

Revisiting the Concept of Transformational Leadership: A Theoretical Perspective

Bhismi Esanafi Ramadhani^{1*}, Safira Nur Aini², Suci Afnia³

¹ Islamic Economics and Finance Study Program, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Semarang, Semarang, Indonesia

Article Information

Article history:

Submitted: 17 April 2026

Revised: 29 April 2026

Published: 06 May 2026

Keywords:

Transformational Leadership,
Transactional Leadership,
Islamic Leadership, Falah,
Organizational Performance

Abstract

This study aims to examine the concept of transformational leadership from an Islamic perspective and to compare it with transactional leadership in order to provide a more comprehensive understanding of leadership practices. Using a qualitative approach with a literature review method, this study analyzes various theories and empirical findings from scholarly articles, books, and relevant scientific publications. The analysis focuses on key dimensions of transformational leadership, its development framework, and its alignment with Islamic values. The findings indicate that transformational leadership differs significantly from transactional leadership in its emphasis on intrinsic motivation, value alignment, and the development of followers. While transactional leadership focuses on exchange relationships through reward and punishment mechanisms, transformational leadership encourages individuals to exceed expectations by fostering commitment, innovation, and personal growth. Furthermore, the study reveals that transformational leadership is highly compatible with Islamic teachings, particularly through concepts such as *falah*, *amanah*, *shura*, and *akhlaq al-karimah*. The leadership of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) exemplifies transformational principles through vision, trust, moral integrity, and the ability to inspire meaningful change. This study contributes to the development of leadership theory by integrating modern leadership concepts with Islamic values, offering a more holistic framework that incorporates both organizational performance and ethical-spiritual dimensions. The results suggest that transformational leadership, when grounded in Islamic principles, can enhance not only organizational effectiveness but also moral responsibility and sustainable development.

✉correspondence address:

Universitas Negeri Semarang
Sekaran, Kec. Gn. Pati, Kota Semarang, Jawa Tengah 50229, Indonesia
E-mail: bismiesanafi2019@gmail.com

ISSN

XXXX-XXXX (print) XXXX-XXXX (online)



INTRODUCTION

Leadership remains a central concern in organizational studies and continues to attract scholarly attention. Every organization, ranging from small enterprises to global corporations, requires effective leadership. The role of leadership is crucial in achieving an organization's vision, mission, and strategic objectives (Prasetyo, et.al., 2022). This is consistent with Munawaroh (2008), who argues that leaders play a decisive role in organizational effectiveness by functioning as direction setters, change agents, spokespersons, and coaches. Therefore, leadership can be considered a primary determinant of organizational success.

Individuals possess diverse characteristics, resulting in variations in personality and leadership styles. From an Islamic perspective, every human being is regarded as a leader or vicegerent on Earth (*khalīfatullāh fī al-ard*) (Halim, 2023; Siddique, Sultan, & Arshad, 2023). Humans are entrusted by Allah SWT with the responsibility to manage both natural and human resources for the benefit of society (ubaudila, Maunah, 2022). This principle is explicitly stated in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah (2): 30, which affirms the appointment of humans as *khalifah*. This verse highlights that leadership encompasses not only worldly responsibilities but also spiritual accountability.

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

Meaning: “(Remember) when your Lord said to the angels, ‘I am going to place a خليفة (khalifah / vicegerent) on earth.’ They said, ‘Will You place in it someone who will cause corruption and shed blood, while we glorify You with praise and sanctify Your name?’ He said, ‘Indeed, I know that which you do not know’”

The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) further emphasized that every individual is a leader and will be held accountable for their leadership (Hadith narrated by Bukhari and Muslim). This underscores that leadership is a trust (*amanah*) that must be exercised responsibly. Leaders are expected to develop the full potential of their followers while prioritizing collective interests over personal gain (Sanjaya, 2016). Subordinates' performance is often closely linked to leadership quality, indicating that leaders play a vital role in organizational outcomes. Moreover, leaders must manage three key variables: the individuals they lead, the tasks they oversee, and the organizational environment (Ivancevich, Konopaske, & Matteson, 2014).

The study of leadership has evolved significantly over time. Early research emphasized the trait approach, focusing on inherent differences between leaders and followers. However, this perspective proved insufficient in explaining leadership effectiveness, leading to the emergence of situational and contingency approaches that highlight the importance of environmental factors. Subsequently, during the 1970s and 1980s, research shifted toward understanding how leaders' individual characteristics influence organizational success.

These developments led to the emergence of transformational and transactional leadership theories, introduced by Bass (1985). Transactional leadership is based on exchange relationships, utilizing reward and punishment mechanisms, whereas transformational leadership emphasizes a leader's ability to inspire and motivate followers to exceed expected performance (Sanjaya, 2015). The transformational approach is considered more relevant in contemporary contexts, as it addresses dynamic organizational changes, fosters innovation, and strengthens organizational commitment.

In today's increasingly complex organizational environment, individuals exhibit diverse needs and expectations. Leaders are therefore required to adopt appropriate leadership approaches to enhance performance. Transformational leadership is particularly effective in this regard, as it emphasizes individual development, effective communication, and follower empowerment (Rasyid, Utami, & Djudi, 2011). Furthermore, this approach is adaptable across different contexts and cultures because it integrates emotional, intellectual, and moral dimensions of leadership (Yukl, 1998).

The values of transformational leadership are also aligned with Islamic teachings, particularly through the concept of *hijrah*, which signifies a transformation toward a better state in accordance with divine guidance. Hijrah extends beyond physical migration to encompass changes in values, attitudes, and behavior. By adhering to Qur'anic principles, individuals are guided toward achieving *falah* (holistic success). In this context, leaders play a crucial role in embedding these values within their followers. Empirical studies provide strong support for the effectiveness of transformational leadership. Tondok & Andarika, (2004) found a positive relationship between transformational leadership and job satisfaction. Wagimo & Ancok, (2005) demonstrated its significant influence on work motivation. Munawaroh (2011) showed that transformational leadership has a more dominant effect on teacher performance compared to transactional leadership. Additionally, Hamdani & Handoyo (2012) found that this leadership style can reduce employees' work-related stress.

However, despite the extensive body of literature, prior studies have predominantly examined transformational leadership from a general management perspective, with limited integration of Islamic values as a comprehensive analytical framework. Most existing research focuses on the direct impact of transformational leadership on organizational outcomes, such as performance, motivation, and job satisfaction, without critically comparing it to transactional leadership within a spiritual and ethical context (Sanders, Hopkins, & Geroy, 2003; Judge, & Piccolo, 2004). Moreover, previous studies tend to treat Islamic values as complementary variables rather than positioning them as a foundational paradigm in leadership analysis (Mubarak, 2023). This creates a gap in the literature, particularly in understanding how transformational leadership can be conceptually reconstructed through Islamic principles and how it compares systematically with transactional leadership within this perspective. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap by offering a comparative analysis between transformational and transactional leadership grounded in an Islamic framework. This approach not only strengthens the theoretical positioning of the study but also provides a more integrative perspective that connects organizational performance with ethical and spiritual dimensions.

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study aims to examine transformational leadership from an Islamic perspective and compare it with transactional leadership. This research is expected to contribute by addressing the existing gap, enriching leadership theory with a value-based approach, and offering practical implications for developing leadership models that are both performance-oriented and spiritually grounded.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach using a literature study (library research) to examine the concepts of transformational and transactional leadership from an Islamic perspective. This approach aims to develop a conceptual understanding by synthesizing theories and empirical findings from previous studies. The data used in this research are secondary data obtained from various academic sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, and conference proceedings. Literature was collected from several academic databases, namely Google Scholar, Scopus, ScienceDirect, and Web of Science, to ensure the credibility and comprehensiveness of the sources.

The literature selection process was conducted through several stages. First, the identification stage involved searching for relevant publications using keywords such as “*transformational leadership*,” “*transactional leadership*,” “*Islamic leadership*,” and “*spiritual leadership*.” Second, the screening stage was carried out by reviewing titles and abstracts to assess their relevance. Third, the eligibility stage involved a full-text review to ensure alignment with the research objectives. Finally, selected sources were included for further analysis. The inclusion criteria were: (1) studies discussing transformational and/or transactional leadership; (2) literature related to Islamic perspectives or values in leadership; (3) peer-reviewed and reputable academic publications; and (4) publications within the period of 2000–2024. The exclusion criteria included non-academic sources, duplicate publications, and studies not directly relevant to the research focus.

The data analysis in this study uses a descriptive-analytical approach combined with a comparative conceptual approach. The selected literature was examined to describe key ideas, identify relationships between concepts, and synthesize findings across studies. Furthermore, a comparative analysis was conducted to explore the similarities and differences between transformational and transactional leadership, particularly in terms of their principles, characteristics, and implications within an Islamic perspective. To ensure the rigor of the study, source triangulation was applied by comparing findings from multiple references and authors, so that the conclusions are more consistent and theoretically grounded.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Concept and Evolution of Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is recognized as one of the most comprehensive theories in explaining organizational change and leadership effectiveness. This model integrates earlier approaches, including trait, behavioral, and contingency theories, thereby offering a more holistic understanding of leadership (Khoirotunnisa, & Pujiyanto 2023)

Initially introduced by Burns (1978) in a political context, transformational leadership emphasizes the leader's ability to articulate a compelling vision and gain followers' trust and commitment. This concept was later expanded by Bass (1985), who contextualized it within organizational settings by highlighting the importance of charisma, emotional attachment, and influence processes. The relationship between leaders and followers is thus not merely transactional but rooted in trust, identification, and shared vision (Bass, et.al., 1987).

In this regard, transformational leadership goes beyond simple exchanges of rewards and punishments, as seen in transactional leadership. Instead, it seeks to elevate followers' motivation and align their personal goals with organizational objectives. This aligns with Hater and Bass (1988), who emphasize that transformational leadership involves strong personal identification with the leader and commitment to a shared vision.

Dimensions and Characteristics of Transformational Leadership

The effectiveness of transformational leadership is largely determined by its multidimensional nature, which encompasses both cognitive and affective elements. According to (Wutun, 2001; Xiaoxia, & Jing, 2006), transformational leadership consists of five key dimensions, such as:

Table 1. Dimension of Transactional Leadership

Dimension	Explanation
Attributed Charisma	A leader with charisma demonstrates a vision, professional competence, and actions that prioritize the organization's interests and the interests of others over personal interests
Idealized Influence	A leader seeks to influence subordinates through direct communication by emphasizing the importance of values, commitment, and beliefs, and possesses the determination to achieve goals while considering the moral and ethical consequences of every decision made
Inspirational Motivation	Leaders act by motivating and inspiring subordinates through providing meaning, fostering participation, and presenting challenges in their tasks.
Intellectual Stimulation	Leaders strive to encourage subordinates to rethink their work methods and seek new approaches to completing their tasks
Individualized Consideration	Leaders strive to pay attention to subordinates and value their attitudes toward the organization.

These dimensions collectively illustrate how leaders influence followers not only through formal authority but also through personal example, emotional engagement, and intellectual encouragement. For instance, attributed charisma reflects a leader's ability to gain respect and trust by demonstrating competence and prioritizing collective interests, while idealized influence emphasizes moral integrity and value-driven decision-making. Inspirational motivation involves the ability to communicate a compelling vision that energizes followers, whereas intellectual stimulation encourages innovation by challenging existing assumptions and promoting creative problem-solving. Individualized consideration, on the other hand, highlights the importance of recognizing and developing each follower's unique potential.

In line with these dimensions, transformational leadership is also characterized by a leader's ability to actively motivate, inspire, and foster enthusiasm among subordinates while instilling a strong sense of purpose and organizational mission. As noted by Hay (2006), transformational leaders not only focus on performance outcomes but also seek to understand and develop the individual capacities of their followers by recognizing their unique abilities and contributions. This relational and developmental orientation enables leaders to build strong commitment and convince subordinates that collective goals, such as high productivity, dedication, and sustained performance can be achieved through shared effort. This perspective is further reinforced by Wutun (2001), who argue that the transformational leadership model proposed by Bass shares conceptual similarities with the leadership philosophy of Ki Hajar Dewantara. In this framework, leadership is expressed through three complementary roles: leading from the front as a role model (*ing ngarso sung tulodo*), engaging with followers to build collective strength (*ing madya mangun karsa*), and providing encouragement from behind (*tut wuri handayani*). These principles highlight that effective leadership is not only directive but also participatory and empowering, enabling employees to develop their roles within the organization while fostering personal growth and self-actualization (Variani, et.al., 2025).

Furthermore, the effectiveness of transformational leadership is influenced by the characteristics of followers, particularly their level of education and readiness for development. Empirical studies indicate that transformational leadership tends to be more appealing to highly educated employees, as they generally seek challenging work environments that support their professional and personal growth (Hater & Bass, 1988). This argument is supported by Keller (1992), who found that individuals with higher education levels are more motivated to engage in complex tasks and are more responsive to leadership styles that emphasize vision, innovation, and autonomy. As a result, such followers are more likely to respond positively to transformational leadership by increasing their effort, commitment, and willingness to exceed performance expectations (Bakker, et.al., 2023). In addition, Bass (1985) suggests that transformational leadership is more likely to

emerge in organizational contexts characterized by high levels of trust, warmth, and a well-educated workforce, as these conditions foster creativity and openness to change. Therefore, the interaction between leadership style and follower characteristics plays a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of transformational leadership in achieving organizational goals.

To develop transformational leaders, it is essential to build upon four interrelated characteristics that function as an integrated whole, as proposed by Bass, et.al. (1987). First, *charisma* (attributed charisma) refers to the perception of a leader as possessing exceptional or “extraordinary” qualities that generate referent power and strong influence over followers. This dimension reflects behaviors that inspire admiration, respect, and trust, enabling leaders to become role models whose actions are emulated by their subordinates. Through charisma, leaders are able to establish emotional connections and foster a sense of confidence that strengthens followers’ commitment to organizational goals.

Second, *inspirational motivation* represents the leader’s ability to attract, engage, and emotionally communicate a compelling vision of the future. A transformational leader in this dimension is not only visionary but also capable of articulating clear expectations regarding performance and motivating followers through enthusiasm and optimism. By conveying meaningful goals and emphasizing collective purpose, leaders are able to stimulate team spirit and align individual efforts with organizational aspirations. This capacity to inspire plays a crucial role in sustaining motivation, particularly in challenging or uncertain situations.

Third, *individualized consideration* reflects the leader’s attention to the needs, aspirations, and development of each follower. In this dimension, leadership is expressed through supportive and developmental behaviors, such as actively listening to subordinates, providing guidance, and facilitating career growth. Transformational leaders recognize that each individual possesses unique potential and therefore adopt a personalized approach in nurturing that potential. This not only enhances individual performance but also contributes to long-term organizational development by fostering loyalty, engagement, and self-actualization among employees.

Finally, *intellectual stimulation* refers to the leader’s ability to encourage followers to think critically and approach problems from new perspectives. Transformational leaders challenge existing assumptions, promote creativity, and motivate subordinates to generate innovative solutions. By encouraging followers to question established values and explore alternative ways of thinking, leaders create a learning-oriented environment that supports continuous improvement. In practice, this dimension often appears in how leaders facilitate dialogue, respond to new ideas, and create space for experimentation, particularly in organizational contexts that demand adaptability and innovation (Suryadi, et.al., 2024).

The Process of Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is not merely defined by its characteristics but also by the dynamic process through which change is initiated, communicated, and institutionalized within an organization. Rather than occurring instantaneously, transformation unfolds through a series of interconnected stages that require both strategic direction and emotional engagement. Tichy, & Sherman (1993) conceptualize this process as a “three-act drama” consisting of *awakening*, *envisioning*, and *rearchitecturing*, each of which represents a critical phase in organizational transformation. This framework emphasizes that successful transformation depends not only on the leader’s vision but also on their ability to guide followers through a structured yet adaptive process of change.

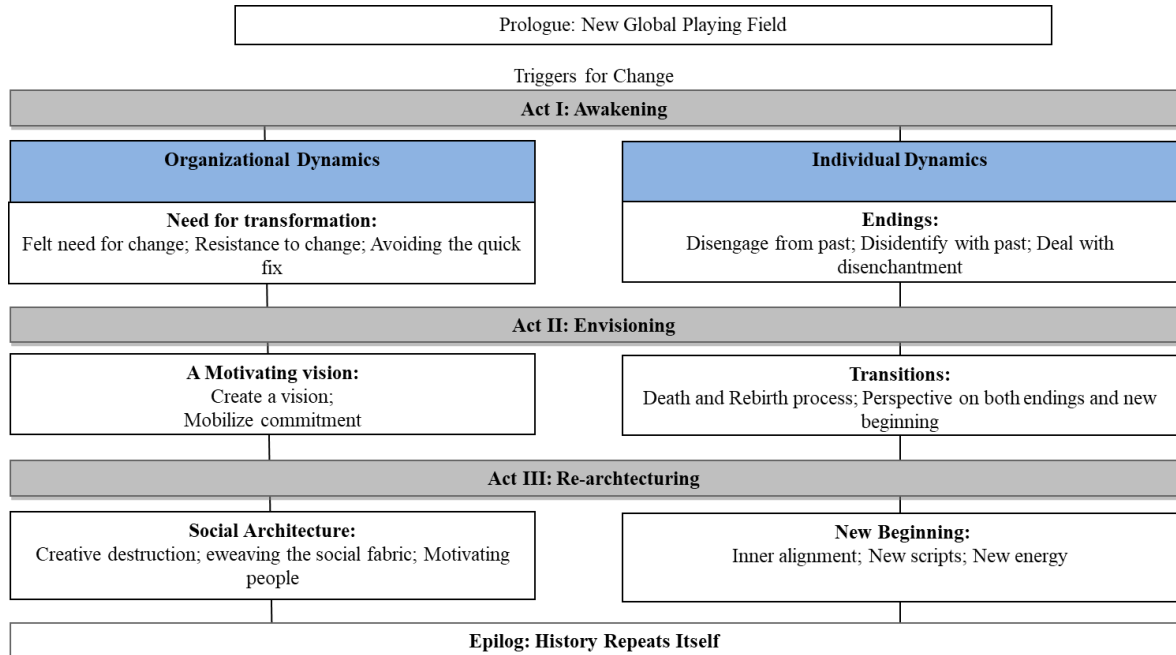


Figure 1. Transformational Leadership: A Three-Act Drama
Source: Tichy, & Sherman (1993) dalam (Mintzberg, et.al., 1998)

The figure illustrates that transformational leadership unfolds through a structured and dynamic process resembling a “three-act drama,” beginning with the recognition of the need for change and culminating in the establishment of a new organizational order (Turan, & Sny, 1996). This model emphasizes that transformation occurs simultaneously at both the organizational and individual levels, requiring alignment between structural change and personal adaptation (Tichy, & Devanna, 1986).

In Act I: Awakening, organizations begin to recognize the necessity for transformation, often triggered by internal inefficiencies, external pressures, or growing dissatisfaction. At this stage, resistance to change is common, and there may be a tendency to rely on quick fixes rather than addressing root problems. Transformational leaders play a critical role in fostering awareness and challenging the status quo, ensuring that members understand the urgency of meaningful change. At the individual level, this phase is characterized by “endings,” where individuals gradually disengage from past practices and identities, even though this process may involve uncertainty or discomfort. Thus, awakening represents a crucial phase in preparing both the organization and its members psychologically for transformation.

In Act II: Envisioning, leaders formulate and communicate a compelling vision that provides direction and inspires commitment among organizational members. This vision serves not only as a strategic guide but also as a motivational force that aligns individual aspirations with organizational goals. At the individual level, this stage represents a “transition,” where individuals begin to move away from past conditions and explore new possibilities. This transitional phase requires strong leadership communication to help individuals make sense of change, reduce ambiguity, and build confidence in the future. Consequently, the effectiveness of this stage depends on the leader’s ability to translate vision into shared meaning and collective purpose.

In Act III: Re-architecturing, transformation is implemented through changes in organizational structures, systems, and culture. This stage involves the development of a new social architecture, often described as “creative destruction,” where outdated systems are replaced with more relevant and adaptive ones. At the individual level, this phase marks a “new beginning,” in which members develop new mindsets, align themselves with organizational values, and demonstrate renewed energy and commitment. Successful re-architecturing requires continuous engagement, reinforcement of new behaviors, and alignment between organizational systems and individual actions, ensuring that transformation is both sustainable and deeply embedded.

Finally, in the epilogue (history repeats itself), the model highlights that transformation is cyclical, as organizations will inevitably face new challenges that demand further change. From an Islamic perspective, this cyclical nature of transformation can be closely related to the concept of hijrah, which signifies a continuous movement toward better conditions in accordance with divine guidance. Transformation in Islam

is not merely organizational or material but also moral and spiritual, emphasizing the alignment of actions with the values of the Qur'an. Just as hijrah requires leaving behind undesirable practices and striving toward righteousness, transformational leadership involves guiding followers through continuous improvement and ethical refinement. In this sense, leadership is not only about achieving organizational effectiveness but also about fostering *falah* (holistic success), where both worldly achievements and spiritual well-being are harmonized.

How to Become a Transformational Leader

Becoming a transformational leader requires not only managerial competence but also the ability to inspire, guide, and empower followers toward a shared vision. Yukl (1998) outlines a seven-point framework that provides practical guidance for developing transformational leadership, which can also be aligned with Islamic values as a moral and spiritual foundation.

Table 2. Seven Practices of Transformational Leadership and Their Islamic Perspectives

No	Dimension	Description	Islamic Perspective
1	Articulating a Clear Vision	Leaders develop and communicate a clear and compelling vision that guides organizational goals, priorities, and decision-making.	Vision in Islam is aligned with achieving <i>falah</i> (success in this world and the hereafter) and must be based on Qur'anic values and ethical objectives.
2	Explaining How to Achieve the Vision	Leaders link the vision with a credible strategy and clarify followers' roles in achieving it.	Islam emphasizes <i>amanah</i> (trust) and <i>ikhtiar</i> (effort), where leaders guide followers with clear direction while ensuring actions remain within Sharia principles.
3	Acting with Optimism	Leaders demonstrate confidence and optimism to strengthen followers' belief in the vision.	Optimism reflects <i>tawakkul</i> (trust in Allah) after effort, encouraging resilience and positive thinking in pursuing goals.
4	Demonstrating Confidence in Followers	Leaders show trust and high expectations, which enhance motivation and performance.	This aligns with <i>husnuzan</i> (positive assumptions) and recognizing human potential as <i>khalifah</i> entrusted by Allah.
5	Using Symbolic Actions	Leaders reinforce values through consistent behavior, decisions, and actions.	Leaders must embody <i>akhlaq al-karimah</i> (noble character), ensuring consistency between words and actions as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad.
6	Leading by Example	Leaders act as role models by practicing the values they promote.	Reflects the concept of <i>uswatun hasanah</i> (good example), where leaders model integrity, honesty (<i>shiddiq</i>), and responsibility (<i>amanah</i>).
7	Empowering Followers	Leaders delegate authority, encourage autonomy, and provide resources.	Empowerment aligns with <i>shura</i> (consultation) and responsibility, encouraging participation and accountability within ethical boundaries.

The table illustrates that the core practices of transformational leadership are not only managerial in nature but also closely aligned with Islamic ethical and spiritual values. Each dimension proposed by Yukl (1998) finds its parallel within Islamic teachings, indicating that transformational leadership can be strengthened through a value-based framework rooted in religion. The articulation of vision, for instance, is not merely a strategic activity but is oriented toward achieving *falah*, while the process of implementing the vision reflects the principles of *amanah* and *ikhtiar*.

Furthermore, the behavioral aspects of leadership, such as optimism, trust in followers, and leading by example, demonstrate a strong correspondence with Islamic concepts like *tawakkul*, *husnuzan*, and *uswatun hasanah*. These parallels suggest that effective leadership is not only about influencing performance but also about shaping character and fostering ethical conduct within the organization. The emphasis on symbolic actions and empowerment further reinforces the importance of integrity, participation, and accountability, which are central values in Islamic leadership.

This integration indicates that transformational leadership, when viewed through an Islamic perspective, becomes more holistic by incorporating both performance-oriented and moral-spiritual dimensions. It highlights that leadership effectiveness is not solely determined by the achievement of organizational goals but also by the ability to guide followers toward ethical behavior, collective responsibility, and sustainable development.

Transformational Leadership from an Islamic Perspective

From an Islamic perspective, leadership cannot be separated from the exemplary model demonstrated by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), whose leadership reflects principles that are consistent with contemporary transformational leadership theory. Although the concept of transformational leadership was formally introduced much later, the Prophet's leadership practices embodied essential elements such as vision articulation, trust-building, moral integrity, and the ability to inspire followers toward meaningful change. This indicates that the essence of transformational leadership has long been embedded in Islamic teachings, particularly in the integration of cognitive, emotional, and ethical dimensions of leadership.

In Islamic thought, the ultimate objective of leadership is the attainment of *falah*, which refers to comprehensive success encompassing both worldly achievements and spiritual well-being. This objective is grounded in adherence to the Qur'an as the primary source of guidance. The Prophet Muhammad effectively communicated a clear and compelling vision based on divine principles, which was internalized by his followers through a strong sense of trust and commitment. His leadership was reinforced by the foundational qualities of *shiddiq* (truthfulness), *tabligh* (effective communication), *amanah* (trustworthiness), and *fathonah* (wisdom), all of which contributed to his credibility and influence. These attributes enabled him to transform not only the external conditions of society but also the internal values and behaviors of individuals.

Furthermore, the notion of transformation in Islamic leadership can be conceptually linked to the principle of *hijrah*, which signifies a transition toward a more righteous and value-driven state. As stated in the Qur'an (QS At-Taubah: 20), those who strive in the path of Allah are granted a higher status, indicating that transformation is closely associated with commitment, sacrifice, and continuous improvement.

الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَهَاجَرُوا وَجَاهَدُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ بِأَمْوَالِهِمْ وَأَنْفُسِهِمْ أَكْثَرُ دَرَجَةً عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْفَائِزُونَ

Meaning: "Those who believe and emigrate and strive in the cause of Allah with their wealth and their lives are of a higher rank in the sight of Allah, and it is they who will be victorious." (QS At-Taubah: 20)

In this context, *hijrah* extends beyond physical relocation and encompasses moral, intellectual, and behavioral transformation guided by divine values. This process requires individuals to consciously move away from undesirable practices and align themselves with principles that promote justice, integrity, and collective well-being. Accordingly, transformational leadership in an Islamic framework is inherently value-oriented, emphasizing the alignment between organizational objectives and ethical-spiritual principles. Leadership is not solely concerned with achieving performance targets but also with fostering moral responsibility and personal development among followers. This perspective broadens the scope of transformational leadership by integrating material and non-material dimensions, thereby offering a more holistic understanding of leadership effectiveness. In this regard, a transformational leader serves not only as a change agent but also as a moral guide who facilitates both organizational transformation and the attainment of *falah*.

The Difference Between Transformational Leadership and Transactional Leadership

To obtain a comprehensive understanding of transformational leadership, it is necessary to contrast it with transactional leadership, as both represent fundamentally different approaches to influencing followers and achieving organizational goals. According to Burns (1978), transactional leadership is grounded in formal authority and bureaucratic legitimacy, where the relationship between leaders and followers is based on an exchange process. In this model, leaders motivate subordinates through contingent rewards and corrective actions, ensuring that tasks are completed according to established standards. The primary focus of transactional leadership is therefore on maintaining organizational stability, achieving short-term objectives, and ensuring compliance with rules and procedures.

In contrast, transformational leadership emphasizes the ability of leaders to inspire and motivate followers to exceed standard expectations by aligning individual values with organizational goals. Rather than relying solely on reward-punishment mechanisms, transformational leaders seek to elevate followers' levels of motivation, commitment, and moral awareness. This distinction highlights that while transactional

leadership operates within existing systems and structures, transformational leadership aims to reshape those systems by fostering innovation, commitment, and long-term organizational development.

Bass, Avolio, & Goodheim (1987) further elaborate on this distinction by identifying key differences in how leaders engage with their followers. First, transformational leaders are more proactive in recognizing and responding to the needs of their subordinates. They do not merely address existing needs but actively seek to elevate them by encouraging higher levels of aspiration and performance. This process involves empowering followers to take on greater responsibility and autonomy in their work, thereby fostering intrinsic motivation. In contrast, transactional leaders tend to respond to followers' needs within predefined frameworks, focusing primarily on task completion and performance outcomes.

Second, transformational leadership places strong emphasis on the development of followers as future leaders. Transformational leaders invest in the growth and capacity-building of their subordinates, enabling them to become more independent, innovative, and capable of leading others. This developmental orientation distinguishes transformational leadership from transactional leadership, which generally prioritizes efficiency and control over long-term individual development. As a result, transformational leadership contributes not only to improved organizational performance but also to the creation of a more adaptive and sustainable leadership structure within the organization.

From an Islamic perspective, the distinction between transformational and transactional leadership can be understood through the balance between external control and internal moral development. Transactional leadership, with its emphasis on rewards and sanctions, reflects a mechanism that regulates behavior at the surface level, ensuring compliance with rules and responsibilities. However, transformational leadership aligns more closely with the Islamic concept of leadership as a process of guiding individuals toward internalizing values and strengthening faith-based motivation. In Islam, leadership is not limited to achieving organizational targets but extends to fostering *amanah* (trust), *ihsan* (excellence), and *taqwa* (God-consciousness) among followers. This indicates that effective leadership should not only manage performance through external incentives but also cultivate intrinsic awareness and ethical responsibility. Therefore, transformational leadership provides a more compatible framework with Islamic teachings, as it emphasizes value-driven change, moral integrity, and the holistic development of individuals in both worldly and spiritual dimensions.

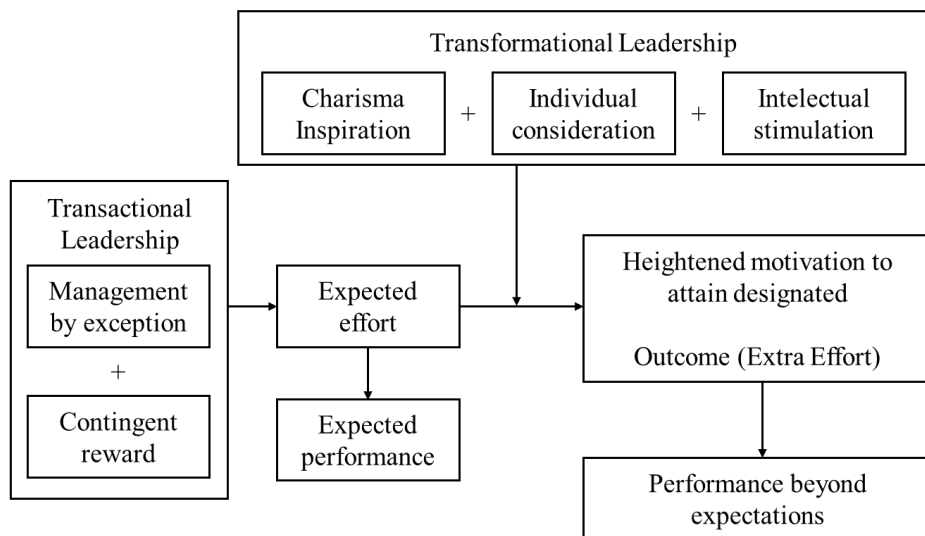


Figure 2. The Difference Between Transformational Leadership and Transactional Leadership
Source: Hakim, (2007)

Figure 2 illustrates that transformational leadership shares notable similarities with charismatic leadership, particularly from the perspective of subordinates in terms of influence and relational dynamics. Subordinates tend to identify strongly with both the leader and the leader's mission, often perceiving the leader as an idealized figure worthy of admiration and trust. This identification fosters a deeper emotional connection, which enables transformational leaders to build strong levels of trust, credibility, and commitment among followers. As a result, subordinates are not only motivated to meet organizational expectations but are also inspired to exert additional effort beyond formal requirements. Moreover, transformational leaders play a

critical role in reframing challenges, helping subordinates perceive threatening situations as opportunities for growth and encouraging them to address complex problems with confidence and creativity.

This perspective is further supported by several scholars who associate transformational leadership with broader leadership paradigms such as charismatic, inspirational, and visionary leadership. Bryman (1992), for instance, refers to transformational leadership as “the new leadership,” emphasizing its departure from traditional, control-oriented approaches. Similarly, Sarros, & Butchatsky (1996) describe it as “breakthrough leadership,” highlighting its capacity to generate substantial and meaningful change. The term “breakthrough” reflects the leader’s ability to transform both individuals and organizations by reshaping values, fostering innovation, and redefining organizational structures and processes to better align with evolving demands. In this context, transformational leadership is not limited to improving performance outcomes but extends to facilitating deep and sustainable change. Leaders engage followers through challenging yet meaningful processes, encouraging them to expand their capabilities and rethink existing assumptions. This approach enables organizations to pursue goals that were previously perceived as unattainable, thereby positioning transformational leadership as a critical driver of innovation, adaptability, and long-term organizational development.

Conclusion

This study underscores that transformational leadership constitutes a comprehensive leadership paradigm that extends beyond conventional transactional mechanisms by emphasizing inspiration, value alignment, and the holistic development of followers. While transactional leadership remains relevant in maintaining organizational stability and ensuring compliance through structured reward and punishment systems, its scope is inherently limited to short-term performance and procedural efficiency. In contrast, transformational leadership operates at a deeper level by fostering intrinsic motivation, encouraging creativity, and building long-term commitment among organizational members. Through the articulation of a compelling vision, the demonstration of trust, and the empowerment of followers, transformational leaders are able to stimulate individuals to exceed expected performance and contribute meaningfully to organizational success in a sustainable manner.

Furthermore, the study reveals that transformational leadership is inherently compatible with dynamic and complex organizational environments, where adaptability, innovation, and continuous improvement are essential. The capacity of transformational leaders to reshape mindsets, redefine organizational values, and mobilize collective commitment enables organizations to respond effectively to uncertainty and change. This highlights that leadership effectiveness is not solely determined by the achievement of predetermined targets but also by the ability to cultivate a culture that supports learning, resilience, and proactive engagement. In this regard, transformational leadership serves not only as a managerial approach but also as a strategic instrument for organizational transformation and long-term development.

From an Islamic perspective, transformational leadership acquires a broader and more profound meaning, as it is grounded not only in organizational objectives but also in moral and spiritual dimensions. The leadership of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) exemplifies the integration of vision, ethical integrity, and the ability to inspire transformative change, demonstrating that leadership is both a responsibility and a trust (*amanah*). The concept of *hijrah* further reinforces the idea that transformation is a continuous process of moving toward better conditions guided by divine values, while the ultimate goal of leadership in Islam is the attainment of *falah*, encompassing both worldly success and spiritual fulfillment. This perspective indicates that transformational leadership, when viewed through an Islamic lens, is not merely about influencing behavior but about shaping character, strengthening faith-based motivation, and fostering ethical responsibility.

Thus, the integration of transformational leadership theory with Islamic values offers a more holistic and value-driven framework for understanding leadership effectiveness. It expands the conventional boundaries of leadership studies by incorporating ethical accountability, spiritual awareness, and social responsibility as essential components of leadership practice. This integrated perspective provides a meaningful contribution to the development of leadership theory, particularly in contexts where moral and religious values play a significant role in shaping organizational behavior and decision-making processes.

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that organizations adopt transformational leadership as a strategic approach to enhance performance, innovation, and long-term sustainability, particularly in increasingly dynamic and complex environments. Leaders should be encouraged to develop the ability to articulate a clear vision, foster trust-based relationships, and empower followers to actively contribute beyond standard expectations. In addition, integrating ethical and spiritual values into leadership practices is

essential, especially within contexts influenced by Islamic principles, where concepts such as *amanah*, *shura*, *tawakkul*, and *akhlaq al-karimah* can strengthen both moral integrity and organizational effectiveness. Future research is also necessary to empirically examine the interaction between transformational leadership and Islamic values across different organizational and cultural settings, using quantitative, qualitative, or mixed-method approaches to provide more robust evidence. Furthermore, leadership development programs should be designed to incorporate not only managerial and technical competencies but also ethical awareness and spiritual intelligence, in order to produce leaders who are capable of achieving organizational goals while maintaining accountability, integrity, and broader social responsibility.

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