

# INTEGRATING ISLAMIC PSYCHOLOGY INTO KIAI'S TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP: A MODEL FOR TEACHER PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT

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**Abstract:** This study aims to describe and analyze the transformational leadership model of *Kiai* based on Islamic psychology in enhancing teachers' performance at Sunan Drajat Islamic Boarding School. The leadership of *Kiai* has unique characteristics that emphasize not only administrative aspects but also spiritual, moral, and psychological dimensions. This research employed a qualitative approach using a case study method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation involving *Kiai*, teachers, and school administrators. Data analysis was conducted using data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing techniques. The findings reveal that the transformational leadership model of *Kiai* in Sunan Drajat Islamic Boarding School is manifested through four key dimensions: exemplary character (idealized influence), spiritual motivation (inspirational motivation), Islamic value-based intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration grounded in *akhlaq* (moral conduct). The integration of Islamic psychological values such as sincerity (*ikhlas*), patience (*sabr*), trustworthiness (*amanah*), and reliance on God (*tawakkul*) forms the emotional bond between *Kiai* and teachers. This model effectively enhances teachers' performance by improving intrinsic motivation, loyalty, and psychological well-being. The study recommends the implementation of Islamic psychology-based leadership training for educational leaders in Islamic institutions.

Keywords: Islamic Boarding School; Islamic Psychology; *Kiai*; Teachers' Performance; Transformational Leadership

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## Introductions

In the traditional Islamic education system in Indonesia, pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) have a distinctive social and organizational structure, in which the figure of the *kiai* occupies a central position as the spiritual, moral, and administrative leader of the institution. According to Dhofier (1994), the existence of a pesantren is deeply dependent on the *kiai* as its founder, manager, and moral guide, who serves as the primary source of legitimacy within the institution. The *kiai* is not only a religious teacher but also a *mursyid* (spiritual mentor) who determines the direction of institutional development and sets an example for both teachers and students in religious and social life. Thus, the role of the *kiai* encompasses three essential dimensions: spiritual leadership, moral authority, and organizational control.

The leadership of the *kiai* is characterized by charismatic and paternalistic traits, which, according to Ziemek (1986), are the hallmarks of traditional pesantren structures. The *kiai's* charisma stems from his spiritual and personal capabilities, perceived *barakah* (blessing), and profound mastery of Islamic knowledge. This makes the *kiai* not merely an educational administrator but a figure who commands emotional and spiritual reverence from students and the surrounding community. In the Weberian framework, the *kiai's* leadership can be categorized as charismatic authority, a form of legitimacy derived from personal and moral strength rather than from formal or bureaucratic power (Weber, 1947).

The kiai's central role also extends to the managerial domain of the pesantren. He acts as the ultimate decision-maker in curriculum design, human resource management, and character development for both teachers and students (Nawawi, 2017). The management model applied is often value-driven leadership, where all institutional policies are directed toward preserving classical Islamic values (*turāth*) while adapting to modern educational demands. Within this framework, kiai leadership does not only regulate teaching and learning processes but also shapes an organizational culture rooted in spirituality, moral responsibility, and sincerity at work (Fadhilah, 2011).

The urgency of Islamic value-based leadership arises from the increasing complexity of educational modernization and social transformation faced by pesantren. The kiai must integrate modern management principles, such as strategic planning and performance evaluation with Islamic ethical foundations emphasizing *'adl* (justice), *amanah* (trust), *syura* (consultation), and *ihsan* (moral excellence). This integration shapes an Islamic transformational leadership model, wherein the kiai does not merely lead structurally but also inspires and transforms teachers' behavior through spiritual and psychological exemplarity (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Qomar, 2019).

In the context of Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat, which harmonizes classical and modern educational systems, Islamic value-based leadership is a key factor in maintaining the balance between teacher professionalism and the institution's spiritual identity. The success of pesantren management, therefore, depends not only on its organizational structure but also on the spiritual and psychological quality of its leader.

The development of modern pesantren institutions necessitates change in educational management systems, particularly in improving teacher performance as the front line of the learning process. Based on preliminary observations at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat, Lamongan, it was found that some teachers struggle to balance the dual demands of professional academic competence and spiritual commitment to pesantren culture. Teachers are expected not only to master teaching materials and modern pedagogical strategies but also to serve as moral exemplars and uphold Islamic values within their community. This dual responsibility often causes psychological strain and emotional fatigue, particularly among younger teachers who are still adapting to the demanding pesantren environment (Observation, Sunan Drajat, 2025).

Preliminary interviews revealed that heavy workloads constitute a major obstacle to optimal teacher performance. Teachers at Sunan Drajat typically teach for more than 30 hours per week in addition to boarding duties, worship supervision, and social-religious activities (Interview, Sunan Drajat Teachers, 2025). This aligns with Nasir's (2019) finding that pesantren teachers perform multidimensional roles, as educators, moral mentors, and spiritual servants. The tension between professional and religious obligations may affect concentration, intrinsic motivation, and teachers' psychological well-being (Jalaluddin, 2011). Furthermore, teacher management systems in many modern pesantren remain centralized and personality-driven, where staff evaluations and promotions often depend more on emotional closeness and loyalty to the kiai than on objective performance metrics (Qomar, 2019). While such models preserve family spirit and spirituality, they risk lowering transparency and creating motivational disparities among teachers (Mutmainnah, 2023).

Another phenomenon observed at Sunan Drajat is a technological adaptation gap among teachers. Senior teachers tend to resist the use of digital tools in teaching, whereas younger teachers advocate for modernization through technology integration (Observation, Sunan Drajat, 2025). This generational divide shapes the dynamics of teamwork and leadership. From an Islamic psychological perspective, this situation underscores the need for a leadership approach that mediates differences through values such as *ṣabr* (patience), *syūrā* (consultation), and *ikhhlās* (sincerity) (Al-Ghazali, 2002; Jalaluddin, 2011).

These empirical realities reinforce the argument that improving teacher performance in modern pesantren cannot rely solely on technical training or administrative policies. It requires a transformational leadership model based on Islamic psychology, capable of nurturing intrinsic motivation, emotional balance, and spiritual awareness. Consequently, the kiai, as a charismatic and spiritual leader, plays a strategic role in transforming teachers' work into a form of meaningful professional and spiritual devotion (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Dhofier, 1994).

Research on kiai leadership in Islamic education has evolved significantly over the past two decades, with early works focusing on the kiai as a charismatic, moral, and institutional leader. Over the last ten years, however, the research orientation has shifted toward managerial and psychological dimensions, indicating a paradigm transition from traditional leadership to transformational Islamic leadership (Rosyidi, 2023; Haris, 2023).

Classical studies by Dhofier (1994) and Ziemek (1986) describe the traditional structure of pesantren leadership as based on spiritual charisma and moral authority. Contemporary research, however, emphasizes that kiai leadership now requires not only personal charisma but also managerial competence and adaptability to educational modernization (Qomar, 2019; Ulfah, 2020). Qomar (2019) stresses the challenge of integrating the ulama's religious authority with managerial functions, while Ulfah (2020) finds that spiritual leadership enhances

teachers' discipline and loyalty but does not sufficiently address their psychological well-being.

In the field of Islamic psychology, recent studies highlight the growing attention to teachers' motivation and psychological welfare in Islamic institutions (Jalaluddin, 2011; Mutmainnah, 2023). Mutmainnah (2023) demonstrates that Islamic psychological values (*ikhlas*, *şabr*, *amanah*, and *tawakal*) positively affect teacher motivation and performance. However, most of these studies remain descriptive and have not conceptually integrated Islamic psychology within the framework of modern leadership theories such as transformational leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

Recent findings underscore the importance of transformational leadership in Islamic education. Rosyidi (2023) observed a strong correlation between transformational leadership and teacher professionalism in Islamic schools. Haris (2023) highlighted the need for participatory and spiritually infused leadership to address community-based educational challenges. Nonetheless, most of these studies have focused on madrasah principals rather than kiai, whose spiritual and moral authority is distinctively rooted in the pesantren tradition.

This indicates a clear research gap in the intersection between transformational leadership theory and Islamic psychology in the context of kiai leadership. Previous studies have tended to discuss them separately, kiai leadership in socio-cultural terms and Islamic psychology in teacher personality development, without integrating the two. In fact, these frameworks are potentially synergistic, providing a model that combines managerial effectiveness with spiritual and emotional transformation (Mutmainnah, 2023; Jalaluddin, 2011). Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by developing a conceptual model of "Transformational Leadership of Kiai Based on Islamic Psychology", integrating modern leadership theory with Islamic psychological principles. This approach seeks to explain how spiritual values such as *ikhlas*, *tawakal*, *şabr*, and *syura* serve as psychological energy driving teacher motivation and performance in modern pesantren such as Sunan Drajat.

Transformational leadership, as proposed by Bass (1990) and Avolio (1994), emphasizes leaders' capacity to transform values, vision, and motivation to achieve higher organizational goals. Transformational leaders inspire intrinsic motivation and moral commitment through four key dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass & Avolio, 1994). While this theory has proven relevant in educational contexts, its Western-secular roots often detach spiritual and transcendental aspects from leadership behavior (Beekun & Badawi, 1999).

Hence, this study contributes by integrating transformational leadership theory with the framework of Islamic psychology (Jalaluddin, 2011). Islamic psychology posits that humans are spiritual beings comprising *ruh*, *qalb*, *'aql*, and *nafs*, which must be harmonized to achieve *insan kamil* (the perfect human). It emphasizes the values of *ikhlas*, *sabar*, *amanah*, *tawakal*, and *syura* in forming ethical, God-conscious leadership behavior (Al-Ghazali, 2002; Jalaluddin, 2011).

By merging these paradigms, this research proposes the conceptual model of Transformational Islamic Leadership, which not only drives behavioral change but also fosters spiritual and psychological growth among followers. The kiai represents a tangible embodiment of this model, combining moral exemplarity, spiritual charisma, and transformational vision in guiding teachers and students. This integrative model bridges managerial effectiveness with spiritual integrity, affirming that the success of Islamic educational leadership is measured not only by productivity but also by moral growth and psychological well-being (Bass, 1990; Jalaluddin, 2011; Qomar, 2019).

Accordingly, this study aims to describe and analyze the model of kiai leadership based on Islamic psychology in improving teacher performance at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat. It seeks to answer how spiritual-psychological values are practiced in kiai leadership and how they impact teachers' motivation, professionalism, and well-being. This objective is significant because the kiai functions not merely as an administrator but also as a spiritual mentor, guiding teachers to work with sincere intention and transcendental purpose (Dhofier, 1994).

From an Islamic psychological perspective, teacher performance is not only a quantitative measure of productivity but also a form of righteous action born of sincerity, patience, and spiritual awareness (Jalaluddin, 2011; Mutmainnah, 2023). Thus, this study aspires to produce a comprehensive understanding of transformational leadership grounded in Islamic psychology, offering both theoretical insight and practical guidance for improving teacher quality through sustained spiritual and emotional development. Ultimately, it contributes to advancing a conceptual framework of Islamic Transformational Leadership, applicable to broader Islamic educational contexts in Indonesia.

## Method

This study employed a qualitative approach using the case study method. This approach was selected because it allows for an in-depth understanding of the meanings, values, and practices of kiai's transformational

leadership within the pesantren's social and spiritual context. According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research focuses on exploring meaning and interpreting human experiences in contextual and naturalistic settings. The case study approach enables the researcher to examine the phenomenon of kiai's leadership holistically, particularly in relation to teacher development and the application of Islamic psychological values (Yin, 2014). The kiai's leadership model at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat is considered an intrinsic case, as it represents a unique model that integrates the traditional pesantren education system with modern governance structures. This design allows the researcher to explore how the kiai transforms spiritual values into managerial strategies that positively influence teacher performance (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011).

The research was conducted at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat, located in Paciran, Lamongan, East Java, Indonesia. This pesantren was chosen purposively because it is one of the largest Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia that has successfully integrated traditional Islamic education (*salafiyah*) with modern educational systems. The institution is also known for its charismatic kiai who plays a strategic role in managing various educational units under the pesantren foundation. Preliminary observations indicated a complex leadership structure involving the kiai, foundation board, school principals, and teachers. This organizational complexity makes Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat an ideal setting for examining the implementation of transformational leadership grounded in Islamic psychology.

The research subjects included the kiai, teachers, and educational administrators within the Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat foundation. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, a technique designed to identify individuals with deep understanding and direct involvement in the phenomenon of kiai's leadership (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The participant composition was as follows: one senior kiai (the pesantren leader) as the key informant; three senior teachers with more than ten years of teaching experience; two young teachers representing the new generation of educators; and two educational administrators from the madrasah and vocational school who directly interact with the kiai's policies.

Data were collected using three primary techniques: In-depth interviews, designed to obtain the participants' perceptions, experiences, and reflections on the kiai's leadership style and its impact on teacher performance. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to allow for open-ended exploration (Creswell, 2013). Participant observation, aimed at directly observing the kiai's leadership behavior, interactions with teachers, and everyday practices within the pesantren environment. Document analysis, which included institutional archives, policy documents, meeting notes, teacher activity reports, and internal records relevant to leadership and performance management. The data from these three sources were compared to identify consistent patterns through source and method triangulation (Denzin, 1978).

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994), consisting of three main stages: (1) data reduction, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion drawing/verification. The data were analyzed thematically (thematic analysis) by identifying central themes such as transformational values, Islamic psychological principles, and teacher performance improvement. This process allowed for the identification of relationships between the kiai's leadership practices and psychological factors influencing teachers' motivation (Moustakas, 1994).

To ensure research credibility, four criteria of data trustworthiness proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) were applied: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These criteria ensured that the study maintained transparency, validity, and replicability, allowing future researchers in the fields of Islamic Education Management and Applied Islamic Psychology to verify and extend its findings.

## Findings and Discussion

### The Kiai's Leadership Pattern in Teacher Development

Based on in-depth interviews with the kiai and teachers at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat, it was found that the kiai's leadership pattern in teacher development is grounded in principles of moral exemplarity, spiritual nurturing, and paternalistic communication. The kiai functions not only as the highest educational decision-maker but also as a spiritual mentor, guiding teachers' behavior and work ethics to align with Islamic values. In an interview, Kiai A. stated:

*"Teachers in this pesantren do not only teach but also educate with the heart. I always remind them, teaching is an act of worship, so the intention must be sincere. If a teacher works lillāh (for Allah), the results will be blessed, even if they seem modest." (Interview, KH. A. July 12, 2025).*

This statement reflects the kiai's transcendental and transformational orientation, where spirituality forms the foundation for teachers' motivation and professional conduct. The kiai adopts a persuasive and dialogical approach to leadership rather than an administrative one. Decisions and teacher evaluations are typically

conducted through majlis musyawarah (consultative meetings) involving the management board and educators.

Observations and internal institutional documents show that teacher development at Sunan Drajat is conducted in a structured yet familial manner. According to the Teacher Development Manual of Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat (Pesantren Document, 2023), the process comprises three main forms: Spiritual development, through collective dhikr sessions, weekly sermons (pengajian kiai), and teacher halaqah; Professional development, through pedagogical training and academic evaluation workshops; Moral and ethical development, through taushiyah (spiritual advice) and personal evaluations of discipline and conduct.

The manual emphasizes a humanistic approach to education, where each teacher is viewed as an individual to be guided with compassion and example rather than coercion or punishment. This pattern aligns with the "individualized consideration" dimension of transformational leadership theory, which stresses the leader's attention to the emotional and spiritual needs of followers. A senior teacher, Ustadz S, affirmed this through his reflection:

*"The kiai always advises us gently. If a teacher seems less motivated, he doesn't scold them but invites a personal talk. He would say, maybe your heart is weary, rest and remember Allah more. After that, our spirit returns."* (Interview, Senior Teacher, July 15, 2025).

This illustrates that the kiai's leadership embodies both psychological and spiritual dimensions, resonating with the Islamic concept of tarbiyah nafsiyyah (spiritual self-cultivation), which aims to help individuals regulate their emotions and intentions at work. The kiai thus acts as both a transformational leader and a spiritual therapist, capable of restoring teachers' psychological balance and inner motivation.

Furthermore, analysis of the Teacher Evaluation Meeting Report (2024) revealed that the kiai encourages teacher participation in academic decision-making, emphasizing the value of *syura* (consultation) as a reflection of Islamic democratic leadership. This participatory approach fosters a strong sense of belonging among teachers and deepens their commitment to the pesantren's vision and mission.

Overall, the findings suggest that the kiai's leadership pattern at Sunan Drajat Islamic Boarding School exemplifies a transformational model grounded in Islamic psychology, characterized by four interrelated dimensions:

- a) Spiritual Exemplarity (Idealized Influence): The kiai serves as a moral and spiritual role model for teachers.
- b) Inspirational Motivation: The kiai inspires teachers through values of sincerity (*ikhlas*) and service as worship.
- c) Islamic Intellectual Stimulation: The kiai encourages pedagogical innovation while upholding Islamic principles.
- d) Ethical Individualized Consideration: The kiai mentors teachers empathetically and personally, fostering emotional and spiritual growth.

This statement illustrates the presence of psychological and spiritual dimensions in the kiai's mentoring approach. His leadership reflects the principle of tarbiyah nafsiyyah (inner or spiritual self-development) as emphasized in Islamic Psychology which seeks to educate individuals to effectively regulate their emotions and intentions in their professional responsibilities. This demonstrates that the kiai functions not only as a transformational leader but also as a spiritual therapist who is capable of restoring the psychological balance of teachers.

### **Integration of Islamic Psychological Values in Kiai's Leadership Process**

The findings also reveal that kiai leadership at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat is not merely administrative or managerial but deeply rooted in Islamic psychological and spiritual values that underpin the kiai's interactions, policies, and communication with educators. In an interview, KH. A. expressed the guiding principle behind his leadership:

*"The most important thing for me is sincerity (ikhlas). If everyone here works with pure intention for Allah, all tasks will feel lighter. I don't demand grand results, only consistency and trustworthiness."* (Interview, Kiai Sunan Drajat, July 12, 2025).

This statement highlights sincerity (*ikhlas*) as the core of the kiai's psychological orientation. In Islamic psychology, *ikhlas* represents a spiritual state that drives a person to act selflessly, channeling all mental and spiritual energy solely toward seeking Allah's pleasure. It serves as an intrinsic motivator, transforming teachers' professional duties into acts of worship.

Alongside sincerity, the value of trustworthiness (*amanah*) is a key leadership principle. Observations revealed that teachers at Sunan Drajat are granted clear responsibilities and considerable autonomy in managing classrooms, activities, and extracurricular programs without excessive supervision. The kiai prioritizes trust-based leadership, grounded in mutual spiritual trust between leader and followers. A young teacher, Ustadzah N. M., shared:

*"The kiai often says: 'I trust you, do your best.' That simple sentence makes me feel appreciated and motivated to give*

*my best. His trust builds responsibility from within.” (Interview, Young Teacher, June 14, 2024).*

The values of patience (ṣabr) and reliance on God (tawakkul) also emerged as central psychological pillars in teacher development. Analysis of the Teacher Development Halaqah Report (2023) showed that the kiai frequently reminds teachers about the importance of patience in dealing with students, workload, and institutional challenges. During one session, he stated:

*“A teacher must be patient. When facing difficult students, don’t get angry, pray for them. Patience doesn’t mean silence, but controlling oneself while waiting with hope.” (Teacher Halaqah Documentation, Sunan Drajat Islamic Boarding School, 2023).*

In addition, the principle of consultation (syūrā) is consistently practiced in the kiai’s participatory communication style. Observations and institutional meeting records indicate that teachers and administrators are actively involved in both academic and non-academic decision-making processes. These meetings are conducted openly, ensuring that every participant can voice opinions while maintaining respect for the kiai’s final authority.

From the comprehensive analysis of interviews and documentation, it can be concluded that the kiai internalizes five core values of Islamic psychology within his leadership practice:

- a) Sincerity: Performing duties purely for Allah’s pleasure.
- b) Trustworthiness: Upholding integrity and reliability in all responsibilities.
- c) Patience: Managing emotions and challenges with spiritual resilience.
- d) Reliance on God: Surrendering outcomes to divine will after maximum effort.
- e) Consultation: Encouraging participatory decision-making within Islamic ethics.

These findings confirm that kiai leadership in the pesantren context embodies spiritual-transformational leadership, where Islamic psychological principles function as both moral compass and motivational energy in guiding teachers toward excellence in both professionalism and spirituality.

### **The Impact of Kiai’s Transformational Leadership on Teachers’ Performance**

The findings indicate that the kiai’s transformational leadership, grounded in Islamic psychology, has a significant and multidimensional impact on improving teacher performance at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat. The impact is manifested in three major aspects: (1) the enhancement of intrinsic motivation and work spirit, (2) the strengthening of professionalism and moral responsibility, and (3) the improvement of psychological well-being and institutional loyalty.

#### **1. Enhancement of Intrinsic Motivation and Work Spirit**

Interviews with several teachers revealed that the kiai’s exemplary and spiritually oriented leadership style cultivates intrinsic motivation among teachers. Teachers perceive their work not merely as a professional duty but as an act of worship and devotion to Allah. One senior teacher, Ustadz M. H., explained:

*“When we see the kiai, he never stops teaching and serving. That makes us feel ashamed if we are lazy. He often says, ‘Teaching is jihad.’ Those words ignite our spirit to always give our best.” (Interview, Senior Teacher, June 15, 2024).*

This statement illustrates that the kiai’s idealized influence serves as a powerful source of spiritual inspiration. In transformational leadership theory, idealized influence reflects a leader’s ability to model moral integrity and instill a sense of purpose in followers (Bass, 1990). Within the pesantren context, this influence is intensified by a religious dimension, in which teachers perceive their work as a sacred amānah (trust) rather than a routine occupation.

Field observations further show that teachers display high commitment to attendance, lesson preparation, and both formal and informal activities such as halaqah, *pengajian kitab* (scriptural study), and santri mentoring. This commitment emerges not from administrative enforcement but from a spiritually driven consciousness cultivated by the kiai’s example and guidance.

#### **2. Strengthening of Professionalism and Moral Responsibility**

The kiai’s transformational leadership also contributes to the enhancement of teachers’ professionalism and moral accountability. According to the Teacher Evaluation Meeting Report (2024), improvements were observed in teachers’ discipline, pedagogical innovation, and teamwork. The Head of the Education Division affirmed this development:

*“The kiai always demonstrates discipline and never postpones work. He doesn’t scold or pressure us, but leads by example. That alone motivates teachers to improve their performance without coercion.” (Interview, Educational Administrator, July 18, 2025).*

This finding corresponds to the inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation dimensions of transformational leadership theory (Bass, 1990). The kiai motivates teachers to think creatively, adapt instructional methods to santri characteristics, and pursue pedagogical excellence without compromising Islamic values. Several teachers reported increased competence in using basic educational technologies and digital media integrated with

da'wah (Islamic preaching) content. Morally, teachers experience a deep sense of spiritual accountability, recognizing that their teaching quality reflects both personal integrity and their devotion to Allah. This moral awareness signifies that the kiai's leadership successfully integrates ethical professionalism and religious spirituality, shaping a holistic framework of Islamic educational leadership.

### 3. Improvement of Psychological Well-Being and Teacher Loyalty

Another prominent impact of the kiai's transformational leadership is its positive influence on teachers' psychological well-being. Based on interviews and observations, teachers at Sunan Drajat exhibit low levels of work-related stress and high emotional satisfaction, despite heavy workloads. One young teacher, Ustadzah S. R., shared:

*"When we face personal problems or work pressure, we can talk to the kiai. He listens and advises us like a parent. It always brings peace of mind." (Interview, Young Teacher, July 16, 2025).*

This empathetic approach exemplifies the individualized consideration dimension of transformational leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1994), wherein the leader attends not only to professional matters but also to the emotional and spiritual needs of followers. From an Islamic psychological perspective, this reflects the function of a murabbi (spiritual nurturer), who harmonizes individuals' cognitive, emotional, and spiritual dimensions.

Internal documentation from the pesantren foundation further reveals high teacher retention rates, with an average tenure exceeding ten years. This sustained commitment demonstrates strong institutional loyalty, rooted not in financial incentives but in the emotional and spiritual bond between the kiai and his teachers. Such loyalty underscores the success of a leadership model that combines spiritual empathy, transformational motivation, and psychological care, a distinctly Islamic form of leadership that nurtures both human and institutional flourishing.

The kiai's transformational leadership, infused with Islamic psychological principles, fosters an educational climate where motivation, professionalism, and well-being coexist harmoniously. Teachers are not merely employees but murabbin (educators with moral and spiritual purpose), whose performance is driven by faith-based motivation, ethical awareness, and emotional stability. The kiai, as both a leader and a spiritual guide, thus plays a vital role in transforming teacher performance into a form of integrated professional and spiritual excellence.

## Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the leadership model of the kiai at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat represents a transformational leadership pattern integrated with the values of Islamic psychology. This leadership model is manifested through four core dimensions, idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass & Riggio, 2006), which, within the pesantren context, are articulated in moral and religious forms.

The first finding, namely the kiai's approach to teacher development, demonstrates that the kiai's role is not merely administrative but profoundly spiritual, moral, and educational. The kiai serves as a source of inspiration and a moral exemplar for teachers, nurturing dedication and work ethics grounded in the values of *ikhlas* (sincerity), *amanah* (trustworthiness), and *tawakal* (reliance on God). This aligns with the findings of Ismail, Mubarak, and Ma'rifah (2025), who emphasize that kiai leadership influences the quality of learning processes through spiritual exemplarity and personal mentoring. Likewise, Mustafidin (2025) found that younger kiai leaders in modern pesantren have begun adopting transformational approaches by integrating educational and social sustainability visions into their leadership practices.

The second finding, concerning the integration of Islamic psychological values in the leadership process, reveals that the kiai establishes emotional relationships with teachers through values such as *ihsan* (excellence in conduct), *syukur* (gratitude), and *amanah*, which function as psychological mechanisms to motivate teachers and stabilize their emotional well-being. This confirms Jalaluddin's (2011) theory that Islamic psychology perceives the human being as a unity of body (*jasad*), intellect (*'aql*), and soul (*ruh*), implying that effective leadership must engage the spiritual dimension (*qalb*) of the individual. Similarly, Prasetyo and Faizah (2025) demonstrated that spiritual values such as *ihsan* and *amanah* strengthen the positive relationship between transformational leadership and teacher job satisfaction in Islamic educational institutions.

The third finding, related to the impact of the kiai's transformational leadership on teachers' performance, highlights increases in intrinsic motivation, loyalty, and professional integrity. The kiai successfully instills the concept of work as a form of *ibadah* (worship), fostering what may be termed meaning-based performance, a work ethic driven by spiritual purpose rather than external reward. This supports the findings of Humaisi and Thoyib (2025), who observed that the charismatic and transformational leadership of kiai directly enhances the quality of educational processes and teacher professionalism. In a broader sense, Mahani and Wahyudin (2025) also concluded that kiai leadership contributes to the development of an authentic, spiritually oriented leadership

pattern grounded in moral excellence.

From a theoretical standpoint, the findings of this study enrich the concept of transformational leadership by incorporating an Islamic psycho-spiritual dimension. Whereas Bass (1990) emphasizes behavioral transformation and motivational change, the integration with Islamic psychology introduces a transcendental dimension that connects leadership vision to divine and moral values. Consequently, the kiai's leadership model can be conceptualized as a form of spiritual-transformational leadership (Anwar & Hakim, 2025), a model that not only focuses on performance improvement but also on religious character formation.

Practically, these findings support Yugo's (2025) assertion that pesantren adopting Islamic value-based management exhibit higher educational quality through visionary and spiritual leadership. Furthermore, this study reinforces the argument of Zahraini et al. (2025) that the internalization of Islamic values in human resource development enhances the effectiveness of situational and transformational leadership styles in maintaining the distinctive work culture of pesantren.

This research provides both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it proposes a conceptual model of kiai's transformational leadership grounded in Islamic psychology, which serves two essential functions: (1) To strengthen teachers' spiritual commitment toward their work, cultivating intrinsic motivation rooted in faith; and (2) To enhance the organizational effectiveness of Islamic educational institutions through value-based management that integrates professionalism with spirituality.

## Congclusions

This study concludes that the leadership of the kiai at Pondok Pesantren Sunan Drajat embodies a transformational leadership model grounded in Islamic psychology. The kiai serves not only as the administrative head of the educational institution but also as a spiritual mentor who transforms Islamic values into practical guidance for teacher development. This leadership model has a tangible impact on enhancing teacher performance through three interrelated dimensions: Spiritual motivation and sincerity in work, cultivated through the kiai's moral and spiritual exemplarity; Professionalism and moral responsibility, strengthened through value-based mentoring rooted in *amanah* (trust) and *syura* (consultation); and Psychological well-being and institutional loyalty, fostered by emotional support and spiritual counseling provided by the kiai. Therefore, kiai's leadership based on Islamic psychology can be conceptualized as a form of spiritual-transformational leadership, a leadership paradigm that integrates transformative vision, Islamic moral values, and psychological nurturing to enhance the quality of human resources within the pesantren system. This synthesis of transformational and Islamic psychological principles highlights that effective educational leadership in Islamic institutions transcends managerial competence, encompassing spiritual integrity, emotional intelligence, and moral exemplarity as foundational components of sustainable teacher development and institutional growth.

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