



The Leadership Role of the Head of Study Program in Improving Student Learning Motivation: A Systematic Literature Review

Peran Kepemimpinan Kepala Program Studi dalam Meningkatkan Motivasi Belajar Mahasiswa: Tinjauan Literatur Sistematis

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Abstrak

Studi ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran penting kepemimpinan Kepala Program Studi (Kaprodi) dalam memengaruhi dan meningkatkan motivasi belajar mahasiswa, khususnya dalam konteks pendidikan tinggi agama Islam. Studi ini menggunakan metode tinjauan pustaka sistematis (SLR) dengan pendekatan kualitatif-deskriptif. Sumber data primer dan sekunder berasal dari 42 artikel jurnal ilmiah bereputasi yang diterbitkan antara tahun 2020 dan 2025. Teknik analisis data yang digunakan adalah analisis isi dan sintesis naratif, berdasarkan teori kepemimpinan transformasional dan teori harapan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepemimpinan Kepala Program Studi berperan melalui tiga dimensi: Dimensi Instruksional (optimalisasi kurikulum dan kualitas dosen), Dimensi Manajerial (menciptakan iklim akademik yang kolaboratif dan suportif), dan Dimensi Transformasi (memberikan teladan, inspirasi, dan stimulasi intelektual). Peran ini secara signifikan meningkatkan motivasi intrinsik dan ekstrinsik mahasiswa. Kontribusi praktis studi ini adalah merumuskan model kepemimpinan Kepala Program Studi yang adaptif terhadap tuntutan era digital dalam Pendidikan Tinggi Agama Islam.

Kata kunci: Peran Kepala Program Studi, Motivasi Belajar, Mahasiswa

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the crucial role of the Head of Study Program (Kaprodi) leadership in influencing and enhancing student learning motivation, particularly in the context of Islamic higher education. This study uses a systematic literature review (SLR) method with a qualitative-descriptive approach. Primary and secondary data sources come from 42 reputable scientific journal articles published between 2020 and 2025. The data analysis techniques used are content analysis and narrative synthesis, based on transformational leadership theory and expectancy theory. The results show that the Head of Study Program's leadership plays a role through three dimensions: the Instructional Dimension (curriculum optimization and lecturer quality), the Managerial Dimension (creating a collaborative and supportive academic climate), and the Transformative Dimension (providing role models, inspiration, and intellectual stimulation). This role significantly increases students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The practical contribution of this study is to formulate a Head of Study Program leadership model that is adaptive to the demands of the digital era in Islamic Religious Higher Education.

Keywords : Role Head of Study Program Leadership, Learning Motivation, Students

INTRODUCTION

Higher education is at the forefront of producing superior human resources, where the quality of the teaching and learning process is a key indicator of success (Susetyo, Pranajaya,



Setiawan, & Suryana, 2022). One crucial variable determining the quality of student learning outcomes is learning motivation. Motivation serves as an internal and external driving force that directs students to participate actively, persevere, and achieve the highest academic achievement (Prihartanta, 2015). Within the management architecture of higher education, the Head of Study Program (Kaprodi) holds a strategic position as an academic and managerial leader who interacts directly with the learning ecosystem, making them key in creating an academic climate that supports student motivation (Affandi, 2023; Muliawan, Ulum, & Suhendar, 2025). Therefore, deeply identifying the leadership role of the Head of Study Program in the context of learning motivation is crucial for the continuous improvement of academic governance.

Leadership studies in educational institutions have become a major focus in the past five years, albeit with varying subjects. Rosalina and Wati (2020) examined the influence of the Head of Study Program's leadership style on curriculum innovation, which indirectly creates a motivating learning environment. Abrori and Muali (2020) focused on the role of instructional leadership in improving learning outcomes, a manifestation of high motivation. Research by Ehyani and Supriana (2023) highlighted the role of the Head of Study Program in shaping student leadership character through organizational activities, linking managerial leadership to student self-development. Furthermore, Zulkarnaen, Wibowo, and Nugroho (2020) focused on principal leadership in teacher motivation and performance through their SLR (Study-Related Lectures) but have not yet directly synthesized its relationship to student learning motivation. Recent trends, such as Fahmi's (2025) study of student self-leadership, have shown that intrinsic motivation is often triggered by external factors, including leadership at the study program level. These studies tend to examine the impact of leadership partially on specific aspects, such as lecturer performance or the curriculum, rather than in an integrated manner across dimensions of student motivation.

Based on the trend map above, there are several crucial academic problems or research gaps: (1) There is no comprehensive synthesis regarding the most effective leadership model of the Head of Study Program, between transformational versus instructional, in the context of increasing student learning motivation; (2) Lack of specific mapping regarding the implementation of the role of the Head of Study Program in State Islamic Religious Universities (PTKIN), where Islamic values are a moderating variable; (3) There has not been a systematic identification of the dimensions of the role of the Head of Study Program that directly contribute to intrinsic motivation (interest) versus extrinsic motivation (values/rewards) of students; (4) Lack of literature reviews that integrate internal (Head of Study Program competence) and external (institutional policies) inhibiting and supporting factors towards the effectiveness of the role of the Head of Study Program; (5) Most previous research is quantitative-correlational, not a qualitative synthesis that formulates a new conceptual framework.

In response to the research gap above, this literature review study aims to: Systematically identify the most relevant leadership models of Head of Study Program in the context of higher education, Analyze and synthesize the specific roles of Head of Study Program in the academic and student dimensions that are proven to strengthen student learning motivation, and Formulate a conceptual framework of key factors (supporting and inhibiting) that influence the effectiveness of the Head of Study Program's role.



The argument to be proven in this qualitative research is that effective leadership of the Head of Study Program is not only managerial, but must adopt a transformative-instructional style that is able to provide academic inspiration and spiritual role models, thereby significantly strengthening students' intrinsic motivation. This research contributes to the development of science, namely producing a new conceptual framework regarding the adaptive Academic Leadership Model.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative method with a library research approach with a systematic literature review research design to identify, evaluate, and synthesize research results (Snyder, 2019) relevant to the role of the study program head's leadership in improving student learning motivation. This approach was chosen because it is appropriate to examine the relationship between the theory and practice of study program head leadership in improving student learning motivation, while simultaneously exploring gaps in previous research conceptually and empirically (Listiana et al., 2025). This allows researchers to develop an integrative conceptual framework without conducting field experiments, but rather through analysis of credible academic sources.

The data sources used consist of national and international journal articles, scientific books, and policy reports published between 2020 and 2025. The criteria for discussing data sources were established to ensure the relevance and quality of the literature, including: discussing academic leadership, schools, heads of study programs, motivation, and students; published by accredited academic institutions; and having a direct relevance to the topic being discussed.

Data analysis was conducted through three stages: data reduction, thematic categorization, and conceptual synthesis. The reduction stage was carried out by selecting the literature most relevant to the research focus, while the categorization stage grouped the findings into themes related to the role of the Head of Study Program. This stage combined the findings into a theoretical model connecting the findings between articles to formulate patterns, similarities, and differences. This stage explains the role of the Head of Study Program's leadership in increasing student learning motivation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Literature analysis over the past five years demonstrates a strong consensus regarding the significance of academic leadership at the study program level. The majority of studies (approximately 70%) use a quantitative correlational paradigm, while the remainder are qualitative case studies. Data indicate that the dominant leadership style studied and recommended is transformational leadership (Lempoy, Pio, & Rogahang, 2025; Putri et al., 2025). Quantitatively, the average influence of the Head of Study Program's leadership style on lecturer performance or student motivation ranges from 45% to 65% (Affandi, 2023; Zulkarnaen et al., 2020).

A significant positive correlation was found between the Idealized Influence and Inspirational Motivation dimensions implemented by the Head of Study Program and increased student intrinsic motivation (Nafal et al., 2024; Zulaikah et al., 2024). Students tend to emulate the professional and spiritual values exemplified by their leaders. Managerially, data shows that Heads of Study Program who are proactive in building partnerships with external parties and providing



adequate facilities (Saragih & Puspita, 2023) create a conducive learning environment, increase student satisfaction, and indirectly trigger extrinsic motivation (Susetyo et al., 2022).

In the context of the curriculum, Heads of Study Programs who involve lecturers in adjusting syllabi and Semester Learning Plans (RPS) through Intellectual Stimulation activities are correlated with the use of more innovative and relevant teaching methods (Rosalina & Wati, 2020). Lecturers who feel supported by the Head of Study Program's leadership tend to be more motivated to use a student-centered approach, which in turn fosters students' own learning motivation (Yanti, 2023).

This study uses two main theories, namely; Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass & Riggio) and Expectancy Theory (Vroom). Transformational Leadership Theory is used as a perspective framework to analyze the role of the Head of Study Program. This theory divides leadership into four dimensions, which are highly relevant to the findings: Idealized Influence (Head of Study Program as a role model of moral and professional integrity), Inspirational Motivation (Head of Study Program builds a vision that inspires students), Intellectual Stimulation (Head of Study Program encourages academic creativity of lecturers and students), and Individualized Consideration (Head of Study Program provides personal attention and guidance). In the analysis, these dimensions function as independent variables that are linked to increased student motivation.

Meanwhile, Expectancy Theory is used to interpret how the Head of Study Program's role influences student motivation. This theory states that motivation is a function of three variables: Expectancy (students believe their efforts will result in good performance), Instrumentality (students believe good performance will result in positive outcomes), and Valence (the outcome is valuable to the student). The Head of Study Program's role in providing resources (increasing Expectancy), providing recognition and rewards (increasing Instrumentality), and ensuring curriculum relevance (increasing Valence) is key in interpreting the findings.

By integrating these two theories, the synthesis of findings can go beyond mere description, towards a deeper interpretation of the causal mechanisms: The Head of Study Program's Transformational Leadership creates conditions that support the components of the Expectancy Theory, so that students' learning motivation increases holistically.

The most relevant leadership model of the Head of Study Program, based on the synthesis of 2020-2025 articles, is the integration of Transformative and Instructional styles, enriched with nuances of Servant Leadership (Kartika & Putra, 2023).

Transformative Leadership as the Core: Transformative leadership (Nafal et al., 2024) is fundamental because it overcomes the static nature of an organization. The Head of Study Program needs to be a driving force for change, not merely an administrator. In the context of the Islamic Education Management (MPI) Study Program at UIN SMH Banten, the Idealized Influence of the Head of Study Program is demonstrated through exemplary spirituality and academic integrity, which align with Islamic values and professional ethics. This is important because the Head of Study Program at PTKIN leads not only managerially but also morally. The vision conveyed (Inspirational Motivation) must connect the study program's achievements with tangible contributions to society and religion (*rahmatan lil alamin*), which provides intrinsic meaning to students' learning efforts (Rahmat & Wahyudi, 2024).



Instructional Leadership as Quality Control: While transformative leadership addresses vision, instructional leadership (Abrori & Muali, 2020) addresses process. Heads of Study Programs must be actively involved in monitoring the quality of learning. This includes ensuring lecturers use student-centered methods, are relevant to current demands (Rosalina & Wati, 2020), and utilize digital technology optimally (Sutrisno & Nurjaman, 2024). Through Intellectual Stimulation, Heads of Study Programs encourage the exploration of new methods (such as problem-based or project-based learning), which directly increases students' expectations that learning is engaging and will be successful.

Contextualization in PTKIN: This integrated model is crucial in PTKIN. Heads of study programs cannot focus solely on managerial (transactional) aspects, but must also embody the roles of Murabbi (educator) and Qudwah (role model). This role ensures that every academic policy, such as curriculum adjustments or guidance, is grounded in a spirit of servant leadership that prioritizes the development of faculty and students.

The specific roles of the Head of Study Program that were successfully synthesized and proven to increase student learning motivation are divided into academic roles and student roles:

1. **Academic Role (Enhancing Intrinsic Motivation):** This role focuses on the quality of the learning substance and process. The Head of Study Program acts as the Initiator of Innovative Curriculum. By ensuring the curriculum is always adaptive to scientific developments and industry needs (Purnomo & Supriadi, 2021), the Head of Study Program increases students' Valence, the belief that what they learn is valuable. Furthermore, the Head of Study Program is a Driver of Lecturer Professionalism. Through coaching and facilitating professional development, the Head of Study Program ensures that lecturers not only master the material but also have a motivating leadership style in the classroom (Yanti, 2023).
2. **Student Affairs Role (Enhancing Extrinsic Motivation):** This role focuses on a supportive environment and recognition. The Head of Study Program is the Architect of a Supportive Academic Climate. A Head of Study Program who maintains open communication and builds harmonious relationships (Rizal & Huda, 2022) creates a safe and comfortable climate, which is an important extrinsic factor (Susetyo et al., 2022). This includes ensuring academic services, such as guidance and administration, run efficiently, reducing frustration, and maintaining a spirit of learning. In addition, the Head of Study Program is a Facilitator of Self-Strengthening and Achievement. By supporting and facilitating the activities of the Study Program Student Association (HMPS), the Head of Study Program provides space for students to develop self-leadership and independence (Fahmi, 2025; Ehyani & Supriana, 2023). Recognition for achievements, both academic and non-academic, by the Head of Study Program serves as a strong incentive (instrumentality), encouraging other students to excel.

The effectiveness of the Head of Study Program's role is largely determined by the synergy between supporting factors and the Head of Study Program's ability to overcome inhibiting factors. The following explains these factors:

1. **Main Supporting Factors:** The main supporting factor is the Head of Study Program's own Transformative Leadership Competence. A Head of Study Program who possesses high managerial, relational, and spiritual competencies is able to effectively manage a team of



lecturers and build trust with students (Affandi, 2023). Relational competencies, in particular, enable the Head of Study Program to provide Individualized Consideration, making students feel valued as individuals. Institutional support, namely Institutional Policy, is also vital. When the faculty gives the Head of Study Program autonomy in curriculum development and allocates adequate resources, the Head of Study Program can focus more on his/her instructional role, rather than solely administrative.

2. Critical Inhibiting Factors: The primary inhibitor is often excessive administrative workload. Syafei and Rohmah (2023) highlighted that Heads of Study Programs are often caught up in administrative routines, drastically reducing time for academic leadership roles (such as coaching lecturers or mentoring students). The second inhibitor is Lecturer Resistance to Innovation. Not all lecturers are ready or motivated to adopt new, student-centered learning methods. Heads of Study Programs must overcome this resistance through open communication, guidance, and fair performance evaluations (Zulkarnaen et al., 2020), so that the quality of learning is equitable and does not become a source of demotivation for students.

Learning outcomes

This Systematic Literature Review has successfully identified and synthesized the specific leadership roles of the Head of Study Program (Kaprodi) in enhancing student learning motivation. The main findings conclude that the most effective leadership model is a combination of Transformative Leadership (as a source of inspiration and vision) and Instructional Leadership (as a guarantor of process quality). The key role of the Kaprodi is reflected in its function as an Initiator of Relevant Curriculum, Driver of Lecturer Professionalism, Architect of Supportive Academic Climate, and Facilitator of Self-Strengthening and Student Achievement.

Theoretically, these findings reinforce Vroom's Expectancy Theory, where the Head of Study Program's transformational leadership acts as an antecedent variable that systematically increases the three components of motivation (Expectancy, Instrumentality, and Valence). Practically, this study contributes by formulating a conceptual framework for the governance of the MPI Study Program at PTKIN. The recommended implementation is that the Head of Study Program should reduce the administrative burden and prioritize his/her academic-inspirational role, using spiritual role models as the main capital in motivating students and lecturers.

CONCLUSION

The results show that the Head of Study Program's leadership plays a role through three dimensions: the Instructional Dimension (curriculum optimization and lecturer quality), the Managerial Dimension (creating a collaborative and supportive academic climate), and the Transformative Dimension (providing role models, inspiration, and intellectual stimulation). This role significantly increases students' intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The practical contribution of this study is to formulate a Head of Study Program leadership model that is adaptive to the demands of the digital era in Islamic Religious Higher Education

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