TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION INSTITUTION THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Transformational leadership in Islamic value-based educational institutions, such as Rumah Tahfidz Qur'an (RTQ), faces challenges in integrating traditional practices with modern innovations to improve academic quality. This study explores the effectiveness of transformational leadership in RTQ Surau Lakuak, focusing on the strategic use of social media. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the research involves in-depth interviews and document analysis, guided by Kouzes and Posner's (2017) Leadership Challenge framework, which includes five core dimensions: Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. The findings indicate that leaders at RTQ Surau Lakuak effectively utilize social media to articulate their vision, enhance transparency, and foster community engagement. Key initiatives, such as digital donation campaigns, symbolic recognition, and community empowerment programs, have strengthened collaboration and ensured the sustainability of Qur'anic education programs. These practices are grounded in Islamic principles like *ta'awun* (cooperation) and deliberation, providing an adaptable leadership model for contemporary Islamic education. The study highlights the potential of applying the Leadership Challenge framework to address digital-era challenges, offering a replicable and innovative strategy for Islamic educational institutions in diverse contexts.

Keywords: Leadership Challenge, Qur'anic Education, Rumah Tahfidz Qur'an, Social Media

INTRODUCTION

Transformational leadership has emerged as a significant factor in the global education landscape, particularly in shaping effective and resilient institutions. Characterized by its capacity to inspire, motivate, and innovate, transformational leadership has received substantial attention in Islamic education for its potential to integrate traditional values with contemporary practices (Alazmi & Bush, 2024; Arifin et al., 2024; Karimi et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2023; Liu & Shi, 2016; Sliwka et al., 2024; Suryani et al., 2021; Ulufah et al., 2024). As educational institutions face the challenges of the digital age, transformational leaders play a pivotal role in bridging the gap between conventional pedagogical methods and modern societal demands (Alazmi, 2023; Asmendri et al., 2023; Ellis, 2024; Macfarlane et al., 2024; Rosyaad et al., 2024). This leadership style's adaptability is particularly relevant in Islamic education institutions that seek to balance heritage with innovation.

The use of social media as a tool for educational leadership has been widely recognized in recent years. Social media platforms provide leaders with the means to engage broader communities, disseminate educational content, and encourage collaborative efforts to achieve shared goals (Al-Rahmi et al., 2021; Antonio, 2022; Asmendri et al., 2023; Ergan & Ergan, 2021; Nilasari et al., 2024; Zarubina et al., 2024). However, many Tahfidz institutions, including Rumah Tahfidz Qur'an (RTQ) Surau Lakuak in Indonesia, continue to prioritize Qur'an memorization over the practical application of its values in daily life and the holistic

development of students' character (A. Shukri et al., 2020; Alamin & Inayati, 2020; Asmendri et al., 2023, 2022; Bensaid & Machouche, 2016; Mubarok et al., 2024; Takwin & Hendriani, 2023). This singular focus often neglects the broader purpose of Islamic education, which seeks to nurture moral integrity and ethical behavior.

At RTQ Surau Lakuak, this gap is particularly evident, as success is predominantly measured by the number of Qur'anic verses memorized by students, with less emphasis on character development and community engagement. Moreover, structured transformative programs leveraging social media for leadership and innovation are notably absent (Asmendri et al., 2023). This study addresses the critical need to evolve RTQ Surau Lakuak from a traditional memorization-focused institution to a transformative educational entity that produces not only proficient hafidz but also individuals who internalize and practice Qur'anic principles in their daily lives. By exploring specific leadership strategies, this research aims to guide similar institutions in balancing Qur'anic memorization with comprehensive Islamic education.

Although previous studies have extensively examined the operational aspects of Qur'anic education—such as curriculum management, teacher learning models, and memorization techniques (Alamin & Inayati, 2020; Alwi et al., 2023; Chusniyah & Makruf, 2024; Fahirah & Khouri, 2023; Fathah, 2021; Harahap et al., 2023; Moslimany et al., 2024; Muawanah et al., 2022; Muhtarom et al., 2022; Mukhtar et al., 2023; Mukmin et al., 2020; Nurhaliza & Yogi, 2024; Nurzanah et al., 2022; Rustiana & Ma`arif, 2022; Susanto, 2022)—there remains a significant gap in understanding the integration of transformational leadership and social media within Tahfidz institutions. Current literature often overlooks the transformative goals of Islamic education, particularly the internalization and application of Qur'anic values in everyday life (Kafid & Rohman, 2018; Kamil et al., 2021; Prasetyo et al., 2023; Saputra et al., 2023; Sulastini & Zamili, 2019). This research fills this gap by examining how RTQ Surau Lakuak utilizes transformational leadership strategies, particularly through social media, to enhance both Quranic memorization and holistic development. The findings aim to provide a comprehensive understanding of how Tahfidz institutions can evolve into transformative educational entities that meet the holistic needs of their students and communities.

The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the intersection of transformational leadership and social media within the context of non-formal Islamic education institutions like RTQ Surau Lakuak. Unlike earlier studies, which predominantly emphasize memorization, this study highlights the potential of leadership strategies that integrate digital tools to foster a holistic educational environment. By investigating RTQ Surau Lakuak's innovative use of social media as a leadership tool, this research offers a replicable model for other Tahfidz institutions. This model balances religious instruction with broader educational missions, producing well-rounded individuals who embody Qur'anic values in their daily lives. These insights address a critical need for leadership frameworks that are both contextually relevant and adaptable to modern educational challenges.

METHOD

This study explores the transformational leadership strategies of the head of RTQ Surau Lakuak in establishing RTQ as a transformative Islamic educational institution. Data were collected through interviews with the head and teachers during an FGD (Focus Group Discussion) activity held at UIN Batusangkar and from documentation data obtained through the Surau Lakuak Facebook account. Employing a qualitative approach, the researcher acted as the primary instrument, adapting to natural settings to collect rich and contextualized data. The naturalistic approach aligns with the study's focus on capturing informants' actions and words. Informants were identified through snowball sampling, starting with the head of the RTQ and

expanding to include teachers, staff, students, and their parents. Interviews were the primary data collection tool, providing insights into informants' experiences and perceptions, while documentation analysis supported and corroborated the findings.

The data were analysed using Kouzes & Posner (2017) Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership framework, which includes Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart. This framework provides a robust lens for examining transformational leadership within Islamic education, aligning closely with Qur'anic principles such as *ta'awun* (mutual cooperation) and exemplary conduct. The analysis followed Miles & Huberman's (1984) steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involved focusing and condensing raw data to align with the study's objectives, while data display organized information systematically. Drawing and verifying conclusions ensured the validity of findings, highlighting how leadership at RTQ Surau Lakuak integrates Islamic values with modern strategies, particularly through the effective use of social media to engage the community and sustain its Qur'anic education programs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
RTQ Surau Lakuak as a Transformative Leadership Model

Transformational leadership at RTQ Surau Lakuak exemplifies the Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership by Kouzes & Posner (2017), integrating Qur'anic values with innovative strategies to achieve holistic Qur'anic education. Leaders at RTQ embody the *Model the Way* dimension by setting a consistent example through active participation in initiatives like tahsin al-Qur'an sessions, collaborative community maintenance, and organizing events such as shared iftar and Subuh congregations. These activities foster student character building and strengthen ties between the institution and the wider community. Social media, particularly Facebook, extends this influence by showcasing programs like *gotong royong* and Qur'an immersion, which garner support from parents and donors, amplifying the impact of leadership. The strategy aligns with Idealized Influence in Bass's (1985) Transformational Leadership theory, positioning leaders as moral role models who inspire and motivate. Additionally, initiatives such as a karate program led by selected instructors emphasize discipline, courage, and cooperation, demonstrating adaptive leadership in addressing character development. This integration of traditional Qur'anic principles with modern communication technologies underscores Northouse's (2016) view of adaptive leadership, positioning RTQ Surau Lakuak as a sustainable and inspiring model of transformational leadership in Islamic education.

The Inspire a Shared Vision dimension in Kouzes and Posner's (2017) Leadership Challenge framework highlights the leader's role in motivating the community through a clear and meaningful vision, a principle exemplified by RTQ Surau Lakuak. The institution's vision of holistic Qur'anic education aims to develop hafidz with strong Islamic character who actively contribute to society, aligning with the concept of inspirational motivation from Bass's (1985) transformational leadership theory. RTQ leaders effectively communicate this vision through social media platforms like Facebook, sharing narratives that connect the organization's goals with a broader audience. For instance, a donation campaign for student uniforms not only conveyed the urgency of the need but also demonstrated transparency in fund allocation, earning support from both local and distant donors. Activities such as Qur'an immersion programs and Tahsin learning sessions are also publicized on social media, reinforcing the vision and engaging the community, as reflected in the positive responses and interactions in the comment sections. This strategic use of digital tools strengthens community trust and participation, demonstrating the power of an inspired and shared vision.

The Inspire a Shared Vision dimension, as outlined in Kouzes and Posner's (2017) leadership framework, emphasizes a leader's ability to articulate a compelling vision that unites

and motivates the community toward shared goals. At RTQ Surau Lakuak, this vision is realized through holistic Qur'anic education, shaping hafidz with strong Islamic character who actively contribute to society, reflecting Bass's (1985) concept of inspirational motivation. Social media serves as a vital tool for communicating this vision, with RTQ leaders leveraging platforms like Facebook to share narratives that connect the organization's mission with a broader audience. For instance, a donation campaign for student uniforms effectively conveyed urgency and transparency, attracting widespread support and building trust. Similarly, posts about activities like Qur'an immersion programs and Tahsin learning sessions reinforced the vision and engaged the community, as seen in positive responses and interactions online. By sharing students' journeys in memorizing the Qur'an and participating in social activities, RTQ leaders inspire support from students, parents, and the wider community. This approach aligns with Northouse's (2016) view of modern leaders who expand their influence through digital tools, while also embodying the Islamic value of amar ma'ruf, guiding the community toward collective well-being. RTQ's implementation of Inspire a Shared Vision exemplifies adaptive leadership, blending Islamic principles with technological innovation to achieve sustainable transformational impact.

The Challenge the Process dimension in Kouzes and Posner's (2017) leadership framework emphasizes innovation and courage in breaking the status quo to achieve progress, a principle actively implemented at RTQ Surau Lakuak. The institution addresses traditional challenges such as limited financial resources and community participation through creative solutions like leveraging social media, particularly Facebook, to sustain its programs. This approach reflects Bass's (1985) concept of Intellectual Stimulation, encouraging innovative thinking and problem-solving. Digital-based donation campaigns, such as those for student uniforms, are conducted with transparency, including detailed financial reports that build trust and attract support from local and non-local donors alike. Beyond fundraising, social media is used to strengthen community ties through the publicizing of programs like Qur'an immersion sessions and mutual aid activities, fostering a sense of belonging. Innovations extend further with initiatives like Forum Annisa, which empowers female students and engages parents through entrepreneurial training rooted in Qur'anic values. This holistic approach enhances institutional effectiveness while empowering individuals in the community. In the context of Islamic education, this aligns with the principle of ijtihad, applying modern innovations to uphold traditional values (Hendra, 2017). By integrating digital strategies and community-focused initiatives, RTQ Surau Lakuak exemplifies adaptive transformational leadership, offering a sustainable model for Qur'anic educational institutions to navigate contemporary challenges.

The Enable Others to Act dimension in Kouzes and Posner's (2017) Leadership Challenge framework highlights the importance of community empowerment to foster collaboration and shared ownership. At RTQ Surau Lakuak, this principle is evident in the active involvement of parents, teachers, students, and donors in supporting the Qur'anic education program. A notable example is the Forum Annisa entrepreneurship program, which equips female students with skills in cooking and business management while involving parents in planning and distribution. The program generates income for RTQ operations, instilling values of independence and collaboration among students and families. Additionally, gotong royong activities, such as cleaning the surau and RTQ environment, provide a platform for collective participation, fostering a sense of shared responsibility. Contributions from students, teachers, and parents are consistently recognized through certificates of appreciation or social media acknowledgments, enhancing motivation and engagement (Chan et al., 2023; Fletcher et al., 2000; Nurwinda, 2022; Saepudin et al., 2023). Social media also plays a strategic role in expanding community participation. RTQ leaders transparently share institutional needs, such

as fundraising for uniforms or new facilities, building trust among local and external donors. By publishing detailed reports on the use of funds, they strengthen donor confidence and broaden the network of support.

The Encourage the Heart dimension of Kouzes and Posner's (2017) Leadership Challenge framework underscores the significance of rewards in motivating individuals and fostering a collective spirit. At RTQ Surau Lakuak, symbolic rewards and incentives are integral to recognizing contributions from students, teachers, and the community. These rewards, such as certificates, Islamic books, and public recognition through social media, create a positive atmosphere and reinforce a sense of belonging that aligns with collective Islamic educational values. For instance, students excelling in the tahfidz program or displaying discipline in Subuh congregational activities are acknowledged, fostering healthy competition. Donors and parents are also appreciated through public mentions or personal messages, which strengthen their emotional connection to RTQ. This recognition strategy enhances engagement, builds trust, and motivates stakeholders, as seen in increased student performance, parental participation in activities like gotong royong, and sustained donor support (Chan et al., 2023; Fletcher et al., 2000). Grounded in the principles of tarbiyah and reinforced by prophetic teachings on gratitude, this approach fosters a culture of appreciation that supports collaboration and long-term sustainability.

RTQ Surau Lakuak exemplifies transformational leadership by integrating Islamic values with modern management practices, positioning itself as a model for transformative Islamic education. Its holistic programs, such as religious study sessions for parents and open evaluations involving stakeholders, aim to empower students as da'wah agents and strengthen parent-institution relationships. The RTQ's policy of providing free services and beneficial programs has led to increased community support and participation. By adhering to Islamic leadership principles such as trustworthiness, compassion, and honesty (Afriyanto & Khoiri, 2024; Nasukah & Winarti, 2021; Wahyuni & Maunah, 2021), RTQ Surau Lakuak has gained widespread trust and popularity. This success highlights its potential as a transformative Islamic educational institution capable of internalizing humanistic moral values, as suggested by Ahyar et al., (2023) and others. RTQ Surau Lakuak's leadership strategies serve as an inspiring model for other RTQs, particularly in West Sumatra, demonstrating the potential of Qur'anic education to drive positive transformation within communities.

The Impact of RTQ Surau Lakuak Activities on the Community

RTQ Surau Lakuak, located in Ikua Koto, Jorong Batang Pamu Nagari Pianggu, Solok Regency, West Sumatra, is led by Refni Dayu, M.Pd. During a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) on April 9, 2024, at the Jorong Padang Balimbing Meeting Hall, Nagari Koto Sani, X Koto Singkarak District, Susi Chaniago, the head of RTQ, shared insights into the participatory leadership strategy employed at RTQ Surau Lakuak. This strategy engages students' parents, the surrounding community, donors, and local leaders, fostering collaboration in planning, implementation, and evaluation processes. Established in 2019 by Susi and her sister, Dayu Chaniago (the late), both UIN Mahmud Yunus Batusangkar graduates, RTQ Surau Lakuak began with three students eager to study the Qur'an. The success of these initial students inspired local parents to entrust their children to the RTQ, despite some parents not setting similar examples of worship and good character. Embracing the trust placed in them, the RTQ provides free education under the slogan "Surau Lakuak, A Surau without Fees," ensuring accessibility and enthusiasm among students.

The students' passion for studying the Qur'an has driven RTQ Surau Lakuak to develop activities aimed at nurturing them as role models and preachers within their families. These initiatives include Qur'an memorization, tahsin, worship activities with parental involvement,

Islamic storytelling competitions, breaking fast together, charity events, and nasheed performances, among others. To sustain these programs, Susi and the teaching team leverage social media platforms like Facebook to share updates and raise funds from donors. Well-packaged updates on activities, such as uniform procurement campaigns, have attracted community and media recognition, boosting donor support. This financial assistance enables the RTQ to implement various planned programs effectively. Documenting the journey and activities of RTQ Surau Lakuak on Facebook has further solidified its role as a transformative educational institution, earning trust and admiration from parents, donors, and the broader community.
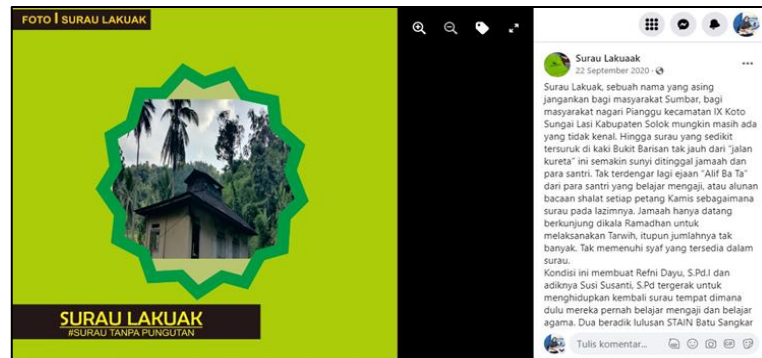

Figure 1. The journey of RTQ Surau Lakuak on its Facebook account

Documentation related to the physical development and programs of Surau Lakuak can be accessed on their Facebook page. The weekly Subuh (pre-dawn) religious education sessions are highly anticipated by the students and include Subuh religious education, morning exercise, breakfast, and community service (gotong royong). The breakfast, which varies weekly depending on donor contributions, is a highlight for the students, as is the ice-breaking games session, which brings joy to their time at RTQ Surau Lakuak.

Figure 2. Student talent development program

Following the Subuh session, students participate in cleaning the Surau, a routine that helps develop their personalities by instilling discipline in worship, courage in public speaking, independence, and teamwork. Additionally, RTQ Surau Lakuak offers a range of activities supervised by expert teachers, allowing students to pursue activities that align with their interest and talents.

Figure 3. Forum Annisa activities

RTQ Surau Lakuak implements an entrepreneurial program through the Forum Annisa, aimed at fostering independence, particularly among female students, by involving them in all stages of food production, from recipe preparation and shopping for ingredients to cooking and selling the products. This program develops entrepreneurial skills while also deepening students' understanding of Islamic womanhood, such as appropriate dressing according to Islamic principles. The institution is also active in fundraising to improve its infrastructure and facilities, such as a mini library obtained through donations, which enriches students' knowledge. Beyond Qur'an memorization and reading, RTQ Surau Lakuak emphasizes life skills and Islamic knowledge. The institution demonstrates its concern for the local community through regular religious gatherings at the surau and donation programs that support not only the students with free education and uniforms but also underprivileged members of the surrounding area.

Figure 4. RTQ Surau Lakuak's Programs for the Community

The activities conducted by RTQ Surau Lakuak have had a positive impact on the community and garnered widespread appreciation. These efforts were even highlighted in *Koran Singgalang*, one of the largest newspapers in West Sumatra. Dayu Refni, M.Pd, the first head of RTQ, was also honored by the Solok Regency Government as the Best Religious Counselor in Solok Regency.

Figure 5. Coverage of RTQ Surau Lakuak's Activities in Electronic Media

Figure 5 showcases the coverage of RTQ Surau Lakuak's activities in electronic media, highlighting the institution's engagement and visibility in various digital platforms. The media coverage underscores the positive impact of RTQ Surau Lakuak's programs on the community, with features that showcase its efforts in religious education, community service, and development. This exposure reflects the institution's commitment to sharing its initiatives and achievements, further solidifying its role in promoting educational and social welfare in the region.

Figure 6. Forms of Donations Collected for the Community and Students

RTQ Surau Lakuak has organized various Qur'an learning and community activities, positioning itself as a transformative educational institution. The planning and implementation of these activities align with the expectations of both the community and donors, benefiting not only the students but also their parents and the surrounding community. By successfully integrating Islamic values into students' lives, RTQ Surau Lakuak has contributed positively to character development, as highlighted by several studies (M. Ali, 2017; Dawiyatun, 2017; Ephrat, 2023; R. K. Sari et al., 2021; R. M. Sari et al., 2024; Syamsuddin, 2020). Character development is a central focus, with activities such as community service, communal cooking for iftar, and sports like karate. Initially, these activities lacked parental support but gradually gained popularity among students, who became more enthusiastic. RTQ Surau Lakuak used these activities as a means of da'wah, eventually securing full support from both students' parents and donors. This support allowed RTQ Surau Lakuak to offer its programs free of charge, exemplifying the transformative leadership of its head, who successfully mobilized students, teachers, parents, and donors to back his program ideas (Jonathan et al., 2024; Komsiyah, 2016; Mubarok et al., 2024; Nengsih et al., 2020; Teuku et al., 2024; Wahyudin et al., 2024; Wahyuni & Maunah, 2021; Wekke et al., 2018; Zulaili, 2018).

This study reveals that the transformational leadership applied by RTQ Surau Lakuak through the use of social media aligns with the theories of transformational leadership developed by James MacGregor Burns (McFayden, 2004; Randolph, 2021), Bernard Bass (Bass, 1985; Bass & Riggio, 2005), and Northouse (2016). Additionally, the perspectives of Al-Rahmi et al. (2021; Antonio (2022); Ergan & Ergan (2021); Khan & Khan (2019); Nilasari et al. (2024); Valero-Pastor et al. (2021); Zarubina et al. (2024) highlight the important role of social media in supporting transformational leadership, a point reinforced by the findings of this study. In the context of Islamic education, these results align with the concepts discussed in Islamic Education and Leadership (Afshari, 2022; Alazmi & Bush, 2024; A. J. Ali, 2009; Beekun & Badawi, 1999; Kafid & Rohman, 2018; Selçuk, 2023; Ulufah et al., 2024). RTQ Surau Lakuak's leader effectively used idealized influence to build trust and respect within the community through social media, sharing Qur'anic values and vision. The leader's ability to motivate both students and the community through inspirational content reflects aspects of inspirational

motivation, emphasizing that transformational leaders influence their followers not only through face-to-face interactions but also through strategic digital engagements, thereby extending their impact in the context of Islamic education.

The findings underscore the role of social media as a tool for transformative leadership, especially in non-formal Islamic education. Social media serves as a catalyst for leaders to inspire, encourage, and empower the community, in addition to acting as a communication tool. The integration of social media into RTQ Surau Lakuak's leadership practices further illustrates how transformational leadership can transcend face-to-face communication, suggesting new possibilities for leaders to use technology to drive significant, sustainable change. However, the study has limitations, particularly its qualitative methodology, which may not have captured all relevant variables, especially those related to broader social and cultural dynamics outside the Surau Lakuak environment. Given the diversity of local contexts, these findings may not be universally applicable to other RTQs or similar Islamic education institutions in different regions. Nonetheless, the study highlights the substantial impact of social media on the social transformation of the local community. Through platforms like Facebook, RTQ Surau Lakuak leaders successfully increased community access to Qur'anic education, benefiting students, their families, and the broader community. Social media allowed information to spread quickly and widely, boosting engagement in RTQ activities and fostering stronger relationships between the institution and the community. As a result, RTQ Surau Lakuak has built a strong network of support from parents, donors, and community leaders, improving the quality and sustainability of its educational programs.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the implementation of transformational leadership at RTQ Surau Lakuak has significantly improved the quality of Qur'anic education based on Islamic values. Using Kouzes and Posner's (2017) Leadership Challenge framework, which includes Model the Way, Inspire a Shared Vision, Challenge the Process, Enable Others to Act, and Encourage the Heart, the leadership approach at RTQ Surau Lakuak has fostered an innovative, collaborative, and sustainable environment. The strategic use of social media as a communication and engagement tool has enabled RTQ leaders to articulate their vision, build trust, and enhance community involvement through initiatives like digital donation campaigns, awards, and empowerment programs such as Forum Annisa. These efforts align with Islamic principles like ta'awun (mutual assistance) and musyawarah (consultation), positioning RTQ Surau Lakuak as an exemplary model of transformational leadership that integrates Islamic traditions with modern technology. The findings also contribute to the transformational leadership paradigm by emphasizing the role of social media as a strategic tool in non-formal Islamic education. It suggests that Islamic education authorities can utilize technology to achieve transformative goals, such as character development and the application of Qur'anic values in daily life. Based on these findings, it is recommended that other RTQs and Islamic institutions implement digital leadership strategies, making social media a key medium to enhance community engagement and educational support, while offering specialized social media training for RTQ leaders to strengthen their leadership effectiveness.

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