Spiritual-Transformational Leadership in Realizing a Culture of Quality in Islamic Educational Institutions SDN 02 Kampung serdangkuring Bahuga Way Kanan

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Abstrak: Lembaga pendidikan Islam menghadapi tuntutan peningkatan mutu yang semakin kompleks seiring perkembangan lingkungan sosial, teknologi, dan standar pendidikan modern. Kondisi ini menuntut pemimpin lembaga tidak hanya mengandalkan kemampuan manajerial, tetapi juga keteguhan nilai spiritual dan kemampuan menggerakkan perubahan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis bagaimana kepemimpinan spiritual-transformasional dijalankan dalam mewujudkan budaya mutu di sebuah lembaga pendidikan Islam yang berkomitmen terhadap perbaikan berkelanjutan. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis studi kasus, melibatkan kepala sekolah, guru, staf administrasi, dan komite sebagai informan. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, serta studi dokumentasi, dan dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles & Huberman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pemimpin menampilkan keteladanan spiritual yang konsisten melalui praktik ibadah, komunikasi yang santun, dan nilai-nilai amanah serta keikhlasan dalam pengambilan keputusan. Pada saat yang sama, pemimpin menjalankan kepemimpinan transformasional dengan memberikan motivasi, dukungan inovasi, dan perhatian personal kepada guru. Budaya mutu terbentuk melalui penerapan sistem seperti supervisi sejawat, jurnal refleksi, SOP mutu, serta audit internal yang dilaksanakan secara rutin. Integrasi unsur spiritual dan transformasional menciptakan iklim organisasi yang inspiratif dan adaptif, sehingga berdampak pada peningkatan kedisiplinan siswa, inovasi pembelajaran, dan hasil akademik. Implikasi penelitian menunjukkan pentingnya penguatan karakter spiritual pemimpin sekaligus peningkatan kapasitas manajerial untuk mendorong budaya mutu yang berkelanjutan dalam lembaga pendidikan Islam.
Kata kunci: kepemimpinan spiritual, kepemimpinan transformasional, budaya mutu, lembaga pendidikan Islam, manajemen pendidikan.

Abstract: The quality culture of Islamic educational institutions is strongly influenced by the character and leadership style of their leaders, particularly in balancing spiritual values with the demands of organizational transformation. However, many institutions still face challenges such as inconsistent quality implementation, limited innovation, and low collective commitment. This study aims to explore how spiritual–transformational leadership contributes to the development of a sustainable quality culture within Islamic educational institutions. Using a qualitative case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews with school leaders, teachers, and staff, as well as observations and documentation analysis. The findings reveal that spiritual role modeling from leaders fosters sincerity, ethical discipline, and positive emotional climate, while transformational practices encourage innovation, participatory decision-making, and continuous improvement. The integration of these two leadership dimensions creates a harmonious ecosystem that strengthens both internal motivation and structural quality systems. Nevertheless, several challenges remain, including uneven teacher commitment, limited resources, and the need for stronger evaluation mechanisms. The study implies that Islamic educational institutions should institutionalize spiritual–transformational leadership patterns through structured training, reinforcement of quality assurance systems, and long-term capacity building.
Keywords: spiritual leadership, transformational leadership, quality culture, Islamic education, organizational improvement.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic educational institutions are currently at an important crossroads, where demands for quality, public accountability, and social change dynamics are becoming increasingly strong.[1] Technological developments, global education standards, and increasingly high public expectations demand a strong culture of quality in every educational unit. However, in reality, many Islamic educational institutions still face various obstacles, such as a weak professional work culture, suboptimal commitment to quality among all madrasah members, a lack of innovation in learning, and minimal internalization of spiritual values in institutional management.[2] This situation highlights the need for a leadership model that is not only oriented towards improving performance but is also capable of reviving the spiritual values that form the identity of Islamic education.In this context, spiritual and transformational leadership have emerged as two approaches that are gaining attention.[3]

Spiritual leadership emphasizes the importance of meaning, sincerity, integrity, and religious values in driving an organization. Meanwhile, transformational leadership focuses on the leader's ability to inspire change, build collective motivation, create innovation, and encourage the growth of a sustainable culture of quality.[4] Although the two are often studied separately, practice in the field shows that combining spiritual values and transformational abilities can be the key to building a holistic culture of quality in Islamic educational institutions.[5] However, studies that integrate these two leadership models are still limited and often only look at their partial effects.The research gap arises because most previous studies have focused more on the influence of transformational leadership on teacher performance or learning quality, without exploring the spiritual dimensions that are characteristic of Islamic educational institutions.[6]

Similarly, research on spiritual leadership has largely stopped at the aspects of values and role models, but has not yet directly linked them to organizational change

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[1] Adri Lundeto, "Islamic Religious Education Literacy as a Source of Multiculturalism Education in Indonesia," *Italienisch*, 11.2 (2021), 288–96.

[2] Muhammad Talhah Ajmain dkk., "Challenges of Islamic Education Teachers in Teaching," 2.1 (2019), 38–47.

[3] Feri Riski Dinata dan Ali Kuswadi, "Kolaborasi Pesantren dan Perguruan Tinggi Islam : Model Manajemen Kemitraan Berkelanjutan," 2.1 (2025), 8–14.

[4] Agus Wahyu Triatmo dkk., "A political ideology of the Indonesian Islamic philanthropy: a case study of Suryakarta Berama foundation," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, 10.2 (2020), 353–80 <https://doi.org/10.18326/IJIMS.V10I2.353-380>.

[5] Feri Riski dan Ali Kuswadi, "Manajemen Pendidikan Kepala Sekolah Dalam Mengaplikasikan Visi dan Misi di SMK Negeri 1 Pakuan Ratu," 1.1 (2024), 7–15.

[6] Feri Riski Dinata, Ali Kuswadi, dan Dwi Novianti, "Peran Deep Learning dalam Optimalisasi Proses Manajemen Pembelajaran di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah," 1.1 (2025), 33–36.

strategies and the formation of a culture of quality.[7] There are not many studies that describe how these two leadership models work simultaneously in the context of Islamic educational institutions, especially in building a culture of quality that includes planning, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement.Based on these gaps, this study aims to describe and analyze how spiritual-transformational leadership is exercised by leaders of Islamic educational institutions in realizing a culture of quality. This study seeks to examine leadership practices comprehensively, from the spiritual values embodied by leaders and the transformational strategies used, to how both contribute to the formation of a culture of quality in institutions.[8]

Previous studies have indeed provided an important foundation, such as studies showing that transformational leadership has a significant effect on teacher performance, work motivation, and institutional effectiveness.[9] Meanwhile, studies on spiritual leadership emphasize the importance of the meaning of work, exemplary behavior, and the existence of a divine vision in strengthening organizational commitment. However, previous studies generally separate the two approaches and rarely view them as a unified leadership model. This study is different because it integrates spiritual and transformational elements and directly links them to the formation of a culture of quality in Islamic educational institutions. Thus, this study is expected to provide a new perspective on how leaders can simultaneously be spiritual role models and drivers of quality change.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study research design because its main focus is to gain an in-depth understanding of spiritual-transformational leadership practices in the real context of Islamic educational institutions. [10] The qualitative approach was chosen because this study seeks to explore the meaning, experience, and dynamics of leadership that cannot be measured only by numbers, but must be understood through interpretation of the actions, policies, and interactions

[7] Susi Ernawati dkk., "Islamic Education Management Strategy in the Digital Era : Governance Transformation to Increase Effectiveness and Accessibility," *International Journal of Islamic Educational Research*, 1.3 (2024), 28.

[8] Taufiqurrahman Siddiq Moh Solikul Hadi, Muhammad Arif Robbani, "Konsep Pendidikan Islam di Era Society 5 . 0 Perspektif Hadist," 3.1 (2021), 28–39.

[9] Moh. Solikul Hadi, M. Sayyidul Abrori, dan Dwi Noviatul Zahra, "Pengembangan Multimedia Interaktif Macromedia Flash Profesional 8 Pada Pembelajaran Al-Qur'an Hadis Kelas X Semester Genap Di Man 1 Yogyakarta," *At-Tajdid : Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pemikiran Islam*, 3.2 (2020), 148 <https://doi.org/10.24127/att.v3i2.1123>.

[10] John W Creswell, *A Mixed-Method Approach*, *Writing Center Talk over Time*, 2018 <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429469237-3>.

that occur within the institution. The complex nature of leadership and its spiritual values also require methods that are able to capture the depth of the phenomenon in a more flexible and contextual manner.[11]

The research location was determined purposively, namely at an Islamic educational institution known for its commitment to developing a culture of quality and having leaders who demonstrate the characteristics of leadership based on spiritual values and a spirit of transformation.[12] Informants were also selected purposively and using the snowball method, involving the head of the madrasah or the head of the institution as the main informant, followed by teachers, management staff, and committee members or other internal stakeholders who understood the dynamics of leadership and the implementation of a culture of quality in the institution. This approach allowed the researcher to obtain diverse and in-depth perspectives on how leadership was exercised.[13]

Data was collected through several main techniques, namely in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. In-depth interviews were conducted face-to-face using semi-structured interview guidelines so that researchers could explore the informants' experiences while still allowing room for new information to emerge beyond the initial questions. Observations were made by observing leadership activities, interaction patterns, work culture, learning activities, and quality management practices taking place at the institution. Meanwhile, documentation included reviewing the institution's vision and mission documents, quality programs, meeting minutes, SOPs, strategic plans, and various archives that supported understanding of the leadership phenomenon.[14]

All collected data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. In the data reduction stage, researchers selected, grouped, and focused on data relevant to spiritual-transformational leadership patterns and quality culture.[15] Data presentation was carried out by compiling narratives, matrices, or thematic categories that made it easier for researchers to see the relationships between phenomena. Conclusions were then drawn through a continuous interpretation

[11] C.L. Shneerson dan N.K. Gale, "Using mixed methods to identify and answer clinically relevant research questions," *Qualitative Health Research*, 25.6 (2015), 845–56 <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732315580107>.

[12] Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Kualitatif dan R&D* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2020).

[13] Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif, Kuantitatif dan RnD* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2019).

[14] Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan: Pendekatan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif R & D* (Bandung: Alfabeta).

[15] Wildani Ridlo dan Arina Nur Sofiana, "Collaborative Leadership as a Catalyst in Optimizing the Quality of Education at Elementary School A . Introduction," 6.3 (2025), 1346–62.

process, ensuring that each finding was always re-verified during the research process.[16]

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Spiritual Exemplarity of Leaders is Visible Consistently

The spiritual exemplary nature of a leader is a fundamental pillar that determines the quality of their leadership.[17] When leaders consistently demonstrate spiritual behavior in their words, actions, and decisions it becomes a source of moral energy that influences everyone in the organization. This consistency makes leaders not only respected figures, but also trusted figures because they are seen as consistent in what they say and do.Leaders who possess spiritual exemplarity usually exhibit characteristics such as honesty, sincerity, integrity, patience, and concern for the welfare of others. These values are not only evident in formal contexts, but also in daily interactions.[18] For example, leaders who always begin activities with prayer, make decisions based on ethical considerations, are fair and impartial, and show empathy when members of the institution face problems. All of these actions create a positive and calm psychological atmosphere.[19]

This consistency has a major impact on trust. Members of the institution tend to trust leaders who are able to maintain a stable attitude and do not change easily due to certain conditions.[20] When leaders demonstrate spiritual values repeatedly and predictably, members of the institution feel secure because they understand the moral standards that form the basis of leadership. This trust then develops into a strong commitment to follow the direction, vision, and policies of the institution.In addition, spiritual exemplary behavior also serves as a model for members of the institution. Through the behavior of leaders, they learn how to apply moral values in their work and interactions. Thus, spiritual exemplary behavior not only improves the personal qualities of leaders, but also influences the culture of the institution as a whole. In the long term, the institution will develop into a more harmonious, productive environment

[16] Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan: Pendekatan Kuantitatif, Kualitatif R & D*.

[17] Muhammad Rahman Saiful Bahri, "Mengembangkan Kecerdasan Spiritual Anak Dengan Konsep Multidisipliner," 4.2 (2018), 149–55.

[18] Mitra Sasmita dkk., "Islamic Education As the Spiritual and Moral Foundation of the Young Generation," *Indonesian Journal of Education (INJOE)*, 4.3 (2024), 857–71.

[19] Joanna Crossman, "Secular spiritual development in education from international and global perspectives," *Oxford Review of Education*, 29.4 (2003), 503–20.

[20] Jasmine Timm dkk., "An exploratory study on the relationship between completion of Erikson's fourth psychosocial stage and assurance of salvation," *Journal of Spirituality in Mental Health*, 24.1 (2022), 53–73 <https://doi.org/10.1080/19349637.2020.1798326>.

oriented towards ethical and humanitarian values.In the context of education, this becomes even more important. Teachers, educational staff, and students see leaders as reflections of how spiritual values are manifested in practice. When leaders are able to maintain consistency in their spiritual exemplarity, the institution has a solid moral foundation to achieve sustainable educational goals.[21]

Interview results show that the leader begins every activity with spiritual values such as the intention of worship, trustworthiness, and sincerity. This aligns with Fry's (2003) Spiritual Leadership theory, which emphasizes the importance of calling and membership in building intrinsic motivation. Observations indicate that the leader does not merely give orders but is also physically present in religious activities and provides an example of good character.[22] This exemplary behavior creates role modeling, which becomes the foundation for establishing a value-based organizational culture. Previous studies also affirm that leaders' spiritual behavior influences teachers' moral commitment. Thus, consistency in spiritual role modeling becomes an ethical energy that strengthens the culture of quality, because quality is not only a technical aspect but also a matter of work morality.[23]

Leaders Drive Transformation Through Innovation and Motivation

These findings indicate that the leader effectively practices transformational leadership within the educational institution. The leader does not rely solely on authority or personal charisma but actively drives change through various strategic actions. He encourages teachers to innovate, appreciates creative efforts, and provides space for dialogue to express new ideas.[24] This approach demonstrates that the leader understands the dynamics of modern organizations, which demand flexibility, collaboration, and continuous renewal. The leader's actions align with the four dimensions of transformational leadership proposed by Bass & Avolio (1994). Inspirational motivation is reflected in his ability to inspire change and instill a clear

[21] Bulkani Bulkani dkk., "Impact of holistic learning models on character development: a systematic review," *Obrazovanie i Nauka*, 27.5 (2025), 111–41 <https://doi.org/10.17853/1994-5639-2025-5-111-141>.

[22] Abdul Kadir dkk., "Development of Integrated Science Teaching Materials of Al-Quran Verses in Improving Students' Religious Attitudes in Madrasas," *Nazhruna: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 7.3 (2024), 512–30 <https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v7i3.2>.

[23] Rayani Rayani, "The Integration of Self-Directed Learning and Mind Skills in the Development of Islamic Character among Guidance and Counseling Students," *International Journal of Innovation and Thinking*, 2.4 (2025), 222–29 <https://doi.org/10.71364/ijit.v2i4.57>.

[24] Dodi Ilham, "Challenge of Islamic Education and How to Change," *International Journal of Asian Education*, 1.1 (2020), 09–20 <https://doi.org/10.46966/ijae.v1i1.16>.

vision among teachers.[25] Intellectual stimulation is visible through his encouragement for teachers to experiment, try new methods, and solve instructional problems creatively. Individualized consideration appears in his personal attention to teachers, understanding their individual needs, and offering support based on their capacities. Meanwhile, idealized influence emerges through his exemplary behavior in work ethic, professionalism, and commitment to positive change.

Field observations reinforce these findings. The leader functions as an agent of change who actively leads the digitalization of administration and instructional improvement. He does not simply give instructions but participates directly in the process, creating an inspiring and collaborative work atmosphere. His exemplary conduct motivates teachers, makes them feel valued, and encourages openness toward innovation.[26] This condition is in line with numerous studies showing that transformational leadership significantly influences teacher performance, accelerates innovation, and strengthens organizational culture. By integrating spiritual role modeling with modern managerial strategies, the leader successfully responds to contemporary educational challenges that require adaptability, creativity, and efficiency.[27] Thus, it can be concluded that the leader does not rely solely on spiritual charisma as a leadership asset but also practices a transformational approach oriented toward change and the holistic improvement of institutional quality.

Quality Culture is Built Through Systems and Habits

The findings indicate that a culture of quality does not emerge spontaneously; rather, it develops through clear systems and continuously reinforced habits. The data show that the institution has established Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), reflective journals, peer supervision mechanisms, and periodic quality audits. These elements demonstrate the implementation of continuous quality improvement (CQI) principles, as emphasized in Total Quality Management (TQM) frameworks within the educational context.[28] Interview results reveal that teachers have become accustomed to ongoing improvement because the leader consistently reinforces discipline and adherence to established procedures. Observations of the school environment

[25] Isri Nafisah dkk., "The Concept of Morality, Ihsan and Ta'dib in the Formation of Islamic Character and Malay Culture," *Lentera Pendidikan : Jurnal Ilmu Tarbiyah dan Keguruan*, 28.1 (2025), 217–27 <https://doi.org/10.24252/lp.2025v28n1i12>.

[26] Hui Li dkk., "Influence of transformational leadership on employees' innovative work behavior in sustainable organizations: Test of mediation and moderation processes," *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 11.6 (2019), 1–21 <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11061594>.

[27] Mohammad Kosim dkk., "The dynamics of Islamic education policies in Indonesia," *Cogent Education*, 10.1 (2023), 1–15 <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2172930>.

[28] Feri Riski dan Dwi Novianti, "Manajemen Pembinaan Karakter Siswa di SMP Negeri 2 Bumi Agung," 1.1 (2024), 23–30.

characterized by orderly routines, disciplined students, and structured activities further confirm that the culture of quality has become an integral part of the organization's identity. Thus, the emergence of a quality culture is shaped by a combination of formal systems (such as documentation, SOPs, and structured evaluations) and informal cultural elements (including discipline, collaboration, and role modeling). These two dimensions complement each other, transforming quality from a mere program into a collective organizational habit.

Spiritual–Transformational Integration Appears Harmonious

The findings reveal that spiritual and transformational leadership do not operate as two separate forces but blend together in a harmonious and mutually reinforcing way. Spiritual values provide meaning, guidance, and moral grounding, while transformational practices offer direction and motivation for change. The fusion of these two dimensions produces a leadership style that feels both humanistic and forward-thinking. Interviews show that teachers feel morally valued and professionally empowered under this leadership.[29] Observations further illustrate that the leader is able to be gentle yet firm, and deeply religious yet strategic in decision-making. This balance moves beyond conventional leadership models that typically separate moral influence from managerial competence.[30] The analysis suggests that this integrated leadership creates a strong sense of meaning in teachers' work, increases their readiness to embrace change, and nurtures a collaborative work culture. Such integration is rarely discussed in previous studies, which often treat spiritual and transformational leadership as distinct concepts. However, the results of this research indicate that their combination generates a more powerful and sustainable impact, particularly in strengthening the institution's culture of quality

CONSLUTION

This study demonstrates that spiritual–transformational leadership plays a strategic role in building and strengthening a culture of quality within Islamic educational institutions. The leader's spiritual exemplarity serves as a moral foundation that fosters trust, loyalty, and commitment among all members of the school community. The leader not only guides through technical instructions but also embodies core Islamic values such as *amanah* (trustworthiness), sincerity, and noble character in daily leadership practices. This integration of values creates a meaningful organizational climate and cultivates a strong sense of belonging among teachers and staff. At the same time, the leader employs a transformational approach characterized by motivation, empowerment, and support for innovation. The leader provides space for teachers to develop new ideas, encourages the renewal of instructional

[29] Zunaidi Harun dkk., "Leadership within Religious-Based School in Malaysia: A Meta-Analysis Study," *JIEMAN: Journal of Islamic Educational Management*, 3.1 (2020), 129–62 <https://doi.org/10.35719/jieman.v3i1.67>.

[30] Fazlur Rehman, "Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual tradition" (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1982).

practices, and ensures that ongoing reflection and supervision are consistently implemented. Through this combination, the culture of quality is shaped not merely through formal systems and documented procedures but also through habituation, collaboration, discipline, and the collective awareness of the entire school community. The integration of spiritual and transformational values has been shown to create a harmonious balance between morality and professionalism, leading to improved discipline, enhanced innovation, and better student learning outcomes. Although the institution continues to face challenges such as limited digital infrastructure and varying levels of teacher readiness, spiritual–transformational leadership remains a decisive factor in sustaining and enhancing educational quality over time

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