

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP MANAGEMENT IN IMPROVING THE PERFORMANCE QUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL STAFF AT THE STATE HIGH SCHOOL (MAN) IN TARAKAN

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative case study explores the implementation of transformational management by the Madrasah Principal at MAN Tarakan City and its impact on employee performance. Data were collected through observation, documentation, and interviews, then analyzed using data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was ensured through triangulation of sources and techniques. The results indicate that transformational leadership is implemented through four main pillars: strong role modeling, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation for innovation, and individual attention. This approach has been proven to significantly improve employee performance, as reflected in discipline, professional independence, intrinsic motivation, and a sense of ownership of the institution's vision. The implication is that the integration of transformational leadership with religious values successfully builds an adaptive and productive organizational culture. This success confirms that improving educational quality relies heavily on the psychological and emotional empowerment of staff by leadership. Practically, this study recommends the importance of transformational leadership training to maintain sustainable performance within the State Madrasah Aliyah (Islamic Senior High School).

ABSTRAK

Penelitian kualitatif studi kasus ini mengeksplorasi implementasi manajemen transformasional Kepala Madrasah di MAN Kota Tarakan serta dampaknya terhadap kinerja pegawai. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, dokumentasi, dan wawancara, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Keabsahan data dijamin melalui triangulasi sumber dan teknik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan kepemimpinan transformasional diterapkan melalui empat pilar utama: keteladanan kuat, motivasi inspirasional, stimulasi intelektual untuk berinovasi, dan perhatian individual. Pendekatan ini terbukti signifikan meningkatkan kualitas kinerja pegawai, yang tercermin dari kedisiplinan, kemandirian profesional, motivasi intrinsik, serta rasa memiliki terhadap visi lembaga. Implikasinya, integrasi kepemimpinan transformasional dengan nilai religius berhasil membangun budaya organisasi yang adaptif dan produktif. Keberhasilan ini menegaskan bahwa peningkatan mutu pendidikan sangat bertumpu pada pemberdayaan staf secara psikologis dan emosional oleh pimpinan. Secara praktis, studi ini merekomendasikan pentingnya pelatihan kepemimpinan transformasional demi menjaga keberlanjutan prestasi di lingkungan Madrasah Aliyah Negeri.

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1. Introduction

In the rapidly evolving landscape of modern education, the quality of educational institutions heavily relies on the effectiveness of their leadership. Educational management is no longer just about maintaining administrative routines; it requires a dynamic approach to foster continuous improvement. In Islamic educational institutions, such as madrasahs, the demand for high-quality outcomes is even more pressing, as they must balance contemporary academic standards with robust religious values. At the heart of this institutional progress is the human resource element. Maximizing employee performance and unleashing the full potential of staff members remain the primary drivers for achieving institutional excellence.

However, translating a leader's strategic vision into actual, measurable employee performance presents a significant challenge in the field. Many institutions struggle with a disconnect between leadership ideals and daily operational reality, often leading to stagnant stagnation, low motivation, and a lack of innovation among staff. To bridge this gap, transformational management has emerged as a crucial leadership paradigm. By moving beyond traditional transactional frameworks, transformational leadership focuses on inspiring, motivating, and intellectually stimulating followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes.

While the concept of transformational leadership has been widely researched in corporate and general public sectors, its specific application within the unique cultural and religious ecosystem of Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) remains under-explored. A deep dive into how a madrasah principal operationalizes this management style to navigate both organizational dynamics and spiritual mandates is highly necessary. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by describing the implementation of transformational management by the Principal at MAN Kota Tarakan and analyzing its direct impact on enhancing employee performance. By exploring this phenomenon, this research seeks to provide valuable insights into creating an adaptive, productive, and vision-driven educational environment.

In the rapidly evolving landscape of modern education, institutional quality heavily relies on effective leadership that can maximize human resource potential. In Islamic educational institutions like madrasahs, the pressure to excel is doubled as they must balance contemporary academic standards with robust religious values. However, translating a leader's strategic vision into actual, measurable employee performance remains a significant field challenge, often hindered by a gap between leadership ideals and operational realities. To bridge this gap, transformational management has emerged as a crucial paradigm. Operating through four core dimensions idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized

consideration this leadership style shifts employee compliance into intrinsic motivation, fostering discipline, professional autonomy, and a deep sense of belonging necessary for institutional excellence.

While transformational leadership is widely studied in corporate sectors, its specific integration with religious values within the ecosystem of Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) remains under-explored. Most existing literature leaves a gap in understanding how secular management frameworks and spiritual mandates blend to form an adaptive organizational culture. This study directly addresses this gap by describing the implementation of transformational management by the Principal at MAN Kota Tarakan and analyzing its impact on enhancing employee performance. The findings offer a vital contribution to educational management, providing a practical blueprint for administrators on how to psychologically empower staff, integrate religious values, and sustain institutional achievements in a fast-changing academic era.

2. Method

This study employed a qualitative research approach with a case study design to gain a deep, contextual understanding of transformational management implementation. The case study design was selected because it allows for a detailed, holistic investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context—specifically, the leadership practices of the Principal at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) Kota Tarakan and their direct influence on employee performance. By focusing on a single institution, the researchers could capture the unique cultural dynamics and religious nuances that characterize management within an Islamic public high school setting.

The primary data sources consisted of key informants selected through purposive sampling to ensure they possessed rich, relevant insights into the institution's leadership and operational environment. Informants included the Principal of MAN Kota Tarakan, vice-principals, and various members of the teaching and administrative staff. Data collection was carried out through three interconnected techniques to ensure comprehensiveness: participative observation of daily school management routines, in-depth interviews guided by semi-structured protocols, and documentary analysis of institutional visions, performance records, and administrative policies.

To maintain the objectivity and credibility of the findings, data trustworthiness was established using triangulation strategies. The researchers applied source triangulation by cross-verifying information given by different informants (e.g., comparing the Principal's perspectives with staff accounts) and technique triangulation by cross-checking data across different

methods, such as validating interview statements against documentary evidence and observational field notes.

The collected qualitative data were analyzed systematically following the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which consists of three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. During data reduction, raw field notes and interview transcripts were selected, focused, simplified, and organized into themes corresponding to the four pillars of transformational leadership. In the data display stage, the reduced data were organized into structured narratives to identify patterns regarding leadership impact. Finally, conclusion drawing involved interpreting the displayed data to form valid meanings, which were continuously verified against the field data to ensure an accurate and credible final assessment.

3. Result and Discussion

1. Implementation of Transformational Management Pillars

The field findings reveal that the Principal of MAN Kota Tarakan systematically implements transformational management through four distinct pillars. The first pillar, idealized influence, is established through the Principal's position as a primary role model. Data shows a high consistency in punctuality, work ethic, and adherence to Islamic ethical values, which builds genuine trust and prompts staff to emulate these professional behaviors voluntarily. The second pillar, inspirational motivation, is demonstrated through the regular articulation of a compelling, shared vision during weekly briefings. Rather than relying on rigid compliance, the leadership emphasizes the spiritual and social value of education, helping employees find deeper meaning in their roles. For the third pillar, intellectual stimulation, innovation is driven by encouraging teachers to re-evaluate conventional teaching methodologies and utilize digital learning platforms. Finally, the fourth pillar, individualized consideration, is realized through an open-door policy where the Principal conducts regular one-on-one check-ins and allocates targeted training opportunities based on specific individual competencies.

The synergy among these four pillars creates a highly responsive feedback loop that reshapes the daily operational climate of the madrasah. By simultaneously providing a strong moral foundation and the structural freedom to innovate, the Principal transforms the workplace into a secure environment for professional experimentation. Staff members no longer perceive administrative mandates as restrictive barriers; instead, they view them as supportive pathways for creative development. This supportive atmosphere encourages open dialogue and peer collaboration, as teachers actively share their newly developed digital learning methods and instructional strategies with one another. Consequently, the implementation of this transformational framework

naturally dissolves systemic isolation, replacing traditional bureaucratic passivity with a vibrant, collaborative community of practice dedicated to continuous institutional improvement.

2. Impact on Employee Performance Quality

The structural implementation of these four pillars has directly influenced the operational quality and behavioral culture of the workforce at MAN Kota Tarakan. Prior to this implementation, work discipline and attendance were driven merely by formal regulations, whereas now staff demonstrate intrinsic punctuality and high responsibility toward administrative tasks. Furthermore, teachers have shifted from a heavy reliance on top-down instructions to exhibiting active professional autonomy in formulating innovative teaching methodologies. This change is accompanied by a transition in motivation sources, moving from purely extrinsic factors like basic job security to intrinsic desires for professional growth. Most importantly, the gap between personal targets and school goals has been bridged, resulting in a strong sense of belonging and direct ownership of the madrasah's long-term vision among the staff.

This profound alignment between individual ambitions and institutional goals fundamentally alters the social fabric of the madrasah, shifting the staff's collective mindset from individualism to shared accountability. When employees begin to view the madrasah's long-term vision as an extension of their personal and professional aspirations, a highly resilient collaborative network emerges across departments. Administrative staff and educators no longer operate in isolated silos; instead, they actively cooperate to streamline school operations and enhance student learning outcomes. This growing sense of ownership creates an informal peer-support system where staff naturally encourage and hold each other accountable, minimizing the need for constant, top-down disciplinary supervision. Ultimately, this behavioral shift stabilizes the school's operational quality, ensuring that high performance standards are maintained consistently even during periods of rapid institutional or curricular change.

3. Operationalization of Transformational Leadership in Islamic Education

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Discussion

The empirical findings of this study demonstrate that the operationalization of transformational management by the Principal at MAN Kota Tarakan goes beyond the mere adoption of contemporary administrative frameworks; it represents a profound psychological and cultural restructuring of the institution. By exploring these dynamics, this discussion contextualizes how the four pillars of transformational leadership interact with Islamic values to eliminate traditional execution barriers, empower human resources, and foster a highly adaptive organizational climate.

The success of *idealized influence* and *inspirational motivation* in this madrasah context highlights a critical theoretical synthesis between Western leadership models and Islamic organizational culture. In classical transformational leadership theory, idealized influence relies heavily on the secular charisma and personal integrity of the leader to build trust. However, at MAN Kota Tarakan, this dimension gains heightened legitimacy because it aligns seamlessly with the Islamic theological concept of *uswah hasanah* (the exemplary role model). When the Principal exhibits rigorous work discipline, punctuality, and ethical consistency, the staff do not view these behaviors merely as administrative compliance, but as a reflection of spiritual devotion (*ibadah*). This alignment bridges the notorious gap between a leader's abstract vision and actual employee performance. The vision is no longer perceived as a distant organizational target, but as a shared spiritual mission, transforming the baseline of employee motivation from extrinsic compliance to a deep, value-driven commitment.

Furthermore, the behavioral shifts observed among the teaching and administrative staff specifically the rise of professional autonomy and intrinsic motivation underscore the power of *intellectual stimulation* and *individualized consideration* in mitigating organizational inertia. Traditionally, bureaucratic educational settings suffer from a culture of dependency, where staff only act upon direct top-down commands. By actively stimulating the intellect of the faculty and removing the fear of administrative reprimand during creative trial phases, the Principal dismantles this rigid framework. Teachers are empowered to explore independent pedagogical innovations and digital tools, converting standard teaching routines into proactive professional development. When this autonomy is supported by individualized consideration where the leader addresses personal professional anxieties and allocates

training based on individual competencies it directly fosters a profound *sense of belonging*. Employees feel psychologically secure and emotionally validated by the management.

Ultimately, this study offers a vital blueprint for educational management by showing that institutional sustainability and performance quality are deeply tied to a leader's capacity to engage their workforce emotionally and psychologically. The integration of transformational leadership with religious values creates a resilient organizational ecosystem capable of adapting to rapid educational shifts. By shifting the administrative paradigm from transactional supervision to holistic empowerment, the madrasah reduces its reliance on constant top-down interventions. The staff becomes a self-regulating, highly motivated body capable of sustaining academic and administrative excellence independently.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the systematic implementation of transformational management by the Principal at MAN Kota Tarakan plays a pivotal role in significantly enhancing employee performance quality. The operationalization of this leadership style through four core pillars—idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration—effectively shifts the institutional culture from passive compliance to proactive excellence. By serving as a strong moral and professional role model, articulating a meaningful vision, encouraging pedagogical innovation, and addressing individual staff needs, the leadership successfully fosters heightened work discipline, active professional autonomy, and a profound sense of belonging among the teaching and administrative staff.

The theoretical and practical implications of this research highlight that the success of educational management in a madrasah ecosystem relies heavily on the harmonious integration of modern transformational frameworks with local religious values. When professional expectations are aligned with spiritual principles (such as *uswah hasanah*), employee motivation transitions from purely extrinsic rewards to deep intrinsic commitment. This holistic empowerment creates a resilient, adaptive, and self-regulating organizational climate capable of sustaining high performance standards independently.

Based on these findings, this study suggests that educational stakeholders and madrasah regulators prioritize structured, transformational-based leadership training for school principals. Such initiatives are essential to equip institutional leaders with the psychological and emotional tools necessary to empower their staff effectively. Furthermore, future researchers are encouraged to expand upon this study by conducting quantitative or mixed-method investigations across multiple regions to broader validate the correlation between transformational management and

institutional performance sustainability in Islamic public high schools.

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