

Moral, Instructional, and Transformational Leadership in High-Performing Schools: Organizational Support for Strengthening School and Student Achievement

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ABSTRACT

Leadership plays a crucial role in improving educational quality, particularly in high-performing schools that are expected to strengthen both school and student achievement. Previous studies have mainly examined moral, instructional, and transformational leadership separately, resulting in a limited understanding of their collective contribution to school effectiveness. Additionally, the role of perceived organizational support (POS) in enhancing leadership effectiveness remains underexplored. This study examines the influence of moral, instructional, and transformational leadership on school and student achievement, as well as the moderating role of POS. The research was conducted in high-performing private Islamic senior high schools in East Java, Indonesia, as part of the educational transformation toward Indonesia 2045. Using a quantitative explanatory design, data were collected from 250 teachers across 15 schools through structured questionnaires and analyzed using SEM-PLS. The findings reveal that all three leadership dimensions significantly contribute to strengthening school achievement and fostering a positive school climate that supports student achievement. Transformational leadership emerged as the strongest predictor, while moral leadership showed a substantial contribution to school excellence. Furthermore, POS selectively strengthened the influence of moral and transformational leadership on educational outcomes. This study highlights the importance of collective leadership capacity and organizational support in sustaining educational quality and school excellence.

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INTRODUCTION

Educational leadership has increasingly become a crucial concern for improving school quality and enhancing student achievement, particularly in high-performing schools expected to respond effectively to rapid social, technological, and educational transformation. Numerous studies have emphasized the significant roles of moral, instructional, and transformational leadership in shaping productive learning environments, strengthening teacher professionalism, and improving institutional performance (Baso & Alwy, 2023; Imran et al., 2020; Saragih & Suhendro, 2020; Zahara & Aslamawati, 2024). Moral leadership focuses on ethical values, integrity, and fairness in organizational decision-making, while instructional leadership emphasizes improving curriculum implementation, supervision, and teaching effectiveness. In contrast, transformational leadership encourages innovation, shared vision, collaboration, and adaptability among school members. Despite extensive discussions of these leadership dimensions, prior studies generally examine them independently, resulting in a limited understanding of how these approaches interact in foster positive school climates and develop high-performing schools (Azzukhrufi et al., 2026).

In addition to leadership capacity, the effectiveness of school leadership is strongly influenced by organizational conditions that either facilitate or constrain leadership practices. One important contextual factor is Perceived Organizational Support (POS), which reflects teachers' perceptions regarding the extent to which the organization appreciates their contributions and supports their professional welfare (Lubis, 2024; Natalia & Hidayat, 2021). Based on social exchange theory, teachers who perceive strong organizational support are more likely to develop trust, commitment, and willingness to contribute toward collaborative school improvement initiatives. Supportive organizational environments may therefore strengthen the influence of leadership practices on educational outcomes. However, empirical evidence regarding the moderating role of POS in the relationship between leadership dimensions and school effectiveness remains relatively limited, particularly within private Islamic school contexts (Christiani & Sudibjo, 2025; Eacott, 2018; Sholikhah, 2025). This limitation demonstrates the need for a more integrated framework that positions organizational support as a reinforcing mechanism in educational leadership effectiveness.

The urgency of strengthening educational leadership is further reinforced by Indonesia's educational transformation agenda toward Indonesia 2045, which places education as a strategic foundation for developing globally competitive and morally grounded human resources. The Indonesia 2045 vision highlights the importance of preparing future generations who are capable of responding to global challenges while maintaining strong ethical and cultural values (Khunaifi, 2024; Mantri & Caniago, 2025; Wisnu et al., 2025). In this context, private Islamic schools play a strategic role by integrating academic achievement with moral and character education (Abdullah & Burhanuddin, 2023; Attruk et al., 2024; Farwati, 2024). Islamic educational principles also emphasize knowledge development, ethical conduct, and collaborative learning practices, as reflected in Surah Al-Mujadila, verse 11, and the Prophet Muhammad's teachings on noble character (Hamengkubuwono & Pratama, 2022; Zakariyah, 2024). These values support the development of achievement-oriented and collaborative school environments without positioning religion as the primary theoretical basis of this study.

Despite their strategic contribution to national educational development, many private Islamic schools still face challenges in sustaining strong school performance and positive organizational climates. These challenges include unequal educational quality, limited instructional innovation, weak collaboration among teachers, and inadequate appreciation for teacher performance (Anisa, 2022; Nugroho & Fahmi, 2022; Sismawati et al., 2024). In several cases, ineffective communication and insufficient organizational recognition may reduce teachers' motivation and weaken the effectiveness of leadership implementation, ultimately hindering school improvement processes (Ainiyah & Mulyani, 2026; Sismawati et al., 2024). Consequently, schools require leadership approaches that strengthen collaboration, increase teacher engagement, and create supportive organizational

environments that foster continuous improvement and institutional excellence. Effective leadership is therefore expected not only to improve academic outcomes but also to foster organizational resilience and sustainable educational development (Glickman et al., 2001).

Based on these considerations, this study aims to examine the roles of moral, instructional, and transformational leadership in strengthening school climate and promoting student achievement within high-performing private Islamic schools. Furthermore, this study investigates the moderating role of Perceived Organizational Support (POS) in strengthening the relationship between leadership dimensions and educational outcomes. By integrating multiple leadership dimensions into a single conceptual framework, this study contributes to the broader literature on educational leadership and organizational effectiveness. The findings are also expected to provide empirical insights regarding the importance of organizational support in reinforcing leadership practices and promoting sustainable school improvement within the broader context of Indonesia's educational transformation toward Indonesia 2045.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design to examine the causal relationships among moral leadership, instructional leadership, transformational leadership, school climate, and school achievement, with Perceived Organizational Support (POS) acting as a moderating variable (Rothgangel & Riegel, 2022). The research focused on high-performing private Islamic senior high schools (SMA/MA) in East Java Province, Indonesia, serving as a context for educational transformation toward Indonesia 2045. From a total population of 658 teachers across 15 schools, a sample of 250 respondents was selected using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error and stratified random sampling to ensure proportional representation across the institutions.

Primary data were collected via an online structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale, distributed through professional teacher networks on social media platforms. The questionnaire adapted established measurement instruments to guarantee content validity across all variables. Meanwhile, secondary data were gathered from books and peer-reviewed journals to support theoretical development and the interpretation of findings (Voukelatou et al., 2021). The entire data collection process adhered to strict ethical considerations, ensuring voluntary participation, informed consent, and the complete anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents' data.

Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) via SmartPLS software, which is well-suited for prediction-oriented analyses, moderation testing, and handling complex models with relatively small sample sizes. The evaluation process involved two main stages: the assessment of the measurement model to verify construct reliability (Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability > 0.70) and validity (convergent validity via outer loadings > 0.70 and AVE > 0.50, and discriminant validity via the Fornell–Larcker criterion), followed by the evaluation of the structural model. This structural assessment tested path coefficients, the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and the significance of both direct and moderating effects using bootstrapping procedures (Ghozali, 2013).

Table 1. Variables, Instruments, and Indicators Table

Research Variable	Instrument / Reference	Dimensions / Indicators
Moral Leadership	Bafadal's Leadership Morality Questionnaire (Bafadal et al., 2024)	Spiritual, moral, national moral, and humanitarian moral.
Instructional Leadership	Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale / PIMRS (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Shatzer et al., 2014)	Goal setting, instructional supervision, curriculum coordination, and professional development.

Transformational Leadership	Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire / MLQ-6S (Bass & Avolio, 1990; C.-J. Wang, 2022; S. Wang, 2019)	Idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.
School Achievement	Index of Perceived Organizational Effectiveness (Hoy & Ferguson, 1985; Işık, 2020)	Effectiveness, efficiency, adaptability, and flexibility.
School Climate	Comprehensive School Climate Inventory / CSCI (Belay et al., 2021; Raman et al., 2022)	Institutional safety, leadership, teaching and learning, interpersonal relationships, and institutional environment.
Perceived Organizational Support (POS)	Perceived Organizational Support Scale / POSS (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Gündüz, 2014)	Personal development and work structure.

Source: Developed by the researcher based on previous studies, 2025

Conceptual Framework

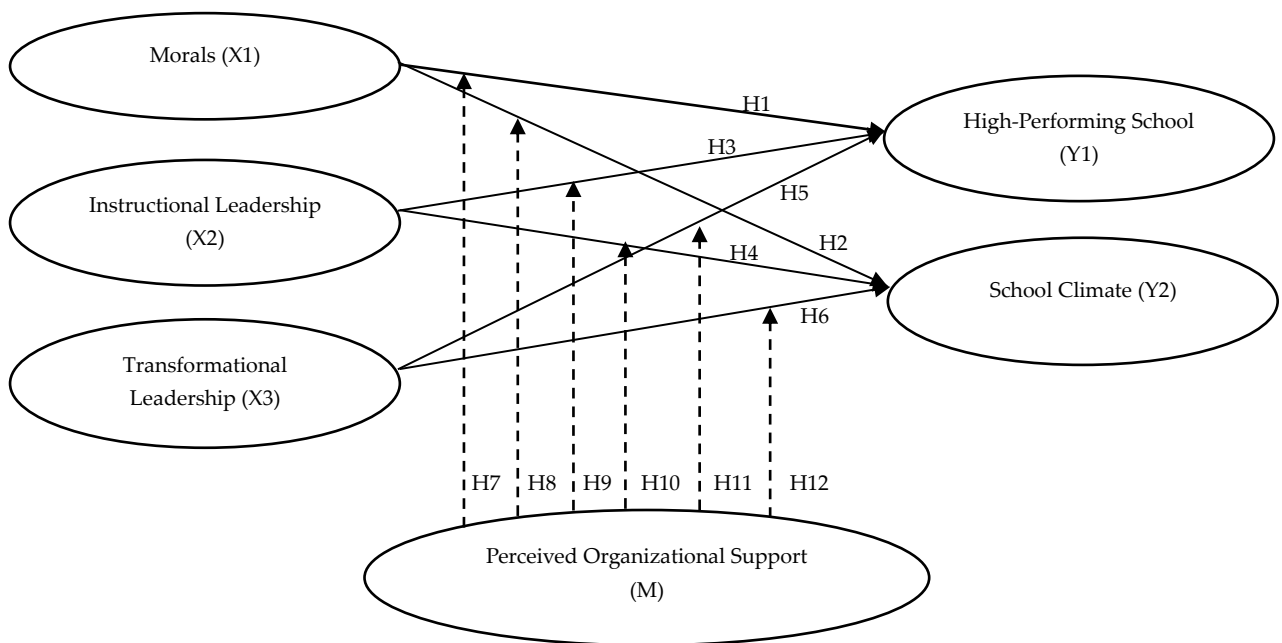


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 2 presents the demographic profile of the respondents involved in this study. The sample consisted of 250 teachers from high-performing private Islamic senior high schools in East Java, Indonesia. Female teachers represented the majority of respondents (55.2%), while male teachers accounted for 44.8%. Most respondents were in the productive age range, particularly between 31–40 years (31.2%) and 41–50 years (28.4%), indicating that the participants were professionally mature and actively engaged in school development processes. In terms of educational background, most respondents held bachelor's degrees (52.8%), followed by master's degrees (43.2%), while a smaller proportion possessed doctoral qualifications (4.0%). Regarding teaching experience, the majority had 1–10 years (40.4%) and 11–20 years (33.2%), suggesting that the sample represented educators with adequate professional exposure and institutional understanding. Overall, these characteristics indicate that the respondents were sufficiently experienced to provide reliable perceptions regarding leadership practices, school climate, organizational support, and school achievement.

Table 2. Respondent Characteristics

No	Respondent Characteristics	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage
1	Gender	Male	112	44.8%
		Female	138	55.2%
2	Age	< 30 Years	52	20.8%
		31–40 Years	78	31.2%
		41–50 Years	71	28.4%
		> 50 Years	49	19.6%
3	Education	Bachelor's Degree	132	52.8%
		Master's Degree	108	43.2%
		Doctoral Degree	10	4.0%
4	Teaching Experience	< 1 Year	15	6.0%
		1–10 Years	101	40.4%
		11–20 Years	83	33.2%
		> 20 Years	51	20.4%

Source: Processed primary data, 2026

Measurement Model Assessment

Leadership capacity in this study is conceptualized not merely as a leadership style, but as a collective leadership capability reflected through moral, instructional, and transformational leadership practices exercised by school leaders and supported by teachers within organizational settings. This conceptualization emphasizes leadership as an institutional capacity that shapes school effectiveness, school climate, and student achievement.

Prior to evaluating the structural relationships, the measurement model was rigorously assessed to establish reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity, adhering to the PLS-SEM guidelines outlined (Hair et al., 2022). Construct reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). As detailed in Table 3, all constructs exhibited Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding the 0.70 threshold and CR values ranging from 0.932 to 0.972, confirming robust internal consistency. Convergent validity was also established, as the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for all latent constructs surpassed the recommended minimum of 0.50, indicating that each construct explains more than half of the variance of its respective indicators.

Table 3. Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Moral Leadership	0.969	0.972
Instructional Leadership	0.967	0.972
Transformational Leadership	0.965	0.969
High-Performing School	0.934	0.946
School Climate	0.944	0.952
Perceived Organizational Support	0.908	0.932

Source: SmartPLS data processing, 2026

Following the establishment of reliability and convergent validity, discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations, as presented in Table 3. All HTMT values fell well below the conservative threshold of 0.85, confirming that the latent constructs are empirically distinct. The highest recorded HTMT value among the interaction terms was 0.742 (POS x Morals Leadership), which remains acceptable and precludes any significant construct overlap.

Table 4. Discriminant Validity (HTMT)

Variable	ES	IL	M	POS	SC	TL	POSxIL	POSxTL	POSxM
Excellent School									
Instructional_Leadership	0.517								
Morals_Leadership	0.530	0.686							
Perceived Organizational Support	0.439	0.639	0.655						
School Climate	0.565	0.605	0.586	0.429					
Transformational_Leadership	0.858	0.472	0.495	0.417	0.481				
Perceived Organizational Support x Instructional_Leadership	0.043	0.129	0.215	0.312	0.141	0.031			
Perceived Organizational Support x Transformational_Leadership	0.044	0.027	0.046	0.141	0.140	0.042	0.462		
Perceived Organizational Support x Morals_Leadership	0.037	0.222	0.312	0.280	0.194	0.045	0.742	0.459	

Source: SmartPLS data processing, 2026

Finally, to preclude potential method bias, a collinearity test was conducted by examining the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for the inner model. As shown in Table 5, all VIF values ranged from 1.000 to 4.965, well below the critical threshold of 5.0. This confirms that multicollinearity is not a pervasive issue within the dataset, thereby fulfilling the essential prerequisite for structural path estimation.

Table 5. Multicollinearity (VIF)

Item	VIF	Item	VIF
ES1	2.412	POS1	2.443
ES2	1.993	POS2	2.419
ES3	2.935	POS3	2.371
ES4	3.551	POS4	2.655
ES5	3.776	POS5	2.554
ES6	3.708	SC1	2.553
ES7	3.902	SC2	2.867
ES8	2.564	SC3	2.603
IL1	3.473	SC4	3.146
IL2	4.359	SC5	2.863
IL3	4.102	SC6	3.200
IL4	3.312	SC7	2.689
IL5	3.443	SC8	3.273
IL6	4.965	SC9	2.858
IL7	4.600	SC10	2.974
IL8	3.042	TL1	2.624
IL9	3.286	TL2	3.117
IL10	3.385	TL3	4.789
M1	3.604	TL4	3.592
M2	4.324	TL5	3.478
M3	4.606	TL6	3.660
M4	4.314	TL7	3.847
M5	3.789	TL8	3.378
M6	3.520	TL9	3.955
M7	3.447	TL10	3.220
M8	3.967	TL11	3.203
M9	3.627	TL12	4.189
M10	3.542	POS x IL	1.000
M11	3.832	POS x TL	1.000
M12	3.871	POS x M	1.000
M13	3.267		

Source: SmartPLS data processing, 2026

Structural Model Assesment

Following the successful validation of the measurement model, the structural model was evaluated to determine its predictive capabilities and to test the hypothesized relationships (*Figure 2*). The coefficient of determination (R^2) indicates that the structural model accounts for 69.5% of the variance in High-Performing School achievement and 46.1% in School Climate (Table 6). These values reflect a moderate to substantial predictive accuracy, underscoring the vital role of the proposed leadership dimensions in shaping educational outcomes.

Table 6. R-Square Test

Variable	R Square	R Square Adjusted
High-Performing School	0.695	0.687
School Climate	0.461	0.445

Source: SmartPLS data processing, 2026

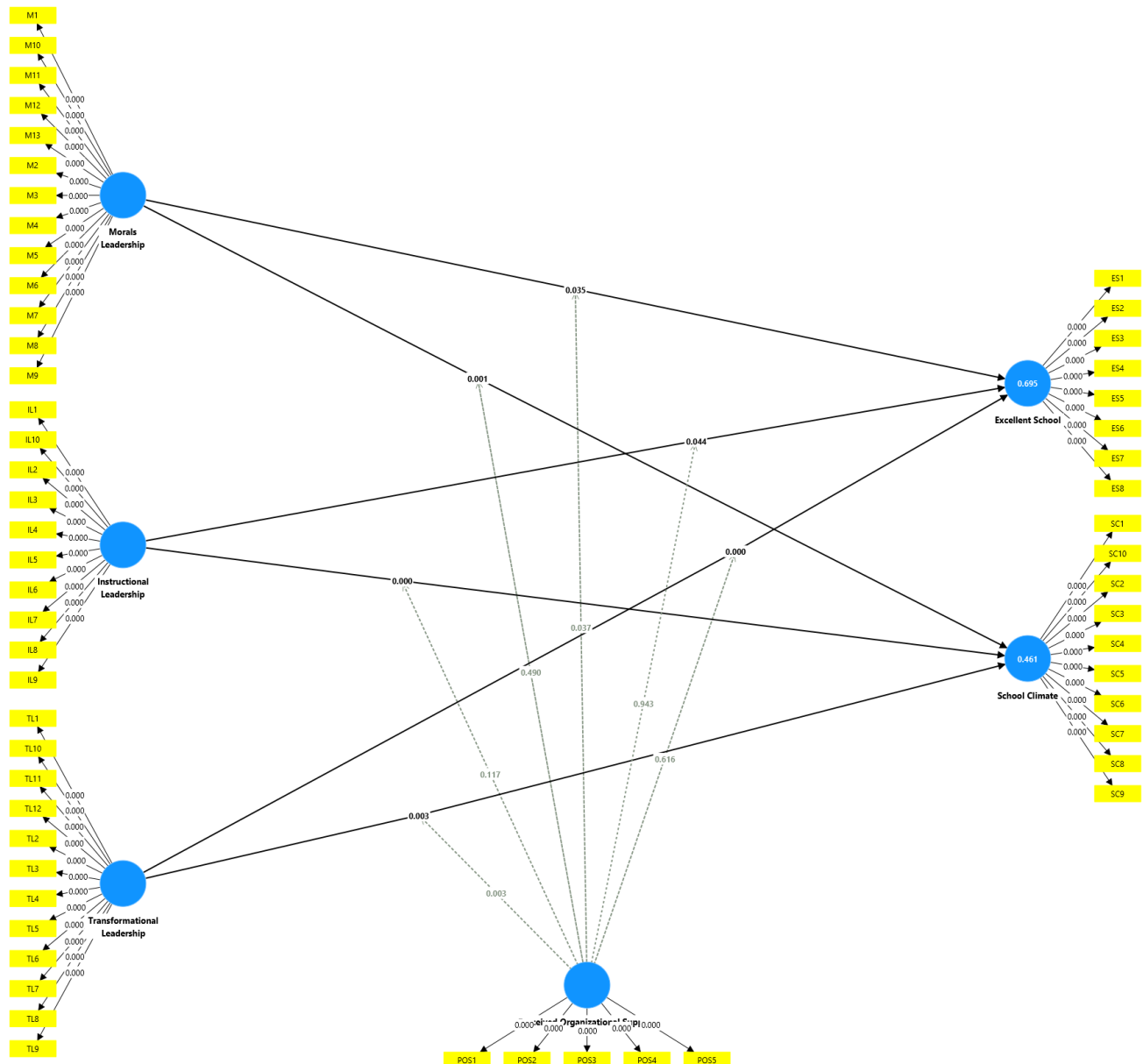


Figure 2. Structural Model (Inner Model)

Further analysis of the effect sizes (f^2) in Table 7 demonstrates the practical significance of each predictor. Transformational Leadership exerts the most profound impact on High-Performing School achievement ($f^2 = 1.164$), indicating a highly substantial effect. Conversely, Instructional Leadership ($f^2 = 0.085$) and Transformational Leadership ($f^2 = 0.066$) exhibit small-to-moderate practical effects on School Climate. The moderating effects of Perceived Organizational Support (POS) yielded relatively low effect sizes, suggesting that while significant, the conditional impact of POS operates within specific boundary conditions.

Table 7. Effect Size

Hypothesis	Effect Size
H1: Moral Leadership -> High-Performing School	0,018
H2: Moral Leadership -> School Climate	0,048
H3: Instructional Leadership -> High-Performing School	0,017
H4: Instructional Leadership -> School Climate	0,085
H5: Transformational Leadership -> High-Performing School	1,164
H6: Transformational Leadership -> School Climate	0,066
H7: Moral Leadership × POS -> High-Performing School	0,014
H8: Moral Leadership × POS -> School Climate	0,003
H9: Instructional Leadership × POS -> High-Performing School	0,000
H10: Instructional Leadership × POS -> School Climate	0,012
H11: Transformational Leadership × POS -> High-Performing School	0,003
H12: Transformational Leadership × POS -> School Climate	0,066

Source: SmartPLS data processing, 2026

To test the proposed hypotheses, a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 subsamples was employed to generate the relevant t-statistics and p-values; the results are summarized in Table 7. The data reveal that moral, instructional, and transformational leadership all exert significant direct effects on both High-Performing School achievement and School Climate (H1–H6 are supported, $p < 0.05$). These empirical findings substantiate the premise that institutional excellence is highly contingent on multidimensional leadership capacities, reinforcing the notion that effective school administration cannot rely on a single leadership paradigm.

Table 8. Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis		Effect	T Statistics	P Values	Result
H1:	Moral Leadership -> High-Performing School	0.112	2.109	0.035	Significant
H2:	Moral Leadership -> School Climate	0.243	3.269	0.001	Significant
H3:	Instructional Leadership -> High-Performing School	0.104	2.014	0.044	Significant
H4:	Instructional Leadership -> School Climate	0.312	4.386	0.000	Significant
H5:	Transformational Leadership -> High-Performing School	0.711	8.850	0.000	Significant
H6:	Transformational Leadership -> School Climate	0.225	3.014	0.003	Significant
H7:	Moral Leadership × POS -> High-Performing School	0.114	2.087	0.037	Significant
H8:	Moral Leadership × POS -> School Climate	-0.063	0.691	0.490	Not Significant
H9:	Instructional Leadership × POS -> High-Performing School	-0.004	0.072	0.943	Not Significant

H10:	Instructional Leadership × POS -> School Climate	0.132	1.566	0.117	Not Significant
H11:	Transformational Leadership × POS -> High-Performing School	-0.039	0.501	0.616	Not Significant
H12:	Transformational Leadership × POS -> School Climate	0.242	3.020	0.003	Significant

Source: SmartPLS data processing, 2026

Notably, transformational leadership surfaced as the most potent driver of school achievement ($\beta = 0.711$, $p < 0.001$). This aligns with contemporary educational paradigms, suggesting that leaders who articulate a compelling vision, stimulate intellectual growth, and foster individualized consideration are best equipped to navigate institutional challenges and drive continuous improvement. Furthermore, the significant role of instructional leadership underscores the indispensable value of direct administrative engagement in curriculum coordination and pedagogical supervision to sustain a highly conducive learning environment. Concurrently, moral leadership instills a foundation of ethical integrity, fostering a culture of mutual trust and collective responsibility that serves as the bedrock for sustained institutional success.

The moderation analysis introduces a nuanced understanding of leadership effectiveness by integrating Perceived Organizational Support (POS) as a boundary condition. The results indicate partial moderation, where POS significantly amplifies the efficacy of moral leadership in elevating school performance (H7), as well as the impact of transformational leadership on cultivating a positive school climate (H12). This implies that the positive outcomes of ethical and visionary leadership are maximized when educators feel structurally and personally supported by their institution. Conversely, POS did not exhibit a significant moderating effect on the remaining pathways (H8, H9, H10, and H11). The non-significant moderating effects on instructional leadership pathways suggest that the pedagogical supervision inherent to instructional leadership directly influences school outcomes, irrespective of the broader perceptions of organizational support. Ultimately, the data highlight that while multidimensional leadership directly shapes school climate and achievement, optimizing specific outcomes requires an institutional environment in which teachers feel genuinely valued and supported.

DISCUSSION

The Role of Moral Leadership in Strengthening High-Performing Schools and School Climate

The findings indicate that moral leadership significantly contributes to the development of high-performing schools and positive school climate. In this study, moral leadership was associated with stronger institutional trust, teacher collaboration, and organizational cohesion. These findings support educational leadership theory, which explains that moral leadership influences organizational behavior through fairness, empathy, and ethical consistency (Eyal et al., 2021; Özdoğan & Güçlü, 2020). Within the context of Islamic schools, moral leadership appears to function not only as an individual leadership characteristic but also as an institutional value system embedded within school culture. Ethical values and collective responsibility become organizational norms that guide interpersonal relationships, professional conduct, and decision-making processes.

The findings are consistent with previous studies showing that ethical and value-based leadership contributes to organizational commitment and social cohesion in faith-based educational settings, where it strengthens collective trust, reinforces organizational culture, and promotes professionalism through shared moral values (Rahmatullah & Baitussalam, 2025; Thoha et al., 2025). Broader discussions on faith-based education also suggest that value-oriented educational environments tend to strengthen collaboration, social responsibility, and institutional identity (Amin, 2024; Kennedy & Lee, 2020). These findings help explain why moral leadership may become

particularly relevant in Islamic schools where organizational culture emphasizes ethical responsibility and collective harmony.

From a theoretical perspective, this study suggests that moral leadership should not be viewed merely as a normative complement to school management but as an institutional mechanism that contributes to organizational stability and school climate (Abejón-Fuentes et al., 2025). The findings suggest that ethical consistency and trust-building practices can strengthen teacher commitment and institutional cohesion, particularly in schools where shared values are deeply integrated into the organizational culture. Furthermore, the emphasis on moral leadership serves as a critical buffer against organizational stress and ethical dilemmas in daily school operations. By prioritizing integrity and humanistic values, school leaders cultivate a psychologically safe environment in which teachers feel respected and treated fairly. This aligns with the perspective that moral leadership extends beyond mere compliance, actively promoting altruistic behaviors and reducing interpersonal conflicts within the academic community (Arjanto et al., 2023; Bafadal et al., 2024). Consequently, ethical role modeling by principals not only fortifies the school's normative framework but also ensures that the drive for high performance does not compromise educators' well-being and moral cognition.

Instructional Leadership as an Institutional Mechanism for Academic Improvement

The empirical evidence confirms that instructional leadership has a significant impact on both achieving high-performing school status and cultivating a positive school climate (Akgöz et al., 2024; Raman et al., 2022). However, unlike relational or emotional leadership paradigms, instructional leadership functions predominantly through highly structured administrative and academic mechanisms. It drives institutional effectiveness by systematically synchronizing curriculum deployment, rigorous academic supervision, targeted teacher mentoring, and continuous professional development with overarching educational objectives (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Shatzer et al., 2014). This aligns seamlessly with established frameworks positing that instructional leadership elevates institutional efficacy, specifically through proactive, direct engagement in core pedagogical processes (Hallinger, 2020).

Furthermore, the data indicate that school principals who rigorously sustain an instructional focus succeed in engineering highly stable academic environments characterized by explicit performance benchmarks. This substantiates the organizational learning perspective, which dictates that continuous institutional enhancement occurs when leadership actively constructs platforms for rigorous instructional monitoring, collegial collaboration, and systematic knowledge dissemination (Maponya, 2020; Özdoğru & Güçlü, 2020). Nonetheless, when juxtaposed with transformational approaches, the organizational footprint of instructional leadership appears comparatively restricted. Its primary utility lies in ensuring stringent operational consistency and meticulous academic administration, rather than driving systemic organizational adaptability or disruptive innovation (Azzukhrufi et al., 2026).

These insights mirror prior scholarship demonstrating that instructional leadership is inextricably linked to superior pedagogical quality, seamless curriculum coordination, and elevated academic outcomes, especially within highly structured academic settings (Gümüş et al., 2022; Owan & Agunwa, 2019). Within the current investigation, instructional leadership emerged as an inherently stable institutional mechanism capable of safeguarding academic integrity independent of fluctuating organizational climates. Consequently, while instructional leadership is undeniably foundational for preserving pedagogical effectiveness (Raman et al., 2022), catalyzing comprehensive organizational metamorphosis likely demands the integration of supplementary leadership dimensions that transcend the boundaries of pure instructional management.

Beyond alleviating professional role ambiguity, the structural precision afforded by instructional leadership substantially amplifies teacher self-efficacy and accelerates professional learning trajectories (Y. Liu et al., 2021). When administrative leaders are visibly invested in

curriculum orchestration and consistently provide constructive pedagogical evaluations, educators develop a deep understanding of institutional standards and instructional expectations. This direct administrative intervention effectively bridges the chronic divide between macro-level institutional policies and micro-level classroom execution (Boyce & Bowers, 2018; S. Liu & Hallinger, 2018). Ultimately, while instructional leadership may not organically generate profound emotional allegiance, its methodical rigor guarantees that educators are both pedagogically proficient and strategically calibrated to fulfill the institution's academic mandates (Thien, 2022).

Why Transformational Leadership Became the Most Dominant Predictor

One of the central findings of this study is that transformational leadership emerged as the strongest predictor of both high-performing schools and school climate. This finding suggests that transformational leadership has broader organizational influence because it operates simultaneously across cognitive, emotional, and institutional dimensions. Unlike instructional leadership, which primarily focuses on academic processes, or moral leadership, which emphasizes ethical conduct, transformational leadership mobilizes collective vision, motivation, innovation, and organizational adaptability (Sahayu et al., 2026; Sukarjono et al., 2026; Yuliana et al., 2025). Principals demonstrating transformational leadership were more likely to strengthen teachers' commitment to institutional goals and continuous improvement (Al Faruq & Supriyanto, 2020; Fahrurrobi et al., 2020; S. Wang, 2019).

These findings align with transformational leadership theory, which emphasizes inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and intellectual stimulation as mechanisms for organizational change. In educational contexts characterized by increasing institutional complexity and rapid change, transformational leadership appears to support organizational adaptability while maintaining collective cohesion (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; Ritchie-Dunham et al., 2023). Within Islamic school settings, transformational leadership also seems to interact with existing value-based organizational cultures, enabling leaders to mobilize teachers through shared purpose and institutional commitment rather than relying solely on hierarchical authority.

Several recent studies in faith-based and value-oriented educational contexts support this interpretation. Specifically, leadership in Southeast Asian faith-based organizations frequently strengthens institutional relationships through shared values, emotional engagement, and collaborative commitment (Abidin et al., 2025; Adiyono et al., 2025; Aryasutha et al., 2025; Aslihah & Wasehudin, 2023; Luhtala, 2023). Similarly, religious moderation and value-based educational approaches in Indonesia and Malaysia significantly contribute to collaborative and adaptive educational cultures (Bahri et al., 2025; Rozanita et al., 2026). These complementary perspectives help explain why transformational leadership may be particularly influential in schools where collective values and institutional identity are deeply embedded in organizational practices.

Theoretically, the findings indicate that transformational leadership serves not only as an interpersonal motivational approach but also as a broader institutional capability that supports school resilience, organizational learning, and long-term adaptation, all of which are vital for sustaining school improvement in dynamic educational environments (Asrohah et al., 2025; Desmiati et al., 2023; Lellya et al., 2026; Madina & Rahmi, 2026; Poncowati et al., 2025). Beyond this motivational capacity, transformational leadership plays a pivotal role in stimulating innovative work behaviors and facilitating knowledge sharing among educators. In an era when educational institutions must continually adapt to new pedagogical demands, transformational leaders intellectually stimulate their staff to challenge the status quo and develop creative instructional solutions. This collaborative environment encourages teachers to share best practices and tacit knowledge voluntarily, thereby transforming the school into a dynamic learning organization (Afsar & Umrani, 2019; Chen et al., 2024). Consequently, the dominance of transformational leadership lies in its dual ability to inspire individual excellence and to orchestrate collective, system-wide innovation.

The Moderating Role of Perceived Organizational Support in Leadership Effectiveness

This study demonstrates that Perceived Organizational Support (POS) functions as a crucial contextual contingency that fundamentally shapes the overall efficacy of educational leadership practices. Specifically, the empirical findings reveal that POS significantly amplifies the path from moral leadership to high-performing school achievement, as well as the relationship between transformational leadership and school climate. These distinct interactions indicate that structural organizational backing explicitly enhances leadership dimensions that rely heavily on relational trust, emotional investment, and psychological safety. When educators perceive a high degree of institutional appreciation, professional recognition, and conducive working conditions, they are inherently more receptive to the ethical influence and visionary initiatives pioneered by school administrators (Al Hammadi et al., 2025; Eisenberger et al., 1986; C.-J. Wang, 2022).

This phenomenon aligns seamlessly with the core tenets of social exchange theory, which posits that supportive institutional ecosystems induce reciprocal obligations, thereby fostering heightened organizational commitment and deeper attachment among staff (Asimiran et al., 2020; Gündüz, 2014). Educators who feel systematically supported by their institutions are substantially more inclined to internalize core organizational values, engage in pro-social collaborative behaviors, and voluntarily participate in macro-level school improvement strategies (Christiani & Sudibjo, 2025; Sholikhah, 2025). Conversely, POS did not yield a statistically significant moderating effect on instructional leadership pathways. This divergence indicates that instructional leadership operates primarily through more formalized, direct academic architectures, operational supervision matrices, and curriculum management protocols, which inherently bypass emotional or purely relational mechanisms (Akgöz et al., 2024; Werdiningsih, 2024).

Consequently, these findings imply that the ultimate dividends of school leadership are fundamentally context-sensitive and explicitly molded by underlying organizational conditions (Natalia & Hidayat, 2021). Leadership dimensions that privilege relational engagement and collective motivation appear heavily dependent on supportive institutional infrastructures, whereas leadership modalities anchored in direct managerial operations exercise their influence relatively independently of perceived baseline support (Y. Liu et al., 2021). By establishing these distinct boundary conditions, this study advances the educational administration literature, positioning POS not merely as an isolated, auxiliary organizational variable but as a critical macro-level moderator that dictates the situational returns of specific leadership behaviors (Al Hammadi et al., 2025; C.-J. Wang, 2022).

Furthermore, the selective moderation demonstrated by POS underscores the indispensable function of structural resource allocation and psychological buffering within modern academic environments. Grounded in the conservation of resources theory, educators are demonstrably better equipped to invest their finite cognitive and emotional energy in visionary, high-demand ethical initiatives when they perceive that their institution provides a resilient safety net of structural support (Imran et al., 2020; Oubibi et al., 2022). In the absence of an adequate POS matrix, even highly inspiring transformational or moral interventions risk precipitating systematic teacher burnout, as escalating institutional expectations easily outpace the actual resources and recognition available to staff (Jukić, 2021). Ultimately, POS acts as a vital institutional catalyst that successfully operationalizes latent leadership potential into tangible, highly sustainable organizational engagement and long-term workplace sustainability (Cho & Kao, 2022).

Scientific and Theoretical Contributions of the Study

This study significantly advances the educational leadership literature by developing an integrated analytical framework that synthesizes moral, instructional, and transformational leadership paradigms in high-performing academic environments (Bass & Avolio, 1990; Hallinger, 2020). By moving beyond fragmented leadership models, this research conceptualizes leadership capacity not merely as an isolated administrative trait but as a collective, system-wide institutional

capability co-produced through the strategic alignment among principals, teachers, and organizational culture (Boyce & Bowers, 2018). Furthermore, this study elucidates the nuanced role of Perceived Organizational Support (POS) as a strategic contingency factor, empirically demonstrating that institutional backing does not universally affect all administrative actions but selectively amplifies leadership dimensions anchored in relational trust, psychological safety, and emotional investment (C.-J. Wang, 2022).

In addition, this investigation offers a vital conceptual contribution to the scholarship on faith-based school management by operationalizing Islamic educational values as tangible aspects of organizational culture and moral capital rather than as abstract theological doctrines (Anisa, 2022; Zakariyah, 2024). This paradigm offers a contextually grounded yet globally generalizable understanding of administrative practices in faith-oriented institutions, illustrating that sustainable school improvement requires an integrated ecosystem of complementary leadership styles (Rahmatullah & Baitussalam, 2025). Specifically, the empirical findings reveal distinct operational pathways: transformational leadership predominantly catalyzes organizational innovation and adaptability (Afsar & Umrani, 2019), moral leadership solidifies structural integrity and normative cohesion, and instructional leadership fortifies pedagogical consistency and day-to-day operational effectiveness (Bafadal et al., 2024; Thoha et al., 2025).

From a practical and policymaking standpoint, the empirical evidence presented herein promotes a fundamental paradigm shift for professional leadership development and educational governance. Rather than exclusively focusing administrative training on isolated, traditional managerial competencies, systemic policy interventions must pivot toward cultivating collaborative school management teams and optimizing institution-wide support infrastructures (Daniëls et al., 2019; Maponya, 2020; Pietsch et al., 2022).

By demonstrating that ultimate leadership efficacy is inextricably linked to the organizational climate and the perceived support matrix, this study provides educational stakeholders with a strategic roadmap for designing holistic, ecosystem-based intervention strategies (Soncin et al., 2025). Such structural alignment is absolutely vital for sustaining long-term institutional excellence and successfully operationalizing the transformative human capital mandates envisioned in the national trajectory toward Indonesia 2045.

To synthesize the theoretical contributions and empirical findings discussed above, Table 9 summarizes how the multidimensional leadership ecosystem operates within high-performing schools, including the varying contextual dependencies on perceived organizational support.

Table 9. Summary of the Multidimensional Leadership Ecosystem and Contextual Dependencies

Leadership Dimension	Primary Mechanism (How it operates)	Key Organizational Outcomes (Impact)	The Moderating Role of POS (Contextual Dependency)
Transformational Leadership	Mobilizes collective vision, inspires motivation, and stimulates intellectual innovation.	Drives organizational adaptability, continuous improvement, and knowledge sharing. Emerged as the strongest predictor.	Significant (Catalyst): Amplifies the leader's ability to cultivate a positive and collaborative School Climate.
Moral Leadership	Fosters ethical consistency, institutional trust, and humanistic value-based norms.	Strengthens social cohesion, organizational stability, and acts as a buffer against institutional stress.	Significant (Amplifier): Strengthens the impact of ethical practices on achieving High-Performing School status.
Instructional Leadership	Facilitates structural clarity, curriculum coordination, and	Ensures operational consistency, academic quality, and clear	Not Significant (Independent): Operates effectively through formal administrative structures

pedagogical supervision.	pedagogical performance expectations.	regardless of perceived support.
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Source: Formulated by the researcher based on study findings, 2026.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that leadership capacity in high-performing Islamic schools functions as a multidimensional and collective institutional capability rather than an isolated administrative trait. The empirical findings reveal that achieving sustainable institutional excellence and a positive school climate requires the strategic integration of transformational, instructional, and moral leadership dimensions within a unified framework. Furthermore, this research advances educational leadership theory by establishing Perceived Organizational Support (POS) as a critical contextual contingency that selectively amplifies administrative efficacy. By operationalizing Islamic values as a dynamic organizational culture and moral capital rather than abstract theological doctrines, these findings provide profound theoretical implications, demonstrating how shared ethical norms inherently reinforce professionalism, structural collaboration, and institutional integrity within faith-based education. Consequently, the overarching implication for the strategic trajectory toward Golden Indonesia 2045 is that sustainable educational transformation cannot rely on a single leadership paradigm but fundamentally requires holistic, value-driven administrative ecosystems.

Based on these insights, practically, policymakers and educational stakeholders should prioritize reinforcing transformational leadership capacities, embedding moral practices, and constructing highly supportive organizational climates to sustain long-term institutional performance. However, certain limitations must be acknowledged, as this study utilizes a cross-sectional design and is geographically restricted to high-performing private Islamic senior high schools in East Java, which may constrain the immediate generalizability of the results to broader contexts. To overcome these boundaries, future research should implement longitudinal and comparative methodologies across diverse educational and cultural landscapes. Additionally, subsequent investigations are highly recommended to explore adjacent variables to further elucidate the complex, evolving mechanisms underpinning sustainable educational transformation.

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