



The Role of Transformational Leadership and Competency Development of Teachers and Educational Staff in Improving School Performance

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Article Info :

Received:

10-07-2025

Revised:

15-07-2025

Accepted:

22-07-2026

Abstract

Transformational leadership has become an essential approach for strengthening human resource capacity and improving school performance. However, qualitative evidence explaining how transformational leadership fosters the competency development of teachers and educational staff within Islamic senior secondary schools (madrasahs) remains limited. This study aimed to analyze the role of the principal's transformational leadership in promoting competency development and improving school performance at MA Miftahul Falah, Bandung City. A qualitative case study design was employed, involving the principal, vice principals, teachers, educational staff, and other relevant stakeholders selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, non-participant observations, and document analysis, and analyzed using the interactive model of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing supported by source and method triangulation. The findings indicate that transformational leadership is implemented through shared vision, inspirational motivation, open communication, empowerment, and support for continuous professional development, contributing to enhanced instructional quality, administrative effectiveness, and organizational performance. The study further reveals that religious values, a family-oriented organizational culture, and the intrinsic motivation of teachers and educational staff reinforce the effectiveness of transformational leadership. These findings contribute to educational leadership literature by proposing a context-sensitive perspective that integrates transformational leadership, competency development, and organizational culture to achieve sustainable school performance in madrasahs.

Keywords: Competency Development, Madrasah, Organizational Culture, School Performance, Transformational Leadership.



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INTRODUCTION

Human resource quality has increasingly become one of the most decisive determinants of educational excellence as schools worldwide are expected to respond to accelerating technological innovation, curriculum reforms, and the growing demand for equitable and sustainable learning outcomes in increasingly complex educational ecosystems (OECD, 2023). Educational institutions are no longer evaluated solely by students' academic achievements but also by their organizational capacity to foster continuous improvement, professional learning, innovation, and institutional resilience in response to rapidly changing societal expectations (Mincu, 2022). Within this evolving landscape, teachers and educational staff constitute strategic organizational assets whose collective competencies directly influence instructional quality, administrative effectiveness, and the overall performance of educational institutions. Effective human resource management has consequently shifted from traditional personnel administration toward strategic human capital development that emphasizes competency enhancement, organizational learning, and continuous professional growth as essential drivers of institutional sustainability (Armstrong, 2020). Contemporary human resource perspectives further argue that educational organizations must continuously invest in developing employees' knowledge, skills, and adaptive capabilities because organizational competitiveness increasingly depends on intellectual capital rather than merely structural resources (Dessler, 2022). Such developments have simultaneously elevated the strategic importance of school leadership, since the effectiveness of competency development initiatives largely depends on leaders' ability to align

organizational vision, professional learning, and institutional improvement within an integrated management framework.

The growing emphasis on leadership effectiveness has positioned transformational leadership as one of the most influential theoretical perspectives in educational management because it explains how leaders inspire organizational members to exceed formal responsibilities through shared vision, intellectual stimulation, individualized support, and collective commitment toward institutional goals (Northouse, 2021). Rather than functioning merely as administrative managers, contemporary school principals are increasingly expected to become transformational leaders capable of cultivating collaborative organizational cultures that encourage innovation, professional learning, and sustainable educational improvement (Leithwood et al., 2020). Numerous empirical investigations consistently demonstrate that transformational leadership contributes positively to teachers' professional commitment, organizational trust, instructional quality, and overall school effectiveness by creating conditions that support continuous learning and organizational adaptability (Hitt & Tucker, 2020). Recent evidence also indicates that leadership practices emphasizing distributed responsibility, collaborative professionalism, and organizational learning have become increasingly relevant as schools face multidimensional challenges associated with digital transformation and educational reform (Harris, Jones, & Ismail, 2022). Professional competency development consequently becomes inseparable from transformational leadership because meaningful improvement in instructional quality requires systematic mentoring, coaching, supervision, and professional learning opportunities rather than isolated training activities (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2022). This relationship suggests that leadership effectiveness should be understood not only through leaders' behavioral characteristics but also through their capacity to establish organizational conditions that continuously strengthen the competencies of teachers and educational staff.

Although previous studies have consistently acknowledged the positive contribution of transformational leadership to educational improvement, existing evidence remains fragmented because most investigations examine leadership, competency development, teacher performance, organizational commitment, or school effectiveness as separate constructs rather than as interconnected organizational processes (Utami, Nelitawati, & Al-Kadri, 2024). Recent studies have further confirmed that transformational leadership strengthens teachers' work ethic, motivation, and professional commitment, yet the mechanisms through which competency development simultaneously influences broader school performance remain insufficiently elaborated across different educational contexts (Supendi et al., 2025). Similar findings indicate that transformational leadership practices contribute significantly to teachers' motivation and institutional performance, although these relationships often vary according to organizational culture, contextual characteristics, and institutional capacity, indicating that leadership effectiveness cannot be universally generalized (Ermita & Baysa, 2025). Existing scholarship also tends to privilege quantitative approaches emphasizing causal relationships among measurable variables, while providing relatively limited understanding of how transformational leadership is enacted, interpreted, and experienced by teachers and educational staff within the everyday realities of educational organizations. This limitation becomes particularly evident in Islamic educational institutions, where leadership practices are embedded within religious values, communal relationships, and distinctive organizational cultures that may shape competency development differently from general schools. As a result, important conceptual and empirical gaps remain regarding how transformational leadership interacts with competency development processes and organizational culture to produce sustainable improvements in school performance, particularly within the unique context of madrasahs.

The limited integration of leadership, competency development, and organizational culture within existing educational leadership research creates both scientific and practical concerns because schools are increasingly required to achieve organizational excellence while simultaneously responding to educational reforms, technological disruption, and rising stakeholder expectations (Sallis, 2021). Educational organizations cannot rely exclusively on formal leadership authority or externally organized professional development programs, as sustainable school improvement depends on the internal capacity to establish collaborative learning environments that continuously strengthen teachers' and educational staff's professional competencies (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2021). In many educational institutions, particularly Islamic senior secondary schools (madrasahs), leadership effectiveness is further influenced by contextual factors such as religious values, organizational traditions, interpersonal

relationships, and institutional culture that shape how professional development initiatives are implemented and sustained. Organizational learning perspectives likewise emphasize that leadership practices become effective only when they successfully facilitate knowledge sharing, collective reflection, and continuous learning across all organizational members rather than concentrating authority solely on school principals (Kurland, Peretz, & Hertz-Lazarowitz, 2020). Indonesian educational policy has similarly reinforced the strategic obligation of schools to continuously enhance teachers' professionalism and competencies as an essential foundation for improving educational quality and institutional accountability (Republic of Indonesia, 2005). These circumstances underscore the necessity of examining transformational leadership not merely as a leadership style but as a dynamic organizational process through which competency development and institutional performance are simultaneously cultivated within a distinctive educational context.

Against this scholarly background, the present study positions itself at the intersection of transformational leadership, competency development, and school performance by extending previous educational leadership research toward a more contextualized understanding of how these dimensions interact within Islamic educational institutions. Unlike most previous investigations that predominantly employ quantitative approaches to examine direct relationships among variables, this study adopts a qualitative case study perspective to explore how leadership practices are experienced, interpreted, and translated into sustainable competency development among teachers and educational staff. The research specifically focuses on MA Miftahul Falah, Bandung City, where preliminary observations reveal that transformational leadership practices coexist with organizational characteristics shaped by religious values, family-oriented relationships, and strong intrinsic dedication among school personnel. Such organizational characteristics provide an important opportunity to investigate whether school performance is influenced not only by formal leadership practices and competency development initiatives but also by contextual organizational dynamics that remain underexplored in the international educational leadership literature. Employing a qualitative inquiry allows this study to capture organizational processes, leadership interactions, and professional development experiences that are difficult to explain through variable-based quantitative models alone (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The analytical procedures are designed to produce an in-depth interpretation of leadership practices through systematic coding, categorization, and cross-case pattern identification that enhance the credibility and richness of qualitative findings (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2020). The case study strategy further enables the investigation of complex organizational phenomena within their real-life setting, allowing leadership practices to be understood in relation to the institutional context in which they naturally occur (Yin, 2018).

This study aims to analyze how the principal's transformational leadership contributes to the competency development of teachers and educational staff and how these processes collectively support the improvement of school performance at MA Miftahul Falah, Bandung City, through a qualitative case study approach. The research is intended to provide a more comprehensive explanation of the interaction between leadership practices, professional competency development, organizational culture, and institutional performance within the distinctive environment of a madrasah. Rather than viewing transformational leadership as an isolated managerial construct, this study conceptualizes leadership as an organizational process that is continuously reinforced by religious values, family-oriented organizational culture, and the intrinsic motivation of teachers and educational staff. The findings are expected to enrich educational leadership theory by offering a contextual perspective that complements the predominantly variable-oriented literature on transformational leadership. Methodologically, the study demonstrates the value of qualitative case study research in uncovering organizational mechanisms that cannot be adequately captured through statistical relationships alone. From a practical perspective, the results are expected to provide evidence-based recommendations for school leaders and educational policymakers in designing sustainable leadership strategies that strengthen human resource competencies and improve school performance across faith-based educational institutions.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed an empirical qualitative research approach using a case study design to obtain an in-depth understanding of the principal's transformational leadership in fostering the competency development of teachers and educational staff and its contribution to improving school performance at MA Miftahul Falah, Bandung City, Indonesia. A qualitative case study was considered

appropriate because it enables researchers to investigate complex organizational phenomena within their real-life context while capturing participants' experiences, perceptions, and interactions in a holistic manner (Yin, 2018). The research participants were selected through purposive sampling based on their direct involvement in leadership practices, competency development activities, and school management processes. The participants comprised the principal, vice principals, teachers, educational staff, and other key stakeholders who possessed relevant knowledge regarding the implementation of transformational leadership and professional development within the madrasah. Data were collected using three complementary techniques, namely in-depth interviews, non-participant observations, and document analysis, to provide comprehensive and triangulated evidence concerning leadership practices, competency development programs, and school performance. The integration of multiple data sources enabled a richer understanding of the phenomenon by capturing organizational processes from different perspectives within their natural educational setting (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The primary research instrument was the researcher, who was supported by semi-structured interview guidelines, observation protocols, and document review checklists developed according to the study objectives and theoretical framework. The credibility and trustworthiness of the findings were strengthened through source triangulation and methodological triangulation by comparing information obtained from different participants and multiple methods of data collection. Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, involving the iterative processes of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification until thematic saturation was achieved (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2020). Throughout the analysis, coding and thematic categorization were conducted systematically to identify recurring patterns and meaningful relationships among transformational leadership practices, competency development, and school performance. Ethical considerations were maintained by obtaining voluntary participation, ensuring informed consent, protecting participants' confidentiality through anonymization, and restricting the use of collected information exclusively for academic purposes. The overall research process was conducted systematically in accordance with established qualitative research principles to ensure that the findings accurately reflected participants' experiences and organizational realities within the madrasah context (Sugiyono, 2023).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Transformational Leadership Practices of the School Principal

The findings indicate that the principal of MA Miftahul Falah, Bandung City, has implemented transformational leadership through a combination of strategic vision development, motivational support, collaborative communication, professional coaching, and the empowerment of teachers and educational staff. Interview data consistently revealed that leadership practices were directed not only toward achieving institutional targets but also toward cultivating organizational commitment, professional responsibility, and collective ownership of the madrasah's educational mission. Participants described the principal as a leader who consistently communicated institutional priorities during both formal meetings and informal interactions, enabling organizational members to understand the direction of school development more clearly. Observational findings further demonstrated that leadership practices were embedded in daily organizational activities, allowing communication and coordination to occur continuously despite the dynamic nature of school operations. Several participants emphasized that the principal encouraged participation rather than relying solely on hierarchical authority, creating an atmosphere in which teachers and educational staff were willing to contribute ideas and participate in organizational decision-making. Such findings illustrate that transformational leadership within the madrasah context functions as a continuous social process that promotes collaboration and strengthens organizational cohesion, supporting previous arguments that educational leadership is fundamentally concerned with building collective capacity rather than exercising administrative control alone (Northouse, 2021).

The implementation of transformational leadership was reflected in several recurring leadership behaviors identified throughout interviews, observations, and institutional documents. Participants frequently referred to the principal's efforts to motivate teachers through recognition of achievements, opportunities for professional development, constructive feedback, and the delegation of responsibilities according to individual capabilities. Communication was characterized by openness and accessibility, allowing teachers and educational staff to discuss academic as well as administrative

matters without excessive bureaucratic barriers. Leadership practices also demonstrated individualized attention, particularly when teachers encountered instructional challenges or required institutional support for professional development activities. Rather than imposing rigid managerial supervision, the principal attempted to develop trust-based relationships that encouraged organizational members to perform their responsibilities with greater autonomy and accountability. The coding process generated several dominant themes that summarize the principal's transformational leadership practices, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Themes of Transformational Leadership Practices at MA Miftahul Falah

Leadership Theme	Evidence from Findings	Organizational Contribution
Shared Vision	Regular communication of institutional goals	Organizational alignment
Inspirational Motivation	Recognition, encouragement, and appreciation	Increased professional commitment
Open Communication	Formal and informal discussions	Mutual trust and collaboration
Individualized Consideration	Coaching and personal guidance	Professional growth
Empowerment	Participation in decision-making and school programs	Organizational ownership
Professional Support	Encouragement to attend competency development programs	Continuous learning culture

Table 1 demonstrates that transformational leadership at MA Miftahul Falah encompasses multiple complementary dimensions rather than isolated managerial activities. The predominance of communication, empowerment, and motivational practices indicates that leadership effectiveness is achieved through sustained interaction between the principal and organizational members rather than through formal authority alone. Participants consistently associated these leadership behaviors with stronger organizational commitment, smoother coordination, and greater willingness to participate in school improvement initiatives. These findings reinforce the proposition that transformational leadership enhances organizational effectiveness by encouraging members to internalize institutional goals as shared responsibilities instead of externally imposed obligations (Bass & Avolio, 1994). The identified leadership themes also reflect characteristics of adaptive educational leadership, in which organizational improvement depends on continuous interaction, professional trust, and collaborative learning rather than centralized control mechanisms (Yukl, 2020). The convergence between interview, observation, and documentary evidence further strengthens the credibility of these findings by demonstrating consistency across multiple sources of qualitative data.

Although transformational leadership was widely perceived as effective, the findings also revealed several organizational constraints that influenced the implementation of certain leadership practices. The most frequently identified challenge concerned the limited opportunity for direct academic supervision because the principal simultaneously carried institutional responsibilities beyond the madrasah. Participants acknowledged that these additional responsibilities reduced the frequency of classroom observations and individualized instructional mentoring despite the principal's strong commitment to educational improvement. Routine coordination meetings and the delegation of responsibilities to vice principals partially compensated for these limitations by maintaining continuity in instructional and administrative activities. Teachers generally perceived this collaborative delegation as an effective organizational strategy because communication channels remained active and institutional decisions continued to be implemented without significant disruption. Rather than weakening leadership effectiveness, these organizational arrangements illustrate how leadership responsibilities can be distributed across multiple actors to preserve institutional stability while maintaining progress toward educational objectives (Harris, Jones, & Ismail, 2022).

The present findings correspond with contemporary educational leadership literature that conceptualizes transformational leadership as an organizational capability for developing professional

commitment, strengthening teacher capacity, and improving institutional effectiveness. Evidence from MA Miftahul Falah indicates that the principal's influence extends beyond managerial coordination by fostering a learning-oriented environment in which teachers and educational staff are encouraged to improve their competencies while contributing actively to organizational development. This pattern supports previous studies demonstrating that successful school leaders strengthen educational quality primarily by enhancing human resource capacity rather than relying exclusively on administrative authority (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2020). Similar interpretations have been advanced by recent educational leadership research emphasizing that effective principals facilitate organizational improvement through instructional support, collaborative leadership, and professional empowerment rather than hierarchical supervision alone (Shaked & Hallinger, 2026). The findings also align with empirical evidence showing that transformational leadership positively influences teachers' professional motivation and institutional performance through supportive organizational relationships (Ermita & Baysa, 2025). Collectively, these perspectives suggest that leadership effectiveness emerges from the integration of strategic vision, interpersonal influence, and continuous organizational learning.

A distinctive finding emerging from this study concerns the integration of transformational leadership with the religious and family-oriented organizational culture that characterizes the madrasah. Participants consistently described leadership relationships as being grounded in mutual respect, spiritual responsibility, and a shared commitment to educational service, creating an organizational climate that extends beyond conventional managerial interactions. Professional responsibilities were frequently interpreted as moral obligations, encouraging teachers and educational staff to maintain commitment despite practical limitations associated with supervision and institutional resources. The principal's leadership was therefore perceived not merely as an administrative function but as a form of moral guidance that strengthened interpersonal trust and organizational solidarity. These contextual characteristics indicate that transformational leadership within Islamic educational institutions operates through organizational values that reinforce collaboration, intrinsic motivation, and long-term institutional commitment. The findings consequently extend existing educational leadership literature by demonstrating that the effectiveness of transformational leadership is shaped not only by the four classical dimensions of transformational leadership but also by culturally embedded organizational values that distinguish the madrasah from many other educational settings.

Competency Development Practices of Teachers and Educational Staff

The findings reveal that competency development at MA Miftahul Falah is implemented through a combination of externally facilitated professional development programs and internally supported learning initiatives designed to strengthen the professional capacity of teachers and educational staff. Interview participants consistently identified Subject Teacher Consultation Forums (Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran—MGMP), seminars, workshops, curriculum implementation training, webinars, and professional development activities organized by the Ministry of Religious Affairs as the primary avenues for competency enhancement. These activities enabled participants to update pedagogical knowledge, improve instructional strategies, strengthen administrative competencies, and expand their understanding of educational policies relevant to the changing educational environment. Observational evidence further indicated that teachers actively incorporated knowledge acquired from professional development activities into classroom instruction, curriculum planning, assessment practices, and the integration of digital learning technologies. Educational staff similarly reported improvements in administrative coordination, document management, and service delivery after participating in competency development programs. Such findings indicate that competency development has become an integral component of organizational learning that supports continuous institutional improvement rather than functioning merely as a periodic administrative requirement (Armstrong, 2020).

The principal played an important facilitating role by encouraging teachers and educational staff to participate in various professional learning activities while providing administrative support and flexibility whenever external training opportunities became available. Participants acknowledged that the principal consistently emphasized lifelong learning as an essential professional responsibility and encouraged organizational members to remain adaptive in responding to curriculum reforms and technological developments. Nevertheless, interview findings also revealed that systematically designed internal competency development programs remained relatively limited because professional

development activities were still predominantly dependent on initiatives organized by external institutions. As a result, the continuity of competency development was influenced by the availability, frequency, and accessibility of external training opportunities rather than by a comprehensive institutional development framework. Despite these limitations, teachers demonstrated considerable initiative in seeking additional learning opportunities independently, reflecting a professional culture that values continuous self-improvement. The principal's encouragement therefore functioned less as direct instructional control and more as organizational support that motivated teachers and educational staff to strengthen their competencies through sustained professional engagement.

Table 2. Competency Development Activities Implemented at MA Miftahul Falah

Professional Development Activity		Organizing Institution	Competencies Strengthened
MGMP Curriculum Training Workshops	Implementation	Subject Teacher Association	Pedagogical competence
		Ministry of Religious Affairs	Curriculum and instructional competence
		Universities and educational institutions	Professional competence
		Seminars and Webinars	Digital literacy and educational innovation
Internal Coordination Meetings		Madrasah	Collaborative problem-solving and organizational learning
Independent Learning	Professional	Individual teachers and staff	Continuous professional development

Table 2 illustrates that competency development within the madrasah is implemented through multiple learning pathways that complement one another in supporting professional growth. External professional development programs provide opportunities to acquire updated knowledge and technical expertise, whereas internal organizational activities facilitate the dissemination and contextual application of newly acquired competencies within the school environment. Participants reported that knowledge obtained through MGMP forums, workshops, and training programs was frequently shared with colleagues during coordination meetings, creating opportunities for collaborative learning beyond formal training activities. This pattern demonstrates that competency development extends beyond individual participation in professional learning events and gradually evolves into collective organizational learning that strengthens institutional capacity. The findings support the view that educational organizations achieve sustainable improvement when professional learning is embedded within daily organizational practices rather than being confined to isolated training programs (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, & Gardner, 2022). The interaction between individual learning and collaborative knowledge sharing consequently enhances both professional competence and organizational effectiveness within the madrasah.

Although competency development has generated positive outcomes, the findings also indicate several challenges that require strategic attention to ensure long-term sustainability. Participants acknowledged that the absence of structured internal competency development planning limited opportunities for systematic mentoring, continuous professional coaching, and periodic evaluation of competency improvement. Most professional development initiatives continued to rely on external institutions, resulting in uneven participation because access to training frequently depended on program availability and institutional scheduling. This condition created variations in professional learning experiences among teachers and educational staff despite their comparable commitment to improving performance. Organizational learning literature emphasizes that sustainable competency development requires institutional mechanisms that integrate mentoring, collaborative reflection, and continuous knowledge exchange into routine organizational practices rather than relying exclusively on externally facilitated activities (Kurland, Peretz, & Hertz-Lazarowitz, 2020). Strengthening internally managed professional development programs therefore represents an important organizational strategy for enhancing institutional resilience and maintaining continuous improvement.

The present findings reinforce contemporary human resource management perspectives that conceptualize competency development as a long-term organizational investment rather than a short-term intervention for improving employee performance. Teachers who participated actively in professional development activities demonstrated greater confidence in implementing curriculum reforms, utilizing digital technologies, and designing more innovative instructional approaches, while educational staff exhibited improvements in administrative effectiveness and institutional service quality. These outcomes correspond with organizational behavior theory, which argues that continuous competency enhancement strengthens employees' adaptive capacity and contributes to higher organizational performance through improved knowledge, skills, and work behaviors (Robbins & Judge, 2022). Similar conclusions have been reported in recent educational leadership research demonstrating that sustained professional development enhances teacher professionalism, work commitment, and educational quality when supported by effective school leadership (Supendi et al., 2025). The evidence generated in this study also complements broader international discussions emphasizing that investment in educator competency remains one of the most influential determinants of educational quality and institutional improvement (OECD, 2023). Collectively, these findings indicate that competency development should be understood as a strategic organizational process that integrates leadership support, professional learning, and organizational culture to strengthen long-term school performance.

The Contribution of Transformational Leadership and Competency Development to School Performance

The findings demonstrate that improvements in school performance at MA Miftahul Falah cannot be attributed solely to transformational leadership or competency development as independent organizational factors. Interview and observational evidence consistently indicates that school performance emerges through the interaction between leadership practices that create a supportive organizational environment and competency development that enhances the professional capacity of teachers and educational staff. Participants emphasized that leadership initiatives encouraging continuous learning were followed by observable improvements in instructional practices, administrative services, organizational discipline, and collaboration among school members. These improvements were reflected in the more effective implementation of educational programs, stronger institutional coordination, and greater responsiveness to curriculum changes and stakeholder expectations. Rather than operating through a simple linear relationship, transformational leadership and competency development functioned as mutually reinforcing organizational processes that collectively strengthened institutional effectiveness. This finding supports the argument that sustainable school improvement depends upon organizational systems capable of integrating leadership, human resource development, and continuous quality enhancement into everyday educational practice (Sallis, 2021).

Interview findings further revealed that the principal actively encouraged teachers and educational staff to translate newly acquired competencies into practical improvements within their respective responsibilities. Teachers reported applying knowledge obtained from professional development activities to curriculum planning, classroom management, digital learning integration, and instructional innovation, whereas educational staff described improvements in administrative coordination, documentation, and institutional service quality. Participants consistently perceived that leadership encouragement increased their willingness to implement new knowledge because professional development was viewed as an institutional priority rather than an individual obligation. Observational evidence also indicated that collaborative discussions during routine meetings created opportunities for teachers and educational staff to exchange experiences and collectively solve emerging organizational problems. This reciprocal interaction between leadership support and competency application gradually strengthened organizational adaptability while improving the quality of educational services delivered by the madrasah. Such organizational dynamics illustrate that leadership effectiveness is realized when professional learning becomes embedded within institutional routines instead of remaining confined to formal training activities (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2021).

Table 3. The Contribution of Transformational Leadership and Competency Development to School Performance

Transformational Leadership Practice	Competency Development Outcome	School Performance Indicator
Vision sharing and motivation	Increased professional commitment	Better implementation of school programs
Coaching and professional support	Improved pedagogical and professional competence	Higher instructional quality
Open communication	Stronger collaboration and knowledge sharing	More effective organizational coordination
Empowerment and participation	Greater responsibility and initiative	Improved institutional effectiveness
Continuous encouragement for learning	Sustainable professional development	Enhanced school performance

Table 3 illustrates that school performance improved through an interconnected sequence of organizational processes rather than through isolated managerial interventions. Leadership practices created favorable organizational conditions for competency development, while enhanced competencies subsequently generated improvements in instructional quality, administrative effectiveness, and institutional performance. Participants consistently associated collaborative communication with stronger organizational trust, enabling professional knowledge acquired from external learning activities to be disseminated more effectively across the school community. These findings indicate that competency development functions as an important organizational mechanism through which transformational leadership influences broader educational outcomes. Contemporary educational leadership literature similarly emphasizes that leadership contributes to school effectiveness primarily by strengthening teacher capacity, professional learning, and organizational commitment rather than by directly influencing educational outcomes alone (Hitt & Tucker, 2020). The evidence generated in this study therefore supports a process-oriented interpretation of school improvement in which leadership and human resource development operate as complementary organizational capabilities.

An important finding emerging from this study concerns the contextual factors that reinforce the relationship between transformational leadership, competency development, and school performance. Participants consistently highlighted the influence of religious values, family-oriented organizational relationships, and intrinsic motivation as organizational characteristics that strengthened commitment to educational responsibilities despite limitations associated with supervision and institutional resources. Religious values encouraged teachers and educational staff to interpret professional responsibilities as moral commitments, while family-oriented relationships promoted mutual support, cooperation, and shared accountability in achieving institutional objectives. Intrinsic motivation further encouraged organizational members to pursue professional improvement independently even when structured internal competency development programs remained limited. These contextual characteristics demonstrate that organizational culture functions as an enabling condition that amplifies the effectiveness of leadership and competency development rather than merely serving as a passive organizational background. Similar arguments have been advanced in recent educational leadership literature suggesting that instructional leadership and organizational improvement are increasingly shaped by contextual organizational characteristics capable of sustaining continuous learning and educational innovation (Shaked & Hallinger, 2026).

The present findings both confirm and extend previous educational leadership research by demonstrating that transformational leadership contributes to school performance primarily through the development of teachers' and educational staff's professional capacity within a supportive organizational culture. Earlier studies have consistently shown that transformational leadership strengthens school effectiveness through teacher empowerment, organizational learning, and professional commitment (Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2020). Recent empirical evidence likewise indicates that transformational leadership positively influences teacher performance, instructional quality, and organizational effectiveness when accompanied by supportive professional development

and collaborative leadership practices (Utami, Nelitawati, & Al-Kadri, 2024). Comparable conclusions have also been reported regarding the positive influence of transformational leadership on teachers' motivation and institutional performance through supportive organizational environments (Ermita & Baysa, 2025). The findings of this study expand this body of knowledge by demonstrating that, within the madrasah context, religious culture, family-oriented organizational values, and intrinsic motivation operate as reinforcing mechanisms that strengthen the relationship between transformational leadership, competency development, and school performance. This contextual perspective offers a broader understanding of educational leadership by highlighting organizational culture as an integral component of leadership effectiveness rather than as an external contextual variable.

The principal contribution of this study lies in the development of a context-sensitive explanation of transformational leadership within Islamic educational institutions. The findings suggest that effective school performance is achieved through the integration of transformational leadership, continuous competency development, and organizational values rooted in religious commitment, collaborative relationships, and intrinsic professional responsibility. Leadership effectiveness therefore depends not only on the leader's ability to inspire and motivate organizational members but also on the institutional capacity to cultivate a learning culture that encourages continuous professional growth. Competency development serves as the principal organizational mechanism through which leadership initiatives are translated into measurable improvements in instructional quality, administrative effectiveness, and institutional performance. The integration of these organizational dimensions provides a richer conceptual understanding of transformational leadership by emphasizing the importance of contextual organizational culture in shaping educational improvement. This perspective contributes to the advancement of educational leadership scholarship by demonstrating that sustainable school performance within madrasahs is constructed through the interaction of leadership, human resource development, and culturally embedded organizational values rather than through managerial interventions alone.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the principal's transformational leadership plays a significant role in improving school performance by fostering a shared vision, motivating teachers and educational staff, encouraging open communication, empowering organizational members, and facilitating continuous professional development. The findings indicate that transformational leadership is implemented not merely through administrative authority but through interpersonal relationships that strengthen organizational commitment, collaboration, and collective responsibility toward achieving the educational goals of the madrasah. The study further reveals that competency development contributes substantially to enhancing instructional quality, administrative effectiveness, and the professional adaptability of teachers and educational staff in responding to curriculum reforms and technological advancement. Competency development is primarily facilitated through participation in MGMP, seminars, workshops, webinars, curriculum training, and other professional learning activities supported by both the madrasah and external educational institutions. Although internally organized competency development programs remain relatively limited, the principal's support and the strong commitment demonstrated by teachers and educational staff have enabled continuous professional learning to become an integral component of organizational improvement. The interaction between transformational leadership and competency development creates a learning-oriented organizational environment that strengthens institutional effectiveness beyond the contribution of each factor independently. These findings indicate that sustainable school performance is achieved through the integration of effective leadership practices and continuous human resource development within the organizational context of the madrasah.

The study also identifies that the relationship between transformational leadership, competency development, and school performance is reinforced by organizational characteristics that are distinctive to Islamic educational institutions. Religious values, a family-oriented organizational culture, and the intrinsic motivation of teachers and educational staff function as contextual mechanisms that strengthen organizational commitment, collaborative relationships, and continuous professional learning. This contextual perspective extends existing transformational leadership literature by demonstrating that leadership effectiveness is influenced not only by transformational leadership behaviors but also by organizational values that shape how leadership is practiced and experienced within the madrasah

environment. The findings therefore propose a context-sensitive understanding of transformational leadership in which leadership practices, competency development, and organizational culture operate as mutually reinforcing dimensions supporting sustainable school improvement. From a practical perspective, the study suggests that school leaders should implement integrated leadership strategies that combine transformational leadership, systematic competency development, and the cultivation of organizational cultures characterized by collaboration, continuous learning, professional commitment, and shared religious values. Since this research was conducted as a qualitative case study in a single madrasah, the transferability of the findings to other educational contexts remains limited. Future studies are encouraged to examine the proposed leadership framework across different types of educational institutions using qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods approaches to provide broader empirical evidence regarding the interaction between transformational leadership, competency development, organizational culture, and school performance.

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