

## **THE ROLE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN IMPROVING TEACHER PERFORMANCE AT STATE MIDDLE SCHOOL 8 GUNUNGSITOLI**

by

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study aims to analyze the role of the principal's transformational leadership in improving teacher performance and identify factors that support and hinder the implementation of transformational leadership at SMP Negeri 8 Gunungsitoli. This study uses a qualitative method with a case study approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation, then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model which includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results show that the principal has implemented four dimensions of transformational leadership, namely inspirational motivation, role modeling, intellectual stimulation, and individual attention. This role has a positive impact on teacher performance, especially in building work enthusiasm, discipline, and creativity. However, its implementation has not been optimal due to a less personal motivational approach, limited facilities, lack of follow-up on teacher ideas, and minimal direct mentoring in the classroom. Supporting factors for the implementation of transformational leadership include a harmonious work climate, open communication between the principal and teachers, and adequate experience of the principal. The inhibiting factors are limited infrastructure, low teacher participation in training, high administrative burden, lack of technical assistance, and different perceptions of school program priorities. The conclusion of this study is that the transformational leadership of the principal at SMP Negeri 8 Gunungsitoli has been implemented well, but needs to be strengthened through increasing personalization of motivation, providing facilities, reducing the administrative burden on teachers, and increasing technical assistance in the classroom. The results of this study are expected to be a reference for developing more effective school leadership in improving teacher performance.

**Keywords:** Transformational Leadership, Teacher Performance, Principal, Supporting Factors, Inhibiting Factors.

### **PERAN KEPEMIMPINAN TRANSFORMASIONAL DALAM MENINGKATKAN KINERJA GURU DI SMP NEGERI 8 GUNUNGSITOLI**

#### **ABSTRAK**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran kepemimpinan transformasional kepala sekolah dalam meningkatkan kinerja guru serta mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor yang mendukung dan menghambat penerapan kepemimpinan transformasional di SMP Negeri 8 Gunungsitoli. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan

model Miles dan Huberman yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, serta penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepala sekolah telah menerapkan empat dimensi kepemimpinan transformasional, yaitu motivasi inspirasional, keteladanan, stimulasi intelektual, dan perhatian individu. Peran ini berdampak positif terhadap kinerja guru, khususnya dalam membangun semangat kerja, kedisiplinan, dan kreativitas. Namun, penerapannya belum optimal karena pendekatan motivasi yang kurang personal, keterbatasan fasilitas, kurangnya tindak lanjut terhadap ide guru, serta minimnya pendampingan langsung di kelas. Faktor pendukung penerapan kepemimpinan transformasional meliputi iklim kerja yang harmonis, keterbukaan komunikasi antara kepala sekolah dan guru, serta pengalaman kepala sekolah yang memadai. Adapun faktor penghambatnya adalah keterbatasan sarana prasarana, rendahnya partisipasi guru dalam pelatihan, beban administrasi yang tinggi, kurangnya pendampingan teknis, dan perbedaan persepsi terhadap prioritas program sekolah. Kesimpulan dari penelitian ini adalah kepemimpinan transformasional kepala sekolah di SMP Negeri 8 Gunungsitoli sudah terimplementasi dengan baik, namun perlu diperkuat melalui peningkatan personalisasi motivasi, pengadaan fasilitas, pengurangan beban administrasi guru, serta peningkatan pendampingan teknis di kelas. Hasil penelitian ini diharapkan dapat menjadi referensi bagi pengembangan kepemimpinan sekolah yang lebih efektif dalam meningkatkan kinerja guru.

**Kata kunci:** Kepemimpinan transformasional, kinerja guru, kepala sekolah, faktor pendukung, faktor penghambat.

## INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a crucial aspect in determining the success of any organization, including educational institutions. As leaders, principals have a significant responsibility in creating a conducive work climate, motivating teachers, and directing all school components toward achieving the established vision and mission. In the context of modern education, a leadership style that relies not solely on formal authority but also emphasizes influence, inspiration, and personal development of subordinates is considered more effective in improving the performance of educators.

One leadership model relevant to addressing these challenges is transformational leadership. This concept emphasizes a leader's ability to inspire, lead by example, encourage creativity, and address the needs and development of individuals within the organization. Transformational leaders focus not only on achieving targets but also on fostering a positive work spirit and values among teachers. This approach is expected to create an innovative, productive work environment oriented toward improving the quality of learning.

In the school context, transformational leadership plays a crucial role in improving teacher performance, both in terms of pedagogical competence, professionalism, and discipline. Teachers who receive motivation and support from the principal tend to demonstrate high work ethic, adaptability to curriculum changes, and a willingness to continuously develop themselves. However, the reality on the ground shows that the implementation of transformational leadership is not yet fully optimal in various educational institutions.

Initial observations conducted by researchers at SMP Negeri 8 Gunungsitoli revealed indications of declining teacher performance, such as a lack of variety in teaching methods, low enthusiasm for participating in self-development training, and ineffective communication between the principal and teachers. These conditions indicate a gap between expectations regarding the application of transformational leadership and the reality of its implementation in

the field. Therefore, an in-depth study is needed to determine how the principal's transformational leadership plays a role in improving teacher performance, as well as the factors that support and hinder this process.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Transformational leadership is a leadership style that focuses on a leader's ability to inspire, motivate, and empower subordinates to be willing to work beyond personal interests to achieve organizational goals. This concept was first introduced by James MacGregor Burns (1978) and further developed by Bernard M. Bass. Transformational leaders act not only as controllers but also as agents of change who strive to foster the potential and creativity of subordinates through a visionary and humanistic approach.

According to Bass and Riggio (2019), transformational leadership consists of four main dimensions, namely:

1. Idealized influence – leaders become role models and role models for their subordinates.
2. Inspirational motivation – leaders are able to generate enthusiasm and optimism towards the organization's vision.
3. Intellectual stimulation – leaders encourage innovation and critical thinking from their subordinates.
4. Individualized consideration – leaders provide personal attention and support to the needs and development of each member.

Transformational leadership is believed to be effective in education because it creates a positive work climate, strengthens collective spirit, and fosters teacher professionalism. Kurniawan (2023) emphasized that transformational leaders in schools can foster a collaborative culture, motivate teachers to innovate, and encourage learning processes that adapt to curriculum changes and student needs.

Furthermore, Triyono (2024) added that transformational leaders are characterized by their ability to inspire, think positively, and provide personal attention to their subordinates, thus encouraging them to perform beyond expectations. Therefore, this leadership style is not only oriented toward achieving results but also toward developing the potential of human resources within the organization.

The effectiveness of transformational leadership is inseparable from various factors that influence its success. Sukendar (2025) groups these factors into two broad categories: internal factors and external factors.

1. **Internal factors** This includes personal characteristics of leaders such as personality, integrity, vision, and communication skills. Leaders with high integrity tend to be consistent in their words and actions, thereby gaining the trust of their subordinates.
2. **External factors** This includes organizational culture, structure, and work environment support. Lestari (2022) emphasized that a flexible organizational structure, an open work culture, and strong management support are essential prerequisites for the development of a transformational leadership style.

Furthermore, the characteristics of subordinates are also important factors. Transformational leaders require organizational members to be highly motivated, willing to change, and willing to actively participate. Positive interactions between leaders and subordinates foster mutual trust and a sense of belonging, which in turn strengthens overall organizational

performance.

Teacher performance is one of the main indicators of the success of an educational institution. Supardi (in Dini, 2018) defines performance as the work results achieved by an individual based on their responsibilities and functions within a specific period. In the educational context, teacher performance reflects their level of ability to carry out the tasks of teaching, mentoring, and developing students professionally.

According to Supriyanto and Troena (2021), teacher performance indicators include the following aspects:

1. Mastery of subject matter,
2. Use of varied learning methods,
3. Effective interaction with students,
4. Continuous evaluation and assessment of learning,
5. Discipline in carrying out duties,
6. Self-development through training or further education,
7. Good classroom management, as well as
8. Active involvement in school activities and relationships with parents.

High-performing teachers tend to be able to create a pleasant learning atmosphere, improve student learning outcomes, and support the achievement of overall educational goals.

Various studies have shown that transformational leadership has a positive influence on improving teacher performance. Rofiqoh and Purbasari (2021) stated that transformational leadership can increase work motivation, build trust, and encourage teacher innovation in implementing learning.

Furthermore, Cira Nussy Palembang and Hotmaulina Sihotang (2023) found that the consistent application of four dimensions of transformational leadership by principals can improve teacher morale, responsibility, and professionalism. Meanwhile, Dwi Rahmawati (2021) emphasized that principals with a transformational leadership style create a conducive work environment, strengthen collaboration among teachers, and increase their involvement in school development activities.

In this context, transformational leadership acts as a catalyst, mobilizing the school's full potential toward positive change. By inspiring, leading by example, and creating a participatory work culture, principals can foster teachers' intrinsic motivation to continuously improve their performance.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach, aiming to deeply understand how the principal's transformational leadership plays a role in improving teacher performance at SMP Negeri 8 Gunungsitoli. The study was conducted from March to June 2024. The key informants consisted of the principal, vice principal, several teachers, and administrative staff (a total of 10 people) selected using purposive sampling. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation, then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was guaranteed through triangulation of sources and methods, as well as member checks with informants. The researchers also paid attention to research ethics, including informant consent and data confidentiality.

## RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research results show that the principal at SMP Negeri 8 Gunungsitoli has implemented transformational leadership principles in carrying out his duties. This is evident in his ability to lead by example, build open communication, motivate teachers to innovate, and pay attention to the professional development of each teacher.

The main dimensions of transformational leadership that stand out are:

1. **Ideal influence (idealized influence)**— the principal is a role model in discipline and responsibility.
2. **Inspirational motivation**— the principal provides encouragement and enthusiasm for work through direction and appreciation.
3. **Intellectual stimulation**— encourage teachers to use varied and creative learning methods.
4. **Individual attention (individualized consideration)**— pay attention to the needs and potential of each teacher.

The impact of implementing transformational leadership is an increase in teacher performance, which is seen in increased discipline, creativity in teaching, participation in training, and responsibility for learning tasks.

However, the research also found several obstacles, such as limited supporting facilities, lack of ongoing leadership training, and some teachers who are still less adaptive to change.

The findings of this study reinforce the theory of Bass and Riggio (2019), which states that transformational leadership has a positive effect on improving subordinate performance. Principals who are able to inspire and provide personal attention have been shown to foster intrinsic motivation and work enthusiasm in teachers.

The implementation of transformational leadership at SMP Negeri 8 Gunungsitoli is also in line with the research results of Rofiqoh and Purbasari (2021), which show that motivation, role models, and intellectual stimulation from leaders can improve teacher performance and professionalism.

Thus, it can be concluded that transformational leadership significantly contributes to improving teacher performance, both through increased motivation, work enthusiasm, and learning innovation. Despite challenges, this leadership style remains relevant for implementation in efforts to create superior and competitive schools.

## CONCLUSION

This study concluded that the principal's transformational leadership played a significant role in improving teacher performance at SMP Negeri 8 Gunungsitoli. The principal was able to serve as a role model, motivate, and provide personal support to teachers, thus creating a positive and productive work environment.

The application of the four dimensions of transformational leadership—idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual attention—has been shown to increase teacher discipline, creativity, and responsibility in carrying out their duties. However, several obstacles remain, such as limited facilities and some teachers' lack of adaptability to innovation.

Overall, transformational leadership has proven effective in building a collaborative work culture and enhancing teacher professionalism.

For school principals, it is hoped that they will continue to develop a transformational

leadership style by improving communication, providing appreciation, and expanding professional development opportunities for teachers.

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