Dimensions of Transcendental Communication in the Management of Spiritual Leadership among Muslim Family Heads Practicing *Shalawat*

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Abstract

Leadership within family life is closely connected to spiritual awareness, moral responsibility, and emotional stability. In Muslim communities, devotional practices often function as important sources of spiritual reflection that influence everyday attitudes and leadership behavior. However, limited research has examined how transcendental communication through religious practices shapes leadership within family contexts. This study aims to explore the dimensions of transcendental communication experienced by Muslim family heads through the practice of *shalawat* and to examine how these experiences contribute to the development of spiritual leadership within family life. The study employed a qualitative phenomenological approach to understand participants' lived experiences and interpretations of *shalawat* as a form of spiritual communication. Data were obtained through in depth interviews with Muslim family heads who consistently practice *shalawat* in their daily lives. The findings reveal that the recitation of *shalawat* carries several interconnected meanings, including expressions of closeness to God, devotion and loyalty to the Prophet Muhammad, and the articulation of prayer and hope. These spiritual meanings contribute to emotional calmness, reinforce leadership responsibility, and encourage moral exemplarity in guiding family members. The study demonstrates that transcendental communication through *shalawat* functions not only as a devotional expression but also as a spiritual resource that shapes leadership attitudes and ethical awareness within family life.

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INTRODUCTION

Leadership within family life plays a fundamental role in shaping moral values, emotional stability, and social responsibility in Muslim communities. In Islamic tradition, the head of the family is not only responsible for fulfilling economic needs but also for guiding family members through moral example and spiritual awareness (Fathurrahman & Jasiah, 2025; Rifani et al., 2021; Zagidullin, 2023). The rapid social transformation experienced in many contemporary societies has created increasing pressure on family leadership structures, particularly in maintaining ethical values and emotional balance

in everyday life (Dahlan, 2025; Lawal, 2025; Saifi & Khouiled, 2024). Reports from global institutions indicate that spiritual well being and religious engagement continue to influence family resilience and social cohesion in many cultural contexts (Bahrami & Sadeghi, 2025; Kumari & Kumari, 2025; Maulana et al., 2025). For instance, the Pew Research Kuran & Özer (2023) reported that more than 84 percent of the global population identify with a religious tradition, suggesting that spiritual practices remain deeply embedded in social life. In Muslim societies, devotional practices such as prayer, *dhikr*, and *shalawat* are frequently regarded as sources of spiritual reflection that shape personal character and leadership attitudes (Bahrami & Sadeghi, 2025; Kumari & Kumari, 2025; Kuran & Özer, 2023). Despite the significance of these practices, academic discussions about the role of spiritual devotion in shaping leadership within family environments remain relatively limited, particularly from the perspective of communication and lived religious experience.

Recent scholarly discussions have increasingly explored the relationship between spirituality, communication, and leadership. Research on spiritual leadership has emphasized that spiritual values can influence leadership attitudes, ethical behavior, and emotional stability in various social settings (Lolang et al., 2023; Muchammad Maulana Abdillah et al., 2023; Zhu et al., 2022). Udahemuka et al. (2023) argues that spiritual leadership is closely connected to inner awareness, meaning making, and value based motivation that guide individuals in fulfilling their responsibilities. More recent studies have also highlighted the role of religious practices in shaping moral consciousness and leadership attitudes within communities (Abu Snaineh, 2025; Gemar, 2023; Ruggiero, 2025). For example, Kim (2024) examined ritual communication practices in digital religious communities and demonstrated that symbolic communication can reinforce collective meaning and spiritual identity. Similarly, George William (2022) noted that religious practices often contribute to emotional resilience and psychological well being in everyday life. Other scholars have also explored how devotional practices function as symbolic expressions that strengthen ethical awareness and interpersonal relationships within social groups (De Simone et al., 2025; Lausch & Rossetto, 2023; Tyler, 2022). Although these studies highlight the importance of spirituality in shaping leadership attitudes, most of them focus primarily on institutional or organizational contexts rather than examining how transcendental communication operates within the micro social environment of family life.

A critical review of existing literature reveals an important gap regarding the role of transcendental communication in shaping leadership within Muslim families. While previous studies have addressed spiritual leadership in organizations, educational institutions, and religious communities, limited attention has been given to the everyday spiritual practices that influence leadership attitudes in family contexts. In particular, the practice of *shalawat*, which holds a central position in Islamic devotional life, has rarely been examined as a form of transcendental communication that shapes moral reflection and leadership behavior. Most existing discussions of *shalawat* focus on theological or devotional perspectives rather than exploring its experiential meaning in everyday leadership practices. Consequently, there remains limited empirical understanding of how this devotional practice influences emotional awareness, moral responsibility, and leadership attitudes among Muslim family heads. Addressing this gap is essential for expanding the discussion of spiritual leadership beyond formal organizational settings and toward a deeper understanding of how religious practices shape leadership within everyday social life.

This study aims to explore the dimensions of transcendental communication experienced by Muslim family heads through the practice of *shalawat* and to examine how these experiences influence the development of spiritual leadership within family life. By focusing on lived spiritual experiences, the research seeks to provide a deeper understanding of how devotional practices shape emotional awareness, ethical reflection, and leadership attitudes in guiding family members. The study also intends to contribute to broader academic discussions on the relationship between spirituality, communication, and leadership. In doing so, it offers insights into how transcendental communication functions not only as a symbolic religious act but also as a meaningful process that influences everyday decision making, interpersonal relationships, and moral responsibility within family environments.

The central argument of this study is that the recitation of *shalawat* functions as a form of transcendental communication that fosters spiritual awareness and strengthens the moral foundations of family leadership. Through this devotional practice, individuals engage in reflective communication with the divine that encourages emotional stability, reinforces ethical values, and promotes compassionate leadership attitudes. Understanding these experiences requires an interpretive approach that focuses on how individuals construct meaning from their spiritual practices in everyday life. By examining the lived experiences of Muslim family heads, this study seeks to illuminate the ways in which transcendental communication through *shalawat* contributes to the formation of spiritual leadership within the family context. The following section therefore outlines the research methodology employed to investigate these experiences and interpret their significance in shaping leadership practices in Muslim family life.

RESEARCHS METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the dimensions of transcendental communication experienced by Muslim family heads who regularly practice *shalawat*. A qualitative approach was selected because it enables an in-depth understanding of spiritual experiences and the meanings individuals attribute to their religious practices. According to Aaslund (2021), qualitative research is particularly suitable for examining complex social and spiritual phenomena that require interpretive analysis of human experiences. The study adopted a phenomenological perspective in order to capture participants' lived experiences and their interpretations of *shalawat* as a form of transcendental communication. This design allowed the researcher to investigate how spiritual practices influence emotional awareness, moral reflection, and leadership attitudes within family life. The research was conducted in a natural social setting where participants engage in their daily routines and religious practices. By focusing on lived experiences, the phenomenological approach provided a comprehensive understanding of how transcendental communication through *shalawat* shapes the spiritual leadership of Muslim family heads.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews and supportive documentation in order to explore participants' personal experiences and reflections regarding the practice of *shalawat*. In qualitative inquiry, in-depth interviews allow researchers to capture participants' perspectives and interpretations in their own words (Doane et al., 2024; Liinamaa, 2026; Ślęzak, 2023). The researcher acted as the primary instrument in the research process, engaging directly with participants to explore their spiritual experiences and leadership reflections within family life (Collins & Stockton, 2022; Devgan, 2025; Goundar, 2025).

The participants consisted of Muslim family heads who consistently practice *shalawat* in their daily routines. The research was conducted over a period of approximately three months in several residential communities where participants actively engage in religious practices. To ensure the credibility of the findings, the study applied several techniques, including data triangulation and reflective verification with participants (Habersang & Reihlen, 2025, 2025; Shea, 2022). These strategies helped strengthen the consistency of interpretations and ensured that the participants' perspectives were accurately represented in the research findings.

Table 1. Informants of the Study

Interview Code	Role / Function
FH1	Muslim family head who regularly practices *shalawat* and reflects on its influence on family leadership
FH2	Muslim family head who integrates *shalawat* into daily routines and family guidance
FH3	Muslim family head who practices *shalawat* during moments of reflection and decision-making
FH4	Muslim family head who encourages family members to engage in religious practices
FH5	Muslim family head who reflects on prophetic character in guiding family members
FH6	Muslim family head who emphasizes spiritual responsibility in family leadership

The collected materials were analyzed using thematic analysis in order to identify patterns of meaning emerging from participants' experiences. The analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Saldana (2024), which involves processes of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Through this process, the researcher carefully examined participants' reflections to identify recurring themes related to transcendental communication and spiritual leadership. The thematic approach allowed the researcher to categorize participants' experiences into meaningful conceptual dimensions, including spiritual meaning, emotional stability, and leadership responsibility. These themes were then interpreted in relation to the broader conceptual framework of transcendental communication and spiritual leadership. To enhance the credibility of the interpretation, the analysis was conducted iteratively, allowing continuous reflection between emerging themes and the participants' narratives. This process ensured that the interpretation remained closely grounded in the participants' experiences while maintaining analytical rigor. Through this analytical procedure, the study was able to construct a conceptual understanding of how the practice of *shalawat* contributes to the formation of spiritual leadership among Muslim family heads.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Result
Dimensions of Meaning in Transcendental Communication

Transcendental communication refers to a form of spiritual interaction that connects human beings with the Divine through religious consciousness and devotional practice. In Islamic religious life, such communication is often expressed through acts of worship that not only fulfill ritual obligations but also cultivate inner awareness and spiritual reflection. One practice that carries profound spiritual significance is the recitation of *shalawat*, the invocation of blessings upon the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). For many Muslims, *shalawat* is more than a devotional formula; it represents an expression of reverence, affection, and spiritual attachment to the

Prophet. At the same time, it serves as a pathway for strengthening one's relationship with God. Among Muslim family heads, this practice is often understood as a form of spiritual reflection that influences personal attitudes, emotional stability, and moral orientation. Through continuous engagement with *shalawat*, individuals experience layers of meaning that shape religious consciousness and reinforce spiritual awareness in fulfilling their responsibilities within family life.

For several Muslim family heads, the recitation of *shalawat* is not perceived merely as a routine devotional act. Rather, it is regarded as a spiritual practice that nurtures a sense of closeness to God while reminding them of the exemplary character of the Prophet Muhammad. Through this practice, individuals often describe an inner experience that fosters calmness and renewed motivation in fulfilling their responsibilities.

One participant expressed this sentiment as follows: "Whenever I recite *shalawat*, I feel a sense of calm. It is as if I am remembering both Allah and the Prophet at the same time. That feeling gives me strength to carry out my responsibilities as the head of the family."*(FH1, 2024)* A similar perspective was shared by another participant who described *shalawat* as a form of spiritual hope that accompanies daily activities. "I usually recite *shalawat* after prayer or while working. It makes my heart feel lighter, and I believe that God will ease whatever difficulties I am facing." *(FH2, 2024)* These reflections indicate that *shalawat* is experienced as a spiritual bridge linking personal devotion with a deeper awareness of divine presence. Through this practice, individuals cultivate a sense of tranquility and moral encouragement in navigating everyday life.

The reflections expressed above suggest that the recitation of *shalawat* carries meanings that extend beyond its outward form as a devotional utterance. For the participants, *shalawat* represents an inner spiritual experience that nurtures a sense of connection with God while simultaneously recalling the moral example embodied by the Prophet Muhammad. The act of reciting *shalawat* appears to create a moment of reflection in which individuals reassess their attitudes, emotions, and responsibilities. In this sense, the practice functions as a spiritual reminder that reinforces patience, humility, and sincerity in everyday life. The participants also associate *shalawat* with a feeling of reassurance that strengthens their confidence in facing challenges. This perception highlights how transcendental communication is lived and interpreted through personal religious experience. Rather than being understood solely as ritual speech, *shalawat* becomes a meaningful expression of faith that shapes the spiritual outlook of Muslim family heads and influences the way they approach their responsibilities within the household.

The findings reveal that the recitation of *shalawat* has become an integral part of the spiritual routines practiced by several Muslim family heads. The practice commonly takes place after completing the obligatory prayers, before beginning daily work, or during moments that require emotional composure. In some cases, *shalawat* is recited quietly during periods of rest or while performing ordinary activities at home. Such moments demonstrate that the practice is not restricted to formal religious settings but often emerges naturally within the rhythm of everyday life. The presence of *shalawat* in daily routines also contributes to the spiritual atmosphere of the household. Family members may hear the recitation or occasionally follow it, creating a subtle environment of remembrance and devotion. This pattern illustrates how *shalawat* functions not only as an individual spiritual expression but also as a habit that gradually shapes the religious character of family life. Through repeated practice, spiritual values become embedded within the everyday experiences of the household.

Transcendental Communication as a Source of Emotional Stability

Spiritual leadership within family life is not solely reflected in the ability to provide material support, but also in the capacity to maintain emotional balance, wisdom, and moral guidance in facing everyday challenges. In many Muslim households, spiritual practices become an important source of inner strength that helps individuals sustain composure and clarity in fulfilling their responsibilities. Among these practices, the recitation of *shalawat* occupies a significant place in nurturing transcendental awareness. Through this devotional expression, individuals experience a spiritual connection that fosters inner calm and reinforces their commitment to religious values. The recitation of *shalawat* is therefore understood not only as an act of reverence toward the Prophet Muhammad but also as a spiritual practice that encourages reflection and emotional stability. For Muslim family heads, such experiences often influence the way they respond to difficulties, make decisions, and guide their families with patience and compassion. In this sense, transcendental communication becomes an essential element that strengthens the emotional foundations of spiritual leadership within the family.

Many Muslim family heads describe the practice of *shalawat* as a source of emotional reassurance in moments of pressure or uncertainty. The act of repeatedly invoking blessings upon the Prophet often becomes a personal way of restoring calmness and strengthening trust in divine guidance.

One participant described this experience as follows: "Sometimes life feels heavy because of responsibilities and worries. When I recite *shalawat*, I feel my mind becoming calmer. It reminds me that everything is under God's will, so I try to face problems more patiently." *(FH3, 2024)* Another participant expressed a similar experience, emphasizing how the practice shapes his emotional responses in everyday situations. "When difficulties arise, I try to recite *shalawat*. It helps me control my emotions and think more clearly before making decisions for my family."*(FH4, 2024)*

The reflections shared by the participants illustrate how transcendental communication manifests in everyday experiences through the recitation of *shalawat*. The practice appears to create moments of spiritual awareness that encourage individuals to pause, reflect, and regulate their emotional responses. Rather than reacting impulsively to challenges, participants describe a tendency to approach difficulties with greater patience and composure after engaging in *shalawat*. This suggests that the devotional act functions as a form of spiritual reflection that influences emotional self-regulation. Furthermore, participants associate the recitation of *shalawat* with renewed confidence that their efforts and responsibilities are guided by divine wisdom. Such perceptions reveal how transcendental communication contributes to shaping a leadership attitude grounded in calmness and moral consideration. The experience of inner tranquility gained through this practice appears to support the development of thoughtful decision-making and compassionate interaction within family life, strengthening the emotional qualities associated with spiritual leadership. The relationship between the practice of *shalawat*, transcendental communication, and the development of spiritual leadership can be illustrated through the conceptual model presented in **Figure 1**.
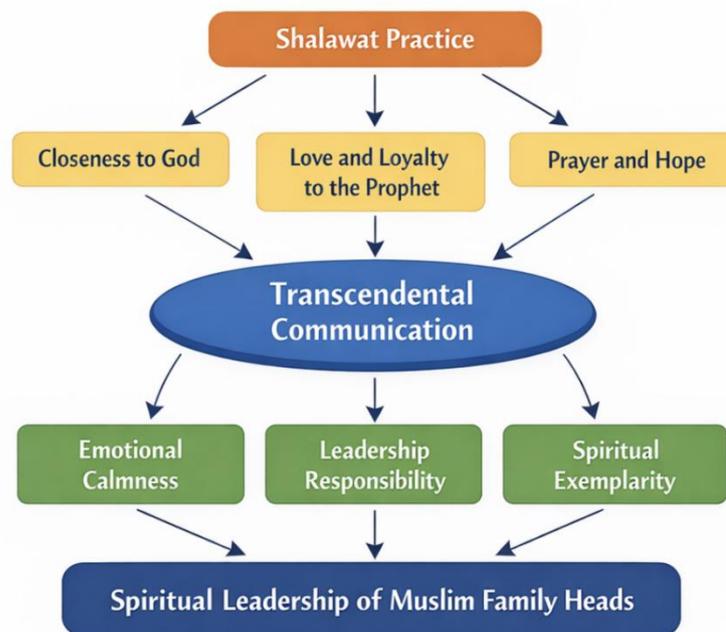
Figure 1. Model of Transcendental Communication in the Spiritual Leadership of Muslim Family Heads

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual relationship emerging from the findings of this study. The practice of *shalawat* functions as the initial spiritual activity that encourages several forms of transcendental awareness, including closeness to God, expressions of love and loyalty toward the Prophet Muhammad, and the articulation of prayer and hope. These dimensions collectively shape transcendental communication, which subsequently contributes to emotional calmness, strengthens leadership responsibility, and encourages spiritual exemplarity in everyday life. Through this interconnected process, transcendental communication gradually forms the spiritual leadership of Muslim family heads in guiding and nurturing their families.

The Role of *Shalawat* Practice in Shaping the Spiritual Leadership

Spiritual leadership within family life is closely connected to the values and behaviors demonstrated by the head of the household. In many Muslim families, leadership is not only associated with providing material support but also with the ability to guide family members through moral example and spiritual awareness. Religious practices often become an important medium through which such leadership values are cultivated and expressed. One of these practices is the recitation of *shalawat*, which reflects devotion to the Prophet Muhammad while simultaneously reinforcing religious consciousness. Through consistent engagement with this practice, Muslim family heads develop attitudes that emphasize responsibility, patience, and ethical conduct. *Shalawat* therefore functions not merely as a devotional expression but also as a spiritual activity that shapes leadership character. By repeatedly engaging in this practice, individuals internalize religious values that influence how they guide their families, make decisions, and interact with other family members.

For several participants, the recitation of *shalawat* serves as a reminder of the moral example embodied by the Prophet Muhammad. This awareness often encourages individuals to reflect on their own attitudes and responsibilities within family life. One participant expressed the following reflection: "When I recite *shalawat*, I remember the

character of the Prophet. It reminds me that a leader in the family should be patient and treat family members with kindness." *(FH5, 2024)* Another participant highlighted the role of *shalawat* in shaping daily behavior and personal responsibility. "*Shalawat* reminds me that being a father means setting a good example. My children may not always listen to advice, but they will observe how I behave." *(FH6, 2024)*

The reflections above illustrate how the recitation of *shalawat* contributes to the development of spiritual leadership within the family. Participants describe the practice as a moment of reflection that strengthens their awareness of moral responsibility. Through this practice, individuals recall the ethical qualities attributed to the Prophet Muhammad, such as compassion, fairness, and patience. These qualities gradually influence how participants perceive their role as family leaders. Rather than emphasizing authority alone, leadership is understood as an opportunity to guide family members through example and ethical conduct. The practice of *shalawat* also appears to encourage greater attentiveness to the emotional needs of family members, as participants associate prophetic character with kindness and empathy. In this way, transcendental communication expressed through *shalawat* becomes intertwined with everyday interactions within the household, shaping attitudes that support responsible and compassionate leadership. Based on these observations, the forms of transcendental communication through *shalawat* and their influence on spiritual leadership can be summarized in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Transcendental Communication through *Shalawat* Practice and Its Influence on Spiritual Leadership

Shalawat Practice	Form of Transcendental Communication	Influence on Spiritual Leadership
Reciting *shalawat* after prayer	spiritual reflection and remembrance of God	fosters emotional calmness in family leadership
Reciting *shalawat* when facing difficulties	expression of prayer and spiritual hope	encourages thoughtful decision-making
Inviting family members to recite *shalawat*	sharing spiritual values within the household	strengthens a religious family atmosphere
Reflecting on the character of the Prophet	internalizing prophetic moral values	reinforces responsibility and ethical leadership

Table 2 illustrates how the practice of *shalawat* functions as a form of transcendental communication that contributes to the development of spiritual leadership among Muslim family heads. Each practice reflects a particular spiritual meaning that gradually shapes leadership attitudes and behaviors within family life. The recitation of *shalawat* after prayer, for instance, encourages spiritual reflection and remembrance of God, which helps individuals maintain emotional calmness when guiding their families. Similarly, the practice of reciting *shalawat* when facing difficulties is interpreted as an expression of prayer and spiritual hope, enabling individuals to approach problems with greater patience and thoughtful consideration. Inviting family members to participate in the recitation of *shalawat* reflects the sharing of spiritual values within the household, thereby strengthening a religious atmosphere that supports moral development among family members. Finally, reflecting on the character of the Prophet Muhammad encourages the internalization of prophetic moral values, reinforcing a sense of responsibility and ethical awareness in family leadership. Together, these practices demonstrate how transcendental communication through *shalawat* shapes the spiritual orientation of leadership within the family.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that the practice of *shalawat* functions as a meaningful form of transcendental communication that shapes the spiritual orientation of Muslim family heads. Through the consistent recitation of *shalawat*, participants experience a sense of spiritual closeness to God, express devotion and loyalty to the Prophet Muhammad, and articulate personal hopes and prayers. These spiritual experiences contribute to emotional calmness, strengthen leadership responsibility, and encourage moral exemplarity within family life. The results indicate that transcendental communication is not merely a theological concept but a lived spiritual experience that influences everyday attitudes and behaviors. In particular, the findings demonstrate that the recitation of *shalawat* serves as a reflective practice that allows individuals to regulate their emotions and reassess their responsibilities as family leaders. This process gradually forms a leadership orientation characterized by patience, empathy, and moral awareness. As illustrated in the conceptual model developed in this study, the practice of *shalawat* initiates a chain of spiritual meanings that ultimately shape the spiritual leadership of Muslim family heads in guiding and nurturing their families.

These findings contribute to the growing body of literature on transcendental communication and spiritual leadership in religious contexts. Previous studies have emphasized that religious practices often function as symbolic communication that strengthens individuals' spiritual awareness and moral orientation (Koonce & Hyrkas, 2023; Watts & Reimer, 2024; Yousaf et al., 2025). Communication perspective suggests that communication is not merely the transmission of information but a symbolic process that maintains shared beliefs and cultural meanings within a community (Abbasi, 2024; Liao et al., 2023; Schrodt & Cobb, 2024). The results of this study support this perspective by showing that the recitation of *shalawat* operates as a ritual communication practice that reinforces religious values within family life. Furthermore, the findings resonate with earlier research indicating that devotional practices can cultivate emotional stability and ethical awareness in leadership roles (Bahrami & Sadeghi, 2025; Kuran & Özer, 2023; Lolang et al., 2023). However, unlike many studies that focus on organizational leadership, this research highlights how transcendental communication operates within the micro-social environment of family life (Cobb & Schrodt, 2024; Morgan & Kellas, 2022; Schrodt & Cobb, 2024). By examining the spiritual experiences of Muslim family heads, the study extends existing discussions by illustrating how religious practices contribute to the formation of leadership attitudes grounded in spiritual reflection and moral responsibility.

This study contributes to the literature by expanding the discussion of transcendental communication beyond institutional or organizational settings and situating it within the context of family leadership. While previous studies have often examined spiritual leadership in educational or organizational environments, this research highlights the role of devotional practices in shaping leadership values within the family sphere. The findings also provide a conceptual contribution by illustrating how the practice of *shalawat* generates layers of transcendental meaning that influence emotional stability, leadership responsibility, and moral exemplarity. From the perspective of Islamic educational management, these insights suggest that spiritual practices play a crucial role in nurturing leadership qualities grounded in ethical awareness and religious values. The integration of transcendental communication with the spiritual dimensions described by Al-Ghazali—*qalb*, *ruh*, *nafs*, and *aql*—also offers a framework for understanding how inner spiritual development influences leadership behavior.

CONCLUSION

Efforts to understand the role of spiritual practices in shaping leadership within family life remain an important area of inquiry, particularly in contexts where religious values strongly influence everyday decision-making and moral responsibility. This study addressed this issue by examining how the practice of *shalawat* functions as a form of transcendental communication that influences the spiritual leadership of Muslim family heads. The findings indicate that the recitation of *shalawat* carries multiple layers of meaning, including expressions of closeness to God, devotion to the Prophet Muhammad, and the articulation of prayer and hope. These spiritual meanings contribute to emotional calmness, reinforce a sense of leadership responsibility, and encourage moral exemplarity in guiding family members. The study therefore highlights that transcendental communication is not merely a symbolic religious act but a lived spiritual experience that shapes attitudes, emotional regulation, and ethical awareness in family leadership. These insights suggest that devotional practices can serve as important resources for nurturing responsible and compassionate leadership within Muslim family life. Future studies may further explore how transcendental communication influences leadership practices in broader social environments, including educational institutions and community organizations, in order to deepen the understanding of the relationship between spirituality, communication, and leadership in contemporary society.

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