

Women Academic Leadership in Islamic Higher Education: Embracing the Society 5.0 Era

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Submitted: 14-02-2024

Revised : 13-04-2025

Accepted: 02-07-2025

ABSTRACT. This study explores the transformational leadership experiences of women academic leaders in Islamic higher education institutions in Bandar Lampung, Indonesia, within the context of Society 5.0. Employing a phenomenological qualitative method, the study conducted in-depth interviews with five leaders and an Information Technology expert. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with five women academic leaders serving as Vice Rector, Dean, Head of Study Program, and Secretary of Study Program. An additional interview was conducted with the Information Technology expert as part of expert triangulation, enriching the study's perspective on the implications of technological integration in academic leadership. The results indicate a consistent tendency towards transformational leadership, which is considered the most adaptive and sustainable model for addressing rapid social and digital changes. Participants emphasized the importance of emotional connection, ethical foundations, and collaborative innovation as key components of effective leadership in the Society 5.0 era. Furthermore, this study shows that transformational leadership enables institutions not only to adapt to technological advancements but also to maintain a humanistic and inclusive academic culture. These findings have significant implications for leadership development in Islamic higher education, underscoring the importance of vision, moral integrity, and empathy in navigating future complexities.

Keywords: *Academic Leadership, Transformational Leadership, Islamic Higher Education, Society 5.0, Digital Transformation.*

 <https://doi.org/10.31538/munaddhomah.v6i2.1860>

How to Cite Hadiati, E., Dwiyanto, A., Setianingrum, D. A., Jatmiko, A., & Iqbal, I. (2025). Women Academic Leadership in Islamic Higher Education: Embracing the Society 5.0 Era. *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam*, 6(2), 345–357.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of technology and information systems has brought humanity to the threshold of Society 5.0 an era where technology is no longer a mere supporting tool, but an active agent shaping the structure of society and human life as a whole (Fukuyama, n.d.; M. Huda et al., 2024). Despite these developments, Indonesian society continues to grapple with the ongoing adaptation to the Industrial Revolution 4.0 (Isnaeni et al., 2025; Suryadi, 2022). The benefits of technological progress, ideally accessible to all, remain unevenly distributed across various social strata (Faizah et al., 2023; Jamaludin, 2021; Safiq Maulido et al., 2023). In this context, the emergence of Society 5.0 a paradigm that places humans at the center of innovation demands critical and deliberate reflection (Narvaez Rojas et al., 2021).

Among the sectors most significantly impacted by these changes is education (Ramdhani et al., 2020). Within academic settings, increasingly sophisticated technologies capable of automated analysis and decision-making raise essential questions about the continuing role of human leadership. While the integration of human-centric technology promises substantial benefits, it simultaneously presents unique challenges, particularly in the realm of academic leadership (Adeoye et al., 2025; A. M. Huda & Rokhman, 2021; Ma`arif et al., 2025). This leads to a crucial inquiry: how can academic leaders especially women in Islamic higher education institutions exercise effective and relevant leadership amid the accelerated evolution of social paradigms?.

Women academic leadership in Islamic higher education is at a crucial juncture in the era of Society 5.0, which emphasizes the integration of technology with social and environmental needs. Data show that women are still disproportionately represented in academic leadership positions, despite their increasing participation in higher education (Maheshwari et al., 2025). In this context, new challenges and opportunities emerge, highlighting the urgency to explore the factors that influence women's involvement in academic leadership and how they can drive positive change in Islamic higher education institutions.

One of the underlying issues behind the lack of women in academic leadership positions is the existence of gender stereotypes and cultural barriers, which often make women feel incapable or unconfident in taking on such positions (Mousa et al., 2021). For example, a study by Shepherd (2017) found that pressures to maintain a work-life balance often discourage women from pursuing leadership positions (Shepherd, 2017). Furthermore, the lack of Women role models in leadership positions also hinders their aspirations, creating a significant gap in representation (Brooks & Ezzani, 2022; Nash et al., 2017).

The paradigm shift towards Society 5.0 demands leaders who are not only technologically savvy but also have the skills to build inclusive and sustainable communities (Potvin et al., 2018). In an academic context, this implies the need to strengthen women's leadership, which is expected to offer new perspectives that are in line with the needs of modern society. Encouraging women to take active roles at the leadership level will not only provide direct benefits to individuals, but also to institutions and society as a whole, creating a more adaptive and responsive environment to change (Aldekhyyel et al., 2024)

In the past decade, significant changes have occurred in the field of education as a result of technological advancements and new social paradigms. The Society 5.0 era, which emphasizes the interaction between humans and machines, demands adjustments in the way education is delivered and managed (AlAjmi, 2022). The research indicates that effective leadership in higher education institutions, including in the Islamic sector, is becoming increasingly important in addressing the evolving and complex needs of modern society (Astra et al., 2024; Munawir et al., 2024). This leads to a crucial inquiry: how can academic leaders especially women in Islamic higher education institutions exercise effective and relevant leadership amid the accelerated evolution of social paradigms?.

Several previous studies have discussed various leadership models in responding to technological change, including in the context of higher education. The intersection of leadership models and technological change, particularly in the context of higher education, has gained significant scholarly attention in recent years. Various studies have explored how leaders in educational settings navigate the complexities brought about by digital transformation and crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Leadership in such contexts must adapt not only to the rapid advancements in technology but also to the unique challenges posed by shifting educational paradigms. Research by Hallinger highlights the importance of understanding the context in which educational leadership operates, suggesting that effective leadership practices must be tailored to meet specific local needs and constraints (Hallinger, 2016). This contextual adaptability is particularly relevant in technology-driven environments where rapid change is the norm. Similarly, Bush and Glover emphasize the evolution of leadership models as they respond to the growing

need for adaptability in educational leadership, identifying a shift towards more collaborative and flexible leadership styles that can better manage technological integration (Bush & Glover, 2014).

This study seeks to examine which leadership models are being adopted and why by women academic leaders in Islamic universities in Bandar Lampung in anticipation of Society 5.0. Through in-depth interviews with five female leaders and one expert in Information Technology, the research aims to explore how these leaders interpret and respond to rapid societal changes, particularly within the educational domain. The findings intend to offer insights into the trajectory of academic leadership in the near future. Given the unprecedented pace at which the shift from Industry 4.0 to Society 5.0 is unfolding (Government of Japan, 2018), this research holds vital significance. It aspires to contribute meaningfully to the development of Indonesia's educational landscape by illuminating how academic leadership can evolve in tandem with technological advancements. Notably, to the best of the researchers' knowledge, no prior studies have specifically explored this issue within the context of Lampung Province particularly focusing on Women leaders in Islamic higher education institutions thus marking this study as a novel contribution to the field. It is hoped that the data gathered will offer meaningful implications for the development of Indonesia's educational leadership in an era shaped by technological transformation.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design with phenomenological approach in the aim of exploring in depth the perspectives and experiences of women academic leaders at Islamic universities in relation to academic leadership in the context of Society 5.0 phenomenon that struck the world in this time and age. A qualitative research design was chosen as it allows for a contextual understanding of this phenomenon, particularly regarding the leadership perceptions and practices adopted by the participants (Miles et al., 2014).

The participants consisted of five Women leaders currently holding academic leadership positions at Islamic higher education institutions in Bandar Lampung. The names of the respective institutions are Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Intan Lampung (The Dean of faculty of Sharia), Postgraduate Universitas Islam Negeri raden Intan Lampung (Vice Director), Universitas Ma'arif Lampung (Head of PIAUD department), Universitas Muhammadiyah Metro (Vice Dean II of Faculty of Islamic Studies), and IAIN Metro Lampung (Rector). These participants were selected using purposive sampling, based on criteria relevant to the research objectives (Arrogante, 2022). Selection was guided by their roles in academic leadership and their experience in navigating technological changes within the educational environment. To support data triangulation, the study also involved one expert in the field of Information Technology, who served as an additional informant. This expert provided broader insight into the impact of technology on academic leadership and how Society 5.0 may reshape leadership structures and functions in the future.

Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with the five women academic leaders, who held positions such as Vice Rector, Dean, Head of Study Program, and Secretary of Study Program. The interviews were conducted using open-ended questions, allowing participants to share their experiences and viewpoints freely and in detail. Interview questions addressed various issues including academic leadership, adaptation to technological advancements, and strategies for preparing educational institutions for the Society 5.0 era. An additional interview was conducted with the Information Technology expert as part of expert triangulation, enriching the study's perspective on the implications of technological integration in academic leadership.

In phenomenological data analysis, the process begins by identifying significant statements from participants that directly relate to their lived experiences of the phenomenon under investigation. These statements are then coded into meaning units, which are organized into core themes. The researcher subsequently develops a textural description (what was experienced) and

a structural description (how the experience occurred). These elements are synthesized into a composite essence, representing the shared meaning of the phenomenon as experienced by all participants. (Creswell, 2014). These themes were then categorized according to their relevance to transformational leadership theory and the concept of Society 5.0. Data triangulation was carried out by comparing the insights gathered from both the academic leaders and the IT expert to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. Through this method, the researcher was able to identify both common patterns and contrasting perspectives between the two groups.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Significant Statements

The respondents consistently articulated a strong preference for transformational leadership as the most adaptive and visionary model in navigating the complex transitions demanded by the Society 5.0 era. Their insights emphasized a shift away from hierarchical, rigid leadership styles toward approaches centered on empowerment, emotional intelligence, and long-term innovation. One participant, the Rector of IAIN Metro Lampung, emphasized the necessity of going beyond traditional managerial practices. She shared:

“For me, transformational leadership is not just a theory it’s a necessity. The pace of change is so fast that we can no longer rely on rigid instructions. I focus on building trust and encouraging my team to think creatively. If a staff member comes with an innovative idea, I don’t just approve it I ask how we can make it sustainable, how it aligns with our Islamic values, and how it can empower others too.”(The Rector of IAIN Metro Lampung)

Her response reflects a holistic view of leadership one that balances innovation with Islamic ethical grounding, aiming to generate not just performance but meaningful and sustainable institutional development. Similarly, the Dean of the Faculty of Sharia at UIN Raden Intan Lampung underscored the importance of cultivating proactive mindsets rather than reactive measures. She argued:

“Transformative leadership provides space for sustainable change, not just temporary or surface-level improvements. Also, many people think leadership is about controlling, but I believe it’s about unlocking potential. That’s why I value transformational leadership. My job is not to know everything, but to enable others to grow especially now that we are entering Society 5.0, where collaboration and innovation are essential. If we don’t inspire people to adapt and learn continuously, we’ll fall behind.”(Dean of the Faculty of Sharia at UIN Raden Intan Lampung).



Figure 1. A mentoring session led by the Dean of the Faculty of Sharia at UIN Raden Intan Lampung (Purple Batik), taken after interview

This narrative aligns with the broader discourse on human-centric leadership, a cornerstone of the Society 5.0 concept, in which innovation must not only serve technological efficiency but also foster dignity, participation, and social equity. The Vice Director of Postgraduate Studies at UIN Raden Intan Lampung extended this idea by highlighting the insufficiency of operational leadership alone. She stated:

“In the transition to Society 5.0, leadership that only focuses on administration or technical matters is no longer enough. We need leaders who can inspire all elements of higher education lecturers, staff, and students to move forward together toward greater goals. Technology is just a tool, but the leader’s vision is what truly drives institutional transformation.” (The Vice Director of Postgraduate Universitas Islam Negeri raden Intan Lampung).



Figure 2. A meeting session led by the Vice Director of Postgraduate of UIN Raden Intan Lampung (right), taken before interview

This perspective underscores how transformative leadership bridges vision and action. Such leaders are seen as capable of leading institutions into the future while also nurturing both innovation and human character development.

“In my faculty, I try to be more than just a manager. I want to be someone who inspires. I frequently hold informal discussions with lecturers and students, just to hear their dreams, their concerns, and their ideas. I believe transformational leadership is about emotional connection, not just vision. It’s about guiding others to see themselves as part of something bigger than their job title.” (Head of PIAUD department of Universitas Ma’arif Lampung).

This approach resonates with individualized consideration, a dimension of transformational leadership that promotes empathy, open dialogue, and capacity-building. Finally, the Vice Dean II of Universitas Muhammadiyah Metro offered a personal reflection on leadership development, emphasizing integrity and example-setting:

“Honestly, I didn’t always see myself as a vice dean or generally, a leader. But once I embraced the idea of leading by example, I found transformational leadership very meaningful. I try to lead with sincerity, to listen more than I speak, and to share my own journey with others. I believe people follow leaders who show integrity, vision, and a willingness to grow together.” (Vice Dean II of Faculty of Islamic Studies Universitas Muhammadiyah Metro).



Figure 3. A discussion led by Vice Dean II of Faculty of Islamic Studies Universitas Muhammadiyah Metro (second from the left), taken after interview

Her statement highlights the transformational impact of authenticity in leadership. She reframes authority not as a position of control, but as a platform for mutual growth and continuous learning values deeply aligned with Islamic educational principles. The findings overall reveal a unified preference for transformational leadership among women academic leaders in Islamic higher education in Bandar Lampung. They view this model as essential in the Society 5.0 era, where traditional leadership no longer suffices. Emphasizing vision, empowerment, and Islamic values, the leaders see themselves as facilitators of change who build trust, inspire growth, and foster innovation. For them, transformational leadership enables sustainable, human-centered progress that aligns technological advancement with moral integrity and inclusive academic leadership.

To strengthen the arguments presented by the five Women academic leaders, the researcher also interviewed an expert in the field of Information Technology. This expert, who also serves as the Head of the Computer Engineering Study Program at a private Islamic university in Bandar Lampung and is herself a woman shared a strong belief that transformative leadership is the most effective and relevant model in the Society 5.0 era. According to her, the shift from Society 4.0 to Society 5.0 brings not only rapid technological changes, but also fundamentally transforms how we interact, learn, and work in educational environments. In this context, transformative leadership offers a comprehensive solution not merely focused on adopting technological innovations, but also on how these innovations can be harnessed to maximize human potential within the education system.

“In Society 5.0, technology becomes more autonomous, but humans remain the key factor,” she stated. “Transformative leaders deeply understand this. They don’t just implement technology they ensure it’s used to support human resource development in educational institutions.” She emphasized that this kind of leadership works not only at the operational level but also strategically. Transformative leaders view technology as a tool for empowerment, enabling every member of the institution students, lecturers, and staff to contribute in meaningful and productive ways. In her view, Society 5.0 requires educational institutions to become more innovative and flexible, particularly in designing curricula and learning methods.

“Technology can certainly make the education process more efficient, but without leadership that drives innovation across all levels, its benefits won’t be fully realized,” she added. According to her, transformative leaders possess the unique ability to initiate and manage change throughout the institution, from classroom practices to administrative systems. They don’t just adopt innovation they foster a more adaptive and resilient academic ecosystem. Moreover, these leaders can respond creatively and collaboratively to ongoing disruption.

“We are facing a period of rapid and unpredictable technological disruption. Transformative leadership enables us to respond proactively, blending technology with human creativity and problem-solving.” This level of flexibility is especially important in higher education, where digital changes occur quickly and demand constant adjustment. Transformative leaders not only focus on adapting to such changes, but also on building long-term, sustainable strategies.

Another key strength of this leadership model, according to the expert, is its ability to build a collaborative academic culture. “Transformative leaders are not just top-down decision-makers they also promote collaboration across all levels of the institution. This creates a synergy between people and technology,” she explained. She emphasized that this human-technology synergy is critical in the Society 5.0 era. Leaders must not only be tech-savvy but must also be capable of motivating and empowering the entire academic community. Among all the leadership models discussed, the expert noted that transformative leadership stands out for its adaptability and long-term impact. Its flexibility and responsiveness make it highly suitable for the Society 5.0 landscape. With their ability to inspire, motivate, and lead significant institutional changes, transformative leaders serve as agents of change not only improving education in the present but also shaping a future that is inclusive, innovative, and human-centered.

To summarize everything in one straight edge, Ultimately, the IT expert emphasized that transformative leadership offers a strategic advantage for educational institutions aiming to stay relevant and competitive in the era of Society 5.0. “Transformative leadership is not just about adapting to new technologies, but about creating new values grounded in human development and innovation,” she said. This leadership model ensures that universities are not merely reactive to change, but are actively leading transformation becoming institutions that inspire the next generation to thrive in an increasingly digital and interconnected world. According to the expert, transformative leadership is not only appropriate for the Society 5.0 era, but it also serves as a powerful foundation for building an education system that is inclusive, innovative, and human-centered. It encourages institutions to embrace technological advancements without losing sight of essential human values. As a result, transformative leadership enables educational institutions to develop into agile, future-ready environments that are well-prepared to meet emerging challenges with vision, empathy, and resilience.

Essence of the Phenomenon

Women's leadership in Islamic higher education institutions in embracing the Society 5.0 era is characterized by a transformative, collaborative, and values-based practice. By placing humans at the center of innovation and viewing technology as a supporting tool, these leaders are shaping an educational ecosystem that is sustainable, relevant, and ethically grounded. Transformational leadership is not merely an option it is a necessity to ensure that Islamic higher education remains adaptive and meaningful in an era of disruption.

Based on the findings of this phenomenological study, the leadership strategies employed by women academic leaders at Islamic higher education institutions in Bandar Lampung demonstrate a strong inclination toward the transformational leadership model. These strategies begin with a clear articulation of vision and a commitment to sustainable innovation. The leaders not only approve new initiatives but also ensure their continuity by evaluating their alignment with Islamic values and their potential to empower the academic community. Their leadership also emphasizes a humanistic approach, characterized by emotional connection, empathy, and openness to input from faculty members, administrative staff, and students. This reflects the dimension of individualized consideration, which lies at the core of transformational leadership.

In addition, their strategies focus on human resource development through the cultivation of a collaborative culture and role-modeling behavior. These Women leaders strive to become inspirational figures by embodying integrity, sincerity, and social sensitivity in their actions. In the context of the transition toward Society 5.0, their leadership approach includes adaptability to technological disruption. However, technology is viewed merely as a supportive tool rather than

the central focus, as human values remain the primary orientation in every educational innovation. Thus, this values-based transformational leadership not only enables effective responses to change but also fosters an inclusive, sustainable, and forward-looking ecosystem for Islamic higher education.

Table. 1 Theme and Meaning Unit

No	Theme	Meaning Unit	Informant Statement
1.	Vision and Sustainable Innovation	Emphasizing long-term change grounded in Islamic values	“I focus on building trust and encouraging the team to think creatively.” (Rector of IAIN Metro)
2.	Empowerment and Collaboration	Creating a trust-based and dialogical working environment	“It’s not just about management, but about giving space for lecturers and students to grow together.”
3.	Islamic Values-Based Leadership	Integrating Islamic ethics with technological innovation	“Innovation must remain rooted in values and aim to empower.”
4.	Humanistic and Empathetic Approach	Prioritizing emotional connection, role modeling, and social sensitivity	“I want to be a leader who listens and inspires.” (Vice Dean of Muhammadiyah University, Metro)
5.	Resilience to Digital Disruption	Viewing technology as a supporting tool, not the center of decision-making	“Technology is a tool; what truly matters are vision and human values.”

Table 1 presents the key themes and corresponding meaning units derived from in-depth interviews with five women academic leaders in Islamic higher education. These themes capture the core dimensions of transformational leadership that emerged from the participants' lived experiences. The first theme, Vision and Sustainable Innovation, highlights the emphasis on long-term change anchored in Islamic values. Empowerment and Collaboration reflects the creation of a trust-based, dialogical environment. Islamic Values-Based Leadership underscores the integration of ethical principles with technological innovation. Meanwhile, Humanistic and Empathetic Approach prioritizes emotional connection and role modeling. Finally, Resilience to Digital Disruption portrays the leaders' view of technology as a supportive tool, not the main driver, reaffirming the centrality of human values in leadership practice. Together, these themes demonstrate how women leaders apply transformational leadership to foster inclusive, value-driven, and adaptive academic cultures in response to the challenges of Society 5.0.

DISCUSSION

The emergence of transformational leadership as the most relevant and practiced model among women academic leaders in Islamic higher education institutions in Bandar Lampung is not coincidental; rather, it responds to a fundamental question: Why is transformational leadership particularly effective in the Society 5.0 era? To begin with, transformational leadership offers an inherent adaptability, a core necessity in navigating the rapid transitions brought about by technological revolutions. According to (BASS & AVOLIO, 1993), transformational leaders inspire and intellectually stimulate their followers, cultivating personal growth and organizational transformation. This is further reinforced by (Rehardiningtyas & Almubaroq, 2022), who argue that during the Industrial Revolution 4.0, such leadership fosters collaboration and anticipates technological shifts. Similarly, (Ünal et al., 2015) emphasize the role of technological self-efficacy among educational leaders in ensuring successful integration of innovations. These theoretical perspectives converge on one idea: effective leadership in times of disruption must be both flexible and visionary.

However, previous research often fails to address the cultural and spiritual grounding of leadership particularly within Islamic contexts. This is where the present study contributes a novel insight. Interviews with five women academic leaders revealed a consistent theme:

transformational leadership rooted in Islamic values and humanistic principles. These leaders not only adapted to technological change but reframed it within the ethical and relational structures of Islamic education. One participant captured this integration, stating that while technology evolves rapidly, “what must not be lost are human values... transformative leadership allows us to keep emphasizing those values.”

This statement illustrates a central tension that leaders face in the Society 5.0 era: the challenge of balancing technological advancement with human-centered leadership. The findings underscore that transformational leadership provides the emotional intelligence and moral grounding required to navigate this complexity. While earlier studies such as (Jönsson et al., 2022) focus on how trust-based environments stimulate innovation, the present study extends that by showing how Islamic ethics and collaborative culture create an even stronger basis for sustainable institutional change (Fahmi et al., 2024; Ferine et al., 2021; Haqqi et al., 2025).

Indeed, these women leaders emphasized trust-building, open dialogue, and long-term vision as the pillars of their leadership practices. This aligns with research by (Ashikali et al., 2021), who show that inclusive leadership fosters psychological safety and creative engagement. Yet, in this study, inclusion was not merely procedural it was spiritual and value-driven. Trust was not only about professional rapport, but also about spiritual accountability and ethical role modeling, showing a deeper layer of leadership that is often absent in secular frameworks.

Furthermore, this leadership style reflects a critical response to the over-technologization of educational institutions. While technology is a prominent element of Society 5.0, the respondents viewed it as a supportive tool rather than the core of institutional identity. Echoing (Golovianko et al., 2023), they cautioned against a techno-centric approach, insisting that human creativity, innovation, and critical thinking remain irreplaceable. One participant aptly stated: “*Transformative leadership doesn't just direct it inspires and empowers others to keep innovating.*”

These insights suggest that leadership in Islamic higher education must go beyond functional adaptation. It must involve the transformation of institutional mindset and culture. As one leader noted, “We’re not only talking about digital transformation, but also cultural and mindset transformation.” This cultural shift is what truly aligns transformational leadership with the goals of Society 5.0: to humanize technology and elevate collective well-being. In contrast to temporary fixes, this study reveals a model of leadership that embeds innovation within moral and communal responsibility.

A distinct feature of this study is the centrality of Islamic values as decision-making anchors. While prior studies have largely viewed ethics as abstract guidelines, the women leaders here demonstrate a practical and contextualized application of Islamic teachings in planning, innovation, and execution. This echoes the argument by (Fernando & Yusnan, 2022) that local wisdom and Islamic tradition can mutually enrich educational practice, as long as it aligns with core scriptural principles (Rohmadiyah et al., 2024).

Therefore, the model emerging from this study is not only transformational it is value-integrated and context-responsive. It highlights a new path forward for women leaders in Islamic education, who not only adapt to but actively shape technological and social changes through the lens of faith, ethics, and inclusion (Bass & Riggio, 2006; Greimel et al., 2023). This moves beyond what (Mutohar et al., 2020) describe as visionary leadership, by offering a culturally and theologically grounded alternative that is future-oriented and deeply human.

Transformative leadership is considered sustainable because it doesn't just focus on technical solutions it prioritizes the development of human potential within institutions. “We can't just follow technological trends; we also have to develop our existing human resources (Stofkova & Sukalova, 2020; Widiastuti et al., 2022). Transformative leadership creates space for each individual in the institution to grow,” she added. Another leader highlighted the critical role of human-driven innovation in Society 5.0: “Technology may replace many administrative processes, but creativity, innovation, and critical thinking must still come from humans. This is where transformative leadership is vital it doesn't just direct but inspires and empowers others to keep

innovating,” she explained. Thus, by embodying transformative leadership principles, leaders can drive the synergy between humanity and technology, ensuring advancements elevate societal well-being rather than diminish it (Gay Cruz Gabitanan, 2024; Legesse et al., 2024).

Moreover, all five respondents agreed that transformation in education must go beyond technology it should also address shifts in organizational culture and mindset. As one of them pointed out: “In Society 5.0, we’re not only talking about digital transformation, but also cultural and mindset transformation. Transformative leadership enables this change to happen across all levels, from students to lecturers and staff”. In conclusion, one leader underlined that transformative leadership makes institutions more adaptive and sustainable (Chaudhry et al., 2023). “Transformative leadership helps us not only survive but thrive amid change. It’s not about temporary adaptation it’s about building institutions ready to face the future through innovation that keeps people at the core.” Thus, the five Women leaders agreed that transformative leadership is the most suitable and future-ready model for helping educational institutions navigate the transition from Society 4.0 to 5.0 and to seize the opportunities offered by this human-centered technological era

The integration of Islamic values in the innovation, planning, and execution of educational strategies is essential in shaping Islamic education, particularly within the context of Women Academic Leadership in Islamic Higher Education, as it aligns with the principles of Society 5.0. The process of integrating local wisdom with Islamic teachings fosters a moral framework that not only upholds religious doctrine but also respects diverse cultural backgrounds. Fernando and Yusnan identify that local wisdom can enrich Islamic education as long as it does not contradict the Quran and Sunnah, ultimately ensuring cultural heritage preservation while reinforcing Islamic values within educational frameworks (Fernando & Yusnan, 2022; Garancang, 2021).

CONCLUSION

This study found that transformational leadership practiced by women academic leaders in Islamic higher education plays a far more significant role in navigating the complexities of the Society 5.0 era than previously assumed. Contrary to conventional views that often separate technology from human values, the findings reveal that these leaders successfully integrate vision, emotional connection, empowerment, and Islamic ethical principles to create adaptive and inclusive academic environments. This finding challenges traditional leadership assumptions and opens new discussions about the role of gendered, value-based leadership in the face of rapid digital transformation.

This study reinforces previous findings on the importance of adaptive and collaborative leadership, while introducing a context-specific transformational leadership model grounded in Islamic values, thereby enriching the scholarly discourse on leadership in the Society 5.0 era within Islamic higher education. This study is limited by its small, specific sample of women leaders in Bandar Lampung, making it less generalizable. Future studies involving larger and more diverse samples are essential to deepen understanding, test the model’s applicability in other regions, and refine theoretical perspectives on gender, leadership, and educational transformation in the digital era. .

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the five women academic leaders and the Information Technology expert who generously shared their time, insights, and experiences during the interviews. Their valuable contributions have enriched the depth and relevance of this study. The authors also extend appreciation to the Islamic higher education institutions in Bandar Lampung for their support and facilitation during the data collection process. Special thanks go to the peer reviewers and editorial team of *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* for their constructive feedback and guidance throughout the publication process.

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