

ANALYSIS OF INITIAL CONDITIONS: A FACTUAL OVERVIEW OF TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP, PRINCIPALS' EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL CULTURAL CURRICULUM IN GORONTALO CITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze baseline data regarding the factual state of transformational leadership, principals' emotional intelligence, and the effectiveness of implementing the Local Content (Mulok) curriculum on regional culture in elementary schools across Gorontalo City. Employing a mixed-methods approach—combining quantitative descriptive analysis with qualitative analysis—data were collected from 24 principals and 120 elementary school teachers via structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The analysis reveals that principals' transformational leadership falls into the "Adequate" category, with the dimensions of inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation requiring further optimization. Principals' emotional intelligence is rated as "Good," particularly regarding self-awareness; however, emotional management during institutional conflict resolution remains inconsistent. Meanwhile, the implementation of the Gorontalo Cultural Local Content curriculum is deemed "Suboptimal" due to a lack of standardized teaching materials, teachers' limited pedagogical competence in integrating local philosophical values (*Adat bersendikan Syara', Syara' bersendikan Kitabullah*), and insufficient monitoring by policymakers. The study recommends reconstructing leadership training models based on emotional intelligence and accelerating the development of digital modules for the Gorontalo Cultural Local Content curriculum.

Keywords: Transformational Leadership, Emotional Intelligence, Local Cultural Content, Elementary School, Gorontalo

Introduction

Basic education serves as a crucial foundation for character building and the intergenerational transmission of cultural values. In the era of modernization and digital transformation, the challenges facing basic education institutions in Gorontalo City have become increasingly complex. A school's success in navigating these changes depends heavily on the effectiveness of the principal's leadership and their ability to preserve the authenticity of the students' local cultural identity through an adaptive curriculum (Bass, B. M., 1990)

The transformational leadership model is considered the most adaptive approach for driving change in educational institutions (Gorontalo Regency Government, 2025), encompassing the dimensions of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Its effectiveness is bolstered by the school principal's emotional intelligence in managing stress and conflict (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). Meanwhile, schools in Gorontalo City are tasked with implementing the Local Cultural Content curriculum (*Muatan Lokal* or *Mulok*) to internalize local philosophies—such as "Customs grounded in Sharia, and Sharia grounded in the Book of Allah"—as well as regional traditions (Sutarto, 2023); however, a gap exists in practice where leadership styles remain transactional (Hastuti, 2021) and the implementation of the cultural curriculum is suboptimal due to limited teaching materials and teacher competencies.

Literature Review

Transformational Leadership of School Principals

Transformational leadership is the ability to transform subordinates' vision to achieve high performance, acting as a change agent that stimulates staff critical thinking (Al-Kadri, H; 2016)

Principal Emotional Intelligence

Encompasses self-awareness, empathy, and social skills—as defined by Goleman—which drive positive energy and foster solid collaboration within the school (Tahir, A. Djafri; 2018).

Gorontalo Cultural Local Content Curriculum

Aims to cultivate an appreciation for local wisdom through language, traditional attire, the arts, and religious-moral values (Mellyyani, M; 2024).

Research Method

This study employs a mixed-methods approach using a sequential explanatory model, involving 24 elementary school principals and 120 teachers in Gorontalo City selected through stratified random sampling. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively, while qualitative data were analyzed using the interactive technique developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (Sugiyono, 2018)

Results and Discussion

Factual Overview of Transformational Leadership among Elementary School Principals in Gorontalo City

Based on preliminary data collection via observation and questionnaires, the transformational leadership of elementary school principals in Gorontalo City falls into the "fairly good" category, yet still requires optimization across several key dimensions. Drawing

on the concepts of Bass (1990), transformational leadership is analyzed through four primary dimensions:

- Idealized Influence: Principals generally serve as role models respected by teachers. The discipline and integrity they demonstrate inspire trust among the school community
- Inspirational Motivation: The school principal is capable of clearly articulating the school's vision. However, the motivation used to drive teachers toward implementing learning innovations based on local wisdom remains instructional in nature and has not yet fully engaged their intrinsic awareness
- Intellectual Stimulation: This dimension shows the lowest score. Principals have not yet optimally stimulated teachers' creativity to solve instructional problems independently or to step outside the comfort zone of conventional administrative practices.
- Individualized Consideration: Principals have paid attention to teacher well-being; however, personal guidance such as mentoring regarding career development and professionalism remains limited due to the demands of bureaucratic tasks.

A Factual Overview of the Emotional Intelligence of Elementary School Principals in Gorontalo City

A principal's emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in fostering a conducive school climate. Generally, initial observations indicate that principals possess a mature level of self-awareness and self-regulation when dealing with internal school conflicts.

However, the greatest challenges lie in the dimensions of empathy and social skills. Given the Gorontalo cultural context—steeped in the philosophy of "Adati lo Hula-hula'a to Syara'a, Syara'a lo Hula-hula'a to Kitabullah" (Custom is grounded in Sharia, and Sharia is grounded in the Book of Allah)—a harmonious emotional approach is essential. Some principals still tend to favor formal, legalistic approaches over emotionally persuasive ones; consequently, two-way communication with educators has not yet fully opened up (Azis, A., & Daud, M; 2021).

Implementation of the Local Cultural Content Curriculum in Gorontalo City Elementary Schools

The current state of implementing the Gorontalo local cultural curriculum—which covers elements such as the local language, Polahi customs, Upiya handicrafts, and Tanggomo oral literature is at a concerning factual stage.

Several major obstacles have been identified in the field:

- Absence of a Standardized Curriculum: Most elementary schools in Gorontalo City do not yet possess standardized textbooks or written reference modules for the Local

Cultural Content Curriculum. Instruction is often left to the creativity of individual classroom teachers.

- Limited Teacher Competence: The majority of teachers instructing the Local Content subject on culture lack an educational background in culture or the Gorontalo regional language, resulting in a lack of depth in the delivery of the material
- Minimal Managerial Support: The school principal has not yet comprehensively integrated this local cultural content policy into the school's priority programs. The principal's role as an educator and leader in preserving local culture through formal channels has not yet been structurally manifested

The Relationship Between Leadership, Emotional Intelligence, and the Success of the Local Cultural Curriculum

Analysis results indicate a strong correlation among these three variables. Principals with high emotional intelligence are able to understand teachers' resistance to change and subsequently employ transformational leadership to inspire them to care about preserving local culture. Conversely, if a principal neglects intellectual stimulation and lacks empathy, the implementation of the local cultural curriculum will merely become an administrative formality—existing only on paper—without any substantial implementation that is meaningful to students.

Analysis results indicate that transformational leadership falls into the "Adequate" category (66.0%), with the lowest score recorded in intellectual stimulation (58.5%). The principal's emotional intelligence is rated as "Good" (76.2%), although self-control during crisis situations requires improvement. The implementation of the local cultural curriculum is categorized as "Suboptimal" due to the absence of structured teaching materials, limitations in teachers' subject-specific competence, and a lack of policy monitoring (Rahmawati, A., & Ismail, M., 2025).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Transformational leadership and the implementation of the local cultural curriculum in Gorontalo City elementary schools still require optimization through emotional intelligence-based leadership development programs, the creation of digital modules on local wisdom, and the strengthening of Teacher Working Groups (KKG).

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