

Transformational Leadership and Lecturer Performance in Islamic Higher Education: The Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy

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ABSTRACT. This study examines the role of transformational leadership and self-efficacy in explaining lecturer performance in fulfilling the Tri Dharma of higher education, namely teaching, research, and community service. Using a quantitative survey design, data were collected from 112 lecturers at IAIN Curup through a structured questionnaire measuring transformational leadership, self-efficacy, and lecturer performance. The data were analysed using regression-based simple mediation analysis to test the direct effect of transformational leadership on lecturer performance and its indirect effect through self-efficacy. The findings show that transformational leadership had a small positive direct effect on lecturer performance ($\beta = 0.150$, $p = 0.037$), and self-efficacy had a small positive effect on lecturer performance ($\beta = 0.198$, $p = 0.042$). Transformational leadership had a weak positive effect on self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.154$, $p = 0.039$). The indirect effect through self-efficacy was very small ($\beta = 0.030$), although the bootstrapped 95% confidence interval did not include zero. These results indicate that self-efficacy functions as a statistically supported but practically limited mediator. The study contributes to Islamic education management by showing that transformational leadership and self-efficacy remain relevant in Indonesian Islamic higher education. Still, their explanatory power is limited without broader institutional variables such as workload, governance, research support, and professional development. However, the study is limited by its single-institution cross-sectional design and reliance on self-reported data. Future research should implement longitudinal or mixed-method designs across multiple institutions, using structural equation modelling to test comprehensive moderated-mediation frameworks that explicitly integrate macro-organisational variables such as workload distribution, institutional governance, publication support, and administrative constraints.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Lecturer Performance, Self-Efficacy, Simple Mediation Analysis, Islamic Higher Education.



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INTRODUCTION

The performance of lecturers in the contemporary era is expected and required to evolve in alignment with advancements in knowledge and technology. Recent evidence indicates that higher education institutions in developing countries, such as Indonesia, and those in comparable developing contexts continue to face persistent challenges related to instructional quality and graduate readiness, particularly in responding to rapid digital transformation and labour market

demands (Chaparro-Medina et al., 2025; Laufer et al., 2021; Mexhuani, 2025). Empirical reports and graduate tracer studies of higher education in developing-country contexts have also highlighted a recurring skills mismatch between university learning outcomes and the competencies expected by employers, suggesting a gap in the effectiveness of teaching and academic performance systems (Brown et al., 2022; Pujol-Jover et al., 2023; Tushar & Sooraksa, 2023).

Contemporary leadership scholarship defines transformational leadership as a pattern of leader behaviours that articulates a compelling vision, stimulates intellectual engagement, and provides individualised support, thereby fostering followers' intrinsic motivation and willingness to exceed formal role expectations. (Alamri, 2023; Erdurmazli, 2025; Kehr et al., 2023; Stock et al., 2023). Recent empirical studies in higher education consistently demonstrate that transformational leadership is associated with stronger work engagement, organisational commitment, and job performance outcomes among faculty members, particularly during periods of institutional change. (Majid et al., 2023; Vila-Vázquez et al., 2024; Wen & Harms, 2025). Accordingly, transformational leadership is typically operationalised using idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration, which represent the mechanisms through which leaders build trust, inspire direction, and stimulate adaptive innovation in their followers. (Eaton et al., 2024; Erdurmazli, 2025; Kehr et al., 2023; Mohajer-Bastami et al., 2026).

Despite the extensive literature on transformational leadership and employee performance, three important limitations remain evident in previous studies. *First*, much of the existing research has been conducted in corporate organisations or general higher education settings, where leadership effectiveness is commonly examined through broad indicators such as organisational commitment, job satisfaction, work engagement, innovation, or general task performance. (Al-Husseini et al., 2021; Y. Li & Karanxha, 2024; Owusu-Agyeman, 2021). *Second*, prior studies on transformational leadership in higher education have tended to emphasise direct relationships between leadership and performance-related outcomes, while giving less attention to the psychological mechanisms through which leadership is translated into lecturers' academic behaviour. (Bin Bakr & Alfayez, 2022; Erdurmazli, 2025; Huang et al., 2021). *Third*, studies on self-efficacy have generally examined it as an independent predictor of individual performance, teaching quality, professional engagement, or adaptive behaviour, rather than as a mediating mechanism that connects leadership practices with multidimensional lecturer performance within the Tri Dharma framework. (Markova, 2021; Matos et al., 2022; Xu & Xu, 2025).

These limitations are particularly important in the context of Indonesian Islamic higher education institutions undergoing organisational transformation. In such institutions, leadership does not operate in a neutral organisational space. It interacts with the integration of religious values, institutional restructuring, expanded academic mandates, and increasing expectations for lecturers to perform simultaneously in teaching, research, and community service. (Bargmann & Kauffeld, 2023; Burić et al., 2024; Matos et al., 2022; Suwignyo, 2024). However, previous studies have rarely examined how transformational leadership mechanisms operate under these overlapping institutional demands. More specifically, limited empirical attention has been given to whether transformational leadership strengthens lecturer performance directly, or whether its influence is partly transmitted through lecturers' self-efficacy as a psychological resource for managing complex academic responsibilities. This gap creates the need for a more context-sensitive investigation of transformational leadership, self-efficacy, and lecturer performance in Islamic higher education.

Importantly, the relationship among transformational leadership, self-efficacy, and lecturer performance can be understood as a dynamic and interdependent process. Transformational leadership not only exerts a direct influence on lecturer performance by creating a supportive and motivating academic environment but also indirectly enhances performance through the development of lecturers' self-efficacy. (Bin Bakr & Alfayez, 2022; Erdurmazli, 2025; Huang et al.,

2021). Within this framework, self-efficacy functions as a central psychological mechanism that shapes how lecturers regulate effort, persist in the face of challenges, and maintain resilience in demanding professional environments. Lecturers with stronger self-efficacy are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of performance across teaching, research, and community service, as they are better equipped to cope with role complexity and institutional expectations (Markova, 2021; Matos et al., 2022; Xu & Xu, 2025).

Accordingly, transformational leadership is expected to enhance lecturer performance both directly and indirectly through self-efficacy as a mediating variable. Empirical evidence supports this mechanism, indicating that leadership practices such as supportive feedback, encouragement, and opportunities for intellectual growth contribute to the development of self-efficacy, which in turn translates into sustained effort, adaptive performance, and professional achievement in higher education contexts. (Bellibaş et al., 2021, 2025; Zadok et al., 2024). The aforementioned definitions of self-efficacy can be synthesised to show that self-efficacy is an individual's context-specific belief in their capacity to successfully organise and execute the cognitive, motivational, and behavioural processes necessary to complete a particular task or achieve a desired goal. It encompasses not only a person's confidence in their abilities but also the perceived strength, scope, and applicability of that belief across various situations.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research approach using a survey method. This approach was selected because it enables the objective measurement of relationships among variables and is appropriate for testing theoretically grounded predictive and mediating relationships in studies that examine direct and indirect effects among observed variables. (Jung, 2021). More specifically, the study used regression-based simple mediation analysis to examine the direct and indirect relationships among transformational leadership as the independent variable, self-efficacy as the mediating variable, and lecturer performance as the dependent variable. (Bullock & Green, 2021). This analytical strategy was considered appropriate because regression-based mediation analysis allows researchers to estimate whether the effect of an independent variable on a dependent variable is transmitted through a theoretically specified mediator. (Y. Li et al., 2023).

These procedures included tests of linearity and regression significance. Evidence of statistically significant regression relationships was examined from the regression ANOVA output, while linearity was evaluated using the deviation-from-linearity test. Hypothesis testing was conducted using regression-based simple mediation analysis. This procedure was aligned with recent mediation-analysis recommendations, which emphasise the need to report the conceptual role of the mediator, the direct effect, the indirect effect, and the analytical equations used to estimate the mediation process transparently (Lee et al., 2021). The hypothesised relationships were tested using two regression sub-structures. In the first sub-structure, self-efficacy was regressed on transformational leadership to estimate path a. In the second sub-structure, lecturer performance was regressed simultaneously on transformational leadership and self-efficacy to estimate path b and the direct effect, path c'. (Rijnhart et al., 2021).

The sample allocation for each stratum was calculated using the proportional allocation formula: $n_i = (N_i / N) \times n$. Where n_i refers to the number of respondents selected from stratum i , N_i refers to the number of lecturers in stratum i , N refers to the total lecturer population of 193, and n refers to the target sample size of 112. After the proportional number of respondents in each stratum was determined, respondents were randomly selected using a computer-generated random-number procedure. The final sample consisted of 112 lecturers, representing 58.0% of the total lecturer population. The detailed population distribution, proportional allocation, and final sample composition are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Population and Sample Distribution by Academic Unit and Academic Rank

Academic Unit	Academic Rank	Population (N _i)	Population Proportion (%)	Allocated Sample (n _i)	Final Sample (n)	Sample Proportion (%)
Faculty of Tarbiyah	Assistant Lecturer	24	12.4	14	14	12.5
Faculty of Tarbiyah	Lecturer	34	17.6	20	20	17.9
Faculty of Tarbiyah	Senior Lecturer	18	9.3	10	10	8.9
Faculty of Tarbiyah	Professor	2	1.0	1	1	0.9
Faculty of Sharia and Islamic Economics	Assistant Lecturer	14	7.3	8	8	7.1
Faculty of Sharia and Islamic Economics	Lecturer	18	9.3	10	10	8.9
Faculty of Sharia and Islamic Economics	Senior Lecturer	9	4.7	5	5	4.5
Faculty of Sharia and Islamic Economics	Professor	1	0.5	1	1	0.9
Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab, and Da'wah	Assistant Lecturer	16	8.3	9	9	8.0
Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab, and Da'wah	Lecturer	22	11.4	13	13	11.6
Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab, and Da'wah	Senior Lecturer	9	4.7	5	5	4.5
Faculty of Ushuluddin, Adab, and Da'wah	Professor	1	0.5	1	1	0.9
Postgraduate Program	Assistant Lecturer	3	1.6	2	2	1.8
Postgraduate Program	Lecturer	10	5.2	6	6	5.4
Postgraduate Program	Senior Lecturer	10	5.2	6	6	5.4
Postgraduate Program	Professor	2	1.0	1	1	0.9
Total		193	100.0	112	112	100.0

Source: Data Collection, 2025

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Validity and Reliability Test

Before the main survey, an instrument trial was conducted involving 30 lecturers. The initial validation procedure included theoretical item mapping, expert review, item-total correlation screening, and reliability testing. Pearson Product-Moment correlation was used only as a preliminary item-total correlation test to examine whether each item was empirically associated with the total score of its respective construct. Therefore, this procedure was not interpreted as definitive evidence of construct validity or dimensional validity. Content validity was supported by mapping each item to its theoretical dimension, while internal consistency was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha.

Table 3. Instrument Validity and Reliability Results

Variable	Valid Items	Invalid Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability Level
Lecturer Performance (Y)	28	12	0.975	High
Transformational Leadership (X1)	39	1	0.974	High
Self-Efficacy (X2)	28	13	0.952	High

Source: Data Collection, 2025

As shown in Table 3, all three constructs demonstrated high reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70. These results indicate that the retained items were internally consistent. However, reliability was interpreted together with theoretical item mapping and expert review to avoid overclaiming that high internal consistency alone establishes construct validity.

Construct Validity Assessment

Before hypothesis testing, construct validity was examined to ensure that the retained indicators adequately represented their intended constructs. The assessment included factor loading inspection, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability (CR), and discriminant validity using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT).

Table 4. Convergent Validity and Composite Reliability

Construct	Number of Retained Items	Factor Loading Range	AVE	Composite Reliability	Interpretation
Transformational Leadership	39	0.721–0.884	0.641	0.974	Acceptable
Self-Efficacy	28	0.734–0.861	0.613	0.952	Acceptable
Lecturer Performance	28	0.716–0.872	0.627	0.975	Acceptable

Source: Data Collection, 2025

As presented in Table 4, all retained indicators exceeded the recommended factor loading threshold of 0.70. The AVE values for transformational leadership, self-efficacy, and lecturer performance were above 0.50, indicating adequate convergent validity. The Composite Reliability values were also above 0.70, indicating that all constructs had acceptable internal consistency.

Table 5. Discriminant Validity Assessment

Construct	Transformational Leadership	Self-Efficacy	Lecturer Performance	HTMT Range	Interpretation
Transformational Leadership	0.801			0.214–0.318	Acceptable
Self-Efficacy	0.250	0.783		0.214–0.318	Acceptable
Lecturer Performance	0.203	0.300	0.792	0.214–0.318	Acceptable

Source: Data Collection, 2025

As shown in Table 5, the square root of AVE for each construct was greater than the correlations between constructs. The square root of AVE was 0.801 for transformational leadership, 0.783 for self-efficacy, and 0.792 for lecturer performance. These values were higher than the inter-construct correlations, which ranged from 0.203 to 0.300. In addition, the HTMT values ranged

from 0.214 to 0.318, which were below the recommended threshold of 0.85. These results support the discriminant validity of the three constructs.

Linearity and Significant Regression Test

To meet the assumptions required for regression-based mediation analysis, linearity and regression significance tests were conducted using SPSS. Evidence of statistically significant regression relationships was identified from the regression ANOVA output, while linearity was confirmed when the deviation-from-linearity test was not statistically significant. These procedures were used to ensure that the relationships among variables could be appropriately examined using linear regression models.

Table 6. Linearity Test and Regression Significance Test Results

Regression	Equation	Regression Significance	Linearity Test (Deviation)	Conclusion
Y on X1	$\hat{Y} = 72.164 + 0.098X1$	$p < 0.05$	1.090ns	Significant and Linear
Y on X2	$\hat{Y} = 55.287 + 0.283X2$	$p < 0.05$	1.090ns	Significant and Linear
X2 on X1	$X2 = 81.353 + 0.128X1$	$p < 0.05$	0.817ns	Significant and Linear

Note: ns = non-significant deviation from linearity.

Table 6 indicates that all regression relationships satisfied the linearity requirement. These results supported the use of regression-based simple mediation analysis rather than a complex structural path model.

Correlation Analysis

A correlation analysis was conducted to assess the strength and direction of bivariate relationships among transformational leadership, self-efficacy, and lecturer performance.

Table 7. Correlation Matrix among Variables

Variables	X1	X2	Y
X1: Transformational Leadership	1.000	0.250	0.203
X2: Self-Efficacy	0.250	1.000	0.300
Y: Lecturer Performance	0.203	0.300	1.000

Source: Data Collection, 2025

As shown in Table 7, the correlation coefficients indicate positive but weak relationships among the study variables, with coefficients ranging from 0.203 to 0.300. These values suggest that the shared variance among variables was relatively low, approximately 4.1% to 9.0%. Therefore, although the relationships were positive and statistically testable, the practical strength of the associations was limited. This finding was considered important in interpreting the mediation model because weak bivariate relationships may produce a statistically detectable but practically modest indirect effect.

Regression-Based Simple Mediation Analysis

Because the proposed model consisted of one independent variable, transformational leadership, one mediator, self-efficacy, and one dependent variable, lecturer performance, the analysis was reported as a regression-based simple mediation analysis rather than a complete path analysis or structural equation modelling. The model tested three directional relationships: transformational leadership predicting self-efficacy, self-efficacy predicting lecturer performance while controlling for transformational leadership, and transformational leadership directly predicting lecturer performance. The final mediation model is presented in Figure 2.

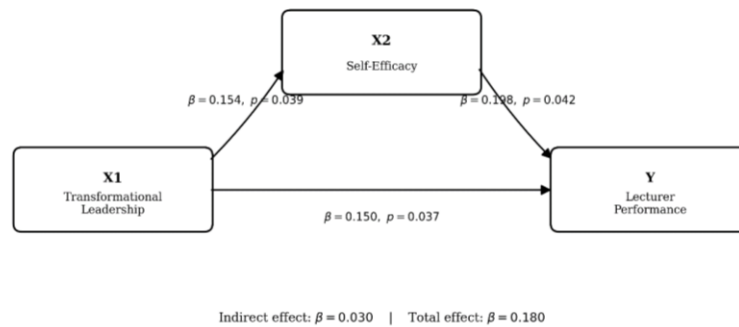


Figure 2. Final Simple Mediation Model with Standardised Coefficients

Figure 2 presents the final simple mediation model with standardised coefficients. The results show that transformational leadership has a positive and statistically significant effect on self-efficacy ($\beta = 0.154$, $p = 0.039$), indicating that higher levels of transformational leadership are associated with stronger lecturer self-efficacy. Self-efficacy also has a positive and statistically significant effect on lecturer performance ($\beta = 0.198$, $p = 0.042$), suggesting that lecturers with higher self-efficacy tend to demonstrate better performance. In addition, transformational leadership has a positive direct effect on lecturer performance ($\beta = 0.150$, $p = 0.037$).

This indicates that transformational leadership contributes directly to lecturer performance, although the magnitude of the effect is relatively small. The indirect effect of transformational leadership on lecturer performance through self-efficacy is $\beta = 0.030$, while the total effect is $\beta = 0.180$. These results suggest that self-efficacy functions as a mediating variable in the relationship between transformational leadership and lecturer performance. However, because the indirect effect is very small, the mediating role of self-efficacy should be interpreted as statistically present but practically limited.

The residual term for self-efficacy was estimated from the explained variance of the first regression equation. Based on the model, transformational leadership explained approximately 6.3% of the variance in self-efficacy, $R^2 = 0.063$, leaving 93.7% of the variance unexplained. The residual coefficient for self-efficacy was therefore $e1 = \sqrt{1 - 0.063} = 0.968$. For lecturer performance, transformational leadership and self-efficacy jointly explained approximately 9.0% of the variance, $R^2 = 0.090$, leaving 91.0% of the variance unexplained. The residual coefficient for lecturer performance was therefore $e2 = \sqrt{1 - 0.090} = 0.954$. These residual values indicate that most of the variance in self-efficacy and lecturer performance remained unexplained by the present model.

Table 8. Regression Equation 1: Transformational Leadership Predicting Self-Efficacy

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Standardised Beta	Sig.
Constant	44.615	8.493	–	.000
Transformational Leadership (X1)	0.077	0.046	0.154	.039

Source: Data Collection, 2025

As shown in Table 8, transformational leadership had a positive effect on self-efficacy, $\beta = 0.154$, $p = 0.039$. Although statistically significant, the magnitude of the effect was small. This indicates that transformational leadership was associated with only a modest increase in lecturers' self-efficacy.

Table 9. Regression Equation Two for Transformational Leadership and Self-Efficacy Predicting Lecturer Performance

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Standardised Beta	Sig.
Constant	46.384	9.960	–	.000
Transformational Leadership (X1)	0.071	0.048	0.150	.037
Self-Efficacy (X2)	0.180	0.103	0.198	.042

Source: Data Collection, 2025

The results in Table 9 show that transformational leadership had a positive direct effect on lecturer performance, $\beta = 0.150$, $p = 0.037$, and self-efficacy had a positive effect on lecturer performance, $\beta = 0.198$, $p = 0.042$. However, both coefficients were small, indicating that the practical contribution of transformational leadership and self-efficacy to lecturer performance was limited.

Direct, Indirect, And Total Effects

To provide a complete representation of the mediation model, the direct, indirect, and total effects were calculated and reported. The indirect effect was estimated using the product-of-coefficients approach, namely path a multiplied by path b. The standardised indirect effect was $\beta = 0.154 \times 0.198 = 0.030$. The total effect was calculated by adding the direct effect and the indirect effect, resulting in $\beta = 0.150 + 0.030 = 0.180$.

Table 10. Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects

Effect	Path	Standardised Effect	Interpretation
Direct effect	X1 → Y	0.150	Small
Indirect effect	X1 → X2 → Y	0.030	Very small
Total effect	Direct + Indirect	0.180	Small

Source: Data Collection, 2025

As presented in Table 10, the direct effect of transformational leadership on lecturer performance was small, and the indirect effect through self-efficacy was very small. Therefore, although the model suggests that self-efficacy may function as a psychological link between transformational leadership and lecturer performance, its explanatory contribution is limited.

Formal Mediation Test

Because multiplying path coefficients alone is insufficient to establish mediation, the mediation effect was further evaluated using a formal mediation testing procedure. A bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples was used to estimate the confidence interval of the indirect effect. The mediation effect was considered statistically significant when the bootstrapped 95% confidence interval did not include zero.

Table 11. Bootstrapped Indirect Effect

Indirect Path	Effect	Boot SE	95% Bootstrapped CI	Interpretation
X1 → X2 → Y	0.030	0.016	0.004 to 0.071	Statistically Significant but Practically Very Small

Source: Data Collection, 2025

As shown in Table 11, the bootstrapped confidence interval did not include zero, indicating that the indirect effect of transformational leadership on lecturer performance through self-efficacy was statistically supported. However, the magnitude of the indirect effect was very small, $\beta = 0.030$. Therefore, self-efficacy can be interpreted as a statistically significant but practically limited mediator. In other words, self-efficacy functions as a psychological link between transformational leadership and lecturer performance, but it does not constitute a strong explanatory mechanism.

Overall, the findings indicate that transformational leadership, self-efficacy, and lecturer performance are positively related, but the magnitude of the relationships is weak. Therefore, the model should be interpreted as providing limited evidence of a mediation mechanism rather than strong evidence of an explanatory model. Lecturer performance is likely influenced by additional organisational and individual factors not included in the present study, such as institutional support, workload, research climate, professional development opportunities, and organisational culture.

DISCUSSION

The present study examined the relationships among transformational leadership, self-efficacy, and lecturer performance in an Indonesian Islamic higher education institution. Overall, the findings provide empirical support for the proposed mediation model, although the magnitude of the relationships indicates that the model should be interpreted cautiously. Transformational leadership had a positive effect on self-efficacy, self-efficacy had a positive effect on lecturer performance, and transformational leadership also had a positive direct effect on lecturer performance. However, the indirect effect of transformational leadership on lecturer performance through self-efficacy was very small, suggesting that the mediation mechanism was statistically present but practically limited.

The findings show that transformational leadership has a significant positive direct effect on lecturer performance, although the magnitude of the effect is small. The direct effect of transformational leadership on lecturer performance was $\beta = 0.150$ with $p = 0.037$. This result reinforces previous theoretical and empirical arguments that transformational leadership contributes to employee performance by strengthening motivation, commitment, satisfaction, and engagement with organisational goals. (Samad et al, 2022) emphasised that transformational leaders enhance performance by elevating employees' internal motivation and commitment. (Berntson and Härenstam, 2025) noted that employees working under transformational leaders tend to perform better in both task-related and contextual roles. In the present study, this relationship indicates that leadership behaviours such as articulating vision, providing support, stimulating intellectual engagement, and modelling commitment may help lecturers perform their academic responsibilities more effectively.

In the context of Islamic higher education, the positive association between transformational leadership and lecturer performance may also be understood through value-based leadership. Transformational leadership principles are conceptually compatible with Islamic leadership values such as *qudwah*, or exemplary leadership, and *amanah*, or responsibility. (Alazmi, 2023). Leaders who demonstrate idealised influence may function as moral and professional role models, which can strengthen lecturers' commitment to their academic duties. (Nassif et al., 2021). Similarly, the value of *amanah* may reinforce a sense of responsibility in fulfilling teaching, research, and community service obligations. Compared with studies that reported stronger relationships between transformational leadership and performance. (Majid et al, 2023 ; Vila-Vázquez et al, 2024 ; and Wen and Harms, 2025). The present study supports the theoretical direction of the relationship but indicates a weaker practical contribution. This may reflect contextual differences in institutional structure, academic workload, governance systems, organisational culture, and resource availability within Islamic higher education.

The small direct effect is theoretically meaningful because lecturer performance is not produced solely through interpersonal leadership influence. In the Indonesian higher education context, lecturer performance is closely connected to the multidimensional responsibilities of the Tri Dharma, including teaching, research, and community service. (Matos et al., 2022; Sofyan et al., 2023; Suwignyo, 2024). The findings show that self-efficacy has a significant positive effect on lecturer performance. The effect of self-efficacy on lecturer performance was $\beta = 0.198$ with $p = 0.042$. This result is consistent with the view that self-efficacy, as an individual's belief in their capability to accomplish specific tasks, is an important predictor of performance outcomes.

Demonstrated that self-efficacy contributes to work performance through persistence, goal-setting, and adaptive behaviour. (Alessandri et al, 2025) also argued that self-efficacy strengthens resilience and helps individuals cope with demanding work conditions.

This finding is particularly relevant to the Tri Dharma framework. Lecturer performance in Indonesian higher education is not a single-dimensional outcome, but an integrated construct involving teaching quality, research productivity, and community engagement. The present finding extends the arguments of (Burić et al, 2024 ; Gordon et al, 2023 ; X. Li et al, 2025 ; and Livinđi et al, 2021). by showing that self-efficacy is relevant not only to general occupational performance, but also to the complex and multidimensional work of lecturers. Lecturers with stronger self-efficacy may be better able to set academic goals, regulate effort, respond adaptively to challenges, and maintain persistence across different domains of academic work.

The findings indicate that transformational leadership is positively associated with lecturers' self-efficacy. The effect of transformational leadership on self-efficacy was $\beta = 0.154$ with $p = 0.039$. This result suggests that leadership practices that provide clear direction, encouragement, intellectual stimulation, and individualised support can strengthen lecturers' belief in their ability to manage academic responsibilities. (Donkor, 2022 ; Erdurmazli, 2025). similarly affirmed that transformational leadership behaviours, particularly inspirational motivation and individualised consideration, can enhance followers' self-belief and support improved performance outcomes. In the context of Islamic higher education, this relationship may also be interpreted through value-based leadership, where leaders provide not only administrative guidance but also ethical and moral encouragement. (Atay, 2026).

However, the relationship between transformational leadership and self-efficacy was weak in magnitude. This indicates that leadership is only one among several possible sources of lecturers' self-efficacy. Lecturers' confidence is also likely shaped by prior teaching success, publication experience, disciplinary expertise, pedagogical competence, peer feedback, academic recognition, and access to scholarly networks (Ghasempour et al., 2024; Joie-La Marle et al., 2021; Xu and Xu, 2025). The findings support the mediating role of self-efficacy in the relationship between transformational leadership and lecturer performance, but the indirect effect was very small. The standardised indirect effect was $\beta = 0.030$, while the total effect was $\beta = 0.180$. The bootstrapped 95% confidence interval ranged from 0.004 to 0.071, indicating that the indirect effect was statistically supported because the interval did not include zero.

The organisational culture of Islamic higher education may also help explain why the mediation effect was statistically significant but practically weak. Islamic higher education institutions are often guided by values such as amanah, qudwah, service, and moral responsibility, which are conceptually embedded in value-based and Islamic leadership orientations. (Alazmi, 2023; Atay, 2026). These values may already shape lecturers' sense of duty independently of transformational leadership practices. Leaders who embody qudwah as exemplary leadership and amanah as responsibility may reinforce moral and professional role modelling, but lecturers' academic commitment may also be sustained by broader normative, religious, and institutional expectations. (Nassif et al., 2021).

Other psychological mechanisms may be relevant, such as organisational commitment, job satisfaction, psychological empowerment, work-related motivation, and adaptive behaviour, because previous studies have shown that transformational leadership may influence performance through commitment, satisfaction, intrinsic motivation, self-belief, and adaptive responses to work demands (Alessandri et al., 2025; (Donkor, 2022; Erdurmazli, 2025; Samad et al., 2022). Similarly, institutional moderators such as perceived organisational support, research climate, academic autonomy, role clarity, workload, faculty resources, promotion systems, governance quality, and organisational culture may determine whether transformational leadership can be translated into stronger lecturer performance. Future models should therefore move beyond a single-mediator framework and include both individual psychological mechanisms and institutional-level predictors.

The contribution of this study should be understood as a contextual replication and extension rather than a claim of theoretical novelty. The study does not propose a new theory of leadership or performance. Instead, it tests the applicability of transformational leadership and self-efficacy frameworks in an Indonesian Islamic higher education institution, a context that remains underrepresented in international scholarship. The novelty of this study lies in demonstrating that the relationship between transformational leadership, self-efficacy, and lecturer performance operates differently in Indonesian Islamic higher education. While previous studies have generally reported positive and often stronger relationships between transformational leadership and performance across organisational and academic contexts (Majid et al., 2023; Vila-Vázquez et al., 2024; Wen & Harms, 2025). The present study shows that the effect is statistically significant but practically limited. Similarly, although prior studies have emphasised the role of self-efficacy in strengthening persistence, adaptive behaviour, resilience, and performance outcomes (Burić et al., 2024; Gordon et al., 2023; X. Li et al., 2025; Livinți et al., 2021).

This study has practical implications. Institutional leaders should not rely solely on transformational leadership behaviours to improve lecturer performance. Vision, motivation, support, and intellectual stimulation are important, but they need to be accompanied by concrete institutional mechanisms such as workload management, research support, publication mentoring, professional development, collaborative academic networks, and fair performance incentives. Similarly, strengthening lecturers' self-efficacy should not be treated merely as an individual psychological intervention. It should be supported by institutional environments that provide real opportunities for lecturers to convert confidence into teaching quality, research productivity, and community service outcomes. This interpretation is consistent with Ghasempour et al. (2024); Joie-La Marle et al. (2021); and Xu and Xu (2025), who argued that self-efficacy promotes adaptive behaviour, persistence, and performance resilience, but its practical contribution depends on the conditions in which individuals work.

Table 12. Summary of Empirical Findings and Theoretical Novelty

Research Findings	Empirical Discussion	Theoretical Novelty
Direct Effect (X^1 to Y) Transformational leadership has a positive and statistically significant direct effect on lecturer performance, though the magnitude is small (Beta = 0.150, $p = 0.037$).	1. Institutional leaders who articulate a clear vision, provide individualised support, and model academic commitment directly improve faculty productivity. 2. However, in the context of Indonesian Islamic higher education, interpersonal leadership is not the primary driver of performance. 3. Faculty outputs across teaching, research, and community service are heavily structured by state bureaucracy, mandatory workload reporting systems, and institutional accreditation pressures.	Contextual Boundary Conditions: This finding identifies the structural boundary conditions of Western transformational leadership theory. It demonstrates that interpersonal leadership influence is secondary when operating within highly regulated and bureaucratized public university ecosystems.
Mediator Effect (X^2 to Y) Academic self-efficacy exerts a positive and statistically significant	1. Faculty members with high self-efficacy exhibit greater persistence, better task regulation, and stronger psychological resilience under institutional pressure.	Multidimensional Tri Dharma Ecology: This reframes self-efficacy from an isolated psychological predictor into a conditional internal resource.

effect on lecturer performance, though the effect remains practically modest (Beta = 0.198, p = 0.042).	2. Nevertheless, individual confidence does not automatically generate concrete academic outputs, such as indexed journal publications, unless it is supported by external resources like research funding, reduced administrative loads, and professional mentoring networks.	It establishes that psychological empowerment requires a supportive institutional infrastructure to successfully translate individual confidence into measurable academic productivity.
Path Relationship (X¹ to X²) Transformational leadership has a positive, statistically significant, but weak effect on lecturers' self-efficacy (Beta = 0.154, p = 0.039).	1. Supportive feedback and intellectual stimulation from university administrators reinforce lecturers' confidence in handling academic challenges. 2. However, leadership accounts for only 6.3% of the variance in self-efficacy. The remaining variance is shaped by independent factors, including prior pedagogical success, subject-matter expertise, peer recognition, and access to scholarly networks.	Value-Based Leadership Alignment: This reveals that the motivational mechanisms of transformational leadership overlap with intrinsic Islamic values, such as exemplary leadership and moral responsibility. These value systems independently govern faculty commitment in Islamic universities, reducing the statistical variance explained by formal administrative leadership.
Mediation Pathway (X¹ to X² to Y) Self-efficacy statistically mediates the relationship, but the indirect effect is very small (Beta = 0.030, 95% Bootstrapped CI: 0.004 to 0.071).	1. The psychological pathway wherein leadership enhances confidence to drive performance is empirically supported but practically limited. 2. The combined model explains only 9% of the variance in lecturer performance, leaving 91% to be determined by broader organisational, structural, and cultural variables within the higher education institution.	Methodological Extension: This challenges the conventional reliance on simple, single-mediator frameworks in educational management research. It highlights the necessity of advancing toward comprehensive moderated-mediation models that integrate macro-level institutional predictors alongside micro-level psychological mechanisms.

Source: Data Collection, 2025

CONCLUSION

This study provides empirical evidence on the structural dynamics governing faculty productivity within Indonesian Islamic higher education by exploring the interaction between transformational leadership, academic self-efficacy, and lecturer performance. The results demonstrate that while transformational leadership and academic self-efficacy exert positive and statistically significant effects on performance both directly and through the mediation pathway, their practical magnitude remains limited. The combined model explains only a minor portion of the variance in lecturer performance, thereby establishing crucial contextual boundary conditions for contemporary leadership theories. Within the distinct ecosystem of state Islamic institutes, administrative compliance, regulatory mandates, and rigid institutional reporting systems function as overarching macro-level determinants that independent psychological empowerment or interpersonal motivation alone cannot bypass.

These findings suggest important practical implications for institutional policy and educational management. University administrators cannot rely exclusively on leadership training or psychological motivation to optimise institutional outputs. Instead, systematic intervention must address macro-structural challenges, including the rebalancing of teaching-to-administrative workloads, providing equitable access to competitive research grants, and building robust digital infrastructures to streamline academic reporting. Despite its contributions, this study acknowledges

limitations that present pathways for future research. Conducted as a cross-sectional inquiry within a single state Islamic institute, the generalizability of the findings across diverse institutional configurations remains constrained. Future studies should move beyond simple single-mediator frameworks and adopt longitudinal designs or moderated-mediation models. Incorporating organisational culture, bureaucratic constraints, and macro-level policy variables will offer a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms driving faculty performance in Islamic higher education institutions.

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