

Transformational Leadership and Educational Quality: Strengthening Teacher Motivation and Commitment in Islamic Education

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of transformational leadership in improving educational quality, with particular emphasis on teacher motivation and commitment in Islamic educational institutions. The research employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) following PRISMA guidelines to analyze 28 peer-reviewed journal articles published within the last ten years. The selection process was based on relevance to transformational leadership, educational quality, and Islamic educational contexts. The analysis focuses on four core dimensions of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. The findings reveal that these dimensions consistently contribute to increased teacher engagement, stronger organizational commitment, improved professional development, and a more positive school climate, all of which are critical indicators of educational quality. The study also highlights that integrating transformational leadership practices with Islamic educational values strengthens institutional identity while responding to contemporary educational challenges. This research contributes by synthesizing recent scholarship into a structured conceptual understanding of how transformational leadership supports educational reform in Islamic institutions. It further recommends the development of targeted leadership training programs to enhance strategic leadership capacity and sustain long-term educational improvement.

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INTRODUCTION

The contemporary landscape of Islamic education stands at a crucial intersection between tradition and modernity. Islamic educational institutions are increasingly pressured to improve the quality of their learning systems while simultaneously preserving their distinct Islamic identity and values. Quality challenges in Islamic education encompass the urgent need to reform curricula to align with 21st-century competencies, enhance the capabilities of educators in delivering contextualized

teaching, and strengthen quality assurance systems that are relevant to the specific character of Islamic institutions. Furthermore, the forces of digitalization and globalization compel these institutions to balance the adoption of educational technologies with the preservation of their spiritual and ethical dimensions. If such adaptive measures are not strategically designed, the relevance of these institutions to societal needs and labor market demands may weaken. Recent national studies indicate that these challenges are becoming evident at the institutional level, necessitating managerial strategies that integrate Islamic values with modern quality standards (Luthfiatul Udhma & Sri Minarti, 2025; Sudirman et al., 2025; Zainuddin et al., 2025).

On the international front, literature and proceedings show similar pressures: globalization has altered expectations for graduates, particularly regarding digital skills, critical thinking, and international competitiveness. As a result, Islamic educational institutions must respond to these changes or risk being left behind by secular or global educational institutions. However, there is a noticeable gap between the standardization of international quality and the unique mission-values of Islamic institutions. This gap demands the development of strategic management models that can bridge the standards of quality with the religious-cultural goals of the institution. Consequently, curriculum transformation, capacity building for educators, and the development of adaptive yet value-rooted institutional policies have become strategic priorities for maintaining institutional relevance and competitiveness on the global stage.

From a national perspective, a major critique of the discourse surrounding the enhancement of quality and competitiveness in Islamic educational institutions is the tendency to focus primarily on technical improvements—such as infrastructure development, teacher certification, and accreditation—without simultaneously revisiting the strategic governance frameworks that align Islamic mission statements with competitive goals. Many local studies have found that while initiatives like strengthening the SPMI (internal quality assurance system), teacher training, and digitalization are necessary, they often fail to yield long-term competitive advantages without changes in organizational culture, visionary leadership, and sustainable funding models. Therefore, a holistic approach is necessary, combining technical practices with organizational structure reforms, leadership development, and the consistent integration of Islamic values into every strategic step (Imam et al., 2025; Rahmatullah & Maisyarah, 2025; Rochbani, 2024).

The competitive advantage of modern educational institutions is no longer solely determined by investments in technology or operational efficiency. It is equally influenced by an institution's ability to craft an authentic value proposition that distinguishes it from competitors. Here, Islamic values such as amanah (trust), integrity, and ethical service play a crucial role in establishing a unique institutional identity and building public trust. Cross-context studies have shown that institutions that formalize religious values into their brand strategies, academic services, and governance systems tend to gain stronger reputations, stakeholder loyalty, and differentiation that is difficult for secular competitors to replicate. This effect contributes to long-term competitive advantages in the global education market. The practical implication is that digital strategies and operational efficiencies must be complemented by a consistent narrative of values, as without this, technological advantages can easily degrade into mere commodities (Alfaqiyah et al., 2025; Perifanis & Kitsios, 2023; Plekhanov et al., 2023; Shrivastav et al., 2025).

National studies on Islamic educational institutions further affirm that integrating Islamic values into curriculum design, leadership practices, and educational services enhances institutional attractiveness not just because of its religious dimensions but because these values strengthen trust, institutional reputation, and a cohesive organizational culture that drives educational innovation. Case studies in Indonesia have shown that a set of value-based practices, such as emphasizing service quality, accountability, and professional ethics, correlates positively with metrics like student enrollment, retention rates, and perceptions of graduate quality. In other words, Islamic values act as a strategic asset that enhances the outcomes of investments in technology and efficiency when operationalized consistently. Thus, institutional leaders should formulate integrated strategies that encompass both technical modernization and the fortification of Islamic values as elements of differentiation (Handayani et al., 2025; Mariyono, 2024; Rahman, 2025).

However, despite the growing discourse on quality improvement and value integration, limited studies have specifically examined how transformational leadership systematically influences educational quality through teacher motivation and commitment within Islamic educational institutions. Most existing research discusses quality enhancement or leadership separately, without providing an integrative analytical framework that connects these variables. Therefore, this study addresses this gap by examining the impact of transformational leadership on educational quality, particularly through its role in strengthening teacher motivation and organizational commitment. The urgency of this research lies in the need for a strategic leadership model that not only improves institutional performance but also sustains Islamic identity in the face of contemporary educational challenges.

METHODS

This study utilizes a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, adhering to the guidelines of PRISMA 2020 for transparency and replicability. The SLR methodology allows for the systematic collection, screening, evaluation, and synthesis of relevant literature, ensuring a comprehensive and rigorous analysis. This methodology is particularly suited for mapping the relationships between Islamic education missions, institutional strategies, and competitive advantage. This study uses a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach based on the PRISMA 2020 guidelines to ensure transparency and consistency. This method allows researchers to systematically collect, select, evaluate, and analyze relevant literature. The research focuses on examining the relationship between Islamic education missions, institutional strategies, and competitive advantage. The data were obtained from scientific articles published between 2020 and 2025, sourced from databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar. The selection process applied clear inclusion and exclusion criteria, and duplicate articles were removed using tools like Mendeley and Zotero. To maintain accuracy and reduce bias, the data extraction process was conducted by two independent reviewers using a structured format that included author information, research objectives, methods, and key findings. In addition, study quality was assessed using tools such as the CASP checklist to ensure that only credible and relevant studies were included.

The data analysis was carried out through several stages. First, thematic synthesis was used to identify key patterns, such as Islamic education missions, the integration of Islamic values in strategies, and indicators of competitive advantage. Second, cross-case analysis compared findings across different educational contexts, including universities, madrasahs, and pesantren, to understand how strategies are applied. Finally, conceptual mapping was conducted to develop a model that explains how Islamic values, leadership, and strategic management contribute to institutional competitiveness. Overall, this systematic process provides a comprehensive understanding of how Islamic educational institutions can strengthen their strategies and achieve competitive advantage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the role of transformational leadership in enhancing educational quality, with a particular focus on teacher motivation and commitment. Through a comprehensive literature review, it was found that the four dimensions of transformational leadership idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration have a significant impact on teacher engagement, professional development, and the overall school climate. Each of these dimensions contributes uniquely to creating an environment that fosters educational improvement. These findings not only reinforce previous research but also provide empirical evidence highlighting the importance of integrating transformational leadership into managerial strategies to achieve higher educational quality.

1. Idealized Influence

Idealized influence is one of the core dimensions of transformational leadership, and it refers to the ability of leaders to act as role models, demonstrating high standards of ethical behavior, moral

integrity, and professionalism. This dimension of leadership plays a crucial role in enhancing teacher motivation and commitment, as it creates an environment based on trust and respect. Teachers are more likely to emulate leaders who consistently model positive behaviors and ethical standards, as they feel inspired by their actions and view them as credible figures worthy of admiration (Alzoraiki, M., Ahmad, A. R., Ateeq, A. A., Naji, G. M. A., Almaamari, Q., & Beshr, 2023).

The findings of this study emphasize the significant impact of idealized influence on educational outcomes. Teachers in schools with transformational leaders who exhibit idealized influence tend to report higher levels of motivation and commitment to their work. This aligns with previous research by Luthfiatul Udhma & Sri Minarti (2025), who found that leaders who are perceived as role models contribute significantly to a positive school climate (Luthfiatul Udhma & Sri Minarti, 2025). When school leaders embody ethical values and demonstrate consistency between their words and actions, teachers are more likely to feel motivated to uphold these values within their classrooms, thereby improving the overall educational quality.

Further, research by Imam et al. (2025) supports the idea that idealized influence enhances organizational trust. Teachers who trust their leaders are more likely to engage in collaborative work and seek out professional development opportunities. Rahman (2025) also highlighted that when leaders demonstrate high moral standards, they cultivate a culture of accountability, which positively impacts teachers' job satisfaction and organizational commitment. In the context of Islamic educational institutions, idealized influence takes on additional significance. As these institutions are often grounded in strong ethical and religious values, the behavior of leaders who model integrity and trustworthiness can strengthen the alignment between the school's mission and its day-to-day operations. This finding is consistent with research by Rahmatullah & Maisyarah (2025), who found that Islamic educational institutions with leaders who exhibit ethical behavior enhance teachers' commitment to their roles and their alignment with the institution's religious values.

2. Inspirational Motivation

Inspirational motivation is a crucial dimension of transformational leadership that significantly influences teacher motivation, commitment, and overall school climate. This dimension refers to the leader's ability to articulate a compelling vision and inspire enthusiasm among followers by presenting a positive outlook for the future. The study found that leaders who effectively communicate a clear and inspiring vision for the institution contribute to increased teacher engagement, which is essential for improving educational outcomes (Kareem, J., Patrick, H. A., Prabakaran, N., Valarmathi, B., Tantia, V., M. P. M., & Mukherjee, 2023).

The findings of this study align with previous research, such as the work of Zainuddin et al. (2025), who emphasize that leaders who convey a strong, inspiring vision of educational success can effectively mobilize teachers to achieve institutional goals. Inspirational motivation encourages teachers to view their roles as integral to the school's mission, fostering a deeper sense of purpose and commitment to their work. Moreover, when leaders motivate teachers with an uplifting vision, they enhance teachers' intrinsic motivation, as they become more invested in their professional development and the students' educational progress (Handayani et al., 2025).

In the context of Islamic education, the alignment of visionary leadership with Islamic values plays a significant role. Rahman (2025) found that leaders who incorporate Islamic principles into their educational vision can foster a sense of shared responsibility and purpose among teachers, thereby strengthening their commitment to both the academic and ethical goals of the institution. This integration of values not only boosts teacher motivation but also reinforces the unique identity of Islamic educational institutions, creating a sense of belonging and loyalty. Furthermore, the study supports the findings of Shrivastav et al. (2025), who highlighted the importance of leaders using inspirational motivation to cultivate a supportive environment where teachers feel empowered and confident in their ability to innovate and improve. Inspirational motivation, therefore, not only boosts teachers' enthusiasm but also helps create a positive and collaborative school culture, ultimately leading to improved educational quality.

3. Intellectual Stimulation

Intellectual stimulation refers to the ability of leaders to encourage creativity, problem-solving, and innovation by challenging conventional thinking and fostering an environment where teachers are encouraged to explore new ideas and approaches. In the context of educational leadership, intellectual stimulation plays a critical role in enhancing the professional development of teachers, as it creates an atmosphere of continuous learning and growth. This dimension of transformational leadership has been found to significantly influence teacher motivation, particularly in how they engage with new teaching methods, technology, and pedagogical reforms (Menon, M. E., & Lefteri, 2021).

Research consistently underscores the importance of intellectual stimulation in educational settings. For instance, in a study by Luthfiatul Udhma and Sri Minarti (2025), the authors highlighted that intellectual stimulation from leaders helps teachers critically evaluate their teaching practices and adopt innovative methods that align with contemporary educational standards. Teachers in schools led by transformational leaders who prioritize intellectual stimulation tend to feel more empowered to experiment with new ideas, which, in turn, enhances their motivation and overall teaching effectiveness (Chen, S., Kadir, S. A., & Kang, 2023).

Furthermore, studies such as those by Imam et al. (2025) and Sudirman et al. (2025) emphasize that intellectual stimulation is especially beneficial when organizational structures support innovative efforts. When leaders encourage teachers to embrace intellectual challenges while simultaneously providing access to resources such as professional development programs and collaboration opportunities, teachers are more likely to thrive (Sudirman et al., 2025). These resources act as catalysts that amplify the effects of intellectual stimulation, ensuring that teachers' creative ideas are not only acknowledged but also nurtured within a supportive environment.

However, the impact of intellectual stimulation is not always uniform. Research by Zainuddin et al. (2025) and Perifanis and Kitsios (2023) suggests that the effectiveness of intellectual stimulation is contingent upon the availability of sufficient organizational support. In environments where resources, such as time, training, and technological tools, are limited, intellectual stimulation may fail to produce the desired outcomes. Teachers may become frustrated if their innovative ideas cannot be implemented due to systemic constraints. This highlights the need for a balance between intellectual stimulation and organizational support to ensure that the benefits of transformational leadership are fully realized in educational settings (Fitria, T., Zainuddin, A., & Masykur, 2025; Perifanis & Kitsios, 2023).

4. Individualized consideration

Individualized consideration is the dimension of transformational leadership that emphasizes leaders' attention to the individual needs of their followers. Leaders who practice individualized consideration offer personalized support, mentoring, and encouragement, which are essential in fostering a supportive work environment. This study reveals that transformational leaders who provide individualized consideration significantly enhance teacher motivation and commitment, which ultimately improves educational quality.

Research has consistently shown that individualized consideration positively influences teacher well-being and job satisfaction. Leaders who engage with teachers on a personal level, understand their unique strengths and weaknesses, and offer guidance tailored to their professional development needs, create a work environment where teachers feel valued and supported. This fosters a sense of belonging and commitment to the school's mission, resulting in greater retention rates and increased teacher motivation (Luthfiatul Udhma & Sri Minarti, 2025; Rahman, 2025). Teachers who receive individualized consideration are also more likely to engage in continuous professional development, as they feel their professional growth is prioritized.

Furthermore, individualized consideration has been shown to play a crucial role in addressing the emotional and psychological needs of teachers. A study by Handayani et al. (2025) found that teachers who feel personally supported by their leaders exhibit higher levels of emotional resilience and are better equipped to cope with the challenges of the profession (Handayani et al., 2025). In Islamic educational settings, where relational values such as trust, respect, and care are central to

leadership practices, individualized consideration aligns with the ethical and spiritual dimensions of leadership (Rahmatullah & Maisyarah, 2025). This relational approach helps build stronger emotional ties between leaders and teachers, leading to a more cohesive and productive school culture.

Moreover, individualized consideration has a profound impact on teachers' professional development. By providing personalized feedback and opportunities for growth, leaders who demonstrate individualized consideration facilitate teachers' professional empowerment. Teachers are encouraged to pursue leadership roles, engage in innovation, and adopt new pedagogical methods, all of which contribute to the overall quality of education (Zainuddin et al., 2025; Imam et al., 2025). In this way, individualized consideration goes beyond mere emotional support; it directly influences teachers' professional capacities and their ability to contribute to school improvement initiatives.

DISCUSSION

The present study confirms that transformational leadership significantly influences teacher motivation, commitment, and overall educational quality findings that are consistent with a growing body of empirical evidence in recent years. Our demonstration that transformational leadership positively affects teacher engagement and contributes to school improvement corroborates studies such as those by *The Influence of Transformational Leadership and Teacher Performance Through Organizational Commitment as a Mediation Variable* (Boylan et al., 2023; Hang, 2025; Hijriyah et al., 2022; Sarinah et al., 2024), which found a direct effect of transformational leadership on teacher performance, and by *Transformational Leadership, Work Motivation, and School Quality: a Study in Indonesian Public Elementary Schools* (Suryati et al., 2023) showing that principal leadership and motivation significantly impact teacher performance.

Moreover, the nuanced role of individual leadership dimensions observed in our study such as idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration aligns with broader findings in educational leadership literature. For instance, the recent work by *The impact of transformational leadership on teacher performance: A study of professional learning communities in Indonesia* (Aridan et al., 2025; Jatmiko et al., 2024; Nisa et al., 2024; Schmitz et al., 2025) highlights that transformational leadership fosters teacher participation in professional learning communities (PLCs), which in turn improves teacher performance. This suggests that effective leadership not only directly influences teacher attitudes but also creates structural conditions (e.g., PLCs) that amplify positive outcomes a pattern resonant with our findings regarding the synergy of leadership practices and supportive organizational culture.

Significantly, recent international evidence reinforces the broader impact of transformational leadership on teacher autonomy and empowerment. A 2024 study in a collectivist cultural setting found that transformational leadership predicted teacher autonomy, mediated by organizational climate and moderated by teacher empowerment. This supports our observation that intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration can foster a sense of autonomy among teachers, enabling them to innovate pedagogically, adjust to students' needs, and commit more deeply to institutional goals (Ajonbadi, H. A., Adekoya, O. D., Mojeed-Sanni, B., & Olawoyin, 2023).

In the context of efforts to improve school quality and respond to evolving educational demands, combining transformational leadership with other organizational supports appears increasingly important. For example, a study by El Achi et al. (2025) demonstrated significant positive effects of transformational leadership on teacher motivation and performance within diverse educational institutions, suggesting that the benefits of transformational leadership remain robust across contexts. Taken together, these findings both ours and from recent literature suggest that transformational leadership operates not only through direct motivational pathways, but also via structural and contextual mechanisms (e.g., supportive climate, PLCs, empowerment) that enhance teacher autonomy, commitment, innovation, and performance.

The novelty of our study lies in its integrative approach: whereas many previous studies isolate single dimensions of leadership or focus narrowly on motivation or performance, our

research concurrently examines all four classical dimensions of transformational leadership and explores their collective influence on school climate, teacher engagement, and educational quality. Furthermore, by situating the study within an Islamic educational context (if applicable adjust accordingly), our research contributes to understanding how transformational leadership can be operationalized in culturally and institutionally specific settings, which remains underrepresented in global literature.

The implications of our findings are both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, our results reinforce the argument that transformational leadership should be considered as a multi-dimensional construct whose combined dimensions exert synergistic effects on teacher outcomes and school quality. Practically, our study suggests that school administrators and policymakers should invest in leadership development programs that cultivate all dimensions of transformational leadership not only charisma or vision, but also individualized support, intellectual stimulation, and ethical role modeling. Additionally, schools should foster supportive organizational structures such as professional learning communities and environments that encourage teacher empowerment to maximize the positive impact of transformational leadership. These measures could contribute to sustained improvements in teacher performance, institutional commitment, and overall educational quality.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that transformational leadership plays a strategic role in improving educational quality through the integrated influence of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. These dimensions collectively strengthen teacher motivation, commitment, professional growth, and school climate, which are essential for sustainable educational improvement. The study contributes theoretically by presenting a multidimensional perspective of transformational leadership within Islamic educational contexts, highlighting how leadership practices can be aligned with institutional values to address contemporary challenges. Practically, the findings emphasize the need for structured leadership development programs that cultivate ethical role modeling, visionary communication, intellectual empowerment, and personalized support, supported by organizational cultures that encourage collaboration and innovation (Owusu-Agyeman, 2021).

LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations that should be noted. As an SLR, the findings depend on the scope of selected databases (Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar), and studies published outside these sources may have been missed. The review was also limited to the past ten years, which may exclude relevant foundational works. Most reviewed studies are concentrated in Indonesian Islamic educational contexts, restricting broader generalizability. Additionally, many studies relied on self-reported data, which may be subject to response bias. The proposed conceptual model remains theoretical and requires empirical validation. Future research is encouraged to adopt primary or mixed-methods designs and expand across diverse geographical and institutional contexts to address these constraints.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION

SN contributed to the conceptualization, literature search, and drafting of the manuscript. RL contributed to the methodology design, data screening, and critical review. NF contributed to the data extraction, thematic synthesis, and cross-case mapping. ND contributed to the supervision, validation of the conceptual framework, and final review. EH contributed to the project administration, quality assessment, and revision of the manuscript. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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