

Transformational Leadership in Islamic Education: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Enhancing Inclusivity and Diversity

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DOI: <http://doi.org/10.33650/al-tanzim.v10i4.14497>

Received: 13 February 2026

Revised: 17 July 2026

Accepted: 03 September 2026

Abstract:

Transformational leadership is increasingly important in helping Islamic educational institutions address contemporary educational challenges through adaptive, inclusive leadership practices. This study explores the implementation of transformational leadership – using a multidisciplinary approach – at a madrasah, as well as the leadership practices and organizational processes that support educational transformation. An instrumental qualitative case study was conducted at the *madrasah* using semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis. Thematic analysis, supported by NVivo software, was employed to analyze the data. The findings reveal three interconnected themes: transformational vision, inclusive governance, and a participatory school culture. These themes show that transformational leadership is underpinned by collaborative organizational processes that integrate multidisciplinary perspectives and values within Islamic education while fostering organizational learning, psychological safety, and shared responsibility. This study helps refine the contextual application of transformational leadership theory. It elucidates the mechanisms by which multidisciplinary perspectives are realized within the framework of Islamic education. The findings also offer practical insights for enhancing leadership development, inclusive governance, and professional learning in madrasahs.

Keywords: *Transformational Leadership, Multidisciplinary, Inclusive Education*

Abstrak:

Kepemimpinan transformasional menjadi semakin penting dalam membantu lembaga pendidikan Islam menghadapi permasalahan pendidikan kontemporer melalui praktik kepemimpinan adaptif dan inklusif. Studi ini mengeksplorasi implementasi kepemimpinan transformasional menggunakan pendekatan multidisiplin di sebuah madrasah serta praktik kepemimpinan dan proses organisasi yang mendukung transformasi pendidikan. Studi kasus kualitatif instrumental dilakukan di madrasah dengan menggunakan wawancara semi-terstruktur, observasi, dan analisis dokumen. Analisis tematik digunakan untuk menganalisis data dengan dukungan NVivo. Temuan mengungkapkan tiga tema yang saling terkait yaitu visi transformasional, tata kelola inklusif, dan budaya sekolah partisipatif. Tema-tema ini menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan transformasional didukung oleh proses organisasi kolaboratif yang mengintegrasikan perspektif dan nilai-nilai multidisiplin dalam pendidikan Islam, dan mendorong pembelajaran organisasi, keamanan psikologis, dan tanggung jawab bersama. Studi ini berkontribusi pada penyempurnaan konteks teori kepemimpinan transformasional. Studi ini menjelaskan mekanisme bagaimana perspektif multidisiplin diwujudkan dalam kerangka pendidikan Islam. Temuan juga memberikan wawasan

praktis untuk meningkatkan pengembangan kepemimpinan, tata kelola inklusif, dan pembelajaran profesional di madrasah.

Kata Kunci: *Kepemimpinan Transformasional, Multidisipliner, Pendidikan Inklusif*

Please cite this article in APA style as:

Hamzah, A. F., Qusairi, A. (2026). Transformational Leadership in Islamic Education: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Enhancing Inclusivity and Diversity. *Al-Tanzim: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 10(4), 1400-1414.

INTRODUCTION

One of the important tasks in the Islamic education sector to address current educational challenges, especially the challenges of diversity and inclusivity within the educational framework, is transformative leadership (Elias & Mansouri, 2023; Taufiqurrahman et al., 2025; Soim et al., 2026). Trends show that Islamic schools are increasingly expected not only to ensure a diverse and socially inclusive learning environment but also to foster religious identity and moderate values in an increasingly diverse society (Alazmi, 2025). For instance, in Indonesia, the expanding range of Islamic education services, the rapid development of information technologies, and the rising public demand for inclusive education create difficulties for school leaders, who must balance innovation with maintaining the institution's religious identity (Assalihee et al., 2024). As a result, educational leaders should transform traditional leadership models by adopting innovative approaches that address these multifaceted challenges (Assalihee et al., 2024; Imansyah et al., 2025; Sartika et al., 2025). Islamic education institutions should move beyond traditional leadership models and become transformative leaders that are flexible, collaborative, and ready to respond to the needs of a changing world.

The history of leadership behaviors in Islamic educational institutions has been characterized by a great diversity, reflecting differences in institutional mission and culture (Hasanah et al., 2024; Sailin et al., 2024). While several institutions have found ways to integrate the two approaches, some still grapple with harmonizing long-standing educational traditions with modern trends that require inclusiveness, flexibility, and innovation in education (Suryani & Muslim, 2024; Heru & Bali, 2024; Khomairohtusshiyamah et al., 2025). The problem arises when leaders must meet the need for inclusiveness and flexibility in response to a diversifying school population and changing social norms, without compromising the institution's religious identity. The multidisciplinary approach appears promising in this regard by integrating ideas from organizational psychology, educational sociology, and educational management (Lei et al., 2024).

A multidisciplinary approach is increasingly identified as a promising strategy for enhancing transformational leadership and promoting inclusivity in Islamic educational institutions. Research consistently shows that integrating perspectives from various disciplines improves educational leadership and organizational effectiveness (Ataman et al., 2024; Khomairohtusshiyamah et al., 2025; Nasrullah et al., 2026; Syafrudin et al., 2026). Armiyanti et al. (2023) stated that a transformational leadership model, combined with psychological and cultural factors, will motivate teachers and students from diverse social backgrounds. Although these studies contain important information regarding the benefits of multidisciplinary and transformational leadership models, these

papers focus largely on conceptual discussions and do not provide details regarding the implementation of these approaches in practice in Islamic educational institutions. This paper contributes to the literature and fills an important gap in existing research.

The topic of transformational leadership has been studied, as have multidisciplinary education and inclusive education, but scholars have paid little attention to how these topics interact within leadership practices in Islamic educational institutions. Furthermore, most previous studies on this topic have been conceptual, and few are empirically examined the processes of multidisciplinary transformational leadership in madrasahs (Ataman & Safitri, 2024; Fauzah & Faizi, 2024; Alodhialah, 2025) . This gap is therefore mainly contextual and methodological. This gap exists because empirical qualitative studies on the enactment of multidisciplinary transformational leadership in Islamic educational institutions are scarce. To address this gap, this study examines the adoption of multidisciplinary transformational leadership in an Indonesian madrasah by analyzing leadership practices, institutional processes, and the enabling and constraining factors shaping inclusive and diverse educational environments.

This study investigates the implementation of multidisciplinary transformational leadership in an Islamic educational institution in Indonesia to address these unresolved issues. This study focuses not only on the conceptual effectiveness of transformational leadership but also on implementation processes, school leaders' practices, and contextual factors that support or hinder the creation of inclusive and diverse educational environments. Thus, this research is a qualitative case study that aims to understand in-depth how the multidisciplinary perspective is translated into leadership practices in the day-to-day management of a madrasah.

Thus, this study uses a qualitative case study to explore how a multidisciplinary approach to transformational leadership is implemented in an Islamic educational institution. This study aims to understand how leadership practices are enacted to foster inclusivity and diversity within the madrasah's institutional and religious context. This research investigates leadership practices in everyday organizational contexts to provide empirically based insights into the use of multidisciplinary transformational leadership in Islamic education.

More specifically, the study has three interrelated objectives. The first explores how multidisciplinary transformational leadership is implemented to develop inclusive and diverse educational practices in an Islamic educational institution. Second, it highlights the leadership practices school leaders use to integrate multidisciplinary perspectives into organizational management and educational decision-making. Third, it considers the contextual factors that enable and inhibit the implementation of multidisciplinary transformational leadership to create inclusive educational environments. Together, these objectives are expected to produce empirical evidence that refines the current understanding of transformational leadership implementation in Islamic educational contexts and provides practical implications for school leaders and educational policymakers.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using an instrumental case study design to examine how multidisciplinary transformational leadership is implemented within an Islamic educational institution. The study used an instrumental case study to generate broader conceptual insights into transformational leadership practices beyond a single case, particularly in the context of Islamic education (Mieghem et al., 2022). The research was conducted at MA Dalwa Pasuruan, purposively selected due to its integration of Islamic values, organizational innovation, and inclusive educational practices. Using purposive sampling, the researchers selected fifteen participants based on their direct involvement in leadership practices and school administration: one principal, two vice principals, six teachers, two administrators, and four students. Their diverse perspectives provided insights into the planning, implementation, and experience of inclusive leadership practices within the madrasah.

Table 1. Informant Participant

Informant Category	Number	Selection Criteria
Principal	1	Responsible for leadership policies
Vice Principals	2	Coordinating academic and student affairs
Teachers	6	Minimum three years of teaching experience
Administrative Staff	2	Responsible for institutional management
Students	4	Actively involved in school activities

The interview protocol and observation guide were developed based on a literature review of transformational leadership, educational inclusion, and diversity management. Before data collection, two scholars specializing in Islamic educational leadership and qualitative methodology reviewed the instruments to ensure the research questions were relevant, clear, and appropriate (Alamri, 2023). The revised instruments were then used to collect data through triangulation involving in-depth interviews, participant observations, and document analysis conducted between January and March 2025. The study analyzed institutional documents, including strategic plans, leadership policies, meeting records, and school regulations, to support and validate interview findings (Yin et al., 2023).

The collected data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework, which consists of six stages: data familiarization, initial coding, categorization, theme development, theme refinement, and interpretation. NVivo software was utilized to systematically organize and analyze qualitative data. The analysis generated 87 initial codes derived from interviews, observations, and documents, which were subsequently grouped into three major themes: (1) Transformational Vision, (2) Inclusive Governance, and (3) Participatory School Culture. Participant quotations were incorporated throughout the analysis to provide empirical support for each identified theme.

The trustworthiness of the findings was ensured through credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability criteria. Credibility was strengthened through prolonged engagement, data triangulation, and participant checking, while dependability was supported through a systematic audit trail documenting the research procedures (Bingham, 2023). We maintained

confirmability through peer debriefing and reflective memos during data analysis, while detailed descriptions of the research context enhanced the transferability of the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The qualitative analysis generated a systematic coding structure through iterative thematic analysis. Interview transcripts, observational field notes, and institutional documents were first open-coded to identify meaningful units related to multidisciplinary transformational leadership. We then grouped similar codes into broader conceptual categories and refined them into overarching analytical themes through constant comparison across data sources. Table 2 illustrates the progression from representative interview excerpts to initial codes, conceptual categories, and the final analytical themes that guided the interpretation of the findings.

Table 2. Development of Analytical Themes

Raw Data (Interview Excerpt)	Initial Code	Category	Final Theme
"We discuss every important policy together before making decisions." (P1)	Collaborative discussion	Shared decision-making	Transformational Vision
"Teachers can express their opinions during planning meetings." (T2)	Teacher participation	Distributed leadership	Inclusive Governance
"Students are encouraged to share their ideas openly." (S3)	Student voice	Psychological safety	Participatory School Culture
"Administrative staff also contribute suggestions for school improvement." (AS1)	Cross-functional collaboration	Organizational participation	Inclusive Governance
"Teachers solve classroom challenges together rather than individually." (T5)	Professional collaboration	Collective learning	Participatory School Culture

The coding process produced three interrelated themes that collectively explain how multidisciplinary transformational leadership emerged, became institutionalized, and influenced organizational culture within the madrasah. Triangulation of interviews, observations, and institutional documents supported these themes. Table 3 summarizes each analytical theme, its representative codes, supporting empirical evidence, data sources, and analytical interpretation before discussing each theme in detail.

Table 3. Thematic Synthesis of Multidisciplinary Transformational Leadership in Madrasah

Theme	Representative Codes	Illustrative Evidence	Data Sources	Analytical Interpretation
Transformational Vision	Shared vision; reflective leadership; collaborative decision-making; value-based leadership; responsiveness to	"We now begin every important discussion by asking how our policies will affect all members of the school community." (P1,	Principal interviews; teacher interviews; strategic planning documents	Reflective dialogue and multidisciplinary perspectives enabled leaders to transform Islamic values into practical guidance for inclusive leadership.

	student diversity	Principal)		
Inclusive Governance	Distributed leadership; participatory policy-making; institutional collaboration; organizational accountability; shared responsibility	"Teachers are invited to contribute ideas during planning meetings, and our professional experiences are genuinely valued." (T2, Teacher)	Principal interviews; vice principal interviews; administrative staff interviews; meeting minutes; institutional regulations	Collaborative governance institutionalized multidisciplinary leadership by distributing decision-making beyond the principal.
Participatory School Culture	Psychological safety; teacher collaboration; student participation; mutual trust; inclusive communication	"We feel comfortable expressing our ideas because teachers are willing to listen to us." (S3, Student)	Teacher interviews; student interviews; classroom observations; extracurricular observations	Continuous interaction among school members built trust, participation, and shared responsibility, strengthening an inclusive organizational culture rooted in Islamic values.

Transformational Vision: Building a Shared Vision

The first theme highlights the emergence of a transformational vision developed through multidisciplinary leadership practices. The findings indicate that leadership transformation at MA Dalwa Pasuruan was not merely a result of structural changes but emerged through the gradual reconstruction of educational values and leadership approaches. Participants described a shift from compliance-based and supervisory leadership toward a more inclusive approach characterized by dialogue, collaboration, and shared responsibility among school stakeholders.

The principal explained that leadership practices had expanded beyond regulatory compliance to consider broader educational dimensions, including students' social backgrounds, teachers' experiences, and collective decision-making processes. This reflects a shift from directive management toward reflective leadership, where organizational challenges are discussed collectively, and solutions are developed through interaction among educational actors.

Teachers also reported significant changes in leadership meetings, which evolved from administrative reporting sessions into collaborative forums for discussing classroom experiences, student learning challenges, and strategies for educational improvement. These findings show that the transformational vision developed through continuous communication and active participation, enabling teachers to contribute their professional knowledge and experience to institutional decision-making.

The findings further show that multidisciplinary perspectives became an essential component of leadership practices. By integrating educational psychology, sociology, and Islamic educational principles, school leaders considered academic, social, and psychological dimensions when developing institutional policies. This approach made leadership decisions more responsive to student diversity and the broader needs of the madrasah community.

Document analysis supported the interview findings by revealing a greater emphasis on collaborative planning, teacher professional development, student

well-being, and inclusive educational initiatives in strategic documents and leadership records. These findings indicate that transformational vision was not limited to leadership discourse but was embedded into organizational practices and institutional planning processes.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that transformational vision emerges through an iterative process of reflective dialogue, collective decision-making, and multidisciplinary integration. This shared vision became the foundation for subsequent organizational transformation, including the development of inclusive governance and participatory school culture. Therefore, transformational leadership in madrasahs can be understood as an organizational process through which institutional values are continuously reconstructed through interaction among educational stakeholders.

Inclusive Governance: Embedding Collaborative Leadership

The second theme shows how inclusive governance helped institutionalize multidisciplinary leadership practices. While the transformational vision provided strategic direction for organizational change, its implementation required governance processes that encouraged collaboration and shared responsibility among organizational members. Interview and document analysis indicate a shift from hierarchical decision-making to a more collaborative approach that involves principals, teachers, administrative staff, and students in organizational deliberations.

The principal emphasized that important institutional decisions were no longer determined individually but developed through collective discussions involving various stakeholders. This approach demonstrates that transformational leadership was operationalized through distributed decision-making rather than centralized authority. By integrating educational, psychological, organizational, and sociocultural perspectives, leaders and stakeholders collectively interpreted challenges, developed solutions, and shared responsibility for implementing institutional policies.

Teachers reported that inclusive governance increased their opportunities for professional participation and strengthened their sense of being valued within the organization. Rather than simply receiving predetermined policies, teachers became involved in planning processes and contributed their professional perspectives. Similarly, administrative staff experienced improved coordination and transparency, as their feedback informed procedures that directly affected teachers and students.

The findings indicate that multidisciplinary transformational leadership extended beyond instructional practices and incorporated broader organizational perspectives into governance processes. School leaders recognized that sustainable transformation required cooperation across academic, administrative, and student-support functions. Consequently, institutional decisions became more responsive to educational needs and reflected the collective knowledge of different organizational actors.

Document analysis further supported these findings by demonstrating that collaborative governance had been integrated into formal institutional practices.

Leadership meeting records, annual work plans, and institutional regulations reflected increased emphasis on collaborative planning, teacher development, conflict-resolution strategies, and student support systems. These processes indicate that inclusive governance was embedded within organizational structures rather than relying solely on the principal's personal leadership style.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that inclusive governance serves as the organizational mechanism through which multidisciplinary transformational leadership becomes sustainable. Through collaborative decision-making, shared responsibility, and institutionalized participation, transformational leadership shifts from individual behavior to a collective governance structure. This process strengthens madrasahs' capacity to sustain continuous organizational transformation.

Participatory School Culture: Building Trust and Shared Responsibility

The third theme highlights the emergence of a participatory school culture as the outcome of multidisciplinary transformational leadership. The findings indicate that changes in governance practices transformed interpersonal relationships within the madrasah by fostering trust, open communication, and shared responsibility. Transformational leadership was not limited to administrative policies but was embedded in daily educational practices, where principals, teachers, administrators, and students actively contributed to creating an inclusive learning environment.

Teachers reported significant improvements in communication patterns and professional collaboration. Previously, teachers often addressed classroom challenges individually; however, participatory leadership encouraged them to share experiences, discuss problems collectively, and develop collaborative solutions. The integration of educational psychology, sociology, and Islamic educational values also shaped teachers' perspectives by enabling them to view student diversity as an educational resource rather than merely a challenge to be managed.

Students also perceived changes in the social environment of the madrasah, particularly regarding their involvement and freedom to express opinions. The findings demonstrate that students experienced greater acceptance, respect, and participation in classroom discussions and school activities. This suggests that transformational leadership contributed to psychological safety by building relationships based on trust, empathy, and mutual respect between teachers and students.

Observational findings further confirmed a collaborative learning environment characterized by active student engagement, respectful interactions, and participatory communication. These practices were observed not only during classroom activities but also in school assemblies and extracurricular programs, demonstrating that participation had become embedded within the broader organizational culture rather than being restricted by formal administrative structures.

The findings suggest that the sustainability of transformational leadership depended on continuous interaction among organizational members rather than solely on the principal's authority. The combination of shared vision, participatory

governance, and open communication gradually strengthened organizational commitment, collective responsibility, and the implementation of inclusive educational practices. Therefore, multidisciplinary transformational leadership can be understood as an organizational process that integrates Islamic values with contemporary educational approaches.

Overall, the findings show that transformational leadership's most significant impact is its ability to establish a sustainable participatory school culture based on trust, inclusion, and cooperation. The three identified themes collectively reveal a sequential transformation process: a shared transformational vision provides strategic direction, inclusive governance institutionalizes collaborative practices, and participatory school culture sustains leadership transformation by embedding inclusive values into everyday educational activities.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that transformational leadership in madrasahs is developed through the construction of a shared transformational vision that integrates multidisciplinary perspectives and Islamic educational values. Unlike conventional views that consider transformational leadership primarily as an individual leader's characteristic, this study reveals that transformation occurs through continuous dialogue, collective decision-making, and shared interpretation among principals, teachers, administrators, and students. The transformational vision is therefore constructed collectively through the involvement of multiple educational actors in addressing institutional challenges, particularly those related to inclusive education (Burns, 1978; Ghorbani et al., 2023; Nadeem, 2024).

These findings extend Burns' (1978) and Bass's (1985) conceptualizations of transformational leadership by showing that the dimensions of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration are enacted through collaborative multidisciplinary processes rather than solely through leader-driven actions. Intellectual stimulation emerges from collective reflection involving diverse professional perspectives, while individualized consideration develops into organizational efforts to accommodate the varied needs of teachers and students. Thus, multidisciplinary inclusivity functions as a contextual mechanism that strengthens transformational leadership practices within Islamic educational settings (Kareem et al., 2023; Nassir & Benoliel, 2025; Rahman et al., 2026).

The study further indicates that transformational leadership becomes sustainable when institutionalized through inclusive governance. The transition from hierarchical decision-making toward collaborative governance enables teachers, administrators, and students to participate in policy development and organizational problem-solving. This finding aligns with distributed leadership theory, which views leadership as a collective activity involving individuals based on their expertise and organizational roles (Bellibaş et al., 2024; Liu & Watson, 2023; Hidayah et al., 2024; Ilmani et al., 2024; Saleha, 2023). However, this study extends distributed leadership theory by demonstrating that leadership

distribution in madrasahs is also shaped by Islamic principles, including *shūrā* (consultation), *ta'āwun* (cooperation), and collective responsibility.

Inclusive governance is not positioned as a new leadership model but as an organizational mechanism through which transformational leadership is embedded and sustained. Through shared vision, multidisciplinary collaboration, and value-based decision-making, leadership transformation becomes integrated into institutional structures rather than depending solely on the personal abilities of individual leaders. This finding supports previous research highlighting that participatory governance contributes to organizational commitment, teacher professionalism, and school effectiveness (Liu & Watson, 2023; Mu'alimin et al., 2026; Munajat & Muqowim, 2025).

The findings also reveal that the primary outcome of multidisciplinary transformational leadership is the emergence of a participatory school culture characterized by trust, open communication, and shared responsibility. This culture develops through continuous interaction among principals, teachers, administrative staff, and students in translating organizational values into educational practices. A key factor supporting this culture is psychological safety, where organizational members feel confident expressing ideas, discussing problems, and participating in decision-making processes without fear of negative judgment (Mikuła & Kaczmarek, 2025; Mogaji & Dimingu, 2024; Ahsan, 2024; Caligiuri, 2025).

Furthermore, participatory school culture serves as a catalyst for organizational learning through communication, reflection, and professional knowledge sharing among members of the madrasah community. This study highlights that organizational learning in madrasahs is not merely technical or managerial but involves the integration of multidisciplinary knowledge and Islamic values such as *amanah*, justice, and communal responsibility. These findings reinforce previous studies emphasizing the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational learning through collaboration and reflective practices (Sliwka et al., 2023; Mais et al., 2026; Supriyono et al., 2025).

Theoretically, this study contributes a contextual refinement of transformational leadership theory by explaining how transformational leadership operates within Islamic educational institutions through the integration of shared vision, inclusive governance, participatory culture, multidisciplinary perspectives, and Islamic values. Rather than proposing a new leadership theory, the study identifies the mechanisms through which transformational leadership can be sustainably implemented in madrasahs. Practically, the findings emphasize the importance of developing madrasah leaders' competencies in decision-making, organizational communication, conflict management, and value-based leadership, while encouraging educational policies that promote collaboration, professional learning communities, and collective responsibility.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that transformational leadership in madrasahs is an organizational process in which shared vision, collaborative governance, and participatory culture interact to sustain educational transformation. The findings highlight that leadership sustainability depends not only on leaders' competencies

but also on the integration of multidisciplinary perspectives and Islamic values that promote collaboration, shared responsibility, organizational learning, and psychological safety. The study contributes to transformational leadership theory by providing a contextual understanding of how interdisciplinary inclusivity operates within Islamic educational settings. However, as the research is based on a single case study, future studies using comparative or mixed-method approaches across diverse Islamic educational contexts are needed to further validate and expand the proposed framework.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors sincerely thank the Rector, academic leaders, and lecturers of Universitas Islam Internasional Darullughah Wadda'wah for their continued support, guidance, and encouragement throughout this research. The authors also thank all participants and members of the institution who contributed valuable insights and assistance during the research process.

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