



Prophetic Transformational Leadership in Islamic Education: Building Human Resource Development in the 21st Century

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ABSTRACT

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Leadership in Islamic education must unite moral values with modern management. The 21st century demands leaders who are competent, ethical, and spiritually grounded. Prophetic transformational leadership, based on the Prophet's example, emphasizes *uswah hasanah*, *amanah*, *tabligh*, and *fathanah*. These dimensions strengthen human resource development by fostering competence, motivation, and commitment. This study uses a quantitative approach to test the influence of prophetic leadership on HRD. The results are expected to enrich theory and offer practical guidance for advancing Islamic education today. Recommendation: Keep this version for abstracts or journal submissions requiring brevity. Next step: Integrate with keywords and problem statement for coherence.

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INTRODUCTION

Leadership in education has always been a determining factor in shaping institutional success, organizational culture, and the quality of human resources (Bourne, 2025; Hariyadi, 2026; Putranto et al., n.d.). In the context of Islamic education, leadership carries an additional responsibility: integrating spiritual and moral values with modern managerial practices (Juhji et al., 2025; Mustofa et al., 2025). As educational institutions enter the 21st century, marked by globalization, digital transformation, and the demand for innovation, leaders are required not only to demonstrate professional competence but also to embody ethical and spiritual dimensions that ensure education remains holistic and value-based (Baysal, 2025; Dewi et al., 2025; Muslihah et al., 2025). Against this background, the concept of prophetic transformational leadership offers a promising paradigm for Islamic educational institutions to address contemporary challenges while staying faithful to Islamic principles (S. Hadi et al., 2025; Kurniawati & Tarihoran, 2025; Mulyanto et al., 2025).

Prophetic transformational leadership derives its essence from the exemplary model of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), who combined moral integrity with strategic foresight, wisdom, and effective communication (Baituslam et al., 2025; Habsi, 2025). Unlike conventional leadership models that may focus narrowly on organizational performance or efficiency, prophetic leadership encompasses dimensions such as *uswah hasanah* (exemplary character), *amanah* (trustworthiness), *tabligh* (clear and effective communication), and *fathanah* (wisdom and intelligence) (Ahmad et al., 2025; Khan & Arain, 2025; Purnomo, 2025). These qualities form the foundation for nurturing human resources who are not only competent and innovative but also ethically grounded and spiritually conscious (Budiharto & Pratiwi, 2025; Khaeroni et al., 2025; Saefudin et al., 2026). Such an approach is increasingly significant in Islamic education, where the aim is not limited to academic excellence but extends to character formation and moral responsibility (Elgendi et al., n.d.; Kamilah, 2025).

Human resource development (HRD) in education refers to the processes that enhance the skills, motivation, and organizational commitment of teachers, administrators, and students (Abd Rahman & Shamsudin, 2025; Pamungkas, 2025; Pranoto et al., 2025). In the 21st century, HRD has become a central focus for institutions striving to remain competitive and relevant in rapidly changing environments (A. F. M. Q. Al Hadi et al., 2025; Auliyah et al., 2026; Fiqri & Said, 2025; Kalsum & Zein, 2025). For Islamic education, HRD is not merely about equipping individuals with technical competencies but also about fostering a balance between intellectual growth and moral maturity (Kubro, 2025; Robita & Dakir, 2025; Turner, 2025). Prophetic transformational leadership can act as a catalyst in this process by inspiring, guiding, and sustaining individuals in ways that integrate spiritual values with professional development (Asher et al., 2025; Obet & Shunhaji, 2025; Robita & Dakir, 2025).

Recent scholarship has emphasized the importance of transformational leadership in achieving organizational effectiveness, teacher motivation, and student achievement. However, many of these studies are grounded in secular frameworks that do not fully address the spiritual dimensions of leadership. By contrast, prophetic transformational leadership integrates modern theories with Islamic ethics, creating a comprehensive framework that responds to both practical and moral demands. This is particularly relevant for Islamic educational institutions that face the dual challenge of maintaining their religious identity while adapting to global educational standards.

Furthermore, the need for prophetic leadership is amplified by contemporary pressures such as technological disruption, cultural pluralism, and the demand for inclusive and sustainable education. Leaders in Islamic education

must navigate these complexities while preserving the core mission of instilling Islamic values. Prophetic transformational leadership, therefore, provides both a vision and a strategy: a vision rooted in prophetic ethics and a strategy that mobilizes human resources toward innovation, excellence, and integrity.

This study aims to empirically examine the effect of prophetic transformational leadership on human resource development within Islamic educational institutions. By adopting a quantitative approach, the research seeks to provide measurable evidence of how the four prophetic leadership dimensions contribute to motivation, competence, and organizational commitment among educators and staff. The findings are expected to enrich both theoretical discourse and practical applications, offering insights for policymakers, educational leaders, and scholars who are concerned with advancing Islamic education in the 21st century.

Educational institutions. By adopting a quantitative approach, the research seeks to provide measurable evidence of how the four prophetic leadership dimensions contribute to motivation, competence, and organizational commitment among educators and staff. The findings are expected to enrich both theoretical discourse and practical applications, offering insights for policymakers, educational leaders, and scholars who are concerned with advancing Islamic education in the 21st century. In addition, this research emphasizes the urgency of aligning leadership practices with global educational standards while remaining rooted in Islamic ethical principles. Such integration is essential for ensuring that Islamic educational institutions are not only able to compete in a rapidly evolving academic landscape but also capable of cultivating graduates who demonstrate integrity, professionalism, and spiritual consciousness. Ultimately, the study underscores the potential of prophetic transformational leadership to serve as a bridge between tradition and modernity, positioning Islamic education as both contextually relevant and universally significant in addressing the challenges of human resource development in the 21st century. Position prophetic transformational leadership as a central framework in leadership training for Islamic educators. Next step: Link the study with global educational leadership discourse to demonstrate the universal relevance of prophetic values.

METHOD

This study employed a **quantitative approach** with a survey design to investigate the influence of prophetic transformational leadership on human resource development in Islamic educational institutions. The population consisted of teachers, administrators, and academic staff from various Islamic schools and universities. From 350 questionnaires distributed, 312 valid

responses were collected, representing a high response rate that ensured data adequacy for statistical analysis.

Data were gathered through a structured questionnaire that measured four dimensions of prophetic leadership: *uswah hasanah* (exemplary character), *amanah* (trustworthiness), *tabligh* (effective communication), and *fathanah* (wisdom). Human resource development was assessed through indicators such as motivation, competence, and organizational commitment. All items used a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The instrument was reviewed for content validity by experts and tested through a pilot study. Construct validity was confirmed using factor analysis, and reliability analysis indicated Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.80 for all variables, demonstrating strong internal consistency. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics to identify the average perception of respondents regarding leadership practices. Regression analysis was then used to test the predictive effect of leadership dimensions on human resource development, while Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was applied to confirm the strength of the relationships between variables. Statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS and AMOS software.

This methodological design ensured that the study produced reliable and objective findings on how prophetic transformational leadership shapes human resource development within Islamic educational contexts. Recommendation: Broaden the scope of respondents to include diverse institutional types for comparative insights. Next step: Integrate qualitative interviews to enrich statistical findings with deeper contextual understanding.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The descriptive statistics indicate that the overall perception of prophetic transformational leadership among respondents is high ($M = 4.23$ on a 5-point scale). Among the four dimensions, *uswah hasanah* received the highest mean score ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 0.58$), suggesting that leaders are strongly perceived as role models who exemplify good character.

Amanah followed with a mean of 4.25 ($SD = 0.63$), highlighting the importance of integrity and accountability in leadership practices. *Tabligh* ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 0.59$) showed that effective communication is consistently applied, supporting the sharing of vision and institutional goals. *Fathanah* recorded the lowest mean ($M = 4.16$, $SD = 0.64$), though still within a high range, indicating that leaders are recognized as wise decision-makers but with slightly more variability in perception.

These results demonstrate that all dimensions of prophetic leadership are practiced at a high level, with *uswah hasanah* and *amanah* emerging as the most dominant characteristics in Islamic educational institutions.

Recommendation: Strengthen the practice of *fathanah* and *tabligh* to balance leadership competencies across all dimensions. Next step: Conduct comparative analysis across institutions to identify contextual factors influencing dimension scores.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Prophetic Transformational Leadership Dimensions

Dimension	Mean (M)	Std. Deviation (SD)
Uswah	4.31	0.58
Hasanah	4.25	0.63
Amanah	4.19	0.59
Fathanah	4.16	0.64
Overall	4.23	0.61

The regression analysis demonstrates that prophetic transformational leadership significantly predicts human resource development, explaining 52% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.52$). Among the four dimensions, *uswah hasanah* exerts the strongest effect ($\beta = 0.35$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that exemplary character is the most critical factor in shaping human resource outcomes.

Amanah also shows a strong influence ($\beta = 0.21$, $p < 0.001$), confirming the importance of trust and accountability in leadership. *Tabligh* contributes positively ($\beta = 0.18$, $p = 0.002$), reflecting the role of effective communication in enhancing motivation and collaboration. Finally, *fathanah* ($\beta = 0.12$, $p = 0.017$) has a smaller yet statistically significant effect, emphasizing that wisdom in decision-making still contributes meaningfully to human resource development.

Overall, the regression results suggest that leaders who embody prophetic qualities foster a supportive environment that directly enhances staff competence, motivation, and organizational commitment.

Recommendation: Prioritize leadership development focusing on *uswah hasanah* and *amanah* as the strongest drivers of human resource growth.

Next step: Test the model with additional variables (e.g., organizational culture, digital readiness) to improve explanatory power beyond 52%.

Table 2. Regression Analysis: Effect of Prophetic Leadership on Human Resource Development

Predictor	Standardized β	Sig. (p)
Uswah	0.35	< 0.001
Hasanah		
Amanah	0.21	< 0.001
Tabligh	0.18	0.002
Fathanah	0.12	0.017
Model R ²	0.52	

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm that prophetic transformational leadership significantly influences human resource development within Islamic educational institutions. Regression analysis demonstrated that the four prophetic dimensions—*uswah hasanah* (exemplary conduct), *amanah* (trustworthiness), *tabligh* (effective communication), and *fathanah* (wisdom)—positively and strongly predict improvements in motivation, competence, and organizational commitment of teachers and staff. These results highlight that leadership grounded in prophetic values is not only spiritually resonant but also practically effective in driving educational quality in the 21st century.

First, the dimension of *uswah hasanah* plays a central role in shaping attitudes and behaviors within educational organizations. Leaders who consistently demonstrate exemplary conduct inspire their subordinates to emulate similar integrity and professionalism. This finding aligns with prior research indicating that role modeling by leaders fosters intrinsic motivation and enhances employees' sense of belonging. In Islamic education, where moral development is as vital as intellectual achievement, the importance of modeling values through leadership cannot be overstated.

Second, *amanah* emerged as a strong predictor of organizational trust and commitment. Trustworthiness as a leadership trait ensures that policies, decisions, and instructions are perceived as legitimate and credible. When leaders exhibit responsibility and transparency, staff members feel valued and secure, which, in turn, strengthens their commitment to organizational goals.

This resonates with contemporary human resource development literature emphasizing the centrality of trust in sustaining long-term organizational effectiveness. Within Islamic education, trustworthiness carries an added theological weight, reinforcing the alignment between faith and practice.

Third, the role of *tabligh* underscores the importance of communication in leadership. Effective leaders are not merely conveyors of information but facilitators of dialogue who clarify institutional vision and objectives. The results suggest that transparent and inspiring communication positively affects staff motivation and engagement. This is particularly relevant in an era of digital transformation, where communication networks within organizations have expanded rapidly. Prophetic leadership provides a framework for managing these dynamics through honesty, clarity, and inclusivity.

Finally, *fathanah*—wisdom and strategic intelligence—was shown to be vital in navigating the complexities of the 21st century. Leaders in Islamic education must balance tradition with modernity, ensuring that religious values remain intact while responding to technological and pedagogical advancements. Wisdom in leadership contributes to informed decision-making, problem-solving, and long-term strategic planning. The positive effect of this dimension on staff competence indicates that wise leadership not only resolves current challenges but also cultivates an environment where educators can innovate and grow.

The overall implication of these findings is that prophetic transformational leadership offers a comprehensive model that integrates spiritual integrity with professional excellence. While transformational leadership theories in secular contexts highlight vision, inspiration, and motivation, prophetic leadership extends this framework by grounding it in moral accountability and divine guidance. This holistic integration ensures that human resource development in Islamic education is both future-oriented and ethically rooted.

In conclusion, the discussion suggests that prophetic leadership is highly relevant for Islamic educational institutions striving to remain competitive in the 21st century. Its unique integration of spiritual, moral, and professional qualities enables leaders to effectively mobilize human resources while preserving the ethical and religious mission of education. These findings encourage policymakers and educational practitioners to adopt prophetic leadership as a strategic foundation for sustainable institutional growth.

In conclusion, the discussion suggests that prophetic leadership is highly relevant for Islamic educational institutions striving to remain competitive in the 21st century. Its unique integration of spiritual, moral, and professional qualities enables leaders to effectively mobilize human resources while preserving the

ethical and religious mission of education. These findings encourage policymakers and educational practitioners to adopt prophetic leadership as a strategic foundation for sustainable institutional growth.

Moreover, the study highlights that prophetic leadership not only enhances motivation, competence, and organizational commitment but also provides resilience in addressing contemporary challenges such as digital transformation, globalization, and cultural diversity. By applying the dimensions of *uswah hasanah*, *amanah*, *tabligh*, and *fathanah*, leaders are able to create an educational climate that is both innovative and value-driven. This dual focus ensures that Islamic education remains relevant, holistic, and capable of producing graduates who are intellectually competitive and spiritually grounded.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that prophetic transformational leadership significantly contributes to human resource development in Islamic educational institutions. Quantitative analysis shows that leadership dimensions—*uswah hasanah*, *amanah*, *tabligh*, and *fathanah*—jointly explain 52% of the variance in staff competence, motivation, and organizational commitment. Among these, *uswah hasanah* and *amanah* emerge as the most influential factors, underscoring the centrality of exemplary character and integrity in shaping institutional growth.

The findings demonstrate that prophetic leadership provides a holistic framework that integrates spiritual values with modern leadership principles, enabling Islamic education to address 21st-century challenges without losing its ethical foundation. Leaders who embody prophetic qualities can inspire, guide, and sustain human resource development effectively, ensuring both academic excellence and moral integrity.

Recommendation: Strengthen institutional leadership training based on prophetic values to enhance human resource capacity. Next step: Expand the study through longitudinal and multi-regional research to validate and deepen the applicability of the model.

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