

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS TO IMPROVE THE PROFESSIONALISM OF EDUCATORS

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Abstract:

This study aims to describe the influence of the principal's transformational leadership in improving the professionalism of educators in the school environment. The main focus of this study is how the principal, through moral exemplars, individual attention, and inspirational motivation, is able to create positive changes in educators attitudes and performance. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation of the principal and educators at MTs Al-Amiriyyah. The collected data were analyzed through the process of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions thematically. The results of the study indicate that principals who implement transformational leadership are able to provide a significant influence on improving educators professionalism. The principal's example of discipline and integrity are real examples for educators, individual attention given through training support and further study increases educators self-confidence, and the inspirational motivation given is able to raise the work spirit and commitment of educators to their profession. Thus, transformational leadership not only shapes the professionalism of educators individually, but also creates a positive work culture and supports sustainable development in schools. The practical implications of these findings suggest that school leadership training programs should integrate transformational leadership components, emphasizing moral modeling, personalized professional development, and motivational strategies. In addition, educational policies should support school leaders in adopting transformational practices as a strategic approach to improving instructional quality and fostering long-term institutional growth.

KATA KUNCI

Kepemimpinan
Transformasional,
Kepala Sekolah,
Profesionalisme
Pendidik.

Abstrak:

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan pengaruh kepemimpinan transformasional kepala sekolah terhadap peningkatan profesionalitas tenaga pendidik di lingkungan sekolah. Fokus utama dalam penelitian ini adalah bagaimana kepala sekolah, melalui keteladanan moral, perhatian individual, dan motivasi inspiratif, mampu menciptakan perubahan positif dalam sikap dan kinerja tenaga pendidik. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus. Teknik pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan dokumentasi terhadap kepala sekolah dan tenaga pendidik di MTs Al-Amiriyyah. Data yang terkumpul dianalisis melalui proses reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan secara tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kepala sekolah yang menerapkan kepemimpinan transformasional mampu memberikan pengaruh signifikan terhadap peningkatan profesionalitas tenaga pendidik. Keteladanan kepala sekolah dalam disiplin dan integritas menjadi contoh nyata bagi tenaga

pendidik, perhatian individual yang diberikan melalui dukungan pelatihan dan studi lanjut meningkatkan kepercayaan diri tenaga pendidik, serta motivasi inspiratif yang diberikan mampu membangkitkan semangat kerja dan komitmen tenaga pendidik terhadap profesinya. Dengan demikian, kepemimpinan transformasional tidak hanya membentuk profesionalitas tenaga pendidik secara individual, tetapi juga menciptakan budaya kerja yang positif dan mendukung pengembangan berkelanjutan di sekolah. Implikasi praktis dari temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa program pelatihan kepemimpinan sekolah harus mengintegrasikan komponen kepemimpinan transformasional, dengan menekankan pemodelan moral, pengembangan profesional yang dipersonalisasi, dan strategi motivasi. Selain itu, kebijakan pendidikan harus mendukung para pemimpin sekolah dalam mengadopsi praktik transformasional sebagai pendekatan strategis untuk meningkatkan kualitas pengajaran dan mendorong pertumbuhan kelembagaan jangka panjang.

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INTRODUCTION

Education has role important in life man so that become very important thing in develop a life. Elementary education (Ibtidaiyah) becomes personal independent in a way individual; Secondary education (tsanawiyah) becomes personal independent in a way group small; Education level intermediate above (aliyah) becomes personal independent in a way group more broad; and higher education (aly) becomes personal total adult (muttaqin) who continues perfected towards and become priest (Musnandar et al., 2024; Tharaba, 2019). In accordance with objective education national in Indonesia which is stated in paragraph 4 of the 1945 Constitution, namely "Enlightening the life nation and participate as well as in realize world order." This goal is also explained more carry on in Republic of Indonesia Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning National Education System: "National Education functions develop ability and form character as well as civilization a dignified nation in frame to make smart life nation, aims For development potential participant educate to become a man of faith and piety to God Almighty, have morals noble, healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent and become democratic citizen as well as responsible answer" (Afifah & Gunarso, 2018).

For create quality schools, leadership school must play a role as agent changes that become role model for its members as well as own vision and mission term long For push progress and achievement performance school. As head school, you have role important in take decisions. Many studies has show that during change fast environment, inability head school For lead in a way effective is one of reason main decline performance academic students and quality graduate of they. As leader school, principal school own role important in increase quality students to have Spirit competitive and ability For compete with global (Simanjuntak, Hadijaya, & Neliwati, 2024), (Putra et al., 2024).

Education plays a crucial role in human life, shaping individuals at different levels, from elementary to higher education. Leader education, especially Head school responsible answer For formulate and convey vision as well as clear mission, manage source Power with effective, and create atmosphere safe and inclusive learning.

In the Al-Quran surah Al-Ahzab verse 21:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا ﴿٢١﴾

Meaning : " *Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah there is truly There is queen good role model for you, (namely) for those who hope for (the mercy of) Allah and (the coming of) the Last Day. Apocalypse and many more remembering Allah*". (Al-Ahzab: 21).

From the verse mentioned, it is clear that the Messenger of Allah as prominent Islamic figures is example example for all over people. Leadership transformational focus on giving motivation, encouragement, and direction his subordinates to carry out task without existence coercion. Responsibility the answer given can implemented in a way natural, while Motivate subordinate be one of role main a leader. A leader No only need understand method build motivation in a way general, but also must be capable guide teachers in understand and apply strategies for grow motivation the.

Professionalism in education refers to the level skills, competencies and attitudes possessed by teachers and leaders institution education, as well as staff education other in operate duties and responsibilities answer they. Professionalism This covers understanding deep about field education, skills effective teaching, as well as attitude that reflects dedication and ethics Work tall in support the learning and development process students. In addition, professionalism in education also involves development self in a way sustainable, such as follow training, workshops, or education advanced For renew knowledge and skills. More far, professionalism reflect will For collaborate, innovate, and implement principles appropriate education with development of the times (Ismunandar & Kurnia, 2023), (Firnando, 2023).

Anny Syukriya, 2022, Leadership Transformational Female Principals in Improving the Quality of Learning (Case Study at Muhammadiyah 4 Elementary School, Malang City). Research Results to reveal that leadership transformational head school girls at Mupat Elementary School, Malang City in increase quality learning reflected in four character main . First, *idealized religious influence*, which is realized through implementation religious and spiritual moral standards. Second, *idealized influence*, which is shown with leadership through exemplary and giving example real . Third, *inspirational motivation*, which is visible in Spirit Study the high as well as effort motivating educators For prioritize Work The same team and togetherness. Fourth, *intellectual stimulation*, which encourages teachers to play a role active in the process of change. Finally, *individualized consideration*, which is applied through approach culture with give support to ideas and suggestions from teachers.

The uniqueness and innovation of this study lies in the integrative approach used, namely by combining Islamic spiritual values, principles of transformational leadership, and the context of professionalism of educators as an effort to improve the quality of education. Unlike previous studies that generally focused on the managerial or administrative aspects of principal leadership, this study offers a more holistic perspective. Principals are positioned not only as managers, but also

as moral and inspirational leaders who are able to be spiritual and intellectual role models for teachers. The concept of transformational leadership in this study not only refers to the four main dimensions according to Bass and Avolio namely idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration but is also enriched with the exemplary values of the Prophet Muhammad SAW as explained in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Ahzab verse 21. This verse emphasizes the importance of morals, integrity, and spirituality as the main foundations of leadership. Thus, this study presents a new contribution by integrating religious values into modern leadership practices to shape teacher professionalism as a whole.

main purpose from study This is For analyze and describe How implementation leadership transformational head school can increase professionalism power educators in the environment school. This purpose leave from fact that quality education is highly dependent on the quality and professionalism of educators as the spearhead in the learning process teaching. In the context of modern education, teachers are required No only own competence academic, but also must capable adapt with developments over time, taking advantage technology, as well as apply approach innovative and participant - centered learning educate. For reach matter this, is needed leader school that does not only operate function administrative, but also capable build culture positive work, empowering teachers, and fostering Spirit continuous learning .

RESEARCH METHODS

Study This use approach qualitative with type study studies case, because aiming For dig in a way in-depth process and form implementation leadership transformational head school in increase professionalism power educator. Approach qualitative selected so that researchers can understand in a way holistic dynamics connection between head school as leader transformational and teachers as power educators, including values, meanings, and perceptions that are built in interaction This study implemented in one of the school base or middle that has known apply style leadership transformational in a way consistent, so that can become representative location in answer focus study (Khaerul et al., 2022; Mikraj et al., 2025; Tharaba & Wahyudin, 2024), .

Data collection techniques in study This use method observation participatory, interview in-depth, and documentation. Observation done For see direct How practice leadership head school applied in activity everyday at school, such as in teacher meeting, supervision class, and interaction social others. In-depth interviews were conducted with the principal, teachers numbering between 4 to 6 people with a composition of men and women, and support staff consisting of 2 to 3 people, both men and women, aged between 25 to 50 years and whose main duties include administration, finance, and management of facilities and infrastructure. These interviews were conducted to obtain subjective information about their experiences, views, and perceptions of the leadership style applied and its impact

on improving teacher professionalism. Documentation used as supporting data, including document planning school, report activity teacher development, as well as notes supervision and training that has been implemented (Khana et al., 2023), (Fandi et al., 2024).

Data analysis was performed with using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which includes three stages Main: data reduction, data presentation, and data extraction conclusion/verification. Data obtained from various source will analyzed in a way thematic For find patterns, relationships, and implications from leadership transformational to development teacher professionalism. The thematic analysis procedure in this study was carried out through several stages, starting from data transcription, verbatim interviews, then continued by reading and understanding the contents of the data in its entirety. Furthermore, the researcher carried out a coding process to mark important parts related to teacher leadership and professionalism. Similar codes were then combined into initial themes, which were then reviewed and refined to suit the research context. Each theme was given a clear name and definition, then compiled in an analysis report that was equipped with direct quotes from participants and interpreted based on transformational leadership theory. Data validity is maintained through technique triangulation sources and methods, so that results study can accountable in a way academic. With approach this, it is expected study can produce comprehensive and in - depth picture about How head school as leader transformational capable build professionalism power educator in context real in the field (Novita Barokah, 2025), (Rachmawati et al., 2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Head school as moral and professional role model for teachers

One of problem fundamental in effort improvement professionalism power educator is weakness exemplary from leader school in operate role strategically. Many teachers experience stagnation in development self No Because lack of training, but Because lack of inspiration and moral encouragement from superior directly, namely head school. In the context of this, leadership transformational become very relevant Because No only demand ability managerial, but also the ability give example in a way real. Head capable school show discipline, integrity, and commitment tall in operate task daily proven can influence teacher behavior in general positive. Teachers tend to copy what they see, no only what is ordered. Therefore that 's important For highlight How exemplary head school can become trigger change culture work at school.

Interview with one of the teachers at Mts Al- Amiriyyah strengthen findings This . A teacher stated,

"I personally feel very motivated Because head our school always come more Morning from other teachers, even often times already was in the teacher's room before at 06.30. That was give I Spirit For No late and more discipline, because he No only ordered, but give example directly." (Interview with the Teacher of Mts Al- Amiriyyah , March 15, 2025).

From the results interview this, can concluded that exemplary head school own impact real to teacher behavior in matter discipline and responsibility answer work. Teachers feel pushed For adapt self with standard ethics work that is No direct formed by the head school through his attitude and actions. Exemplary like this, if done in a way consistent, no only to form teacher professionalism in general individual, but also creates culture Work positive in the environment school in a way overall.

Leadership transformational head school No only own influence on aspects structural or administrative, but also plays a role role important in to form attitudes, values, and behavior teacher professionalism. Exemplary head school in show discipline, integrity and responsibility answer become a real model that is psychological influence teachers to behave similar (Efendi et al., 2023). When the leader capable give concrete example in operate his duties, the teacher feels own clear reference in to uphold ethics work and professionalism. This is support draft *social learning theory* put forward by Albert Bandura (1986), who stated that man Study through observation, imitation, and modeling to the behavior of others that is considered as figure important. In the context of school, principal school become *role models* that are observed and emulated by teachers, not Because authority formally, but Because his moral influence and exemplary behavior (Hanik & Mutmainah, 2020).

Individual attention to the head school to development professional teacher

Challenge main in increase professionalism power educator is lack of attention to individual needs of each teacher. In practice, many policy improvement quality of teachers that is uniform and not consider difference background background, competence, and the potential of each individual. In fact, teachers as human being learner own different needs in development career and advancement capacity self. Findings This underline importance dimensions *individualized consideration* in leadership transformational, where the head school show personal concern for teachers through a humanistic and participatory approach. Head capable school understand teacher's strengths and weaknesses, then provide access to training, workshops and studies carry on in a way planned, proven capable increase confidence self as well as performance professional teacher.

Research result show that head school No only become leader administrative, but also plays a role as facilitator development teacher career. This is looks in form support concrete like give permission studies further, recommend teachers to follow the training program in accordance his field, until provide time special For discussion development competence. For strengthen findings this, the following is teacher participation data table in activity development professionals facilitated by the head school during One year final:

Table 1 activities development teacher professionalism

| No | Type of activity | Number of Teachers Involved | Percentage (%) |
|----|--|-----------------------------|----------------|
| 1 | Development Workshop Curriculum | 18 | 75% |
| 2 | Digital Learning Training | 15 | 62.5% |
| 3 | Further Studies (Masters or Certification) | 5 | 20.8% |
| 4 | Discussion Group Focused (FGD) | 20 | 83.3% |
| 5 | Mentoring Supervision Individual | 12 | 50% |

data from Mts Al- Amiriyyah

Based on data collected from MTs Al-Amiriyyah, teacher professional development activities include five main types. The activity with the highest level of participation is the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) which was attended by 20 teachers or around 83.3% of the total teachers. The vortex development workshop was in second place, involving 18 teachers (75%). Furthermore, digital learning training was attended by 15 teachers or equivalent to 62.5%. Individual supervision or mentoring activities showed a participation of 50%, with 12 teachers involved. Meanwhile, advanced studies such as master's programs or certification were attended by 5 teachers or 20.8%, becoming the activity with the lowest participation. These data show that collaborative and practical-based activities are more in demand than formal and individual activities. The data above also shows that the principal provides real space and support for increasing teacher capacity. This individual attention creates a supportive work climate and encourages teachers to continue to develop. As a result, teachers become more confident, competent, and professional in carrying out their duties.

The principal's individual attention to teacher professional development is a key element in building the professionalism of educators in a sustainable manner. An approach that humanizes teachers as individuals with unique potential and needs has a significant impact, both psychologically and professionally. The principal's support in the form of facilitation training, continuous learning, and personal mentoring provides a sense of appreciation to teachers and builds an inclusive and participatory work climate. As a result, teachers are more motivated, confident, and encouraged to continue to improve their capacity (Suparman et al., 2020). This finding is in line with the transformational leadership theory developed by Bass and Avolio (1994), especially in the individualized Consideration dimension, which refers to the leader's attention and support for the personal development of his subordinates. The principal as a transformational leader is required to recognize individual differences, support their development needs, and provide space for the potential of each teacher to grow. In addition, the authentic leadership theory, developed by Avolio and Gardner (2005), emphasizes leaders who are open, honest, and able to build authentic relationships with their subordinates. Authentic leadership focuses on the leader's self-awareness, transparency, and trust that form a strong relationship between leaders and followers (Gary Yulk, 2010; Kurniana, 2020; Rakhma et al., 2022). In the context of education, principals who implement

authentic leadership will pay attention to the personal and professional needs of individual teachers, so that they feel valued, accepted, and encouraged to grow. This is in line with the finding that the principal's personal support can increase teacher motivation and self-confidence. Bass (1999) stated that a leader's personal attention to his team members can create stronger relationships, increase loyalty, and significantly accelerate the improvement of professional competence (PURE, 2021).

Motivation teacher intrinsic increases through approach inspiring

Aspect important in leadership transformational is ability head school For give motivation intrinsic to the teachers. In context this, motivation intrinsic refers to the urge from in teacher self for Work with full passion and dedication without existence pressure external. Head capable school give inspiration and spirit through approach emotional can build trust teacher self, make they feel appreciated, and encouraged they For Keep going develop potential personal and professional. Leadership that prioritizes motivation intrinsic this can also increase sense of ownership to task as well as teacher commitment to quality teaching and learning in schools. Through inspiring leader, teacher will feel more involved in vision and mission school, which in turn strengthen performance they.

Interview results with one of the teachers demonstrating influence real from motivation inspiration given by the head school. A teacher at the school under study speak about How head his school capable give encouragement emotional that makes it feel more motivated in operate assignment. The teacher say,

" Head school always reminds us that teach No only about give science, but about to form character students. When he speak about importance our work, i feel very appreciated. It's motivating. I For more strive and grow as educators " (Interview with the Teacher of Mts Al- Amiriyyah, March 18, 2025).

From the interview this, can seen that motivation given head school through approach emotional and inspiring can to awaken teacher's enthusiasm for more committed to his/her task. This is leading to improvement more initiative and effort big from the teacher in increase quality the learning they do give to students. Capable leadership inspire and motivate internally clear own impact significant positive to professionalism power educator.

Motivation given head school through approach emotional and inspiring No only functioning For increase Spirit teacher work, but also encouraging they For more committed to duties and responsibilities answer professionalism (Aulia Gusli, 2024). The role of work motivation is one of the driving factors to produce optimal performance. The principal should think about efforts to motivate teachers well in order to improve teacher performance. Therefore, work motivation has an important role to be carried out to control teacher performance in high school continuously (Pratama et al., 2024). When the teacher feels appreciated and given personal and emotional impulses, things the strengthen the sense of ownership they to profession they. This can seen from improvement initiative in work and desire For try more hard in create experience more learning Good for students. Motivation

intrinsic source from feeling appreciated and understood this also becomes booster main for teachers to Keep going develop self they through various chance training and development competence others. Relevant theories with findings This is *Self-Determination Theory* (SDT) was put forward by Deci and Ryan (1985). SDT states that that motivation intrinsic develop when individual feel own control on his actions, fulfilled with a sense of competence and connectedness social. In terms of this, head school that shows attention personal and giving encouragement emotional to the teacher, allowing they For feel more connected with work they, feel competent in teach, and feel valued as part from community school (Wadi & Mukminin, 2024). This is in line with draft *transformational leadership* developed by Bass and Avolio (1994), where leaders motivate in a way emotional and inspiring can increase sense of responsibility responsibility and commitment his followers to objective organization. In the context of this, head capable school give motivation intrinsic speed up the development process professional teachers and increase quality teaching in school (HIDAYAH et al., 2014; Nur et al., 2024; Rizki et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

Based on research findings at MTs Al-Amiriyyah, the principal's transformational leadership has been proven to provide a real contribution to the continuous improvement of teacher professionalism. Three key elements found in this school context include the principal's moral example, individual attention to teacher professional development, and the provision of intrinsic motivation. The principal's example reflected in discipline, integrity, and commitment to tasks has shaped positive teacher behavior, especially in fostering an independent and professional work ethic. In addition, the principal's personal attention manifested through facilitation of training, workshops, and other learning opportunities has been proven to be able to increase teacher capacity and self-confidence. A principal who recognizes the potential and needs of each teacher creates a supportive and inclusive work atmosphere. On the other hand, an inspirational leadership approach also provides intrinsic motivation that makes teachers more enthusiastic, feels ownership of the school's mission, and is encouraged to continue to improve the quality of learning. Thus, the transformational leadership style applied by the principal at MTs Al-Amiriyyah not only has an impact on administrative aspects, but also significantly affects the psychological and professional development of teachers. The role of the principal as a transformational leader is a key factor in building a work culture that supports improving the quality of education in the school environment.

There are several recommendations that can be followed up to strengthen the role of the principal as a transformational leader in improving teacher professionalism. First, schools need to provide regular training for principals that focus on strengthening transformational leadership competencies, especially in aspects of moral exemplars, individual attention, and inspirational motivation. Second, the education office recommends developing a professional development

program for principals that is integrated with teacher training efforts, so that principals not only carry out administrative roles, but also become the main facilitators in developing teacher capacity. This study has several limitations that need to be considered.

First, this study was only conducted in one educational institution, namely MTs Al-Amiriyyah, so the results cannot necessarily be generalized to other schools with different social, cultural, and managerial conditions. Second, the qualitative approach used is highly dependent on the subjectivity of informants and the interpretation of researchers, so that the possibility of perception bias cannot be completely avoided. Third, the focus of the study, which is limited to the transformational leadership of principals, has not fully explored the influence of other external factors, such as national education policies, the role of school supervisors, or community support that can also influence the development of teacher professionalism. Therefore, the findings of this study should be processed in a limited context and become the basis for broader and more in-depth further studies.

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