



Reconstructing Transformational Leadership through Islamic Values: A Model for Improving Institutional Performance in Islamic Education

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Abstract

This study aims to reconstruct transformational leadership through the integration of Islamic values, offering a contextual model for enhancing the performance of Islamic educational institutions. The primary focus is to combine the core principles of transformational leadership with Islamic teachings to form a leadership framework that aligns with the spiritual, ethical, and cultural foundations of Islamic education. Using a qualitative approach and a case study design, research was conducted in several Islamic educational institutions across Indonesia. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. The research findings indicate that Islamic values such as sincerity (ikhlas), trustworthiness (amanah), justice ('adl), and deliberation (shura) reinforce the four key dimensions of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. These values do not replace transformational leadership elements but enrich and contextualize them, leading to improved institutional performance in managerial, academic, and spiritual aspects. The implications of this study underline the significance of internalizing Islamic values within leadership practices to build a productive, ethical, and spiritually grounded organizational culture. This integrated model can serve as a practical and theoretical reference for developing effective, authentic, and sustainable leadership in Islamic educational settings.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan merekonstruksi kepemimpinan transformasional melalui integrasi nilai-nilai Islam, menawarkan model kontekstual untuk meningkatkan kinerja lembaga pendidikan Islam. Fokus utamanya adalah menggabungkan prinsip-prinsip inti kepemimpinan transformasional dengan ajaran Islam untuk membentuk kerangka kerja kepemimpinan yang selaras dengan fondasi spiritual, etika, dan budaya pendidikan Islam. Penelitian ini dilakukan di beberapa lembaga pendidikan Islam di Indonesia dengan pendekatan kualitatif dan desain studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipan, dan analisis dokumen. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa nilai-nilai Islam seperti ketulusan (ikhlas), amanah (amanah), keadilan ('adl), dan musyawarah (syura) memperkuat empat dimensi kunci kepemimpinan transformasional: pengaruh yang ideal, motivasi yang inspiratif, stimulasi intelektual, dan pertimbangan individual. Nilai-nilai ini tidak menggantikan elemen-elemen kepemimpinan transformasional, melainkan memperkaya dan mengontekstualisasikannya, yang mengarah pada peningkatan kinerja kelembagaan dalam aspek manajerial, akademik, dan spiritual. Implikasi dari penelitian ini menggarisbawahi pentingnya internalisasi nilai-nilai Islam dalam praktik kepemimpinan untuk membangun budaya organisasi yang produktif, etis, dan berlandaskan spiritual. Model terpadu ini dapat

berfungsi sebagai referensi praktis dan teoritis untuk mengembangkan kepemimpinan yang efektif, autentik, dan berkelanjutan dalam lingkungan pendidikan Islam.

INTRODUCTION

Transformational leadership is a leadership approach that has long been recognized as effective in managing modern organizations, including educational institutions (Adeoye & Munawwaroh, 2025; Meng, 2022). This model emphasizes the formation of a shared vision, individual empowerment, and the creation of intrinsic motivation within the organization (Doten-Snitker et al., 2021). Theoretically, transformational leadership emphasizes idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Khan et al., 2022). However, in practice, the implementation of this model in Islamic educational institutions is not always effective due to the lack of integration between spiritual and social Islamic values and these leadership principles (Veronika & Zaini, 2024). This raises questions about how the transformational leadership model should be developed to align with Islamic values (Adhinugraha et al., 2024). Without adequate integration, transformational leadership can lose its relevance and effectiveness within the cultural and spiritual context of Islamic educational institutions (Baroudi, 2022). Therefore, it is crucial to reconstruct this model based on Islamic values, which are integral to the life of Islamic educational organizations (Rohmatulloh et al., 2023). Research indicates that spiritual dimensions, such as *qana'ah* (contentment), significantly influence academic-adjustment and motivate actors in Islamic educational contexts (Melinda et al., 2024).

Conditions on the ground indicate that many Islamic educational institutions, both formal and informal, still face challenges in improving their institutional performance (Buanaputra et al., 2022). Some institutional leaders have received leadership training based on modern theories, including transformational leadership, but the impact on improving management, academic, and spiritual quality has not always been significant (Majeed & Jamshed, 2023). This indicates a mismatch between the applied theory and the actual needs of the institution. In many cases, leadership practices remain instructional and bureaucratic, neglecting fundamental values such as sincerity, deliberation, trustworthiness, and justice, which are the foundation of the Islamic education system (Alazmi, 2025). For example, in strategic decision-making, the deliberation process is often neglected for the sake of procedural efficiency. Furthermore, the relationship between leaders and organizational members often does not reflect the values of compassion and respect for individual potential as taught in Islam (Ahmad et al., 2023). This imbalance demonstrates the need for a leadership model that not only prioritizes efficiency and effectiveness but also aligns value-wise and spiritually with the characteristics of Islamic educational institutions (Albustomi, 2025).

Several previous studies have attempted to explain the importance of values-oriented leadership in the educational context. (Cañadas et al., 2025; Khan et al., 2022) stated that transformational leadership can improve employee motivation and performance through an inspirational and humanistic approach. In the context of Islamic education, research by (Sain & Abdullah, 2024; Saran et al., 2023) emphasizes the importance of moral and religious value-based leadership in creating a healthy and productive educational environment. Other research, such as that conducted by (Setyosari & Kamdi, 2021), also highlights that effective leadership in Islamic education is largely determined by the morals

and integrity of the leader. However, most of this research remains descriptive in nature and has not yet produced a conceptual model that systematically reconstructs transformational leadership through an Islamic values approach. This is where this research's position and contribution lies: developing a model that not only adapts Western theory to the Islamic context but truly restructures it by making Islamic values the primary foundation of the transformational leadership approach in education.

The novelty of this research lies in its reconstructive approach, which reimagines the transformational leadership model using Islamic values as its foundation. Rather than merely symbolically or normatively adapting transformational leadership theory to an Islamic context, this research proposes a new conceptual structure that integrally incorporates values such as sincerity, trustworthiness, justice, deliberation, and *ihsan* into the core dimensions of transformational leadership. In this way, Islamic values are positioned not as mere spiritual complements or ornaments, but as the primary framework for shaping effective leadership in Islamic educational institutions. This research also makes a practical contribution by formulating a model that is not only conceptual but also operational and applicable, based on field findings from case studies in Islamic educational institutions. This model is expected to address the needs of Islamic educational institutions for leadership that bridges managerial, spiritual, and social aspects within a coherent and contextual framework.

Based on the above description, the main question in this research is: How can a transformational leadership model based on Islamic values be reconstructed to improve the performance of Islamic educational institutions? This question reflects the urgent need for a leadership framework that is not only technically effective but also aligned with the Islamic values that underpin the institution's operations. The initial argument underlying this research is that Islamic values inherently align with the principles of transformational leadership. For example, the value of sincerity can deepen the meaning of idealized influence, trustworthiness strengthens individual consideration, while the principles of deliberation and justice align with intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation. Therefore, the integration of these values not only enables the creation of a contextual leadership model but also improves overall institutional performance. This argument will be tested through qualitative research using a case study approach, to ensure that the developed model is not only theoretically sound but also relevant and applicable in the practice of Islamic education.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. This approach was chosen because it allowed the researcher to explore in-depth and holistically the phenomenon of transformational leadership in Islamic education based on Islamic values. Case studies provide space for contextual exploration of leadership practices that are oriented not only toward organizational effectiveness but also toward spiritual integrity and Islamic ethics in decision-making and institutional management.

This research was conducted at an Islamic educational institution with an integrated education system and known for consistently applying Islamic values in its leadership and

institutional management practices. This institution was selected based on academic considerations, namely because the institution demonstrates stable performance, has a clear leadership structure, and integrates Islamic values into its organizational culture. These conditions are considered representative for an in-depth study of the construction of Islam-based transformational leadership.

Data sources for this study were obtained from various sources. The primary respondents consisted of educational institution leaders, unit heads, and senior teachers who are directly involved in the policy-making process and leadership implementation. Supporting informants included administrative staff, students, and alumni who could provide historical and contextual perspectives on the ongoing leadership dynamics. In addition, data was also obtained from various documents and texts, such as official institutional documents (vision and mission, organizational structure, operational guidelines), religious texts (books, manuscripts, scientific works), and additional sources such as online news articles and institutional performance reports.

Data collection techniques included participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. Participant observation was conducted to directly observe leadership practices within the institution during daily activities. In-depth interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide, designed to explore key issues such as the application of Islamic values in leadership, decision-making processes, and their impact on institutional performance. Meanwhile, documentation studies were conducted by analyzing archives, manuscripts, and relevant texts as supporting materials for data triangulation.

The data analysis process was conducted interactively and occurred throughout the research process, spanning three main stages. The first stage was data condensation, which involved reducing data by selecting and focusing relevant information in accordance with the research objectives. The second stage was data presentation, which involved organizing information into thematic narratives, categorization tables, and visual descriptions to facilitate analysis. The third stage is verification and drawing conclusions, which is carried out through interpretation of emerging patterns of meaning and testing the validity of the findings through triangulation techniques. In analyzing the data, several methods were used, namely content analysis to examine documents and texts related to leadership vision, values, and structure; discourse analysis to understand the context of leader communication and power relations in institutional interactions; and interpretive analysis to interpret the respondents' experiences and subjective understanding of leadership practices based on Islamic values.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Integration of Islamic Values Strengthens the Dimension of Transformational Leadership

The integration of Islamic values into transformational leadership in Islamic educational institutions is defined as the application of Islamic principles, such as honesty (*sidq*), trustworthiness (*amanah*), and sincerity in doing good (*ihsan*), which actively shape the leader's character and leadership style. These values serve as the primary foundation that influences how leaders motivate, inspire, and empower staff and students to optimally achieve institutional goals.

Table 1: Observation Results Related to Integration of Islamic Values Strengthens the Dimension of Transformational Leadership

Aspects	Observation Results	Researcher Interpretation
Inspirational Motivation	The leader consistently conveys motivational messages based on Islamic values such as trustworthiness and patience.	Islamic values serve as a source of intrinsic motivation that increases work enthusiasm and commitment.
Ideal Influence (Role Model)	The leader demonstrates honesty, fairness, and consistency in decision-making and daily interactions.	Leadership based on Islamic values strengthens trust and respect among staff.
Intellectual Stimulation	The leader encourages creative discussion and innovation while adhering to the principles of ijihad and wisdom.	Islamic values do not stifle creativity but instead serve as a moral framework that guides innovation.
Individual Consideration	The leader pays special attention to the personal conditions and needs of members with empathy and compassion.	The values of mercy and justice strengthen harmonious interpersonal relationships and support team performance.

Source: Authors' Analysis Research Data

In an interview with the Principal, he stated, "I always instill honesty and trustworthiness in every decision and interaction with teachers and students. These values earn me trust and respect, which motivates them to work even better." Similarly, a senior teacher also revealed that leaders direct not only with words but also with concrete examples that align with Islamic values, thus inspiring and calling them to contribute. From this, it can be interpreted that the presence of Islamic values strengthens interpersonal relationships and serves as a source of internal motivation that fosters commitment and loyalty among members of the institution.

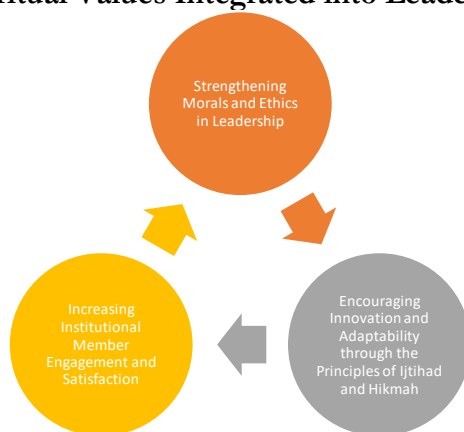
Field observations demonstrate how institutional leaders consistently implement Islamic values in various activities such as meetings, decision-making, and student character development. For example, leaders frequently cite relevant Quranic verses and hadiths when providing guidance and emphasize the importance of trustworthiness in work responsibilities. These practices not only strengthen the leader's credibility but also create a conducive and harmonious work climate, a hallmark of effective transformational leadership. Based on the interview and observation data, it can be concluded that the integration of Islamic values into transformational leadership is not merely a ritual formality but also strengthens leadership dimensions such as inspiration, motivation, and moral influence. These values serve as an ethical foundation that motivates all elements of the institution to behave and work with a strong commitment for mutual progress. The patterns emerging from the data indicate that transformational leadership based on Islamic

values operates through the internalization of Islamic principles in daily practice, which then impacts the quality of interpersonal relationships, work motivation, and the overall organizational climate.

An Islamic Values-Based Leadership Model Improves Institutional Performance

An Islamic values-based leadership model in Islamic educational institutions is defined as a leadership approach that places Islamic principles—such as justice (adl), responsibility (amanah), and patience (shabar)—as the primary foundation for managing all aspects of the institution. This model focuses not only on achieving academic targets but also emphasizes character building, harmonizing relationships between members, and implementing educational processes in line with religious values, thus creating a healthy and productive learning environment. In practice, this model is seen as a framework that integrates spiritual values into leadership strategies to improve the effectiveness and quality of institutional performance.

Figure 1: Spiritual Values Integrated into Leadership Strategy



Source: Authors' Analysis Research Data

An interview with one madrasah principal revealed, "By instilling the values of justice and trustworthiness in every decision-making process, I see increased trust from teachers and students, which leads to higher work morale." Furthermore, a teaching staff member stated, "This leadership model makes us feel valued and empowered, which makes us more enthusiastic in carrying out our duties and innovating in the learning process." From this statement, the researcher interprets that consistently applying Islamic values in leadership can increase motivation, a sense of responsibility, and the active participation of institutional members, which directly contributes to improved performance.

Observations within the institution indicate that leaders regularly hold evaluation meetings guided by Islamic values, such as deliberations that uphold justice and patience in listening to the aspirations of all parties. Furthermore, the process of coaching and professional development of teachers is carried out using an approach that respects their dignity and responsibility as a trust. The researcher believes that these practices create a supportive and collaborative work environment, which plays a crucial role in improving overall institutional performance.

Based on the interview and observation data, it can be concluded that an Islamic values-based leadership model significantly contributes to improving institutional performance by strengthening ethical, spiritual, and social values within the leadership process. This approach not only streamlines organizational management but also fosters a sense of belonging and loyalty among the entire academic community.

The pattern emerging from the data above indicates that the implementation of an Islamic values-based leadership model operates through the internalization of religious values into the work culture and collective decision-making. This pattern builds a harmonious, participatory, and results-oriented institutional climate, resulting in continuous and consistent performance improvements in Islamic educational institutions.

Islamic Transformational Leadership Promotes Innovation and Adaptability

Islamic transformational leadership is defined as a leadership style that combines Islamic principles, such as patience (shabar), tawakkal (surrender), and ijtihad (creative and critical thinking), in leading an institution, thereby fostering innovation and adaptation to changes in the educational environment. This operational definition is reflected in how leaders not only strategically drive change but also provide role models and spiritual motivation that support members of the institution to be creative and flexible in facing challenges.

In an interview with the principal, he stated, "The values of patience and tawakkal teach me not to give up easily when faced with change or difficulties, while also continually striving to find innovative solutions in accordance with Islamic teachings." Furthermore, a teacher said, "Our leader encourages us to engage in ijtihad to find more effective learning methods, so we feel empowered to innovate without fear of making mistakes." Researchers interpret this combination of spiritual values and intellectual empowerment as creating an atmosphere that supports the development of new ideas and high levels of adaptability within the institution.

Field observations show that in meetings and work gatherings, leaders routinely engage institutional members in open discussions about problems and seek creative solutions based on Islamic values. For example, the use of digital learning methods, which are not yet commonly adopted, is encouraged by leaders while maintaining Sharia principles and morals. Researchers observed that this practice demonstrates high adaptability and innovation aligned with Islamic values, enabling the institution to remain relevant and thrive amidst changing times.

Based on the interview and observation data, it can be concluded that Islamic transformational leadership significantly encourages innovation and adaptability in Islamic educational institutions. Islamic values not only serve as a moral foundation but also a motivator for continued innovation and wise adaptation in the face of challenges and change.

The patterns evident in the data indicate that Islamic transformational leadership operates through the internalization of Islamic values, balancing spiritual steadfastness with intellectual creativity. This pattern creates an institutional culture that is open to innovation and adaptation, while also firmly rooted in religious principles, thus generating sustainable positive change.

The results of this study indicate that the integration of Islamic values into transformational leadership significantly strengthens leadership dimensions such as inspiration, motivation, and moral influence. This finding aligns with the literature presented by (Berkovich & Eyal, 2021; Setyaningsih & Sunaryo, 2021), which states that transformational leadership is effective when it has a strong foundation in values and ethics. However, this study adds a new perspective, namely how Islamic values—such as amanah (trustworthiness), shabar (forbearance), and ijtihad (ijtihad)—serve as an ethical foundation that not only drives change but also fosters spiritual character. Unlike Western models of transformational leadership, which focus more on psychological and organizational aspects, this model emphasizes a deeply religious aspect. The implications of these findings point to the need for Islamic educational institutions to not only adopt a general transformational leadership style but also adapt it to local and spiritual values to enhance the effectiveness of institutional performance.

The implications of these findings emphasize that leadership based on Islamic values has a dual function: not only improving institutional performance functionally but also strengthening social and spiritual cohesion within educational institutions. Conversely, if these values are ignored, there is the potential for dysfunction in the form of decreased motivation, loss of trust, and a weakening of collective spirit. This supports (Ruiz et al., 2021) theory of social structure, which posits that a social system will function effectively if shared values are upheld. Therefore, the Islamic value structure in leadership is a crucial underlying structure for optimal institutional performance.

From a causal perspective, the research results indicate a positive correlation between the internalization of Islamic values and institutional innovation and adaptability (Rosyidi et al., 2025). Islamic transformational leadership, which emphasizes patience, tawakkal (relief), and ijtihad (initiative) creates a conducive environment for creativity and positive change. This is consistent with the findings of (Annisa & Sukriyah, 2025), who emphasized that effective leadership fosters innovation through empowerment and providing concrete examples (Burhan & Khan, 2024). However, these findings strengthen the argument that religious values are the primary driving factor distinguishing leadership in Islamic educational institutions from other institutions, and therefore, the religious value structure must be an integral part of the leadership strategy.

Furthermore, the pattern emerging from this research indicates that transformational leadership based on Islamic values does not rely solely on external motivation but also fosters intrinsic motivation through character development and spiritual awareness (Thohir, 2024). This model contains a fundamental structure that connects religious morality with organizational goals, creating a synergy that results in superior and sustainable performance. Therefore, this model can serve as an important reference for leadership development in the context of Islamic education, while also opening up space for interdisciplinary research between educational management and Islamic studies (Samsul, 2025).

In conclusion, this study confirms that reconstructing transformational leadership with an integration of Islamic values is not only relevant but also essential for improving institutional performance in Islamic education. The practical implication is the need for leadership training that emphasizes a deep understanding of Islamic values, as well as the

development of an organizational culture that reinforces these values. In this way, Islamic educational institutions can optimize the potential of their human resources while maintaining spiritual and moral integrity, ultimately contributing to holistic and competitive educational quality.

CONCLUSION

The most important finding of this study demonstrates that the integration of Islamic values into transformational leadership significantly improves institutional performance in Islamic education. A leadership approach that emphasizes spiritual values such as trustworthiness, patience, and *ijtihad* is not only intrinsically motivating but also fosters innovation and adaptability within institutions. The lesson learned is that religious values serve as a moral and strategic foundation that strengthens leadership effectiveness and creates a harmonious and productive work climate.

The strength of this study lies in its contribution to updating the perspective on transformational leadership by explicitly adding the dimension of Islamic values, using an in-depth and contextual qualitative approach. However, this study is limited to a single location and a sample of informants lacking gender and age diversity, making the findings difficult to generalize. Therefore, further research with a wider variety of approaches and quantitative survey methods is needed to obtain a comprehensive picture and provide a basis for more targeted Islamic educational leadership policies.

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