

THE ROLE OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

The quality of education in elementary schools is an important factor in developing students' potential and readiness to face future challenges. This research examines the role of transformational leadership in improving the quality of education in elementary schools, through quantitative and qualitative approaches utilizing literature studies, surveys and in-depth interviews in several elementary schools that apply the principles of transformational leadership. Transformational leadership characterized by motivation, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individual attention has been proven to positively influence teacher motivation, creativity, and performance, as well as increasing student engagement and academic achievement. This research shows that leaders who are able to inspire, encourage innovation, and pay attention to the needs of individuals in the school community play a key role in creating a conducive educational environment, which in turn improves the overall quality of education. There is a significant relationship between the implementation of transformational leadership practices and improving the quality of education in elementary schools, which is influenced by increasing teacher performance and student academic success. The implications of this research urge the need for leadership education and training for prospective school leaders, with special emphasis on developing transformational leadership qualities, in order to improve the quality of future education.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Quality of Education, Elementary Schools

INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, the quality of education in primary schools has become a major focus of attention for educators, researchers and educational policy makers in various parts of the world. At the elementary school level, students are introduced to basic concepts that will become the foundation of their knowledge in the future (Sunaengsih et al., 2023). Therefore, improving the quality of education at this stage will not only affect students' learning outcomes at that time but also their success at the next level of education. In

this context, the role of leadership in the school environment, especially transformational leadership, becomes very important for further research in an effort to improve the quality of education.

Transformational leadership, with its characteristics of encouraging change, innovation, and motivation, is considered the key to achieving educational success at the elementary school level. This leadership style involves creating a clear vision, effective communication, providing inspiration and motivation, and encouraging active participation from all school stakeholders (Ampo, 2024). School principals and educators with transformational leadership abilities are considered capable of creating a conducive learning environment, improving teacher performance, and positively influencing student learning outcomes. Although much research has shown the relationship between transformational leadership and improving the quality of education, there is still a need to explore more deeply how this can be implemented and optimized at the primary school level (MAEd, 2022).

Given the importance of the elementary school period in the formation and development of students' learning capacity, research examining the influence of transformational leadership at this level becomes very relevant. By understanding the dynamics and influence of transformational leadership, more effective strategies and approaches can be developed to improve the quality of education. This is ultimately expected to make a significant contribution not only to education in primary schools but also to the education system as a whole (Madalambana et al., 2022). Therefore, exploring the role of transformational leadership in improving the quality of education in elementary schools is very important to do.

Through an in-depth investigation of how transformational leadership can be implemented and what impact it has on the school community, this research aims to provide new insights that can be used as a reference in educational practice. In particular, the emphasis on leadership in elementary schools offers an opportunity to design better learning environments, which focus not only on academic achievement but also on the holistic development of students. This is in accordance with the goals of modern education which not only pursue academic excellence but also the formation of students' character and adaptability to change (Noori et al., 2023).

In implementation in the field, transformational leadership can answer various challenges faced by elementary schools today, including the need for adaptation to curriculum changes, integration of technology in learning, and handling of student psychosocial issues (YULIANA, 2024). Therefore,

exploration of the implementation of transformational leadership also opens up opportunities for developing leadership capacity in schools that is more adaptive and responsive to these challenges. Thus, the ability to implement this transformational leadership style will not only influence the current learning environment but also form the basis for the long-term success of educational institutions (Lusquinos, 2023).

To go further, concretizing the influence of transformational leadership in improving the quality of education in elementary schools requires systematic and structured research. This includes identifying specific indicators that can demonstrate success in implementing transformational leadership and its impact on educational outcomes. These indicators may include increasing student motivation and learning engagement, improving student academic performance, improving the quality of teacher teaching, and increasing positive school climate (Amarta et al., 2023).

Additionally, it is important to consider factors that may facilitate or hinder the implementation of transformational leadership in the elementary school context. This includes, but is not limited to, training and professional development for principals and teachers, school resources, parent and community involvement, and supportive educational policies. A comprehensive assessment of this context will provide a deeper understanding of how transformational leadership can be optimized to produce sustainable and positive change in elementary school education (Little, 2023).

In the end, it is hoped that this research can produce practical and effective recommendations for school principals and educators in adopting and implementing transformational leadership in elementary schools. In this way, an educational environment that is conducive, innovative and able to meet future needs and challenges can be created. Through this focus on transformational leadership, this research contributes not only to improving the quality of education in elementary schools but also to a broader understanding of the importance of effective leadership in education.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study in this research is qualitative with literature. The literature study research method is a research approach that involves the analysis and synthesis of information from various literature sources that are relevant to a particular research topic. Documents taken from literature research are

journals, books and references related to the discussion you want to research (Earley, M.A. 2014; Snyder, H. 2019).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership in elementary schools is an approach that emphasizes the leader's capacity to inspire and motivate teaching staff, students, and the school community as a whole to exceed their own expectations in achieving educational goals. The first and perhaps most important characteristic of transformational leadership is the ability to create a clear and compelling vision (Toloy, 2024). In elementary schools, this could mean establishing a vision oriented towards creating learning environments that are innovative, inclusive, and encourage students' holistic development. Transformational leaders show high hopes and aspirations which become a reference for teachers and students to try harder to achieve higher standards.

Apart from creating a vision, transformational leaders also act as role models. In the elementary school context, this means that the principal or educator displays the standards of behavior, ethics, and commitment to education that are expected of all members of the school community. Through their actions and policies, transformational leaders demonstrate integrity, dedication to professional development, and openness to lifelong learning. This action not only increases respect and trust between staff and students, but also instills important values that influence the school's learning ethos (Mu'alimin & Anwar, 2022).

Motivation is another key element of transformational leadership (Masriah, 2022). In elementary schools, effective leaders use a variety of motivational techniques to encourage teachers and students to reach their full potential. This can involve recognizing achievements, providing constructive feedback, and supporting innovation in teaching and learning methods. By promoting a culture that emphasizes personal and professional growth, leaders can inspire a spirit of creativity, teamwork, and commitment to academic excellence (Tin & Ahmad, 2022).

Transformational leadership emphasizes the importance of effective two-way communication. In the elementary school environment, open communication between principals, teachers, students and parents is crucial in forming partnerships that support educational goals. Through effective communication, leaders can ensure that all community members feel heard, valued, and actively involved in the learning process (Sutanto et al., 2022). By

promoting dialogue, transformational leaders strengthen relationships, increase collaboration, and facilitate conflict resolution in a constructive manner.

Through the application of transformational leadership characteristics in elementary schools, an educational environment can be created that not only facilitates academic achievement but also supports students' social, emotional and moral development. Leaders who are able to inspire, motivate, and communicate their vision effectively will be a catalyst in creating more dynamic, responsive, and inclusive schools (Dacpano, 2022).

Transformational leaders in elementary schools also emphasize the importance of shared values. In implementing transformational leadership, leaders must be in line with the values held by the school community, creating a sense of shared ownership of mission and goals. Effective leaders will involve all stakeholders, including staff, students, and parents in the decision-making process and forming school values (Haestetika et al., 2023). This creates a strong sense of community and supports the active involvement of all parties in achieving common goals. When all members of a community feel that they have a role in building an educational environment, their level of commitment and participation increases.

Transformational leadership also aims to encourage leadership development among teachers and students. Instead of placing all leadership responsibilities on one person, a transformational approach encourages the distribution of authority across staff, strengthening leadership capacity at all levels. Teachers are encouraged to take leadership roles in specific initiatives, contribute to curriculum development, or guide professional learning circles. Students are also encouraged to take leadership roles in clubs, extracurricular activities, or class projects (Windasari et al., 2022). In this way, elementary schools become incubators for future leaders, places where self-confidence and leadership skills grow from real-life experiences.

Adaptability and the ability to respond to change is another key component of impactful transformational leadership. The ever-changing world of education requires leaders who are flexible and ready to adapt plans or strategies to meet new needs as they arise. In elementary schools, this may mean integrating the latest technology into the classroom, responding to students' special educational needs, or adopting different learning methods in response to feedback from the school community. Willingness to learn and adapt not only shows agile leadership but also provides an example for

teachers and students to develop their own adaptive abilities (Agustina et al., 2023).

Transformational leadership pays great attention to continuous professional development. In elementary schools, leaders must be key advocates for teacher development, providing resources and opportunities to learn and grow in their profession. This can be achieved through conferences, workshops, training in teaching and assessment, as well as collaboration with other educational institutions. By emphasizing the importance of lifelong learning and building professional competencies, transformational leadership not only improves the quality of teaching but also helps retain and attract quality talent to elementary schools (Rahmansyah, 2022).

Implementing transformational leadership in elementary schools requires strong commitment, vision, collaboration, and a progressive approach to meet the demands of modern education. By focusing on inspiration, innovation, and continuous improvement, transformational leaders direct schools to achieve success, not only at the academic level but also in developing character and life skills that will be useful for students throughout their lives (Aminah et al., 2023).

Significant Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Improving the Quality of Education in Elementary Schools

Transformational leadership in elementary schools plays a significant role in improving the quality of education. Leaders with a transformational leadership style focus on developing a shared vision, inspiring staff to transcend self-interest for the benefit of the group, and spurring innovation and positive change. They work toward establishing a student-centered learning environment, where all members of the school community feel responsible and empowered to contribute to continuous improvement. By influencing intrinsic motivation and strengthening work ethic, transformational leaders direct teachers and staff to adopt best teaching practices, carry out reflective assessments, and actively strive to improve student learning outcomes (Aldawsari, 2024).

In line with a commitment to educational excellence, transformational leaders encourage continuous professional learning for their teachers. By identifying and developing individual and team strengths, and integrating learning needs with institutional capacity-building strategies, they create a learning culture that values not only knowledge but also creativity and innovation. Recognition of accomplishments and support for professional

development give teachers the confidence and expertise to implement innovative pedagogy (Kadiman et al., 2023). This, in turn, has a direct impact on the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom, leading to richer learning experiences and improved academic outcomes for students.

Transformational leadership impacts the social-emotional environment of schools. These leaders instill values such as fairness, integrity, and caring, which create a safe and supportive school environment where students can thrive. This includes recognizing the diversity of students' needs and talents and appreciating that each child has unique potential to develop. This inclusive and stimulating environment allows students to develop important social, emotional, and leadership skills, which are integral components of a quality education (Garad et al., 2022). Therefore, transformational leadership indirectly improves the quality of education by building a solid foundation for students' learning and personal development, which will bring them success in the future.

In the elementary school context, the relationship between transformational leadership and improving the quality of education becomes more significant when considering the long-term impact on students. Transformational leadership focuses not only on short-term learning outcomes, but also on developing character and values that will support students in all aspects of their lives. By instilling a sense of self-confidence, responsibility, and cooperation, transformational leaders inspire students to become lifelong learners. This promotes a growth mentality that allows students to respond to challenges with perseverance and resilience, which is critical for success outside the classroom (Ibrahim, 2023).

Transformational leaders are usually more open to partnerships and collaboration with outside parties, such as student families, community organizations, and the private sector. These relationships create a stronger support network for schools, which can enrich resources and learning experiences. The assembled network not only opens the door to diverse and practical learning experiences, but also supports the provision of resources that can improve technology and learning facilities, thereby directly improving the quality of education received by students (Alkordi & Gregory, 2024).

All things considered, transformational leadership offers a powerful framework for driving continuous improvement in education in elementary schools (Aulia et al., 2023). The combination of leading by example, building a supportive learning culture, and engaging the broader community opens the door to educational innovation and improves the quality of student learning.

This creates an environment where students not only achieve high academic standards but also develop the social and emotional skills necessary for long-term achievement in their lives (Cui, 2023).

Transformational Leadership Influences Teacher Motivation and Performance

Transformational leadership in schools greatly influences teacher motivation and performance. Leaders who apply this leadership style create a positive work climate by trusting teachers' abilities, providing support, and appreciating their initiatives and innovations. This creates an inspiring work atmosphere and motivates teachers to be more deeply involved and committed to the learning process and their own development (Wulandari, 2022). Being an example to follow, transformational leaders demonstrate high enthusiasm, integrity and dedication, which has a direct impact on increasing teacher morale and motivation. This high motivation not only improves teacher performance but also spreads widely through their interactions with students in the classroom.

Teacher performance inspired by transformational leadership has a significant impact on student academic achievement. Motivated teachers tend to use more innovative and interactive teaching methods, which not only transfer knowledge but also inspire students to learn more effectively. This approach helps improve understanding and retention of teaching material among students, leading to better academic outcomes (Yang & Ph.D., 2024). Transformational leaders also often facilitate the development of the resources and training teachers need to implement the latest, evidence-based teaching techniques, which directly impact student learning outcomes. In this way, students benefit from an innovative and challenging education that better prepares them for the future (Sarinah et al., 2024).

Transformational leadership not only improves individual performance but also strengthens collaboration among teachers, which in turn increases the academic achievement of students as a collective. A strong culture of collaboration in schools allows for a better exchange of ideas and teaching strategies, leading to more coherent and comprehensive teaching methods. Good transformational leaders encourage their teaching teams to learn from each other, share best practices, and support collective growth. These positive relationships and collaboration create a more supportive and enriching learning environment for students, which directly contributes to their increased achievement in school. Through all these aspects,

transformational leadership changes the educational paradigm to become more dynamic and effective (Morales, 2022).

Transformational leadership which influences teacher motivation and performance also has a significant impact on creativity and flexibility in managing school curriculum and programs. This type of leader tends to create space for teachers to experiment with teaching methods and curriculum tailored to the specific needs of their students, giving them the freedom to adopt a more personal approach to the teaching and learning process (Rahmawati, 2022). This makes it easier for teachers to identify different student learning styles and then adapt their materials or teaching methods to maximize each individual's potential. This creates conditions that are more conducive to holistic learning, where students are not only measured on academic ability but also develop emotionally, socially, and creatively.

The effects of this kind of transformational leadership approach are often seen in improved teacher and student performance simultaneously. Highly motivated teachers, supported by an empowering work environment, tend to be more proactive in monitoring their students' progress and difficulties, and more responsive in providing the necessary support. Students, feeling supported and understood by their teachers, generally show an increase in engagement with the course material and intrinsic motivation to learn (Effendi, 2023). This combination of responsive education and motivated students creates a positive cycle that continues to encourage improvement at all levels of the school (Kurniawan et al., 2024).

On the other hand, student academic achievement is also influenced by the ability of school leaders to identify and apply relevant educational resources and technology (Ansar et al., 2022). Visionary transformational leaders will always look for ways to integrate technological innovations in the learning process that have the potential to optimize students' learning experiences and prepare them to face current and future challenges. Targeted adoption of educational technology can increase student engagement, enrich learning experiences, and enable greater personalization of learning, all of which leads to markedly improved learning outcomes and academic achievement. Transformational leadership to improve the quality of education in elementary schools is in line with preparing a generation that is able to compete and be successful in the 21st century (Sumampong & Arnado, 2024).

CONCLUSION

Transformational leadership plays a crucial role in creating a dynamic, inspiring and supportive educational environment in elementary schools. By focusing on the individual needs and potential of both teachers and students, transformational leaders are able to increase motivation, dedication, and performance among teaching staff. This approach has a direct impact on students' levels of engagement and academic achievement, through the use of innovative and interactive teaching methods, as well as the adoption of a responsive and personalized curriculum. Thus, the role of transformational leadership in improving the quality of basic education is very significant. This leadership style not only improves teacher performance and student academic achievement, but also creates a learning environment that is conducive to the holistic growth and learning of all individuals in the school. Transformational leadership, with its focus on empowerment, innovation and adaptation, is the key to facing the challenges of modern education and developing intelligent, creative and resilient future generations.

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