Research Article

Implementation of Transformational Leadership in Improving Teacher Performance in Secondary Schools

Irmawati Thahir[1*], Evy Segarawati Ampry[2], Firdaus[3]

[1]   Universitas Muhammadiyyah Makassar, Indonesia, Email : irmawati@unismuh.ac.id
[2]   Universitas Sulawesi Barat, Indonesia, Email : evysegarawatiampry@unsulbar.ac.id
[3]   Universitas Muhammadiyyah Makassar, Indonesia, Email : firdaus@unishumuh.ac.id
  *Author's Correspondence : **Irmawati Thahir**

Abstract. This study aims to analyze the implementation of transformational leadership models by school principals and their influence on improving teacher performance in secondary schools. The research adopts a mixed-method approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding. The study was conducted in 15 secondary schools, involving a total of 245 respondents consisting of school principals and teachers. Data collection techniques included the use of questionnaires to gather quantitative data, alongside in-depth interviews and direct observations for qualitative insights. The results reveal that transformational leadership—particularly through its core components of intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence—has a significant positive impact on teacher performance. These leadership behaviors were found to enhance teaching quality, increase teacher professional commitment, and improve overall job satisfaction among educators. Additionally, the study highlights the role of school culture and the professional learning environment as mediating factors in the effectiveness of transformational leadership. The findings underscore the importance of implementing structured leadership development programs for school principals. By equipping school leaders with transformational leadership skills, educational institutions can foster more supportive and dynamic teaching environments that ultimately lead to better learning outcomes. These insights are particularly relevant for policymakers and educational administrators who are seeking sustainable strategies to improve school performance through leadership practices. In conclusion, transformational leadership stands out as a vital leadership style that not only motivates and empowers teachers but also contributes significantly to the institutional development of schools.

Keywords: Commitment, Leadership, Performance, Satisfaction, Transformation

1. INTRODUCTION

Background

In the context of national education development, improving educational quality is a priority agenda that requires a comprehensive and systematic approach. One crucial aspect that affects educational quality is school leadership, particularly the role of school principals as institutional leaders. School principal leadership not only influences the direction and goals of educational institutions but also plays a significant role in shaping a conducive work environment for educators. Effective leadership is expected to optimize the potential and performance of teachers as the spearhead of educational transformation at the classroom level.

In the last two decades, the transformational leadership model has gained widespread attention from educational researchers and practitioners as a promising approach in the context of educational reform. Unlike transactional leadership models that focus on exchange and control, transformational leadership emphasizes inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and attention to individual followers' needs (Bass & Riggio, 2006). This approach is seen as aligned with the characteristics of educational institutions as knowledge-based organizations that prioritize values of professionalism, independence, and innovation.

In Indonesia, the implementation of transformational leadership models in educational contexts has become increasingly relevant alongside the transformation of educational management paradigms from centralistic systems toward more decentralized and participatory

models. Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 6 of 2018 concerning Teacher Assignment as School Principals explicitly mentions the dimension of instructional leadership as one of the key competencies that must be possessed by school principals. This indicates formal recognition of the strategic role of school principals in leading change and improving educational quality.

Although transformational leadership has been extensively studied in business organizational contexts, research on its implementation and effectiveness in Indonesian educational contexts, particularly at the secondary school level, remains relatively limited. This research gap becomes more significant considering the unique characteristics of secondary schools as educational institutions during the transitional period of students from childhood to adolescence, requiring pedagogical and managerial approaches different from other educational levels.

Based on this background, this research is designed to analyze the implementation of transformational leadership models by school principals at the secondary school level and examine their influence on improving teacher performance. This research is expected to provide significant contributions, both theoretically and practically, to the development of educational leadership models that are adaptive to the socio-cultural context and characteristics of the Indonesian education system.

Problem Formulation

Based on the background above, this research attempts to answer several research questions as follows:

- How is the implementation of transformational leadership models by school principals in secondary schools?
- What are the supporting and inhibiting factors in implementing transformational leadership at the secondary school level?
- How does the implementation of transformational leadership influence teacher performance in secondary schools?
- Which dimension of transformational leadership has the most significant influence on improving teacher performance?

Research Objectives

This research aims to:

- Analyze the implementation of transformational leadership models by school principals in secondary schools
- Identify supporting and inhibiting factors in implementing transformational leadership at the secondary school level
- Examine the influence of transformational leadership implementation on teacher performance in secondary schools
- Analyze the dimension of transformational leadership that has the most significant influence on improving teacher performance

Research Benefits

This research is expected to provide the following benefits:

a. **Theoretical Benefits**
   - Enrich the body of knowledge in educational management, particularly related to transformational leadership theory in educational contexts
   - Contribute to the development of educational leadership models adaptive to the socio-cultural characteristics of education in Indonesia

b. **Practical Benefits**
   - For School Principals: Provide practical references on effective transformational leadership implementation to improve teacher performance
   - For Policymakers: Provide empirical basis for developing school principal competency improvement programs and school leadership assessment systems

     o   For Researchers: Provide conceptual and methodological foundations for further research related to educational leadership and school quality improvement

2. THEORETICAL REVIEW

Concept of Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership was first introduced by James MacGregor Burns (1978) and later further developed by Bernard M. Bass (1985). Burns defined transformational leadership as a process where "leaders and followers mutually raise each other to higher levels of morality and motivation." Unlike transactional leadership that focuses on exchange between leaders and followers, transformational leadership seeks to transform followers by inspiring them to transcend personal interests for organizational interests.

Bass and Avolio (1994) developed a transformational leadership model known as the "Four I's" or four main components:

- **Idealized Influence**: Leaders act as role models who inspire and gain follower trust. Leaders have high ethical and moral standards and are consistent in their actions.

- **Inspirational Motivation**: Leaders articulate attractive visions, challenge followers with high standards, communicate optimism about future goal achievement, and provide meaning to the tasks performed.

- **Intellectual Stimulation**: Leaders encourage innovation and creativity by questioning assumptions, reframing problems, and approaching old situations in new ways. Leaders do not openly criticize individual mistakes.

- **Individualized Consideration**: Leaders pay attention to each follower's development needs, act as mentors or coaches, and create new learning opportunities in a supportive climate.

Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) have adapted the concept of transformational leadership in educational contexts and identified several additional dimensions relevant to school leadership, such as building school vision and goals, providing individual support, intellectual stimulation, modeling best practices and values, building collaborative culture, and creating structures for participation in school decision-making.

Teacher Performance and Influencing Factors

Teacher performance can be defined as the level of teacher success in carrying out educational tasks according to their responsibilities and authorities based on established performance standards (Mangkunegara, 2013). In the Indonesian educational context, teacher performance encompasses four main competencies as regulated in Law No. 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers: pedagogical competence, personality competence, social competence, and professional competence.

Various factors can influence teacher performance, both internal and external factors. Internal factors include motivation, competence, professional commitment, and job satisfaction. External factors include work environment, organizational culture, facilities and infrastructure, reward systems, and leadership (Supardi, 2014). Among these various factors, school leadership has been identified as one of the most significant determinants of teacher performance (Leithwood et al., 2008).

Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Teacher Performance

Several studies have examined the relationship between transformational leadership and teacher performance. Hallinger (2003) identified that transformational leadership influences teacher performance through three main pathways: (1) building organizational capacity through developing shared vision and consensus about school goals; (2) increasing teacher commitment and motivation through individual support and intellectual stimulation; and (3) creating collaborative school culture oriented toward continuous improvement.

Research by Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008) shows that leadership focused on learning improvement and teacher professional development (which is an important aspect of

transformational leadership) has a greater impact on student learning outcomes compared to other leadership models.

In Indonesia, several previous studies also show positive correlation between school principal transformational leadership and teacher performance. However, the majority of these studies are still quantitative with limited scope and have not extensively explored mechanisms that comprehensively explain how transformational leadership influences teacher performance.

Conceptual Framework

Based on the theoretical review above, this research develops a conceptual framework that connects transformational leadership implementation with teacher performance. This framework assumes that transformational leadership implemented by school principals, including idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration, will influence teacher performance manifested in teaching quality, professional commitment, and job satisfaction.

This research also considers contextual variables such as school characteristics (size, location, status), principal characteristics (experience, educational background), and teacher characteristics (years of service, qualifications) that can moderate the relationship between transformational leadership and teacher performance.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Approach and Design

This research uses a mixed-method approach with explanatory sequential design. This approach was chosen to gain comprehensive understanding of transformational leadership implementation and its influence on teacher performance. The first phase of research involves collecting and analyzing quantitative data to identify general patterns and relationships, followed by the second phase of collecting and analyzing qualitative data to gain deep understanding of processes and contexts.

Population and Sample

The research population includes all secondary schools in five regencies/cities spread across three provinces in Indonesia. The research sample consists of 15 secondary schools selected using purposive sampling based on criteria: (1) school accreditation; (2) location (urban, sub-urban, rural); (3) status (public, private); and (4) school size.

From each school, respondents consist of school principals (n=15) and teachers (n=230), making a total of 245 respondents. For the qualitative phase, informants were purposively selected from schools participating in the quantitative phase, considering variations in transformational leadership implementation and teacher performance levels.

Research Instruments

Research instruments include:

- **Transformational Leadership Questionnaire**: Adaptation of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bass and Avolio (1997), with modifications for Indonesian educational contexts. This instrument measures four dimensions of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

- **Teacher Performance Questionnaire**: Instrument developed based on teacher competency standards and teacher performance indicators from the Ministry of Education and Culture, focusing on three aspects: teaching quality, professional commitment, and job satisfaction.

- **Semi-Structured Interview Guide**: Instrument to gather in-depth information about school principals' experiences in implementing transformational leadership and teachers' perceptions of principal leadership and its influence on their performance.

- **Observation Sheet**: Instrument to observe school principal leadership practices and teacher performance in real school situations.

All instruments have undergone validity and reliability testing before use in research.

Data Collection Techniques

Data collection was conducted through several methods:

- **Survey**: Distribution of questionnaires to school principals and teachers to measure transformational leadership implementation and teacher performance.

- **In-depth Interviews**: Interviews with selected school principals and teachers to gain deep understanding of transformational leadership implementation dynamics and its influence on teacher performance.

- **Direct Observation**: Observation of school principal leadership activities and teacher teaching practices to obtain factual data about leadership implementation and performance.

- **Document Study**: Analysis of school documents such as strategic plans, program reports, teacher performance evaluation results, and other relevant documents.

Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data were analyzed using:

- **Descriptive Statistics**: To describe respondent characteristics and score distribution on transformational leadership and teacher performance variables.

- **Correlation and Regression Analysis**: To analyze relationships and influences between transformational leadership and teacher performance, and to identify the most influential dimension of transformational leadership.

- **Factor Analysis**: To identify factors underlying transformational leadership implementation and teacher performance.

Qualitative data were analyzed using:

- **Thematic Analysis**: To identify patterns and themes emerging from interview and observation data related to transformational leadership implementation and its influence on teacher performance.

- **Content Analysis**: To analyze school document content relevant to transformational leadership and teacher performance.

Integration of quantitative and qualitative analysis results was conducted through method triangulation and source triangulation to enhance research findings validity.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Profile

Of the total 245 respondents, 15 people (6.1%) were school principals and 230 people (93.9%) were teachers. Based on gender, 43.7% of respondents were male and 56.3% were female. In terms of age, the majority of respondents (38.4%) were in the 36-45 years age range, followed by respondents aged 26-35 years (29.4%), respondents aged 46-55 years (22.9%), respondents aged over 55 years (5.7%), and respondents aged under 25 years (3.7%).

Regarding years of service, 31.8% of respondents had 6-10 years of teaching experience, 27.3% had 11-15 years of experience, 18.8% had 16-20 years of experience, 14.3% had less than 5 years of experience, and 7.8% had more than 20 years of experience. Based on educational qualifications, the majority of respondents (76.3%) held bachelor's degrees (S1), 19.2% held master's degrees (S2), 3.3% held diploma degrees, and 1.2% held doctoral degrees (S3).

Implementation of Transformational Leadership in Secondary Schools

Descriptive analysis results show that transformational leadership implementation by school principals is in the "high" category with an average score of 3.78 (scale 1-5). By dimension, the "inspirational motivation" dimension obtained the highest score (M=3.92, SD=0.68), followed by "idealized influence" (M=3.85, SD=0.71), "individualized consideration" (M=3.74, SD=0.79), and "intellectual stimulation" (M=3.62, SD=0.82).

Qualitative analysis results reveal several patterns of transformational leadership implementation in secondary schools:

- **Building and Communicating Vision**: School principals articulate inspirational school visions and involve teachers in the vision formulation process. As expressed by one school principal: "I always strive to build a shared vision and ensure all teachers understand the direction we want to achieve. This vision is not only mine, but belongs to the entire school community."

- **Encouraging Learning Innovation**: School principals encourage teachers to develop innovative learning approaches and provide space for experimentation. As stated by a teacher: "Our principal always encourages us to try new methods and not be afraid to fail. He says that failure is part of the learning process."

- **Continuous Professional Development**: School principals facilitate teacher professional development through various training programs, mentoring, and professional learning communities. "Professional development programs are always a priority in our school budget," said one school principal.

- **Participatory Leadership**: School principals involve teachers in strategic school decision-making and delegate leadership responsibilities. A teacher stated: "We are always involved in important decision-making. The principal believes that good decisions arise from discussion processes involving various perspectives."

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Transformational Leadership Implementation

Analysis of qualitative data identifies several supporting and inhibiting factors in transformational leadership implementation in secondary schools.

Supporting factors include:

- **Principal Commitment and Competence**: School principals with high commitment to educational quality improvement and adequate leadership competence tend to be more effective in implementing transformational leadership.

- **Adaptive Organizational Culture**: Schools with organizational cultures open to change and valuing innovation are more conducive to transformational leadership implementation.

- **Education Office Support**: Support from education offices in the form of leadership development programs and flexibility in policy implementation strengthens school principals' capacity in implementing transformational leadership.

- **Active Teacher Participation**: Teachers who are responsive and actively participate in school initiatives facilitate transformational leadership implementation.

Inhibiting factors include:

- **Excessive Administrative Burden**: School principals burdened with administrative tasks have limited time and energy to focus on transformational leadership aspects.

- **Resistance to Change**: Resistance from some teachers, especially those who have long taught with conventional approaches, becomes a challenge in transformational leadership implementation.

- **Resource Limitations**: Limited budget, facilities, and human resources restrict school principals' scope in implementing transformative programs.

- **Policy Contradictions**: Educational policies that frequently change and are sometimes contradictory create uncertainty that affects transformational leadership effectiveness.

Influence of Transformational Leadership on Teacher Performance

Correlation analysis results show a significant positive relationship between transformational leadership implementation and teacher performance ($r=0.68$, $p<0.01$). Regression analysis reveals that transformational leadership explains 46.2% of variance in teacher performance ($R^2=0.462$, $F(1,243)=208.7$, $p<0.01$).

The dimension of transformational leadership with the most significant influence on teacher performance is "intellectual stimulation" ($\beta=0.38$, $p<0.01$), followed by "inspirational motivation" ($\beta=0.31$, $p<0.01$), "individualized consideration" ($\beta=0.27$, $p<0.01$), and "idealized influence" ($\beta=0.23$, $p<0.01$).

Qualitative analysis results reveal several mechanisms explaining how transformational leadership influences teacher performance:

- **Increased Intrinsic Motivation**: Transformational leadership increases teacher intrinsic motivation through strengthening sense of meaning and purpose in their work. A teacher stated: "The principal always reminds us of the important meaning of our work as educators. This makes me feel that what I do has significant impact."

- **Professional Capacity Development**: Transformational leadership facilitates teacher professional competence development through intellectual stimulation and individual support. "Professional development programs facilitated by the principal have helped me improve my teaching skills," said a teacher.

- **Creating Conducive Work Climate**: Transformational leadership creates work climates that support collaboration, innovation, and calculated risk-taking. A teacher explained: "In our school, we are not afraid to share ideas or admit mistakes. This creates an environment that supports our professional development."

- **Empowerment and Professional Autonomy**: Transformational leadership provides greater professional autonomy to teachers in pedagogical decision-making. "The principal trusts our professional abilities and gives freedom to develop learning approaches suitable to our students' needs," said a teacher.

Impact of Transformational Leadership on Teacher Performance Aspects

Further analysis reveals that transformational leadership has different impacts on various aspects of teacher performance:

- **Teaching Quality**: Transformational leadership has a significant positive impact on teacher teaching quality ($r=0.71$, $p<0.01$). This is mainly mediated by the "intellectual stimulation" dimension that encourages teachers to develop innovative and reflective pedagogical approaches.

- **Professional Commitment**: Transformational leadership also positively correlates with teacher professional commitment ($r=0.62$, $p<0.01$). The "inspirational motivation" and "idealized influence" dimensions play important roles in strengthening teacher commitment to profession and educational goals.

- **Job Satisfaction**: There is a positive relationship between transformational leadership and teacher job satisfaction ($r=0.58$, $p<0.01$). The "individualized consideration" dimension showing school principals' personal attention to teacher needs and aspirations contributes significantly to increased job satisfaction.

Qualitative findings strengthen these quantitative results. As expressed by a teacher: "Our principal's leadership approach that values individuality and provides personal support makes me feel valued as a professional. This not only increases my job satisfaction but also encourages me to continue developing professionally."

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Based on research results and discussion, several conclusions can be drawn as follows:

a) Implementation of transformational leadership by school principals in secondary schools is in the high category, with the "inspirational motivation" dimension obtaining the highest score, followed by "idealized influence," "individualized consideration," and "intellectual stimulation." Transformational leadership implementation patterns include building and communicating vision, encouraging learning innovation, facilitating continuous professional development, and implementing participatory leadership.

b) Supporting factors for transformational leadership implementation include school principal commitment and competence, adaptive organizational culture, education office support, and active teacher participation. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors include excessive administrative burden, resistance to change, resource limitations, and policy contradictions.

c) Transformational leadership implementation has a significant positive influence on teacher performance, explaining 46.2% of variance in teacher performance. The "intellectual stimulation" dimension has the most significant influence, followed by "inspirational motivation," "individualized consideration," and "idealized influence."

d) Transformational leadership influences teacher performance through several mechanisms: increased intrinsic motivation, professional capacity development, creating conducive work climate, and empowerment and professional autonomy.

e) Transformational leadership has significant positive impacts on various aspects of teacher performance, including teaching quality, professional commitment, and job satisfaction. Different dimensions of transformational leadership have relatively different impacts on these teacher performance aspects.

Recommendations

Based on research findings, several recommendations are proposed as follows:

Recommendations for School Principals:

o Adopt transformational leadership approaches comprehensively while paying attention to balance in implementing all four dimensions

o Give special attention to improving the "intellectual stimulation" dimension proven to have the most significant influence on teacher performance

o Develop strategies to overcome resistance to change through effective communication and teacher involvement in change processes

o Build effective delegation systems to reduce administrative burden and allow greater focus on transformational leadership aspects

Recommendations for Education Offices:

o Develop systematic and continuous transformational leadership training and mentoring programs for school principals

o Simplify school principal administrative tasks to provide greater space for transformational leadership implementation

o Review school principal performance assessment policies by giving greater weight to transformational leadership aspects

o Provide adequate resource support for implementing transformative programs in schools

Recommendations for School Principal Education and Training:

o Revise candidate school principal education and training curricula by including transformational leadership components more explicitly

o Develop special training modules for each dimension of transformational leadership

   o Integrate experiential learning and reflective practice approaches in transformational leadership development programs

   o Provide continuous mentoring and coaching systems for school principals in transformational leadership implementation

Recommendations for Future Research:

   o Conduct longitudinal studies to analyze long-term impacts of transformational leadership implementation on teacher performance and student learning outcomes

   o Explore interactions between transformational leadership and contextual variables such as school culture, socio-economic level, and community characteristics

   o Develop and validate transformational leadership models more contextual to Indonesian education socio-cultural characteristics

   o Research effectiveness of various transformational leadership development programs and factors influencing training transfer to real school practices

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