritual values inherent in the leadership of The Prophet strengthen his relevance as an ideal leadership model in various modern contexts, including organizations, education, and government.

Keywords

Islamic Leadership, Prophetic Leadership, Strategic Leadership, Islamic History, Crisis Leadership.

1. Introduction

Leadership is indeed one of the most interesting and most discussed topics in management, leadership is an effort from a leader to be able to realize individual goals as well as organizational goals. Therefore, leaders are expected to be able to influence, support, and motivate, so that their followers want to carry it out enthusiastically in achieving the desired goals both individually and organizationally. Islam has a figure who is a role model for the implementation of leadership, namely Muhammad SAW, Prophet Muhammad succeeded in becoming an ideal leader and modeling in various ways, his success in leading which can be imitated and applied in every era. (Azzahra et al., 2024). Rasulullah is a storehouse of perfection traits that are difficult to compare with other leaders, such as: honest, trustworthy, *tabligh*, *fathonah*, strong self-belief, and diligent hardworking and militant.

Rasulullah SAW is the greatest leader and manager in history. His life holds many valuable lessons that can be learned from various aspects. Management and leadership exemplified by The Prophet Muhammad is an integral part of his very special and interesting life. In the context of the deterioration of the condition of Muslims today, understanding and implementing the principles of his management and leadership is essential in all aspects of life (Umam, 2018). However, the success of Rasulullah SAW in leading is not only from his personality and quality as a leader, but also how we understand The Prophet's strategies in facing challenges and critics. One of the events that tested the leadership of Rasulullah SAW was the Hunain war (Amin, 2017).

The Hunain War was a war that took place between The Prophet and his followers against the Bedouin tribes from the Hawazin and *Tsaqif* tribes in 630 or 8 H. In the Hunain war where the Muslims were able to defeat the enemy troops, thus achieving victory. However, the initial dynamics of the war experienced a setback because the enemy troops carried out a surprise attack, when the Muslim troops were off guard because they were busy collecting war booty (Priatna, 2010; Anggito & Setiawan, 2018). According to Saufan (2015), the situation that initially seemed to benefit the Muslim troops turned into panic and chaos, testing the calmness, decisiveness, and strategic abilities of The Prophet Muhammad as a leader.

Under these conditions, Rasulullah SAW showed a series of extraordinary leadership. Rasulullah was known as a smart and wise figure in dealing with various situations (Evta et al., 2024). Rasulullah SAW was not only able to organize and return the troops that were initially scattered to be neat again, but also apply strategies that are in accordance with the state of the troops so as to turn things around and gain victory (Azizi, 2022). Previous research such as Harianto (2022) said that the leadership strategy of The Prophet Muhammad SAW did not only discuss war tactics, but there were many lessons that we could learn from it, The Prophet involved moral, spiritual and psychological values which were an important role of leadership in achieving leadership. This study aims to discuss and analyze in depth the leadership strategy of The Prophet Muhammad in the Hunain war, through a qualitative approach with historical analysis of the hadith books, *Sirah Nabawiyah* and secondary sources in the form of scientific articles. This study is expected to contribute to the study of leadership, both in terms of religion and contemporary management. So that it can be a reference for leaders when facing critical situations.

2. Literature Review

Studies on the leadership of The Prophet Muhammad SAW have been widely conducted, especially in the context of ethics, spirituality, and moral exemplars. Umam (2018) highlighted The Prophet's managerial footprints that reflect the principles of modern leadership, while Nur'ain et al. (2023) emphasized the importance of emulating The Prophet's leadership in educational institutions and social organizations. However, most studies are still descriptive and have not strongly integrated contemporary leadership theories.

Research results of Hussain (2024) and Afifi (2024) on the leadership of The Prophet Muhammad in the context of war, especially the War of Hunain. In fact, this context provides a strategic space to explore the relevance of the concept of leadership in crisis situations. There have not been many attempts to link The Prophet's leadership strategy in war with theories such as contingency theory which emphasizes adaptation to situations, servant leadership which highlights service-based leadership, or transformational leadership which inspires change. This limitation indicates the need for an interdisciplinary approach that combines Islamic historical sources with modern theoretical frameworks to enrich the understanding and contribution of The Prophet Muhammad in the discourse on global leadership.

Umam (2018) found that tracing the leadership and managerial traces of The Prophet Muhammad SAW uses documentation research methods and then analyzed through content analysis and critical analysis. The purpose of this study is that the author discusses ideal leadership and important attributes of a leader, then this study also examines the leadership of The Prophet Muhammad SAW in western management theory. This study found that almost all leadership theories according to management experts existed in The Prophet Muhammad SAW. The findings of this study resulted in one of the offers of thought about the model of improvement and change in leadership and innovative management (Adib, 2017; Bakar, 2018; Arifin, 2023).

The purpose of the study was to find out the leadership in upholding religion and taking care of matters of affairs in the world more deeply and to find out the importance of Leadership of The Prophet Muhammad if applied in Education, Institutions, Organizations, and others in the present time. The results of this study are in an organization or community organization requires a leader to regulate various things in society. The leadership that is suitable to be emulated is the leadership of The Prophet Muhammad. The leadership of Rasulullah SAW provides an example for leaders to prioritize the interests of the people, teach and practice good morals, have a clear vision, and be fair.

3. Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with a literature study research method. Qualitative research is the collection of data in a natural setting with the intention of interpreting the phenomena that occur where the researcher is the key instrument, sampling of data sources is done purposively, collection techniques with triangulation (combined, inductive/qualitative data analysis emphasizes meaning rather than generalization. The literature study method according to Mestika Zed is research in which the collection of information and data is carried out in depth through various literatures such as books, journals, notes, magazines, other references and relevant previous research results to obtain a theoretical basis and answers to the problems to be studied (Aliffizriah et al., 2024). Data were collected from primary sources, such as the book of Hadith and the book of *Sirah Nabawiyah*. Secondary sources such as scholarly books, journal articles and contemporary academic works were added to strengthen the analysis. Analysis was conducted

through content analysis and contextual interpretation, ensuring data validity through triangulation and cross verification of sources.

4. Results

4.1. A Brief History of the Battle of Hunain

The Battle of Hunain occurred on the 10th of Shawwal in the 8th year of *Hijriyah*, shortly after the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ left Mecca following its conquest. This battle is recognized as one of the greatest and most perilous during the Prophetic era. According to *Mausu'at Al-Ghazwaat Al-Kubro*, the enemy forces, led by Malik bin Auf, numbered 20,000, while the Muslim army, directly commanded by the Prophet, totaled 12,000. Hunain is a valley situated on the road to *Thaif*, near Dzul Majaz, about three nights' journey from Makkah. The battle is also referred to as the War of *Authas* named after the location of the clash—or the War of the Hawazin, in reference to the large Arab tribe involved, which consisted of several sub-tribes (Ayyasy, 2009).

The cause of the battle, as stated in *Subulus Salam Min Shahih Sirah Khairul Anam*, was the fear and apprehension of the *Harwazin* and *Tsaqif* tribes after the conquest of Mecca. These tribes felt threatened by Islam's growing influence and the widespread conversion across the Arabian Peninsula. Fearing for their dominance, they planned a preemptive strike against the Muslims. Confident in their numbers, the Muslim army became complacent and was ambushed in the Hunain valley. The Hawazin and *Tsaqif* had been preparing for battle since *Fathu Makkah*, aiming to strike quickly before Islam gained more strength.

4.2. The Prophet's Leadership Strategy in the Battle of Hunain

Leadership is taken from the word leader which in English is called leader from the root word to lead which contains closely related meanings: move early, walk ahead, take the first step, do first, pioneer, direct the thoughts-opinions-actions of others, guide lead, move others through influence (Ummah, 2019). Leadership in Islam is not only a position or authority, but also a huge moral and spiritual responsibility. Rasulullah SAW became the main example for ideal leaders, both in character building and leadership style. Leaders have an important role in directing goals, providing motivation, and determining the actions of others (Azzahra et al., 2024). Meanwhile, leadership strategy is a process of plans set by a leader by influencing subordinates who focus on the long-term goals of an organization (Antariksa, 2017). With a strategy, an organization will gain a strong position or position in its work area. Because strategy is a form of directed plan to obtain maximum results. Thus, the strategy is used as a tool by the leader to influence subordinates in determining the goals of an organization, as well as motivating subordinates to be even better (Rasli et al., 2024; Muliani et al., 2024).

When news of the *Harwazin* and *Tsaqif* tribes having gathered to fight the Muslims reached The Prophet. The Prophet did not remain silent but prepared for war by gathering troops. Indeed, preparation and readiness to face the enemy is important and a necessity for victory. This does not contradict *tawakkal*, as Muslims are confident that victory is from Allah SWT and at the same time Muslims are commanded to take necessary steps and take care of themselves. Allah SWT has commanded this in Surah Al-Anfal verse 60.

4.3. Battle of Hunain War

Before the Battle of Hunain, Prophet Muhammad SAW undertook several strategic preparations, including gathering intelligence and borrowing 30 sets of armour and 30 camels from *Shafwan* bin Umayyah, who was not yet a Muslim. He mobilized 12,000 troops—10,000 from the *Muhajirin* and *Ansar*, and 2,000 from Mecca—and motivated them by promising, Insha'Allah, victory and spoils of war.

This demonstrates that Rasulullah SAW never faced war without meticulous planning, reflecting the modern concept of planning in leadership, which influences all other managerial functions and goal setting. His approach represents visionary leadership, where a leader's clear vision inspires and motivates followers (Shaifudin, 2021).

According to Muhammad SAW, the Muslims were ambushed at dawn when entering the valley of Hunain. Duraid *ibn al-Shimmah* had signaled the attack, leading the Muslims to scatter in chaos. This moment resembled the Battle of Uhud, when the Muslims, distracted by spoils, lost focus (Ridha, 1369). In *Marwiyat Ghazwat Hunayn wa Hisar al-Ta'if*, it is noted that the Prophet stood firm, called out to his Lord, and declared his prophethood, then charged ahead, inspiring morale. His courage revived the troops. In *Qishshah al-Hayah Jam'u wa I'dad*, he instructed his uncle al-Abbas to call back the soldiers. The Companions of the Pledge of *Al-Ridwan*, the *Ansar*, and *Banu al-Harith* responded, reorganized, and returned to battle. Ibn Hisham recounts that after this rally, the Prophet led a decisive counterattack.

This swift reorganization illustrates his crisis management skills. The Prophet's calmness, decisiveness, and ability to inspire loyalty under pressure show his excellence as both a spiritual and military leader. This aligns with transformational leadership, where the leader sets a personal example and uplifts followers' aspirations. Leadership in Islam is a moral responsibility, and the Prophet exemplified ideal leadership in both character and strategy, with timeless relevance for modern organizations.

5. Conclusion

This study provides a significant contribution by reinforcing the relevance of the leadership of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) within the framework of modern management, especially in crisis situations. His strategies during the Battle of Hunain demonstrate that effective leadership requires a clear vision, tactical preparedness, moral integrity, and the ability to manage crises. These values are highly applicable to contemporary leadership across various fields, including education, governance, and business. The prophetic leadership model serves as a rich source of inspiration for developing leadership theories that emphasize morality, spirituality, and social transformation.

However, this study has several limitations. It uses a qualitative approach based on literature review, which, while rich in narrative and historical analysis, lacks empirical generalizability. Another limitation is the limited integration of classical Islamic sources with broader modern leadership theories such as servant leadership, contingency theory, and adaptive leadership. Moreover, the focus on a single historical event the Battle of Hunain means other aspects of the Prophet's leadership in different contexts remain underexplored.

The Battle of Hunain stands as strong historical evidence of the strategic brilliance and leadership excellence of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in times of crisis. He demonstrated careful planning, decisiveness, and the ability to inspire the morale and loyalty of his followers under immense pressure. His swift reorganization of the scattered troops exemplifies transformational leadership in action. Prophetic leadership values vision, ethics, tactical readiness, and exemplary conduct—remain highly relevant for modern leaders. Therefore, this study affirms the importance of adopting the leadership of the Prophet (SAW) as a model for the development of leadership theory and practice in today's world.

References

- Adib, S. (2017). Etika Perang Dalam Islam. *Tasamuh: Jurnal Studi Islam*, 9(1), 65-92.
- Aliffizriah, D., Bariah, O., & Makbul, M. (2024). Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Islam Pada Perang Badar dalam Al Quran Surah Ali Imran Ayat 123-126 Tafsir Ibnu Katsir. *Innovative: Journal Of Social Science Research*, 4(4), 5780-5794.
- Amin, M. R. (2017). Sejarah Kehidupan Nabi Muhammad dan Kemenangan Umat Islam. *Tasamuh: Jurnal Studi Islam*, 9(2), 545-576.
- Anggito, A., & Setiawan, J. (2018). *Metodologi penelitian kualitatif - Albi Anggito, Johan Setiawan*. Sukabumi: CV Jejak (Jejak Publisher)
- Antariksa, W. F. (2017). Penerapan Manajemen Strategi Dalam Dakwah Nabi Muhammad Saw. *J-MPI (Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam)*, 2(1), 28-37.
- Arifin, M. (2023). Konsep Kepemimpinan Dalam Islam: Karakteristik Pemimpin Ideal Menurut Al-Quran. *Akademik: Jurnal Mahasiswa Humanis*, 3(3), 151-160.
- Ayyasy, M. A. (2009). *Strategi Perang Rasulullah*. Jakarta: Qultum Media
- Azizi, M. H. (2022). Komunikasi Krisis Internal Integratif Rasulullah Pada Pembagian Ghanimah Hunain. *Inteleksia: Jurnal Pengembangan Ilmu Dakwah*, 3(2), 357-378.
- Azzahra, D., Ivan, I. M. M. I., & Yusutria. (2024). *Karakteristik Kepemimpinan Nabi Muhammad Saw Dalam Al-Quran*. 7(4), 656-668.
- Bakar, A. I. A. (2018). Strategi Rasulullah SAW dalam Mengukuhkan Kestabilan Negara: Prophet's Strategy in Strengthening the Stability of a Country. *Ma'ālim al-Qur'ān wa al-Sunnah*, 14(2), 101-114.
- Evta, E., Prayogi, Y., Saputra, H., & Putera, R. P. (2024). Implementasi Nilai-Nilai Kepemimpinan Rasulullah dalam Kepemimpinan Pendidikan Islam di Era Digital. *Reflection: Islamic Education Journal*, 1(4), 51-65.
- Firmansyah, M. F. (2020). Sejarah Dan Problematika Dakwah Rasulullah Saw. *Tahdzib Al-Akhlaq: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 3(2), 103-122.
- Harianto, Y. A. (2022). Teknik Persuasi Nabi Muhammad Kepada Kaum Anshar Dalam Pembagian Ghanimah Perang Hunain. *Jurnal Lentera: Kajian Keagamaan, Keilmuan dan Teknologi*, 21(1), 1-15.
- Muliani, A. S., Fadhilah, A. N., Saragih, B., & Febriani, M. (2024). Strategi Kepemimpinan Terhadap Efektivitas Organisasi Pembelajaran. *Jurnal Media Akademik (JMA)*, 2(5), 3031-5220.
- Nur'ain, M., Rapinah, N., Syifa, N., & Anisa, R. N. (2023). Kepemimpinan Rasulullah SAW. *Edu-Leadership*, 3(1), 1-8.
- Priatna, T. (2010). Profil Kepemimpinan Nabi Muhammad SAW. *Artikel Ilmiah*, (5)1 1-9.
- Rasli, A., Memon, S. B., Prestianawati, S. A., & Abas, I. H. (2024). Leadership Lessons from the Battle of Uhud. *Journal of Islamic Thought and Civilization*, 14(2), 356-369.
- Ridha, A. (2006). *Muslimah Pendamping Rasul di Surga*. Yogyakarta: Niaga Swadaya.
- Saufan, A. (2015). Strategi dan Diplomasi Perang Rasulullah. *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan*, 13(1), 107-134.
- Shaifudin, A. (2021). Makna Perencanaan dalam Manajemen Pendidikan Islam. *Moderasi: Journal of Islamic Studies*, 1(1), 28-45.
- Sofiah Sinaga, N., Aprilinda, D., & Putra Budiman, A. (2021). Konsep Kepemimpinan Transformatif. *Cerdika: Jurnal Ilmiah Indonesia*, 1(7), 840-846.
- Umam, M. K. (2018). Imam Para Nabi: Menelusur Jejak Kepemimpinan Dan Manajerial Nabi Muhammad Saw. *Al-Hikmah: Journal of Education and Islamic Studies*, 6(1), 59-74.
- Ummah, M. S. (2019). Manajemen Pendidikan Islam Dan Implikasinya. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 11(1), 1-14.

Acknowledgment

We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of individuals who supported the completion of this article.

Funding Information

This research did not receive any funding.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval and Originality Statement

Ethical approval was obtained for this study. The manuscript represents original work and has not been previously published, nor is it under consideration by another journal.

Data Disclosure Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.



Copyright: © 2025 by the authors.

This work is licensed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>).