

Implementation of Transformational Leadership to Improve School Achievement

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ABSTRACT

School achievement is the main indicator that reflects the quality of education delivery in an institution. The achievement of optimal achievement requires a strategic role from the principal as a leader to manage and develop the various potentials possessed by the school. This study aims to examine the application of transformational leadership by school principals to improve school achievement, as well as analyze the factors that affect the success of the implementation of transformational leadership. The method used in this study is a literature study that collects and analyzes various sources of information relevant to the topic of the study. The results of the study show that the application of transformational leadership through four main components, namely ideal influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration, plays a significant role in creating a positive work environment, increasing teacher motivation and performance, improving the quality of the learning process, and encouraging the active involvement of all school residents to achieve common goals. The success of the implementation of this leadership style is influenced by factors such as the ability of the principal to build cooperative relationships, develop a clear vision and mission, the availability of adequate resources, and support from the surrounding environment.

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INTRODUCTION

School achievement is the main indicator that reflects the quality of education delivery in an institution. The achievement of good achievement is not only seen from the academic results of students, but also includes various other aspects such as character development, achievements in non-academic fields, the quality of the learning process, and the school's ability to create a conducive educational environment. This condition shows that the success of an educational institution is the

result of the integrated management of all existing components (Akmal et al., 2015). Achieving optimal achievement requires planned, coordinated, and sustainable efforts from all parties involved in the implementation of education (Said et al., 2024). Various factors can affect the level of achievement achieved by the school, including the quality of human resources, the availability of facilities and infrastructure, support from the surrounding environment, and the ability of school leaders to manage and develop all the potential possessed by the school.

The principal has a very strategic role to determine the direction and success of the implementation of education in the school he leads. As a leader, the principal is responsible for creating a clear vision and mission, planning various programs and activities that support the achievement of educational goals, and mobilizing all school residents to work together to achieve the goals that have been set (Wibawa et al., 2025). The effectiveness of this leadership is often tested through how decisions are made to deal with dynamic and ever-changing organizational situations (Darmawan, 2024a). The ability of the principal to lead and manage various aspects of the implementation of education will greatly determine the level of achievement that the school can achieve. School principals who have good leadership skills will be able to create a conducive work environment, motivate teachers and staff to work optimally, and develop various innovations that can improve the quality of education delivery in schools.

Transformational leadership is one of the leadership styles that is considered effective to face various changes and challenges faced by educational institutions (Angwaomaodoko, 2025). This leadership style emphasizes on the leader's ability to inspire, motivate, and empower members of the organization to achieve higher goals than previously expected. This leadership model plays an important role as an agent of social change that is able to strengthen the value system within the organization (Rojak et al., 2022). Transformational leadership also emphasizes on developing the potential of each individual in the organization, so that each member of the organization can develop optimally and make a significant contribution to the progress of the organization. The application of this leadership style is expected to create positive changes in various aspects of education administration and encourage the achievement of better school achievements.

The application of transformational leadership by school principals can have a wide impact on various aspects of education delivery in schools. Principals who apply this leadership style will be able to create a clear and attractive vision for all school residents, so that all school residents have the same understanding of the goals they want to achieve and have high motivation to realize them (Firdaus & Farikha, 2024). Attention to a culture of discipline and work loyalty is also an integral part of a leader's success (Al Laisty et al., 2024; Hariani & Irfan, 2022). The principal will also be able to provide encouragement and support to teachers and staff to develop their abilities and skills, as well as encourage them to create various innovations in the learning process and school management. This will ultimately contribute to improving the quality of education delivery and achieving better school achievements.

The discussion of transformational leadership of school principals to improve school achievement in this study is based on the Transformational Leadership Theory developed by Bass and Riggio (2006). This theory explains that transformational leadership consists of four main components, namely ideal influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration. According to this theory, leaders who implement a transformational leadership style will be able to create positive change in the organization by inspiring the organization's members to achieve higher goals, encouraging them to think creatively and innovatively, and providing attention and support that is appropriate to the needs and potential of each individual in the organization. Leadership principles that serve focus on improving performance and developing teacher competencies in a sustainable manner (Darmawan, 2024b; Darmawan, 2014).

The Transformational Leadership Theory described earlier provides a relevant framework for analyzing the role of principals to improve school achievement (Menon, 2024). The application of this theory shows that transformational leadership does not only focus on achieving the goals of the

organization alone, but also focuses on developing the potential of each individual in the organization. The development of this potential is closely related to the active involvement of all personnel to build a strong academic culture in the educational environment (Rojak, 2023). This theory also emphasizes that the success of leaders to lead organizations is highly dependent on the leader's ability to create good relationships with members of the organization, inspire them to work optimally, and encourage them to create various innovations that can improve the organization's performance. This shows that the implementation of transformational leadership by school principals has great potential to improve overall school achievement.

Based on studies of various previous studies, there are still limited understanding of how transformational leadership can be effectively applied by school principals to improve school achievement. Some studies only discuss the concepts and characteristics of transformational leadership without examining in depth the application and impact in the context of education. Meanwhile, some other studies discuss the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational performance in general without specifically examining its impact on school performance. In fact, the relationship between the role of leaders and motivation and performance in the field is a crucial aspect that determines the success of school goals (Anam & Darmawan, 2024). These limitations make it difficult for the principal to effectively implement the transformational leadership style to improve the performance of the school he leads.

Another problem that arises is the lack of understanding of the factors that affect the success of implementing transformational leadership by school principals to improve school achievement. Various factors can affect the success of the implementation of this leadership style, such as the characteristics of the principal himself, the condition of the school environment, the characteristics of teachers and staff, and support from various parties related to the implementation of education. The quality of the work environment and the professionalism of teachers have been shown to have a real influence on supporting the effectiveness of the leadership style applied by the principal (Bashor et al., 2024). A lack of understanding of these factors makes it difficult for principals to determine the appropriate steps to implement transformational leadership effectively. This has the potential to cause a mismatch between the leadership style applied and the conditions in the school, so that the results achieved are not in accordance with expectations.

Research on transformational leadership of school principals to improve school achievement was conducted to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic. This research is expected to provide a clear picture of the characteristics and components of transformational leadership, as well as how this leadership style can be effectively applied by school principals to improve school achievement. The results of this research are also expected to be a reference for school principals to develop transformational leadership skills and apply them in an effort to improve the quality of education delivery and the achievements of the schools they lead. Understanding this will help school principals to face various challenges and changes that occur in the world of education.

Based on the description that has been submitted, the formulation of the problem in this study is how the implementation of transformational leadership by school principals can contribute to improving school achievement, as well as what factors affect the success of the implementation of transformational leadership. The purpose of this study is to examine the application of transformational leadership by school principals to improve school achievement, as well as analyze the factors that affect the success of the implementation of transformational leadership. This research also aims to identify the various benefits that can be obtained from the application of transformational leadership in the implementation of education, as well as to identify various obstacles that may arise in the process of its implementation. The results of this research are expected to contribute to the development of knowledge in the field of education management and leadership, as well as provide practical benefits for school principals in an effort to improve the achievements of the schools they lead.

METHODS

This study uses a literature study method that aims to collect, analyze, and synthesize various sources of information relevant to the topic of study to obtain a comprehensive and systematic understanding. This method was chosen because it allows researchers to review various previous studies that discuss transformational leadership, educational management, and school achievement. Through this method, researchers can identify various views, findings, and concepts that are developing regarding the role of transformational leadership to improve school achievement. This method is considered in accordance with the purpose of the research that wants to compile a summary and analysis of various studies that have been conducted previously to provide a clear picture of the phenomenon being studied.

The data sources in this study were obtained from various scientific literature that are directly related to the focus of the study. The literature used as a reference includes textbooks that discuss educational leadership, school management, and organizational development. In addition, scientific articles published in indexed academic journals are also used as primary sources. The researchers also drew on research reports from credible educational institutions, as well as other scientific publications that highlight transformational leadership and school achievements. All sources are selected taking into account the level of credibility and academic quality, so that the information obtained can be scientifically accounted for and used as a solid basis for analysis and synthesis (Hain, 2025).

Data analysis in this study was carried out using a thematic analysis approach. Information gathered from various literature is organized into main themes relevant to the focus of the research. The analysis stage begins with identifying the main idea of each source, then grouping them into appropriate categories, and finally compiling them into a systematic and structured description (Mayer, 2026). This approach allows researchers to compare and contrast different views, while compiling a comprehensive synthesis of the principal's transformational leadership role to improve school performance.

Maxwell and Miller's (2020) view affirms that thematic analysis helps researchers organize information logically and facilitates the process of identifying patterns that emerge from various literature. Meanwhile, Smith *et al.* (2019) emphasizes that this technique provides an opportunity for researchers to present a more in-depth and comprehensive explanation of the topic being studied. Thus, thematic analysis not only functions as a data grouping tool, but also strengthens the validity of research results through the presentation of a structured, critical, and consistent description with the purpose of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The ideal influence shown by the principal is a basic component in transformational leadership that plays a role in building trust and respect among all school citizens (Voelkel *et al.*, 2024). Principals who have an ideal influence will be good role models in acting, behaving, and making decisions, so that teachers and staff feel proud to follow the directions given. This honesty and responsibility are also an important foundation for carrying out ethical managerial practices in the school environment (Rojak & Darmawan, 2021). The consistent attitude of the principal will create a positive organizational climate, where every member of the organization feels safe and comfortable to contribute to the maximum. A harmonious work atmosphere can increase teachers' satisfaction in carrying out their duties (Putra & Sinambela, 2021; Irfan & Hariyani, 2022). The trust built will facilitate the process of cooperation between members of the organization and minimize the potential for conflicts that can interfere with the course of educational activities, which ultimately supports the creation of better school achievements.

The inspirational motivation provided by the principal plays an important role in arousing the enthusiasm and commitment of teachers and staff to achieve the goals that have been set (Nachshoni, 2024). Principals who implement this component will be able to communicate the school's vision and mission in an interesting and easy-to-understand way. Efforts to arouse this enthusiasm are crucial

because high work motivation is the main driver to improve performance in schools (Hariyani et al., 2016; Rahmawati & Darmawan, 2024). The principal will also provide encouragement and support to teachers and staff to develop their potential and strive to achieve better results. This kind of support helps teachers feel more confident so that they are able to show optimal work performance (Pramudya & Mardikaningsih, 2021; Darmawan, 2014). The encouragement given will foster confidence and intrinsic motivation in each member of the organization, so that they are willing to exert their energy and thoughts optimally for the progress of the school.

Intellectual stimulation carried out by school principals plays a role in encouraging teachers and administrative staff to be able to think creatively, innovatively, and critically to deal with various complex problems that arise in the implementation of education in schools (Amarta *et al.*, 2023). Principals who consistently apply the intellectual stimulation component in their leadership style will create an organizational environment that allows each member of the organization, both teachers and staff, to put forward new ideas, opinions, and ideas that can be used as considerations in an effort to improve the quality of the learning process and overall school management. This environment that is open to new ideas will encourage teachers and staff to not just accept existing procedures, but to actively question whether they are still relevant and efficient to achieve educational goals. The principal will also encourage teachers and staff to continuously develop themselves through various activities such as reading professional literature, attending trainings, or participating in scientific discussion forums, so that they can find better solutions to various challenges faced in their daily work. Intellectual stimulation provided on an ongoing basis will create a culture of continuous learning in the school environment, where each member of the organization is not satisfied with existing achievements, but continues to strive to improve their abilities and performance. This culture of continuous learning is very important because challenges in the world of education continue to evolve along with social, technological, and government policy changes, so schools need an adaptive organization and are able to learn collectively to remain relevant and effective to carry out educational missions.

The individualized consideration shown by the principal plays a role in meeting the diverse needs and developing the potential that each teacher and staff has personally, not just treating all members of the organization uniformly without regard to individual differences (Pei & Bao, 2020). Principals who apply the individualized consideration component in their leadership practice will pay special attention to the personal and professional condition of each member of the organization, including their educational background, work experience, strengths, weaknesses that need to be improved, and each individual's career aspirations. The principal will also provide support and assistance tailored to the specific needs of each teacher and staff, for example by providing different training programs for novice and senior teachers, or providing intensive mentoring to staff who are having difficulty operating a technology-based administration system. In addition, the principal will provide equal opportunities to every teacher and staff to develop their career and abilities, without discrimination based on irrelevant factors such as age, gender, or socioeconomic background. The principal will also provide regular constructive feedback to each teacher and staff, not only in the form of end-of-year assessments, but also in informal conversations after learning observations or after completing a specific assignment. This constructive feedback will help each member of the organization to identify areas that need improvement and formulate concrete steps to improve and develop themselves. According to Bush (2011), the individual consideration given by the leader to each member of the organization will create a sense of appreciation and recognition in every teacher and staff. This sense of being valued and recognized is an important psychological need, and when this need is met, each member of the organization will have a higher internal motivation to improve performance and the contribution made to the school.

The application of transformational leadership by school principals also contributes significantly to improving the quality of the learning process carried out in schools, as school principals act as catalysts that encourage positive change at the grade level (Siregar, 2024). Principals who apply a transformational leadership style will actively encourage teachers to develop a variety of learning

methods and strategies that are innovative and appropriate to the needs of diverse students, including students with different learning styles, students with special needs, or students from different sociocultural backgrounds. The principal will also provide the support and facilities needed by teachers to carry out the learning process well, for example by allocating a budget for the purchase of teaching aids, providing access to educational software, or arranging a schedule that allows teachers to have enough time to plan quality learning. In addition to providing material support, the principal will also provide opportunities for teachers to actively participate in various professional development activities, such as workshops, seminars, or advanced study programs, so that teachers can continue to update their pedagogical knowledge and subject content. This support and opportunity provided by the principal will increase the confidence of teachers to try new approaches in the classroom, because they know that the principal will not punish failure but will support the learning process from experience. According to Leithwood and Sun (2012), transformational leadership implemented by school principals will create an organizational environment that supports continuous improvement in the learning process. This enabling environment of continuous improvement is critical because improving the quality of learning is not a one-time event, but rather an ongoing process that requires long-term commitment from all components of the school. Ultimately, an environment that supports continuous improvement will improve student learning outcomes and overall school achievement, as each student receives a better learning experience over time.

Improving teacher performance is one of the important impacts that can be empirically observed from the implementation of transformational leadership by school principals in the education unit environment (Utami et al., 2024). Principals who consistently apply a transformational leadership style will be able to motivate teachers to work better and voluntarily improve their performance, without the need for strict supervision or the threat of repressive sanctions. The principal will also provide the support and assistance needed by teachers to carry out their professional duties, both in the form of emotional support such as listening to complaints and providing encouragement, and in the form of instrumental support such as providing the necessary resources for teaching activities. In addition to providing motivation and support, the principal will also create a fair and transparent performance appraisal system, where the assessment criteria are clearly prepared and socialized to all teachers before the assessment process begins, so that there is no room for subjective or discriminatory practice practices. The principal will also provide awards and recognitions in accordance with the level of performance shown by the teacher, for example in the form of public praise in school meetings, the awarding of certificates of appreciation, or the opportunity to represent the school in activities at the district or provincial level. These awards and recognitions do not always have to be material, but what is more important is that they are given in a timely manner and specifically refer to positive behaviors or work results, so that teachers clearly understand what behaviors are valued by the school. According to Hallinger (2018), transformational leadership applied by school principals will create organizational conditions that allow teachers to develop their abilities and performance optimally. The organizational conditions that support this optimal development include aspects of a positive work climate, respectful interpersonal relationships, and a management system that is oriented towards professional growth, not just adherence to rules. In the end, when teachers can develop their abilities and performance optimally, their contribution to improving school achievement will be greater, because teachers are the most important factor that affects the quality of learning in the classroom.

The implementation of transformational leadership by school principals also contributes to increased student involvement in the learning process (Angwaomaodoko, 2025). Principals who apply this leadership style will create an environment that supports good interaction between teachers and students. A religious and exemplary school environment also plays an important role in shaping students' character and discipline (Darmawan & Mahbubah, 2026; Darmawan & Pernaningtik, 2026). The principal will also provide the support and facilities needed by students to develop their potential and achieve optimal learning outcomes. Through proper education, students are expected to have good social skills to interact in their environment (Gani, 2025; Hariani et al., 2021). According to the view of

Day and Sammons (2013), transformational leadership implemented by principals will create an environment that supports the overall development of students, which will ultimately improve student achievement and overall school achievement.

The application of transformational leadership by school principals also contributes to improving the quality of resource management owned by schools (Wulandari, 2022). Principals who apply this leadership style will be able to manage various resources, both human, financial, and financial, in an effective and efficient way. Good management includes paying attention to workload and workplace conditions so that all parties feel comfortable at work (Darmawan et al., 2021; Mardikaningsih, 2023). School principals will also be able to make optimal use of various resources to support the achievement of educational goals. One of the keys to success in improving the quality of education is the accuracy of the leadership strategies used (Ismaya et al., 2023). Good resource management will facilitate the implementation of various educational activities carried out in schools and support the creation of better school achievements.

Increasing parental and community involvement in the delivery of education is also an important impact of the implementation of transformational leadership by school principals (Reid, 2023). Principals who apply this leadership style will be able to build good relationships with students' parents and the surrounding community. This collaboration is very important to create positive behavior change in society through education (Gautama & Mardikaningsih, 2022). The principal will also be able to communicate school policies clearly, so that the public understands the school's efforts to improve the quality of education. This helps to overcome various barriers to access to education that often occur in developing countries (Rojak & Khayru, 2022). Good parental and community involvement will provide significant support for the school's progress and improved achievements. In addition, active community participation is also a way to build a better future (Warin, 2022).

The application of transformational leadership by principals also contributes to improving the school's ability to cope with various changes and challenges (Nordin et al., 2023). To deal with cultural differences in diverse organizational environments, leaders need to implement a way of communicating that embraces all parties (Sajjapong et al., 2025). Principals who apply this leadership style will be able to create a flexible and adaptive environment. School principals are required to use a leadership style that suits the situation so that team performance is maintained (Gardi et al., 2024). The school's ability to deal with changes and challenges that occur will allow the school to continue to develop and improve the achievements achieved along with the times. Readiness to adapt is needed by educators to remain resilient to carry out their professional duties (Liwak et al., 2023).

The success of the implementation of transformational leadership is influenced by the ability of the principal to develop good relationships with all school residents (Utami et al., 2024). This strong relationship will trigger the emergence of loyalty and high commitment from staff and teachers (Hariyani & Irfan, 2022; Rojak, 2024a). School principals who are able to build good relationships with various parties will get broad support to implement school programs. This support greatly affects the job satisfaction and performance of teachers in schools (Irfan et al., 2023; Saputra & Darmawan, 2023). Good relationships will also facilitate the process of communication and cooperation, so that various problems that arise can be solved properly without interfering with the course of educational activities.

The vision and mission developed by the principal must be adjusted to the needs and conditions of the school, and be able to provide a clear direction for all school residents. The use of digital technology can also help schools to create a culture of innovation and creativity (Rojak, 2025). A clear and attractive vision will be a strong foundation for all efforts made by schools to improve the quality of educational delivery. In addition, the integration of modern science in the education system can also strengthen students' beliefs and understanding (Samsiroh et al., 2024). This shows that the school's vision must include technological developments as well as strengthening basic values.

The availability of adequate support and resources also affects the successful implementation of transformational leadership (Menon, 2024). The availability of facilities and a supportive work environment is very important to keep teachers' morale stable (Musthofa & Darmawan, 2024).

Adequate support will make it easier for school principals to implement the various components of transformational leadership well and achieve optimal results. Other factors such as fair policies also play a role in determining the level of job satisfaction and commitment (Sahid & Darmawan, 2024). The availability of adequate support will create conditions that allow all school residents to make a significant contribution to the school's progress.

The ability of school principals to develop leadership skills is also a determining factor (Hakim & Rizal, 2025). Good leaders are those who are able to provide guidance and direction in a structured manner to their colleagues (Rojak, 2024b). Principals need to have the ability to communicate vision, motivate, and provide support that suits each individual's needs. This can be done by applying leadership that serves to build a positive mentality in the work environment (Hariani & Wardoyo, 2024; Hariani & Mardikaningsih, 2026). Adequate abilities and skills will make it easier for the principal to achieve optimal results. This effort also includes paying attention to mental health aspects in organizational culture so that human resource performance is increasing (Rojak et al., 2025).

The sustainable implementation of transformational leadership will have a significant impact on improving school achievement (Kelvin, 2023). The application of innovation in education and the improvement of teacher professionalism are concrete steps that must be taken continuously (Sinambela et al., 2014). Sustainable implementation will allow positive changes in various aspects of education delivery. The final result will be seen in improving teachers' teaching skills and learning achievements achieved by students (Romli & Darmawan, 2025). This success also supports the creation of environmentally friendly management and effective digital communication in the modern era (Hariani et al., 2025). The successful implementation of transformational leadership will also provide long-term benefits for school development and the quality of education held in schools.

CONCLUSION

Transformational leadership implemented by school principals has a very important role to improve school achievement. The application of this leadership style through the components of ideal influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individual consideration will create an environment that supports the improvement of teacher performance, the quality of the learning process, student involvement, and the involvement of parents and the community. The successful implementation of transformational leadership is influenced by a variety of factors, such as the principal's ability to build good relationships, develop a clear vision and mission, the availability of adequate support and resources, and the principal's ability to develop the skills needed. Proper and sustainable implementation will have a significant impact on improving school achievement.

The results of this study provide implications for school principals to develop transformational leadership skills as part of the professional competencies that must be possessed. School principals need to understand the various components of transformational leadership and apply them in an integrated manner in an effort to improve school performance. For educational institutions and authorized agencies, the results of this study provide implications for developing training and development programs that can improve the transformational leadership skills of school principals. The implementation of good transformational leadership will have a positive impact on the quality of education held in schools and the progress of education as a whole.

The next research can conduct an empirical study to measure the effect of the application of transformational leadership by school principals on improving school achievement in various types and different levels of education. The study can identify the most influential components of transformational leadership and the factors that influence the success of its implementation. Research can also develop transformational leadership models that suit the conditions and needs of schools in different environments, so that they can be used as a reference for school principals to implement this leadership style effectively.

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