

## THE PAK BUDI CONCEPT IN TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP OF MADRASAH PRINCIPALS TO IMPROVE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

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### Abstract:

This study aims to explore and analyze the transformational leadership of the principal at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri (MIN) 2 Malang City, which is formulated through the PAK BUDI concept (Perhatikan, Apresiasi, Komunikasi, Berintegritas, Update/Publikasi, Dekati wali siswa, dan Inspiratif) and its impact on improving student achievement. The study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through observations, in-depth interviews with the principal, teachers, and students, as well as documentation studies of school programs, activity reports, and student achievement records. Data validity was ensured through triangulation of sources and techniques. Data analysis followed an interactive model consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The results indicate that PAK BUDI represents the practical implementation of transformational leadership, reflected in personal attention to school members, consistent appreciation, open two-way communication, integrity through transparent and accountable services, publication of achievements as a form of public accountability, strengthened partnerships with parents, and an inspiring role modeling by the principal. These practices contributed to increased student discipline and learning motivation, stronger academic programs, systematic monitoring of learning progress, and improved non-academic achievement through competitions and extracurricular activities. In addition, a culture of achievement and a strong sense of school belonging involving teachers, students, and parents were established. The findings confirm that context-based and humane transformational leadership can serve as an effective driver for improving student achievement at the primary education level.

### Abstrak:

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi dan menganalisis kepemimpinan transformasional kepala Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri (MIN) 2 Kota Malang diimplementasikan melalui konsep PAK BUDI (Perhatikan, Apresiasi, Komunikasi, Berintegritas, Update/Publikasi, Dekati wali siswa, dan Inspiratif) serta dampaknya pada peningkatan prestasi peserta didik. Pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis studi kasus menjadi metode penelitian. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam dengan kepala madrasah, guru, dan siswa, serta studi dokumentasi (program kerja, laporan kegiatan,). Keabsahan data dijaga melalui triangulasi sumber dan teknik. Analisis data dilakukan dengan model interaktif meliputi kondensasi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa konsep PAK BUDI merupakan operasionalisasi kepemimpinan transformasional yang tampak pada perhatian personal kepada warga madrasah, apresiasi yang konsisten, komunikasi terbuka dua arah, keteladanan integritas dan layanan yang transparan, publikasi capaian sebagai bentuk akuntabilitas, penguatan kemitraan dengan wali murid, serta keteladanan yang inspiratif. Implementasi tersebut berdampak*

*pada meningkatnya disiplin dan motivasi belajar siswa, penguatan program akademik dan pemantauan kemajuan belajar, serta meningkatnya prestasi non-akademik melalui ekosistem lomba dan ekstrakurikuler. Selain itu, terbentuk budaya berprestasi dan rasa memiliki madrasah yang melibatkan guru, siswa, dan orang tua. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa kepemimpinan transformasional yang diramu secara kontekstual dan humanis dapat menjadi pengungkit peningkatan prestasi peserta didik pada jenjang pendidikan dasar.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Over the past decade, various national reports have shown that increased access to basic education in Indonesia has not always been accompanied by significant improvements in the quality of student learning outcomes (Dusalan, 2025; Dwi Ratnawati et al., 2024). This phenomenon indicates a gap between institutional expansion and the effectiveness of educational leadership at the school level. Moreover, several recent studies emphasize that managerial factors alone are insufficient to explain variations in students' academic and non-academic achievements; the quality of school leadership has become a determining variable that is often overlooked in educational policy practices (Al-Tameemi et al., 2023; El Jihaoui et al., 2025; Setiawan et al., 2020).

Furthermore, realities in the field reveal that many madrasah principals remain trapped in administrative-bureaucratic roles, causing their leadership energy to be absorbed more by reporting and technical management aspects rather than by cultivating a learning culture and achievement motivation. In fact, within the context of 21st-century education—marked by social complexity, digital literacy demands, and the need for character strengthening—madrasah principals are required to transform into change agents capable of inspiring, empowering, and building a collaborative learning ecosystem.

Transformational leadership has become one of the most widely recommended paradigms in global educational management literature. This model emphasizes four main dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Numerous studies indicate that transformational leadership positively correlates with improved teacher performance, a conducive school climate, and enhanced student learning outcomes (Alzoraiki et al., 2024; Sliwka et al., 2024; Wahyudin et al., 2024). However, most studies still position transformational leadership at a normative conceptual level or limit its influence to teacher performance and organizational culture, without specifically linking it to improvements in student achievement as the primary outcome of Islamic basic education. Recent research shows that transformational leadership significantly influences teacher professionalism through moral role modeling, individualized attention, and inspirational motivation (Umam & Nadir, 2025). In the context of modern education,

the transformational approach has proven effective in increasing teacher engagement, encouraging instructional creativity, and fostering a positive and adaptive school culture (Riyadi, 2023).

In Indonesia, the issue of transformational leadership has become increasingly relevant alongside the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar (Freedom to Learn) policy, which demands more humanistic, collaborative, and student-centered school leadership. Madrasah principals are expected not only to manage curriculum and administration but also to build emotional connections, establish effective communication, and create synergy with parents and the community. Research by Daulay and Pulungan (2024) indicates that transformational leadership is the dominant factor in the effectiveness of Islamic education management, contributing 38%, surpassing curriculum and infrastructure factors.

Nevertheless, most previous studies have focused on transformational leadership in relation to teacher performance, organizational culture, or institutional management effectiveness. Helmina et al. (2022), for example, assert that principal leadership style significantly affects teacher performance in vocational high schools. Muzakki et al. (2020) highlight the formation of transformational leadership culture in Islamic educational institutions, while Wahrudin and Maunah (2023) examine transformational leadership in pesantren contexts with a focus on strengthening organizational culture. However, these studies have not specifically linked transformational leadership of madrasah principals to improvements in student achievement as the primary output of education.

This research gap indicates the need for more contextual and applicative studies, particularly at the madrasah ibtidaiyah (Islamic elementary school) level. At the basic education stage, the role of the madrasah principal is highly crucial as it directly influences character formation, learning motivation, and the foundation of students' academic and non-academic achievements. Therefore, a leadership model is required that is not only managerially effective but also humanistic, communicative, and grounded in religious values.

Unlike previous studies, this article positions transformational leadership not merely as a theoretical construct but as a concrete practice integrated with local and religious values through what is referred to as the PAK BUDI Effect. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on analyzing the direct relationship between the transformational leadership of madrasah principals and the improvement of students' academic and non-academic achievements within the context of madrasah ibtidaiyah. Thus, this article is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of Islamic educational leadership studies and practically by offering an alternative leadership model relevant to contemporary educational challenges.

In this context, the leadership phenomenon of the principal of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri (MIN) 2 Malang City becomes particularly interesting to examine. The principal not only adopts the principles of transformational leadership but also integrates them into a distinctive and contextual approach known as the PAK BUDI

concept *Perhatikan* (Attention), *Apresiasi* (Appreciation), *Komunikasi* (Communication), *Berintegritas* (Integrity), *Upload* (Positive Promotion), *Dekati wali siswa* (Engagement with Parents), and *Inspiratif* (Inspirational Leadership). This approach is manifested through exemplary conduct, warm interpersonal communication, excellent service to teachers and parents, and personal attention to students. Such leadership practices are believed to significantly contribute to creating a harmonious madrasah climate and improving student achievement. Previous research shows that systematic principal strategies through mapping students' interests and talents, implementing student-centered approaches, and collaborative management successfully enhance both academic and non-academic student achievements (Affan et al., 2025).

Specifically, this article aims to explore and analyze how the transformational leadership of the madrasah principal is formulated through the PAK BUDI concept and how it impacts the improvement of student achievement at MIN 2 Malang City. The findings of this study are expected to serve as a reference for madrasah principals, educational policymakers, and future researchers in developing leadership models that are effective, humanistic, and quality-oriented in education.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to obtain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of transformational leadership by the Principal of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri (MIN) 2 Malang City through the PAK BUDI concept in improving student achievement. The research data consisted of qualitative data collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation (Tharaba & Wahyudin, 2024).

Observation was conducted to identify leadership practices and patterns of interaction between the principal, teachers, students, and parents. In-depth interviews involved the principal as the key informant, teachers as supporting informants, and students and parents as additional informants in order to obtain comprehensive information. Documentation was used to strengthen the research data, including the madrasah profile, work programs, activity reports, and records of student achievement.

Data validity was ensured through source and technique triangulation. Data analysis was carried out using an interactive analysis model consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification (Tharaba & Wahyudin, 2024), thereby producing valid and contextual findings regarding transformational leadership practices and their impact on improving student achievement.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### **PAK BUDI as a Leadership Model from a Transformational Leadership**

The research findings indicate that the PAK BUDI concept is not merely a leadership slogan, but a structured pattern of action that has been internalized into

the madrasah's work culture. The seven elements of PAK BUDI (Perhatikan, Apresiasi, Komunikasi, Berintegritas, Update/Publication, Dekati Wali Siswa, and Inspiratif) are systematically implemented and form a leadership ecosystem that impacts the learning climate and student achievement outcomes. The detailed explanation is presented below:

### ***Perhatikan (Humanistic Approach / Individualized Consideration)***

Within the framework of transformational leadership, *Perhatikan* can be understood as the practice of individualized consideration, where the leader is genuinely present, sensitive to the needs of madrasah members, and builds relationships that make teachers and students feel safe and valued. This pattern aligns with research findings emphasizing the role of transformational principals as communicators and counselors who strengthen both psychological and professional support for school members (Gamaliel, 2024; Muh. Rizal Kurniawan Yun Hermansah & Ila Rosmilawati, 2025).

These findings are reflected in interview results, where the principal affirmed that a humanistic approach forms the foundation of madrasah management. The madrasah operator revealed that the principal frequently inquires about teachers' personal conditions, while students expressed that they have space to convey their problems. Observations showed that the principal routinely holds meetings to communicate activities and gather feedback from both teachers and students. The integration of field findings and literature review demonstrates that *Perhatikan* in PAK BUDI is not merely normative, but concretely realized in daily leadership practices that strengthen a positive psychological climate within the madrasah.

### ***Apresiasi (Motivational Reinforcement and Achievement Culture)***

*Apresiasi* in PAK BUDI functions as a reinforcement mechanism that fosters intrinsic motivation and a positive work climate. This is consistent with literature showing that recognition from principals positively correlates with teacher work motivation and performance quality (Husnunnadia & Masyithoh, 2024). Interview results support these findings. The principal stated that appreciation creates space for teachers' ideas to emerge. The madrasah treasurer revealed that teachers become more confident in expressing ideas, while students mentioned that praise and recognition increase their motivation to achieve. Observations also showed that the principal provides motivational reinforcement during student activities. Therefore, appreciation in PAK BUDI can be understood as a transformational leadership practice that empirically enhances motivation, participation, and an achievement-oriented culture within the madrasah.

### ***Komunikasi (Open, Two-Way, and Participatory Communication)***

Communication in PAK BUDI can be positioned as the core of transformational leadership, as open communication fosters trust, commitment, and coordination (Zahria, 2024). The research findings align with interview data, where the principal emphasized the importance of active communication without barriers. Teachers reported clearer coordination, while students indicated that information from teachers became easier to understand. Observations confirmed that the principal

maintains openness toward both teachers and students. This integration shows that communication in PAK BUDI functions not only as an administrative tool but also as an instrument of inspirational motivation that strengthens shared understanding and facilitates effective implementation of madrasah programs.

### ***Berintegritas* (Ethical Role Modeling, Service Transparency, and Integrity Zone Strengthening)**

*Berintegritas* in PAK BUDI reflects the dimension of **idealized influence**, namely moral role modeling that builds trust and ethical culture. This aligns with studies on Integrity Zones in madrasahs (Azmi Yunarti et al., 2023) and research on integrating anti-corruption values in schools (Yusuf et al., 2024). Observations revealed that the madrasah has a gratification control unit integrated within the One-Stop Integrated Service (PTSP), demonstrating its commitment as an Integrity Zone. Interviews showed that the principal emphasizes fair treatment without discrimination. Teachers described firm leadership in upholding honesty, while students expressed that they experience equal and fair treatment. Thus, integrity in PAK BUDI is not merely the principal's personal value but has been institutionalized as an organizational culture that strengthens leadership legitimacy.

### ***Update/Publication* (Public Accountability and Institutional Branding in the Digital Era)**

*Update* or publication in PAK BUDI represents the adaptation of transformational leadership within the digital context, emphasizing transparency, accountability, and institutional image strengthening. This is in line with systematic literature reviews (2024) on educational branding through social media and studies on school leadership in the digital era (Anggita & Sulistyorini, 2025; Arif Rahman, 2025). Interviews indicated that the principal stresses the importance of uploading every activity, no matter how small. The operator stated that publication helps organize activities and strengthens the institution's image, while students expressed pride when school activities are publicly shared. Documentation confirmed that the madrasah consistently updates its website and social media platforms. This integration shows that publication in PAK BUDI serves a dual function: as a mechanism of accountability and as a means of strengthening collective motivation and institutional pride.

### ***Dekati Wali Murid* (School-Home Partnership and Parental Support for Achievement)**

Approaching parents can be interpreted as a strategy to build a learning ecosystem through synergy between school and home. This aligns with research demonstrating that madrasah leadership and parental support positively influence students' academic achievement (Nursinta & Abidin, 2024). Supported by studies on collaborative and inclusive leadership (Hania & Khauldi, 2024), partnership with parents becomes a key factor in building a student-centered and equitable learning ecosystem. Interview results showed that the principal emphasizes the importance of engaging parents; teachers observed increased parental involvement; and students reported that their parents are now more active in monitoring learning at

home. Documentation also indicated that the principal and stakeholders frequently conduct consultative meetings. Therefore, PAK BUDI positions parents as strategic partners in students' learning success.

### ***Inspiratif* (Role Model, Change Agent, and Innovation Driver)**

*Inspiratif* in PAK BUDI highlights the leader's role as a role model who drives change, builds enthusiasm, and normalizes a culture of work and achievement. This is consistent with Hermansah & Rosmilawati (2025), who emphasize that transformational leadership fosters teacher commitment to instructional transformation, as well as Supriyana et al. (2022), who demonstrate a positive relationship between transformational leadership and teacher innovation. Empirically, the principal emphasized the importance of leading by example, such as arriving earlier than others. The operator stated that this example encourages teachers to be more disciplined and motivated. Students expressed that the principal's attitude motivates them to arrive on time and study more diligently. Observations showed that students also come earlier to emulate the principal. Thus, the inspirational element in PAK BUDI aligns with contemporary research positioning leader role modeling as a catalyst for behavioral change, increased motivation, and the growth of innovation and achievement culture.

### **The Effects of the PAK BUDI Transformational Leadership Model on Student Achievement**

The transformational leadership model implemented by Pak Budi does not merely focus on administrative aspects, but extends to transforming work culture, enhancing teacher motivation, and building a shared vision within the madrasah environment. Through an inspirational, communicative, and participatory approach, he fosters a collective commitment among all school members to continuously grow and achieve excellence.

#### **Discipline and Learning Motivation**

Interview findings indicate that discipline is cultivated not through punitive measures, but through role modeling and personal attention. The principal emphasized that discipline is instilled as a character value rather than merely an administrative rule. Students reported that they are now accustomed to arriving before 7:00 a.m., reflecting the internalization of a disciplined culture. Theoretically, this practice reflects the dimensions of idealized influence and inspirational motivation within transformational leadership. When a leader demonstrates concrete examples such as arriving early and consistently maintaining commitments a mechanism of social modeling is formed. As a result, the discipline that emerges becomes intrinsic rather than externally imposed.

These findings are consistent with research by Dessie Dalkie Dukamo & RJ (Nico) Botha (2025), which demonstrates that transformational leadership significantly influences achievement motivation and discipline through teacher mediation. Thus, PAK BUDI shapes discipline grounded in role modeling and relational engagement rather than mere structural control.

### **Improvement of Academic Achievement**

Interview results reveal that improvements in academic achievement at the madrasah are achieved through additional learning programs, continuous monitoring of student progress, and the implementation of structured evaluation systems. Student motivation is not limited to verbal encouragement but is translated into concrete and scheduled academic programs. This finding aligns with Deliar Ramos (2025), who shows that transformational leadership contributes to academic achievement through planned strategies such as strengthening study hours, providing additional academic mentoring, and systematically monitoring student performance. Therefore, the PAK BUDI leadership model enhances academic achievement through a combination of motivational reinforcement and structured, sustainable instructional programs.

### **Improvement of Non-Academic Achievement**

Students demonstrate a strong drive to participate in competitions and extracurricular activities as a form of self-actualization facilitated by supportive leadership. This motivation arises not only from internal factors but also from the availability of talent development spaces, open appreciation, and publication of every achievement attained. Teachers observed increased courage and confidence among students in showcasing their non-academic potential, both internally within the madrasah and in external competitions.

This phenomenon indicates the creation of an empowering school climate that promotes students' holistic development. These findings are in line with research by I Gusti Ayu Manuati Dewi et al. (2023), which affirms that transformational leadership significantly contributes to developing student potential through a supportive and inspirational learning environment. Hence, Pak Budi does not merely perform administrative duties as principal but acts strategically as a catalyst for optimizing students' talents and interests sustainably.

### **Achievement Culture and Sense of Belonging**

Interview data reveal the growth of a strong sense of belonging toward the madrasah, not only among teachers but also among students and parents. The intensity of activity publications, recognition of achievements, and the principal's personal attention to school members' needs foster collective pride, which in turn increases institutional commitment and loyalty. This sense of belonging is reflected in active participation in various madrasah programs and parental support for school development initiatives.

These findings are consistent with Adinata et al. (2025), who emphasize that transformational leadership grounded in stakeholder participation strengthens commitment and engagement among school members. Additionally, a quantitative study by Ayala Zadok & Pascale Benoliel (2024) demonstrates that transformational leadership significantly enhances teachers' collective efficacy and organizational resilience.

Thus, the leadership practices implemented do not only impact individuals but also reinforce solidarity and institutional sustainability at a systemic level. In this

context, PAK BUDI functions as a *social adhesive* that strengthens shared goals, nurtures a collective achievement culture, and builds a strong sense of belonging within the madrasah community.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the transformational leadership of the principal at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri (MIN) 2 Malang, through the PAK BUDI concept, is an effective and value-based leadership model that enhances both academic and non-academic student achievement. PAK BUDI integrates key transformational leadership principles with local and religious values. The principal's focus on humanistic attention, appreciation, open communication, integrity, and parental involvement fosters a positive school climate, strengthens collaboration, and turns motivation into tangible educational outcomes.

The study confirms that transformational leadership plays a crucial role in shaping students' character and learning. The PAK BUDI model influences student success through improved teacher commitment, structured academic support, and increased parental engagement. Student achievement is thus the result of a supportive ecosystem built through ethical and inspirational leadership. The study recommends that madrasah principals adopt leadership models grounded in local values and urges policymakers to include humanistic-transformational leadership training for principals. Future research should explore the scalability of the PAK BUDI model across different madrasahs and educational settings.

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