



## Transformational Leadership and Organizational Climate from Teachers' Perspectives (A Qualitative Study at School Tahfidz Durrotul Ummah, Mekar Jaya Village, Panongan District, Banten Province)

Dafyar Eliadi Hardian<sup>1</sup>, Adea Sapta<sup>2</sup>, Syukran Fadhilah<sup>3</sup>, Horjel Gabriel Kewas<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>Universitas Islam Syekh Yusuf, Indonesia

E-mail: [pps@unis.ac.id](mailto:pps@unis.ac.id), [dafyar711@unis.ac.id](mailto:dafyar711@unis.ac.id), [2407010233@students.unis.ac.id](mailto:2407010233@students.unis.ac.id), [2407010299@students.unis.ac.id](mailto:2407010299@students.unis.ac.id), [2407010131@students.unis.ac.id](mailto:2407010131@students.unis.ac.id)

Article Info	Abstract
<b>Article History</b> Received: 2025-07-07 Revised: 2025-08-18 Published: 2025-09-04  <b>Keywords:</b> <i>Transformational Leadership;</i> <i>Organizational Climate;</i> <i>Teacher Perceptions;</i> <i>Qualitative Study;</i> <i>Tahfidz School.</i>	This research investigates how teachers perceive the principal's transformational leadership and the organizational climate at Tahfidz Durrotul Ummah School in Mekar Jaya Village, Panongan District, Banten Province. Adopting a qualitative case-study design, the study gathered data through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document review, with five teachers serving as key informants. Analysis proceeded through data reduction, data display, and inductive interpretation. Findings show that teachers regard the principal as a transformational leader who models exemplary conduct, offers individualized encouragement, and sparks positive shifts in instructional practice. The organizational climate is portrayed as collegial, characterized by open communication, harmonious relationships, and mutual trust. Participants believe the combination of inspirational leadership and a supportive work environment greatly enhances their morale and professional growth. These results underscore the pivotal role of leadership and organizational culture in cultivating a healthy educational ecosystem, particularly within faith-based institutions such as tahfidz schools.
Artikel Info	Abstrak
<b>Sejarah Artikel</b> Diterima: 2025-07-07 Direvisi: 2025-08-18 Dipublikasi: 2025-09-04  <b>Kata kunci:</b> <i>Kepemimpinan Transformasional;</i> <i>Iklim Organisasi;</i> <i>Persepsi Gurul</i> <i>Studi Kualitatif</i> <i>Sekolah Tahfidz.</i>	Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana persepsi guru terhadap kepemimpinan transformasional kepala sekolah dan iklim organisasi di Sekolah Tahfidz Durrotul Ummah yang berlokasi di Desa Mekar Jaya, Kecamatan Panongan, Provinsi Banten. Dengan menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur, observasi partisipatif, dan telaah dokumen, dengan melibatkan lima orang guru sebagai informan utama. Analisis data dilakukan melalui tahapan reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan secara induktif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa para guru memandang kepala sekolah sebagai pemimpin transformasional yang menunjukkan perilaku teladan, memberikan dorongan secara personal, dan mendorong perubahan positif dalam praktik pengajaran. Iklim organisasi digambarkan sebagai suasana kerja yang kolektif, ditandai dengan komunikasi terbuka, hubungan yang harmonis, dan saling percaya di antara anggota sekolah. Para partisipan meyakini bahwa kombinasi antara kepemimpinan yang inspiratif dan lingkungan kerja yang suportif secara signifikan meningkatkan semangat dan profesionalisme guru. Temuan ini menegaskan pentingnya peran kepemimpinan dan budaya organisasi dalam membangun ekosistem pendidikan yang sehat, khususnya di lembaga berbasis keagamaan seperti sekolah tahfidz.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Primary education forms the essential groundwork for nurturing students' competencies and character development in a continuous and holistic manner. At this level, teachers play a pivotal role not only as learning facilitators but also as influential figures who shape students' social, emotional, and spiritual growth. Consequently, teacher quality and performance are critical to the success of the educational process. In this regard, the role of school leadership becomes central in fostering an

environment that promotes teachers' professional development.

According to Maysaroh, Rahmawati, and Khodijah (2025:39), transformational leadership characterized by idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized support creates a collaborative atmosphere that sparks innovation and boosts teacher motivation. This form of leadership is especially important in religious-based schools like tahfidz institutions, where leadership extends beyond administrative functions to encompass spiritual guidance.

Transformational leaders not only improve operational effectiveness but also cultivate trust and a culture of creativity within the teaching and learning process.

Research by Kim and Lim (2021:114) highlights that principals who embrace a transformational leadership style enhance teachers' adaptability to digital tools and innovative pedagogies, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. This underscores the principal's role as a transformative agent more than a manager, they serve as motivators and role models. Under such leadership, teachers feel valued, empowered, and encouraged to grow professionally and independently. This approach has proven effective in schools with strong moral frameworks, where leaders are viewed not just as authorities but as mentors and vision-driven figures.

In addition to leadership, the organizational climate plays a significant role in shaping teacher performance. A supportive and positive school climate fosters psychological security and promotes collaboration among educators and staff. Suhayat, Suwatno, and Buchdadi (2022:65) assert that an organizational climate characterized by transparent communication, constructive interpersonal relationships, and clearly defined roles directly enhances teacher effectiveness. In such an environment, teachers are more confident, engaged, and able to focus on their responsibilities. Furthermore, a positive climate fosters loyalty and teamwork in striving toward shared educational goals. Within Islamic-based primary schools, a climate that is both open and grounded in religious values is key to cultivating an ethical, collaborative, and high-performing educational community.

The study conducted by Rivai, Harefa, and Manurung (2023:92) offers a valuable insight, emphasizing that a principal's leadership style significantly influences the organizational climate, albeit indirectly. At SD IT Umami Aida Medan, a principal who adopted a transformational leadership style successfully cultivated a work culture rooted in sincerity, discipline, and professionalism. This suggests that leadership and organizational climate are deeply intertwined, working together to shape a value-based system that permeates all areas of school life. A principal who promotes collegiality and provides opportunities for teachers to engage in decision-making helps build a sense of ownership and belonging, which ultimately enhances teacher performance.

Similarly, a study by Azmiati, Marwan, and Siraj (2024:72) found that teachers in three public elementary schools in Bireuen Regency directly felt the influence of transformational leadership on their work motivation. Based on interviews and observations, the teachers shared that the principal's attention to their individual needs, empowerment efforts, and reinforcement of moral values were key factors driving their motivation to grow and contribute more meaningfully to the school. These findings highlight how qualitative research can capture the emotional and psychological aspects of leadership dimensions that often go unrecognized in quantitative studies.

Reinforcing this perspective, research by Rahayu et al. (2024:58) at MI Sunniyyah Selo Grobogan showed that teachers responded favorably to transformational leadership that fostered mutual trust, strengthened communication, and created opportunities for professional growth. These outcomes suggest that empathetic and participatory leadership plays a vital role in nurturing a positive organizational climate that supports teachers' development and well-being.

Drawing from the above discussion, it is evident that transformational leadership and organizational climate are closely linked in building a school environment that is productive, supportive, and inspiring. This study aims to investigate in depth how teachers experience and interpret the principal's leadership and the organizational atmosphere at Tahfidz Durrotul Ummah School, located in Mekar Jaya Village, Panongan District, Banten Province. The findings are expected to contribute to the advancement of spiritual-values-based leadership theories and serve as a foundation for educational policy development aimed at improving the quality of learning in Islamic boarding schools and tahfidz-based institutions.

## **II. METHOD**

This study adopted a qualitative research approach with a case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of teachers' perspectives on transformational leadership and the organizational climate at Tahfidz Durrotul Ummah School, located in Mekar Jaya Village, Panongan District, Banten Province. This methodology was chosen due to the complex and context-dependent nature of the research focus, which required a nuanced interpretation of how educational stakeholders construct meaning within their natural setting. As noted by Mills and

Birks (2020:212), qualitative case studies enable researchers to explore social phenomena through direct engagement with participants in authentic environments, allowing for a deeper grasp of ongoing processes and interactions.

The research site was selected purposively because the school demonstrates prominent characteristics of religious leadership and an organizational culture grounded in spiritual values and discipline. The participants included five teachers who had been working at the school for at least two years and were actively engaged in institutional activities. Informants were chosen through purposive sampling, in line with Baltes and Ralph's (2020:6) assertion that qualitative research prioritizes the depth and relevance of information over statistical generalizability. These selected participants were expected to offer meaningful insights into the leadership practices and organizational culture under investigation.

Data collection was conducted using three primary techniques: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews allowed participants to express their thoughts and experiences in a reflective and open-ended manner. Participant observation helped capture the nuances of social interactions and communication dynamics within the school setting. Document analysis involved reviewing institutional records such as school profiles, organizational charts, meeting minutes, and internal policy documents. As emphasized by Thelwall and Nevill (2021:10), integrating these methods enhances the depth of data and improves research validity through methodological triangulation.

The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions inductively. This model was selected for its effectiveness in identifying thematic patterns from narrative data. Padgett (2021:154) highlights that an iterative approach—where data are continuously reviewed and interpreted while remaining open to new insights—is essential for producing rich and meaningful results in qualitative inquiry. The final analysis is therefore expected to offer a comprehensive understanding of how transformational leadership and organizational climate are perceived by teachers in this particular educational context.

To enhance the credibility of the research findings, the study applied multiple validation strategies, including source and method

triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing. Triangulation was achieved by cross-verifying data collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. Member checking involved validating the researcher's interpretations with the informants to confirm the accuracy and authenticity of the data. Peer debriefing was carried out by engaging in critical discussions with academic supervisors and fellow researchers to evaluate the findings from different perspectives. According to Akutey (2021:5), methodological triangulation not only strengthens the reliability of the data but also enhances the researcher's credibility in interpreting social phenomena.

This research is rooted in an interpretive-constructivist philosophical framework, which holds that reality is subjective and shaped through social interactions. Therefore, understanding meaning must be contextualized within the lived experiences of participants. As Charmaz (2020:34) explains, within a constructivist paradigm, meaning is co-constructed by researchers and participants through reflective, dialogic engagement. This approach is particularly well-suited for uncovering how teachers interpret and experience transformational leadership and the organizational climate within the day-to-day realities of a tahfidz school setting.

### III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### A. Result

The results of this study demonstrate that teachers at Tahfidz Durrotul Ummah School consistently perceive the principal's transformational leadership as more than a top-down directive role. Instead, the principal is regarded as a continuous source of motivation and inspiration. Teachers reported receiving both emotional and professional support, especially when dealing with classroom difficulties or when involved in school program development. One teacher, Mrs. Rina, explained:

"The principal doesn't just give us instructions he's always encouraging us. Sometimes, when we're feeling overwhelmed or unsure about teaching, he joins us, listens, talks through ideas, and even helps brainstorm lesson plans. That really keeps me motivated to stay here as a teacher."  
(Interview, Mrs. Rina, July 14, 2025)

This behavior illustrates the *individualized consideration* aspect of transformational leadership, where personal engagement and

emotional support are essential in fostering a nurturing work environment. Kilag et al. (2024:103) highlight that such relational leadership behavior is vital for cultivating meaningful professional relationships.

Beyond emotional support, the principal also actively promotes teacher involvement in decision-making and encourages innovation. Mr. Oga shared: "When we were asked to design a thematic memorization program, I felt truly valued. Usually, programs are handed down to us, but this time we got to build it collaboratively. That really boosted my confidence." (Interview, Mr. Oga, July 14, 2025)

This experience reflects the *intellectual stimulation* dimension of transformational leadership, where teachers are empowered to think creatively and contribute to the school's strategic direction. Sasan et al. (2023) emphasize that such practices promote a collaborative culture and strengthen teachers' sense of ownership and engagement.

With regard to organizational climate, data from interviews and observations revealed an environment characterized by transparency, harmony, and mutual trust. As described by Mrs. Rosma: "It feels like a family here. If there's an issue, we come together, talk it out, and solve it as a team. The principal is very open we're free to share any ideas as long as it benefits the students and the school." (Interview, Mrs. Rosma, July 15, 2025) This kind of participatory atmosphere aligns with findings by Suhayat, Suwatno, and Buchdadi (2022:65), who suggest that open communication, institutional support, and clearly defined roles are key features of a healthy school climate. In such an environment, not only is working more comfortable, but solidarity and team cohesion among staff are also strengthened.

The study also identifies two overarching categories of influencing factors: enablers and barriers. Key enabling factors include the emotional closeness between the principal and teachers, alignment in Islamic educational values, and a culture of open dialogue and mutual respect. According to *Frontiers in Education* (2025:04), shared values between leaders and their teams play a crucial role in enhancing leadership effectiveness and cultivating institutional loyalty. Within the tahfidz school context, spiritual values serve as a unifying force that strengthens both social and professional ties. However, several

obstacles were also identified. Teachers pointed to heavy administrative demands and limited access to formal training in digital tools and self-development as significant challenges. As Mrs. Ajeng noted: "We often want to try new things, but admin work takes up so much of our time. Also, not every teacher here knows how to create modern learning media." (Interview, Mrs. Ajeng, July 16, 2025).

These challenges indicate a broader systemic issue in which bureaucratic demands hinder teachers' professional development. Padgett (2021:154) highlights that institutional transformation is a gradual process and that individuals adapt at different paces, underscoring the necessity of granting educators time and space to realize their professional capacities. The study also finds that new teachers often experience difficulty adjusting. Although they contribute enthusiasm and fresh insights, aligning with the school's ethos and core values demands a period of orientation and structured support. This adjustment phase is essential to uphold the school's collective vision and cultural integrity.

Overall, the research reinforces that transformational leadership is fundamental in cultivating a supportive organizational climate. This environment, in turn, boosts teacher professionalism, self-assurance, and innovation. The teachers' testimonies align with Charmaz's (2020:34) perspective that social meaning emerges through thoughtful, interactive dialogue within a specific community. At Tahfidz Durrotul Ummah School, the integration of faith-based values and communal culture enriches this dynamic, rendering transformational leadership not only effective but also deeply resonant on both spiritual and cultural levels. The study emphasizes that transformational leadership significantly influences both individual teacher growth and the overall atmosphere of the organization. The principal's influence extended beyond formal duties to include mentoring, emotional encouragement, and motivational guidance. This supports the observations of Azmiati, Marwan, and Siraj (2024), who noted that transformational leaders in educational settings improve teacher morale through personalized interactions, trust-building efforts, and communication rooted in shared values. The principal's active involvement in daily school

matters especially during challenging moments provided emotional support and practical assistance, sustaining teachers' motivation and engagement.

This approach reflects the *individualized consideration* aspect of transformational leadership described by Kilag et al. (2024:103), where teachers feel genuinely acknowledged, valued, and supported not only as staff members but also as partners in the educational mission. In the religious school context, such leadership proves even more impactful, as it deepens the spiritual and communal elements of the learning environment, aligning personal goals with institutional aspirations. Furthermore, the research found that teachers responded positively to leadership strategies that promoted their participation in school decisions and curriculum development. Involvement in initiatives such as thematic memorization programs and collaborative reflection strengthened teachers' sense of ownership and professional identity. This represents the *intellectual stimulation* component of transformational leadership, which Kim and Lim (2021:114) argue is vital in encouraging educator creativity and adaptability especially in post-pandemic educational contexts that demand innovation and responsiveness.

These inclusive practices also signify a shift from top-down leadership models toward more collaborative and collegial approaches. Rather than simply following orders, teachers were empowered to actively shape the school's progress. This corresponds with the findings of Maysaroh, Rahmawati, and Khodijah (2025:39), who assert that transformational leadership fosters a cooperative work environment where autonomy and responsibility enhance one another.

From an organizational standpoint, the supportive climate at Tahfidz Durrotul Ummah School was shaped by strong interpersonal trust, transparent communication, and shared ethical principles. Teachers described the school community as resembling a close-knit family, where problems were addressed collectively and decisions were reached through participatory dialogue. Suhayat, Suwatno, and Buchdadi (2022:65) highlight that environments characterized by openness and psychological

safety are strongly associated with sustained teacher satisfaction and performance.

A significant contributing factor was the alignment of spiritual and moral values among staff and leadership. The shared religious foundation between the principal and teachers served as a unifying ethical compass that guided daily interactions and institutional decisions. According to *Frontiers in Education* (2025:4), when leaders and followers share core values, it enhances the organization's identity and strengthens collective engagement. In faith-based schools like tahfidz institutions, this alignment amplifies the effectiveness of leadership by integrating the educational experience with a spiritual purpose.

Nevertheless, despite these strengths, several ongoing challenges were identified. One persistent issue is the heavy administrative burden placed on teachers, which limits opportunities for pedagogical creativity and critical reflection. Padgett (2021:154) stresses that meaningful reform must be accompanied by sufficient institutional support and effective time management systems to allow professional growth. Additionally, a lack of training in digital tools and instructional design restricted teachers' ability to fully embrace the empowering leadership practices offered by the principal.

New teachers also experienced adjustment difficulties as they navigated the unique culture of the school, particularly in understanding unspoken expectations rooted in religious values. This transitional experience supports Charmaz's (2020:34) constructivist view that identity and meaning within a social environment are developed over time through repeated interactions and shared experiences.

In conclusion, the study demonstrates that transformational leadership when anchored in empathy, value alignment, and intellectual encouragement is highly effective in cultivating a positive and engaging school climate. It also highlights the necessity of tailoring leadership strategies to the specific institutional context, particularly within religious schools where spiritual unity and collective values are central to organizational success. Ultimately, this research enriches the growing field of values-driven educational leadership, offering meaningful implications for policy formulation, leadership

development, and future scholarly exploration in similar educational settings.

## **B. Discussion**

This study explored how transformational leadership and organizational climate are perceived by teachers at School Tahfidz Durrotul Ummah, located in Mekar Jaya Village, Panongan District, Banten Province. The findings indicate that transformational leadership, as demonstrated by the principal, plays a crucial role in shaping a supportive, inclusive, and inspiring educational environment. Teachers described the principal not merely as a figure of authority but as a mentor who offers emotional encouragement, professional guidance, and opportunities for collaboration. This aligns with the core components of transformational leadership individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and idealized influence which together foster teacher motivation, creativity, and a sense of professional ownership.

Moreover, the study highlights the positive organizational climate characterized by mutual trust, open communication, and a shared commitment to Islamic values. Teachers likened their work environment to a family, emphasizing relational warmth, collective problem-solving, and spiritual alignment between leadership and staff. This climate supported not only teacher satisfaction but also engagement in school improvement initiatives. However, several challenges emerged, including the burden of administrative tasks, limited training in instructional technology, and adaptation difficulties faced by new teachers. These factors suggest the need for structural adjustments to ensure that leadership ideals are matched by institutional capacity.

Overall, the study confirms that transformational leadership, when grounded in empathy and shared values, is effective in enhancing both individual teacher development and the broader organizational climate in faith-based schools. The findings contribute to the growing body of literature on values-driven educational leadership and underscore the importance of context-sensitive practices in promoting sustainable school transformation.

## **IV. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

### **A. Conclusion**

This research affirms that transformational leadership, as perceived by the teachers at Sekolah Tahfidz Durrotul Ummah, plays a pivotal role in cultivating a supportive organizational atmosphere and enhancing teacher professionalism. The principal's responsibilities extended well beyond routine administration, encompassing emotional guidance, intellectual stimulation, and inclusive leadership all of which nurtured a strong sense of community and motivation among educators. The presence of shared religious and ethical principles further reinforced unity, grounding the school's educational mission in spiritual values.

Although challenges such as excessive administrative responsibilities and limited opportunities for pedagogical innovation were present, the synergy between transformational leadership and aligned values served as a critical sustaining factor. These outcomes suggest that school leaders particularly within religious education contexts should embrace leadership strategies rooted in empathy, trust-building, and active collaboration. Schools are advised to streamline administrative procedures and expand teacher development initiatives tailored to their practical and contextual needs. Furthermore, policymakers are encouraged to advance leadership models that incorporate ethical and spiritual dimensions, while future studies could investigate similar approaches in broader Islamic or values-driven educational settings to deepen insight into effective and sustainable leadership practices.

### **B. Suggestion**

Drawing from the findings of this study, several strategic recommendations are proposed to enhance the practice of transformational leadership and strengthen the organizational climate, particularly at Sekolah Tahfidz Durrotul Ummah and other similar educational settings. First, school leaders are advised to consistently implement transformational leadership by providing emotional support, encouraging innovation, and actively involving teachers in decision-making processes. A leadership approach grounded in empathy, trust, and collaboration is essential for cultivating a positive and engaging school environment. Second,

teachers should be empowered to take on leadership roles and contribute to school development efforts. Their professional growth can be supported through reflective practices and peer collaboration within an atmosphere that nurtures learning and innovation.

Third, educational institutions are encouraged to minimize administrative workloads that may hinder creativity, while also providing regular training in digital pedagogy, instructional design, and personal development to foster teaching innovation. Fourth, policymakers should design and implement leadership development programs that integrate ethical, spiritual, and transformational values, especially for faith-based schools. Such policies should prioritize teacher autonomy, well-being, and ongoing professional development to ensure sustainable educational advancement. Lastly, future researchers are encouraged to explore transformational leadership across various Islamic and values-based educational contexts. Comparative studies may offer broader insights that contribute to the growing body of knowledge on effective and values-driven educational leadership.

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