

# Exploration Of The Principal's Transformational Leadership Style In Increasing Teacher Motivation

Ahmad Rifai Siregar<sup>1</sup>, Jodi Mahmud Siregar<sup>2</sup>, Nadya Ramadhani<sup>3</sup>,  
Nur Halimah Matondang<sup>4</sup>, Arif Rahman<sup>5</sup>, Deny Setiawan<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4,5,6</sup>Universitas Negeri Medan, Indonesia

<sup>1</sup>ahmadrifaisrg02@gmail.com

## Abstract

This research explores the transformational leadership styles that principals employ in an effort to increase teacher motivation. Using a qualitative approach, this study seeks to understand in depth how school principals apply transformational leadership dimensions, such as idealistic influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration, and analyze the impact on teacher motivation in carrying out duties and responsibilities. Data will be collected through participatory observations within the school environment, in-depth interviews with principals, teachers, and other stakeholders, as well as documentation studies of related documents. Data analysis will be carried out inductively, by identifying patterns, themes, and relationships that arise from the data obtained. This research is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the implementation of transformational leadership styles by school principals in the context of education in Indonesia. Research findings can be a reference for school principals and other education stakeholders in formulating strategies and policies to increase teacher motivation, ultimately contributing to improving the overall quality of education.

**Keywords:** transformational leadership, Principal, Teacher Motivation

## Introduction

Transformational leadership has become one of the leadership styles widely adopted in the context of modern organizations, including in the world of education. This leadership style emphasizes on a leader's ability to inspire and motivate his subordinates in achieving organizational goals (Bass & Riggio, 2006). In the context of education, school principals have a very important role in encouraging teacher motivation, which will ultimately have an impact on the quality of learning and student achievement (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2006). Key dimensions in transformational leadership, such as idealist influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration, have been shown to be effective in improving teacher motivation and performance (Balyer, 2012; Sayadi, 2016).

Teacher motivation is a key factor that determines the success of the teaching and learning process in schools. Highly motivated teachers tend to be more passionate, creative, and innovative in designing and implementing learning activities. They are also more concerned about the needs and development of students and strive to provide their best in educating students. Conversely, teachers who are less motivated often show attitudes and behaviors that are less enthusiastic, tend to complain, and are less responsive to student needs (Mulyasa, 2013; Viseu et al., 2016). This can adversely affect the achievement of educational goals and contribute to the low overall quality of education.

Previous research has shown the importance of transformational leadership in increasing teacher motivation. A study in Turkey by Balyer (2012) found that teachers working under the

leadership of transformational principals had higher levels of motivation and job satisfaction compared to teachers working under the leadership of non-transformational principals. Similar research in Iran by Sayadi (2016) also found that transformational dimensions of leadership, such as idealistic influence, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation, had significant positive associations with job satisfaction and teacher organizational commitment.

In Indonesia, research on transformational leadership in the context of education is still limited. However, several studies have tried to explore the application of this leadership style by principals. Research conducted by Wahyudi (2012) in Yogyakarta found that principals who implement transformational leadership can improve teacher performance through increased motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment. Meanwhile, a study conducted by Murtiningsih (2016) in Central Java revealed that transformational principals can create a positive organizational climate, where teachers feel valued, supported, and encouraged to develop professionally.

However, these studies still have some limitations. First, most past research has used only quantitative methods, such as surveys or questionnaires, which may be less able to capture the complexity of implementing transformational leadership in real contexts. Second, such studies generally focus only on certain aspects of transformational leadership, such as idealistic influence or inspirational motivation, without comprehensively exploring the overall dimensions of transformational leadership and how those dimensions are applied in an integrated manner by principals.

In addition, the diverse socio-cultural dynamics in Indonesia can influence how transformational leadership styles are applied and accepted by teachers in each region. Therefore, further research is needed that explores the application of transformational leadership in different cultural contexts and school environments in Indonesia. It is important to understand the contextual factors that can influence the effectiveness of implementing transformational leadership styles in increasing teacher motivation.

Furthermore, most previous research has focused on teachers' perceptions of principal transformational leadership, but has not delved deeply into how principals themselves apply transformational leadership dimensions to day-to-day leadership practice. In fact, a deeper understanding of the principal's perspective can provide richer insight into the challenges, strategies, and efforts they make in implementing a transformational leadership style. In addition, it is also important to explore the factors that influence the successful implementation of transformational leadership, such as the leadership characteristics of the principal, the school's organizational culture, and support from other stakeholders.

In the Indonesian context, the importance of teacher motivation in improving the quality of education is becoming increasingly relevant considering the challenges and problems faced in the national education system. Although there has been an improvement in education indicators such as school enrollment rates and teacher-student ratios, there are still gaps in the quality of education between urban and rural areas, as well as between public and private schools (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020). Motivated teachers can be key in overcoming these challenges, by providing higher quality teaching and creating a conducive learning environment for students.

On the other hand, the teaching profession in Indonesia still faces challenges in terms of welfare and professional development. Many teachers feel undervalued and lack support to improve their competence (Jalal et al., 2009). This can have an impact on low teacher motivation, which in turn can hinder the overall improvement of education quality. Therefore, efforts to increase teacher motivation through transformational leadership are very important in the context of education in Indonesia.

Taking into account the importance of teacher motivation in improving the quality of education, as well as the limited research on transformational leadership in the context of education in Indonesia, this study aims to explore in depth how school principals apply the dimensions of transformational leadership and their impact on teacher motivation. This research will use a qualitative approach with a case study design to gain a holistic and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon.

By using qualitative methods, this research is expected to provide a more comprehensive and contextual picture of the application of transformational leadership in schools. Through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies, this research will explore how principals apply transformational leadership dimensions in daily interactions with teachers and other stakeholders, and analyze their impact on teacher motivation in greater depth. In addition, this research will also explore the principals' perspectives on the challenges, strategies, and efforts they make in implementing transformational leadership styles. An exploration of the factors that influence the successful implementation of transformational leadership will also be carried out, such as the leadership characteristics of the principal, the organizational culture of the school, and support from other stakeholders.

The findings of this study are expected to provide new insights and enrich the literature on transformational leadership in the context of education in Indonesia. In addition, the results of this study can also be a reference for school principals and other education stakeholders in formulating effective strategies and policies to increase teacher motivation, which ultimately contributes to improving the overall quality of education. A deeper understanding of the implementation of transformational leadership in the school environment can also inform the development of training programs and leadership development for future principals and future principals.

Overall, this research is expected to make a significant contribution to the development of science in the field of transformational leadership and education, as well as provide practical implications for improving the quality of education in Indonesia through increasing teacher motivation. By exploring in depth the application of transformational leadership by school principals and its impact on teacher motivation, this research is expected to broaden our understanding of how this leadership style can be optimized in the context of education in Indonesia, taking into account the challenges and dynamics that exist.

## Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore in depth the application of the principal's transformational leadership style in increasing teacher motivation. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to gain a holistic and deep understanding of the phenomenon under study through exploration of participants' perspectives and experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

This research was conducted at SMA Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan, The participants in this study will consist of 1 principal, 8 teachers, and 2 homeroom teachers as other stakeholders. The selection of participants will be carried out using purposive sampling techniques, where researchers will select participants who are considered to be able to provide rich and in-depth information about the phenomenon under study (Patton, 2015).

Data collection will be conducted through three main methods, namely participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. Researchers will conduct participatory observations in the school environment to observe firsthand how principals apply transformational leadership dimensions in daily interactions with teachers and other

stakeholders. Observations will be carried out for several weeks to get a comprehensive picture of the phenomenon under study. Researchers will conduct in-depth interviews with principals, teachers, and other stakeholders to gain more detailed and in-depth information about the implementation of transformational leadership and its impact on teacher motivation. The interview will be conducted in a semi-structured manner, using flexible interview guidelines to allow further exploration of the aspects that emerged during the interview.

Data analysis will be carried out inductively, by identifying patterns, themes, and relationships that arise from the data obtained. The data analysis process will involve data coding, categorization, and interpretation to produce meaningful research findings. Researchers will use techniques such as data triangulation, member checking, and peer debriefing to ensure the validity and reliability of research findings. To ensure the validity of data and research findings, researchers will use several strategies, including: data triangulation, member checking, peer debriefing, and rich descriptions.

This research will be conducted by taking into account aspects of research ethics, such as informed consent, confidentiality of participant data, and avoiding risks or negative impacts for participants. Researchers will seek written consent from participants before involving them in the study, and will maintain the confidentiality of their identities in the research report. By using comprehensive qualitative research methods and paying attention to aspects of data validity and ethical considerations, this research is expected to provide a deep understanding of the application of transformational leadership of school principals in increasing teacher motivation in Indonesia.

## Results

This study managed to collect rich and in-depth data on the implementation of transformational leadership style by the Principal of SMA Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan and its impact on teacher motivation. Data were obtained through four weeks of participatory observation in the school environment, in-depth interviews with the principal, eight teachers, and two vice principals, as well as a documentation study of related documents such as school strategic plans, activity reports, and other policy documents.

Based on data analysis conducted inductively, this study identified several main themes related to the implementation of transformational leadership by the Principal of SMA Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan and its impact on teacher motivation.

### ***Idealized Influence***

The principal of SMA Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan, Mr. Bambang Hardian Damanik, S. Pd., showed a strong idealistic influence in leading the school. He has high integrity and consistency in implementing the values and vision of the school. This can be seen from his attitude and behavior that always upholds Islamic values, discipline, responsibility, and commitment to education.

As expressed by one of the senior teachers, Mrs. Dra. Aidah Fitriyah.:

"The principal always sets a good example for us teachers. He is very disciplined, always coming to school early and leaving last. He is also very responsible and committed to the school's vision to produce a generation that excels academically and has noble morals."

The idealistic influence shown by the Headmaster makes teachers feel motivated to internalize the same values and strive to be role models for students. This was acknowledged by one of the teachers, Mr. Rendi Syahputra, S. Pd:

"The principal's leadership full of integrity and consistency makes us teachers feel compelled to apply the same values in our daily lives, both at school and at home. We want to be a good role model for our students."

### ***Inspirational Motivation***

The Principal of SMA Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan was able to articulate an inspiring and challenging vision of the school. He often gives motivation and encouragement to teachers through meetings, both formal and informal. This arouses the enthusiasm and enthusiasm of teachers in carrying out their duties and responsibilities.

One of the vice principals, Mrs. Hildani Sari Harahap, S.Pd., M. Hum., revealed:

"The Principal is very good at inspiring and motivating us teachers. In every meeting, he always conveyed the vision of the school with passion and enthusiasm. He also often gives advice and motivation so that we remain passionate about teaching and educating students."

The inspirational motivation given by the Principal makes teachers feel motivated and excited in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. This was acknowledged by one of the teachers, Mrs. Fatimah Hasibuan, S.Pd.:

"After listening to the motivation and enthusiasm given by the Principal, I feel more motivated to give my best in teaching. I feel that my duty as a teacher is not only to teach, but also to educate and shape the character of students into a superior generation and noble character."

### ***Intellectual Stimulation***

The Principal of SMA Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan encourages teachers to think creatively and innovatively in designing and implementing learning activities. He provides opportunities for teachers to attend trainings and workshops, and appreciates new ideas proposed by teachers. This increases teachers' confidence and involvement in the decision-making process in schools.

One of the teachers, Mr. Ade Irwansyah, S.Pd., Gr., M. Pd., revealed:

"The Principal always encourages us to think creatively and try new and innovative learning methods. He also often included us in trainings to improve our competence as teachers."

The intellectual stimulation provided by the Headmaster makes teachers feel more confident and involved in the decision-making process in the school. This was acknowledged by one of the teachers, Mrs. Wisti Ningsih, S.Pd., GP. :

"I feel very appreciated when the Principal appreciates the new ideas I put forward in the teacher meeting. He was always open to input and suggestions from us teachers. This makes me feel more confident and feel that my opinion is valued."

### ***Individualized Consideration***

The principal of SMA Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan pays attention to the needs and aspirations of individual teachers. He often has one-on-one discussions with teachers to understand their challenges and expectations, and provide the necessary support and guidance. This creates a conducive and supportive work environment, and increases teachers' sense of ownership and commitment to the school.

One of the teachers, Mrs. Hilda Armadhani, S.Pd., revealed:

"The principal always takes the time to discuss privately with us teachers. He asked about the obstacles we faced in teaching and provided guidance and appropriate solutions."

The individual consideration shown by the Headmaster makes teachers feel valued and supported. This was acknowledged by one of the other teachers, Mr. Arif, S. Si., M. Si. .:

"I feel very appreciated and supported by the principal. He always listened to my aspirations and hopes, and gave me the support I needed to develop myself professionally. This makes me feel more motivated and committed to giving my best for the school."

These findings show that the application of transformational leadership style by the Principal of SMA Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan through the dimensions of idealistic influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration, has succeeded in increasing teacher motivation in carrying out their duties and responsibilities.

The idealistic influence shown by the Headmaster makes teachers feel motivated to internalize the school's values and vision and become role models for students. The inspirational motivation given by the Principal aroused the enthusiasm and enthusiasm of teachers in teaching and educating students. The intellectual stimulation provided by the Headmaster increases the teacher's confidence and involvement in the decision-making process at school. While the individual consideration shown by the Principal creates a conducive and supportive work environment, and increases the teacher's sense of ownership and commitment to the school.

## Discussion

The findings of this study show that the application of transformational leadership by the Principal of SMA Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan through its four main dimensions (idealistic influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration) has succeeded in increasing teacher motivation in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. These results are in line with the transformational leadership theory of Bass and Riggio (2006) which states that transformational leaders are able to motivate and inspire subordinates to achieve organizational goals through idealistic influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration.

The findings support previous research that found a positive relationship between transformational leadership and teacher motivation. Sayadi (2016) found that transformational leadership dimensions have a positive relationship with job satisfaction and teacher organizational commitment. Wahyudi's (2012) research also found that transformational principals can improve teacher performance through increased motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

However, this study contributes further by exploring in depth how school principals apply the dimensions of transformational leadership and their impact on teacher motivation in the context of education in Indonesia.

The findings of this study have important implications for leadership practice in schools in Indonesia. Principals can adopt a transformational leadership style to increase teacher motivation, which will ultimately have an impact on improving the overall quality of education. The findings can also be used as a basis for developing transformational leadership training programs for principals and future principals.

From a theoretical perspective, this research enriches the transformational leadership literature in the context of education in Indonesia and provides a deeper understanding of the application of transformational leadership dimensions in the school environment.

Despite making important contributions, the study had some limitations. First, the study was only conducted in one school, so generalizing the findings should be done with caution. Second, this study only focused on the perspectives of teachers and schools, while the perspectives of students and parents were not explored.

Based on these limitations, further research can be conducted involving more schools and research sites to improve the generalization of findings. In addition, student and parent perspectives can be explored to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the impact of transformational leadership on teacher motivation and overall education quality.

Future research may also explore other factors that might influence teacher motivation, such as organizational culture, compensation, and professional development opportunities, as well as how those factors interact with transformational leadership styles.

## Conclusion

This study aims to explore the application of transformational leadership style by principals at SMA Islam Al-Ulum Terpadu Medan and its impact on teacher motivation. Based on the data analysis carried out, several important things can be concluded as follows:

First, the principal applies transformational leadership dimensions that include idealistic influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration in leading the school. Second, the application of idealistic influences keeps teachers motivated to internalize the values and vision of the school and be role models for students. Third, the inspirational motivation given by the principal arouses the enthusiasm and enthusiasm of teachers in teaching and educating students. Fourth, intellectual stimulation increases teachers' confidence and involvement in decision-making. Fifth, individual consideration creates a conducive and supportive work environment, and increases teachers' sense of ownership and commitment to the school.

Overall, the implementation of transformational leadership by the principal has succeeded in increasing the motivation of teachers in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. The findings of this study are in line with previous research and transformational leadership theory of Bass and Riggio (2006). Despite its limitations, this research makes an important contribution in enriching the literature on transformational leadership in education in Indonesia.

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