



Transformational Leadership in Developing the Quality of Lecturers' Careers in Islamic Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

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This research explores the role of ethics, morality, and intellectual stimulation in improving the quality of lecturers' careers at a higher education institution grounded in Islamic values. The study focuses on how these factors contribute to developing lecturers' academic and professional competencies while upholding Islamic principles. A qualitative approach was employed, utilizing interviews and observations with key university stakeholders, including rectors, deans, and lecturers, to gather insights into the institution's practices and programs. The findings reveal that ethics and morality, particularly integrity, justice, and responsibility, are central to leadership practices and contribute to a harmonious academic environment. Intellectual stimulation, through training programs, workshops, and collaborative research, significantly enhances critical thinking and creativity among lecturers. Furthermore, a strong religious community fosters collaboration and supports career growth. The implications of this research suggest that integrating ethical values and intellectual engagement in academic environments can lead to more effective career development for lecturers, aligning with both professional growth and moral integrity. The study also highlights the need for future research to broaden the scope, incorporating diverse educational settings and gender perspectives to provide a more comprehensive understanding.

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INTRODUCTION

The quality of lecturers' careers is essential for the sustainability of education, because high-quality lecturers are the main pillars of creating an excellent academic environment. Lecturers with quality careers have continuously updated knowledge and skills to teach students relevant and up-to-date materials. They are also more likely to engage in innovative research and community service, which enhances the university's reputation and makes fundamental contributions to the local and national communities (Karl et al., 2024; Zhang & Chen, 2024). In addition, lecturers with good career quality can be role models and motivators for students, encouraging them to achieve high

academic and professional achievements. The quality of lecturers' careers is also related to the stability and loyalty of teaching staff, reducing turnover that can disrupt the continuity of educational programs (Chen et al., 2022; Baglivo et al., 2023; Sujee et al., 2024). Thus, ensuring the quality of lecturers' careers is key to maintaining and improving the quality of education, making it a competitive and sustainable institution in the long term. The quality of lecturers' careers plays a crucial role because high-quality lecturers are the backbone of creating and maintaining superior academic standards (Khotimah et al., 2024). Good career-quality lecturers can provide inspiring and relevant teaching, preparing students to face the challenges of a dynamic working world (Sajja et al., 2023; Mehrabi et al., 2024).

They are also active in research activities and scientific publications, which contribute to the development of science and enhance the university's academic reputation. In addition, lecturers with promising careers tend to be more involved in curriculum development and educational innovation, ensuring that study programs remain relevant to industry needs and global developments (Faiz et al., 2023; Hasanah et al., 2024; Purwanto & Wafa, 2023). The quality of lecturers' careers also impacts their loyalty and job satisfaction, which reduces the turnover rate and ensures continuity and stability in the provision of education (Arifin, 2024; Ataman et al., 2024; Fahmi et al., 2024). Therefore, improving the quality of lecturers' careers is an important strategy to ensure can continue to provide high-quality education and remain competitive at the national and international levels (Souza Filho et al., 2021; Nagarajan et al., 2022; Cook, 2024). Previous studies have shown that good management of facilities and infrastructure, implementing integrated quality management, and using evaluation tools such as the Balance Scorecard are essential for improving the quality of lecturers' careers in Islamic universities.

Regarding the quality of lecturers' careers, Trabelsi et al (2023) highlighted the importance of managing facilities and infrastructure in meeting educational quality standards at IPI Garut, where good management can improve lecturers' academic qualifications and productivity. Jho & Ha (2024) research shows that implementing a comprehensive and sustainable quality management system is essential for improving the quality of education and lecturers' careers in Islamic universities. Meanwhile, research exploring the implementation of the Balance Scorecard found that this evaluation tool helps monitor and improve lecturer performance through systematic evaluation, which is also relevant for Islamic religious universities (Sanjani, 2024; Zain & Mustofa, 2024; Zaini & Fahmi, 2023). These studies emphasize the importance of a holistic and structured approach in management and assessment to improve the quality of lecturers' careers in facing

the challenges of globalization and rapid changes in the world of higher education (Bai et al., 2025).

Transformational leadership is crucial in improving the quality of lecturers' careers. Transformational leaders can create an inspiring and supportive work environment where lecturers feel motivated to continue developing themselves and reach their full potential. These leaders encourage innovation in teaching and research through a visionary and empathetic approach and support lecturers' professional development. In addition, transformational leadership ensures a fair reward and recognition system, which can increase lecturers' job satisfaction and commitment to the university. Thus, lecturers feel appreciated and encouraged to contribute more, ultimately improving the quality of education and the reputation as a whole.

The novelty of this research lies in the transformational leadership, which not only focuses on the development of individual lecturers but also integrates a holistic approach that includes the development of a collaborative and innovative academic environment. By utilizing digital technology and a personalized approach, transformational leaders at this university can create career development programs tailored to each lecturer's unique needs and potential. In addition, new initiatives encourage lecturers' involvement in cross-disciplinary research projects and global partnerships, enriching the academic experience and opening up new career development opportunities.

Based on the above, this study analyzes how transformational leadership can contribute significantly to developing lecturers' career quality. In addition, this study identifies effective transformational leadership practices in creating a work environment that supports lecturers' professional development and understanding of their impact on lecturers' academic performance, motivation, and job satisfaction. Thus, the results of this study are expected to provide strategic recommendations for university administrators to implement a transformational leadership model that can improve the quality and sustainability of lecturers' careers and support the achievement of the institution's overall vision and mission.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method that utilizes descriptive data from the observed phenomena in written and spoken language. This method was chosen because of its advantages in presenting a direct relationship between researchers and research subjects and its flexibility in adjusting to complex realities. The type of research used is a case study, where researchers explore certain phenomena in depth and detail by collecting data through various procedures over a specific period. This approach focuses intensively on one

object and studies it as a comprehensive case (Pecere et al., 2022; Cui, 2023; Susnjak & McIntosh, 2024). Primary data sources were obtained from interviews with several informants selected using quota sampling. This technique ensures that the sources studied are representative and in-depth.

With this approach, the study provides a clear and detailed picture of the phenomena studied and reveals the relationships and dynamics that occur. This study involved participation from various levels of leadership at the university, including the head of the rectorate, vice-rectors, heads of faculty deans, heads of study programs, and lecturers, with 18 participants, 14 men, and four women. All participants had a bachelor's or master's degree, without a doctoral degree, which reflects the level of education held by the leaders at this university. The majority of participants were male, indicating gender dominance in leadership positions. Using the quota sampling technique, this study collected representative and in-depth data, providing comprehensive insights into leadership dynamics, job satisfaction, and work productivity among interns and university staff.

Tabel 1. Participant

Participant	Gender		Educational background			Code	Amount
	L	P	S1	S2	S3		
Head of Rectorate	1	-	-	1	-	AH	1
Vice Rector	2	-	-	-	2	HM, NF	2
Head of Faculty Dean	3	-	-	1	2	AFD, CM, ZA	3
Head of Study Program	5	-	-	2	3	AM, HA, UM, FR, IG	5
Lecturer	3	4	-	5	2	AB, BM, MR, HF, ZR, ED, NA	7
Total	14	4		9	9	-	18

Data analysis in this study uses the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (1994), which includes four steps: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and concluding/verification (Chu et al., 2022). The initial stage includes data collection through observation, interviews, and documentation. The second step includes and focuses on essential elements relevant to the research theme. Data reduction aims to present a clear picture of transformational leadership and career quality. The third step is data presentation in the form of narrative text. The final step involves drawing conclusions based on the reduced data. Data validity is guaranteed through triangulation and review, ensuring the consistency of research findings. Source triangulation is carried out by comparing data with previous theories and studies in higher education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Ethics and Morality in Improving the Quality of Lecturers' Careers

Ethics and morality are the main pillars of leadership, especially in an academic environment such. As conveyed by AH as the rector of Unuja, As an institution based on Islamic values, we strongly emphasize the importance of integrity, justice, and responsibility in every action and decision leaders and teaching staff take. These ethics and morality are not only to maintain harmony in the work environment but also to ensure that we provide a good example for students and the community.

AH said that we apply religious principles through various programs and policies. For example, we hold routine activities such as religious studies, congregational prayers, and religious discussions involving all lecturers and staff. In addition, in decision-making, we always try to act fairly and transparently by Islamic teachings. We also give awards to lecturers who show outstanding performance based on Islamic values, such as integrity, hard work, and concern for others. We have various programs aimed at developing lecturers' careers. Among them are training programs and workshops, both domestically and abroad, which are tailored to each lecturer's field of expertise. We also encourage lecturers to participate in seminars and conferences and conduct collaborative research. In addition, we provide career counseling services and mentoring programs where senior lecturers guide junior lecturers in their career development. We have a regular evaluation and feedback system where each program and activity is evaluated thoroughly. AH explained that we also provide opportunities for lecturers to offer constructive input and suggestions. In addition, we ensure that every decision is made by considering our ethical and moral principles. In this way, we can ensure that the programs are not only beneficial for the career development of lecturers but also in line with the Islamic values that we adhere to.

AH said that I hope can continue to be a conducive place for the career development of lecturers while still upholding ethical and moral values and religious principles. I hope that our lecturers can continue to excel at the national and international levels and make significant contributions to the development of science and society. With a shared commitment, I am sure we can achieve these goals.



Figure 1. Univelling Leadership Pillars

Figure 1, ethics and morality play a crucial role in shaping the leadership culture, particularly in fostering a harmonious and productive academic environment (Jho & Ha, 2024). The rector, AH, emphasized that Unuja prioritizes integrity, justice, and responsibility in leadership actions and teaching staff decisions as an institution grounded in Islamic values. This commitment to ethics and morality aims to maintain a conducive working environment and set a positive example for students and the surrounding community. Through regular religious activities such as studies, congregational prayers, and discussions, University ensures that Islamic principles are deeply embedded in its operations (Hasanah et al., 2024; Onia, 2024; Putri et al., 2024). These activities foster a culture where ethical considerations guide professional and personal behavior.

In addition to ethical conduct, University invests significantly in the career development of its lecturers through various programs and policies. AH highlighted that the university provides tailored training, workshops, seminars, and collaborative research opportunities to enhance lecturers' professional skills. Senior lecturers mentor junior staff, promoting career growth and knowledge sharing (Faisol, 2023; Qushwa, 2024). The university also implements a robust system of evaluations and feedback, ensuring that all programs align with ethical and moral standards. This continuous improvement system ensures that lecturers' professional growth aligns with the Islamic values upheld by the institution, creating an environment that nurtures academic excellence and moral integrity. By upholding these principles, AH believes that Unuja will continue to foster a scholarly community that contributes meaningfully to the nation and the global educational landscape.

Developing Religious Communities as a Pillar of Transformational Leadership

Building a religious community in an academic environment is very important, especially, which is based on Islamic values. AFD, the dean of Unuja, stated that a strong religious community can create a harmonious, mutually supportive, togetherness and brotherhood work environment. This improves the quality of lecturers' careers and fosters a spirit of collaboration and concern between lecturers, staff, and students.

The principle of togetherness and brotherhood is applied through various religious and social activities. As the dean, ZA confirmed this by routinely holding congregational prayers, conducting religious studies, and conducting religious discussions with the entire campus community. In addition, social activities such as community service and humanitarian assistance are also held to involve lecturers, staff, and students. These activities aim to strengthen relationships between community members and build a sense of mutual care and social responsibility. AFD explained that a harmonious and mutually supportive work environment is the primary key to developing the quality of lecturers' careers. Therefore, various career development programs for lecturers, such as training and workshops with togetherness and collaboration, are provided. Lecturers are encouraged to collaborate in research and teaching and are given awards for those who demonstrate commitment to the values of ukhuwah. Thus, lecturers feel supported and motivated to improve their work quality.

One concrete example is the mentoring program, which CM delivered as the dean. In this program, senior lecturers provide academic guidance and become role models in implementing Islamic values and togetherness. This program has helped junior lecturers feel more accepted and supported so that they are more motivated to excel. In addition, routine religious activities also strengthen the sense of community and togetherness, positively impacting lecturer performance. ZA explained that the main challenge is to ensure that every member of the university community truly understands and applies the values of togetherness and ukhuwah. We hold training and workshops on developing Islamic spirituality and ethics to overcome this challenge. We also encourage open dialogue and listen to input from lecturers, staff, and students. This way, we can create an inclusive and supportive environment where everyone feels valued and supported.

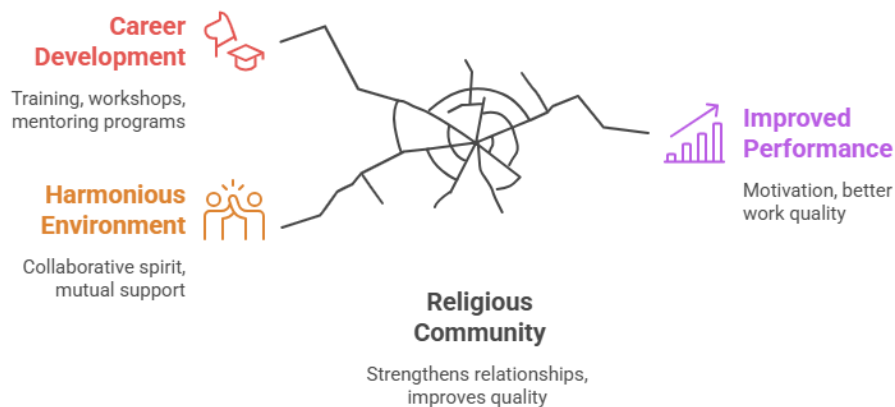


Figure 2. Religious Community Fosters Lecturer Career Development

Figure 2, finding reveals that the religious community built is vital in creating a harmonious and supportive academic environment. According to AFD, a strong religious community strengthens the relationship between lecturers, staff, and students and improves the quality of lecturers' careers (Zsila et al., 2021; McCutcheon et al., 2024). Spiritual activities such as congregational prayers and religious studies, which are carried out routinely, Help build togetherness and brotherhood. Social activities involving all elements of the campus also strengthen the sense of social responsibility and concern among community members (Fan et al., 2024; Huwiler et al., 2024). This creates an atmosphere that supports the professional growth of lecturers in an environment full of collaborative spirit.

Lecturer career development programs run at Unuja, such as training, workshops, and mentoring, further emphasize the importance of togetherness and brotherhood in the academic environment. AFD and CM emphasize that in addition to academic development, it is important for lecturers to be role models in implementing Islamic values. The mentoring program involving senior lecturers as mentors is also a real example of the application of the value of togetherness, where junior lecturers feel more appreciated and motivated (Okur et al., 2022; Srivani & Murugappan, 2023; Lokaj et al., 2024). By involving lecturers in various social and religious activities, strives to create an inclusive and supportive environment, ultimately positively impacting the quality of lecturers' work and the university's reputation.

Intellectual Stimulation in Developing Lecturers' Potential

Intellectual stimulation is essential in improving the quality of lecturers' careers because it encourages them to continue learning and thinking critically and creatively to find solutions. In an academic environment based on religious values, every thought and action of lecturers must always align with these

principles. This approach not only improves lecturers' academic competence but also strengthens their moral integrity, which ultimately positively impacts the quality of education and research.

Various approaches have been implemented to encourage lecturers to think critically and creatively. One is through training programs and workshops on developing critical and creative thinking skills. In addition, seminars and discussions on contemporary issues from an Islamic perspective are held. Lecturers are encouraged to engage in collaborative research that demands innovative solutions that still refer to Islamic values. All intellectual activities begin and end with prayer, as a reminder that all efforts must align with Islamic teachings.

One concrete example is the group discussion activities that are regularly held. In these discussions, lecturers are encouraged to express their opinions on various academic and social topics. They are invited to think critically and creatively in finding solutions based on Islamic values. For example, in seeking solutions to environmental problems, lecturers seek technical solutions and consider moral and ethical aspects based on Islamic teachings. In addition, scientific writing competitions are held to encourage lecturers to develop creative ideas based on religious values. This approach has a significant impact on the quality of lecturers' careers. Many lecturers have succeeded in producing high-quality research that is recognized nationally and internationally. They can also integrate Islamic values into teaching methods to make the learning process more meaningful for students.

The main challenge in increasing intellectual stimulation is ensuring that all lecturers are actively and consistently involved in every activity. To overcome this challenge, the university strives to create programs that are interesting and relevant to the needs of lecturers. In addition, full support in the form of necessary facilities and resources, as well as awards and incentives for outstanding lecturers, is given to encourage active participation. A culture of mutual support among lecturers is also encouraged to create an environment conducive to intellectual development.

The university hopes to continue to be a place that encourages the intellectual development of critical and creative lecturers while still being based on Islamic values. Lecturers are expected to continue to innovate in research and teaching and to be role models in integrating science with religious values. With a shared commitment, the university is confident that it can improve the quality of lecturers' careers and its reputation nationally and internationally.

Table 1. Intellectual Stimulation Of Lecturers And Its Impact On Lecturer Career Development

Activity	Purpose	Impact on Lecturer Career Development
Training & Workshop Programs	Develop critical and creative thinking skills	Enhances lecturers' ability to develop innovative solutions
Seminars & Islamic Perspective Discussions	Discuss contemporary issues from an Islamic perspective	Helps lecturers think more critically and remain relevant to Islamic values
Collaborative Research	Encourage lecturers to engage in innovative research	Improves the quality of research and publications at an international level
Regular Group Discussions	Encourage lecturers to think critically and creatively on social and academic issues	Generates creative ideas that integrate Islamic values
Scientific Writing Competitions	Encourage lecturers to develop creative academic ideas	Enhances the quality of scientific writing and lecturers' academic contributions
Awards & Incentives	Acknowledge lecturers' contributions to intellectual activities	Increases motivation and commitment to career development
Support for Facilities & Resources	Provide necessary resources for intellectual activities	Facilitates lecturers in developing research and teaching

Table 1, indicate that intellectual stimulation significantly improves the quality of lecturers' careers. Through various training programs, workshops, and seminars focusing on developing critical and creative thinking skills, lecturers can deepen their understanding and produce innovative solutions that adhere to Islamic values (Song & Ke, 2023; Agostini et al., 2024). Activities such as group discussions and scientific writing competitions allow lecturers to think more critically and creatively in developing practical ideas in academic aspects and social and moral life through Islamic teachings (Hessen et al., 2022; Pecere et al., 2022; Ivanova et al., 2024).

However, the biggest challenge in developing intellectual stimulation is ensuring that all lecturers actively participate in scholarly activities. To that end, the university continues to strive to create relevant and engaging programs and provide full support in the form of facilities and incentives to encourage lecturer participation (Fahd & Miah, 2023; Martínez-Comesaña et al., 2023). By maintaining a culture of mutual support among lecturers, it is hoped that a conducive academic environment can be created, which not only advances the quality of lecturers' careers but also improves the quality of education and the reputation of the university, both at the national and international levels.

CONCLUSION

The most important finding of this study highlights the crucial role of ethics, morality, and intellectual stimulation in improving the quality of lecturers' careers. The study reveals that universities can foster an environment conducive to career growth and academic excellence by embedding Islamic values into leadership, community development, and educational activities. The strength of this research lies in its contribution to the field by offering a fresh perspective on how ethical principles and religious community building can enhance academic performance and lecturer development. It also provides a methodological approach for integrating ethics and morality into career development programs. However, the study has limited scope, as it is confined to a specific institution, which may not fully represent the diversity of educational contexts across different locations, genders, and age groups. Future research is needed to broaden the scope, possibly incorporating surveys and more diverse samples to gain a comprehensive understanding. This could serve as a foundation for more targeted and effective educational leadership and development policy-making.

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