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ORIGINAL RESEARCH ARTICLE

Determinants of Teacher Innovation in Islamic Schools

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ABSTRACT

Teacher innovation has become increasingly important as Islamic schools respond to changes in educational practices, technology, and students' learning needs. However, teacher innovation is not determined solely by individual professional capabilities but may also be shaped by the leadership and organizational environment of schools. This study aims to examine the determinants of teacher innovation in Islamic schools, particularly the effects of Transformational Leadership and Teacher Professional Competence. The study employed a quantitative survey design involving 78 teachers in Islamic schools. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics, validity and reliability tests, classical assumption tests, Pearson correlation, and multiple linear regression. The findings revealed that Transformational Leadership had a very strong and significant positive effect on Teacher Innovation ($\beta = 0.951$, $p < 0.001$). Teacher Professional Competence showed a positive and significant bivariate correlation with Teacher Innovation ($r = 0.290$, $p = 0.010$), but its independent effect was not significant in the regression model ($\beta = 0.012$, $p = 0.744$). The two predictors collectively explained 91.1% of the variance in Teacher Innovation. These findings indicate that teacher professional competence alone does not guarantee innovative behavior when organizational leadership is taken into account. The study contributes a leadership-enabled perspective, positioning Transformational Leadership as the primary organizational mechanism that enables teachers to translate their professional capabilities into innovative educational practices. The findings highlight the importance of strengthening transformational leadership alongside teacher professional development to foster sustainable innovation in Islamic schools.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership; Teacher Professional Competence; Teacher Innovation; Islamic Schools; Educational Innovation.

ABSTRAK

Inovasi guru semakin penting seiring dengan perubahan praktik pendidikan, perkembangan teknologi, dan kebutuhan belajar peserta didik di sekolah Islam. Namun, inovasi guru tidak hanya ditentukan oleh kemampuan profesional individu, tetapi juga dapat dipengaruhi oleh kepemimpinan dan lingkungan organisasi sekolah. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis determinan inovasi guru di sekolah Islam, khususnya pengaruh Kepemimpinan Transformasional dan Kompetensi Profesional Guru. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain survei yang melibatkan 78 guru di sekolah Islam. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner terstruktur dan dianalisis menggunakan statistik deskriptif, uji validitas dan reliabilitas, uji asumsi klasik, korelasi Pearson, serta regresi linear berganda. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Kepemimpinan Transformasional memiliki pengaruh positif yang sangat kuat dan signifikan terhadap Inovasi Guru ($\beta = 0{,}951$; $p < 0{,}001$). Kompetensi Profesional Guru memiliki hubungan positif dan signifikan dengan Inovasi Guru pada analisis bivariat ($r = 0{,}290$; $p = 0{,}010$), tetapi tidak memiliki pengaruh independen yang signifikan dalam model regresi ($\beta = 0{,}012$; $p = 0{,}744$). Kedua variabel secara bersama-sama mampu menjelaskan 91,1% variasi Inovasi Guru. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa kompetensi profesional guru saja belum menjamin munculnya inovasi apabila tidak didukung oleh kepemimpinan yang mampu menciptakan lingkungan organisasi yang mendorong perubahan dan kreativitas. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi melalui perspektif kepemimpinan sebagai penggerak inovasi, yang menempatkan Kepemimpinan Transformasional sebagai mekanisme organisasi utama dalam mengoptimalkan kapasitas profesional guru menjadi praktik pendidikan yang inovatif. Hasil penelitian menegaskan pentingnya penguatan kepemimpinan transformasional yang berjalan seiring dengan pengembangan kompetensi profesional guru untuk membangun inovasi yang berkelanjutan di sekolah Islam.

Kata Kunci: Kepemimpinan Transformasional; Kompetensi Profesional Guru; Inovasi Guru; Sekolah Islam; Inovasi Pendidikan.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid transformation of education has fundamentally changed the expectations placed on teachers (Antonopoulou, 2024; Hadi et al., 2026; Sailer & Homner, 2019). Teachers are no longer expected merely to deliver curriculum content, but are increasingly required to design innovative learning experiences, integrate digital technologies, respond to diverse student needs, and develop pedagogical practices that are relevant to changing social and technological environments(Afin Nida Al Hasanah et al., 2026; Dinata et al., 2026; Kuswadi et al., 2026). Teacher innovation has therefore become an important component of educational quality because innovative teachers are more capable of developing new instructional strategies, learning resources, assessment approaches, and classroom practices that support meaningful and adaptive learning (Dinata Feri Riski et al., 2025; Fahmi Husein, Moh Solikul Hadi, 2024; Moh. Solikul Hadi, Muhammad Nuril Anam, 2021). In this context, teacher innovation can be understood not simply as the adoption of new technologies, but as the capacity and willingness of teachers to generate, implement, and sustain new ideas in their educational practice.

The need for teacher innovation is particularly important in Islamic schools, where educational transformation must accommodate both contemporary educational demands and Islamic

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educational values (Aboubacar Barry et al., 2025; Abrori & Hadi, 2020). Islamic schools have the distinctive responsibility of developing students' intellectual, social, moral, and spiritual dimensions simultaneously (Aboubacar Barry et al., 2025; Mahmud et al., 2026). Consequently, innovation in Islamic education cannot be separated from the principles of *akhlaq*, responsibility, integrity, and the transmission of Islamic values (Hadi et al., 2024; Nurlaila, 2019). Teachers are required to develop innovative pedagogical practices while ensuring that technological and instructional innovations remain consistent with the broader objectives of Islamic education. This situation creates a distinctive context in which teacher innovation is influenced not only by individual professional capacity but also by leadership, organizational culture, institutional support, and teachers' readiness to respond to change.

From an organizational perspective, teacher innovation is influenced by multiple interconnected factors. Transformational leadership theory suggests that school leaders can encourage innovation by articulating a shared vision, providing intellectual stimulation, empowering teachers, and creating an environment that supports experimentation and change. In Islamic schools, this leadership function is particularly significant because school leaders are responsible for translating institutional values into organizational practices while simultaneously encouraging educational innovation (Haningsih et al., 2026; Sibawaihi et al., 2025). In addition, teachers' professional competence and self-efficacy can influence their willingness to experiment with new pedagogical approaches. Teachers who possess stronger confidence in their professional abilities may be more willing to develop new ideas and implement alternative instructional strategies (M. S. H. Suparman, 2024; S. Suparman et al., 2025). Organizational culture is also important because an environment characterized by collaboration, trust, openness, and continuous learning can encourage teachers to exchange ideas and take constructive risks. Similarly, institutional support, including access to resources, professional development, technological facilities, and recognition, may determine whether innovative ideas can be effectively implemented.

Although previous studies have extensively discussed teacher innovation in relation to leadership, teacher competence, self-efficacy, organizational culture, and technological readiness, several gaps remain (Fahmi Husein, Moh Solikul Hadi, 2024; Hadi et al., 2026). First, many studies examine these factors independently, making it difficult to understand their relative contribution to teacher innovation within a single explanatory model. Second, existing research on teacher innovation has predominantly focused on general schools or higher education institutions, while the distinctive institutional and value-based context of Islamic schools has received comparatively less attention. Third, innovation is often approached primarily from a technological perspective, whereas teacher innovation also involves pedagogical creativity, organizational adaptation, collaboration, and the ability to integrate new practices with institutional and educational values. These gaps indicate the need for an integrated examination of the determinants of teacher innovation specifically within Islamic school settings.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the determinants of teacher innovation in Islamic schools by investigating the contribution of leadership, teacher professional competence, organizational culture, and institutional support to teachers' innovative practices. The study seeks to identify which factors significantly influence teacher innovation and to determine the most dominant determinant within the proposed model. By examining these relationships simultaneously, the

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study moves beyond the assumption that teacher innovation is solely an individual characteristic and instead positions it as an outcome of the interaction between individual capacity and institutional conditions. The novelty of this study lies in developing an integrated, context-sensitive understanding of teacher innovation in Islamic schools, in which innovative teaching is viewed as the product of both teachers' professional capacity and an organizational environment that enables, supports, and directs innovation in accordance with the values and educational mission of Islamic schooling. This perspective provides a basis for developing more effective strategies for strengthening teacher innovation while maintaining the distinctive identity of Islamic education.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach using a survey method to examine the determinants of teacher innovation in Islamic schools. The quantitative design was selected because the study aimed to measure the relationships and relative contributions of several factors to teacher innovation based on empirical data obtained from respondents. The research model positioned Teacher Innovation as the dependent variable (Y), while Transformational Leadership (X1), Teacher Professional Competence (X2), Organizational Culture (X3), and Institutional Support (X4) were treated as independent variables. The model was developed based on the assumption that teacher innovation is influenced not only by individual professional capacity but also by the organizational environment in which teachers perform their professional responsibilities (Creswell, 2023; Stadtländer, 2009).

The population consisted of teachers working in Islamic schools. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling based on the criteria that participants were actively teaching and had direct experience with instructional and organizational practices within their respective schools. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire employing a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). The questionnaire items were developed to measure five constructs: Transformational Leadership, Teacher Professional Competence, Organizational Culture, Institutional Support, and Teacher Innovation. Teacher Innovation was measured through indicators related to the generation of new ideas, implementation of innovative teaching strategies, development and use of new learning resources, adaptation to students' needs, and continuous improvement of instructional practices (Hadi et al., 2025; Moh. Solikul Hadi, M. Sayyidul Abrori, 2024).

Before the main analysis, the quality of the research instrument was evaluated through validity and reliability testing. Item validity was examined using item-total correlation, while the internal consistency of each construct was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. Items that did not meet the predetermined validity criteria were reviewed before the subsequent analysis. Reliability coefficients were interpreted based on commonly accepted thresholds to ensure that the instruments provided sufficiently consistent measurements of the research constructs.

The collected data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with SPSS (Cristache et al., 2025; Syarifudin & Muttaqin, 2025). Descriptive statistics were used to present the characteristics and distribution of the research variables through frequency, minimum, maximum,

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mean, and standard deviation values. Prior to hypothesis testing, classical assumption tests were conducted, including normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests. These procedures were intended to ensure that the data fulfilled the statistical requirements for multiple linear regression analysis (Nabulsi et al., 2023).

Pearson Product-Moment correlation analysis was subsequently conducted to identify the direction and strength of the relationships between each independent variable and Teacher Innovation. Multiple linear regression analysis was then employed to determine the simultaneous and partial effects of Transformational Leadership, Teacher Professional Competence, Organizational Culture, and Institutional Support on Teacher Innovation. The regression analysis included the coefficient of determination (R^2 and Adjusted R^2), F-test, t-test, unstandardized coefficients (B), standardized coefficients (β), and significance values (Hair et al., 2014; Joseph F. Hair, n.d.). The F-test was used to determine whether all independent variables simultaneously contributed to Teacher Innovation, while the t-test was used to examine the partial contribution of each determinant. The standardized beta coefficients were compared to identify the most dominant determinant of Teacher Innovation.

The statistical significance level was set at 0.05. A predictor was considered to have a statistically significant effect when its significance value was below 0.05. The findings were subsequently interpreted in relation to theories of transformational leadership, teacher professional competence, organizational culture, institutional support, and teacher innovation, with particular attention to the distinctive educational and organizational context of Islamic schools. This analytical procedure enabled the study to identify not only whether the proposed factors were associated with teacher innovation, but also which determinants made the strongest contribution to teachers' innovative practices.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study analyzed data from 78 teachers in Islamic schools. The findings show that the three variables were generally perceived at a high level. Transformational Leadership obtained a mean score of 98.15 (SD = 5.70), Teacher Professional Competence obtained a mean score of 97.68 (SD = 6.17), and Teacher Innovation obtained a mean score of 98.27 (SD = 5.42). Based on the four-point response scale, the corresponding item-level means were 3.27, 3.26, and 3.28, respectively. These results indicate that respondents generally perceived transformational leadership, professional competence, and teacher innovation positively.

The validity test was conducted using corrected item-total correlation. With 78 respondents, the critical correlation value at the 5% significance level was approximately 0.223. The results showed that 13 items of Transformational Leadership, 15 items of Teacher Professional Competence, and 14 items of Teacher Innovation exceeded the critical value. Items that did not meet the criterion require further review before being retained in a refined version of the instrument.

The reliability analysis produced Cronbach's Alpha coefficients of 0.698 for Transformational Leadership, 0.707 for Teacher Professional Competence, and 0.665 for Teacher Innovation.

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Teacher Professional Competence demonstrated acceptable internal consistency, while Transformational Leadership was close to the commonly accepted 0.70 criterion. Teacher Innovation showed marginal reliability and therefore requires further instrument refinement in future studies.

The regression residuals were normally distributed. The Shapiro-Wilk test produced a statistic of 0.976 with a significance value of 0.155, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the residuals did not significantly depart from normality. The multicollinearity test also showed no problematic relationship between the two independent variables. Both predictors produced a tolerance value of approximately 0.915 and a VIF value of 1.093, indicating that multicollinearity was not a concern. The regression model therefore met the principal assumptions required for multiple linear regression analysis.

The Pearson correlation analysis revealed a very strong positive relationship between Transformational Leadership and Teacher Innovation ($r = 0.955$, $p < 0.001$). This indicates that higher levels of transformational leadership were strongly associated with higher levels of teacher innovation. Teacher Professional Competence also demonstrated a positive relationship with Teacher Innovation, although the relationship was considerably weaker ($r = 0.290$, $p = 0.010$). Meanwhile, Transformational Leadership and Teacher Professional Competence were positively correlated at a relatively weak level ($r = 0.292$, $p = 0.009$).

Multiple linear regression was conducted to examine the simultaneous contribution of Transformational Leadership and Teacher Professional Competence to Teacher Innovation. The analysis produced an R^2 value of 0.911 and an Adjusted R^2 of 0.909. Thus, the two predictors collectively explained 91.1% of the variance in Teacher Innovation, while the remaining 8.9% was attributable to other factors not included in the model.

The ANOVA results showed that the regression model was statistically significant, $F(2,75) = 385.562$, $p < 0.001$. This finding indicates that Transformational Leadership and Teacher Professional Competence jointly contributed significantly to Teacher Innovation.

The partial regression results demonstrate that Transformational Leadership had a positive and statistically significant effect on Teacher Innovation ($B = 0.905$, $\beta = 0.951$, $t = 26.460$, $p < 0.001$). The standardized beta coefficient of 0.951 indicates a very strong contribution and establishes Transformational Leadership as the dominant determinant in the model.

In contrast, Teacher Professional Competence did not demonstrate a statistically significant independent effect on Teacher Innovation after Transformational Leadership was controlled ($B = 0.010$, $\beta = 0.012$, $t = 0.328$, $p = 0.744$). Although Teacher Professional Competence showed a significant positive correlation with Teacher Innovation in the bivariate analysis, its independent contribution became negligible in the multiple regression model.

Overall, the findings indicate that teacher innovation in Islamic schools is strongly associated with transformational leadership. Transformational Leadership emerged as the dominant determinant, while Teacher Professional Competence did not make a significant independent contribution when leadership was simultaneously considered. The very high explanatory power of the regression model ($R^2 = 0.911$) further indicates that the two variables collectively provide substantial

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explanatory power for teacher innovation in the present sample. The findings suggest that teacher innovation should not be viewed solely as a consequence of teachers' individual professional competence, but also as a phenomenon strongly shaped by the leadership environment in which teachers work.

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that Transformational Leadership is the strongest determinant of Teacher Innovation in Islamic schools. The regression analysis showed a very strong positive effect of Transformational Leadership on Teacher Innovation ($\beta = 0.951$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that teachers are more likely to demonstrate innovative practices when school leaders provide a clear vision, intellectual stimulation, encouragement, and opportunities for professional development. This finding is strongly supported by Transformational Leadership Theory, particularly the view that transformational leaders stimulate followers to move beyond routine practices by developing a shared vision, encouraging new ways of thinking, and empowering organizational members to pursue improvement. In the context of Islamic schools, this leadership function is particularly important because innovation must be directed not only toward educational effectiveness but also toward the values and mission of Islamic education. The present finding is consistent with Bao's (2024) study, which found that principal transformational leadership positively influenced teachers' innovative behavior and that this relationship could operate through teachers' sense of meaning at work. It is also consistent with a recent meta-analysis showing a positive relationship between transformational leadership and innovative behavior in educational settings. Thus, the present study supports rather than rejects the dominant theoretical and empirical position that transformational leadership is an important organizational driver of teacher innovation.

The strength of the relationship found in this study, however, provides an important extension to previous research. While earlier studies generally demonstrate that transformational leadership positively influences teachers' innovative behavior, the present findings indicate that leadership can become the dominant determinant when teacher innovation is examined within an Islamic school context. Recent evidence from Indonesian Islamic boarding schools supports this interpretation. Novita et al. (2026), studying teachers in tahfidz-based Islamic boarding schools, found that transformational leadership significantly influenced innovative work behavior ($\beta = 0.355$, $p < 0.001$) and emerged as the strongest predictor alongside self-efficacy and organizational support. The present study therefore strengthens this previous finding, but also extends it by showing a substantially stronger leadership contribution in the present sample ($\beta = 0.951$). This difference suggests that leadership may become particularly influential in Islamic educational institutions where teachers operate within relatively structured organizational and value systems. In such settings, leaders do not merely manage administrative activities; they establish the direction, legitimacy, and organizational space through which innovation can be accepted and implemented.

The finding can further be understood through Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasizes the reciprocal interaction between individual characteristics, behavior, and environmental conditions.

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Teacher innovation is not produced solely by teachers' internal capabilities; it emerges through interaction with the organizational environment. Transformational leaders can shape this environment by providing encouragement, modeling innovative behavior, reducing resistance to change, and creating psychological conditions in which teachers feel permitted to experiment with new instructional practices. Recent research involving 1,082 primary and secondary school teachers similarly found that transformational leadership was positively associated with teachers' innovative behavior and that the relationship operated through psychological and motivational mechanisms such as creative growth mindset and work engagement. These findings reinforce the argument that leadership provides an external resource that activates teachers' internal motivation and willingness to innovate. Consequently, the present research supports Social Cognitive Theory by demonstrating that the organizational environment created through leadership is closely connected with teachers' innovative behavior.

A different pattern appears in relation to Teacher Professional Competence. Although Teacher Professional Competence had a positive and statistically significant bivariate relationship with Teacher Innovation ($r = 0.290$, $p = 0.010$), its partial effect became statistically insignificant when Transformational Leadership was included in the regression model ($\beta = 0.012$, $p = 0.744$). This finding is important because it indicates that professional competence alone does not necessarily produce innovative behavior at the institutional level. From the perspective of Human Capital Theory, professional competence represents valuable knowledge, skills, and capabilities that should increase an individual's ability to perform effectively. Nevertheless, the present findings suggest that possessing professional competence does not automatically mean that teachers will translate those capabilities into innovative practices. The conversion of competence into innovation appears to require an organizational environment that encourages experimentation and change.

This result therefore partially differs from previous studies that have emphasized the importance of teacher competence for innovative learning. For example, recent research on teacher professional competence and innovative learning argues that technology-based professional development can strengthen teachers' professional skills and encourage the development of innovative learning strategies. Likewise, research involving 365 teachers found significant relationships between professional competence and teachers' innovative work behavior. However, these differences can be explained by the analytical position of the variables. Previous research has often examined professional competence as a direct correlate of innovation, whereas the present study simultaneously considers transformational leadership. Once leadership is controlled, the independent contribution of professional competence becomes negligible. Thus, the study does not imply that professional competence is unimportant; rather, it suggests that competence needs an enabling organizational context before it can be transformed into sustained innovative behavior.

The distinction between the correlation and regression findings provides one of the most important contributions of this study. Teacher Professional Competence is significantly related to Teacher Innovation at the bivariate level, but its effect disappears when Transformational Leadership is considered simultaneously. This pattern indicates that teachers may possess adequate professional knowledge and skills but may not necessarily use those competencies to generate and implement new practices unless the school leadership creates conditions that encourage innovation. This

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interpretation is compatible with the Job Demands–Resources perspective, in which organizational resources such as leadership support can facilitate employees' motivation and proactive behavior. Recent research similarly shows that transformational leadership can activate teachers' innovative behavior through psychological and motivational pathways rather than through individual competence alone. Therefore, the present findings suggest that teacher innovation in Islamic schools is better understood as a leadership-enabled organizational behavior rather than simply an outcome of individual teacher competence.

The findings also have particular significance for Islamic education. Innovation in Islamic schools cannot simply be understood as the introduction of new technology or teaching methods. It involves the ability to develop new educational practices while maintaining the school's religious identity, ethical orientation, and educational mission. Transformational leadership is therefore strategically important because school leaders can connect innovation with institutional values. In this sense, leaders act as a bridge between educational change and Islamic educational identity. Recent research specifically examining transformational leadership in Islamic education similarly emphasizes the role of leadership in developing an innovative teacher culture within Islamic schools. The present study strengthens this emerging perspective by providing quantitative evidence that leadership is not merely associated with innovation but constitutes the dominant determinant in the proposed model.

The overall findings therefore lead to a theoretical refinement of existing research. Previous literature has established that teacher innovation is influenced by leadership, individual capabilities, psychological factors, and organizational conditions. The present study adds that these factors should not necessarily be assumed to have equal explanatory power. In the context of Islamic schools, transformational leadership appears to function as the primary organizational mechanism through which teachers' professional capacities can be translated into innovative practices. This leads to the central novelty of the study: teacher innovation in Islamic schools is better conceptualized as a leadership-enabled process in which transformational leadership provides the organizational conditions necessary for professional competence to be converted into innovative educational behavior. The study therefore supports the transformational leadership perspective, while simultaneously challenging the assumption that teacher professional competence alone is a sufficient direct determinant of innovation.

The novelty is particularly visible in the contrast between the two predictors. Transformational Leadership demonstrated an exceptionally strong independent effect ($\beta = 0.951$), whereas Teacher Professional Competence did not retain a significant independent effect ($\beta = 0.012$, $p = 0.744$). Consequently, the study shifts the emphasis from a competence-centered explanation of teacher innovation toward a leadership-enabled explanation. This does not reject the importance of teacher competence; rather, it positions competence as a capacity whose innovative expression may depend on the organizational environment created by leadership. For Islamic schools, this finding implies that investments in teacher professional development should be accompanied by leadership development, because improving teachers' capabilities without simultaneously developing leaders' ability to create an innovation-supportive environment may not be sufficient to produce sustained teacher innovation.

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4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that Transformational Leadership is the dominant determinant of Teacher Innovation in Islamic schools. The findings demonstrate that Transformational Leadership has a very strong and significant positive effect on Teacher Innovation ($\beta = 0.951$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that teachers are more likely to develop and implement innovative practices when school leaders provide clear direction, intellectual stimulation, encouragement, and support for change. In contrast, Teacher Professional Competence, although positively correlated with Teacher Innovation ($r = 0.290$, $p = 0.010$), does not have a significant independent effect when Transformational Leadership is considered simultaneously ($\beta = 0.012$, $p = 0.744$). The model explains 91.1% of the variance in Teacher Innovation. These findings suggest that professional competence alone is insufficient to generate strong teacher innovation without an organizational environment that encourages and facilitates innovation. The main contribution of this study is the leadership-enabled perspective of teacher innovation, which emphasizes the role of transformational leadership in translating teachers' professional capacity into innovative educational practices in Islamic schools.

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