

Strategic Leadership Transformation in Addressing Non-Traditional Security Threats in Indonesia: A Narrative Literature Review

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Abstract

This study examines strategic leadership transformation in addressing non-traditional security threats in Indonesia and develops an adaptive strategic leadership framework by integrating transformational leadership, adaptive leadership, and legitimacy theory. A qualitative narrative literature review was conducted on 56 Scopus- and ScienceDirect-indexed articles (2015–2026). The selected articles were analyzed thematically through data reduction, categorization, and conclusion drawing. The findings show that transformational and adaptive leadership improve defense-organization performance, while non-traditional threats require more flexible leadership approaches. The Indonesian context presents challenges related to civil–military dynamics, defense coordination, cyber threats, disinformation, and public legitimacy. The study concludes that effective transformation requires the integration of leadership capacity, institutional synergy, and social legitimacy to strengthen responses to non-traditional security threats. This study is limited by its reliance on secondary literature from two databases and the absence of primary empirical data, requiring future validation through field studies. This study contributes to leadership and defense studies by contextualizing adaptive strategic leadership in Indonesia and providing practical insights for defense institutions in managing emerging security challenges.

Keywords: Civil–Military Relations, Indonesian Defense, Non-Traditional Threats, Strategic Leadership, Transformational Leadership

1. INTRODUCTION

The character of national security has shifted fundamentally since the end of the Cold War. The once-clear line separating military from non-military threats, and external aggression from internal instability, has grown steadily blurred. Ubiquitous digital connectivity, a multipolar geopolitical order, and the spread of hybrid strategies by state and non-state actors alike have driven this change. [Lupovici \(2023\)](#) observes that hybrid warfare erodes the boundaries between war and peace, combatant and civilian, and the military and civilian domains. Such conditions call for a defense posture that is integrated and adaptive, drawing on newer mechanisms such as deterrence by denial, as illustrated by the supply of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) sourced armaments to Ukraine [Lupovici \(2023\)](#). Precisely because these dynamics travel across borders and reshape the calculus of deterrence, they bear directly on Indonesia, whose archipelagic exposure and strategic location make it acutely susceptible to the same cross-domain pressures, rendering strategic renewal at the leadership level an urgent national concern. Non-traditional security threats have become a central preoccupation of contemporary security research, chiefly because their cross-border and multidimensional nature and their reliance on non-state actors depart from the state-centric, territorial logic of conventional military threats ([Fayaz, 2025](#)). Building on this, [Stollenwerk, Börzel, and Risse \(2021\)](#) advance a theory of resilience that reaches beyond military strength, arguing that a society's capacity to recover from multidimensional shocks is integral to national stability. To situate the security challenges confronting Indonesia, Table 1 sets out the core characteristics of non-traditional security threats as identified in the literature.

Table 1. Characteristics of non-traditional security threats

Type of Threat	Characteristics	Example in Indonesia	Source
Cyber threat	Cross-border, anonymous, attacks on critical infrastructure	National Data Center ransomware	Imran & Gunawan (2024)
Hybrid warfare	Combination of military and non-military, information warfare	Political disinformation campaigns	Jung & Tan (2024) and Lupovici (2023)
Grey-zone conflict	Below the threshold of war and fait accompli tactics	China maritime claims in the South China Sea	Afriansyah et al. (2024) ; Arif et al. (2024)
Information warfare	Manipulation of perception and social polarization	Identity-based issues in elections	Arifman et al. (2026) ; Luthfia & Angeline (2026)

Table 1 shows that Indonesia security landscape has widened beyond territorial concerns to encompass complex, cross-border, and multidimensional threats. Cyber threats bypass physical frontiers to strike critical infrastructure, while hybrid warfare marshals diverse instruments of power to pursue strategic ends without resorting to overt kinetic force. As a vast archipelagic state of 17,504 islands and roughly 278 million people, Indonesia faces considerable geopolitical pressure within the Indo-Pacific, particularly amid the deepening rivalry between the United States and China. [Arif et al. \(2024\)](#) note that China assertiveness in the South China Sea, namely by encroaching on Indonesia Exclusive Economic Zone in the North Natuna Sea, exemplifies grey-zone operations. By deploying paramilitary coast-guard assets and maritime militia, these tactics contest sovereign rights while remaining below the threshold of conventional engagement.

The proliferation of such threats demands a critical reappraisal of Indonesia defense strategy. The national posture remains anchored in territorial military operations aligned with the Universal Defense and Security doctrine. Assessing this framework within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (ASEAN) Defence Ministers' Meeting, [Sjamsoeddin, Yusgiantoro, Saragih, and Soepandji \(2023\)](#) identify systemic coordination deficiencies, more than 75% of non-defense officials showed limited familiarity with the very policy frameworks that designate their agencies as primary stakeholders in countering non-traditional threats. This gap between the accelerating evolution of threats and the slower pace of strategic adaptation endangers national resilience and underscores the need for leadership-level renewal.

Proceeding from the background above, this study is guided by four research questions: what dimensions of transformational strategic leadership and individual leadership capacity emerge from the global literature? what characteristics of non-traditional security threats are salient for Indonesia, and what are their implications for national defense strategy? how do civil–military dynamics and institutional synergy shape strategic leadership in Indonesia? how can these elements be integrated into a conceptual framework of strategic leadership transformation that accounts for social legitimacy in the Indonesian context?

Corresponding to these questions, the objectives of the study are to identify and analyze the dimensions of transformational strategic leadership and individual leadership capacity in the global literature. To examine the characteristics of non-traditional security threats relevant to Indonesia and their implications for national defense strategy. To analyze the dynamics of civil–military relations and the effectiveness of institutional synergy as determinants of strategic leadership in Indonesia. To formulate an integrative conceptual framework for strategic leadership transformation that incorporates the strengthening of social legitimacy for Indonesia.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Transformational Leadership Theory

Transformational leadership has been the most extensively studied leadership model of the past three decades, especially within public and military organizations. [Burns \(1978\)](#) first framed it as a process in which leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality; [Bass and Riggio \(2006\)](#) later rendered it a systematic framework built on four dimensions, namely idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, which remain the dominant paradigm in the field ([Northouse, 2021](#)). In brief, idealized influence casts the leader as a moral exemplar whose integrity earns trust and pride, inspirational motivation articulates a compelling vision and builds shared purpose, intellectual stimulation invites subordinates to question assumptions and innovate, and individualized consideration attends to each follower's developmental needs. In military settings these behaviors underpin a commander's credibility, allowing leadership to rest on consistent example rather than formal authority alone, and to foster the adaptive problem-solving that complex hybrid threats require ([Bakker et al., 2022](#); [Bass & Riggio, 2006](#); [Northouse, 2021](#); [Vu et al., 2025](#)). Empirical studies across the military, education, business, and government sectors confirm that transformational leadership correlates positively with organizational performance, job satisfaction, commitment, and innovative behavior ([Agag et al., 2025](#); [Northouse, 2021](#); [Sueb & Sopiah, 2023](#); [Yu & Xiang, 2024](#)).

2.2 Leadership in Military and Defense Contexts

Leadership in the military is distinctive, shaped by strict hierarchy, high discipline, and the severe consequences of failure. [Morgan-Owen and Gould \(2022\)](#) argue that military doctrine grows out of the interplay between civil and military leadership, excessive civilian dominance can stifle strategic innovation, whereas a balanced relationship accelerates it. Studying civil–military relations in India, [Mukherjee \(2022\)](#) shows that heavy bureaucratic oversight can constrain a military expected to sustain professional standards under civilian control, and this observation is pertinent to Indonesia, with its trajectory from the ABRI dual function to post-1998 civilian supremacy ([Rehardiningtyas, & Almuaroq, 2022](#); [Solar, 2020](#)). For Indonesia specifically, [Shives and Fatahillah \(2026\)](#) propose a six-pillar strategic leadership model, comprising integrated vision, civil–military orchestration, human-resource development, industrial architecture, integrity-based governance, and adaptive decision-making, to align defense doctrine with the Golden Indonesia 2045 vision. Complementing this, [Aryanto, Bachri, Rifani, and Rahmawati \(2026\)](#), surveying 180 army personnel, find that transformational leadership positively affects job satisfaction and, through it, innovative work behavior, suggesting that in a hierarchical culture innovation depends more on cultural support and positive experience than on directive orders. [Esenyel \(2024\)](#) reinforces the point, advocating a shift from command-and-control toward participative styles in Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous (VUCA) environments where non-traditional threats such as cyberattacks and pandemics are inherently unpredictable, a setting in which adaptive leadership can enhance military capability against hybrid threats ([Teixeira, Pais, dos Santos, & de Sousa, 2024](#)).

2.3 Non-Traditional Security Threats

Since the cold war end, non-traditional security threats have moved to the center of international security research. Unlike military, territorial, and state-centric conventional threats, they are cross-border and multifaceted and involve non-state actors ([Stollenwerk, Börzel, & Risse, 2021](#)). [Lupovici \(2023\)](#) adds that hybrid warfare increasingly dissolves the distinctions between war and peace and between combatant and civilian. This review groups the relevant literature into three interrelated strands, namely cyber and digital security, hybrid and grey-zone conflict, and information and cognitive warfare, which are synthesized below rather than treated study by study.

2.3.1 Cyber Threats and Digital Security

Cyber threats rank among the most pressing non-traditional challenges of the digital age. [Taddeo \(2017\)](#) shows that classical deterrence theory struggles with cyberspace because it cannot accommodate attribution ambiguity, inter-actor dynamics, and uncontrolled escalation, while [Lilli \(2021\)](#) argues that effective cyber deterrence must enlist the private sector proactively. In Indonesia, [Imran and Gunawan \(2024\)](#) find cybersecurity policy to be largely reactive, hampered by limited

expertise among officials, weak legal foundations, scarce professional talent, and poor inter-agency coordination. [Judijanto \(2025\)](#) treats the June 2024 ransomware attack on the National Data Center as stark evidence of this vulnerability. [Aulianisa and Indirwan \(2020\)](#) similarly conclude that the national legal framework is reactive, lacks clear attribution mechanisms, and insufficiently integrates the private sector and civil society. Against these gaps, [Jabbar, Astuti, Ahmad, Adnan, and Putra \(2026\)](#) call for stronger data protection, a digital-literacy ecosystem, and a hexa-helix collaboration model on the premise that no single actor commands the resources to confront cyber threats alone.

2.3.2 Hybrid Warfare and Grey-Zone Conflict

[Jung and Tan \(2024\)](#) examine the integration of defense and public policy against hybrid threats, which fuse digital and non-digital instruments, including information warfare and structured cyberattacks alongside economic pressure and political subversion. Though acknowledged in Indonesia 2025–2029 General Policy of National Defense, implementation remains obstructed, reflecting the intersection of traditional and modern warfare that characterizes contemporary hybrid war ([Cetinkaya, 2025](#)). [Arif et al. \(2024\)](#) show that in the South China Sea China employs coast-guard vessels and civilian fishermen to expand claims through fait accompli tactics without provoking conventional escalation, a challenge sharpened by Indonesia thin surveillance of border and remote areas ([Afriansyah et al., 2024](#); [Sarjito, 2024](#)). [Laksmmana \(2022\)](#) attributes reactive responses to maritime incidents to Indonesia's fragmented division of labour model of maritime law enforcement, in which overlapping mandates among the Coordinating Ministry for Political, Legal, and Security Affairs, the armed forces, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs undercut a unified command.

2.3.3 Information Warfare and Cognitive Dimensions

Beyond cybersecurity, the literature increasingly engages cognitive warfare aimed at shaping public perception, belief, and political orientation ([Troublefield, 2026](#)). Unlike conventional information warfare, its goal is to reshape how people think, that is, their perceptions, beliefs, and collective memory, through AI-supported behavioral manipulation. [Arifman et al. \(2026\)](#) document disinformation campaigns in Indonesia that exploit fear of external enemies and politicize defense budgets, with electoral polarization accelerating their spread as actors weaponize ethnic, religious, and inter-group sentiment. [Gustafsson and Mälksoo \(2023\)](#) propose memory-political deterrence, in which collective memory and identity foster cohesion and reduce vulnerability to external intervention, which is pertinent for a plural society such as Indonesia. Extending this, [Luthfia and Angeline \(2026\)](#) advance a culture-based hybrid resilience in which cultural heritage (*wayang*, *batik*, communal values) serves as a defense against foreign narratives and digital colonialism.

2.4 Civil–Military Relations and Legitimacy

Indonesia transition from new order authoritarianism to post-1998 democratic consolidation dismantled the armed forces' dual-function (*dwifungsi*) doctrine and withdrew the military from practical politics. [Solar \(2020\)](#) contends that a military can rebuild legitimacy in post-authoritarian societies when it is seen to maintain order and curb crime, and this is consistent with legitimacy theory, which grounds authority not in sanctions but in public perceptions of fairness, procedural propriety, and voluntary compliance. Contemporary frictions persist: [Sajida \(2026\)](#) reports that the planned 2025 revision of the armed-forces law provoked marked polarization, with sentiment analysis of YouTube comments yielding 3,694 positive against 512 negative reactions and transparency the dominant concern. [Harijanto \(2024\)](#) add that opacity in defense decision-making deters partners such as Australia from sharing sensitive technology essential to strategic partnership in the Indo-Pacific.

At the institutional level, [Ng & Kurniawan \(2024\)](#) examines Indonesia regional-security outlook following the establishment of a National Security Council, which is expected to reduce strategic ambiguity between foreign and defense policy, provided that its chair exercises firm leadership and member institutions relinquish sectoral self-interest. Comparative experience suggests such councils are typically led by a head of state or government and backed by a robust secretariat and adequate budget; without authority over resource allocation they risk becoming mere discussion forums ([Ng & Kurniawan, 2024](#); [Kriswanto et al., 2023](#); [Shives & Fatahillah, 2026](#)). [Bollen and Kalkman \(2022\)](#) further show that effective civil–military collaboration in disaster

response depends on clear role delineation, procedural interoperability, and regular joint exercises.

On social legitimacy, [Dolan et al. \(2023\)](#) theorize legitimation as a dynamic, relational process rather than a static binary, while [Schoon \(2022\)](#) operationalizes legitimacy across acceptance, trust, and compliance with state institutions. [Tyler \(2005\)](#) stresses that legitimacy secures voluntary compliance beyond the fear of sanction, and this is directly relevant to defense policies requiring public cooperation. [Bengtsson and Brommesson \(2022\)](#) find institutional trust a strong predictor of voluntary participation in civil-defense activity, and [Thornton and Mirón \(2022\)](#) draw from COVID-19 the lesson that resilience built on social trust outperforms coercion. Together these strands imply that Indonesian defense strategy against non-traditional threats should invest in social capital and legitimacy rather than repression.

2.5 Research Gap and Contribution

Although scholarship on transformational leadership, non-traditional threats, and civil–military relations has advanced rapidly, four gaps motivate this study. First, most transformational-leadership research addresses business and education rather than defense, and studies in developing-country defense settings remain scarce, [Aryanto, Bachri, Rifani, and Rahmawati \(2026\)](#) is a rare exception, though limited to a single unit. Second, the Indonesian literature on non-traditional threats is fragmented, with work on cyber threats [Imran and Gunawan \(2024\)](#), [Judijanto \(2025\)](#) and [Nugroho and Chandrawulan \(2023\)](#), hybrid warfare [Jung and Tan \(2024\)](#) and [Prasetyo, Suharto, and Santoso \(2025\)](#), and grey-zone conflict [Arif, Afriansyah, Chairil, and Lestari \(2024\)](#), [Aritonang, Perwita, Aritonang, and Hendarwoto \(2025\)](#), and [Sajida \(2026\)](#) rarely linked to strategic leadership. Third, research on Indonesian civil–military relations [Harijanto \(2024\)](#), [Pramono, 2025](#), [Sajida \(2026\)](#), [Shives and Fatahillah \(2026\)](#), and [Solar, 2020](#) emphasizes political and legal dimensions over leadership transformation. Fourth, no framework yet integrates transformational leadership, non-traditional threats, and social legitimacy for Indonesian defense. Addressing these gaps, the study contributes by contextualizing transformational-leadership theory within Indonesia defense environment, integrating legitimacy theory with it, developing the concept of adaptive strategic leadership for VUCA conditions, and offering operational policy recommendations.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study adopts a qualitative approach using the narrative literature review method, chosen because it allows the researcher to identify, appraise, and synthesize findings from prior studies in depth and to build a rich conceptual framework with room to explore competing perspectives ([Baumeister & Leary, 1997](#); [Snyder, 2019](#)).

3.2 Data Sources and Selection Procedure

The corpus comprises 56 scholarly articles retrieved from Scopus and ScienceDirect using the keywords transformational leadership, adaptive leadership, non-traditional security, hybrid threat, defense strategy, Indonesia, and *Tentara Nasional Indonesia* (TNI). Selected articles were published between 2015 and 2026 and available in full text, the ten-year window keeps the review aligned with contemporary threat dynamics. Table 2 reports the distribution of articles by source and year.

Table 2. Distribution of articles by source and year

Category	Quantity	Percentage (%)
Source		
Scopus	36	64
ScienceDirect	20	36
Year of publication		
2026	9	16
2025	20	36
2024	14	25

Category	Quantity	Percentage (%)
2023	6	11
2022	4	7
2021	2	4
2020	1	2

Table 2 shows most articles come from Scopus, a high-reputation database, and 77% appeared in the last three years, which is evidence that the topic is a live, fast-evolving concern and that the review speaks to current threat dynamics. The concentration of recent publications indicates growing scholarly attention toward leadership adaptation in responding to increasingly complex and multidimensional security challenges. Furthermore, the balanced use of Scopus and ScienceDirect sources strengthens the breadth of the literature review by incorporating diverse academic perspectives and ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

3.3 Data Collection Procedure

Data collection proceeded in four stages. First, literature search on Scopus and ScienceDirect with the keyword combinations initially returned 2,527 articles on military transformational leadership and 534 on the Indonesian context. Second, article selection narrowed these to the 56 most relevant, using criteria requiring that a study treat strategic or transformational leadership as a primary variable, address non-traditional security threats, and apply a clear methodology. Third, article classification grouped the selected studies into four emergent themes: dimensions of transformational strategic leadership, non-traditional security threats, strategic-leadership adaptation, and Indonesian civil–military relations. Fourth, data extraction recorded, for each article, the author, year, objective, method, main findings, and relevance to Indonesia. Table 3 illustrates the extraction for three key articles spanning distinct methodological approaches.

Table 3. Example of data extraction from key articles

Author & Year	Objective	Method	Main Findings	Relevance to Indonesia
Aryanto et al. (2026)	Test the influence of transformational leadership on personnel performance	Quantitative survey ($n=180$)	Transformational leadership positively affects job satisfaction ($\beta=0.693$)	Empirical validation in the armed forces
Sjamsoeddin, Yusgiantoro, Saragih, and Soepandji (2023)	Analyze civil–military cooperation in defense-policy implementation	Qualitative case study	75% of non-defense officials unfamiliar with the doctrine	Identifies coordination gaps
Imran & Gunawan (2024)	Examine securitization of cyber threats in Indonesia	Policy analysis	Cyber policy is reactive and fragmented	Indonesian cyber vulnerability

Table 3 conveys the methodological diversity of the corpus, spanning quantitative surveys, qualitative case studies, and policy analysis, whose contributions are complementary: quantitative work evidences the effect of transformational leadership, qualitative work reveals institutional dynamics, and policy analysis exposes weaknesses in the legal framework. These findings provide a comprehensive foundation for understanding leadership transformation within Indonesia’s defense context. The extracted evidence was further synthesized to identify recurring themes, conceptual relationships, and research gaps.

3.4 Data Analysis Technique

Analysis followed [Braun and Clarke's \(2006\)](#) thematic procedure in three stages. In data reduction, all 56 articles were read repeatedly to grasp content and context and to code analytically relevant material. In categorization, findings were clustered into emergent themes by identifying patterns, similarities, and differences, with categories reviewed for internal consistency. In conclusion drawing, a narrative synthesis answered the research questions and yielded the proposed conceptual framework of strategic leadership transformation for Indonesia.

3.5 Research Validity and Reliability

Four strategies safeguarded trustworthiness. Source triangulation drew on varied publications to enrich the analysis. Peer debriefing subjected interpretations to critical review by the supervisor. An audit trail documented the entire selection and analysis process. Finally, because this is a literature review rather than a field study, the customary notion of member checking, that is, verification with human participants, does not apply. Instead, interpretive fidelity was maintained by systematically returning to and re-verifying each claim against the original text of the source articles, so that every synthesized statement is traceable to its documentary evidence.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Characteristics of the Analyzed Articles

Of the 56 articles analyzed, 40 constitute global literature and 16 address the Indonesian context. By method, 32 are quantitative, 15 qualitative, and 9 mixed-methods; most quantitative work was conducted in Western settings, while research on Indonesia remains comparatively limited. Table 4 presents the distribution of articles by main theme.

Table 4. Distribution of articles by main theme

Theme	Number of Articles	Percentage (%)	Key Articles
Transformative leadership dimension	30	54	Aryanto et al. (2026) , Esenyel (2024) , and Shives & Fatahillah (2026)
Cyber threats & digital security	24	43	Aulianisa & Indirwan (2020) , Imran & Gunawan (2024) , and Judijanto (2025)
Hybrid warfare & grey zone	20	36	Jung & Tan (2024) , Arif et al. (2024) , and Lupovici (2023)
Civil–military relations	18	32	Harijanto (2024) , Sjamsuoddin, Yugianoro, Saragih, and Soepandji (2023) , and Solar (2020)
Adaptive leadership & VUCA	22	39	Bengtsson & Brommesson (2022) , Larsson et al. (2021) , and Mattingdal (2025)
Legitimacy & public trust	16	29	Dellmuth & Tallberg (2020) , Schoon (2022) , and Tyler (2005)
Indonesian context	16	29	Ng & Kurniawan (2024) , Sajida (2026) , and Warsono et al. (2023)

Table 4 reveals three patterns. Transformative leadership is the most prevalent theme, confirming its standing as the primary theoretical lens in the defense literature. Cyber threats and hybrid warfare emerge as the two most-discussed non-traditional threats, signaling a shift of attention from conventional to multidimensional threats. Finally, only 29% of articles address Indonesia specifically, marking a substantial research gap.

4.2 Dimensions of Transformative Strategic Leadership

Across the corpus, transformational leadership stands out as the leadership model most discussed in defense and security organizations. Developed by Burns (1978) and elaborated by Bass and Riggio (2006), it rests on four dimensions recurring across studies (Aryanto et al., 2026; Esenyel, 2024; Shives & Fatahillah, 2026).

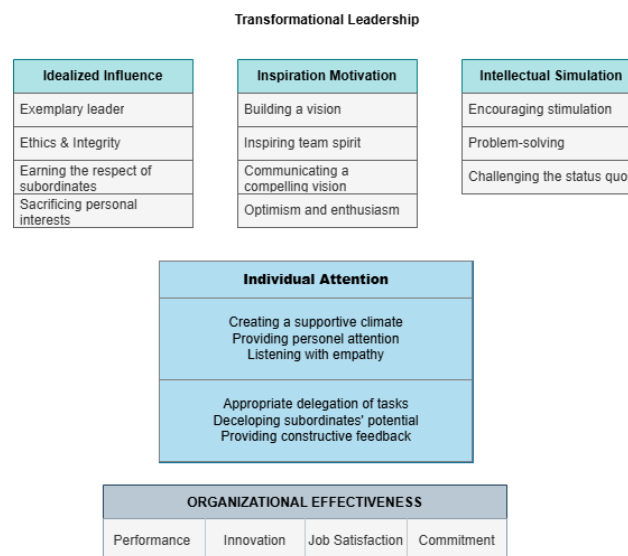


Figure 1. Bass transformational leadership model

As Figure 1 indicates, the four dimensions are interlocking and jointly drive organizational effectiveness, such as idealized influence builds credibility, inspirational motivation supplies energy and direction, intellectual stimulation spurs innovation, and individualized consideration develops each member. In the military, these dimensions bear directly on credibility, trust, and readiness against complex threats. Empirical evidence from Indonesia reinforces the model. Aryanto et al. (2026) find that transformational leadership significantly raises job satisfaction ($\beta=0.693$, $p<0.001$) and, in turn, innovative work behavior among 180 army personnel, indicating that in a rigid, hierarchical culture innovation flows more from cultural support and positive experience than from directive orders. In a related vein, Marlia et al. (2025) report that digital leadership improved organizational success by 25% in Indonesian public universities, hinting at the payoff of transformational leadership pursued through digital means.

Confronting unpredictable non-traditional threats also demands adaptive leadership. Esenyel (2024) advocates a move from rigid command-and-control toward decentralized, participative models suited to VUCA conditions, in which cyber warfare and pandemics routinely outstrip legacy hierarchies. Larsson et al. (2021) identify inter-agency trust, open communication, goal alignment, and conflict management as determinants of collaborative effectiveness within a total-defense framework, which is precisely the synchronization Indonesia needs. Consolidating these strands, Shives and Fatahillah (2026) offer a six-pillar framework, comprising integrated strategic vision, civil-military orchestration, human-capital development, defense-industrial architecture, integrity-based governance, and adaptive decision-making, for advancing strategic leadership capacity in Indonesian defense.

4.3 Non-Traditional Security Threats

4.3.1 Cyber Threats and Digital Security

Cyber threats and digital security rank second among themes in the defense literature. In Indonesia, high internet penetration unmatched by adequate digital literacy generates acute exposure to cyberattacks and disinformation ([Imran, & Gunawan, 2024](#); [Jabbar, Astuti, Ahmad, Adnan, & Putra, 2026](#)). Table 5 synthesizes the principal constraints on the national cyber-security ecosystem.

Table 5. Cyber-security constraints in Indonesia

Constraint	Description	Impact	Source
Lack of knowledge	Minimal cyber-security understanding among state officials	Slow response to cyberattacks	Imran & Gunawan (2024)
Inadequate legal basis	Framework does not clearly cover threat attribution	Difficulty identifying perpetrators	Aulianisa & Indirwan (2020)
Weak coordination	Sectoral ego among cyber, military, and police agencies	Overlapping mandates and policies	Judijanto (2025)
Limited human resources	Scarce professional talent in the cyber field	Low prevention capacity	Nugroho (2026)

Table 5 identifies four interlinked constraints. Limited technical knowledge [Imran and Gunawan \(2024\)](#) and scarce professional talent [Nugroho \(2026\)](#) reflect internal capacity deficits, whereas an inadequate legal basis [Aulianisa and Indirwan \(2020\)](#) and fragmented inter-agency coordination [Judijanto \(2025\)](#) constitute structural barriers. Their convergence produces a strategic dissonance, that is, a wide gap between awareness of cyber threats and the state's capacity to respond. [Judijanto \(2025\)](#) reads the June 2024 ransomware attack on the National Data Center as a marker of this deficit, and [Nugroho \(2026\)](#) traces the shortfall in digital leadership to low literacy among officials, thin human-resource capacity, and policy fragmentation. [Jabbar et al. \(2026\)](#) again press the case for data protection, a stronger literacy ecosystem, and hexa-helix collaboration.

4.3.2 Hybrid Warfare and Grey-Zone Conflict

[Jung and Tan \(2024\)](#) frame the integration of defense and public policy as a response to hybrid threats that combine digital and conventional components, including information warfare, structured cyberattacks, economic pressure, and political subversion, and these are accommodated in the 2025–2029 National Defense General Policy yet impeded in practice. [Lupovici \(2023\)](#) observes that hybrid warfare blurs the war–peace and combatant–civilian divides, with NATO arms transfers to Ukraine serving both as deterrent and as long-term capacity-building. [Arif, Afriansyah, Chairil, and Lestari \(2024\)](#) detail China grey-zone strategy in the South China Sea, where coast-guard vessels and maritime militia press territorial claims through fait accompli without triggering escalation, and this is an acute challenge given Indonesia limited surveillance of border areas and outer islands. Fragmented authority among the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, the Maritime Security Agency, and the Navy compounds the problem [Afriansyah, Imanuel, and Darmawan \(2024\)](#) and the absence of a unified command structure yields reactive responses [Laksmiana \(2022\)](#).

4.3.3 Information Warfare and Cognitive Dimensions

Contemporary discourse increasingly foregrounds cognitive warfare, which seeks not merely to shape opinion but to engineer mindsets, perceptions, and collective memory through AI-based behavioral manipulation ([Troublefield, 2026](#)). [Arifman et al. \(2026\)](#) show how disinformation in Indonesia exploits fear of external threats and politicizes defense allocations, with electoral polarization accelerating identity-based manipulation that erodes cohesion. [Gustafsson and Mälksoo \(2023\)](#) position collective memory and identity as instruments of cohesion and deterrence, while [Luthfia and Angeline \(2026\)](#) propose local-wisdom-based resilience, which mobilizes cultural artifacts and communal values, digital customary law, algorithmic diplomacy, and critical literacy, to defend cognitive sovereignty amid technological disruption.

4.4 Strategic Leadership Adaptation to Non-Traditional Threats

Dynamic, unpredictable threats demand adaptive leadership. [Mattingsdal \(2025\)](#), analyzing military leaders' performance in irregular-warfare simulations, finds that professional background shapes decision-making, since police backgrounds prioritize public order and civilian protection while military backgrounds prioritize threat neutralization, and this carries clear implications for Indonesia, where defense effectiveness hinges on civil–military synergy. [Hedlund and Alvinus \(2024\)](#) advance a constructive-alignment framework to synchronize strategic goals, exercise design, and evaluation, and [Bollen and Kalkman \(2022\)](#) stress clear roles, standardized procedures, and routine drills. Yet in Indonesia joint activity among the armed forces, the police, and the disaster-management agency tends toward the ceremonial, with limited collective decision-making under pressure ([Aryanto et al., 2026](#)). [Larsson et al. \(2021\)](#) specify the determinants of successful inter-agency collaboration within a total-defense framework, summarized in Table 6 with implications for Indonesia.

Table 6. Factors for successful inter-agency collaboration in defense

Factor	Description	Implications for Indonesia
Inter-agency trust	Belief that other agencies act with competence and integrity	Build trust through joint exercises and transparency
Open communication	Smooth information flow without bureaucratic obstacles	Eliminate sectoral egos and information silos
Shared goals	Mutual understanding of the ultimate objectives	Collectively agree on national defense priorities
Conflict management	Mechanisms to resolve disagreements constructively	Establish inter-agency conflict-resolution protocols

Table 6 makes clear that effective collaboration is not automatic but built on trust, open communication, shared goals, and conflict-resolution mechanisms, namely four factors that remain challenging in Indonesia, where sectoral egos and the lack of permanent coordination fragment communication and misalign objectives. In the maritime domain specifically, [Inayah et al. \(2024\)](#) show that leadership quality in regional cooperation directly shapes the effectiveness of Indonesia's maritime security strategy, reinforcing the argument that formal coordination structures translate into operational outcomes only when paired with strong leadership. [Warsono et al. \(2023\)](#) find that engaging local communities during the COVID-19 pandemic outperformed repressive sectoral approaches, a lesson for future defense strategy. On the digital front, [Aulianisa and Indirwan \(2020\)](#) reaffirm the reactivity of the legal framework, while [Lilli \(2021\)](#) and the Colombian model ([Cujabante Villamil et al., 2020](#)) suggest that joint cyber-operation centers enabling real-time information sharing among the military, police, and private sector could underpin proactive information resilience.

4.5 Civil–Military Relations in Indonesia

Indonesia post-1998 transition eliminated the dwifungsi doctrine and demobilized the military from politics. [Solar \(2020\)](#) argues that the military can win new legitimacy when perceived as effective against crime and disorder, and [Tyler \(2005\)](#) reminds us that legitimacy secures voluntary compliance beyond fear of sanction, and this is relevant to policies such as mandatory training or resource mobilization. Contemporary tensions center on the 2025 revision of the armed-forces law, which [Sajida \(2026\)](#) shows generated marked polarization (3,694 positive versus 512 negative YouTube comments) over transparency. [Harijanto \(2024\)](#) note the resulting dilemma: Indonesia seeks capacity through foreign cooperation, yet partners demand transparency and accountability that weak civilian control over decision-making does not guarantee. [Institutionally, Ng & Kurniawan \(2024\)](#) sees the National Security Council under Prabowo Subianto as a means to close gaps between foreign and defense policy, contingent on strong leadership and the setting aside of sectoral interests, comparative practice again warns that a council without resource-allocation authority degenerates into a consultative forum ([Shives & Fatahillah, 2026](#)). The persistent finding that over 75% of non-defense officials misunderstand their mandated responder roles leaves agencies such as the disaster, cyber, and health authorities operationally marginalized despite clear mandates ([Sjamsoddin, Yugianoro, Saragih, & Soepandji, 2023](#)).

4.6 Social Legitimacy and Public Trust

Legitimacy theory provides the analytical foundation for understanding public evaluation of defense institutions. [Dolan et al. \(2023\)](#) treat legitimation as a dynamic, relational process, and [Schoon \(2022\)](#) operationalizes it across acceptance, trust, and compliance. Table 7 applies this framework to Indonesian defense.

Table 7. Three dimensions of legitimacy in the Indonesian defense context

Dimension	Definition	Indicator	Challenges in Indonesia
Acceptance	Public acceptance of defense institutions' existence and role	Level of public support for the armed forces	Legacy of the ABRI dual function
Trust	Public confidence in institutional integrity and competence	Perception of professionalism	Lack of transparency
Compliance	Voluntary adherence to defense policies	Participation in Bela Negara programs	Low defense literacy

Table 7 shows legitimacy as a spectrum rather than a binary, acceptance is the minimal foundation, trust a higher tier requiring validated performance, and voluntary compliance the apex reflecting internalized values ([Schoon, 2022](#)). In Indonesia, the *Bersenjata Republik Indonesia* (ABRI) dual-function legacy still conditions acceptance, opacity constrains trust, and low defense literacy limits compliance ([Solar, 2020](#)). [Solar \(2020\)](#) adds that post-authoritarian militaries can earn legitimacy through effective security provision even as authoritarian legacies linger, while [Bengtsson and Brommesson \(2022\)](#) tie voluntary participation to interpersonal and institutional trust and [Bunduchi et al. \(2022\)](#) link the legitimacy of strategic initiatives to stakeholder engagement and concrete benefits. For defense strategy, [Thornton and Mirón \(2022\)](#) draw from COVID-19 the decisive lesson that resilience grounded in social trust outperforms coercion, implying that Indonesia should build social capital and legitimacy rather than intensify repression ([Aritonang et al., 2025](#); [Solar, 2020](#)).

4.7 A Conceptual Framework for Strategic Leadership Transformation

Synthesizing the 56 articles, the study proposes an integrated framework of three interconnected dimensions, grounded in the transformational-leadership theory of [Bass and Riggio \(2006\)](#), the legitimacy theory of [Schoon \(2022\)](#), and the resilience theory of [Stollenwerk, Börzel, and Risse \(2021\)](#). Table 8 details the dimensions, components, indicators, and sources; Figure 2 renders their relationships.

Table 8. Conceptual framework for strategic leadership transformation

Dimension	Component	Indicator	Literature Source
Individual	Visionary capacity	Ability to articulate strategic vision	Esenyel (2024) and Shives & Fatahillah (2026)
	Adaptive competence	Flexibility in facing change	Larsson et al. (2021) and Mattingsdal (2025)
	Digital literacy	Understanding of digital threats and opportunities	Jabbar et al. (2026) and Nugroho (2026)
	Adaptive decision-making	Rapid response to VUCA situations	Esenyel (2024) and Shives & Fatahillah (2026)
Institutional	Inter-agency synergy	Effective coordination between institutions	Larsson et al. (2021) and Sjamsuddin, Yusgiantoro, Saragih, and Soepandji (2023)

Dimension	Component	Indicator	Literature Source
Institutional	Governance reform	Policy structure and process renewal	Ng & Kurniawan (2024) and Judijanto (2025)
	National Security Council	Integrated command authority	Ng & Kurniawan (2024) and Shives & Fatahillah (2026)
	Civil–military coordination	Balanced strategic partnership	Morgan-Owen & Gould (2022) and Mukherjee (2022)
Societal	Public participation	Active engagement in defense	Jabbar et al. (2026) and Warsono et al. (2023)
	Social legitimacy	Public acceptance and trust	Schoon (2022) and Solar (2020)
	Digital national defense	Defense literacy in the digital era	Arifman et al. (2026) and Luthfia & Angeline (2026)
	Public trust	Confidence in defense institutions	Bengtsson & Brommesson (2022) and Tyler (2005)

Table 8 illustrates the dimensions and components of adaptive strategic leadership, consisting of individual, institutional, and societal dimensions. The individual dimension emphasizes leadership capabilities, adaptability, and digital competence, while the institutional dimension focuses on coordination, governance reform, and civil–military synergy. The societal dimension highlights the importance of public participation, social legitimacy, digital defense awareness, and trust in strengthening effective responses to non-traditional security threats.

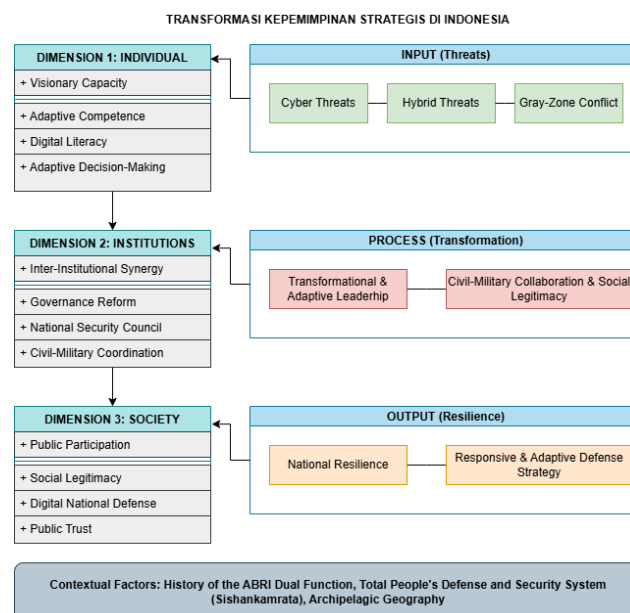


Figure 2. Integrated conceptual framework

As Figure 2 illustrates, transformation requires a holistic integration of three dimensions. The individual dimension is foundational, such as strategic leaders need visionary capacity, adaptive competence, digital literacy, and adaptive decision-making, without which institutional and societal efforts falter. The institutional dimension is the enabling structure, such as inter-agency synergy,

governance reform, the National Security Council, and civil–military coordination create conditions conducive to transformation. The societal dimension supplies legitimacy and support, such as public participation, social legitimacy, digital national defense, and public trust are resources that reinforce strategy. These dimensions interact dynamically with Indonesia specific context, namely the ABRI dual-function legacy, the Universal Defense doctrine, and archipelagic geography. The framework further integrates the contextual factors summarized in Table 9.

Table 9. Indonesian contextual factors and their implications

Contextual Factor	Description	Implication
ABRI dual-function legacy	Legacy of the military's dual role in the New Order era	Build public trust through transparency
Universal Defense doctrine	System of total people's defense and security	Encourage substantive public participation
Archipelagic geography	17,504 islands with limited surveillance	Strengthen inter-agency maritime coordination
Ethnic and religious plurality	Pluralistic society with polarization potential	Strengthen national narratives and cohesion
Digital divide	Uneven digital literacy across regions	Expand digital-literacy programs equitably

Table 9 affirms that transformation in Indonesia is contextual, not abstract. The dual-function legacy still shapes perceptions of the military's role [Solar \(2020\)](#) and [Tyler \(2005\)](#). The Universal Defense doctrine mandates substantive, cross-sectorally coordinated participation ([Sjamsuoddin et al., 2023](#)). Archipelagic geography demands effective maritime coordination; ethno-religious plurality requires inclusive national narratives and the digital divide calls for accelerated, equitable literacy programs ([Arifman et al., 2026](#); [Luthfia and Angeline, 2026](#)).

4.8 Discussion of Key Findings and Policy Implications

Four findings crystallize from the synthesis. First, transformational and adaptive leadership have a firm empirical basis for improving defense-organization performance, but their effectiveness is contingent on cultural and institutional context, given Indonesia hierarchical legacy, application requires sensitivity to power dynamics and civil-military relations ([Aryanto, Bachri, Rifani, & Rahmawati, 2026](#); [Esenyel, 2024](#)). Second, non-traditional threats such as cyberattacks, hybrid warfare, and grey-zone conflict demand a leadership paradigm distinct from the conventional, because, as [Lupovici \(2023\)](#) argues, hybrid warfare dissolves the war-peace boundary and rewards leaders comfortable with ambiguity, consistent with [Esenyel \(2024\)](#) adaptive model. Third, the Indonesian context poses distinctive challenges in post-reform civil–military dynamics and uneven implementation of the Universal Defense doctrine, underscored by the finding that most non-defense officials misunderstand their mandate ([Sjamsuoddin, Yusciantoro, Saragih, & Soepandji, 2023](#)). Fourth, social legitimacy and public trust are decisive; legitimacy is a product of continuous negotiation between state and society [Schoon \(2022\)](#) and [Solar, 2020](#), with strategic implications amid the polarization surrounding the 2025 law revision ([Harijanto, 2024](#); [Nalle, 2026](#); [Sajida, 2026](#)).

From these findings follow five policy implications. First, strategic-leadership development: the Ministry of Defense and the armed forces should institutionalize programs integrating transformational and adaptive competencies through crisis-simulation training, digital literacy, and cross-sectoral collaboration ([Esenyel, 2024](#); [Shives, & Fatahillah, 2026](#)). Second, strengthening the National Security Council with a permanent secretariat and cross-sectoral budget to secure effective coordination ([Ng, & Kurniawan, 2024](#); [Yuliana, & Hasibuan, 2022](#)). Third, updating the defense legal framework and cybersecurity regulation to mitigate hybrid threats, including attribution mechanisms and rules for private-sector participation ([Aulianisa, & Indirwan, 2020](#); [Lilli, 2021](#)). Fourth, strengthening social legitimacy through transparency and participation, especially digital-based defense literacy and Bela Negara initiatives ([Jabbar, Astuti, Ahmad, Adnan, & Putra, 2026](#); [Luthfia, & Angeline, 2026](#)). Fifth, international defense diplomacy: optimizing forums such as ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) and intensifying joint exercises with partners including

Australia, India, and Japan ([Harijanto, 2024](#); [Laksmana, 2022](#); [Wadjdi, Tambayong, & Sianturi, 2023](#)).

4.9 Theoretical and Practical Contributions

Theoretically, the study extends transformational-leadership theory by contextualizing [Bass and Riggio \(2006\)](#) model within an Indonesian defense environment marked by the dual-function legacy, the Universal Defense doctrine, and archipelagic geography, the four dimensions remain relevant but require recalibration to a hierarchical, collectivist culture ([Aryanto, Bachri, Rifani, & Rahmawati, 2026](#)). It integrates legitimacy theory ([Schoon, 2022](#)) with transformational leadership, positing social legitimacy, namely acceptance, trust, and compliance, as a precondition for leadership efficacy and thereby extending civil–military scholarship beyond its traditional focus on civilian control ([Morgan-Owen, & Gould, 2022](#); [Mukherjee, 2022](#)). And it develops adaptive strategic leadership, fusing transformational and adaptive paradigms to move beyond the transformational–transactional dichotomy in VUCA settings ([Esenyel, 2024](#); [Shives, & Fatahillah, 2026](#)).

Practically, the study frames strategic-leadership development for the Ministry of Defense and the armed forces, with [Shives and Fatahillah \(2026\)](#) six-pillar model as a curriculum reference, specifies conditions for operationalizing the National Security Council, namely a permanent secretariat, a cross-sectoral budget, and a commitment to overcoming silos [Ng and Kurniawan \(2024\)](#) and [Sjamsoeddin, Yusgiantoro, Saragih, and Soepandji \(2023\)](#), and identifies the imperative to reform the defense legal framework for cyber and hybrid threats, given its persistent reactivity ([Aulianisa, & Indirwan, 2020](#); [Imran, & Gunawan, 2024](#); [Indil, Lestari, & Azzahra, 2024](#)).

4.10 Implementation Challenges and Mitigation

Translating these recommendations into practice confronts systemic, cultural, and structural obstacles. The defense bureaucracy is hierarchical and patrimonial, with procedural rigidity and sectoral parochialism impeding coordination [Sjamsoeddin, Yusgiantoro, Saragih, and Soepandji \(2023\)](#), so transformation demands sustained cultural change. The dual-function legacy continues to shape civil–military dynamics, and proposed revisions to the armed-forces law have raised concern about a resurgence of that doctrine ([Ahmadi, & Fikri, 2025](#); [Sajida, 2026](#)). Deficient digital literacy leaves institutions exposed to phishing and social engineering ([Jabbar, Astuti, Ahmad, Adnan, & Putra, 2026](#); [Nugroho, 2026](#)). Resource limitations compound these problems: the defense budget is constrained relative to neighbors [Destyananda, Suaedi, and Setijaningrum \(2022\)](#), with leadership development often subordinate to equipment procurement [Madrohim and Prakoso \(2021\)](#), professional human capital in cybersecurity and strategic management is scarce [Imran and Gunawan \(2024\)](#), and infrastructure gaps hinder equitable digital-defense programs ([Utami, Saputra, Fariaty, Kusmin, Rahimallah, Burhanuddin, & Lawelai, 2026](#)). Finally, political polarization, especially the instrumentalization of identity issues [Arifman, Mantoro, and Handayani \(2026\)](#), together with sensitivities around cooperation with partners such as Australia and the United States [Harijanto \(2024\)](#), threaten consensus, while security responses must also balance crime prevention against the protection of human rights ([Masyhar & Emovwodo, 2023](#)). Table 10 pairs these challenges with mitigation strategies and responsible parties.

Table 10. Strategies to overcome implementation challenges

Challenge	Mitigation Strategy	Responsible Party
Bureaucratic obstacles	Gradual reform and pilot projects in selected units	Ministry of Defense and armed forces
Dual-function legacy	Policy transparency, public dialogue, and civil participation	Government, parliament, and armed forces
Low digital literacy	Mass training and private-sector partnerships	Cyber and communication agencies and armed forces
Budget limitations	Program prioritization and public–private partnerships	Ministry of Defense and planning agency
Political polarization	Effective public communication and national consensus	Government, parliament, and media

Table 10 underscores that overcoming these barriers is a shared responsibility requiring gradual bureaucratic reform, policy transparency and public dialogue, mass digital-literacy training, program prioritization with public-private partnerships, and effective communication to build national consensus. These efforts are essential to strengthen institutional resilience and ensure that defense strategies remain adaptive to evolving non-traditional security challenges. Furthermore, collaborative governance among state institutions, private sectors, and society is required to enhance legitimacy and improve the effectiveness of national security responses.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This study concludes that strategic leadership transformation is an urgent necessity for Indonesia defense strategy against non-traditional security threats. Drawing on 56 articles from Scopus and ScienceDirect, it advances four conclusions. First, transformational and adaptive leadership demonstrably enhance defense-organization performance and responsiveness to dynamic threats. The four dimensions, namely idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, recur across the global literature and remain relevant in the Indonesian context, where transformational leadership contributes positively to personnel performance, job satisfaction, and innovative behavior. Second, non-traditional threats such as cyberattacks, hybrid warfare, information warfare, and grey-zone conflict require leadership approaches that differ from conventional models, highlighting the urgency of digital-leadership transformation. Third, the Indonesian context presents distinctive challenges related to post-reform civil-military dynamics and uneven implementation of the Universal Defense doctrine, indicating the need for stronger defense literacy, institutional coordination, and broader stakeholder engagement. Fourth, social legitimacy and public trust are decisive factors, requiring continuous efforts to strengthen transparency, participation, and public acceptance. Integrating individual leadership capacity, institutional synergy, and social legitimacy therefore provides a coherent pathway toward sustainable defense performance.

5.2 Research Limitations

Several limitations should be acknowledged. Database coverage is confined to Scopus and Science-Direct, so literature indexed elsewhere may be omitted, only English and Indonesian language articles were included and although peer debriefing reduced bias, some interpretive subjectivity remains inherent to thematic analysis. No empirical fieldwork was conducted, so the findings are theoretical and require subsequent validation through primary research.

Several limitations bound these conclusions. Database coverage is limited to Scopus and Science-Direct, so literature in Web of Science, Google Scholar, or other databases may be missed, only English and Indonesian language articles were included, no empirical fieldwork was conducted, so the findings are theoretical and require primary-research validation, and despite peer debriefing, some interpretive subjectivity remains inherent to thematic analysis. The findings should thus be read within the specific scope of this review.

5.3 Suggestions and Directions for Future Research

Building on the findings and limitations of this study, several suggestions and directions for future research are proposed. Managerially, the Ministry of Defense and the armed forces are encouraged to develop leadership programs that integrate transformational and adaptive competencies with a focus on digital literacy and VUCA decision-making, to strengthen inter-agency coordination through permanent mechanisms and routine joint exercises, and to enhance policy transparency in order to build legitimacy and trust. The government, in turn, is encouraged to operationalize the National Security Council with a permanent secretariat and cross-sectoral budget, to reform the defense legal framework to address hybrid and cyber threats, including attribution provisions and the private sector's role, and to encourage participation through digital-defense and literacy programs reaching all levels of society. For future research, scholars are encouraged to conduct empirical studies within Indonesian defense institutions to validate the theoretical propositions advanced here, to broaden database coverage beyond Scopus and ScienceDirect, to develop a context-specific

strategic-leadership measurement model, and to undertake comparative studies with other Southeast Asian countries. Methodologically, longitudinal and mixed-methods designs, together with participatory action research, would yield more robust causal evidence and greater practical relevance, while cross-country collaboration, including through regional networks such as the ASEAN Defence Research Network, would broaden perspective on transnational threats.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

MTG contributed to the conceptualization, research design, literature search and selection, thematic analysis, and drafting of the manuscript. AAS supervised the study, validated the methodology, and led the review and editing to ensure theoretical consistency and analytical rigor. CH contributed to the classification and synthesis of the literature on non-traditional security threats and to the development of the conceptual framework. JW contributed to the analysis of civil–military relations and legitimacy, the formulation of policy implications, and the critical revision of the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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