






Transformational leadership: a qualitative study from *waqf* institutions in malaysia

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ABSTRACT

This study entails an exploratory investigation of transformative leadership in the context of *waqf* institutions. In analysing the transformational leadership style, the study interviewed the heads of the State Islamic Religious Councils in charge of *waqf* institutions in Malaysia. The best practices in the two *waqf* institutions were found to fall under four areas related to transformational leadership: idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration. The four categories were generated from three sub-categories, bringing the overall total to 12 sub-categories. The findings demonstrate the applicability of transformational leadership in *waqf* institutions, where it fosters employee inspiration, contentment, and creativity. In addition, this study adds to the body of knowledge as there are not many previous investigations on transformational leadership in the setting of *waqf* institutions. *Waqf* sector leaders can use this study's practical application to comprehend, apply, practice and evaluate transformational leadership in accomplishing the objectives of their respective *waqf* institutions.

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Introduction

As one Islamic-based institution in Malaysia, *waqf* institutions are governed by each state's State Islamic Religious Council (SIRC). This indicates that each SIRC has the authority to manage and oversee its *waqf* resources (*mutawalli*), which may include lands, buildings and financial donations made by the trustee (*wakif*) (Abu Talib et al., 2018). One of the critical responsibilities of Malaysia's *waqf* institution, per (Arshad & Mohd Zain, 2017), is to advise the SIRC on strategies, policies, and methods for developing *waqf* products and property. Numerous research studies

conducted on *waqf* institutions over the years have shown that they can enhance socio-economic equity and support the underprivileged. As a prime example, (C. Mahmood et al., 2017) state that *waqf* institutions in Malaysia play a significant role as a tool to address poverty through providing services like mosques, hospitals, and other necessities. Such situations indicate that *waqf* institutions have a noble objective (Aboramadan & Dahleez, 2020). This demonstrates how crucial it is for these institutions to continue functioning effectively and competently in order to meet those objectives. In achieving the objective of this institution, one who has the most significant influence is the leaders and their leadership style (Silva, 2016). A study conducted by Meraku demonstrates that a leader's role and leadership style significantly influence organisational effectiveness (Meraku, 2017). In the context of Islamic-based institutions, a survey by Jabran & Sharfizie that reviewed the implications of leadership towards Islamic-based institutions has demonstrated that leadership qualities play a crucial role in ensuring organisational effectiveness (Jasni & Sharip, 2022).

Transformational leadership's study and application has become a vital and continuous effort. In actuality, the vast majority of the currently available works of literature on transformational leadership are within the context of religiosity, such as Christianity (Scarborough, 2010), Hinduism (Varghese et al., 2017), Buddhism (Chancey et al., 2019), and Islam (Abbas & Tan, 2020). Studies on transformational leadership in Islamic-based institutions emerged due to the identified positive effects of transformational leadership on several aspects, including organisational citizenship behavior (Subandi, Thoyib, M., Fauzan, A., 2021), job satisfaction (Lubis, 2022), helping behaviour (Mukhlisin, A., Ghozali, I., & Djastuti, 2021), and employees' ethical behaviour (Hafidz et al., 2019). Numerous studies have demonstrated such positive impacts in the context of Islamic banks (Rianto et al., 2021; Sabran, Ekowati, V. M., & Supriyanto, 2022a), Islamic private firms (A. B. Ahmad & Cheng, 2018), Islamic telecommunications firms (Javed et al., 2020), and Islamic school (Mukhtar & Anwar, 2019). However, even with the rise in transformational leadership studies, there is still lacking studies had been carried out in the context of an Islamic non-profit organisation, specifically *waqf* institutions in Malaysia. Therefore, this study wants to examine transformational leadership in non-profit organisations with a religious basis, notably in the *waqf* setting, and more importantly, on how transformational leadership is applied. Based on the four transformational leadership elements introduced by (Epitropaki & Martin, 2004), namely individualised consideration, intellectual stimulation, idealised influence, and inspirational motivation, this study attempts to answer this research question: What are the roles of the four dimensions of transformational leadership in *waqf* institutions?

This qualitative study's primary goal is to understand transformative leaders' functions in *waqf* institutions. The secondary purpose of this study is to pinpoint the advantages of

transformational leadership for *waqf* institutions in addition to those mentioned above. These goals were developed to explain the necessity for transformational leadership in *waqf* institutions. This study focuses on leaders in *waqf* organisations in several states in peninsular Malaysia and investigates their attributes of transformational leadership and the subsequent implications. In order to accomplish the goals of this study, the researchers developed the following research questions; (a) What are the roles of the four transformational leadership dimensions in *waqf* institutions? (b) What are the positive implications of transformative leaders towards *waqf* institutions? (c) Why does transformational leadership need to be studied in the context of *waqf* institutions? Researchers must understand the role of a theoretical framework in their research in order to increase scientific understanding (Mendoza Diaz et al., 2019). A theory is a coherent set of concepts that describes a particular occurrence (Knowles et al., 2014), which in this instance, entails transformational leadership. This suggests that a theory must be thorough and effectively supported by a framework.

Numerous scholars have contributed various definitions of transformational leadership (Bass & Bass Bernard, 1985; Burns, 2012; Epitropaki & Martin, 2004). For this current study, the definitions of transformational leadership by (Burns, 2012), (Bass & Bass Bernard, 1985) and (Epitropaki & Martin, 2004) are used as the underlying basis for the study's theoretical framework. Burns initially described transformational leadership as a leadership style that can inspire followers to become better versions of themselves and bring forth their potential (Burns, 2012). Later, several researchers contributed to paint a more comprehensive picture of the term. For instance, Bass noted that a transformative leader is someone who, when working with subordinates, can bring constructive change to the organization (Bass & Bass Bernard, 1985). A transformative leader has the 4 "I"s idealised influence, individualised consideration, intellectual stimulation, and inspirational motivation described by (Epitropaki & Martin, 2004), which will be discussed in further detail in the following sub-section. Academic and industrial scholars and practitioners have broadly used these four dimensions of transformational leadership.

The researchers structured this article into three parts to ensure a pleasant reading experience. To shed light on what transformational leadership means in the context of Islamic-based institutions, specifically *waqf* institutions, the researchers began with an outline of transformational leadership. Many terms will be defined and justified in order to prevent misconceptions about the concept. In the next stage, the researchers disclose the sample size, the method used to find the informants, the participants' demographics, and other relevant information. Through such a procedure, readers will be better able to comprehend the methods utilised to gather, evaluate, and interpret the data in order to conclude. The final section of this article summarises all of the findings, identifies the study's limitations, and highlights

the general conclusion.

Waqf institutions are perceived as significantly influencing society (Noordin et al., 2017). Understanding *waqf* goals is necessary to comprehend why Islam supported *waqf* so ardently. Humans should always act righteously, according to Islamic teachings. One of the great practises of Islam in the context of *waqf* is being a *wakif* who provides charity to those in need. This is because *waqf* is a separation between the rights of a *wakif* and his assets to be legally used for the good, progress and welfare of all human beings (Iman & Mohammad, 2017). *Waqf* institutions govern their resources with creativity and innovation (Hati & Idris, 2019). Currently, *waqf* is being utilised by many countries to deal with a variety of issues related to poverty and to reduce the socio-economic gap (Zakariyah et al., 2021). However, several studies demonstrate that *waqf* institutions in Malaysia are not exempt from various challenges (Isamail et al., 2015; Mansor et al., 2017). Inconsistencies in law and administration (R. H. Mahmood et al., 2017), unused *waqf* land (Zaki, 2019), accountability and transparency (Daud, 2018; Kamaruddin et al., 2019), and illiteracy regarding the advancement and development of financial products (Abu Talib et al., 2018) are among some of the challenges. Such challenges might influence potential donors' (*wakif*) faith in *waqf* institutions and cast confidence in *waqf* institutions' ability to function effectively (Hasan & Siraj, 2017).

The reputation of *waqf* institutions should be maintained, which becomes increasingly challenging in regaining the public's trust. This study wants to explore the roles of transformational leadership in the context of *waqf* institutions in Malaysia. Transformational leadership can be defined as a process whereby leaders and followers collaborate to develop or elevate spirit and motivation levels. Eventually, cooperatively together in achieving institutional goals. According to Epitropaki and Martin (Epitropaki & Martin, 2004), the four fundamental elements of transformational leadership are idealised influence, inspirational motivation, individualised consideration, and intellectual stimulation. The characteristics of transformational leadership are seen to be very effective in changing perspectives and increasing followers' drive to cooperate in order to accomplish organisational goals.

The dimension of Idealised Influence depicts a leader admired and looked up to by his followers. A charismatic leader is able to confidently and devotedly steer the institution's aim and vision. According to (Burns, 2012), a leader's charismatic personality results from their exemplary behaviour. A leader's charisma is a function of their self-assurance, ideologies, and emotions. This charismatic trait can also be determined by the leader's willingness to devote himself to the institutional mission and vision. Every follower looks to leaders as their main role models. Hence, a leader needs to have a forceful, specific, and powerful demeanour (Abdullah et al., 2018). The charismatic leader will offer remedies if followers face difficulties such as stress,

disagreements, or conflicts while working (Yunus et al., 2019). The next transformative leadership dimension is Inspirational Motivation. This is a trait of leaders who can inspire people to overcome challenges (Dunn, 2014). One straightforward example of inspiration is a CEO who motivates followers to give their all to accomplish the company's goals. A motivational leader would also continuously express enthusiasm and encouragement to motivate his team to achieve the organisation's goals.

The third dimension is Individualised consideration. (Bass & Bass Bernard, 1985) asserted that a leader who exhibits the characteristics of individualised consideration could be identified by their ability to show compassion, be receptive to other people's perspectives, and be willing to look into those of their followers. Regarding the team's thoughts or concerns, the leader will demonstrate the characteristics of a transformative leader, including sensitivity to each employee's needs and his desire to address those needs (Pounder, 2003). (Boerner et al., 2007) stated that these leaders would not treat their workers as ordinary underlings. This would lead to an increase in the employees' confidence (Kellerman & Rhode, 2007). The office will be cheerful and welcoming, and the personnel will support and encourage each other. The final transformational leadership dimension is Intellectual Stimulation. According to (Burns, 2012), transformational leaders must be able to inspire their followers' intelligence by giving them the freedom to come up with ideas on their own. This claim is also supported by (Mohammad Al-Khalidi et al., 2020), who conducted research in the context of Islamic-based institutions. They contend that by encouraging followers to use their approaches to solve problems, leaders can stimulate their followers' intellect, generate innovation, and increase their creativity. This will inspire followers to use creativity and ingenuity to find novel solutions to challenges.

The four elements of transformational leadership are effective, as numerous earlier research shows. Studies that apply transformational leadership in Islamic-based institutions will be discussed in more detail in the subsequent section. Whereby each dimensional characteristic has unique applications and benefits. Prior research demonstrated that transformative leadership can have various effects on various institutions, businesses, and organisations. There has not been any research on transformational leadership in *waqf* institutions which is relevant to our study. This suggests that this research can add to the body of knowledge currently available from the perspective of *waqf* institutions, particularly those in Malaysia. Therefore, existing researches in Islamic-based institutions are studied in order to understand transformational leadership from the standpoint of *waqf* institutions.

Transformational Leadership in The Context of Islam

The beliefs, fundamental ideas, and behaviours exhibited by an Islamic leader are connected to transformative leadership traits, namely individual consideration, intellectual stimulation,

inspirational motivation, and idealised influence (Abbas & Tan, 2020). Moreover, exemplary Islamic leaders promote Islamic values and lead their followers in accordance with the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (Trmal et al., 2015). Several favourable consequences from transformative leadership among Islamic leaders towards their Islamic organisations may be noticed after analysing several publications to understand the Islamic perspective on the practice properly.

Firstly, Islamic transformational leaders are effective in raising job satisfaction (Adriansyah & Wiranto, 2018; Azizaha et al., 2020; Kolomboy et al., 2021; Lubis, 2022; Moey & Hashi, 2018; Mukhtar & Anwar, 2019; Nurjanah et al., 2020; Selamat et al., 2013; Tantowi et al., 2022). This is because Islamic transformational leaders in Islamic organisations have the three essential emotional, spiritual, and social attributes (Kolomboy et al., 2021). For example, in the context of Indonesian Islamic banking, transformational Islamic managers are constantly accessible to listen, support, and advise staff members while also paying attention to their needs and accomplishments (Hanafi et al., 2020). This is because such treatments would render the employees feel valued and appreciated, thus raising their level of job satisfaction.

Secondly, many studies have demonstrated the ability of Islamic leaders with transformative qualities to improve organisational citizenship behaviour among their subordinates in an Islamic institution (A. B. Ahmad & Cheng, 2018; Din et al., 2019; Harmen et al., 2018; Hendijani Fard et al., 2021; Masrohatin & Tobing, 2019; Mohammad Al-Khaldi et al., 2020; Pratama et al., 2020; Rianto et al., 2021; Risqina et al., 2020; Subandi, Thoyib, M., Fauzan, A., 2021; Tanjung et al., 2020; Tantowi et al., 2022). According to (Masrohatin & Tobing, 2019), organisational citizenship behaviour can be enhanced when a transformative Islamic leader executes his authority in a just and transparent manner consistent with Islamic doctrine. This is because transformational leaders create emotional connections with their team members as they realise their objectives and vision, providing them with elevated comfort, trust, motivation, and organisational citizenship behaviour (Tantowi et al., 2022). For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, influential Islamic leaders in the Institute for Islamic Studies Jember had properly understood their subordinates' challenges. (Risqina et al., 2020).

In addition, Islamic transformational leaders can drive a collaborative culture among their subordinates within the organization (Aini et al., 2021; Masrohatin & Tobing, 2019; Mukhlisin, A., Ghozali, I., & Djastuti, 2021). (Masrohatin & Tobing, 2019) explained this as the effect of the existing culture in the organisation. Leaders and followers who are united tend to have shared goals, are supportive of one another, and are attentive to each other's needs. Idealised influence is one of the dimensions of transformational leadership, serving as an example for the subordinates to boost their teamwork (Aini et al., 2021). As an example, (Mukhlisin, A., Ghozali, I., & Djastuti,

2021) found that the transformative leader in an Indonesian Islamic educational institution who showed high levels of collaborative spirit brought positive effects to the teamwork culture of the school community.

It is fascinating to observe that amid challenging circumstances, transformative Islamic leaders can encourage creativity among their workforce and organisation, enhancing their capacity to compete in the current and fiercely competitive economic market (A. B. Ahmad & Cheng, 2018; Hambali & Idris, 2020; Mukhtar & Anwar, 2019; Purwanto, 2020, 2021; Rulitawati et al., 2021; Suryadi et al., 2022). According to (Mukhtar & Anwar, 2019) and (Purwanto, 2020), transformative Islamic leaders will ensure their followers have the capacity, opportunity, and flexibility to fulfil their obligations and responsibilities, ultimately polishing their creative abilities. In the context of Indonesian Islamic schools, they provided evidence to support this claim, showing that transformational leadership significantly boosts teachers' creative capacity during the COVID-19 pandemic (Purwanto, 2021). For instance, to guarantee that students are paying attention in class during the pandemic, the principal will give them the ability to teach their lectures online. It has also been shown that transformational Islamic leaders who are deeply rooted in Islamic culture and ideas foster employees' ethical behaviour in Islamic institutions.

This in turn encourages the development of self-integrity among the employees (M. Ahmad & Rochimah, 2021; Aini et al., 2021; Sabran, Ekowati, V. M., & Supriyanto, 2022b). Leaders are also accountable for reporting. The Islamic councils' reports are crucial and significant. The public will be better informed about the *waqf* trustees' goals and how they carry them out through *waqf* reporting. A lack of openness indicates a failure to meet the needs of the stakeholders, which breeds mistrust and eventually hinders success (Daud, 2018). For example, a leader with a high level of self-integrity will psychologically inspire staff members to achieve their goals. In Indonesian Islamic banks, a manager's transformational leadership can successfully reduce employees' inefficient work behaviour towards achieving organisational goals (Sabran, Ekowati, V. M., & Supriyanto, 2022b). Inspirational Islamic figures have also been shown to inspire their followers to adhere to Islam more strictly (Falah, 2021; Fitriyah et al., 2019; Hafidz et al., 2019; Hanafi et al., 2020; Ibrahim et al., 2020; Javed et al., 2020; Khoiri et al., 2022; Kolomboy et al., 2021; Risqina et al., 2020; Suryadi et al., 2022). This is because, as an Islamic organisation with a strong Islamic culture, transformational leadership significantly impacts the employees' Islamic work ethic (Javed et al., 2020). An employee who embraces an Islamic work ethic will be much more loyal to the organisation he belongs to and perform better (Falah, 2021).

Discussion

Using a qualitative case study technique is appropriate to thoroughly comprehend a particular phenomenon, in this case, the responsibilities of transformational leaders in *waqf* institutions. This is so that researchers can address their research objective by employing case studies to help them recognise and evaluate case study themes. (Yin, 2009) described a case study as academic research of a phenomenon in real-life settings using various sources of evidence. The gap that shows an uncertain correlation between the phenomenon and the environment is the reason for pursuing the phenomenon. Applying case studies, according to (Dooley, 2002), will enable researchers to investigate any desired study objective or phenomenon thoroughly. This indicates that a case study can aid researchers in understanding complicated patterns of issues. This study is the first to provide a thorough and unbiased analysis of the transformational leader's responsibilities within the framework of Malaysia's *waqf* institutions. In order to accomplish these goals, (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) conducted a thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews with two leaders from certain *waqf* institutions in Malaysia. This is because, (Galletta, 2020), the semi-structured interview method can guarantee a favourable environment and atmosphere for both the interviewees and the researcher.

There is no set guidelines for selecting the number of informants (Moustakas, 1994). (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000) stated that two lengthy interviews are still sufficient for qualitative research as long as data saturation is reached. (Moustakas, 1994) asserted that there are no explicit requirements for how many informants should be chosen. This is true even for small sample sizes as long as they are diverse because the foundation of the qualitative approach lies in its elaborative exploration. Since the critical topic of this study is transformational leadership, the primary informants are leaders in reputable *waqf* institutions in Malaysia who can provide details regarding the phenomenon. By applying criteria-based selection, the researchers will be able to choose more precise informants who can provide in-depth knowledge on the phenomenon depending on the research purpose. As a result, a list of inclusion criteria (Table 1) was developed to guarantee that the participants chosen are ideal informants for this study.

Table 1. Inclusion criteria for the informants

No.	Characteristics of the Inclusion Criteria
1	<i>Waqf</i> institution leader in Islamic Religious Councils in Peninsular Malaysia
2	Overseeing, managing, or governing a <i>waqf</i> endowment
3	Across Peninsular Malaysia
4	Regardless of gender
5	Regardless of socio-economic status
6	Regardless of multi-cultural diversity
7	Willing to share the experience as a leader

Interview sessions were conducted at two selected branches of the SIRC in Peninsular

Malaysia. *The SIRC governs waqf institutions in Malaysia*. Hence, the interview should involve the leader responsible for the governance of the respective *waqf* institution. For personal purposes, the participants and the institutions they represent will be given code names (Table 2). By respecting the confidentiality of the participants' identities, the researcher can gain trust and provide comfort to the participants in providing their views and experiences on the studied phenomenon. Therefore, the participants' confidence towards the researcher is essential to ensure that the details can be obtained accurately. The researchers had obtained permission from each religious council and made appointments beforehand. The interviews were conducted individually with each participant.

Table 2. Selected branches of the State Islamic Religious Council

No.	State Islamic Religious Councils	Leader Name
1	State Islamic Religious Council A	Leader A
2	State Islamic Religious Council B	Leader B

Expertise in leadership and *waqf* institutions was supplied with interview rules developed following a prior interview session with selected informants. After examining the interview protocol, the experts were asked to make suggestions and provide guidance for creating more appropriate interview rules (McCracken, 1988). According to (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), the interview methodology may change as new themes and patterns emerge during the data collection process. Interviews were conducted one-on-one with informants who hold positions within the relevant institutions. Discussing a leader's real-life experiences during their tenure in *waqf* organisations is a delicate subject. As theorised by (Lu & Gilmour, 2006), personal and sensitive topics fall under social desirability symptoms. In order to avoid or at least reduce social desirability bias due to an issue that is deemed sensitive, the researchers must prioritise the informants' comfort and involvement. As mentioned in the preceding article, the interview format is semi-structured, which can result in a favourable interview session atmosphere and direct but wide-ranging discussion topics. Interviews were successfully performed, and the informants enthusiastically participated in the discussion and effectively communicated their message.

Open-ended questions were used in the interview protocols, which also included sections for each study objective and research topic. Firstly, a general topic, debate, and question on leadership and the nature of transformative leadership were put forth. The interview eventually delved deeper into particular issues, including the application, consequences, and transformational leadership experience in *waqf* institutions. The interview went on for 40 to 60 minutes. (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) asserted that data analysis might begin even before the data were collected. During the data-gathering phase of exploratory research, it is possible to make changes and improve the data analysis as a strategy (McCracken, 1988). In order to examine the

data, researchers must obtain prior permission from each informant to record the interview session. Transcribing the recorded interviews would render the data analysis process more straightforward. Subsequently, the themes, patterns, parallels, and linkages were discovered by critically analysing the interview transcripts and notes that had been taken throughout the interview session. (Spiggle, 1994) explained that specific techniques, such as categorisation, dimensionalisation, abstraction, and comparison are crucial to the analysis process. As a result, the researchers first used inductive coding to categorise the data. The code was then inserted into the text transcription and filed under the study's description and theme. The analysis of the data results is the last step. The researchers then examined the data, of which results were subsequently interpreted. The outcomes of the interpretation were then disclosed.

There are no notable differences in the categories or themes between the informants when comparing the analysed data from various sources. Even though they are from different states and workplaces, the informants' perspectives on the roles of transformational leadership in the context of *waqf* institutions are pretty similar. This indicates that the sample population has a consensus on the study's goals. Researchers must assess their findings once they have finished evaluating their data (Kvale, 1996; Spiggle, 1994). In order to guarantee the validity of the results, the informants must validate the review procedure. To gain feedback on how the data should be interpreted and confirmation from the informants, the researchers also need to validate the qualitative research findings with academic experts. This will prevent the incorrect reading of the analysis data and guarantee the conclusions' accuracy.

The majority of the interviewee's explanations on how they manage their organisations in *waqf* institutions were highlighted in their responses. This is because the interview protocol created by the researchers focuses on identifying and conceptualising the transformational leadership characteristics present in each *waqf* institution, such as how such institutions manage, administer, and run their organisations. This means that the information gathered through interviews is consistent with the research of transformational leadership scholars and the 4 "I"s of transformational leadership. The interviews revealed that there are four categories of transformational leadership: intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, individualised consideration, and idealised influence. Each domain has three sub-themes, which are represented in Table 3. In the context of *waqf* institutions, the consideration of the domains and sub-themes supports the claims of the functions of transformational leadership.

The four transformational leadership components share some similarities with the theoretical framework and literature presented in the previous section. Notably, the roles of transformational leadership, as revealed by the informants, are strongly influenced by Islamic teaching and culture. In terms of the dimension of Idealised Influence, the informants revealed that leaders should

acquire a clear understanding of their responsibility, subsequently revealing their charisma as competent leaders. This is pertinent as *waqf* institutions under the SIRC are the official organisations for managing *waqf* endowments that are aimed at bringing goodness and prosperity to the community. One of the informants said: “As a leader, the overview has to be clear. We, as trustees, must be responsible for all trusts given to us. I am afraid that the trust given will still not be fulfilled when I die.” Another informant claimed: “Without us (SIRC), people can do charity with *waqf* on their own. But it is proven that if an individual manages the *waqf*, many conflicts and problems will be faced. Many examples can be given in this state. Therefore, our purpose (SIRC) is as *ulul amri* (the one who holds the trust).”

Table 3. Theme and Sub-Themes

Themes	Idealised Influence	Inspirational Motivation	Intellectual Stimulation	Individualised Consideration
Sub-themes 1	Clear with leaders' responsibility	Appreciate every employee's effort	Trust potential and skills	Approachable and genial
Sub-themes 2	Information, Knowledge and Wisdom	Listen and understand every employee's opinion	Helping and guiding each other	Understanding every employee's characteristic
Sub-themes 3	A lead organisation with rational	Walk the talk	Giving credit to employees for their achievements	Ensure the confidence of employees

Apart from clearly understanding their responsibility, a leader with idealised influence must have the necessary information, knowledge, and wisdom. An informant said: “Followers need leaders who have enough knowledge related to the nature of their institution and also related knowledge. For example, I am a graduate of *Sharia* law, but when I was given ‘*amanah*’ I became a leader. I have to master various other knowledge such as land administration, *waqf* and others. So, if anything happens, I can help my subordinates.” Having information, knowledge, and wisdom can benefit employees and the organisation as a whole. Subordinates would also respect leaders with this attribute as mentioned by one of the informants: “Leaders should know more about the ins and outs of knowledge in *waqf* institutions. This is because the leader can give thoughtful advice in order to prevent followers from making mistakes in managing governance.” This shows that a charismatic leader should also have information, knowledge and wisdom to run a *waqf* institution successfully.

On top of having a clear understanding of their responsibility and well-versed knowledge, a leader should also be highly rational. A charismatic leader typically makes rational decisions for the institution's best interest. An informant revealed: “Leaders must make wise decisions. They should also ensure that followers understand every decision that has been made. Working for the organisation will make it satisfying, and their tiredness will be worth it.” Hence, leaders with idealised influence can boost employees’ job satisfaction levels. One of the informants supported

this by stating: "Sufficient for the leader to understand, listen and make correct and wise decisions. We will feel safe when we know our leaders will make wise decisions." This means that the decisions made by leaders are extremely crucial, which therefore require wisdom.

Inspirational Motivation

Prior studies have highlighted that the inspirational motivation component plays a crucial role for leaders in inspiring their subordinates to complete their tasks at the workplace. According to the informants, various acts of inspirational motivation can be shown by the leader, such as appreciating employee efforts. One informant mentioned: "I will not be stingy with employees (generous towards employees). For example, I will always thank them. I will really appreciate every effort they make then I will thank them. I believe this act is really meaningful for them. As I felt when my boss thanked me." Hence, a simple act of gratitude can drive employee motivation. Apart from that, listening to and understanding the perspectives of employees can also inspire and motivate them. One informant said: "I will be very satisfied and more enthusiastic at work if my boss at least listens to my opinion." Despite being a leader, the informant still needs to answer to the top management. Hence, listening to employee opinion has its value, such as in the decision-making process. Another informant added: "I don't expect the opinion I give to be implemented, I just want my opinion to be heard and considered. Not just listening to one side's point of view. This is because the boss can make the right choice." This means that each employee's opinion can give the leader options in making decisions. Employees hence need to understand the decision of their leader, which will then motivate them to act accordingly to achieve the set objectives.

Humble acts by the leader such as being appreciative, listening, and understanding the employees' perspective, and walking the talk, can inspire and motivate them to do better. Walking the talk means performing consistently with what has been planned. In achieving organisational objectives, every component in the organisation plays an important role, especially the leader. Leaders can ignite and drive the achievement of organisational objectives and vision. One informant said: "*Waqf* endowment is not something that is merely said. Like sitting for lectures in the mosque. *Waqf* is an important thing for us to implement in our lives." Leaders must hence execute plans and decisions accordingly to achieve institutional objectives. In turn, the subordinates can be influenced to execute their roles within the organisation. In such a situation, the leader acts as the role model for the organisation.

Intellectual Stimulation

The two elements from the previous sub-section, *i.e.*, idealised influence and inspirational motivation, indicate how important it is for transformative leaders to inspire and motivate their team members at work. It can put the entire organisation on the right track and help them accomplish their goals. It is crucial to remember that transformative leaders also have an element

known as intellectual stimulation that could ensure employees utilise their abilities and skills to the fullest at the workplace. A leader should first assign a task to one of their staff members and trust them to complete it. An informant mentioned: "One of our efforts is to make each vision a success. Try to list what problems you face and discuss solutions. Even the Messenger of God is not good at doing everything, right? God helped Muhammad by giving his friends. For example, a friend who is an expert in the field of agriculture could help in that area. So, in building that expertise, we can build ourselves among existing employees." Hence, in order to solve a task, trust is very crucial. Employees appreciate the trust given to them by their superiors and, in turn, will do their best to accomplish their tasks.

Apart from giving trust, leaders should also provide guidance and help in accomplishing tasks. An informant said: "Every time there is a problem, we must find a solution together. Help them to achieve a collective vision." A leader must possess the necessary information, knowledge, wisdom, experience, and capability. With their position, leaders are obligated to guide their subordinates in completing their designated work. An informant claimed: "In solving problems related to an issue, we need strategic partners such as banks, developers or collaborating with parties related to the issue at hand." This will indirectly expose the subordinates to other perspectives and drive their skills and knowledge. From the above, trust and guidance are shown to stimulate intellect among subordinates. This process occurs before and during the completion of a task. Following the completion of the task, the leader can still stimulate the subordinates' potential by giving them credit for their achievement. One informant said: "When he can innovate, I will praise him. I will say thank you. I will tell the top management. Credit does not go to me. Credit does not necessarily go to me." Such an act can truly motivate employees to work harder and become more innovative. The informant added: "Previously, there was an issue of rent arrears of up to five years. When given trust and credit to resolve this issue, the tenant paid the five-year arrears inclusive of an advance payment of rent for the next year." This indicates that trust, guidance and credit are very important in the practice of transformative leadership to stimulate the potential of subordinates.

Individualised Consideration

Finally, transformative leaders should empathise with their subordinates' situation at the workplace and outside. Individualised consideration means that the leader will try his very best to understand his subordinate's situation and provide guidance in solving any problem. A transformative leader in the context of *waqf* institutions should be approachable and genial. As such, subordinates will be more open in sharing problems with their leader. One informant said: "When it's five o'clock in the evening, I'll leave my room. I will chat with them (subordinates) because they will not enter my room unless it is related to work." a transformative leaders will find a way to ensure that they are approachable and have a positive relationship with their

subordinates. The informant added: "If a big problem or a big fight is going on, and me being approachable by employees, we can prevent small problems from becoming big ones. We can tackle the problem early." The leader must ensure the employees trust him and know they can depend on him for anything.

As described previously, being a strong leader means more than being approachable and kind. A leader that practices individualised consideration is knowledgeable about the personalities of their team members, which entails knowing each person's strengths, weaknesses, abilities, and behaviours. The same is true when referring to a leader in a *waqf* institution. A leader should choose a qualified applicant who can carry out the work when delegating it. One of the informants said: "You, as the leader, must know your subordinates. What advantages does he have? As the leader, I had to change the task list two or three times to ensure that the given tasks were suitable for my employees. I see if he lacks motivation around here. I adjusted his task list." This would lead to the creation of a positive work atmosphere and ensures work efficiency. One informant described his understanding of his employees: "He (one of the subordinates) can handle tense situations. Even when people are fighting, he can handle it. I can't handle it. So, he has the expertise for that situation. But don't ask him to do office work. Another example is there are people (other employees) who can't communicate well. They panic."

With employees who don't feel confident about specific tasks and their skills, a leader with "individualised consideration" will ensure to hone the needed confidence. One informant said: "We assign tasks that are appropriate to the selected individual. For example, putting people who know about law, finance, and engineering on assignments related to their field. But in terms of task execution, if the person is facing any difficulties, guidance is still provided to ensure that they can complete the task. As an example of the approach that needs to be implemented." This means that if the designated employee is still facing difficulties in executing his tasks, the transformative leader will provide coaching and guidance. The three sub-themes show the valid values of individualised consideration which entail understanding the situation of employees and helping them solve problems.

Conclusion

The literature review section revealed the contribution of researchers in the area of transformational leadership in Islamic-based institutions, with their own perspective of Islamic transformational leadership. However, none of the past studies had focused on transformational leadership in the context of *waqf* institutions. This paper contributes to the current body of knowledge by expanding the perspective of transformational leadership in the context of *waqf* institutions by conceptualising the dimensions of transformational leadership. Four categories

and 12 sub-categories of transformational leadership were identified via the interviews conducted with the leaders in selected *waqf* institutions in Malaysia. The four categories are aligned to the current dimensions of transformational leadership, namely: (1) Idealised Influence, (2) Inspirational Consideration, (3) Intellectual Stimulation, and (4) Individualised Consideration. Each dimension has three sub-categories that elucidate the roles of transformative leaders in *waqf* institutions. This research demonstrated the importance of transformational leadership in *waqf* institutions towards ensuring the achievement of their goals.

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