

## **Transformational Leadership in Changing the Education Paradigm: Improving the Quality of Alpha Generation Student**

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**Abstract:** This study aims to interpret transformational leadership in changing the educational paradigm, namely in improving the quality of learning of alpha generation madrasah aliyah students. The research design used is qualitative research with a case study method. The sources of informants in this study consisted of principals, teachers, students, and student guardians. Data collection in this study was conducted through three main methods, namely in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis. The results of this study show that transformational leadership at MAN 2 Banyuwangi has succeeded in changing the educational paradigm, namely in improving the quality of learning through soft skills development, digital learning hub development, and multimodal literacy development. The novelty in this research is the concept of transformational leadership that contributes to the quality of learning. The contribution of this study shows that the application of transformational leadership in Madrasah Aliyah can significantly change the educational paradigm.

**Keywords:** Alpha Generation, Learning Quality, Transformational Leadership

### **A. Introduction**

Transformational leadership does not only focus on technological innovation in education, but on the formation of adaptive and collaborative values that can prepare alpha generation students to face the challenges of a changing world. Transformational leadership aims to create fundamental changes that are not only technical but also touch the character aspects and basic values of students. In the context of the alpha generation living in an era of renewal and fast shifting dynamics, the formation of adaptive and collaborative values is key so that they are not only skilled in technology, but also able to work together and adapt in various social and professional environments. A study developed by (Butcher et al., 2024; Hilarowicz et al., 2023; Shahzad, 2024) shows that adaptation skills are one of the core competencies needed in the future, especially in the face of digital transformation and automation. Transformational leadership supports the formation of these skills through project-based learning and real problem simulations. Thus, transformational leadership not only focuses on technological innovation, but also

forms adaptive and collaborative values as the main foundation to prepare alpha generation students to face the challenges of dynamic global change. The phenomenon is a change in the current educational paradigm.

A change in the educational paradigm in accordance with the needs of students will result in students experiencing a shift in thinking. The educational paradigm is a framework of thought that underlies the implementation of education to build holistic individuals. So that the existence of transformational leadership is one of the efforts to minimise the existence of paradigms in education. This concept is illustrated in the concept of humans as caliphs on earth who are responsible for leading and are given the ability to bring about changes in accordance with the contents of surah Al Baqarah/2 verse 30:

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنِّيْ جَاعِلٌ فِى الْاَرْضِ خَلِيْفَةً ۗ قَالُوْۤا اَتَجْعَلُ فِيْهَا مَن يُفْسِدُ فِيْهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَآءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ ۗ قَالَ اِنِّيْۤ اَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝۳۰

*Meaning: (Remember) when your Lord said to the angels, "I want to make a caliph on earth." They said, "Do you intend to make therein one who will destroy and shed blood, while we praise you and sanctify your name?" He said, "I know what you do not know."*

This is relevant to transformational leadership that is influential in the educational paradigm, by preparing the alpha generation to become future leaders who improve the quality of learning in madrasah aliyah. Transformational leadership aims to create an innovative, collaborative and adaptive learning environment for the alpha generation in line with Permendikbud 22 of 2016 which stipulates that

*Process standards for primary and secondary education should be student-centred, support the development of learners' potential, and encourage active learning.*

To achieve the quality of learning in accordance with the characteristics and needs of alpha generation students requires a leader who has a transformational leadership style based on bass theory found in (Njaramba, 2024; Ridic et al., 2024) which reveals that transformational leadership theory emphasises the importance of Inspirational Motivation, Idealised Influence, Intellectual Stimulation, Individualised Consideration. This theory is relevant for transformational leaders in changing the educational paradigm to be more adaptive to the needs of the alpha generation.

Research on transformational leadership has been one of the effective leadership approaches in creating significant change in various organizations, including educational institutions and has been conducted by several researchers such as (Armiyanti et al., 2023; Efendi et al., 2023; Restu Rahayu & Sofyan Iskandar, 2023) this is because this study is the main concern of the researcher because the benefits of transformational leadership are very relevant to significant changes. Although many studies have highlighted the benefits of transformational leadership, specific studies on its implementation in changing the educational paradigm are still very limited. How transformational leadership can be implemented significantly to develop the quality of learning of alpha generation students in madrasah aliyah has not been widely discussed in the literature. So the novelty in this study is the concept of

transformational leadership that contributes to the quality of alpha generation student learning. This focus reflects the importance of leadership models that are able to deal with modern educational challenges, such as personalisation of learning, advanced technology and the value of collaboration. With the increasing demands of the digital age and national education policies, it is important to explore leadership strategies that can support educational transformation. Recent research conducted by (Nalmpanti et al., 2024; Polatcan et al., 2024; Sliwka et al., 2024) revealed that transformational leadership has a major involvement in developing the quality of learning through the creation of a collaborative and innovative culture in schools. Transformational leadership in education is an interesting research subject because of its ability to create an innovative, technology adaptive learning environment and focus on developing students socio emotional values, especially in facing the demands of alpha generation learning in the digital era.

This research aims to interpret transformational leadership in changing the education paradigm, namely in improving the quality of learning for alpha generation students. The alpha generation lives in the midst of rapid technological, social and cultural changes, so the conventional education paradigm needs to be updated with a leadership approach that encourages innovation, creativity and collaborative values. Transformational leadership offers a relevant approach by building a collective vision, empowering individuals, and providing learning facilities that are responsive to the unique characteristics of the alpha generation. In studies (Hoang & Le, 2024; Nguyen et al., 2023; Raziq et al., 2024) this research shows that transformational leadership directly influences the culture of educational organisations by encouraging innovation and improving the quality of learning processes. This research confirms that transformational leadership is a necessary solution to answer the challenges in the modern era by building a shared vision, empowering individuals, and creating innovative learning environments to improve the quality of learning of alpha generation students.

Factually, transformational leadership has leadership characteristics that can change the educational paradigm in madrasah aliyah by empowering all madrasah residents to innovate, so that the quality of madrasah aliyah learning can improve through soft skills development, digital learning hub development, and multimodal literacy. In this context, soft skills development is the main focus, given the importance of skills as expressed by (Dias-Oliveira et al., 2024; Herlinawati et al., 2024; Orr & Lavy, 2024) In this context, the development of soft skills is a key focus, given the importance of skills as expressed by (Dias-Oliveira et al., 2024; Herlinawati et al., 2024; Orr & Lavy, 2024) in their research skills such as intelligence, collaboration, and emotional capability will be crucial in the future. Transformational leadership can facilitate the improvement of these soft skills by providing space for students to engage in extracurricular activities, team-based projects, and personal development training. In addition, the development of digital learning hub that provide access to relevant technology based learning platforms,

recent research from (Al-Adwan et al., 2024; Anwar & Saraih, 2024) shows that school leaders who apply transformational leadership styles are more likely to adopt technology to support learning and create digital platforms to access educational resources easily and effectively. Digital learning hub enable students to learn independently through digital resources, such as e-learning, online discussion forums and other multimedia resources. A study published by (Cheng & Wang, 2023; Lim et al., 2022; Valderrama Polo, 2021) showed that multimodal literacy taught in schools can improve students critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Transformational leadership can support this by creating a curriculum that integrates different forms of media and technology in learning. With several programs that have been implemented at MAN 2 Banyuwangi, it will be known how transformational leadership is able to change the educational paradigm in developing the quality of alpha generation student learning. This includes the development of soft skills, digital learning hubs, and multimodal literacy as a solution that suits the demands of alpha generation students. Based on this, the research question posed in this study is to find out how transformational leadership is involved in managing changes in the educational paradigm at MAN 2 Banyuwangi and how related theories and practices can be implemented to support the optimal quality of alpha generation student learning.

## **B. Methods**

The object of this research is the alpha generation of MAN 2 Banyuwangi because of its relevance to the challenges and needs of education in the modern era (Khasanah, 2023). The alpha generation, born amidst technological advances and rapid social change, requires innovative and adaptive educational approaches. Transformational leadership, with its visionary, inspirational and change-driving characteristics, is considered capable of changing the conventional education paradigm to better suit the needs of this generation. The transformation aims to improve the quality of learning with methods that are more contextualized, technology-based and support the maximum potential of students. This research has both academic and practical significance, not only contributing to the development of educational leadership theory but also offering concrete solutions to learning challenges for future generations.

The research design used in this study is qualitative research with a case study method (Given et al., 2023). This research aims to deeply understand how transformational leadership is applied in changing the educational paradigm to improve the quality of learning for alpha generation students. This design allows researchers to explore the phenomenon holistically, providing a clear picture of the implementation and impact of transformational leadership in the context of modern education.

The sources of informants in this study were purposively selected to ensure the data

obtained were relevant and in depth (Akhter, 2022). The principal is the one who implements transformational leadership, teachers are directly involved in the learning process, as well as alpha generation students as the main beneficiaries of the educational paradigm shift. In addition, student guardians were also involved as supporting informants to provide perspectives on the impact of educational transformation outside the school environment. The selection of informants was based on certain criteria, such as their experience in the context of transformational leadership implementation and active involvement in the learning process. By involving various perspectives, this research is expected to provide comprehensive results regarding the implementation and impact of transformational leadership in improving learning quality.

Data collection in this study was conducted through three main methods, namely in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis (Khoa et al., 2023). In depth interviews were conducted with principals, teachers, students and parents to explore their views, experiences and perceptions regarding the implementation of transformational leadership in education. Directly observing the learning process of madrasah activities is one of the participatory observation efforts made to see the educational paradigm shift. Document analysis is used to find out how the paradigm shift is systematically implemented, namely by examining madrasah policies, learning documents, and learning activities.

Data analysis of the Miles and Huberman interactive model was carried out in this study using three main steps: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Salmona & Kaczynski, 2024). In the data reduction stage, data obtained from interviews, observations and documents were selected, summarised and grouped based on relevant main themes, such as transformational leadership patterns, educational paradigm shifts and their impact on the quality of alpha generation students' learning. Furthermore, the data was presented in the form of descriptive narratives to facilitate the researcher in understanding the relationship between findings. In the final stage, the researcher drew provisional conclusions and conducted verification by comparing findings from various sources and methods to ensure consistency and validity. This approach allows the researcher to systematically process the data so as to produce accurate and in-depth findings related to the research focus.

### **C. Results and Discussion**

The results of this study answer the research question, namely to find out how transformational leadership is involved in managing educational paradigm shifts at MAN 2 Banyuwangi and how related theories and practices can be implemented to support the optimal quality of alpha generation student learning. The results of this research are explained and discussed in full below:

## **Soft Skills Development**

The results of the interview with Mr. Saeroji as the head of madrasah revealed that the head of madrasah always ensures that the development of soft skills in madrasah is personalized and in accordance with the needs of students. Each student is given the opportunity to join a program that suits their interests, such as batik art, graphic design, or broadcasting. The madrasah also conducts assessments to find out the potential of each student and provide direction on what skills they need to hone. By bringing this skill development closer to their respective interests, students will feel more motivated and can develop optimally according to their talents and needs. Based on the results of these interviews, it can be stated that this study reveals that transformational leadership at MAN 2 Banyuwangi not only focuses on developing technical skills (hard skills), but also on developing non technical skills (soft skills) that instill 21st century competencies needed by alpha generation students. This explanation is in line with previous research found by (Fortuna Togatorop et al., 2024; Novia & Aimah, 2024) who found that transformational leadership has an important role in developing soft skills because this approach not only focuses on technical aspects or knowledge (hard skills), but also develops interpersonal and emotional abilities needed to adapt to the dynamics of a changing world. Soft skills such as communication skills, leadership, teamwork, problem solving, and creativity are becoming very important competencies for alpha generation students who are growing up in a fast paced digital era.

The evidence in this soft skills development finding is in the form of documentation at the time of verification and submission of the skills program as follows:



**Figure 1. Documentation with Verifiers during Skills Program Verification and Submission**

Source: <https://man2banyuwangi.sch.id/>

Based on the figure above is documentation of verification and submission of skills programs that support the explanation of skills programs that aim to improve soft skill development, even the skills program is one of the madrasah flagships programs to answer the challenges of the times in the world of education. And some of the skills programs that have been implemented such as: robotics, batik art,

graphic design, journalism and broadcasting, fashion. This evidence is one of the findings that transformational leadership can contribute significantly to improving the quality of learning of the alpha generation of Madrasah Aliyah in the field of soft skills development, this is corroborated by research (Bhat & Gupta, 2024; Sanabria-Z & Olivo, 2024; Yeoh et al., 2024) which shows that millennial skills, such as critical thinking, communication, and collaboration, are key in preparing future generations to work in an increasingly complex world. This model encourages project-based learning, collaboration between students, as well as increased emotional awareness which is crucial for the development of soft skills. Transformational leadership has a major role in developing alpha generation students' soft skills, which involve not only technical skills, but also interpersonal and adaptability, to prepare them for 21st century challenges in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world.

### **Development of Digital Learning Hub**

The interview with Mr. Saeroji as the head of madrasah revealed that the head of madrasah motivates teachers and students to see the digital learning center as a great opportunity to create more accessible, flexible and relevant learning. By describing the vision, it is expected that teachers feel encouraged to learn new technologies, and students are motivated to use digital platforms to learn and create. This inspiration is often conveyed by the madrasah head through activities such as joint training or sharing sessions on the benefits of multimedia-based learning, so that all parties feel enthusiastic in supporting this transformation. Based on the results of these interviews, it can be stated that this study reveals that transformational leadership at MAN 2 Banyuwangi focuses not only on developing an analog education center, but also on developing a digital learning center that provides access to multimedia-based materials, such as videos, electronic books, and podcasts relevant to the needs of the alpha generation. This explanation is in line with previous research found by (Saharso & Fadilah, 2024; Yaturrochmah et al., 2024) who found that transformational leadership in education aims to develop a more inclusive and flexible learning model, where not only analog education centers are considered, but also digital learning hubs that provide easy and quick access to multimedia-based materials. Digital learning hub provide a variety of materials that can be accessed at will and allow students to learn in a more interactive way and fit the needs of the alpha generation in desperate need of a platform that can accommodate their diverse learning styles.

The evidence in the digital learning hub findings is in the form of the Mandawangi TV program as a place to broadcast educational programs, mandawangi news, and student films as follows:



**Figure 2. Mandawangi TV Program**  
Source: [instagram.com/man2banyuwangi](https://www.instagram.com/man2banyuwangi)

Based on the figure above, it supports the explanation of Madrasah TV program which aims to improve the development of digital learning hub in essence Madrasah TV at MAN 2 Banyuwangi is a Madrasah Aliyah channel and even the largest number of subscribers in Banyuwangi Regency. Madrasah TV is an innovative and interactive method in the learning process. Even Madrasah TV is also a place to broadcast teachers, learning media, educational programs and student films. This evidence becomes one of the findings that transformational leadership can develop the quality of learning for the alpha generation of madrasah aliyah in the field of digital learning center development, this is corroborated by a study (Kulal et al., 2024; Muawanah et al., 2024; Turnquest et al., 2024) which shows that digital based learning, including e-learning, videos, and podcasts, not only increases the accessibility of materials, but also improves engagement and retention of information for younger students. Transformational leadership focuses not only on developing analog education centers, but also on developing digital learning centers that provide flexible access to multimedia based materials, which are relevant to the needs of the alpha generation in facing learning challenges in the digital age.

### **Multimodal Literacy Development**

An interview with Mr. Saeroji as the madrasah principal revealed that the principal always encourages teachers to think outside the box by holding regular discussions on innovative and relevant learning methods. Students are also encouraged to be active through multimodal literacy programs and digital content creation. The principal wants every individual in the madrasah to feel comfortable to come up with new ideas without fear of being wrong, because that is the way to build an innovative and dynamic environment. Based on the results of these interviews, it can be stated that this study reveals that transformational leadership at MAN 2 Banyuwangi not only focuses on literacy, but also on developing multimodal literacy that facilitates the use of multimodal text (a combination of text, video and infographics) in learning, making it relevant to the learning style of the alpha generation which is visual and interactive. This explanation is in line with previous research found by (Lango et al., 2024; Mamlukhah & Susanto, 2022) who found that transformational leadership can develop more modern learning methods that match the development of technology and the learning styles of alpha generation students



who grew up with different types of media and digital interactions, which makes them more likely to use multimodal texts for learning. Therefore, in addition to focusing on conventional literacy, it is important for education leaders to develop multimodal literacy that involves text, video and infographics. This approach supports a more visual and interactive way of learning.

As for the evidence in the findings of multi modal literacy in the form of documentation of the contribution of the muri record for the most student works and published in Banyuwangi radar.



**Figure 3. Documentation of the Muri Record Award Presentation to the Head of MAN 2 Banyuwangi**

Source: <https://man2banyuwangi.sch.id/>

Based on the picture above, it supports the explanation of the madrasah literacy program which aims to improve the development of multimodal literacy, in several literacy events MAN 2 Banyuwangi was named the first winner of the national level literacy active school and received an award as a contributor to the muri record for the most student work. this is the biggest motivation and stepping stone to continue developing literacy programs in madrasahs with several agendas, namely: GELEM (Madrasah Literacy Movement), GLOBE (Joint Outdoor Literacy Movement), GSMB (School Writing Book Movement). This program is an initiative that aims to improve students' ability to understand, use and create various types of scripts that combine several communication media, such as text, images, video, audio and infographics. This program is designed to support the rapid growth of the alpha generation in this modern age, where information is often delivered in multiple formats by utilizing multimedia technology. This evidence is one of the findings that transformational leadership is able to create significant changes in the learning process in madrasah aliyah in the area of multimodal literacy development, this is corroborated by research (Beltrán-Palanques, 2024; Higgs & Kim, 2022; Stewart, 2023) which shows that today's learners are more engaged in learning that combines various digital media, such as text, images, and videos, which allows them to understand the material in a more interactive way. Transformational leadership not only emphasizes literacy, but also develops multimodal literacy by facilitating the use of texts, videos and infographics in learning, which is more aligned with the visual and interactive learning styles of the alpha generation who are used to modern systems.

## D. Conclusions

Transformational leadership at MAN 2 Banyuwangi plays an important role in creating changes that touch the technical aspects and character of Alpha generation students. This leadership not only focuses on technological innovation, but also on the formation of adaptive and collaborative values that are crucial for students in facing an ever-changing world. Soft skill development is key to preparing students to adapt to 21st century challenges such as communication, teamwork, creativity and problem solving. Transformational leadership also prioritizes approaches that touch on the social and emotional aspects of students, preparing them with useful skill sets to thrive in the working and social world. In addition, transformational leadership also includes the development of digital learning centers that provide access to multimedia-based materials, as well as the development of multimodal literacy that involves different types of media such as combining text, video and infographics in one literacy activity. This approach is highly relevant to the learning style of the alpha generation who are more interested in technology-oriented learning and digital interaction. Digital learning centers facilitate flexible and inclusive learning, giving students access to materials anytime and anywhere. By integrating multimodal literacy, transformational leadership ensures that students can access more visual and interactive learning, in line with the rapid development of technology.

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