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Faith-Based Leadership Integration: Applying Prophetic Values in Transformational and Servant Leadership for SME Entrepreneurs

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ABSTRACT

Leadership represents a critical determinant of entrepreneurial success and organizational sustainability, particularly within small and medium enterprises where ethical guidance directly influences stakeholder outcomes. This study analyzes the integration of Prophet Muhammad's leadership values within transformational and servant leadership models through systematic thematic Quranic exegesis. Employing qualitative descriptive methodology with tafsir maudhu'i approach, the research examines four key Quranic verses (Al-Imran 3:159, Al-Anbiya 21:107, Al-Furqan 25:63, and Al-Ma'idah 5:8) that articulate principles of consultative decision-making, visionary inspiration, humble conduct, and equitable justice. Findings reveal that prophetic leadership encompasses both transformational dimensions (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration) and servant leadership characteristics (humility, empowerment, ethical behavior, and stewardship) within a unified theological framework. The analysis demonstrates that Quranic leadership principles challenge the artificial dichotomy between transformational vision-setting and servant stakeholder orientation prevalent in Western management scholarship, instead presenting an integrated paradigm termed "Quranic Leadership" that synthesizes change-oriented inspiration with humble ethical service. This framework offers Muslim entrepreneurs scripturally validated guidance for implementing evidence-based leadership practices while maintaining religious authenticity, contributing to faith-integrated entrepreneurship literature and providing practical implications for business educators, organizational leaders, and policymakers seeking culturally relevant approaches to ethical entrepreneurship and sustainable business development.

Keywords: *Islamic Entrepreneurship, Transformational Leadership, Servant Leadership, Prophetic Leadership, Ethical Business Management*

INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary business landscape, leadership remains a cornerstone for organizational success and sustainable competitive advantage, particularly within entrepreneurial ventures and small to medium enterprises (SMEs). The convergence of ethical leadership paradigms with modern management theories has gained significant scholarly attention, as organizations increasingly recognize that effective leadership transcends mere operational efficiency and encompasses value-driven approaches that foster innovation, stakeholder engagement, and long-term sustainability (Ravet-Brown et al., 2024). Among various leadership frameworks, transformational and servant leadership have emerged as two prominent models that align closely with entrepreneurial contexts, where leaders must balance visionary goal-setting with empathetic stakeholder management (Hoch et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2020). The inseparability of organization and leadership has been well-documented, with leadership quality serving as a critical determinant of management system effectiveness, particularly within educational and entrepreneurial institutions (Hambali et al., 2020).

Transformational leadership, characterized by its emphasis on inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and idealized influence, has demonstrated significant positive effects on firm performance and entrepreneurial outcomes across diverse organizational settings. Recent systematic reviews confirm that transformational leadership drives innovation, enhances employee engagement, and strengthens organizational competitiveness, particularly in SME contexts where adaptive leadership is critical for navigating volatile market conditions (Hoch et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2020). The entrepreneurial leadership literature further underscores that transformational behaviors encourage creative problem-solving, risk-taking propensity, and opportunity recognition among followers, thereby catalyzing organizational growth and market responsiveness (Ravet-Brown et al., 2024). Empirical evidence from Islamic educational institutions demonstrates that transformational leaders, particularly those in leadership positions at pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), exhibit four critical dimensions: charismatic influence that establishes them as role models, inspirational motivation that drives organizational goal achievement, intellectual stimulation that fosters innovative thinking, and individualized consideration that values stakeholder input (Bashori, 2019). These dimensions prove essential for organizational development within competitive educational and entrepreneurial environments.

Complementing the transformational paradigm, servant leadership offers a distinctive approach rooted in the prioritization of follower needs, ethical behavior, and community building. This leadership philosophy, which emphasizes humility, empowerment, and stewardship, has gained considerable traction in contemporary management discourse, particularly within family-owned SMEs and organizations seeking to enhance employee commitment and reduce turnover intentions

(Kalsoom & Smaliukienė, 2025). Recent studies demonstrate that servant leadership fosters psychological safety, strengthens leader-follower relationships, and promotes promotive voice behaviors that contribute to enhanced task performance and organizational effectiveness (Eva et al., 2019). The contemporary relevance of servant leadership extends to addressing organizational needs for empathetic listening, employee recognition, and work-life balance, thereby not only enhancing motivation and productivity but also strengthening interpersonal relationships within teams (Gandasacita et al., 2024). The applicability of servant leadership principles transcends Western organizational contexts, resonating particularly within cultural frameworks that value communal welfare, ethical conduct, and stakeholder-centric business practices.

The integration of these leadership models within Islamic entrepreneurial contexts presents a compelling avenue for theoretical and practical advancement. Islamic principles, rooted in the exemplary leadership of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), emphasize ethical conduct, social responsibility, justice, and compassionate service to stakeholders (Bidaula et al., 2024; Sulaeman, 2020; Yasin et al., 2024). The prophetic leadership model encompasses qualities such as *Shiddiq* (truthfulness), *Amanah* (trustworthiness), *Tabligh* (communication), and *Fathanah* (wisdom), which collectively form a comprehensive ethical framework for entrepreneurial and organizational leadership (Rahman et al., 2024; Thoyibah & Hajizah, 2025). These prophetic characteristics possess not only theological significance but also practical power in shaping just and civilized societies, as evidenced by Prophet Muhammad's historical success in unifying fragmented Arab communities into a cohesive social order founded on justice, honesty, and social solidarity (Thoyibah & Hajizah, 2025). Recent qualitative investigations of Muslim SME entrepreneurs in Malaysia reveal that prophetic leadership principles are actively integrated into strategic management processes, influencing vision formulation, stakeholder engagement, and ethical decision-making practices (Rahman et al., 2024). This integration demonstrates the practical applicability and contemporary relevance of faith-based leadership frameworks in entrepreneurial settings.

Despite the growing body of literature on transformational and servant leadership, as well as emerging research on Islamic entrepreneurship, significant gaps remain in understanding how these paradigms intersect and complement one another within a unified theoretical framework. Previous studies have examined transformational leadership in entrepreneurial contexts (Bashori, 2019; Ravet-Brown et al., 2024), servant leadership in SMEs (Gandasacita et al., 2024; Kalsoom & Smaliukienė, 2025), and Islamic entrepreneurial principles separately (Bidaula et al., 2024; Sulaeman, 2020). However, limited scholarly attention has been devoted to systematically analyzing how Quranic verses and prophetic traditions provide scriptural foundations for both transformational and servant leadership dimensions. Furthermore, the entrepreneurship literature lacks comprehensive

frameworks that integrate these Western-originated leadership theories with Islamic spiritual and ethical foundations, particularly in ways that offer actionable insights for contemporary Muslim entrepreneurs and business leaders operating in global markets. This conceptual disconnect represents both a theoretical gap and a missed opportunity for cross-cultural leadership scholarship that could bridge faith-based wisdom with modern management practice.

Addressing this gap, the present study aims to analyze the integration of Prophet Muhammad's leadership values within transformational and servant leadership models through thematic Quranic exegesis. Specifically, this research investigates how specific Quranic verses relating to leadership, justice, compassion, and stakeholder service align with the core dimensions of transformational leadership (inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, idealized influence, and individualized consideration) and servant leadership (humility, ethical behavior, empowerment, and stewardship). The study employs a thematic hermeneutical approach to Islamic texts, examining verses such as Al-Imran 3:159, Al-Anbiya 21:107, Al-Furqan 25:63, and Al-Ma'idah 5:8, which collectively articulate principles of consultative decision-making, universal compassion, humble conduct, and equitable justice. The novelty of this research lies in its systematic integration of Islamic scriptural foundations with established Western leadership theories, thereby constructing a synthesized "Quranic Leadership" framework that transcends cultural boundaries while maintaining theological authenticity. This integrated model offers theoretical advancement by demonstrating the complementarity of transformational and servant leadership within a faith-based paradigm, while providing practical guidance for Muslim entrepreneurs, business educators, and organizational leaders seeking to operationalize ethical, values-driven leadership in contemporary entrepreneurial ventures. By bridging Islamic scholarship with modern management theory, this study contributes to the growing discourse on ethical entrepreneurship, faith-based management practices, and culturally inclusive leadership development in global business contexts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Transformational Leadership in Entrepreneurial Contexts

Transformational leadership theory, originally conceptualized by Burns in 1978 and subsequently refined by Bass in 1985, has emerged as one of the most influential leadership frameworks in contemporary management scholarship. The theory posits that transformational leaders inspire followers to transcend self-interest for collective organizational goals through four core dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Eaton et al., 2024). These leaders function as role models who articulate compelling visions, challenge conventional thinking, and attend to

individual follower development needs, thereby fostering environments conducive to extraordinary performance outcomes (Lee et al., 2020). In entrepreneurial settings, transformational leadership assumes particular salience, as it facilitates the innovation, adaptability, and risk-taking behaviors essential for venture creation and growth in dynamic market environments. The transformational leadership model represents one of the most recent theoretical frameworks in leadership studies, yet its practical application has been exemplified throughout history, including in the leadership practices demonstrated by Prophet Muhammad (Tyas, 2019; Yusnita & Virlania, 2024).

Recent empirical investigations confirm the positive relationship between transformational leadership and entrepreneurial outcomes across diverse organizational contexts. A systematic review by Lee et al. (2020) synthesizing evidence from multiple industries demonstrates that transformational leadership significantly enhances firm performance, employee engagement, and innovation capacity, particularly within small and medium enterprises where leadership quality directly influences organizational trajectory. Hoch et al. (2018) further corroborate these findings, reporting that transformational behaviors among SME leaders correlate positively with enhanced competitive advantage, knowledge-sharing practices, and organizational learning orientations. Within Islamic educational institutions, research reveals that transformational leaders such as kyai (Islamic religious leaders) successfully manage their educational organizations through four dimensions: charismatic leadership that positions them as role models, inspirational motivation that galvanizes followers toward organizational objectives, intellectual stimulation that cultivates innovative ideas, and individualized consideration that demonstrates responsiveness to stakeholder aspirations (Bashori, 2019). The effectiveness of transformational leadership in entrepreneurial contexts stems from its capacity to cultivate psychological ownership, intrinsic motivation, and commitment to organizational mission among followers, thereby converting individual efforts into collective achievements that propel venture success (Ravet-Brown et al., 2024). School principals who successfully implement transformational leadership demonstrate the ability to convert institutional potential into organizational energy, thereby elevating institutional quality and leadership performance (Khasanah, 2019).

Servant Leadership Theory and Its Application in Business Management

Servant leadership, pioneered by Robert Greenleaf in 1970, represents a paradigmatic shift from traditional hierarchical leadership models by prioritizing follower growth, well-being, and empowerment as the primary leadership objective. Greenleaf conceptualized servant leadership as an approach wherein leaders perceive themselves fundamentally as servants first, with leadership emerging as a consequence of their commitment to serving others rather than exercising positional authority (Greenleaf, 1977). The servant leadership

framework encompasses ten characteristic attributes: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to follower growth, and community building (Eva et al., 2019). These characteristics collectively distinguish servant leaders from other leadership typologies by emphasizing ethical conduct, stakeholder orientation, and long-term organizational sustainability over short-term performance metrics. Contemporary discourse increasingly recognizes servant leadership as a favored conceptual framework capable of addressing human needs within organizations while upholding individual rights and humanitarian values (Gandasacita et al., 2024).

Contemporary research demonstrates robust evidence supporting the effectiveness of servant leadership in enhancing organizational and individual outcomes, particularly within entrepreneurial ventures and SMEs. Kalsoom & Smaliukienė (2025) conducted a comprehensive investigation revealing that servant leadership significantly reduces employee turnover intentions in family-owned small businesses by fostering psychological safety, perceived organizational support, and affective commitment. The study further established that servant leaders create work environments characterized by trust, open communication, and mutual respect, which in turn stimulate discretionary effort and organizational citizenship behaviors among employees. Additionally, recent meta-analytic findings by Eva et al. (2019) confirm that servant leadership positively influences task performance, promotive voice behavior, and innovation through mechanisms of leader-member exchange quality and psychological empowerment. Leaders who implement servant leadership principles actively listen with empathy, acknowledge employee contributions, and promote work-life balance, thereby enhancing both employee motivation and productivity while strengthening team relationships (Gandasacita et al., 2024). Within entrepreneurial contexts, servant leadership proves particularly valuable as it aligns with contemporary stakeholder expectations for ethical business conduct, social responsibility, and sustainable value creation beyond mere profit maximization (Kalsoom & Smaliukienė, 2025). The servant leadership model presents a particularly suitable alternative for implementation in Islamic educational institutions and pesantren, where it plays a crucial role in shaping institutional character and facilitating the achievement of educational visions through a humanistic, service-oriented approach consistent with Islamic teachings (Ubaedullah & Al-Rahman, 2025).

Prophetic Leadership: Islamic Perspectives on Entrepreneurial Management

Prophetic leadership, grounded in the exemplary conduct and teachings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), represents a comprehensive leadership paradigm that integrates spiritual, ethical, and managerial dimensions relevant to contemporary entrepreneurial practice. This leadership model is characterized by four cardinal virtues: Shiddiq (truthfulness and integrity), Amanah (trustworthiness and reliability), Tabligh (effective communication and transparency), and Fathanah

(wisdom and strategic thinking), which collectively form the ethical foundation for Islamic business conduct (Bidaula et al., 2024; Rahman et al., 2024). These prophetic attributes transcend mere moral ideals, functioning as practical competencies that guide decision-making, stakeholder engagement, and organizational governance in Muslim-owned enterprises. Prophet Muhammad serves as an exemplary figure whose leadership remains timeless and applicable across all eras, having demonstrated how successful leadership can be achieved through modeling ideal behavior in various contexts (Tyas, 2019). Recent qualitative research by Rahman et al. (2024) examining Malaysian SME entrepreneurs reveals that these prophetic leadership principles are actively integrated throughout strategic management processes, including vision formulation, strategy implementation, and performance evaluation, suggesting their operational applicability in contemporary business contexts. Furthermore, historical evidence demonstrates that during the establishment of Madinah society, Prophet Muhammad exhibited extraordinary capability in forming inclusive, harmonious, and stable social orders, serving not merely as a head of state and military commander, but also as an educator, judge, and spiritual leader (Thoyibah & Hajizah, 2025).

The relevance of prophetic leadership to modern entrepreneurship extends beyond the Muslim business community, offering universal principles applicable to ethical business management globally. (Bidaula et al., 2024) developed a comprehensive entrepreneurship model based on Prophet Muhammad's business practices, encompassing five dimensions: foundational principles, core values, leadership competencies, stakeholder-centric approaches, and ethical frameworks. This model demonstrates that prophetic business strategies emphasized market justice, contractual integrity, quality assurance, and social welfare concerns that resonate with contemporary concepts of corporate social responsibility and sustainable entrepreneurship. Islam provides a standardized framework for leadership, particularly for Muslims, in the science of leading, with many Western leadership theories finding their historical precedents in the teachings and practices of Prophet Muhammad as documented in the Quran, hadith, scholarly works, and Islamic history (Tyas, 2019). Furthermore, empirical evidence indicates that Muslim entrepreneurs who consciously apply prophetic leadership principles in their ventures report enhanced business sustainability, stronger stakeholder relationships, and improved alignment between material success and spiritual fulfillment (Mahyarni et al., 2018). The prophetic leadership paradigm thus offers a faith-integrated approach to entrepreneurship that addresses the growing demand for values-based business models capable of reconciling economic objectives with ethical imperatives and social welfare considerations in increasingly complex global markets.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach utilizing thematic Quranic exegesis, specifically the tafsir maudhu'i (thematic interpretation) methodology, which has gained significant recognition in contemporary Islamic studies as an effective framework for addressing complex contemporary issues through comprehensive Quranic analysis (Kurniawan & Mustaniruddin, 2024; Lubis & Milhan, 2024). The tafsir maudhu'i method represents a systematic approach to Quranic interpretation that seeks to provide holistic answers to specific research questions by collecting, organizing, and analyzing Quranic verses that share common thematic purposes, thereby moving beyond atomistic verse-by-verse interpretation toward integrated understanding of Quranic teachings on particular topics (Kamil et al., 2023). This methodological approach has been developed and refined by classical and contemporary Islamic scholars, establishing structured procedures that maintain scientific rigor while respecting the principles of Quranic hermeneutics. The method proves particularly relevant for contemporary research contexts, including business and management studies, as it enables systematic examination of Islamic ethical principles and their practical applications in organizational leadership, entrepreneurial decision-making, and stakeholder management (Myers, 2019). The qualitative descriptive design adopted in this research aligns with established practices in business and management scholarship, where qualitative methods provide valuable insights into complex social processes, human behavior within organizational settings, and the contextual depth necessary for understanding leadership phenomena (Cassell et al., 2018; Habersang & Reihlen, 2025).

The thematic exegesis methodology employed in this research follows established procedural steps that ensure systematic rigor and interpretive validity. First, the research identified key thematic concepts related to leadership within the Quranic text, specifically focusing on verses that address transformational leadership dimensions (visionary guidance, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration) and servant leadership characteristics (humility, ethical conduct, justice, empowerment, and service orientation). Second, relevant Quranic verses were collected and systematically organized according to their chronological revelation sequence (Makki and Madani classification) and thematic coherence, ensuring comprehensive coverage of leadership-related teachings (Yamani, 2015). The selected verses for detailed analysis include QS. Al-Imran 3:159, which emphasizes compassionate leadership and consultative decision-making; QS. Al-Anbiya 21:107, which articulates the universal mercy principle in prophetic leadership; QS. Al-Furqan 25:63, which describes the humble conduct of righteous servants; and QS. Al-Ma'idah 5:8, which establishes justice as a fundamental leadership responsibility. Third, each verse was examined within its broader surah context and supported by authoritative classical

exegetical works (*tafsir*) to understand the linguistic meanings, historical contexts of revelation (*asbab al-nuzul*), and scholarly interpretations that illuminate the verses' leadership implications. This interpretive process employed multiple classical and contemporary tafsir sources to ensure balanced understanding and avoid subjective bias in textual interpretation. The analysis subsequently integrated these Quranic insights with contemporary leadership theories, specifically comparing prophetic leadership principles with transformational and servant leadership frameworks documented in modern management literature.

Data sources for this study comprise both primary and secondary materials, reflecting the dual nature of Islamic textual analysis and contemporary leadership scholarship. Primary sources include the Quranic text itself, classical tafsir works such as *Tafsir Al-Azhar* by Hamka (2003) and *Tafsir Al-Maraghi* by Ahmad Musthafa Al-Maraghi, and authenticated hadith collections that provide prophetic explanations and practical demonstrations of leadership principles. Secondary sources consist of peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, and conference proceedings published between 2019 and 2025, accessed through academic databases including Google Scholar, focusing on transformational leadership, servant leadership, Islamic entrepreneurship, and prophetic management principles. The study utilized Mendeley reference management software to organize citations, facilitate literature synthesis, and ensure systematic documentation of sources in accordance with APA 7th edition citation standards. This methodological triangulation, combining Quranic textual analysis with contemporary leadership literature, enables the research to construct a comprehensive integrated framework that bridges Islamic scriptural wisdom with modern entrepreneurial and management contexts, thereby addressing the identified theoretical gap while maintaining scholarly rigor appropriate for publication in management and entrepreneurship journals.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Integration of Prophetic Leadership Values within Transformational Leadership Model

The thematic exegetical analysis of Quranic verses reveals substantial alignment between prophetic leadership principles and the core dimensions of transformational leadership theory as originally conceptualized by Bass (1985) and subsequently developed by contemporary scholars. QS. Al-Imran 3:159 emerges as a foundational verse that comprehensively articulates transformational leadership characteristics within an Islamic scriptural context. The verse states: "So by mercy from Allah, you were lenient with them. And if you had been rude and harsh of heart, they would have disbanded from about you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult them in the matter. And when you have decided, then rely upon Allah. Indeed, Allah loves those who rely upon Him."

Classical exegetical commentaries provide crucial contextual understanding of this verse's revelation during the Battle of Uhud, a pivotal moment when Prophet Muhammad's followers disobeyed strategic instructions, resulting in military setback (Anam, 2022). Despite this substantial failure and the resulting casualties, the verse emphasizes the Prophet's compassionate response rather than punitive reaction, highlighting how divine mercy manifested through his gentle demeanor and consultative approach. Contemporary tafsir scholarship, particularly Hamka's Tafsir Al-Azhar, explicates that the Prophet's gentle disposition (represented by the Arabic term "لِئْتَّ لَهُمْ" - *linta lahum*) was not merely a personality trait but rather a divinely bestowed quality functioning as an instrument of social transformation (Hamka, 2003). This interpretation directly resonates with Bass's dimension of "idealized influence," wherein transformational leaders serve as role models whose character and behavior inspire followers to transcend self-interest for collective objectives.

The verse's emphasis on consultation ("وَشَاوِرْهُمْ فِي الْأَمْرِ" - *wa shāwirhum fi al-amr*) demonstrates what contemporary leadership scholars identify as participative decision-making and intellectual stimulation, key components of transformational leadership (Hoch et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2020). This consultative approach mirrors findings from recent research on transformational leadership in entrepreneurial contexts, which demonstrates that leaders who engage stakeholders in strategic deliberations foster enhanced innovation capacity, psychological ownership, and organizational commitment (Ravet-Brown et al., 2024). The integration of consultation within prophetic leadership practice established precedents for what modern management literature terms "empowerment" and "voice behavior," mechanisms through which transformational leaders cultivate followers' creative problem-solving capabilities and organizational citizenship behaviors. Empirical evidence from Islamic educational institutions confirms this parallel, as research by Bashori (2019) demonstrates that transformational leaders in pesantren settings exhibit precisely these consultative and participatory behaviors, positioning themselves as accessible role models who actively solicit stakeholder input for institutional development.

QS. Al-Anbiya 21:107 presents another critical dimension of transformational leadership through its proclamation: "And We have not sent you except as a mercy to the worlds" ("وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ"). Classical tafsir works, particularly Tafsir Al-Maraghi, interpret this verse as establishing the Prophet's universal mission extending beyond immediate community welfare to encompass comprehensive societal transformation grounded in justice and human flourishing (Massofia & Rahmawati, 2023). This expansive vision aligns fundamentally with transformational leadership's emphasis on articulating compelling organizational visions that inspire followers to pursue objectives transcending narrow self-interest. The concept of "rahmatan lil 'alamin" (mercy to all worlds) functions as what Burns (1978) originally conceptualized as "transforming leadership" - a paradigm wherein

leaders elevate both themselves and followers to higher levels of morality and motivation oriented toward collective welfare rather than individual gain.

The transformational dimension of "inspirational motivation" finds its Quranic foundation in this verse's articulation of a vision encompassing universal human dignity, social justice, and ethical conduct. Contemporary research on transformational leadership in entrepreneurial contexts emphasizes that effective leaders articulate visions capable of mobilizing stakeholder commitment toward organizational missions aligned with broader social welfare (Ravet-Brown et al., 2024). The prophetic mission described in QS. Al-Anbiya 21:107 embodies precisely this characteristic, establishing societal transformation as the overarching objective rather than mere political authority or economic advantage. Historical analysis of the Madinah Constitution and early Islamic community development demonstrates how this vision translated into practical institutional arrangements promoting interfaith cooperation, social safety nets, and participatory governance structures that anticipated modern conceptions of stakeholder-inclusive entrepreneurship (Thoyibah & Hajizah, 2025).

The transformational leadership dimension of "individualized consideration" - wherein leaders attend to followers' unique developmental needs and capabilities - manifests throughout prophetic practice as documented in hadith literature and biographical accounts. The hadith stating "Each of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock" establishes leadership as fundamentally oriented toward stakeholder welfare and development rather than hierarchical domination. This principle resonates with contemporary research demonstrating that transformational leaders who provide individualized attention and developmental support enhance follower self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, and performance outcomes (Hoch et al., 2018). School principals implementing transformational leadership principles demonstrate this capacity to convert institutional potential into organizational energy precisely through attending to individual stakeholder needs and capabilities (Khasanah, 2019), mirroring prophetic leadership practices documented throughout Islamic historiography.

Servant Leadership Principles in Quranic Leadership Ethics

The thematic analysis of Quranic verses articulating servant leadership principles reveals profound alignment with Greenleaf (1977) foundational conception of leadership oriented primarily toward serving others' needs rather than exercising positional authority. QS. Al-Furqan 25:63 provides scriptural foundation for servant leadership's characteristic humility: "And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say words of peace" (*وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا "خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا"*). Classical tafsir interpretations emphasize that this verse describes ideal believers who embody dignified modesty rather than arrogant self-

aggrandizement, responding to provocation with peaceful restraint rather than retaliatory hostility (Subagja & Khoiruddin, 2023).

This scriptural emphasis on humble conduct ("يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْناً" - yamshūna 'alā al-ardi hawnan, literally "walk upon the earth gently") directly parallels servant leadership's foundational principle that leaders perceive themselves as "servants first" rather than authority figures demanding deference (Greenleaf, 1977). Contemporary research on servant leadership confirms that humility represents a core behavioral dimension distinguishing this leadership approach from hierarchical models emphasizing leader charisma or positional power (Eva et al., 2019; Kalsoom & Smaliukienė, 2025). The Quranic articulation of humble conduct as characteristic of righteous servants establishes theological foundations for leadership approaches prioritizing stakeholder welfare and ethical conduct over personal aggrandizement. Recent empirical investigations demonstrate that servant leaders who embody humility foster psychological safety, reduce employee turnover intentions, and enhance organizational citizenship behaviors precisely because followers perceive genuine concern for their welfare rather than instrumental manipulation (Gandasacita et al., 2024; Kalsoom & Smaliukienė, 2025).

The verse's second component - responding to ignorance with peaceful greetings ("سَلَامًا" - salāman) - establishes emotional regulation and empathetic response patterns as essential leadership qualities. This principle resonates with contemporary servant leadership research emphasizing emotional healing, empathy, and supportive communication as mechanisms through which leaders create psychologically safe work environments conducive to employee well-being and engagement (Eva et al., 2019; Kyambade et al., 2024). Modern organizational research demonstrates that compassionate leaders who respond constructively to workplace conflicts and interpersonal tensions cultivate trust, collaborative relationships, and enhanced team performance (Ramachandran et al., 2024). The Quranic prescription for peaceful response to provocation provides scriptural validation for servant leadership practices that prioritize relational harmony and stakeholder dignity over ego defense or retaliatory assertion.

QS. Al-Ma'idah 5:8 establishes justice as a fundamental leadership responsibility transcending personal preferences or group loyalties: "O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah as witnesses in justice, and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what you do" ("يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ") ("يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُونُوا قَوَّامِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ"). This verse articulates what contemporary leadership scholarship identifies as procedural and distributive justice - ensuring fairness in both processes and outcomes regardless of stakeholder identity or relationship to the leader (Labiibah et al., 2024). The command to maintain justice even toward those one dislikes ("وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ ٓأَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا") establishes

impartiality as a non-negotiable leadership obligation, directly paralleling servant leadership's emphasis on ethical behavior and stakeholder equity (Wati et al., 2024).

Contemporary research on servant leadership confirms that leaders demonstrating fairness and justice create organizational climates characterized by trust, perceived organizational support, and employee commitment (Eva et al., 2019; Lemoine et al., 2019). The Quranic command to uphold justice despite personal animosity provides theological grounding for servant leadership practices that prioritize stakeholder welfare and organizational ethics over personal preference or convenience. This principle proves particularly relevant for entrepreneurial contexts where leaders face pressures to favor certain stakeholder groups or compromise ethical standards for short-term advantage. Recent research on Muslim entrepreneurs demonstrates that those consciously applying prophetic justice principles report enhanced business sustainability and stronger stakeholder relationships precisely because they maintain ethical consistency across diverse stakeholder interactions (Bidaula et al., 2024; Rahman et al., 2024).

The verse's final component - linking justice to God-consciousness ("اغْدِلُوا هُوَ" "أَقْرَبُ لِلنَّفْوَى") - establishes transcendent accountability as motivation for ethical leadership conduct. This theological dimension distinguishes Islamic servant leadership from purely secular approaches by grounding service orientation in divine mandate rather than instrumental calculations of organizational advantage. However, this theological foundation does not diminish practical relevance but rather provides enduring motivation for ethical conduct transcending situational pressures. Contemporary research demonstrates that faith-integrated leadership approaches provide resilience against ethical compromises because leaders perceive accountability extending beyond human stakeholders to include divine judgment (Rahman et al., 2024). This finding suggests that integrating spiritual foundations within servant leadership frameworks may enhance ethical consistency and long-term sustainability of service-oriented leadership practices.

Synthesis: Quranic Leadership as Integration of Transformational and Servant Paradigms

The systematic analysis of Quranic leadership principles reveals that these verses articulate an integrated leadership framework encompassing both transformational and servant dimensions within a unified ethical system. This finding addresses the theoretical gap identified in contemporary leadership literature, where transformational and servant leadership are typically treated as distinct paradigms with different emphases and outcomes (Hoch et al., 2018; Lemoine et al., 2019). The Quranic leadership model demonstrates that visionary inspiration (transformational) and humble service (servant) are not contradictory but rather complementary dimensions of ethical leadership grounded in transcendent values.

Prophet Muhammad's leadership exemplifies this integration through biographical evidence demonstrating simultaneous embodiment of transformational and servant characteristics. The historical record documents his visionary articulation of societal transformation goals, inspirational mobilization of follower commitment, and intellectual stimulation through encouraging questioning and deliberation (transformational dimensions), alongside his personal service to community members, consistent humility despite authority, and unwavering commitment to justice and stakeholder welfare (servant dimensions). This integration challenges Western leadership scholarship's tendency to categorize leadership approaches into discrete typologies and suggests that the most effective leadership may combine elements typically associated with distinct theoretical frameworks.

The integrated Quranic leadership model offers particular relevance for contemporary entrepreneurial contexts where leaders must balance competing imperatives: articulating compelling visions while remaining responsive to stakeholder needs, driving organizational change while maintaining ethical consistency, pursuing competitive advantage while honoring social responsibilities. Recent research on entrepreneurial leadership confirms that successful ventures require leaders capable of both transformational vision-setting and servant-oriented stakeholder engagement (Bidaula et al., 2024; Ravet-Brown et al., 2024). The prophetic leadership model provides historical precedent and theological validation for this integration, demonstrating through the Madinah community's development how transformational vision and servant humility operate synergistically to achieve sustainable organizational and societal outcomes.

The findings from this Quranic exegetical analysis substantially extend previous research on transformational and servant leadership while offering unique theoretical contributions to the entrepreneurship and management literature. First, these results strongly support and extend the work of Bashori (2019) who documented transformational leadership dimensions among kyai in Islamic educational institutions. Our analysis provides scriptural foundations explaining why Islamic religious leaders naturally embody transformational characteristics - these behaviors align with Quranic prescriptions for prophetic leadership that emphasize consultation, compassionate guidance, and vision articulation. Where Bashori identified four transformational dimensions empirically, our analysis reveals their theological origins in verses commanding gentle treatment, consultative decision-making, and mission-driven leadership, thereby deepening theoretical understanding of why transformational behaviors emerge within Islamic organizational contexts.

Second, our findings significantly extend Gandasacita et al. (2024) work on servant leadership implementation in contemporary organizations by demonstrating that servant leadership principles possess deep historical and theological roots in Islamic scripture predating Greenleaf's (1970) formulation by over thirteen

centuries. This historical precedence suggests that what Western management scholarship terms "servant leadership" represents rediscovery of universal ethical principles rather than novel innovation. More importantly, the Quranic articulation provides additional theoretical depth by explicitly linking service orientation to justice, humility, and transcendent accountability - dimensions sometimes implicit but underemphasized in secular servant leadership frameworks. This finding addresses Eva et al. (2019) call for greater theoretical specificity regarding servant leadership's distinctive moral foundations, demonstrating that consequentialist ethics (serving multiple stakeholders) gains enhanced motivational power when grounded in theological commitments transcending utilitarian calculations.

Third, the research substantially supports and extends Rahman et al. (2024) qualitative findings regarding prophetic leadership integration in Malaysian SME entrepreneurs. Where Abd Rahman documented that Muslim entrepreneurs actively apply prophetic principles (Shiddiq, Amanah, Tabligh, Fathanah) in strategic management, our analysis reveals the scriptural verses providing theological authorization and practical guidance for these applications. Specifically, QS. Al-Imran 3:159's emphasis on consultation validates participatory strategic planning processes, while QS. Al-Ma'idah 5:8's justice mandate supports equitable stakeholder treatment in operational decisions. This scriptural grounding provides Muslim entrepreneurs with religious legitimacy for adopting leadership practices that might otherwise appear to conflict with hierarchical cultural norms prevalent in some Muslim-majority contexts. Furthermore, our integration of transformational and servant paradigms within prophetic leadership addresses Bidaula et al. (2024) observation that Prophet Muhammad's entrepreneurship model encompasses multiple dimensions by demonstrating how these dimensions cohere within unified Quranic leadership ethics.

Fourth, the findings offer partial contradiction to research suggesting transformational and servant leadership represent fundamentally distinct paradigms with different theoretical foundations and practical applications (Hoch et al., 2018; Lemoine et al., 2019). While acknowledging these frameworks emphasize different aspects - transformational focusing on vision and change, servant prioritizing follower needs and ethics - our analysis demonstrates their essential complementarity within prophetic leadership. The Quranic verses analyzed simultaneously command visionary mission articulation (QS. Al-Anbiya 21:107) and humble stakeholder service (QS. Al-Furqan 25:63), suggesting these dimensions represent facets of integrated ethical leadership rather than competing alternatives. This finding supports emerging research suggesting that the most effective leadership combines transformational inspiration with servant humility (Kyambade et al., 2024; Ramachandran et al., 2024), offering entrepreneurs and organizational leaders permission to integrate seemingly disparate leadership approaches rather than choosing between them.

Finally, these results significantly extend Tyas (2019) assertion that contemporary leadership theories find historical precedents in prophetic practice by providing systematic Quranic exegetical analysis demonstrating specific textual foundations for transformational and servant leadership dimensions. Where previous research noted general alignment between Islamic values and modern leadership concepts, this study offers verse-by-verse analysis revealing precise scriptural bases for specific leadership behaviors, decision-making processes, and stakeholder orientations. This specificity enables Muslim entrepreneurs and business educators to ground leadership development programs in authentic Islamic sources rather than relying solely on Western management theories, potentially enhancing cultural relevance and religious legitimacy of leadership education in Muslim-majority contexts. Moreover, the integrated framework we term "Quranic Leadership" offers theoretical advancement beyond existing constructs by demonstrating how theological commitments can unify seemingly distinct leadership paradigms into coherent ethical systems capable of guiding contemporary entrepreneurial practice across diverse cultural and economic contexts.

CONCLUSION

This study systematically analyzed the integration of Prophet Muhammad's leadership values within transformational and servant leadership models through thematic Quranic exegesis, revealing substantial alignment between Islamic scriptural teachings and contemporary management theories. The analysis of key Quranic verses (Al-Imran 3:159, Al-Anbiya 21:107, Al-Furqan 25:63, and Al-Ma'idah 5:8) demonstrates that prophetic leadership encompasses both transformational dimensions (visionary inspiration, consultative engagement, and stakeholder mobilization) and servant leadership characteristics (humility, justice, empowerment, and ethical conduct) within a unified theological framework. These findings challenge the artificial dichotomy between transformational and servant paradigms prevalent in Western leadership scholarship, demonstrating instead that effective leadership synthesizes visionary change orientation with humble stakeholder service. The Quranic leadership model, grounded in divine revelation and exemplified through prophetic practice, provides Muslim entrepreneurs and business leaders with scripturally validated frameworks for ethical organizational management that transcend cultural boundaries while maintaining religious authenticity. This integrated approach, termed "Quranic Leadership," offers theoretical advancement by demonstrating how faith-based values can unify seemingly disparate leadership constructs into coherent ethical systems capable of addressing contemporary entrepreneurial challenges.

The practical implications of this research extend to multiple stakeholder groups within entrepreneurial and educational contexts. For Muslim entrepreneurs

and SME owners, the study provides scriptural validation for implementing transformational and servant leadership practices that might otherwise appear to conflict with traditional hierarchical norms in some cultural contexts, thereby facilitating adoption of evidence-based leadership approaches grounded in Islamic principles. Business educators and leadership development practitioners can utilize the integrated Quranic Leadership framework to design culturally relevant training programs that resonate with Muslim professionals while maintaining compatibility with global management standards. The research also offers insights for multinational corporations operating in Muslim-majority markets, suggesting that leadership approaches emphasizing consultative decision-making, stakeholder justice, and ethical transparency align with both Islamic values and effective management practices documented in contemporary organizational research. Furthermore, the study contributes to the growing discourse on faith-integrated entrepreneurship by demonstrating how religious principles can inform sustainable business models that balance economic objectives with social welfare imperatives, addressing stakeholder expectations for corporate social responsibility and ethical business conduct in increasingly values-conscious global markets.

Despite these contributions, this study acknowledges several limitations that suggest directions for future research. First, the research employed qualitative textual analysis focusing exclusively on Quranic verses and classical exegetical sources without empirical validation through primary data collection from practicing Muslim entrepreneurs. Future studies should employ mixed-methods approaches combining thematic scriptural analysis with surveys, interviews, or case studies examining how Muslim business leaders operationalize Quranic leadership principles in contemporary organizational contexts. Second, while the study integrated Islamic sources with Western leadership theories, it did not systematically compare Quranic leadership with other faith-based leadership frameworks such as Christian servant leadership or Buddhist mindful leadership, limiting understanding of universal versus culturally specific leadership principles. Comparative research across religious traditions could illuminate common ethical foundations while respecting theological distinctiveness. Third, the research focused primarily on leadership ethics and behaviors without addressing structural and contextual factors influencing leadership effectiveness, such as organizational culture, industry characteristics, economic conditions, or regulatory environments. Future investigations should examine boundary conditions determining when and how Quranic leadership principles translate into measurable organizational outcomes such as firm performance, innovation capacity, employee engagement, or stakeholder satisfaction. Finally, longitudinal studies tracking Muslim entrepreneurs over extended periods could reveal how faith-integrated leadership practices evolve as ventures mature and face changing competitive pressures, providing insights into the sustainability and adaptability of Quranic leadership principles across organizational life cycles and diverse entrepreneurial contexts.

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