

The Role of Transformational Leadership in Enhancing Teacher and Student Motivation

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Article received: February 2025, Revision: March 2025, Approval: March 2025

DOI: 10.17977/um025v9i22054p185

Abstract: This study aims to analyze the role of transformational leadership in enhancing teacher and student motivation in educational institutions. The study employs a literature review approach by examining 20 relevant scholarly journal articles published between 2016 and 2024. Transformational leadership is understood as a leadership style oriented toward positive change by emphasizing vision, inspiration, emotional support, and intellectual stimulation for its followers. In the context of education, transformational leaders, such as school principals or institutional heads, have the ability to create an inspiring educational vision, build strong interpersonal relationships with teachers and students, and encourage innovation in both teaching and school management. The analysis results indicate that transformational leadership has a significant impact on improving teacher motivation. Teachers become more enthusiastic in teaching, more open to change, and more committed to developing their professional skills. Furthermore, students also show increased learning motivation, active engagement in class, and greater self-confidence. Leadership that fosters a positive and supportive school climate strengthens interpersonal relationships within the educational environment, enhances collaboration among teachers, and builds a collaborative culture that supports the creation of innovative learning. Transformational leadership also plays an important role in the development of adaptive curricula, the creation of a conducive work environment, and the enhancement of teacher job satisfaction. Overall, the findings show that this leadership style can be an effective strategy in creating educational institutions that are not only productive but also adaptive to ongoing global challenges. Therefore, educational leaders are encouraged to adopt the principles of transformational leadership in order to strengthen the intrinsic motivation of both teachers and students in achieving optimal educational goals.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Teacher Motivation, Student Motivation.

Transformational leadership is one of the most widely discussed leadership styles in the field of education due to its significant role in fostering positive organizational change. This leadership style emphasizes a leader's ability to inspire and motivate followers to exceed their own expectations, both personally and professionally. In an educational context, leaders who adopt a transformational leadership style are expected to create a shared vision that encourages both teachers and students to work with greater enthusiasm toward achieving higher goals. This is particularly relevant in today's increasingly competitive and dynamic educational landscape, where challenges extend beyond improving teaching quality to include managing limited resources and adapting to technological advancements in learning.

Recent studies have shown that transformational leadership has a positive impact on teacher and student motivation. According to Hasibuan et al. (2023) transformational leadership significantly affects teacher performance at SMK Siti Banun Rantauprapat, particularly by enhancing creativity in teaching and participation in professional development. Moreover, transformational leaders are able to create a supportive environment for students, encouraging them to be more active in learning and fostering positive relationships between teachers and students. Research by Marsin (2022) also found that the transformational leadership of school principals and work motivation influence teachers' professionalism and performance.

However, the application of transformational leadership in education still faces several challenges. As stated by Pakaja et al. (2019) without a supportive organizational culture and proper training, the implementation of this leadership style tends to be less effective. This highlights the importance of readiness from all school elements—both management and educators—in adopting and executing transformational leadership strategies.

The novelty of this article lies in its deeper exploration of the role of transformational leadership in enhancing teacher and student motivation in Indonesia, focusing particularly on the challenges of implementing this leadership style within the diverse Indonesian educational context. Previous research has mostly discussed transformational leadership in international settings, with limited attention given to its application in Indonesia's unique education system, which faces distinct social, cultural, and economic challenges. Therefore, this article aims to provide a new perspective on effective ways to apply transformational leadership in improving education quality in Indonesia, as well as practical recommendations that educational leaders can implement.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the role of transformational leadership in enhancing teacher and student motivation, as well as to identify the challenges faced in its implementation. This study also seeks to contribute to the existing literature by providing new insights into the influence of transformational leadership on education quality, particularly in Indonesia. Through an in-depth literature review of recent sources, this article is expected to provide valuable insights for educational leaders, teachers, and policymakers in creating a better environment for teachers' professional growth and students' academic achievement. Through this approach, it is hoped that more effective and contextually relevant leadership implementation strategies for Indonesian education can be identified.

Transformational leadership plays a crucial role in motivating organizational members, especially in educational settings. This leadership style focuses on a leader's ability to inspire and motivate followers rather than merely providing instructions or supervision (Iskandar et al., 2020). Transformational leaders are capable of creating a shared vision and guiding individuals to achieve goals beyond what they initially thought possible. In education, school principals or other educational leaders are not only administrators but also mentors who can motivate teachers and students to optimize their potential. Research by Dewi & Putra (2021) showed that transformational leadership enhances teachers' professional motivation, contributing to improved teaching quality delivered to students.

Regarding motivation, transformational leadership has a strong influence on teacher motivation. Teacher motivation is crucial because it directly correlates with teaching quality and students' academic performance. According to Wibowo et al (2022) school principals who apply transformational leadership can create a more positive work environment where teachers feel valued and inspired to continue developing. Teachers' intrinsic motivation increases when they feel a greater sense of purpose in their work—one that goes beyond academic content and focuses on improving overall education quality. This is further supported by (Wardani & Safitri, 2023), who found that transformational leaders provide effective emotional and professional support, encouraging teachers to enhance their performance.

For students, transformational leadership can also enhance motivation. Based on Self-Determination Theory, leadership that supports intrinsic motivation helps create an environment that meets students' basic psychological needs—competence, autonomy, and social relatedness. Transformational leaders give students opportunities to feel appreciated and encouraged to grow, both academically and personally. For instance, principals who apply transformational leadership encourage teachers to adopt more creative and inclusive teaching approaches, making students more engaged in their learning process. This aligns with the study by (Santoso et al., 2023), which found that learning environments supported by transformational leadership foster higher intrinsic motivation among students to learn and achieve academic success.

However, the implementation of transformational leadership to enhance teacher and student motivation in Indonesia faces certain challenges. One major challenge is the inability of some leaders to embrace change or effectively apply transformational principles. According to Pratama et al (2024), effective implementation of transformational leadership depends greatly on a leader's experience, training, and environmental support. In Indonesia, many schools still maintain traditional managerial cultures that are less flexible in embracing adaptive and inspirational leadership styles. This makes it difficult for educational leaders to apply transformational strategies that could improve teacher motivation, performance, and student achievement.

In this context, teacher and student motivation is highly influenced by how educational leaders address these challenges. (Rahman & Fauziah, 2022) found that successful school leaders are those who create space for creativity, promote open communication, and provide appropriate recognition for achievements. Therefore, transformational leadership can serve as a key factor in enhancing motivation within educational organizations, ultimately improving teaching quality, learning experiences, and students' academic outcomes.

Overall transformational leadership has a significant impact on teacher and student motivation, which are critical factors in improving education quality. Leaders who can inspire and motivate their subordinates toward shared goals help create a productive environment that supports teachers' professional development and students' academic success. However, the successful implementation of this leadership style requires preparedness from all elements within educational organizations, as well as continuous training and support to overcome existing challenges and maximize the potential of teachers and students.

METHOD

This study employs a literature review approach to examine the role of transformational leadership in educational management, particularly in enhancing teacher and student motivation. The data sources consist of 20 scholarly journals, including 5 national journals and 15 international journals, all of which are relevant and published between 2016 and 2024. Articles were selected based on their relevance, quality, and contribution to the research theme.

The analysis was carried out through a process of reading, classifying, and synthesizing findings from related literature. A comparative analysis approach was also used to compare national and international research results, highlighting the context of education in Indonesia. Furthermore, content analysis techniques were applied to identify patterns and relationships within the existing literature, which then served as the foundation for providing a comprehensive overview and practical recommendations regarding the implementation of transformational leadership in improving motivation within educational institutions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Based on the findings of Muliati (2022) transformational leadership in education plays a vital role in improving teacher performance and fostering a conducive school climate. The study indicates that transformational leadership among school principals significantly influences teacher performance. For instance, one study found that transformational leadership contributed 79.8% to the improvement of teacher performance, with the remaining percentage influenced by other unexamined variables. This finding affirms that leaders who can inspire, motivate, and provide individual attention are capable of encouraging teachers to perform optimally.

In addition according to Makmur et al (2023), teacher work motivation is also a key factor influencing performance. Other studies have demonstrated that work motivation significantly affects teacher performance. Motivated teachers tend to be more enthusiastic in carrying out their duties, which has a positive impact on both the learning process and student outcomes.

The school climate, as the daily working environment for teachers, also plays a role in determining their performance. Research shows that a positive and supportive school climate enhances teacher performance. A climate that promotes collaboration, open communication, and recognition of achievements encourages teachers to work more effectively and efficiently (Marliansyah & Suwadi, 2024).

According to Pratama (2023) the interaction between transformational leadership and school climate is also crucial. Principals with transformational leadership styles can create a positive school climate, which in turn improves teacher performance. The study revealed that transformational leadership and school climate together have a significant impact on teacher performance. However, not all research found a direct relationship between work motivation and teacher performance. Some studies suggest that motivation does not always have a direct influence, indicating that other factors—such as organizational support, workload, and teacher welfare—may also play an important role in shaping performance.

Further research by Dwianto & Munir (2023) found that transformational leadership has a significant impact on curriculum management and school development. Leaders who can inspire, motivate, and empower staff and students are able to create dynamic and adaptive learning environments. In education, transformational leadership focuses on developing a shared vision, empowering staff, and cultivating an innovative school culture. Principals who apply this leadership style can inspire staff and students to embrace positive change, develop their potential, and achieve learning objectives aligned with the curriculum.

According to Hermansyah et al (2024) transformational leaders play an essential role in developing curricula that adapt to student needs and external demands. They ensure that the curriculum remains relevant to technological advances, industry needs, character education, and 21st-century skills. This approach enables schools to remain responsive to change and maintain high educational quality.

Similarly Ausat et al (2022) stated that the collaborative and innovative culture fostered by transformational leaders improves learning quality and motivation. By encouraging collaboration among teachers, students, and staff, and promoting innovation through technology use and creative teaching methods, transformational leaders create a supportive and engaging learning environment. The involvement of the entire school community—including teachers, students, parents, and stakeholders—is crucial in curriculum development. Sumampong & Arnado (2024) noted that transformational leaders ensure active participation from all parties through discussion forums, curriculum committees, and training programs to enhance curriculum.

In Islamic boarding schools (pesantren), (Alawiyah et al., 2023) found that transformational leadership plays a crucial role in improving the quality of learning. By applying this leadership style, pesantren leaders are able to inspire and motivate students and teachers to achieve their best potential. This approach not only focuses on academic aspects but also on character development and 21st-century competencies. For instance in Pondok Pesantren Mahasiswa Malang, the implementation of transformational leadership by the dormitory head has proven effective in enhancing educational quality.

In this context transformational leaders act as change agents who drive innovation in curriculum and teaching methods. They ensure that the curriculum remains relevant to scientific and technological advancements while accommodating the spiritual and moral needs of students. This approach creates a dynamic and adaptive learning environment where students are encouraged to think critically and creatively. Research shows that transformational leadership in pesantren enhances education quality by improving staff professionalism, student motivation, and community participation (Suharyati et al., 2016).

According to Sasan et al (2023) transformational leaders in pesantren also focus on developing human resources through regular training and opportunities to attend seminars or workshops. These initiatives aim to improve the professionalism of administrators and teaching staff in managing pesantren and educating students. Consequently, the overall quality of pesantren education can be continuously enhanced. Similar findings show that transformational leadership in madrasah ibtidaiyah (elementary

Islamic schools) improves education quality through integrated curriculum development combining religious and general knowledge, alongside professional training and development for teachers.

The application of transformational leadership in pesantren also fosters a collaborative and innovative culture that enhances learning quality and motivation. Transformational leaders encourage collaboration among teachers, students, and staff while promoting innovation through technology use and creative pedagogical approaches. The involvement of the entire pesantren community—including teachers, students, parents, and other stakeholders—is essential for curriculum development and educational improvement. Thus, transformational leadership focuses not only on managerial aspects but also on cultivating a positive and inclusive educational culture (Rizqy et al., 2024).

Research by Maysarah & Fadhli (2024) revealed that transformational leadership at SMP Muhammadiyah 7 Medan effectively improved teacher motivation. Leaders applying this style were able to create a clear and inspiring vision that helped teachers understand long-term goals and provided concrete direction for achieving school objectives. Transformational leaders also recognized and rewarded outstanding teachers, thereby boosting morale and motivation. Moreover, they paid individual attention to teachers' needs, offering guidance and professional development support tailored to their strengths and weaknesses. This approach fostered a work environment conducive to both professional and personal growth, positively impacting overall educational quality.

At MAN 5 Banjar research by Sabariah et al (2024) found that the principal demonstrated all four key dimensions of transformational leadership: Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration. The leader provided a clear vision and mission, instilled pride, and earned respect and trust from subordinates. They inspired staff to achieve meaningful goals, encouraged intellectual growth, creativity, and problem-solving, and treated each teacher as an individual by providing guidance and mentorship. This leadership style fostered teachers' enthusiasm, responsibility, and commitment through regular meetings, evaluations, supervision, and professional development activities such as workshops and subject-teacher forums (MGMP).

According to Leithwood & Sun (2021), transformational leadership plays a key role in creating educational environments that enhance teacher and student motivation. School principals with transformational leadership styles provide emotional support and professional growth opportunities that increase teachers' engagement. Similarly Sharma & Singh (2020) emphasized that transformational leadership motivates teachers to adopt innovative teaching methods, which in turn enhances student learning motivation. This approach not only creates a more inclusive work environment but also promotes innovation in the learning process.

Several studies have demonstrated how transformational leadership strengthens teacher motivation by fostering strong social relationships within schools. Noland & Richards (2016) explained that this approach enhances teacher-student relationships, creating a more conducive learning environment. Likewise Kurland et al (2020), highlighted that collaboration among teachers, facilitated by transformational leaders, boosts intrinsic motivation and creativity. Day et al (2016) further revealed that

leaders who recognize teacher contributions help increase teacher confidence, which positively influences student learning outcomes.

In terms of shared vision Hallinger & Heck (2021), underscored the importance of transformational leaders in guiding teachers and students toward higher goals through clear strategies (Leithwood et al., 2019), added that transformational leadership fosters a culture of innovation in schools, empowering teachers to experiment with new teaching approaches. Robinson et al (2020), supported this finding by showing that students in transformationally led environments demonstrate higher learning motivation due to collective encouragement from their leaders.

As part of motivation theory Keraf (2013); Deci & Ryan (2020), highlighted that transformational leadership supports the fulfillment of students' basic psychological needs—competence, autonomy, and relatedness—thereby enhancing intrinsic motivation. Similarly Bass & Riggio (2019), noted that key elements of transformational leadership, such as idealized influence and inspirational motivation, significantly impact student motivation. Their research emphasized the importance of emotional support from leaders in creating positive learning environments that foster student engagement.

The influence of transformational leadership on teacher motivation is also supported by Judge & Piccolo (2016), who found that teachers working under transformational leaders exhibit higher productivity due to increased intrinsic motivation within a positive work environment. Avolio dan Bass (2020) further explained that emotional support from transformational leaders strengthens teachers' confidence in fulfilling their responsibilities, thereby enhancing teaching effectiveness.

According to Tschannen-Moran & Gareis (2019), specialized training for transformational leaders has a major impact on improving teacher and student motivation. Trained leaders are better equipped to implement effective strategies for fostering innovation and professional growth. Jing Sun et al (2022) added that transformational leadership helps address modern educational challenges by creating environments that support teacher and student self-development, thereby directly enhancing motivation and achievement.

Finally Jian Sun et al (2017), found that transformational leadership cultivates positive work environments in which teachers feel valued and motivated to continuously develop their professional skills. Likewise Leithwood & Sun (2021), asserted that consistent emotional support from transformational leaders fosters a more inclusive school culture, motivating both teachers and students to strive toward higher educational goals.

From the comprehensive review of various journal articles, the overall findings of this study can be summarized as follows:

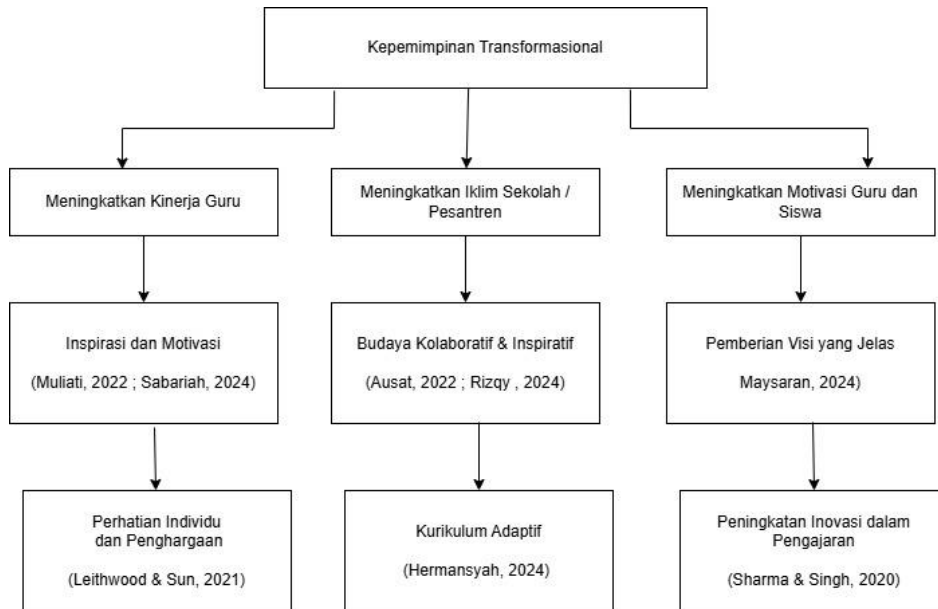


Figure 1. Schematic Synthesis of Findings: The Role of Transformational Leadership in Education

DISCUSSION

Transformational leadership has been proven to have a significant impact on improving teacher performance across various educational institutions. The study by Agustina Muliati (2022) revealed that this leadership style contributes up to 79.8% to teacher performance, indicating that the role of school principals as transformational leaders is crucial in shaping productive and competitive educators. Transformational leaders not only provide direction but also inspire, motivate, and attend to the individual needs of teachers, thereby creating a conducive work climate that drives optimal performance.

In addition, work motivation plays an essential role in supporting teacher performance. The study by Makmur et al. (2023) showed that highly motivated teachers tend to be more enthusiastic and committed to their duties. However, several studies suggest that the influence of motivation on teacher performance can be mediated by other factors such as organizational support and working conditions. This indicates that personal motivation must be complemented by a supportive system and work culture to generate maximum positive outcomes.

A positive school climate also plays a strategic role in enhancing teacher performance. According to Marliansyah and Suwadi (2024), a collaborative, communicative, and supportive school environment fosters a comfortable workspace that ultimately improves teacher performance. Furthermore, A. N. Pratama (2023) emphasized that transformational leadership and school climate are interrelated in shaping teacher behavior and performance. An effective leader not only provides individual guidance but also cultivates a healthy, adaptive, and professionally supportive school culture.

In the context of curriculum development, transformational leadership plays a key role in fostering innovation and change. Studies by Dwianto and Munir (2023) and Hermansyah et al. (2024) revealed that transformational leaders encourage schools to adapt their curricula to meet contemporary needs, such as technological advancements and industrial challenges. Visionary leaders also consider the character and needs of learners, ensuring that curriculum development is more relevant and contextual.

The implementation of transformational leadership is not limited to formal schools but is also effective in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) and madrasahs. Several studies—such as those by Alawiyah et al. (2023), Suharyati et al. (2016), and Sasan et al. (2023)—found that pesantren leaders who adopt transformational approaches can drive managerial renewal, character development, and teacher professionalism. This demonstrates that the principles of transformational leadership are both universal and contextual, making them effectively applicable across diverse educational settings.

Transformational leadership has also been shown to enhance teacher motivation and professionalism. According to Maysarah and Fadhli (2024) and Sabariah et al. (2024), leaders who articulate a clear vision, provide recognition, and understand teachers' individual needs can stimulate intrinsic motivation and strengthen their sense of responsibility. This serves as a key factor in encouraging teachers to continuously grow and contribute optimally to their schools.

Globally transformational leadership is regarded as a style that supports innovation and 21st-century learning. Studies by Leithwood & Sun (2021), Hallinger & Heck (2021), and Robinson et al. (2020) suggest that transformational leaders create innovative learning environments, build strong social relationships, and enhance creativity and motivation among both teachers and students. This indicates that transformational leadership not only benefits teachers but also brings about positive change in overall student learning outcomes.

In conclusion transformational leadership in educational management has a significant impact on teacher and student motivation. Across multiple studies, it is evident that this leadership style not only promotes collaboration and innovation but also fosters a working environment that supports both professional and emotional development. In addressing the challenges of modern education, transformational leadership serves as a key approach to enhancing engagement and motivation among all stakeholders involved in the educational process.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings from previous research, it can be concluded that transformational leadership has a significant impact on improving teacher performance and creating a conducive educational environment. Transformational leaders who are able to inspire, motivate, and provide individual attention play a crucial role in enhancing teacher motivation, which in turn influences the quality of teaching and student learning outcomes. Moreover, transformational leadership contributes to the development of a relevant and adaptive curriculum that aligns with contemporary changes, as well as the creation of a collaborative and innovative culture that supports more effective learning.

SUGGESTIONS

On the other hand, although teacher motivation is an important factor influencing their performance, several studies indicate that other factors—such as organizational support, workload, and teacher well-being—also play significant roles. A positive school climate, characterized by collaboration, open

communication, and appreciation of achievements, can further strengthen the influence of transformational leadership. Therefore, the implementation of transformational leadership that promotes teacher professionalism and fosters strong social relationships within the school is essential to achieving sustainable improvements in teacher productivity and educational quality.

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