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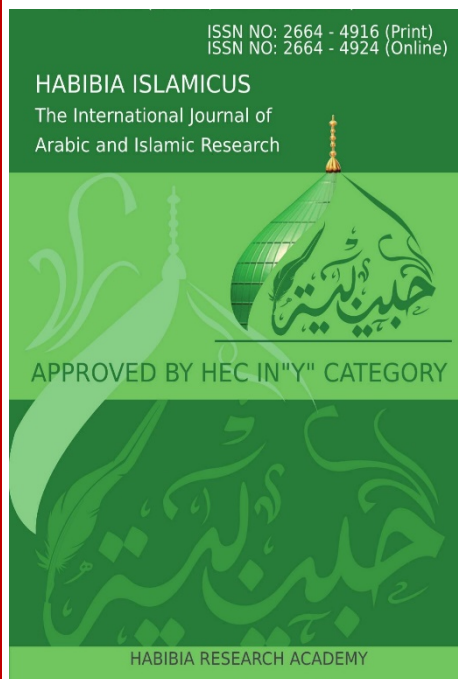
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### TOPIC:

**TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION IN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE**

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TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION IN  
ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

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**ABSTRACT:**

*This article critically examines the relationship between transformational leadership theory and Islamic principles of leadership. While transformational leadership, with its four pillars of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration—has dominated contemporary leadership scholarship, its compatibility with non-Western religious and ethical frameworks remains underexplored. Through an analysis of the Qur'an, the Sunnah, and the leadership practices of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), this article demonstrates substantial convergence between transformational behaviors and prophetic leadership. The Prophet exemplified idealized influence through his trustworthy character, inspirational motivation through Qur'anic revelation during hardship, intellectual stimulation through consultative decision-making, and individualized consideration through personalized care for his companions. However, a fundamental philosophical divergence exists: Islamic leadership derives its authority from divine revelation and seeks the pleasure of God as its ultimate purpose, whereas transformational leadership originates from human reason and pursues organizational success. This distinction carries profound implications for Muslim leaders navigating contemporary organizational contexts.*

**KEYWORDS:** Transformational leadership, Islamic leadership, Prophet Muhammad, idealized influence, vicegerency (*khilafah*)

**1. INTRODUCTION**

The study of leadership has captivated scholars, practitioners, and policymakers for centuries, yet few leadership paradigms have generated as much sustained scholarly attention as transformational leadership. Transformational leadership, introduced first by James MacGregor in 1978, has appeared as one of the well-known and widely researched theories of leadership in organizational studies.<sup>1</sup> Unlike transactional leadership, which operates on exchanges of rewards for compliance, transformational leadership uplifts both leaders and followers to advanced levels of motivation, morality, and performance. It is a process wherein leaders and followers engage in a mutual journey of growth, inspiring one another to transcend self-interest for the greater good of the collective. This theory has found application across diverse domains—from corporate boardrooms and educational institutions to non-profit organizations and government agencies—demonstrating its remarkable versatility and enduring relevance. While Burns distinguished transformational from transactional leadership conceptually, it was Bernard Bass in the mid-1980s who developed the empirical framework that made the theory testable. Bass argued that transformational leadership augments transactional leadership rather than replacing it entirely. Leaders often employ both styles depending on context, but transformational

behaviors consistently predict extra effort, satisfaction, and effectiveness beyond what transactional leadership alone can achieve.

However, despite the extensive body of literature examining transformational leadership through Western philosophical and organizational lenses, a critical question remains insufficiently explored: How does transformational leadership align with, or diverge from, Islamic principles of leadership? This question is not merely an academic curiosity; it carries profound implications for the approximately two billion Muslims worldwide who occupy leadership positions in various sectors, as well as for organizations operating in Muslim-majority contexts. The intersection of contemporary leadership theory and Islamic ethical frameworks represents a fertile yet underexplored terrain that demands rigorous scholarly investigation.

The present article undertakes this important task by offering a critical examination of transformational leadership from an Islamic perspective. It begins by establishing a broad understanding of transformational leadership, tracing its theoretical origins, defining its central characteristics, and analyzing its four foundational pillars: ‘idealized influence,’ ‘inspirational motivation,’ ‘intellectual stimulation,’ and ‘individualized consideration.’ These components, as developed by Bass and Avolio, constitute the theoretical backbone of transformational leadership and offer an organized framework for assessing leader behaviors and organizational performances.<sup>2</sup> The article then turns to the Islamic leadership tradition, drawing primarily from the Qur’an and the Sunnah (teachings and practices) of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).<sup>3</sup> The Islamic worldview presents a distinctive understanding of leadership, rooted in the concept of vicegerency (*khilafah*), wherein every human being is considered a steward of God on earth, accountable for their actions and responsibilities. The famous *hadith* narrated by Ibn Umar—“Every one of you is a shepherd and everyone is answerable about his flock”<sup>4</sup>—illustrates this ethical foundation. This theological grounding introduces a dimension of divine consciousness (*taqwa*) that fundamentally shapes the motivations, behaviors, and ultimate objectives of Muslim leaders.

The comparative analysis undertaken in this article reveals both striking convergences and significant divergences between ‘transformational leadership’ and Islamic leadership principles.<sup>5</sup> On one hand, the practical behaviors pertaining to transformational leadership—such as articulating a compelling vision, serving as a moral role model, stimulating intellectual engagement, and attending to individual follower needs—find powerful resonance in the leadership practice of Prophet Muhammad. The article provides detailed historical evidence demonstrating how the Prophet embodied idealized influence through his unwavering character, inspirational motivation through Qur’anic revelation during times of hardship, intellectual stimulation through consultative decision-making, and individualized consideration through personalized care for each companion.

On the other hand, a fundamental philosophical difference emerges. The origin and ultimate purpose of leadership distinguish Islamic principles from contemporary leadership

theories. While transformational leadership derives its authority from human reason and organizational objectives, Islamic leadership draws its legitimacy from divine revelation and seeks the pleasure of God as the ultimate end. This distinction is not merely theoretical; it permeates every aspect of leadership practice, from goal-setting and resource allocation to performance evaluation and succession planning. By overcoming the divide between contemporary leadership scholarship and Islamic ethical traditions, this article contributes to a more inclusive, globally relevant understanding of leadership. It challenges the assumption that leadership theories developed in Western contexts possess universal applicability without modification or critical engagement with local cultural and religious frameworks. Moreover, it offers practical insights for Muslim leaders seeking to integrate their faith commitments with effective organizational leadership, as well as for non-Muslim leaders working in cross-cultural contexts.

The article proceeds as follows: Section two provides a comprehensive overview of transformational leadership theory, including its key tools and influence processes. Section three presents a critical examination of transformational leadership from an Islamic perspective, analyzing each of the four components through the lens of Qur'anic teachings and prophetic practice. Section four concludes with an account of the findings and their implications for theory and practice. Through this structure, the article aims to advance scholarly discourse on leadership while providing actionable guidance for leaders navigating the complex intersections of faith, ethics, and organizational effectiveness.

## **2. Transformational Leadership: A General Overview?**

The term of “transformation” originates from the Latin word *transformare*, meaning “to change the character, purpose, or condition of something.” It can take place at several levels; including the individual, group, community, or political system. According to another perspective, the term ‘transformation’ comes from the word “to transform” which means modify and improve something from one situation to a better and more valuable one. Moreover, transformation refers to the process of changing something into a different form: for example, turning a possibility into reality or translating achievement motivation into an actual accomplishment.<sup>6</sup> Transformational leadership is characterized by optimistic, trusting, and positive leaders who emotionally encourage teamwork and foster innovation through support and inspiration.<sup>7</sup> According to Dvir, Kass, and Shamir, transformational leadership involves mutually beneficial goals, motivation, emotional engagement, a shared vision, and common values.<sup>8</sup>

Burns defined transformational leadership as “a process where leaders and followers engage in a mutual process of ‘raising one another to higher levels of morality and motivation.’” Transformational leaders elevate expectations by appealing to the higher ideals and core values of their followers. In doing so, they often embody these values themselves and employ charismatic influence to draw individuals toward both the values and the leader. Burns argues that transformational leadership is more effective than transactional leadership which primarily relies on self-interest-based incentives. An

appeal to shared social values thus encourages people to collaborate, rather than working in individual—and potentially competitive—struggle. He also observes transformational leadership as an ongoing process rather than the discrete exchanges characteristic of transactional leadership.<sup>9</sup>

The transforming leader searches for potential motives in the followers, strives to fulfill their higher needs, and engages them at a comprehensive personal level. The result of transforming leadership is a relationship of mutual inspiration and elevation that transforms followers into leaders and may, sometimes, convert leaders into moral agents.<sup>10</sup> Transformational leadership makes an appeal to the follower's thought. It is determined to transform the thinking of the follower so that they match its vision. If the leader can reshape the follower's perspective so that the follower adopts the leader's vision and ideas, the follower becomes more strongly motivated to pursue that vision and goal. Changing the follower's vision from within to match the leader's vision is not always that simple. It is simpler to use some external tools for this purpose.<sup>11</sup> Subordinate and the results related to their efforts are influenced to the great extent by the transformational leadership. This includes trust to managers, organizational commitment, satisfaction of leadership, performance in relation with work and strengthening unique work relations.<sup>12</sup>

Transformational leadership takes place “when leaders broaden and elevate the interests of their employees, when they generate awareness and acceptance of the purposes and mission of the group.”<sup>13</sup> It is defined as “a pattern of leader behaviors that transforms and inspires followers to perform beyond expectations while transcending self-interest for the good of the organization”<sup>14</sup> Transformational leadership empowers leaders to move beyond their personal interests and develop a vision for the future that benefits both themselves and their followers.<sup>15</sup> From small work teams to the whole organizations, transformational leadership can influence the direction of action through a clear and strong vision. Its impact extends beyond organizational boundaries, shaping interactions and outcomes in the sphere of international relations as well.<sup>16</sup>

Transformational leadership is crucial for organizations undergoing through the processes of change. It helps to develop such a strong vision that motivates both the leaders and followers. Transformational leadership puts emphasize primarily on relationship between leader and followers. It targets to bring well-being and achievement to followers and the organization as a whole.<sup>17</sup> Transformational leadership helps organizations to achieve their objects more skillfully by linking the job performance to valued rewards and by ensuring employees to get the resources required for the job. Transformational leaders develop a strategic vision, communicate that vision through enclosing and use of symbol, model the vision by “walking the talk” and demonstrate commitment to it.<sup>18</sup>

### 2.1. Important Tools for Transformational Leadership

The four important tools discussed and used for transformation of the follower's vision by the leader are the following:<sup>19</sup>

- Idealized Influence
- Inspirational Motivation
- Intellectual Stimulation
- Individualized Consideration.

#### *A-Idealized Influence:*

Transformational leadership is to be a role models and to have a charisma so that others would strive become like it. Idealized influence is the keenness of the leadership to confront a certain level of difficulty and adhere to a fundamental set of values, beliefs, and ethical principles. By means of this type of influence, the leader generates confidence with his followers and they, in turn, foster trust in their leader. In this way the leader has given his subordinates building trust and serves as a role model for the workers to go beyond their assigned duties. “The leaders will be praised, respected, faithful, and trusted making the followers proud when working with them. The followers will try to behave like the leaders and want to imitate their leaders. The leaders will strengthen confidence of the followers and enable the followers to be the same as the leaders based on their shared visions and purposes.<sup>20</sup> The leaders will avoid using the power for their own interests. The leaders will demonstrate their ingenuity.<sup>21</sup> Thus, the transformational leaders will maintain their influences in achieving their goals and performing their duties.”<sup>22</sup>

#### *B-Inspirational Motivation*

‘Inspirational Motivation’ means that the leader is capable of motivating self-confidence, enhancing motivation and fostering an awareness and appreciation of followers’ thoughts, perspectives, and ideas. The transformational leader presents a clear vision for the future, understands and clearly communicates the expectations and goals of the group and show a commitment to the goals that have been laid out for the group to achieve. This aspect of transformational leadership requires high quality communication skills as the leader must convey his messages with accuracy, power and a sense of clout. Other significant behaviors of the leader comprise his continued enthusiasm, eagerness and ability to point out the confident sides of organizational visions and goals.<sup>23</sup>

It is also argued that ‘Inspirational Motivation’ refers to leader’s behavior in a way that inspires the followers by building internal motivation, providing meaning and challenges during work with the followers. Transformational leaders invigorate team spirit through their passion, promoting positive attitudes and inspiring optimistic thinking among the followers. “There is a clear creation and hope that the leaders will show dedication or commitment to goals and shared vision. Leaders will show confidence and show their willingness to achieve their goals. Leaders will help the followers overlook their interests for the visions and missions of the organizations. The leaders will help the followers

develop his or her engagement with the long-term goals. Leaders will help the followers follow their own interests for the visions and missions of the organizations.”<sup>24</sup> “Idealized influence” and “Inspirational motivation” both reveal that the leader provides followers with a clear and inspiring sense of purpose that is energizing. Through these qualities, the leader fosters identification with both the leader and the vision he or she promotes.<sup>25</sup>

### ***C-Intellectual Stimulation***

Transformational leader loves creativity and self-sufficiency among the team. He/she helps the team in this regard by involving them in decision making process and by encouraging them to be more creative for solving issues. Such leaders also consider assumptions and plead for thoughts from followers, not to criticize but to help change the way followers look at the problems and challenges. He/she brings in wider vision to enable the followers to comprehend the situation as a whole and so that their efforts bear fruits.<sup>26</sup> “Intellectual stimulation” refers to a leader’s ability to encourage followers to challenge traditional and conventional approaches to problem-solving. It motivates them to critically evaluate existing methods, explore new perspectives, and seek innovative ways to improve performance and outcomes.<sup>27</sup>

### ***D-Individualized Consideration***

“Individualized Consideration refers to the behaviors of leaders who understand the differences of the followers in terms of different needs and abilities of each person. The leaders will have behaviors that are concerned about the welfares and development of the followers to promote the good working environment. The leaders will have relationships with people to provide care for the individuals and make the followers feel that they are valuable and important. The leaders will be the coaches and the advisors for each follower. The leaders are expected to develop the potential of the followers to become higher. The leaders will pay special attention to individual needs for the achievement and growth of each person. In addition, the leaders will treat the followers by providing opportunities from learning new things and creating the atmosphere of support for the followers in working.”<sup>28</sup>

Transformational leader has a distinctive ability of identifying the needs and desires of individual members of his followers. Not all the people are motivated by the same stimulant rather every individual has generally a motivation factor of his own. Money, excitement and need; all those and other factors are there at the back of minds. The transformational leader considers individual factors of motivation and the stimulants of every member of the team by keen observation and knowledge of their personal taste. In this way he will have customized coaching and training sessions for them to lead them towards success in the accomplishment of organizational objectives.

Transformational leadership is fundamentally concerned with change, and for that change to be evocative, it must be sustainable. According to Michael Fullan, leadership sustainability is characterized by eight key elements.

1. “Public service with a moral purpose:” It means to make public service with a moral purpose part of the system.
2. “Commitment to changing context at all levels:” The whole context is to be changed in a way that people are ready to experiment new ideas.
3. “Lateral capacity building through networks:” The basic idea is to share knowledge and experience with other organizations. It is to activate more thinking and have better results.
4. “Intelligent accountability and vertical relationships” (encompassing both capacity building and accountability). Though this is in the context of educational institutions, but it can be applied on any leadership scenario. It means that accountability should be accompanied by capacity building at the same time.
5. “Deep learning:” It means to raise the bar of the learning goals and have ambitious targets.
6. “Dual commitment to short-term and long-term results:” Leadership is not only to achieve short term results but at the same time having a vision for short and long-term change and making an environment that the followers work for both goals equally.
7. “Cyclical energizing:” Having a plan for the followers to motivate them and have a capacity building plan for them not once for all, but in a periodical manner so that the energy keeps fresh and is not lost.
8. “The long lever of leadership:” Not only pleasing on having immediate results but having a vision for long term change in a way that once the leader is no more, he has prepared other leaders to replace him.<sup>29</sup>

### **2.2. Influence Process of Transformational Leadership:**

Some writers say that Kenneth E. Boulding’s theory of love as powerbase is compatible with Burn’s definition of love for Transformational leadership. Boulding views love as a concrete basis of power rather than simply an emotional feeling, even though emotional elements remain inherent in it. He conceptualizes love as active and purposeful conduct, stressing that genuine love is non-abusive and non-coercive. As a source of power, it operates through care, respect, and the promotion of human well-being rather than through control or compulsion. This non-abusive and integrative power is fitting the definition of Transformational leadership given by Burn. Worth noting is that love here means mutual stimulation of leader and the follower. This mutuality enhances productivity in organizations.<sup>30</sup> Beyond Boulding’s concept of love as a power base, social identity theory offers another explanatory mechanism. Transformational leaders shape followers’ self-concept by making collective identity salient. When followers identify strongly with the leader and the group’s mission, they internalize organizational goals as their own, reducing the need for external monitoring and control.

### **3. Transformational Leadership in Islamic Perspective: A Critical Examination**

#### **3.1. The Nature of Transformational Leadership under Islamic Teaching**

Transformational leadership theory is convergent with the Islamic principles of leadership when it comes to the material rules put to action in both types of leadership however when it comes to spiritual concepts and the matters of faith that is the most significant part of the Islamic leadership theory, there is a difference between them. According to Islamic worldview the human being is a born leader as God sent him to earth as His deputy. Quran narrates this fact as follows:

“And when thy Lord said unto the angels: Lo! I am about to place a viceroy in the earth, they said: Wilt thou place therein one who will do harm therein and will shed blood, while we, we hymn Thy praise and sanctify Thee? He said: Surely I know that which ye know not.”<sup>31</sup>

The concept of *Amanah* (trust) is central to Islamic leadership. Every leader is entrusted with the well-being of those under their authority, and this trust carries heavy accountability before God on the Day of Judgment. This understanding transforms leadership from a position of privilege into a sacred responsibility. This verse of the Quran leads to the fact that the aim of Islamic leadership is to remind the fellow humans of their true status of being a vicegerent of God on earth in whatever position they are. The basic teaching of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) alludes towards making leaders by the main leader, when he said,

“It has been narrated on the authority of Ibn 'Umar that the Prophet (May be upon him) said:

Beware. Every one of you is a shepherd and everyone is answerable about his flock. The Caliph is a shepherd over the people and shall be questioned about his subjects (as to how he conducted their affairs). A man is a guardian over the members of his family and shall be questioned about them (as to how he looked after their physical and moral well-being). A woman is a guardian over the household of her husband and his children and shall be questioned about them (as to how she managed the household and brought up the children). A slave is a guardian over the property of his master and shall be questioned about it (as to how he safeguarded his trust). Beware, every one of you is a guardian and every one of you shall be questioned about his trust.”<sup>32</sup>

This is the basic difference between transformational leadership theory and Islamic principles of leadership. Nevertheless, the process of transformation is almost like that of Islamic leadership process put to practice by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). God says in Quran:

“We sent thee not save as a mercy for the peoples”<sup>33</sup>

Islamic leadership emphasizes the formulation of a clear vision and promotes commitment to collective goals founded upon the principle of justice.

“O ye who believe! Be ye staunch in justice, witnesses for Allah, even though it be against yourselves or (your) parents or (your) kindred, whether (the case be of) a rich man or a poor man, for Allah is nearer unto both (them ye are). So, follow not passion lest ye lapse (from truth) and if ye lapse or fall away, then lo! Allah is ever Informed of what ye do.”<sup>34</sup>

Aspects of transformational leadership include expressing a vision and promoting group goals. It employs values, attitudes and behaviours, such as selfless love, optimism, and prophecy, to encourage followers and escalate their sense of divine patience, resulting in positive organizational consequences.<sup>35</sup> Islamic leadership is based on the core vision of the unity of God and group goals of establishing a society based on that. It utilizes the values of righteousness and piety and the attitude of enjoining virtues and forbidding evil and good will for the whole humanity. It persuades its followers i.e. the believers to focus spreading the fundamental values of Islam and keep hope ultimately for the real reward of the hereafter. Thus the modern theory of transformational leadership might not have been discussed in the classical period of Islamic history however the characteristics of this theory well existed in the Islamic leadership. Similarly, the principle of *Shura* (consultation), mandated in the Qur'an (42:38), requires leaders to actively seek input from followers before making decisions. While transformational leadership encourages intellectual stimulation, *Shura* makes consultation a religious obligation rather than merely an effective managerial practice.

### **3.2. Comparison between Transformational Leadership and Islamic principles of leadership**

For the sake of comparison if we take the four fundamentals of transformational leadership theory and search for them in the Islamic principles, we can have interesting results. Those four fundamentals include: “Idealized Influence,” “Inspirational Motivation,” “Intellectual Stimulation,” Individualized Consideration.”

#### ***A - Idealized Influence***

The first concept of “Idealized Influence” refers to that a leader should have a charismatic person. “A leader with idealized influence tends to influence the ideals, inner values and inspire them to move in leader’s desired direction. Idealized influence enables the followers not only to identify with the leader but also creates trust and respect for the leader. A leader with idealized influence strongly disseminates vision and gains followers’ confidence immediately.”<sup>36</sup> The Qur’anic concept of *Uswah Hasanah* (the excellent model), articulated in Qur’an 33:21, presents the life of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) as a comprehensive and living standard for human conduct, especially for those who seek closeness to God and success in the Hereafter. This “excellent example” is not confined to ritual devotion alone but extends to all dimensions of life—including leadership—thereby making the Prophet’s life a practical embodiment of divine guidance. This ideal is further illuminated in Qur’an 68:4, where the Prophet is described as being “on a great moral character” (*khuluqin ‘azim*), a phrase that signifies the highest standard, encompassing

truthfulness, humility, compassion, forgiveness, and unwavering integrity. Together, these verses establish that the Prophet's personality is not merely to be admired but actively emulated; his behavior becomes the criterion through which believers shape their own conduct, transforming faith from a set of beliefs into a lived ethical reality.

The Prophet of Islam began his leadership from idealized influence as he only preached Islam during his 13 years in Makkah before migration to Madinah. This means that during this period, he only worked hard to inculcate the fundamentals of Islam within the hearts and minds of his followers. No doubt that he was doing this on the command of God. He did not allow his fellow companions to retaliate in any form. He taught his followers the fundamentals of the new religion and through his loving and respectful way removed the false faith from their minds and hearts. Mubarakpuri states:

“The Prophet (Peace be upon him) used to meet and teach, the new converts, the religion in privacy because the call to Islam was still running on an individual and secret basis. Revelation accelerated and continued after the first verses of “O you wrapped in garments.” The verses and pieces of Sûrah (chapters) revealed at this time were short ones with wonderful strong pauses and quite fascinating rhythms in full harmony with that delicate whispering setting. The central topic running through them focused on sanctifying the soul and deterring the Muslims from falling prey to the deceptive glamour of life. The early verses used as well to give a highly accurate account of the Hell and the Garden (Paradise), leading the believers down a new course diametrically opposed to the ill practices rampant amongst their compatriots.”<sup>37</sup>

Thus, the Prophet of Islam during this period focused on individuals who came to the fold of Islam and faced severe opposition from their families and the society. Worth noting is that in the beginning mostly the poor, the slaves and the destitute segment of the Arab society embraced Islam as they saw a new light of freedom with Islam. The Prophet himself was a role model of forbearance in face of multidimensional pressures. His followers could see that their leader did not only invite them to be strong on the path they had chosen but he himself was the victim of all sort of hardships and he stood fast. This was something that helped build a relation of confidence and faith between them. They developed utmost confidence, respect and love for the Prophet of Islam. There is no doubt that this love and respect was the pre-requisite for being a true believe as has been stated earlier, however a study of the life of the Prophet of Islam reveals that he was a role-model in the true sense of the word. He lived a very humble life among his followers with such a strong character that even before his prophethood the people of Makkah called him *Amin* (the trustworthy) and *Sadiq* (the truthful). “Muhammad (Peace be upon him) the great leader of the Muslim community, and mankind at large, was an exemplary man in his perfect manners and noble attributes; no one could measure up to his endowments of nobility, honesty, trustworthiness and abstinence; unanimously and uncontestably acknowledged even by his enemies. Abu Jahl himself, the great enemy of Islam, used repeatedly to say: “O Muhammad, we are in no position to belie you, and we rather disbelieve what you have brought us (Islam).” It is

narrated that three people of Quraish each separately and secretly listened to some verses of the Noble Qur'an. Later, this secret was uncovered and one of them asked Abu Jahl (one of the three) what he thought of what he heard from the prophet Muhammad. He answered: We contested the honour of leadership and generosity with Banu 'Abd Munaf and shared equal privileges competitively. They then began to boast saying that a Prophet rose among them whom Revelation came down upon from heavens. I swear we will never believe in him."<sup>38</sup>

***B – Inspirational Motivation:***

This is the second element of transformational leadership. While the Muslim community was passing its hardest times, the Prophet of Islam gave his followers new hopes and confidence. He made them think out of the box and create solutions of their problems. One such example is the migration of a group of Muslims from Makkah to Abyssinia where Negus, a kindhearted Christian king, ruled. Twelve men and four women from among the Muslims fled Makkah to save their skin from the oppression of the infidels.<sup>39</sup> "When Muslims were forced to undergo constraints, or when their life was kept under continual restraint, there would be revealed verses telling identical stories of past Prophets with their people and the sufferings and pains they had experienced. The verses would also include suggestive clues to the final tragic end of the Makkan disbelievers envisaging their final perdition, yet and at the same time, bearing glad tidings to the believers and promising the true servants of viceregency on earth to go with absolute success, and victory to attend the Islamic Call and its proponents."<sup>40</sup>

The Qur'an mentions a key concept of *Tawakkul*, which signifies a profound reliance upon God that transcends mere passive resignation; it is an active, conscious trust that harmonizes human effort with divine wisdom. It nurtures an unwavering hope and confidence, even amid adversity, by anchoring the believer's heart in the certainty that outcomes ultimately rest with a just and all-knowing Creator. This inner assurance transforms trials into arenas of growth, patience, and moral resilience, enabling a leader to remain steadfast, composed, and purpose-driven in the face of uncertainty. In contrast, secular optimism is often contingent upon favorable circumstances, personal capability, or probabilistic expectations of success. While it may inspire temporary confidence, it lacks the metaphysical grounding that sustains hope when external conditions deteriorate. *Tawakkul*, therefore, offers a deeper, more enduring source of strength—one that motivates action and preserves inner equilibrium.

The biggest inspirational motivation that accompanied the leadership of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was the revelation of Quran. As mentioned earlier it revealed in piecemeal and according to circumstances. Thus, when the Muslim community was depressed because of the oppression of the opponents of Islam, Quran revealed to console them and motivate them by reminding them that the Mightiest Being, God is on their side. One of the best examples of such revelation is the chapter called *Al Dhuha* (the Early Hours). God says:

“By the morning hours. And by the night when it is stillest, Thy Lord hath not forsaken thee nor doth He hate thee, and verily the latter portion will be better for thee than the former, And verily thy Lord will give unto thee so that thou wilt be content. Did He not find thee an orphan and protect (thee)? Did He not find thee wandering and direct (thee)? Did He not find thee destitute and enrich (thee)? Therefor the orphan oppress not, Therefor the beggar drive not away, Therefor of the bounty of thy Lord be thy discourse”.<sup>41</sup>

Another such example is the chapter called *Al Inshirah* (The Expansion) where God says:

“Have We not caused thy bosom to dilate, and eased thee of the burden Which weighed down thy back; And exalted thy fame? But lo! with hardship goeth ease, lo! with hardship goeth ease; So, when thou art relieved, still toil and strive to please thy Lord”<sup>42</sup>

These two chapters of the Qur’an are apparently addressed to the Prophet, however basically it is a reassurance for his followers.

***C – Intellectual Stimulation:***

The third element in transformational leadership is intellectual stimulation. This was something done by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) constantly during his struggle for the establishment of an Islamic order in the Arabian peninsula. The first and foremost example is the first battle between Muslims and their adversaries from Makkah that is historically called the Battle of Badr. Mubarakpuri narrates that situation as follows.

“The intelligence corps’ of the Madinese army reported to the Prophet (Peace be upon him) that a bloody encounter with the Makkans was inescapable, and that a daring step in this context had to be taken, or else the forces of evil would violate the inviolable and would consequently manage to undermine the noble cause of the Islam and tread upon its faithful adherents. The Muslims were afraid that the pagan Makkans would march on and start the war activities within the headquarters of Islam, Madinah. A move of such nature would certainly damage and produce an infamous impact on the dignity and stance of the Muslims. On account of the new grave developments, the Prophet (Peace be upon him) held an advisory military emergency meeting to review the ongoing situation and exchange viewpoints with the army leaders.”<sup>43</sup>

Although Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was connected directly to God and received revelation from Him, even though, he did not command the Muslims as someone having supernatural powers but tried to behave like a common man in all situations so that the Muslims learn a lesson from that situation and so that they did not depend upon miracles only. It was intellectual stimulation to show them how to plan for solution of various problems. When the Prophet apprised his companions of the gravity of the situation, several among them stood and assured him of their unconditional allegiance in every situation. The

Prophet, however, wanted to hear from the companion who were from Madinah. There Saab bin Muaz said,

“O Prophet of Allah! We believe in you and we bear witness to what you have vouchsafed to us and we declare in unequivocal terms that what you have brought is the Truth. We give you our firm pledge of obedience and sacrifice. We will obey you most willingly in whatever you command us, and by Allah, Who has sent you with the Truth, if you were to ask us to plunge into the sea, we will do that most readily and not a man of us will stay behind. We do not grudge the idea of encounter with the enemy. We are experienced in war and we are trustworthy in combat. We hope that Allah will show you through our hands those deeds of valour which will please your eyes. Kindly lead us to the battlefield in the Name of Allah.”<sup>44</sup>

This statement clearly shows the leadership impact of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) on his companions and that how much they trusted and respected him as a role-model.

***D – Individualized Consideration:***

Individualized Consideration: The Prophet was the most caring for each one of his companions. He loved his companions more than anyone not only the living ones but also those who died. He would pay the debts of any of his deceased companion if he died without paying it because of poverty. It is narrated by Abu Hurairah:

“When a deceased person who owed debts was brought for funeral prayer, he would first inquire whether sufficient assets had been left to settle those debts. If such assets existed, he would personally lead the funeral prayer; otherwise, he would ask others to perform it. Later, when the resources of the Muslim state increased, he declared that he bore greater responsibility for the welfare of believers than they did for themselves. Consequently, he assumed responsibility for settling the debts of deceased Muslims, while any property left behind would pass to their lawful heirs.”<sup>45</sup>

As a good leader he recognized positive traits of his companions on individual level and gave them assignments according to their responsibilities. Examples in this regard are innumerable. He appointed Bilal bin Rabbah as the one who would do the call for prayer (*adhan*) because of his beautiful voice. He refused to appoint Abu Dhar Ghifari to administrative post as he knew that he was weak and could take the responsibility. He gave all confidential information to one of his companions; Huzaifah bin al Yaman.

“Out of appreciation and motivation, Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) conferred some titles to his companions. For example, he told Abu Ubayhdah ibn al-Jarrah:

You are the most trustworthy of this *Ummah* (nation).

He said to Khalid b. al-Walid:

You are one of the swords of Allah.

He told Mu‘adh b. Jabal:

By God, I love you O Mu‘adh.”

After accepting Islam, the family of Yasir endured severe persecution and torture at the hands of their opponents. In acknowledgment of their steadfastness and sacrifice, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) regularly consoled them and assured them of a place in Paradise. The Prophet also remained deeply appreciative of those who supported him during the early stages of his mission. His gratitude and loyalty toward his companions are reflected in his statement: “No one has been more generous to me with his life and wealth than Abu Bakr.”<sup>46</sup>

The Qur’an explicitly commands believers to follow the Prophet’s example: ‘Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example for whoever hopes for Allah and the Last Day and remembers Allah often.’ (Qur’an 33:21). This verse establishes *Uswah Hasanah* as a theological requirement, not merely a leadership technique. The Prophet’s contemporaries testified to his impeccable character; even his enemies called him Al-Amin (the trustworthy) and Al-Sadiq (the truthful) long before he received revelation. This pre-prophetic reputation for integrity formed the foundation upon which his later leadership was built. Although there are common sorts between the suggested Islamic leadership model and modern leadership model, but there is also a fundamental difference. The concept of consciousness of God occupies a central position in the Islamic model and serves as the overarching framework within which all other dimensions and principles operate. It provides a framework and a context for the other dimensions and operating principles of the model. It provides an Islamic context for the use of some of the elements of modern leadership theory. In addition, the consciousness of God brings spirituality into the picture. Islam considers human beings to have a body and a soul. The golden rule in Islam is to keep the body and soul in harmony and maintain a balance between the needs of both. Moderation is a fundamental principle of an Islamic way of life. Since human behavior is influenced by both material and spiritual considerations, explanations based solely on material factors offer an incomplete understanding of human conduct. People’s behavior is affected by needs of both the soul and the body. Description of human behavior based on material data only will provide inaccurate models. The dimension of the consciousness of God fills this gap.<sup>47</sup>

#### **4. Conclusion**

The foregoing analysis has undertaken a critical examination of transformational leadership theory through the lens of Islamic principles, revealing a complex relationship characterized by substantial convergence on practical behaviors alongside a fundamental philosophical divergence concerning the origin and ultimate purpose of leadership. The discussion reveals that the four pillars of transformational leadership—idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration—are not merely compatible with Islamic leadership but are, in fact, deeply embedded within the prophetic model of leadership as exemplified by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The evidence presented in this article establishes that transformational leadership theory is almost fully convergent with Islamic principles of

leadership when examined at the level of observable behaviors and organizational practices. The Prophet's thirteen-year period in Makkah, during which he focused exclusively on inculcating fundamental beliefs and values within his followers, represents a masterful application of idealized influence. His ability to inspire hope and confidence among a persecuted minority through Qur'anic revelation, particularly chapters such as *Al-Duha* and *Al-Inshirah*, exemplifies inspirational motivation in its most profound form. The consultative decision-making process before the Battle of Badr demonstrates intellectual stimulation, as the Prophet engaged his companions in strategic thinking rather than relying solely on divine revelation. His personalized care for individual companions—from Bilal's appointment as the caller to prayer to his refusal to appoint Abu Dhar Ghifari to an administrative post—embodies individualized consideration in a manner that contemporary leadership literature rarely captures. In essence, transformational leadership is not alien to Islamic tradition; rather, it constitutes an integral part of the Islamic principles of leadership that have been practiced for over fourteen centuries.

However, to conclude that the two frameworks are identical would be intellectually dishonest. A fundamental philosophical difference separates them, and this difference is not merely academic but carries profound practical implications. The origin of Islamic principles is Divine revelation—Qur'an and Sunnah—whereas the origin of contemporary leadership theories, including transformational leadership, is human reason. This distinction is not a matter of superiority or inferiority but of foundational epistemology. Islamic leadership derives its authority from God, and its legitimacy depends upon adherence to divinely prescribed ethical boundaries. Transformational leadership, by contrast, derives its authority from empirical validation and organizational outcomes.

In a very close connection to this epistemological difference is the question of ultimate purpose. A Muslim leader, ideally and normatively, keeps the pleasure of God (*rida Allah*) as the ultimate goal for all leadership endeavors. Every decision, every strategic vision, every interaction with followers is oriented toward fulfilling the responsibility of vicegerency (*khilafah*) and earning divine reward in the hereafter. This orientation fundamentally reshapes leadership priorities. Profit maximization, market share, and organizational growth become means rather than ends; they are pursued not for their own sake but as part of a broader ethical project of establishing justice, promoting goodness, and forbidding evil. A non-Muslim leader operating within a secular framework, by contrast, will typically have in mind the short-term and long-term success of the organization or community being led. While this is neither illegitimate nor inconsequential, it lacks the transcendent dimension that characterizes Islamic leadership.

The practical implication of this distinction is significant. When a transformational leader and an Islamic leader both engage in the same behavior—articulating a vision, for example—the meaning and motivation behind that behavior may differ substantially. The

Islamic leader's vision is ultimately accountable to God; the secular leader's vision is accountable to stakeholders. Both may achieve organizational success, but the framework of evaluation and the source of ethical constraint are fundamentally different. Future research should explore the practical implications of this philosophical divergence in real-world organizational settings. How do Muslim leaders navigate potential tensions between transformational leadership practices and Islamic ethical requirements? Can the transformational leadership framework be modified to incorporate divine consciousness (taqwa) as a fifth pillar? These questions await further scholarly investigation. For now, this article concludes that transformational leadership and Islamic leadership are convergent in practice but divergent in foundation—a finding that invites both appreciation of commonalities and respectful acknowledgment of differences.

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