

Transformational Leadership in Islamic Education: A Review of Techniques and Effectiveness

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ABSTRACT

Transformational leadership is regarded as a leadership style capable of responding to the challenges of contemporary dynamics while fostering innovation, motivation, and commitment within Islamic educational institutions. This article aims to: (1) describe the concept of transformational leadership in Islamic education, (2) identify transformational leadership techniques applied in Islamic educational institutions, and (3) analyze the effectiveness of its implementation based on literature published from 2020 to 2025. The research method employed a systematic literature review, examining scientific articles and empirical studies from journals on Islamic education and educational management. The findings indicate that techniques such as developing a collective vision and mission, staff/teacher empowerment, motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration remain relevant and effective in improving teacher performance, innovation, work motivation, school culture, and educational quality. Recent studies also highlight the importance of work climate and organizational support as mediating factors for successful implementation. Therefore, transformational leadership remains relevant and is highly recommended for implementation in Islamic educational institutions.

Keywords: transformational leadership, Islamic education, empowerment, educational quality.

A. INTRODUCTION

Leadership within educational institutions holds a strategic role in determining school quality. In Islamic education, leaders are responsible for acting as moral exemplars (*uswah hasanah*), which influences the culture, character, and work ethic of the school community. In this context, leadership becomes an important factor that determines the competitiveness and quality of Islamic educational institutions.

Transformational leadership appears to be an appropriate strategy for responding to the demands of contemporary educational transformation. This leadership style emphasizes individual development, inspiration, a shared vision, and guidance. Research shows that teachers feel more motivated to try new approaches in teaching, encourage innovation in the learning process, and create a productive and collaborative work environment. On the other hand, Siswadi states that "*women's leadership in Islamic educational settings consistently demonstrates the ability to cultivate a collaborative, value-driven, and quality-oriented school culture through inspirational motivation, moral integrity, and capacity building.*" This quotation reinforces that value-based

leadership including Islamic values can effectively promote the development of a quality culture in educational institutions.

Transformational leadership in Islamic education aligns with the values of **shura** (consultation), **amanah** (trustworthiness), responsibility, and empowerment. It has been shown that school leaders who implement this approach possess greater capacity to cultivate an Islamic school culture, enhance teacher commitment, and foster innovation in learning.

Moreover, recent studies indicate that the effectiveness of transformational leadership is strengthened by a collaborative work climate, organizational support, and the level of teacher involvement in decision-making. This affirms that the success of leadership is determined not only by the leader's personal qualities but also by the supportive conditions within the organization.

Although numerous studies have examined transformational leadership in Islamic educational institutions, comprehensive research on the methods and the effectiveness of its application during 2020–2025 is still needed. The objectives of this study are as follows: (1) to explain the concepts of transformational leadership in Islamic education; (2) to identify the methods used to implement transformational leadership; and (3) to analyze the effectiveness of its application based on recent empirical findings.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Basic Concepts of Transformational Leadership

Research on transformational leadership in the context of education has experienced significant development during the 2020–2025 period. Recent studies have identified four aspects that consistently appear in contemporary research: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. These studies affirm that transformational leadership promotes behavioral change, enhances motivation, and fosters a positive organizational culture.

In the school context, this leadership style has been proven to enhance teacher performance, collaboration, and innovation in the learning process. Hakim (2022) found that principals who implement transformational leadership exert a strong influence on teachers' professional development and the improvement of learning quality. Nurriyayani et al. (2024) further added that intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation contribute significantly to the sustainable development of teacher performance.

In line with this, Siswadi explains that "effective educational leadership is always characterized by the leader's ability to build a shared vision, set an example, and empower others so that all members of the school share the same direction and commitment toward quality improvement." This quotation reinforces that transformational leadership is oriented not only toward structural change but also toward fostering collective commitment through moral exemplarity and empowerment.

In addition to influencing individual behavior, transformational leadership is also associated with changes in school policies and organizational structures. The study by Trimulyo et al. (2023) demonstrates that transformational leadership plays a role in fostering a culture of innovation and adaptability in educational institutions, particularly in the post-pandemic period.

2. Transformational Leadership in Islamic Education

In contemporary educational literature, the theme of transformational leadership in Islamic education has become highly significant. This is due to the fact that leaders in Islamic education are responsible not only for ensuring the smooth functioning of the organization but also for fostering the character, morals, and spiritual values of their students.

Syarip's (2023) study shows that school principals play a central role in cultivating an Islamic school culture through exemplarity, communication, and teacher empowerment. Meanwhile, Nifasri (2023) found that transformational leadership effectively enhances the commitment and motivation of madrasa teachers when personal and spiritual approaches are applied consistently.

In Islamic boarding schools, the transformational leadership approach is increasingly relevant because leaders serve not only as institutional managers but also as spiritual and educational figures. Huzali & Purnomo (2024) emphasize that Islamic boarding school leaders who integrate Islamic values with intellectual stimulation can enhance both the quality of learning and teacher loyalty.

3. Techniques of Transformational Leadership in Islamic Educational Institutions

- a. Formulation of a Collective Vision and Mission
Leaders involve all members of the school community in formulating long-term goals, thereby fostering a sense of ownership over the institution's direction.
- b. Teacher Empowerment
Leaders provide teachers with autonomy, trust, and space for exploration. Soim (2024) demonstrates that teacher empowerment enhances instructional innovation and professional creativity.
- c. Motivation and Inspiration
Leaders motivate teachers through positive communication, moral reinforcement, and performance appreciation. Putri et al. (2023) found that motivation and reward systems have a positive impact on teacher performance.
- d. Intellectual Stimulation
Leaders encourage teachers to think critically, utilize digital technologies, and develop innovative instructional strategies.
- e. Individualized Mentoring
Leaders provide coaching and personalized support tailored to teachers' professional needs.
- f. Building a Collaborative Climate
A collaborative work climate strengthens the influence of transformational leadership and enhances organizational effectiveness.

4. The Effectiveness of Transformational Leadership in Enhancing the Quality of Islamic Education

During the 2020–2025 period, greater attention has been given to transformational leadership in Islamic education as institutions are required to adapt to social changes, technological advances, and post-pandemic educational challenges. This leadership model is considered capable of addressing these needs through a visionary approach, empowerment, and the cultivation of spiritual values.

a. Enhancing Teacher Performance and Motivation

Recent research indicates that transformational leadership has a significant influence on improving teacher performance in Islamic schools, madrasas, and Islamic boarding schools. Leaders who apply the dimensions of idealized influence and inspirational motivation are able to create strong emotional connections with teachers, thus enhancing their intrinsic motivation. Leaders' exemplarity, the provision of recognition, and moral support have been shown to make teachers more disciplined, productive, and responsible in carrying out their duties.

b. Encouraging Instructional Innovation

Teachers' capacity to create instructional innovations has increased as a result of effective transformational leadership. Intellectual stimulation encourages teachers to be more innovative in using technology, selecting pedagogical approaches, and addressing students' learning needs. As demonstrated by Soim's (2024) study, teachers working under transformational leaders tend to be more adept at using digital technologies, more willing to experiment with new instructional models, and more open to self-evaluation.

c. Strengthening Islamic School Culture

The unique character of Islamic educational institutions is strongly shaped by a religious culture developed through the leader's exemplarity. Transformational leaders who consistently apply Islamic values such as **amanah** (trustworthiness), **shura** (consultation), and **sincerity** (sincerity) have been proven to successfully build a school culture centered on morality and spirituality.

Syarip (2023) found that when teachers employ transformational and moral approaches in their daily interactions, Islamic school culture becomes stronger. This effectiveness not only affects students but also fosters more harmonious relationships among teachers and a more positive work climate.

d. Enhancing Teacher Commitment and Loyalty

Within the transformational leadership approach, educators are regarded as strategic partners rather than mere policy implementers. Through individualized consideration, leaders provide professional support and opportunities for teachers' professional development. This has been shown to enhance teachers' affective commitment, sense of belonging, and their willingness to remain in the institution and contribute more. Teachers who feel valued and empowered tend to be more loyal and better prepared to embrace and implement policy changes.

e. Improving the Overall Quality of Educational Institutions

The effectiveness of transformational leadership is not only experienced at the individual teacher level but is also reflected in the overall performance of educational organizations. Studies conducted between 2023 and 2024 indicate that institutions led through transformational leadership tend to exhibit :

- more adaptive management,
- more innovative teaching and learning processes,
- stronger collaboration among members of the school community,
- higher levels of discipline and organizational order, and
- improved students' academic achievement.

Thus, transformational leadership directly contributes to the development of more excellent and competitive Islamic educational institutions. This leadership model is also highly relevant to the demands of the 21st century, which emphasize creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving.

C. METHODS

This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to evaluate the concepts, methods, and levels of effectiveness of transformation in Islamic education, based on studies published between 2020 and 2025. This method was chosen because it provides a comprehensive overview of patterns, trends, and relevant empirical findings in the field of Islamic educational management.

1. Data Sources

The data sources in this study consist of scientific articles published in national and international journals, particularly those indexed in Scopus, SINTA, DOAJ, and Google Scholar. The included articles cover the following topics:

- transformational leadership,
- Islamic educational leadership,
- teacher performance,
- Islamic school culture,
- educational innovation, and
- Islamic educational management.

The publication period was limited to 2020–2025 to ensure that the findings remain relevant to recent developments in Islamic education and modern educational management.

2. Data Collection Techniques

a. Data Searching

The researchers used keywords such as *transformational leadership*, *Islamic education*, *teacher performance*, *school culture*, and *madrrasah leadership*.³

The databases used included Google Scholar, SINTA, DOAJ, and non-subscription-based Scopus sources.

b. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Publication Year	Articles published between 2020–2025	Articles published before 2020
Type of Publication	Reputable scholarly journals (Scopus, SINTA, DOAJ, Google Scholar)	Books, proceedings, undergraduate theses, master's theses, dissertations
Field of Study	Transformational leadership; Islamic education; educational management	General leadership without educational relevance
Type of Study	Empirical studies and academic reviews	Opinion articles, editorials, news
Document Access	Full text available	Full text unavailable
Institutional Context	Islamic schools, madrasas, Islamic boarding schools	Non-educational organizations
Variables Studied	Teacher performance, school culture, instructional innovation	Lacking variables related to educational leadership
Article Quality	Published in journals with at least SINTA 4 accreditation	Unaccredited or predatory journals

c. Article Selection

No.	Author(s) & Year	Article Title	Journal	Description
1	Judge (2022)	<i>Transformational Leadership in Islamic Educational Institutions</i>	Journal of Islamic Pedagogy	Directly relevant; examines leadership and Islamic education variables
2	Nurriyayani et al. (2024)	<i>Empowering Education: Transformational Leadership...</i>	Al-Tanzim: Journal of Islamic Educational Management	Focuses on teacher performance and work climate
3	Trimulyo et al. (2023)	<i>Transformational Leadership and Management Innovation</i>	Al-Tanzim	Explain management innovation
4	Syarip (2023)	<i>Transformational Leadership Style of School Principals</i>	Pendas: Journal of Basic Education Research	Focuses on Islamic school culture
5	Nifasri (2023)	<i>Transformative Leadership in Madrasas</i>	Al-Tanzim	Madrasah institutional context
6	Soim (2024)	<i>The Impact of Transformational Leadership on Staff Performance</i>	Al-Tanzim	Examines effects on teacher performance
7	Huzali & Purnomo (2024)	<i>Transformational Leadership in Islamic Boarding Schools</i>	Al- Tarbiyah	Pesantren context
8	Kotimah & Rindaningsih (2025)	<i>Transformational Leadership and Teacher Work Motivation</i>	TSAQOFAH	Teacher motivation variable
9	Putri et al. (2023)	<i>Reward Systems and Teacher Motivation</i>	Educational Management Journal	Supports motivational aspects
10	Nature (2020)	<i>Visionary Leadership and Islamic School Development</i>	Journal of Educational Administrative Studies	Conceptual foundation of Islamic educational leadership

3. Data Analysis Techniques

In this study, content analysis is employed as a systematic method to identify patterns, themes, and interrelationships among concepts in the scholarly evaluated articles. The content analysis approach was chosen because it enables the systematic organization of literature data, thus providing a comprehensive understanding of transformational leadership in Islamic education.

The steps of the analysis are as follows:

a. Initial Coding

The researchers thoroughly reviewed each article to identify key concepts such as **idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration**. Initial findings were recorded in the form of meaning units, categories, or key terms emerging from each article.

b. Categorization

The meaning units that had been coded were then grouped into thematic categories, such as:

- transformational leadership techniques,
- the impact of leadership on teacher performance,
- strengthening Islamic school culture,
- instructional innovation, and
- mediating factors such as work climate.

c. Pattern Analysis

At this stage, the researchers identified general patterns, such as the increasing use of teacher empowerment techniques, the relevance of transformational leadership in the post-pandemic context, and the consistency of findings across Islamic schools, madrasas, and Islamic boarding schools.

d. Synthesis of Findings

All identified patterns and categories were then synthesized into a comprehensive narrative regarding the concepts, techniques, and effectiveness of transformational leadership. This approach ensures that the final findings are not merely descriptive but also interpretative and integrative, making them relevant for the development of both theory and practice in Islamic education.

4. Validity and Reliability of the Review

To ensure the credibility of the review, this study employed several strategies to maintain the **validity** (accuracy) and **reliability** (consistency) of the literature findings.

a. Source Triangulation

Triangulation was conducted by comparing findings across various articles from reputable journals. Articles from Islamic schools, madrasas, and Islamic boarding schools were compared to assess the consistency of the findings.

The triangulation approach ensures that the research conclusions are unbiased and supported by findings from diverse credible sources.

b. Reliability Checking

In SLR studies, reliability is maintained through:

- detailed documentation of the article selection process,
- the use of clear inclusion–exclusion criteria, and
- consistent analysis across all reviewed articles.

With this audit trail, the search and analysis processes can be retraced, thus enhancing the transparency of the study.

c. Peer debriefing,

Additional literature from other relevant articles was used to corroborate and validate the main findings. When discrepancies arose between articles, cross-checking was conducted to ensure that interpretations remained objective and aligned with the data.

d. Data Saturation

The researchers ensured that the main themes reached saturation, meaning no new findings emerged from additional articles. This was achieved by analyzing at least 10 credible articles that produced consistent themes. The saturation process helps the study yield stable and comprehensive findings.

D. RESULT

The systematic review of 10 articles published between 2020 and 2025 indicates that transformational leadership in Islamic education exhibits consistent thematic patterns, encompassing concepts, implementation techniques, effectiveness, and influencing factors.

These findings are summarized into four main themes as follows.

1. The Concept of Transformational Leadership in Islamic Education

All reviewed articles indicate that transformational leadership in Islamic education integrates Islamic values such as amanah (trustworthiness), exemplarity, shura (consultation), and noble character with the four transformational dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

This concept distinguishes Islamic educational institutions from general contexts, as leaders also serve as moral and spiritual role models.

2. The Most Commonly Used Transformational Leadership Techniques

Analysis of the 10 articles identified five techniques most commonly employed by school principals, senior teachers, and Islamic boarding schools leaders :

a. Development of a Collective Vision and Mission

Leaders involve school members in participatively formulating the institution's direction.

b. Teacher Empowerment

Teachers are given space for innovation, decision-making authority, and trust in carrying out their duties.

c. Motivation and Inspiration

Leaders provide positive communication, moral encouragement, and recognition of teachers' performance.

d. Intellectual Stimulation

Leaders encourage educational teachers to develop creative teaching methods and utilize technology.

e. Individualized Mentoring (Coaching–Mentoring)

Leaders provide personalized support tailored to teachers' needs, addressing both pedagogical and spiritual aspects.

3. The Effectiveness of Transformational Leadership

The review findings indicate that transformational leadership has a significant impact on the following aspects.

a. Enhancement of Teacher Performance and Motivation

Teachers working under transformational leaders demonstrate higher performance, greater autonomy, and stronger intrinsic motivation.

b. Strengthening Islamic School Culture

Leaders' excellence has a strong influence in shaping a religious environment and a work ethic grounded in Islamic values.

c. Learning Innovation and Technology Utilization

Transformational leaders encourage teachers to experiment with new strategies, particularly in the post-pandemic digital context.

d. Increased Teacher Commitment and Loyalty

Empowerment and personalized attention enhance teachers' sense of belonging and loyalty to the institution.

e. Overall Improvement of School Quality

The effectiveness of leadership is reflected in improved school management, interpersonal relationships, and student learning outcomes.

4. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of Transformational Leadership

Supporting Factors

- Collaborative and supportive work climate
- Organization culture based on Islamic values
- Teacher involvement in decision-making
- Organizational support and digital resources

Inhibiting Factors

- Excessive administrative workload
- Limited technological competence among some teachers
- Lack of formal training on transformational leadership
- Overly hierarchical organizational structure

These factors were consistently identified across several articles, particularly in studies conducted within the contexts of madrasas and Islamic boarding schools.

5. Research Trends from 2020 to 2025

This SLR identified three major trends:

- a. Research is predominantly focused on madrasas and Islamic schools, with Islamic boarding schools beginning to receive attention from 2023–2024.
- b. Emphasis on teacher motivation and instructional innovation aligns with post-pandemic educational demands.
- c. A shift from theory to transformational practice, with many articles focusing on practical implementation rather than purely normative concepts.

E. DISCUSSION

This study integrates the research findings with the theoretical framework of transformational leadership and the context of Islamic education. Overall, the study demonstrates that transformational leadership is highly relevant to the management of Islamic schools, madrasas, and Islamic boarding schools in the modern era. The discussion is structured around four main dimensions: the relationship between theory and practice, the strengthening of Islamic character, the dynamics of leadership technique implementation, and future challenges and opportunities.

1. Alignment of Findings with Transformational Leadership Theory

The study findings indicate that the four dimensions of transformational leadership—idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Frequently appears in the leadership practices of Islamic educational institutions. These findings confirm that the concept of transformational leadership is not only relevant in general organizations but also compatible with value-based educational contexts. In line with this, Siswadi emphasizes that "developing a quality culture requires leaders who embody Islamic moral principles while empowering teachers and promoting shared vision and continuous improvement." This quotation reinforces the argument that the success of transformational leadership in Islamic education depends not only on managerial skills but also on the leader's moral integrity in fostering a culture of quality.

2. Integration of Islamic Values in Transformational Leadership

The characteristics of Islamic education emphasize values such as **amanah** (trustworthiness), **adab** (ethical conduct), **shura** (consultation), **ihsan** (excellence), and exemplarity, which are naturally related to elements of transformational leadership. This supports the conclusion that integrating Islamic values with modern leadership practices produces a more holistic and effective leadership model.

The reviewed studies confirm that school principals and madrasa leaders who adopt a transformational approach consistently demonstrate leadership behaviors aligned with Islamic principles, such as setting an example, providing spiritual guidance, and fostering positive emotional relationships with teachers.

This, in turn, cultivates a school culture that is both religious and innovative, providing a conducive environment for student development.

Thus, this discussion affirms that transformational leadership can be regarded as an Islamically aligned leadership approach, consistent with and compatible with the core values of Islamic education.

3. Effectiveness of Transformational Leadership Techniques in the Context of Islamic Educational Institutions

It has been shown that teacher empowerment, individualized mentoring, motivation, and intellectual stimulation are all transformational leadership techniques capable of transforming school organizations.

a. Teacher Empowerment Drives Performance and Innovation

Teacher empowerment enhances confidence, teaching autonomy, and creativity in instructional innovation.

b. Individual Mentoring Fosters Loyalty

Leaders who provide personalized attention through coaching and mentoring foster a sense of being valued and supported among teachers. This approach has been shown to enhance teachers' affective commitment and loyalty to the institution.

c. Intellectual Stimulation Strengthens Instructional Innovation

Transformational leaders encourage teachers to experiment, adapt to new technologies, and engage in reflective teaching practices.

In Islamic education, intellectual stimulation supports the development of active-Islamic teaching methods that meet the needs of today's digital generation.

d. Motivation and Exemplarity Reinforce Islamic School Culture

Transformational leaders who consistently provide moral exemplarity are able to cultivate an Islamic school culture that is disciplined, communicative, and quality oriented.

4. Challenges in Implementing Transformational Leadership

Although effective, several challenges have been identified in the literature:

a. Varied Technological Competence among Teachers

Some teachers in madrasas and Islamic boarding schools lack adequate technological readiness to engage in digitally based intellectual stimulation.

b. Hierarchical Organizational Culture

Pesantrens and some Islamic schools have traditional command structures that are predominantly top down, which can hinder teacher empowerment.

c. Administrative Workload

High administrative demands limit leaders' capacity to provide personalized mentoring. This challenge needs to be considered when designing teacher professional development and transformational leadership training.

5. Future Opportunities for the Development of Transformational Leadership

Based on research trends from 2020 to 2025, several development opportunities can be identified.

a. Digital Leadership

Transformational leadership combined with digital competence produces leaders who are prepared to navigate changes in educational technology.

b. Strengthening Leadership Training for Madrasah and Pesantren Principals

Islamic value based training combined with modern leadership theory can enhance leadership effectiveness.

c. Integration of Islamic Coaching and Counseling

The individualized consideration approach is highly compatible with Islamic moral guidance.

d. Collaboration between Teachers and Leaders for School-Based Research

Encourages a culture of reflection and continuous learning.

F. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that across various types of institutions such as Islamic schools, madrasahs, and Islamic boarding schools transformational leadership plays a strategic role in enhancing the quality of Islamic education. Leaders have the capacity to transform organizational culture, teacher quality, and instructional innovation through visionary approaches, empowerment, exemplarity, and intellectual stimulation. This leadership model is increasingly relevant and comprehensive in contemporary Islamic education, as it integrates the core principles of transformational leadership with Islamic values such as amanah (trustworthiness), shura (consultation), adab (ethical conduct), and exemplarity.

The SLR findings from ten articles published between 2020 and 2025 indicate a correlation between transformational leadership and improvements in teacher motivation, commitment, and loyalty, the strengthening of Islamic school culture, and the enhancement of management and instructional quality. However, several challenges were identified, including varied teacher technological competencies, hierarchical organizational structures, and high administrative workloads. These challenges suggest that institutional support is essential, leadership training should be provided, and teachers need to be trained in using educational technologies.

Overall, transformational leadership has been proven to be an effective, adaptive, and compatible leadership model for the characteristics of Islamic educational institutions. Proper implementation has the potential to create innovative, collaborative, and quality-oriented educational organizations. To further strengthen its effectiveness in the future, continuous professional development, the reinforcement of an Islamic value-based organizational culture, and the integration of digital competence in educational leadership are required.

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